



# VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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July 15, 2014

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VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

The Honorable Judge Brian Back  
Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California  
County of Ventura  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Grand Jury Report, Detention Facilities Inspections (June 16, 2014)

Dear Judge Back:

This letter is in response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations pertaining to the annual inspection of all places of incarceration in the County, as it relates to the Sheriff's Office Pre-Trial Detention Facility (PTDF), (referred to as "Main Jail" in the Grand Jury Report), Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail.

## **FINDINGS**

**Finding:** FI-01 – All jails and holding cells in the County were satisfactory or better for the areas reviewed (FA-01).

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the PTDF, Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail.

**Finding:** FI-02 – Realignment has put more demands and stress on public safety workers due to heavier workloads, more difficult detainees, and greater potential for physical and verbal abuse (FA-03, FA-04).

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the PTDF, Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail.

**Finding:** FI-03 – Mandated collaborative implementation plans among all parties responsible for Realignment, as well as other new documentation requirements, take significant time and effort away from public safety employees' important other duties (FA-03, FA-04).

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the PTDF, Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail, although the Sheriff's Office understands and accepts the responsibility of working collaboratively with other public safety partners to

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implement programs that help make Realignment a successful reality in Ventura County.

**Finding:** FI-10 – *The following facilities excelled in overall cleanliness: Todd Road, East Valley/TO, Camarillo, Ojai, Port Hueneme, Moorpark and Simi Valley (FA-01, FA-09, FA-20, FA-23).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the Todd Road Jail and East Valley Jail.

**Finding:** FI-13 – *County jails, the VYCF and Work Furlough offer progressive education and vocational training programs to counteract recidivism and help releases adapt once they return to society (FA-11, FA-12, FA-13, FA-14, FA-15, FA-17, FA-18).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the PTDF, Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail.

**Finding:** FI-14 – *Several facilities have implemented laudable "green" initiatives in the areas of solar power-generation, composting, bottle and container recycling and food-waste recycling. Todd Road is particularly progressive in this regard, with its solar farm providing 45% of its electrical energy (FA-10).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the findings as they relate to the PTDF, Todd Road Jail, and East Valley Jail. The Sheriff's Office is particularly proud of its efforts to use renewable energy through the "Solar Farm" at the Todd Road Jail and through the food-waste recycling program, which has reduced the need to divert refuse to local landfills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation:** R-01 – *The Grand Jury recommends that the County, Cities, Sheriff and Probation Department strive to operate detention and incarceration facilities at current or higher performance levels (FI-01).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation to strive to operate its detention facilities at current or higher performance levels. To that end, jail managers continually evaluate practices and processes in order to provide the most constitutionally sound, as well as safe and secure detention environments for staff and inmates.

**Recommendation:** R-02 – *The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office, Probation Department and Cities continue to expand their focus on mutual respect, rehabilitation,, and societal reentry; in particular, that they expand their evidence-based skills, attitudes and CBT training programs, sharing best programs and practices among all detention facilities where such programs are practical (FI-13).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation to continue to expand its focus on mutual respect, rehabilitation, and societal reentry for inmates under its care. There are challenges ahead that threaten the funding required to implement sound programs, such as AB1876 (Quirk), which has the potential to dramatically undermine inmate program funding, however the Sheriff's Office is committed to work proactively with its public safety and community based partners to overcome those challenges.

**Recommendation:** *R-03 – The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office, Probation Department and Cities expand their staff training to include more training that specifically addresses realignment challenges; e.g., more emphasis on how to cope with the greater probability of physical and verbal attacks by inmates and increased workloads, perhaps offering more frequent refreshers of current relevant training programs such as stress reduction, anger management, and Crisis Intervention Training (FI-02, FI-03).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation to expand its staff training to address the challenges associated with Realignment. These challenges include the increase of physical and verbal attacks by inmates on staff, and increased stress and workloads caused by the need to safely care for higher inmate populations. Of course, increased training equates to an increase in costs associated with this training. In order to fulfill this recommendation without impacting our budget, jail supervisors regularly provide training to staff during shift briefings. The topics of these training sessions oftentimes target issues directly related to the challenges of Realignment.

**Recommendation:** *R-04 – The Grand Jury recommends that detention facilities, wherever feasible, expand their efforts towards sustainable ecologies; e.g., capturing solar energy; recycling bottles, cans and cartons; and composting and/or recycling yard and food waste (FI-14).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation, wherever feasible, to expand its efforts toward sustainable ecologies. The Todd Road Jail's examples of solar electricity generation and food-waste recycling are areas that have been explored at other Sheriff's Office facilities as well. We will continue to look for opportunities to improve efficiencies as we continue to be a good partner in the communities we serve.

**Recommendation:** *R-05 – The Grand Jury recommends that the County's detention and incarceration facilities continue to expand their use of technology, reducing their dependence on paper files (FI-06).*

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation to continue to expand its use of technology, reducing our dependence on paper files. One example of our ongoing efforts to expand our use of technology is in the area of adherence to the Affordable Care Act. We have been working collaboratively with the County's Human Services Agency to ensure that our inmates have access to affordable health care once

they are released from custody. This has involved the automated sharing of database information to assist local health care professionals in registering inmates into eligible programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Grand Jury report. If additional explanation is needed, please feel free to contact Captain Ron Nelson at 648-9275 or [ronald.nelson@ventura.org](mailto:ronald.nelson@ventura.org).

Sincerely,



Geoff Dean  
Sheriff

Cc: Foreman, Ventura County Grand Jury  
Assistant Sheriff Gary Pentis  
Frank Chow, CEO Analyst