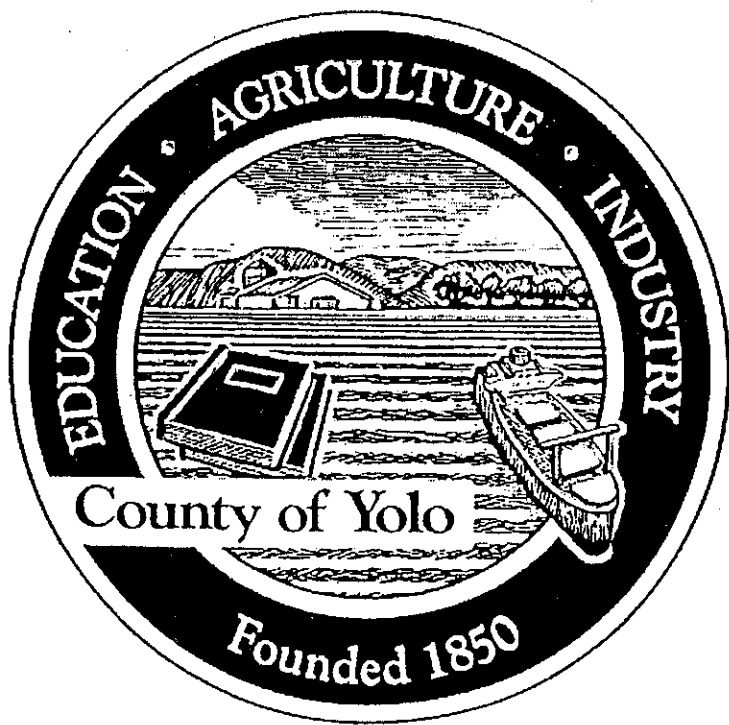


1999-2000 YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY

FINAL REPORT

A report for the citizens of Yolo County, California



June 30, 2000
Woodland, California

1999-2000 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report

A Report for the Citizens of Yolo County

P.O. Box 2142, Woodland, California 95776 • (530) 666-8225

June 30, 2000

Honorable Stephen L. Mock
Advisory Judge to the Grand Jury
Superior Court, County of Yolo
725 Court Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Dear Judge Mock:

It is the duty of the Grand Jury to present to you, and to the citizens of Yolo County, the *1999-2000 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report*. The Grand Jury was comprised of citizens from Davis, West Sacramento, Woodland, Yolo and Zamora.

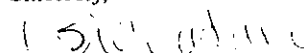
We received many inquiries asking for guidance in pursuing action against other employees of the County, cities, special districts, agencies or commissions, regarding real or perceived problems. Several formal citizens complaints were also received. Some of the complaints were accepted for formal review and others were returned for additional information or otherwise deemed inappropriate with the material submitted. In all of the cases that were not accepted for further review, the citizens were notified as to why they were rejected.

We also invited many of the elected County Officials to brief the entire Grand Jury on their duties to get a better feel for their services and how we might be able to help them in the future.

We moved our office again, hopefully this time to a permanent site near the courts. All of our materials are now in one place and we have considerably more room and the needed privacy. Some minor problems still have to be worked out.

We thank the Courts for having selected us to serve on the Grand Jury and for the help you and your staff afforded us. We thank the employers who permitted their people the time off to serve and we thank the many citizens interviewed for their insights, help and time. Nine of our members have graciously volunteered to serve a second term on the 2000-2001 Grand Jury. This will make the next body even more effective right from the start. It has been very rewarding, these last two years, serving as a juror, observing and working with our jurors from such diverse backgrounds but all coming together for the common good of our County's people.

Sincerely,


Dennis R. Ojakangas

What Is the Grand Jury?

The California Constitution requires each county to appoint a Grand Jury. Grand Juries guard the public interest and provide citizens with a means to participate in oversight of local government. The Yolo County Superior/Municipal Court appoints 19 grand jurors each year. The Yolo County Grand Jury is an official body of the Court and is an independent authority, not answerable to administrators or the Board of Supervisors.

The California Grand Jury process was established by statute in 1880. Unlike Grand Juries in other states, a California Grand Jury's primary responsibility is to promote honesty and efficiency in government by reviewing the operations and performance of county government, city governments, school districts and special districts. Based on these reviews, the Grand Jury issues a final report that may recommend changes in the way government conducts its business. Copies are distributed to public officials, county libraries and the news media. The Board of Supervisors or the governing body of each government agency reviewed must respond to the Grand Jury findings and recommendations within 90 days after publication of the final report.

Another Grand Jury responsibility is to consider complaints submitted by private citizens, local government officials or government employees. Complaints must be in writing and should include any supporting evidence available. Grand jurors are sworn to secrecy and, except in rare circumstances, records of their meetings may not be subpoenaed. This secrecy ensures confidentiality of the complainant and any testimony offered to the Grand Jury during its investigations. The Grand Jury exercises its own discretion on whether to conduct an investigation or to report its findings on citizen complaints.

A third responsibility of the Grand Jury is to consider criminal indictments based on evidence presented by the District Attorney. The Grand Jury does not pass upon the guilt or innocence of the accused. The Grand Jury also investigates charges of malfeasance (wrongdoing) or misfeasance (a lawful act performed in an unlawful manner) by public officials.

To be eligible for the Grand Jury, a citizen must:

- be at least 18 years of age;
- reside in the county for at least one year before selection;
- exhibit ordinary intelligence and good character;
- possess a working knowledge of the English language; and
- not have served on the Grand Jury within one year, although the Court may choose to hold over up to ten jurors to ease transition.

Following a screening process by the Court, grand jurors are selected by lottery. If you are interested in becoming a grand juror, submit your name to the Jury Commissioner, 725 Court Street, Room 303, Woodland, California, 95695, or telephone (530) 666-8600.

June 30, 2000

The 1999-2000 Yolo County Grand Jury resolves that the attached report is adopted as the Final Report of the 1999-2000 Yolo County Grand Jury.

Signed:

Roger Brooks, Woodland
Patricia M. Brown, Woodland
Daniel J. Clayton, West Sacramento
Loran Dockter, Woodland
Valente F. Dolcini, Davis
Sham S. Goyal, Davis
James B. Guiles, Woodland
Barbara J. Hernandez, West Sacramento
Arden Hill, West Sacramento (*Sgt-at-Arms*)
Robert L. Mansfield, Davis
Jose Martinez, Davis

Joe V. Meyer, West Sacramento
Mary Lou Nevis, Woodland (*Treasurer*)
Dennis R. Ojakangas, Davis (*Foreman*)
Charla Parker, Zamora
Elmer Roelling, Woodland (*Foreman-Pro-Tempore*)
Mary Roussas, Davis
Esther Vasquez, Yolo (*Secretary*)
John Wilson, Davis

Public Notice

The findings in this document report the conclusions reached by the Grand Jury. Although all the findings are based on evidence, they are the product of the Grand Jury's independent judgment; some findings are the opinion of the Grand Jury rather than indisputable statements of fact.

