



DR. THOMAS E. HOLDEN
Mayor

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October 26, 2010

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Ventura County Grand Jury
Don Cody, Ed.D. Chairman
Robert A. Peskay, Foreman
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Gentlemen:

This letter will confirm that the Oxnard City Council has reviewed and accepted the response to your report "Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities" prepared by Chief John Crombach of our Police Department.

This correspondence is in compliance with Penal Code §933(c) as you requested. If you have need of further information or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas E. Holden
Mayor



John Crombach
Chief of Police

Police Department

R. Jason Benites
Assistant Chief
Scott Whitney
Assistant Chief

Ventura County Grand Jury
800 S. Victoria Ave., L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

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JUN 10 2010
VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Subject: Grand Jury Report *Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities*

On May 11, 2010, this Department received a copy of the final Grand Jury report titled, *Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities* and an enclosed request for response. Most of the findings and recommendations did not fall under the control of the City of Oxnard or the Oxnard Police Department. The report did identify issues relating to the relationship between the Probation Agency and local law enforcement agencies. Our responses to the *findings* and *recommendations* are listed below.

F-60. Police departments within the County and the Sheriff's Department have extensive written policies and procedures regarding the detention, arrest, and disposition of juvenile offenders as required by State law.

Response: We concur with this finding.

F-61. The majority of Officers interviewed by the Grand Jury contact Intake to receive prior approval before transporting juveniles to the Juvenile Justice Facility (JJF). The Grand Jury was unable to find any instance where doing so is a specific written policy.

Response: We concur with this finding.

F-63. Officers said that they believe all felony and violent misdemeanor offenses should qualify for booking into the JJF.

Response: We disagree with this finding.

One of the primary objectives of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is to reduce the inappropriate confinement of juveniles. The Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) currently used in the County was developed by our local JDAI Committee with the technical assistance of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. It is consistent with the RAI's used at other JDAI sites. The RAI takes into account the seriousness of the offense. Violent misdemeanors, such as school fights and simple batteries, do not automatically qualify for booking. Felony offenses for property crimes, do not

automatically qualify for booking. We do not believe that violent misdemeanors and all felonies should automatically meet the RAI criteria for booking.

- F-64.** Felony and violent misdemeanor crimes do not automatically meet the RAI criteria for booking into the JJF.

Response: We concur with this finding.

- F-65.** Officers expressed concern that some chronic repeat offenders did not meet the RAI criteria for acceptance into the JJF and expressed belief that such offenders should be accepted.

Response: We concur in part with this finding.

The RAI is an effective tool designed to separate lower risk juveniles that can be released, with or without restrictions, from higher risk juveniles that need to be detained. Its focus is on adjudicated offenses within the prior 24 months as opposed to mere arrests. Officers will not have the same access to information on adjudicated cases as JJF personnel. A downside to using adjudications rather than arrests is in the instances where juveniles accumulate numerous offenses within a short time. The RAI also places a low point value on prior misdemeanor adjudicated offenses. It is a good practice to regularly assess and, if necessary, fine tune the RAI. Our Department would look forward to participating in this effort.

- F-68.** The Probation Agency states that it has made police departments and the Sheriff's Department aware of the RAI and of JDAI by contacting police chiefs and by attending some shift briefings on an ongoing basis.

Response: We concur with this finding.

- R-10.** Police chiefs and the Sheriff should provide Officers with Probation Agency information regarding the criteria for accepting juveniles into the JJF, the use of the RAI and JDAI.


Response: Will be implemented.

While the Probation Agency has provided training at patrol briefings and the RAI is included in our Juvenile Detention Log, the Grand Jury Report indicates a need for additional training on this topic. We appreciate the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury and will take the following steps to improve the understanding amongst our officers of the RAI and of JDAI. These steps will be implemented by the end of July, 2010.

1. The Department will provide training to patrol officers on the RAI and the criteria for lodging juveniles into the JJF.
2. The Department will provide training to patrol officers on JDAI and how it relates to public safety as a whole.
3. The Department will provide training for its sworn and civilian supervisors and managers on the use of the RAI and JDAI.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this response, please contact Assistant Chief Scott Whitney at 385-7751.

Sincerely,



John Crombach

Cc: Honorable Kevin J. McGee, Presiding Judge Ventura County Superior Court
Edmund Sotelo, Oxnard City Manager
Oxnard Mayor and City Council