



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

- BOB BROOKS
SHERIFF
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July 27, 2001

Honorable Bruce A. Clark
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Ventura County Hall of Justice
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

FILED

AUG 27 2001

RICHARD D. DEAN, County Clerk
By *Richard D. Dean* Deputy

Dear Judge Clark:

Subject: Response to 2000 – 2001 Grand Jury Report on Sheriff's Crime Lab

We appreciate that the Grand Jury recognizes the current crisis we are experiencing in our Forensic Laboratory. As the report points out we have been actively seeking resources to allow us to improve the facility through the ballot and legislative channels. The report accurately depicts in its findings many of the challenges we face in our continuing efforts to provide quality forensic services to the Ventura County Criminal Justice System.

Finding 8 does bear elaboration. The characterization of the planned remodel as minor understates the scope of what we plan to accomplish. The remodel will include analyzing the workflow of the current structure and making modifications to both administrative spaces and existing laboratory space. The aging HVAC, security systems and utilities will need redesign to accommodate both current workspace and additional area from the vacated administrative space. As the report recognizes this is an interim measure pending new facilities but should provide much-improved environment for employees and efficiency.

The report makes three recommendations. I will respond to each:

R-1 The Ventura County Sheriff's Department Chief in charge of Special Services and the Commander in charge of Technical Services should continue to make every effort to hire an Assistant Forensic Crime Laboratory Manager.

- We have placed the Assistant Lab Manager position at the top of our priority of increment two requests in the 2001-2002 budget. That request was not included in the CEO's recommended budget. We have been told that if we

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(805) 494-8261 FAX (805) 494-8295

DETENTION SERVICES
800 South Victoria Avenue
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feel the position is required we should look at using another allocation to convert. As you are aware there is no area of our laboratory which could give up an allocation. The Sheriff has committed to converting an existing sworn allocation to the Assistant Lab Manager position. That conversion is underway.

R-2 The planned move and modification (remodel) of the existing areas should be funded and carried out as soon as possible, complete with formalized plans.

- The lease for the move of our detectives has been finalized and required modifications to that space are underway. The move is scheduled to occur on September 10th. The laboratory administrative functions will move shortly after that date. GSA is negotiating with vendors for the design phase of the remodel. We hope to have that contract in place and underway during August of 2001. Funding for remodel costs has not been identified. The state passed legislation authorizing 25 million dollars for crime laboratories statewide. We are awaiting the Governor's approval of the budget and notification of the application process so we may seek some assistance from that grant process for remodel costs.

R-3 Every effort must be made by County Supervisors, and involved Department Heads, and Administrators to secure funding for the location and construction of a new Sheriff's Crime Lab facility by 2006, in part to implement plans in association with CSUCI.

- Towards this goal we have included \$150,000 in our 2001-2002 budget for Forensic Laboratory needs assessment and cost estimate. Vendor selection has been completed in conjunction with GSA. We plan to present to the Board, at their first meeting in September, a request for authorization to enter into a contract. The completed study will give us the information we will need to secure funding and commence detailed design. We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation that any facility we construct provide us with the physical plant we need to team with CSUCI in a Forensic Science program.

Sincerely,



BOB BROOKS
Sheriff