The California Penal Code¹ specifies the duty, timeframe and format for responding to the Grand Jury reports. The governing board of the public agency, which is the subject of the report, must respond within 90 days of the date the Grand Jury submits its report to the Court. Other named respondents must comment within 60 days. Respondents must state whether or not they agree with each finding. If the responding person or entity disagrees with a Grand Jury finding, the respondent is required to explain the reason(s) for disputing the finding. In responding to each Grand Jury recommendation, the person or entity must report a summary regarding the implemented action, the timeframe for implementation, or an explanation if the recommendation will not be implemented or requires further analysis. If the recommendation requires further analysis, the respondent must identify the scope and parameters of the analysis and a timeframe for completion, not to exceed six months after publication of the report.

¹Sections 933 and 933.5

Table of Contents

Studies	3
Davis Police Department	
West Sacramento Police Department	
Winters Police Department	
Woodland Police Department	
Yolo County Sheriff's Department	
The Yolo County Juvenile Hall	
Yolo County Y2K Strategy Plan	
Complaints	8
Child Protective Services	
Esparto Community Services District (ECSD)	
Esparto Unified School District (EUSD)	
Tours	11
Martins' Achievement Place	
Monroe Detention Center and the Leinberger Center	
Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District	
Yolo County Alcohol and Drug Services	
Yolo County Animal Shelter	
Yolo County Coroner's Office and Morgue	
Addendum	12

Studies

Davis Police Department

BACKGROUND

Members of the Yolo County Grand Jury met with members of the Davis Police Department as part of the Grand Jury's annual oversight function.

FINDINGS

1. It appears that the Davis Police Department is currently functioning more smoothly and with higher morale in the workforce relative to a few years ago.
2. It appears that a detailed and clear-cut mission statement needs to be developed within the Davis Police Department.
3. The Davis Police Department deserves to be commended for their emphasis on a community service approach.
4. The new I-80 under-crossing bicycle tunnel appears to be highly controversial and raises some serious safety and law-enforcement concerns.
5. Due to the decision to shutdown the current Davis firing range located on Pole Line Road, serious questions and concerns have arisen about the availability of firearms training facilities relative to the actual needs as mandated by law. Lack of proper firearms training may potentially have serious ramifications for law enforcement in the City of Davis.
6. It appears that some of the parking enforcement rules, laws, or practices, as applied to the privately owned lots (e.g., shopping plaza lots), are not practical and hence provide high probabilities of unfairness to motorists.
7. There appears to be a lack of any formal training of sworn officers for racial tolerance.
8. The Davis Police Department has not yet switched to the new 900 MHz frequency as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (although not in violation at this time).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-01 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Davis Police Department develop a clear-cut mission statement as soon as possible. (Finding #2).

(STUDIES: Davis Police Department-continued on next page)

00-02 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Davis City Council conduct a study of the safety issues related to the new I-80 bicycle undercrossing and determine and meet the law-enforcement needs before a serious incident occurs. (Finding #4)

00-03 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that in order to achieve better racial harmony in the community and to deal with race related matters more effectively, the Davis Police Department provide formal and periodic training to their sworn officers for racial tolerance and other cultural awareness aspects. (Finding #7)

00-04 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Davis City Council seriously study the issues relating to proper fire-arms training needs and facilities for its police force and make sure that the police force does not fall behind in fire-arms training and meets or exceeds standards mandated by law. (Finding #5)

00-05 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Davis City Council study the practicality and fairness issues as related to parking enforcement in privately owned lots (especially in shopping plaza lots) and make sure that the ordinances are enforceable in a fair and just manner. (Finding #6).

00-06 The Yolo County Grand Jury believes that the entire Yolo County will benefit when the Davis Police Department adopts the new 900 MHz communication frequency. (Finding #8)

RESPONDENTS

Davis City Council
Davis City Manager
Davis Chief of Police

West Sacramento Police Department

BACKGROUND

Members of the Yolo County Grand Jury met with members of the West Sacramento Police Department as part of the Grand Jury's annual oversight function.

FINDINGS

1. The West Sacramento Police Department appears to be functioning properly, appropriately, smoothly, and harmoniously. The

department seems to have a full grasp and control on the law-enforcement situation in their city.

2. It appears that the West Sacramento Police Department's morale and harmony has improved significantly, under the new Chief of Police.
3. The West Sacramento Police Department appears to be fully aware and familiar with the additional law-enforcement needs and problems that would arise as a result of the baseball park that is currently under construction.
4. The West Sacramento Police Department has done a good job of including racial minorities in their force in order to maintain a good rapport with various racial minorities in their community.
5. The West Sacramento Police Department has done a very good job of public relations.
6. The West Sacramento Police Department allows their officers to take the patrol cars home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

RESPONDENTS

West Sacramento City Council
West Sacramento City Manager
West Sacramento Chief of Police

Winters Police Department

BACKGROUND

Members of the Yolo County Grand Jury met with members of the Winters Police Department as part of the Grand Jury's annual oversight function.

FINDINGS

1. It appears that the Winters Police Department is currently operating with fewer sworn officers than necessary. The department is still operating with the same number of sworn officers as when the city population was 2,500, relative to the current population of 5,500 or more.
2. The Winters Police Department is to be commended for doing an outstanding job considering they are seriously understaffed and under-equipped.
3. Operation of Winters Police Department with fewer officers is jeopardizing the safety of both citizens as well as sworn officers.

4. Winters Police Department lacks training and necessary equipment to collect and preserve evidence that may be effectively used in court trials.
5. Since the Winters Police Department has the lowest pay scales and retirement benefits in the county, the Winters Police Department has an exceptionally difficult time recruiting sworn officers for its force.
6. The Winters Police Department has not yet switched to the new 900 MHz frequency as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (although not in violation at this time).

RECOMMENDATIONS

00-07 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Winters City Council and the Winters City Manager's office should study the situation of its police force and find ways to increase the number of sworn officers. (Finding #1, 3 and 4)

00-08 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that the Winters City Council should seriously study the pay scales and the benefits package for its sworn officers. It is further recommended that the pay scales and benefits be brought up to a comparable level with other law enforcement agencies in Yolo County. (Finding #5)

00-09 The Yolo County Grand Jury believes that all of Yolo county will benefit when the new 900 MHz communication frequency is adopted by the Winters Police Department. (Finding #6)

RESPONDENTS

Winters City Council
Winters City Manager
Winters Chief of Police

Woodland Police Department

BACKGROUND

Members of the Yolo County Grand Jury met with members of the Woodland Police Department as part of the Grand Jury's annual oversight function.

