

San Joaquin County Grand Jury



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY JAIL AND SHERIFF'S OFFICE 2008/2009 San Joaquin County Grand Jury

OBSERVATIONS

The 2008/2009 San Joaquin County Grand Jury toured the San Joaquin County Jail, Honor Farm and the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Call Center. The Grand Jury met with the Sheriff and top management staff and was given an overview of the Department. The Grand Jury also toured the Sheriff's Court Services Operation in the San Joaquin County Courthouse.

The early release of prisoners due to the physical limitations of the county jail, as reported in a prior Grand Jury report, continues to remain a significant problem. The current capacity of the jail is set at 1,411 prisoners. With the daily bookings into the jail, the average daily population exceeds 1,500 prisoners. Sheriff's staff must determine which prisoners are released early. The County is working with State Government for funding provided by Assembly Bill 900, to build a new jail facility that will add approximately 1,280 beds in the initial phase. A second phase would add an additional 300 plus beds but is subject to availability of State and County funds.

The Grand Jury believes there is an opportunity to enhance court security and public safety in the courthouse by reducing prisoner movements with the use of video arraignments. Kern, Monterey, Lassen, Orange, Stanislaus, San Luis Obispo and San Bernardino counties have been using video arraignments from five to twenty years. As a new county courthouse and county jail expansion are being planned, the utilization of video arraignments should be re-visited.

The Grand Jury commends the Sheriff for hiring several cadets from the Police Academy who were initially hired to become City of Stockton police officers but were given layoff notices due to City's impending budget cuts.

FINDINGS:

1. The Jail's main kitchen facility continues to be in desperate need of replacement. The California Corrections Standards Authority reported on the need to rebuild the kitchen facility.
2. Recent events at the San Joaquin County courthouse, including the stabbing of a Superior Court Judge and multiple prisoner escapes require vigorous and impartial investigations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender and the Court re-visit the feasibility of utilizing video arraignments.
2. The Grand Jury be provided with copies of completed investigative reports relating to Finding 2.
3. Adopt viable contingency plans to maintain the current daily cost for prisoner meals and minimum jail standards in the event that it becomes necessary to close the main kitchen due to mechanical/health problems.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Pursuant to Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code:

The San Joaquin County Sheriff shall report to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court, in writing and within 60 days of publication of this report, with a response as follows:

As to each finding in the report a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The respondent agrees with the finding.
- b. The respondent disagrees with the finding, with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

As to each recommendation, a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the action taken.
- b. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with a time frame for implementation.
- c. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of analysis and a time frame not to exceed six (6) months.
- d. The recommendation will not be implemented, with an explanation therefore.