



COUNTY OF SOLANO

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Isabelle Voit
Chief Probation Officer

Joel Keller
Chief Deputy Probation Officer

July 3, 2007

David E. Power
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Ave.
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Judge Power:

Enclosed please find the Chief Probation Officer response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Fouts Springs Youth Facility, dated May 21, 2007.

Sincerely,

Isabelle J. Voit
Chief Probation Officer
Solano County

cc: Grand Jury
Charlene Ping, Deputy CAO
Garry Ichikawa, Presiding Juvenile Court Judge

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Fouts Springs Youth Facility

Issued May 21, 2007

Chief Probation Officer response to the Grand Jury Report:

Finding #1 – Solano and Colusa Counties pay more per ward than other participants. Other counties receive a 35 percent subsidy per ward, which is \$1900.

Probation's Response to Finding #1 – Probation agrees that Solano and Colusa Counties pay more per ward than other participants.

Recommendation #1 – The Joint Powers Authority should establish ward rates that are equal for all counties.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #1 – The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The current rate structure was put in place to ensure a balanced budget and keep Fouts in operation for the use of owner counties. The user county rate is set as high as the market will allow. A higher rate would cause fewer counties to use the program reducing revenue and putting the program at risk. Fouts provides a unique program that is of great value to Solano County making payment of the higher rate worthwhile; however, the rate structure is being reviewed annually and the goal is to balance the rates for all counties when the market will allow.

Finding #2 – There is no consistent method of record keeping that tracks the success rate of a ward's return to the community.

Probation's Response to Finding #2 – Probation disagrees partially. Solano County is able to track Solano County commitments to Fouts as long as they remain on probation. Fouts has a process in place to request follow up information from other counties.

Recommendation #2 – Participating counties should be required to track and report back to the Solano County Probation Department on released ward performance to evaluate the success of Fouts Springs programs.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #2 – The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Imposition of a requirement to provide follow up information could adversely affect user county interest in placing minors at Fouts.

Finding #3 – Fouts Springs ward capacity is 160. At the time of our inspection, there were 49 wards, which represent a 69 percent vacancy rate.

Probation's Response to Finding #3 – Probation disagrees partially. Although there are 160 beds at Fouts, the facility is staffed for a capacity of 60.

Recommendation #3 – The Fouts Springs governing board, in conjunction with the Solano County Probation Department, should develop an aggressive marketing campaign to bring Fouts Springs to its current maximum capacity. The Director of Fouts Springs should develop promotional material, including a video, featuring Fouts graduates, to promote Fouts to other counties.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #3 – The recommendation has been implemented and as a result of the aggressive marketing campaign that is in place, the average daily population (ADP) has remained close to current maximum capacity of 60. The ADP for FY 2006-2007 is 56.02. The ADP for the last quarter is 57.06. At this time there is a limited need for the program provided at Fouts which is designed for high risk offenders. The 60 bed program is meeting the current needs of owner and user counties.

Finding #4 – The sentencing of wards to Fouts Springs is determined by a judge after a probation department's report is presented.

Probation's Response to Finding #4 – Probation agrees.

Recommendation #4 – The probation department's recommendation to the judge should give a clear picture of the benefits in sentencing a ward to Fouts Springs.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #4 – The recommendation has been implemented. The Probation Department has a long standing policy that Probation reports recommending Fouts include information regarding the anticipated benefit of Fouts placement for the minor.

Finding #5 – Vocational shop equipment appears antiquated.

Probation's Response to Finding #5 – Probation disagrees partially. Wood shop equipment is regularly refreshed.

Recommendation #5 – All vocational shop equipment should be brought up to current industry standards. This would give the wards a better employment opportunity upon their release.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #5 – The recommendation has been implemented in regard to wood shop where at least one piece of equipment is refreshed every year using funds available for that purpose. The recommendation will not be implemented in regard to the welding and auto shops because it is not reasonable. The vocational program at Fouts is provided by the Colusa County Superintendent of Schools and purchase of new equipment is limited by availability of funds. As funds become available new equipment can be purchased; however, the equipment currently in use does not hinder wards from developing marketable skills. For example, an average of one minor per month receives certification through the American Welding Society.

Finding #6 – The Solano County tax payers bore \$1.5 million dollar debt expenditure for capital improvements, by Board of Supervisor's action, at Colusa County's Fouts Springs' location.

Probation's Response to Finding #6 – Probation agrees.

Recommendation #6 – Any future capital debt assumption should be evaluated in terms of what is best for Solano County taxpayers.

Probation's Response to Recommendation #6 – It is anticipated that the recommendation will be followed when capital projects are considered in the future as past practice has been to carefully analyze the benefit of such projects prior to seeking Board approval.