FINDINGS

1. After apparent employee dissatisfaction of several years in the past, the Woodland Police Department now appears to be improving in terms of morale, enthusiasm, effectiveness, and loyalty.
2. The Woodland Police Department largely

appears to be functioning smoothly.

3. After three years of higher than normal personnel turnover, it appears to have been significantly reduced.
4. There appears to be a lack of any formal training of sworn officers for racial tolerance.
5. The Woodland Police Department has not yet switched to the new 900 MHz frequency as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (although not in violation at this time).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-10 The Yolo County Grand Jury recommends that in order to achieve a better racial harmony in the community and to deal with race related matters more effectively, the Woodland Police Department provide formal and periodic training to their sworn officers for racial tolerance and other cultural awareness aspects. (Finding #4)
- 00-11 The Yolo County Grand Jury believes that all of Yolo County will benefit when the Woodland Police Department adopts the new 900 MHz communication frequency. (Finding #5)

RESPONDENTS

Woodland City Council
Woodland City Manager
Woodland Chief of Police

Yolo County Sheriff's Department

BACKGROUND

Members of the Yolo County Grand Jury met with Yolo County Sheriff as part of the Grand Jury's annual oversight function.

FINDINGS

1. It appears that the department's morale has improved significantly, under the new Sheriff.
2. Higher than normal turnover of sworn personnel is reported consistently which appears mainly due to lower pay scales than even the surrounding counties and cities. Due to higher turnover rates, Yolo County seems to have become a training ground of law enforcement officers for other jurisdictions.
3. The level of satisfaction appears to be higher in the Coroner's Department relative to Sheriff's Department.

4. The Correctional Officers are concerned about the forthcoming administrative changes that the sworn deputies will be taken out of the detention facility and put on the patrol and that they would have to fill the role of deputies inside the facility without any commensurate pay and benefits. The Correctional Officers do not have Safety Retirement either. This situation could result in the departure of as many as 15 Correctional Officers from the Monroe Detention facility.
5. The Sheriff's Department almost always has difficulty in filling the vacant deputy positions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-12 The Grand Jury recommends that the County Administrator's office conduct an independent study to determine the root-cause of higher than normal turnover of sworn officers, and then, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Department, find ways to remedy the situation. (Finding number 2 & 5).
- 00-13 The Sheriff's Department evaluate the potential of moving the sworn officers out of the Monroe Detention Center into the County at large, including the Deputies and the Correctional Officers. In the event the Correctional Officers are asked to take over the Officer's functions inside the detention facility, we recommend that they receive additional training and benefits including safety retirement. (Finding number 4).

RESPONDENTS

Yolo County Sheriff's Department
Yolo County Administrator's Office

The Yolo County Juvenile Hall

BACKGROUND

On September 21, 1999, members of the Grand Jury toured the Juvenile Hall Facility located at 238 West Beamer St. in Woodland, California. The Juvenile Hall Director conducted the tour and provided information about the history, function and services provided at the Juvenile Hall Facility.

The 1998-1999 Grand Jury recommended that the 1999-2000 Grand Jury "fully investigate" the Yolo County Juvenile Hall. Several issues immediately surfaced that the Grand Jury felt needed to be brought to the attention of the County Administration and the citizens of Yolo County.

FINDINGS

"To protect the public from the delinquent acts of minors by providing for the safe and secure reception and temporary care of minors in detention pursuant to provisions of the California Juvenile Court Law." -*Mission Statement of the Juvenile Hall*

"We seek diverse individuals to join and strengthen our organization and we strive to create a work environment that nurtures and encourages good people to remain a part of our Yolo County team." -*Yolo County Values*

1. The basic care and needs of the wards are being provided.

A. Medical Needs

There is a Spartan medical examination room at the facility where medical services are provided. More demanding medical services are conducted outside the facility. Each ward receives a medical examination prior to admittance to the facility.

B. Food Services

Three meals a day are served by a staff person to small groups of wards. The meals are prepared at the Monroe Detention Center and then transported to the hall. There is a small kitchen and dining room where the meals can be kept warm and consumed in a social setting. Three meals a day are served at two sittings based on group classification.

C. Education

The classroom at the facility appears to be up to date and has a setting that resembles any normal classroom. Each ward is given six hours of schooling, five days a week. There is a small library that is accessible to the students. One difficulty is that a teacher must attempt to teach multiple age groups and different grade levels simultaneously. We question whether the quality of education provided is sufficient for the wards to maintain their academic standing upon readmission into the normal school system.

D. Physical Activities and Recreation

Three hours of recreation are provided for on a daily basis. On weekends and holidays the wards have five hours of recreational time. There is an indoor recreation room with activities including arts and crafts as well other indoor activities. One hour is allotted each day for outdoor activities.

(STUDIES: The Yolo County Juvenile Hall -continued on next page)

E. Visitation

Parents/Guardians are allowed to visit on Thursdays and Sundays at scheduled times in a secure and observable area near the lobby. Parents and guardians are given time to visit the ward after the initial booking procedure.

F. Religious and Counseling Services

Wards can voluntarily attend religious services on Sundays that are given by members of the local clergy. A ward or parent/guardian may also request a meeting with a member of the clergy through the Juvenile Hall staff.

There is psychiatric counseling available as part of the medical care given to the wards. The court may also order psychiatric counseling on an as needed basis. Various counseling services and support services such as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous are available.

2. The safety and security of the wards, staff and community is at risk.

On February 2, 1994, nine detainees overpowered the staff and escaped into the community in a well-documented event. Since that time, measures have been taken to deter this from happening again. However, there still appear to be major deficiencies in security at the facility that could have serious consequences to the wards, staff and community.

These deficiencies appear to be legion and can be delineated as follows: entry security, surveillance cameras, electronic locks, and maintenance.

A. Entry Security

There is no metal detector positioned at the entryway into the facility. There is a "wand" available, but due to staffing constraints, no one is available to operate it. There is almost an "honor" system that anyone entering will leave any metal objects or weapons in the lock boxes located outside the entry door. It is apparent that anyone desiring to enter the facility with a concealed weapon would easily be able to do so.

An intercom system allows the person in the "control room" to communicate with anyone desiring to enter the facility.

