



El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Final Draft Response

to the

2013-14 Grand Jury Midterm Report

June 10, 2014

**EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY, 2013-  
2014**

**REPORT NUMBER 13/14-  
02**

***EL DORADO COUNTY JAILS  
INSPECTIONS***

**Reason for the Report**

Each year, the grand jury is mandated by California Penal Code §919(b) to “inquire into the conditions and management of the public prisons within the county.”

**Background**

The South Lake Tahoe and Placerville jails are relatively older facilities, and house county inmates, as well as other inmates that have come to our two jails as a result of the California State Public Safety Act / Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) authorized in April, 2011.

The original South Lake Tahoe jail was built in 1973 and Placerville jail in 1988. While the original jail was constructed in 1973, the majority of the facility currently in use is an addition which was erected during approximately the same time frame as the Placerville Jail.

**2013-2014 Grand Jury Actions**

This grand jury conducted on-site inspections of the South Lake Tahoe Jail September 23, 2013, and the Placerville Jail on October 21, 2013. At the time of our visits, the jails were at approximately ¾ capacity; South Lake Tahoe at 114 inmates with a capacity of 158, and Placerville housing 243 inmates with a capacity of 311. We interviewed staff regarding the condition and management of the facilities.

**Grand Jury Findings**

1. Staff at both jails identified several negative impacts to inmate populations due to California AB 109.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

2. In spite of their ages, both facilities appeared to be clean and well maintained.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

3. Both jails appeared to be well managed and staff morale seemed to be good.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

4. Staff indicated that maintaining adequate female staff has been a problem at both jails, but recent aggressive recruitment efforts have been effective in alleviating that problem.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

5. Staff reported that turnover has been a problem at the South Lake Tahoe Jail and to a lesser degree in Placerville.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

6. Staff commented that inmates with mental health issues, as well as older and homeless inmates, are an ongoing problem. One staff comment was that jails have become a repository for people with mental health issues.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

7. Several inmate programs are offered, including substance abuse, life skills, culinary arts (to include state culinary certification), GED education, and religious services.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

8. Medical services are out-sourced to the California Forensic Medical Group.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

9. 15% of meals are special diets (religious, diabetic, vegetarian, etc.).

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

10. Staff at the Placerville facility reported that an additional room where attorneys can meet confidentially with clients is needed because of the lengthy time attorneys must wait to use current rooms. It was noted that the pass-through slot in the existing

attorney rooms were quite small (only 4 or 5 pages at a time), and often adds much time to a visit as the transfer of paper back and forth does not easily accommodate typical paperwork.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.**

### **Grand Jury Evaluation of Findings**

As noted in Finding #1, the implementation of AB 109 has created several negative impacts to inmate populations at both of our jails. Since these problems are serious, and affect other county departments including Probation and Sheriff, they will be specifically addressed in a separate grand jury report to be released later this year focusing on how AB 109 has affected our county.

Based on our inspections of both facilities, we commend the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office under the command of Cpt. Peshon for hiring very competent leaders and staff. Our two County Jails are well maintained and operated.

### **Grand Jury Recommendations**

1. Because of their ages, both Placerville and South Lake Tahoe jails should be evaluated for replacement and/or refurbishment.

**Response: The recommendation has been implemented.** The County contracted with Vanir Construction Management for a detailed assessment of all county-owned facilities including the Placerville and South Lake Tahoe jails. The 2013-14 Facilities Capital Improvement Plan was presented to the Board of Supervisors on October 28, 2013. For each facility, the ratio of deferred maintenance as a percentage of replacement costs was calculated. The analysis suggests investment in both the jails is warranted, but the cost of replacing the facilities would be prohibitive. Some refurbishment projects are underway. On January 27, 2014 the Board again considered the Facilities Capital Improvement Plan, approving in concept years two through five of the deferred maintenance plans, and also approved the priority of facility replacements as such 1) Sheriff Administration, 2) El Dorado Center and 3) District Attorney's office.

2. Reasons for staff turnover at both facilities should be evaluated, and consideration given to adjacent region's salary ranges as well as other retention tools.

**Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be**

**implemented in the future.** The Chief Administrative Office, Human Resources Department and the Sheriff Office will work to address turnover, and endeavor to report back to Board of Supervisors within six months as resources permit.

3. An advisory team including the Sheriff's Office, county mental health professionals, and other incarceration experts should be formed to make recommendations to improve the care, treatment and housing of mentally ill inmates.

**Response: The recommendation has been implemented.** County departments already work with the Sheriff's Office to address the mental health care of inmates at the time of incarceration and when being release from jail.

4. Search for a better process for attorney/client paperwork transfer (perhaps in a manner similar to regular mail) to alleviate the attorney wait times. This may eliminate the need for an additional attorney room.

**Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.** The Sheriff's Office already offers a system of bulk paperwork delivery from an attorney to a client.