B. Surveillance Cameras

Several surveillance cameras are badly positioned and in one critical area, the kitchen and dining hall, there is no camera at all. Due to the linear configuration of the facility,

there are several areas that cannot be viewed. In the "control room," one monitor was non-functional. It was noted that the person in the control room was also preparing reports and answering phones, which effectively removed their attention from observing the wards. We also question the accessibility to viewing the surveillance monitors from the visitation area and the lobby.

C. Electronic Locks

The electronic locks suffer from periods of non-operation and at the time of our visit, were not Y2K compliant. This could pose a serious problem in the event of an emergency.

D. Maintenance

It was noted that maintenance requests take an inordinately long period of time before completion. There appeared to be no viable prioritizing or tracking mechanism for repair requests at the facility. Maintenance requests are phoned in to the general services department and logged down as to date and time requested.

3. Staffing, employee morale, and organization is deficient.

The Grand Jury was greatly dismayed at the low level of employee morale and high rate of staff turnover at the Juvenile Hall Facility. We are similarly concerned over real and perceived differences between the adult probation officers and the juvenile group supervisors from within the probation department.

A. Proper Staffing

Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations mandates that the Juvenile Hall Facility must staff at a ratio of one staff person for every ten wards. There are two distinct line functions below the Facility Director. One is the "Group Supervisor", who directly observes and interacts with the wards. The other is the "Supervising Group Supervisor", who is responsible for administration and management of the other supervisors. During the course of our investigation it was discovered that the "Supervising Group Supervisor" was also expected to supervise the wards along with their other functions in order for the facility to comply with Title 15. The increased responsibilities of this position for a fractional offset in pay has made this position less than desirable.

There are three eight-hour shifts each day. At the time of our investigation,

there were two shifts (day and relief), where there were no supervisors assigned due to the inability to fill these positions. It is not unusual to find personnel working two shifts per day (16 hours) because of unfilled supervisory positions. At the time of our investigation, there were two vacant supervisor positions; one has been open since March 3, 1999, and the other due to the present supervisor becoming the temporary Facility Director.

B. Salary Structure, Disparity within the Probation Department

Increasing levels of responsibility within the Juvenile Hall are not met with commensurate increases in salary, making it difficult for Juvenile Hall Group Supervisors to accept promotions to the next level. In the administrative end, the Supervising Group Supervisor is paid approximately 9% more than the Group Supervisor II. With the extra 5% more a Group Supervisor can earn for working "out of class", this cuts the differential to only 4%. This is hardly an incentive to assume the additional responsibilities.

Entry level positions at the Juvenile Hall Facility begin at approximately \$1941 per month, which is over \$500 per month less than the entry-level position as an Adult Probation Officer. This salary disparity continues through the more advanced positions. In comparable supervisory positions the gap grows to over \$1100 per month. We felt this wage disparity led to the perception of the Juvenile Hall Group Supervisor as a "lower class" than an Adult Probation Officer.

C. Salary Structure, Disparity with Neighboring Counties and Related Law Enforcement Positions

In 1996, a study was done to adjust the base pay for the probation employees to within ten percent of an accumulated group of neighboring counties base pay levels. There is some controversy as to the accuracy of this study in relation to what constituted a comparable position. Recently, Sacramento County announced a pay raise of between fifteen to twenty percent for their probation officers that already earned better than ten percent more than similar jobs in Yolo County. Also thrown in was a fifteen hundred-dollar bonus. This type of financial incentive to leave Yolo County is in

many cases just too great to ignore. To qualify for a probation department position, a person must pass a background check and have 60 college units (Associate of Arts Degree). By contrast, the Sheriff's Department pays more (\$2480, starting wage for Deputy Sheriff) and only requires a minimum high school diploma and POST training.

It is evident that a job in the Juvenile Hall branch of the probation department is seen primarily as a starting point to accumulate the experience and training necessary to move to another law enforcement career, either within Yolo County or elsewhere, which offers superior financial and job related rewards. The lack of promotional opportunities within the department also adds to lower staff morale.

D. Safety Retirement

One of the mainstays of any viable career is the retirement benefits accorded to any employee. The current contractual guidelines specify that employees will pay their own share of their retirement to the California Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) for the first five years of employment. After that time, the county will pay both the county's and the employee's contribution to PERS. Many counties pay both contributions when an employee begins employment.

Another feature of most law enforcement and many probation departments is "safety retirement" or a better retirement benefit package that encourages careers in law enforcement. The Yolo County Probation Department employees do not have this benefit. Many other probation departments within the state share this benefit with their law enforcement and correctional counterparts. It is to be noted that all Juvenile Hall Supervisors and Adult Probation Officers are classified as peace officers under Section 830.5 of the California Penal Code.

E. Employee Turnover

Better than seventy-five percent of the staff at the Juvenile Facility are at entry level. Only two persons have better than five years experience. One person has three years with the remainder having less than two years experience. Most employees leave before acquiring two years. There is a virtually constant search to keep

staff positions filled. This constant turnover erodes any semblance of a "team" atmosphere.

F. Training

All employees must pass a state mandated training program. Each staff member receives State mandated training, starting with pre-hire training, going on to 180 hours of training the first year and then 40 hours of legal and pain compliance training. The State pays for the hours of formal training.

Once the new employee begins, the Supervising Group Supervisor must then provide "on the job" training. The constant training due to high turnover detracts from the supervisor's ability to perform other functions. This leads in many cases to excessive overtime and inadequate training. Inconsistent or inadequate training has the potential for increased risk to the safety of the employees or the wards.

G. Volunteer Program

A volunteer program that allows screened volunteers to interact with the wards is in place and is considered quite beneficial. There is the possibility of expansion of this program if more qualified volunteers can be found. These people who willingly give of their time are to be commended.

4. The current facility is old, out-dated, and overcrowded

The original Juvenile Hall was built in the 1960s and expanded in 1976-77 to what it is today.

Originally there were twelve bed spaces; there are now thirty beds in the facility and twenty-two sleeping rooms. Additional beds are set up in a "dorm" setting. The facility is built in a linear fashion that makes management of the facility difficult. There are many blind spots and corners.

At the time of our visit there were forty wards although the building was built to house only thirty. Males and females are kept separated with the exceptions of mealtime and during school. The overcrowding was especially noticeable in the "dorm" area.

The average headcount continues to grow year after year as the population increases. Over the last few years the average has grown from the low thirties to the high thirties and beyond. Severe overcrowding could be handled by sending overflow wards to other nearby counties facilities with which Yolo County has reciprocal aid agreements, but this is expensive and rarely done. Usually

when extra wards are brought in to the facility, extra help has to be added on to deal with the already crowded situation. Upwards of fifty wards have been housed at a given time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The citizens of Yolo County must be aware that there is a serious problem at our Juvenile Hall. The problem is apathy, not by the dedicated men and women who work there or volunteer their time, but rather by those County and Probation administrative officials whose responsibility it is to provide a safe, secure and satisfying work environment for the employees and a safe, secure and corrective environment for the wards.

While we look to the future at the possibility of a new Juvenile Hall, we must first deal with the problems that exist at the current facility before we can move forward.

The obvious categories for our recommendations are short, intermediate and long term solutions:

00-14 Short Term

The easiest and quickest solutions involve the facility itself. All safety and security issues must be remedied at once.

- A. All monitors fixed and on line.
- B. All surveillance cameras working and pointed in relevant areas, new cameras installed where needed.
- C. All locks in working order with downtime held to a minimum.
- D. A metal detector installed at the main entrance.
- E. The Director of the Juvenile Facility should be given authority (up to a pre-determined monetary limit) to maintain the integrity of any physical security related items without having to go through the normal bureaucratic channels.

00-15 Intermediate Term

Those problems admitting an intermediate fix involve the hiring and training of adequate staff.

- A. Pay scales need to be investigated and adjusted to more accurately reflect the going rate with comparable positions in neighboring counties. Comparisons could also be made between positions of similar responsibility in the juvenile and the adult sections of the probation department.
- B. Safety retirement should be offered

(COMPLAINTS: The Yolo County Juvenile Hall
-continued on next page)

in some form to all probation department employees carrying the peace officer classification.

- C. A more detailed method of prioritizing and tracking repairs should be delineated and initialized.

00-16 Long Term

- A. A new juvenile hall must be given serious consideration and study, this process is already underway. The present hall is woefully inadequate both from the standpoint of size and supervision. We want to point out that the safety, security and morale issues at the present facility must take priority over the consideration for a new facility.

RESPONDENTS

Yolo County Board of Supervisors
Yolo County Probation Department

Yolo County Y2K Strategy Plan

BACKGROUND

The Yolo County Grand Jury decided to monitor the activities of the various Yolo County Departments to assure that there would be few problems with the highly touted Y2K issues. The Grand Jury began to monitor the Y2K issues in the summer of 1999 and continued through the last critical time period of February 29, 2000.

FINDINGS

The Year 2000 issue began as a problem that would possibly occur on or before January 1, 2000, because most computers and programs would not recognize the "00" date. A lot of early forecasts called for widespread power outages, and other problems including a paralyzing shutdown of the computer world. Forecasters were predicting the most serious of all situations and a total downfall of the economy, both private and governmental. As the year 2000 continued to come closer, the hype of the situation grew.

The officials of Yolo County looked at the problem and had to decide the best solution to make sure the County, and all its departments, would be Y2K compliant when the clock turned on January 1, 2000. The County Administrative Office directed that a strategy be planned with the Information Technology Division (ITD) leading the way for the rest of the departments. The solutions came to dividing the problem into manageable parts and assigning responsibility to the departments to have a Y2K plan, and the ITD would

provide the tools and assistance to accomplish this task. Reports of their accomplishments would be done monthly and meetings would take place to monitor their progress. The head of each department would confirm their status. An Internet site was set up to allow any interested parties the chance to view what was proceeding. Meetings were held with other governmental bodies within the counties to share ideas and compare notes.

The problem of the Y2K issue was divided into three areas: applications maintained by Central Information Technology, those maintained by vendors, and those maintained by departments along with the commercial type applications. Desktop computer hardware had to be looked at along with network devices and operating systems. Embedded chips and the global Y2K issues also had to be resolved. On a monthly basis, progress on these areas was noted by each department and was shown on a graph, for a comparison with the other departments. Each department was to resolve a Business Continuity & Contingency Plan that would allow the department to operate if the computer world shut down.

Yolo County government consists of 23 departments, along with 11 sub-units, making a total of 34 different units. The reports that kept us informed showed great improvement from month to month. By October 15th, a report was given as to the status of the efforts. All application systems were either Y2K compliant, or there was a way to work around the application, or the application was not supporting a critical function. All PC desktops and software supporting critical functions were Y2K compliant, and all communication devices supporting critical functions were now Y2K compliant. All of the departments with Mission Critical functions or Department Critical Business support functions had their Business Continuity & Contingency Plans for those critical functions. Refinements and testing of all the areas would continue.

The Grand Jury also looked into the preparedness of the 911 emergency system. The whole system could go mobile, with generators, and still carry on all functions as normal. The 911 system, along with the various police agencies, had emergency contingency plans that would function during any event. Meetings and drills took place to assure the full preparedness of these agencies.

As January 1, 2000 approached, the Grand Jury felt assured that all would pass with a minimum of problems. A private firm was hired by the County to give a second opinion on the validity of the preparedness of the departments. A green light was given

and the wait for New Year's Day was on.

On New Year's Eve, the buildings were staffed and computers were monitored when the clocks changed. Much to the relief of all concerned, nothing happened and the staffers went home early to celebrate the arrival of the New Year. On February 2nd, a few minor problems occurred, but were resolved quickly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-17 The Grand Jury would like to commend all the people involved in resolving the Y2K issue. Our special commendation goes to the Information Technology Division for providing leadership and direction to the departments. It was a job well done by many people, and should provide compliance for many years to come.

RESPONDENTS

Yolo County Board of Supervisors

Complaints

Child Protective Services

BACKGROUND

A citizen's complaint was received regarding the way the Department of Child and Protective Services places children in foster homes and monitors their care while in foster care.

FINDINGS

Members of the Grand Jury interviewed the Deputy Director of the department to obtain an overview of the department and its protocols. Following that interview, a review was conducted of the *Foster Family Homes Policy and Procedure Manual* (Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 7.5) along with the report of the Little Hoover Commission, *Now in Our Hands: Caring for California's Abused and neglected Children*, released August 1999. Following that review, a list of questions was submitted to the Deputy Director for response followed by another in-person interview with members of the Grand Jury.

1. The Grand Jury was unable to document that the department is consistently following the guidelines as outlined in the reviewed documents.
2. The Deputy Director was unable to pro-

duce written protocols which outlined an objective, step-by-step protocol that case workers utilize to decide upon the level of placement that a child needs and the options for placement that might include kin-care.

3. The Deputy Director reported that case workers exceed the case load ratios on a regular basis due to an acute shortage of qualified and experienced case workers, but was unable to report that there is a plan in place in Yolo County to address that shortage.
4. The Deputy Director reported that it takes almost a year for a new employee to become fully functional in the department, but was unable to produce a comprehensive plan to shorten that orientation time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-18 The Director should verify that there are written protocols and objective assessment instruments in place to guide the placement decisions of the caseworkers according to accepted standards.
- 00-19 The Director should review the written protocols for the department periodically to assure that the department is in compliance with accepted standards.
- 00-20 The Director should enlist the services of the Human Resources Department and the County Administrator's Office to develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan. This should include a formal employee orientation and training program that will fast track the new staff to be fully functional within 90 days of hire.

RESPONDENTS

The Department of Child and Protective Services
Yolo County Administrator's Office

Esparto Community Services District (ECSD)

BACKGROUND

In response to a citizen complaint, the Grand Jury investigated allegations of violations of the Brown Act open meetings requirements¹. The Grand Jury interviewed ECSD

board members, staff, and private citizens. The Grand Jury also reviewed minutes (both written summaries and audio tape recordings), agendas, correspondence, and the ECSD by-laws.

The ECSD is an independent special district. It provides policy oversight to the unincorporated Esparto community for water, sewage treatment, and street lighting. The ECSD consists of five elected members, who serve four-year terms.

The California Ralph M. Brown Act, enacted in 1953 (Act)², requires that meetings of local government agencies, such as the ECSD, be open to the public. Meetings, as defined in the Act, albeit slippery, includes "any congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body ... to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body" (54952.2.a). The Act prohibits any "use of direct communication" or "technological devices" by a majority "to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken on an item" by the legislative body (54952.2.b). (Emphasis added) The use of a telephone, email, and facsimile devices used to develop such a collective concurrence fall within the parameters of the Act. Finally, "no legislative body shall take action by secret ballot, whether preliminary or final" (54953.c).

Except for limited circumstances, e.g., emergency, the Act prohibits "action or discussion" at public board meetings on items unless those items appear on the posted agenda for the meeting. (54954.2.a).

FINDINGS

1. The present ECSD board, which includes two new members³ elected in November 1999, has violated the Brown Act on at least one specific occasion by discussing and taking action on an item not appearing on the posted agenda for the meeting in question⁴. From comments received by the Grand Jury it appears that there is concern with members' frequent efforts to deliberate on matters outside the published agenda.
2. There does not appear to be a consistent training policy or efforts to assure board members receive Brown Act initial or refresher training.
3. Although the Grand Jury was unable to identify specific instances of violations for illegal "meetings" between board members, there appears to be a general recognition and admission by the members that in fact those "meetings" for the purpose by a majority "to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken on an item" has occurred with some frequency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-21 The ECSD institute a formal policy of initial and annual refresher training on the requirements of the Brown Act for its board members. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]
- 00-22 Coordinate with other local agencies such as County Counsel, District Attorney, or other local agencies that provide Brown Act training allowing ECSD members to participate in that training. The training should be focused on the Brown Act and not merely an aside, which typically is the case with larger conferences focusing on more global statewide issues. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]
- 00-23 Take personal responsibility to assure that the public's business is conducted in public as required by law. The intent of the Brown Act is that actions taken by public bodies, such as the ECSD, be taken openly and their deliberations be conducted openly⁵. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]
- 00-24 Review Findings⁶ and Recommendations⁶ from the 1997-1998 Yolo County Grand Jury and institute that Report's Recommendations immediately.
- 00-25 The 2000-2001 Grand Jury continues to monitor the ECSD.

RESPONDENTS

Esparto Community Services District: All Findings and Recommendations
Yolo County Counsel: Recommendation 00-22
Yolo County District Attorney: Finding 1 and Recommendation 00-22

¹ECSD was previously investigated by the 1997-1998 Yolo County Grand Jury for Brown Act violations. (See 1997-1998 Report with extensive Findings and Recommendations.)

²Government Code Section 54950 et seq. All references to Government Code unless otherwise noted.

³"Any person elected to serve ... who has not yet assumed the duties of office shall conform his or her conduct to the requirements of" The Brown Act (54952.1).

⁴ECSD initiated, discussed, and took action to grant staff paid holiday day off on election days. One citizen was concerned that, because the "action to grant time off" was improper under the Act, the monies to pay for this "illegally" granted time off was a misappropriation of ECSD funds.

⁵We remind the ECSD board of the Brown Act's legislative intent: "The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created."

⁶Particularly Findings: 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

⁷Particularly Recommendations: 98-25 through 98-29, inclusive, and 98-34.

Esparto Unified School District (EUSD)

BACKGROUND

In response to a citizen complaint, the Grand Jury investigated allegations of violations of the Brown Act open meetings requirements. The Grand Jury interviewed EUSD board members, staff, and private citizens. The Grand Jury also reviewed minutes, agendas, correspondence, and the EUSD by-laws.

The EUSD is an independent district. It provides policy oversight to the Esparto local public schools, and is responsible for the supervision of the school district's superintendent and various school principals serving the Esparto community. The EUSD consists of five elected members, who serve four-year terms. After an election, and at the beginning of each calendar year, the EUSD board conducts a reorganization meeting to, among other administrative matters, nominate and elect its officers for a one-year term. The two principle officers are its president and clerk (equivalent to vice-president).

The California Ralph M. Brown Act, enacted in 1953 (Act)¹, requires that meetings of local government agencies, such as the EUSD, be open to the public. Meetings, as defined in the Act, albeit slippery, includes "any congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body ... to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body" (54952.2.a). The election of officers would be a matter "within the subject matter jurisdiction" of the EUSD. The Act prohibits any "use of direct communication" or "technological devices" by a majority "to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken on an item" by the legislative body (54952.2.b). (Emphasis added) The use of a telephone, email, and facsimile devices used to develop such a collective concurrence fall within the parameters of the Act. Contrary to members' testimonial assertions, the use of the telephone does not have to be by way of simultaneous communication, such as by conference call, to fall within the Act's prohibitions. Finally, "no legislative body shall take action by secret ballot, whether preliminary or final" (54952.2.c).

Much significance was voiced by three of the EUSD members that the allegations filed with the Grand Jury were groundless because they were as a result of retaliation by an ex-member of the EUSD² or as a result of a "sour grapes" motivation (as one local newspaper editorialized³). However, regardless of the motivation for filing the complaint, if a violation

of the Act has occurred, such a violation still remains a violation. Improper and illegal behavior is not diminished in its result by the motivation that brought it to the revealing light of day in the first place. Therefore, the Grand Jury attached no significance to the motivation behind the allegation and investigated the allegation on its own merit by investigating the factual content of the events in question.

FINDINGS

1. The present EUSD board, which includes two new members⁴ elected in November 1999, has violated the Brown Act on at least one specific occasion⁵. From comments received by the Grand Jury it appears that there is also concern with members' frequent efforts to deliberate on matters outside the published agenda.
2. The present EUSD board has a cavalier attitude that conversations between members prior to board meetings are acceptable as long as the conversations are not simultaneous, and, in any event, "that's the way things are always done". To do otherwise would be, according to one member, "contrary to the way congress and other government agencies do business". Characterizing conversations as "planning and strategy", such as were conducted in the specific instance referred to in '1' above, are deemed by some members as not improper, even though they seek concurrence.
3. There does not appear to be a consistent training policy or efforts to assure board members receive Brown Act initial or refresher training.
4. The EUSD board may be adversely affected by one of the member's extraordinary number of absences in both its public meetings and closed sessions, although his attendance appeared to be improving at the time of our investigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-26 The EUSD institute a formal policy of initial and annual refresher training on the requirements of the Brown Act for its board members. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]
- 00-27 Coordinate with other local agencies such as County Counsel, District Attorney, or other local agencies that provide Brown Act training allowing EUSD members to participate in that training. The training should be focused on the Brown Act and not merely an aside, which typically is the case with larger conferences focusing on more global statewide issues. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]
- 00-28 Take personal responsibility to assure that the public's business is conducted in public as required by law. The intent

of the Brown Act is that actions taken by public bodies, such as the EUSD, be taken openly and their deliberations be conducted openly⁶. [Findings 1, 2, & 3]

- 00-29 Board members evaluate their own commitment of time to productively serve their community and the EUSD board by actively participating by their presence on the board. Absences from the community and/or the board meetings may detract from a member's effectiveness to serve, and may deprive the community and/or the board of the full talents and skills of the member⁷. [Finding 4]

RESPONDENTS

Esparto Unified School District: All Findings and Recommendations

Yolo County Counsel: Recommendation 00-27

Yolo County District Attorney: Finding 1 and Recommendation 00-27

¹ Government Code Section 54950 et seq. All references to Government Code unless otherwise noted.

² We are reminded of a passage in Shakespeare's Hamlet wherein the Queen opines that "The lady doth protect too much, methinks."

³ The Daily Democrat January 26, 2000, to which at least one board member responded in writing, taking exception with what he considered to be the equivalent of being called "country bumpkins" by the editorial.

⁴ "Any person elected to serve ... Who has not yet assumed the duties of office shall conform his or her conduct to the requirements of" the Brown Act (54952.1).

⁵ Because the EUSD members expressed doubt that a violation occurred it would be instructive to set out the particulars of this violation. The events that resulted in a violation are as follows: 1. Sometime before the EUSD's annual reorganization meeting (there was some conflict in testimony whether it occurred hours before the meeting or days before) board member 'A' called member 'B' and informed 'B' that he, 'A', intended to nominate 'C' for president and 'B' for clerk. 'A' then asked 'B' if 'B' "could support" the nomination. 'B' responded he indeed could support 'C' for president. 'A' told 'B' he would call 'C' and inform her of his conversation with 'B'. 2. 'A' next called 'C' and informed her of his intentions informing her of his conversation with 'B'. After some conversation about the how-to of serving as president (as 'C' was newly elected to the board and 'A' is an experienced board member) 'C' agreed to serve as president. 'C' then called 'D' and 'E' to inform them of the intended action at the EUSD upcoming meeting. She did not call 'B'. At the reorganization meeting, 'A' followed through and nominated 'C' and 'B' to their respective officer positions. Predictably, 'C' and 'B' were elected by a majority of the four members present at the meeting. What seems to be lost to the members is that prior to getting to the official meeting three members of the board had already "met" and formed a majority in their "collective concurrence" on the election of officers by 'A's' telephone calls to 'B' and 'C'. The "action" at the official board meeting was a mere formality, the real "action" had already been taken when the telephone calls were made by 'A'.

⁶ We remind the EUSD board of the Brown Act's legislative intent: "The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created."

⁷ For example, this member, with the concurrence of other members, agreed that he should not be considered for president because of his absences.

Tours

Martins' Achievement Place

Martins' Achievement Place is an intensive residential treatment program for adjudicated adolescent male sex offenders. The Grand Jury toured the school facilities. The school is certified by the State Department of Education to provide special education for learning or emotionally handicapped students in grades 7 through 12. A specialized program is designed to promote positive change in the student's behavior and provide an individualized curriculum. For those students not requiring special education services, home and hospital instruction is provided by the local school district in addition to the structured, educationally focused day program provided by Martins' Achievement Place.

The students are supervised 24 hours a day. There is one staff person to every three wards during the day and one to six during the sleeping hours. The staff receives training updates from various sources. There is a high turnover in staff of about 50% every six months. This is mainly in the aide staff, due to low salary and the fact that they are mainly college students who are moving toward completing their degrees.

Overall, this is a well-run program with measures in place to make certain that both the students and community are kept safe. There is a no-touch, non-contact program to insure the safety of all residents and staff. There is a level system with clear expectations about behavior throughout the school program. It was noted that students who do not succeed here due to behavior problems are returned to the court or the probation department for other placement. This is one of the few programs designed to treat adolescent male sex offenders.

Monroe Detention Center and The Leinberger Center

The Grand Jury toured the Monroe Detention Center and the Leinberger Center in October 1999, as part of its annual oversight inspection of county jails. We found a safe clean facility staffed by well-trained Correctional Officers who take pride in their profession and the job they are performing.

The Monroe Detention Center is the main jail for Yolo County. It is equipped to house virtually any classification of inmates: maximum, medium, protective custody, medical and special housing for male and female inmates. It is designed in "pods" and all controls and instrumentation are fully electronic. A new integrated computer system will be installed to link Monroe's system with other law enforcement systems, which will result in significant savings of time and manpower.

The facility houses 303 inmates; of these, up to 64 can be female inmates. This year, for lack of space only, 16 inmates had to be released early, as compared to 894 last year. The average length of stay in Monroe is 32 days. Medical and dental facilities are available on site. The kitchen provides three hot meals per day, all cooked from "scratch" in a clean, well-managed kitchen.

The staff seems to have good control of their population despite the fact, that deputies are in the pods mixing freely with the inmates. Over the last eleven years only three deputies have been assaulted, two of these assaults were by mentally unstable inmates. Seldom do inmates need to be physically restrained (none in January, four in February and two in March). Pepper spray is used on the average of twice a year.

Education, counseling and training programs are paid for by the Inmates Welfare Fund along with other extras such as TV. The inmates generate the Inmate Welfare Fund when they purchase candy, sundries or use the telephone. These programs act as positive inducement for good behavior as well as positive rehabilitation.

The Leinberger Center, located adjacent to the Monroe Detention Center, is a minimum-security unit that houses inmates in a dormitory style facility. The inmates housed in this area work on and off the Yolo County Detention Facility grounds. Leinberger also is in charge of the house arrest technology.

Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District

The Yolo County Grand Jury toured Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District located in Elk Grove, on February 7, 2000.

This district represents Sacramento and Yolo Counties. This also includes the following cities: Davis, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Sacramento, Winters, Woodland, and West Sacramento. The district covers a total area of

2,013 square miles. The district's annual budget is approximately \$4 million, approximately \$660 thousand comes from Yolo County. The district's main source of income is from county property taxes.

The District responds to citizen complaints about mosquitoes and other pests (non-human of course). It uses a variety of means to attempt to control mosquitoes: educational, public relations, biological and chemical. The primary chemical for control of adult mosquitoes is Malathion, sprayed from hand held cans, power spraying, and/or air spraying. For larval control primarily genetic altering chemicals are used.

For biological controls they use mosquito fish. In 1998, 2,962 pounds of fish were used, primarily in rice fields, ponds, and marshes. The district is also experimenting with the three-spine stickleback fish. The district equips and staffs active laboratory projects to collect samples, evaluate, and experiment with different chemicals and biological controls methods.

The District undertakes an active educational program at various schools, homeowner groups, service clubs, governmental agencies, and public events.

Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District has over one hundred rolling stock, consisting of pickups, Jeeps, forklifts, tractors, 4x4s, and a variety of handheld instruments. They have a staff of approximately 35 field technicians, in addition to mechanics, scientists, and administrative staff; the entire operation is impressive. Our tax money seems to be well spent here.

Yolo County Alcohol and Drug Services

This department provides services throughout the county with county run programs as well as contractual arrangements with non-profit agencies. Some examples of county run programs are Beamer Street, Drinking Driver Program, and Adult Drug Court.

John H. Jones Community Clinic, a program of CommuniCare, is a non-profit contractor who provides several services for Yolo County residents. Some examples are outpatient treatment with outpatient medical detoxification, day treatment for pregnant and parenting women including young children, Youth for Recovery, an after school substance abuse treatment for high school

(TOURS: Yolo County Alcohol and Drug Services-continued on next page)

age youth, an Adolescent day treatment program, and a day treatment program in transitional living facility for women and children.

This department has been merged from two to create a structure that is cost effective and able to provide seamless delivery to customers. It appears to be moving toward that goal by utilizing quality improvement principals.

Yolo County Animal Shelter

The Yolo County Grand Jury toured the county's Animal Shelter on November 2, 1999. The shelter has the capacity to hold 100 dogs and 75 cats. Reptiles and barnyard animals are kept in outside pens. The Animal Shelter employs one manager, one supervisor, nine Animal Control Officers and one Kennel Technician. Inmates of the Walter L. Leinberger Center help to clean and maintain the cages and assist in the construction of others.

The shelter is a section within the Administrative and Special Services Division of the Sheriff's Department. Duties of Animal Control Officers include assisting other law enforcement agencies where animals may be involved; enforcement of pertinent code sections; assisting Fish and Wildlife Officers; assisting postal employees who have been threatened by loose dogs; and filling requests from citizens who complain of stray animals or animal abuse.

Much of the operating costs for the shelter are met by contracts with cities within the county, license fees, humane fees and donations, including pet food given by various stores in the county.

Upon entering the shelter, animals are vaccinated and observed to ensure that the public has a healthy group from which to adopt. Nearly half of all the animals entering the shelter are adopted. The shelter and the SPCA have entered into a reciprocating agreement to foster additional adoptions in approved homes. Unwanted animals, which are disease-free, are euthanized and frozen for study by University of California at Davis Veterinary students.

County residents whose pets are missing and feared stolen or dead should report the facts to the Animal Shelter. If the pet is not found at the shelter, it may have been given to the S.P.C.A.

Recently the Food and Agriculture Department passed State Codes and imposed four new mandates that follow.

1. A 72-hour holding period for feral cats and dogs.

2. Daily mandatory observation and temperament testing (written assessment not formerly done).

3. Increased holding period mandatory on all other stray cats and dogs to six days (formerly 72 hours).

4. Owner surrendered animals must now be held two days before being adopted.

These new codes will necessitate building a new metal structure to house more animals longer, and hiring one additional Animal Care Technician.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 00-30 That the shelter work out an understanding with the UC Davis Department of Animal Science and the College of Veterinary Medicine to create internships with the shelter.

RESPONDENTS

Yolo County Sheriff and/or Animal Shelter Administrator

Yolo County Coroner's Office and Morgue

On November 2, 1999, the Grand Jury visited the two-year-old Yolo County Coroners Office and Morgue. The purpose of this office is to investigate the "cause and manner of death". Deaths investigated can include; sudden, violent, unusual, on the job, accidental and those deaths that occur while a person is in protective custody. The office handles about 600 cases per year, of these perhaps 100 are violent deaths, 15-20 homicides, 200-300 natural deaths, 75 motor vehicle accidents and a disproportionate number of suicides relative to other counties.

To do this job, there are three full-time staff members, one part-time staff member and up to three interns who work two eight-hour days per week. A case may take only a minimum of four hours time to investigate. For a more serious crime the cause of death may take weeks to investigate. It is the job of the Sheriff Coroner's Office to positively identify the body, and mostly this is done through fingerprints.

We found that the staff seems enthusiastic and dedicated to their job. In a time of tightening budgets, the staff is increasingly handling more of their tasks in-house rather than contracting them out. All staff personnel are trained in positive fingerprinting. In-house whole body and teeth x-rays are being performed and a photo lab is being set up for developing the x-rays. Blood is first tested

for a positive or negative reaction for drugs to minimize sending out all samples for expensive forensic tests.

It was reported to us that the Coroner's Office has very low turnover within its workforce. This may be explained by the interesting nature of the work and the extra training given to the personnel. The Sheriff provides great support and allows time off from work (XTO), without pay, when the stress load becomes unmanageable.

Addendum

The Grand Jury wishes it to be noted that during the course of year various administrators from each of the county's departments were invited to address the Grand Jury concerning the nature and functions of their respective departments. We appreciate those administrators taking their valuable time to open the communication channels which are so vital as our county progresses into the new millenium.

Members of the Grand Jury also toured Folsom Prison on April 17, 2000. We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the administration and correctional officers of this facility for the service they provide to the people of our country.