

**SOLANO COUNTY JAIL FACILITIES**  
**2009-2010 Solano County Grand Jury**

**REASON FOR INSPECTION**

California Penal Code Section §919, Subsection (b) provides: "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." Pursuant to the statute, in October 2009, the 2009-2010 Grand Jury inspected the jail facilities of Solano County.

**GRAND JURY ACTION**

- Met Sheriff and staff for orientation
- Received information on the programs and security of the jail facilities
- Toured and inspected both facilities
- Interviewed staff at both facilities

**BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY – JUSTICE CENTER DETENTION FACILITY (MAIN JAIL) AND CLAYBANK DETENTION FACILITY (CLAYBANK)**

The main jail of Solano County is located at 530 Union Avenue in Fairfield, California. This facility started operations June 29, 1987, as a Type II prescreening facility. Since the original opening, the facility has been subject to several changes. Originally built to house 401 inmates, the Board of Corrections allowed an additional 138 beds to be added, which brought the capacity to 539 beds. In 1999, a Board of Corrections jail hardening (increased security measures) plan added an additional 198 beds to the site. The final expansion brought 5 more beds for a total of 737 beds. Since the original design, 336 beds have been added to the facility, increasing the original design by 85%. These increases are due to the increase of inmate population within the county. At the time of this inspection, there were 668 inmates housed at the main jail, of which approximately 12% (83 inmates) of the inmate population were awaiting trial for murder.

The Sheriff and staff do all that is possible to comply with the State of California Title 15 regulations that are concerned with the care and welfare of inmates in the jail. The cells are double occupancy except those designated as single occupancy for inmates that are a higher security risk. When there is a large influx of inmates and no beds are available, they are given a cot and mattress and are assigned to sleep in the day room.

**Booking/Cost**

All offenders are processed in the same manner before being put into the main population or a holding cell. All offenders receive a medical screening to evaluate any illness that they may carry. After they are processed, photographed and fingerprinted, they are placed in a holding cell. Phones are provided along with the numbers of bail bond companies. At the present time, 93% of those booked are people accused of committing a felony offense. The remaining 7% are misdemeanor offenders. There has been a steady increase in felony offenses since January 1986. The average length of stay for inmates has increased from 15 to 19 days. This is an increase in cost for the Sheriff's Office.

The total cost per inmate is \$121.00 per day. The cost per meal is \$1.31 per inmate. The inmates receive three meals a day totaling 2,200 calories per Title 15 requirements. They receive two cold and one hot meal each day. At the time of this inspection, Grand Jury members were allowed to sample the meal that the inmates receive. The meal was palatable and hot, contained a protein, starch, vegetable, drink and dessert.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Sheriff's Office is mandated to provide and manage several services for those that work and reside in the County, including:

- Office of Emergency Services
- Office of the Coroner
- Coroner transportation
- Inmate transportation
- Facilities Security
- Patrol of unincorporated areas of the County
- Coordination of County-wide mutual aid
- Civil Process
- Criminal Investigations
- Custody facilities
- Coordination of County-wide Search and Rescue
- Patrol of County waterways
- Narcotics Enforcement
- Gang Enforcement
- Emergency Services Dispatch
- Court Services

The Sheriff of this county also assists the Office of the Governor of California and the Inspector General as the Sheriff is appointed to the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board (CROB). CROB is a legislatively formed committee for providing oversight of the implementation of AB900 requirements (see [http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions\\_Boards/CSA/CFC/AB900\\_Program.html](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions_Boards/CSA/CFC/AB900_Program.html)) within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The Sheriff also serves in an advisory capacity for multiple county projects and programs, including:

- Juvenile Justice Planning
- Office of Family Violence Prevention
- Solano County Strategic Plan
- Superior Court Construction Project

The Sheriff's Office performs many other varied duties.

### **Programs**

In 2006, the Solano County Office of Education did testing of the inmates at the jail facilities. At that time, it was learned that the majority of inmates read below the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. The Sheriff's Office started the Literacy Program to coincide with the GED Program.

One of the many programs the Sheriff's Office has introduced is the GED/Literacy Program, which helps inmates succeed after they are released from incarceration. Eighty percent (80%) of those in custody read below a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. A study was done by Solano County Office of Education which verified the above statistics.

The Sheriff's Office administers court-ordered alternative programs enabling an inmate to maintain his job in order to provide for his family or to continue school. These programs are available after a background check and careful screening of the inmate. Those with extensive criminal background or violence are not eligible for these programs. There is a monetary cost to the inmate for these programs.

Fees are determined on a sliding scale, along with the cost of any and all equipment used. These programs save the county money and decrease the possibilities of overcrowding in the jail. The monies received go to the Prisoners Relief Fund.

### **Security/Gangs**

The Sheriff's Office has a comprehensive Gang Intelligence Unit which shares their information with other agencies in the County. There is an ongoing effort to suppress the gang influence in the County. The Sheriff's Office has developed the Facility Search Team (FST) and the Custody Response Team (CRT) to maintain security, protect inmates, and to enhance officer safety. Both work together as a unit but have different functions in the jail. The FST unit ensures that the integrity of the jail is not compromised. The FST also searches inmates and facilities for weapons. The CRT is an extraction team that is used only when inmates are a danger to themselves and others.

Since the implementation of CRT and FST there have been no Worker's Compensation claims involving these units. No correctional officer or inmate involved with CRT or FST actions has been injured. All CRT and FST incidents are videotaped for security.

### **BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY - CLAYBANK FACILITY**

This detention facility, located at 2500 Claybank Road, Fairfield, California, was opened in 1979. The original design called for 203 beds. Since that time, 216 beds have been added by double bunking in the minimum security area and the female section. At the present time, the detention facility has 419 beds. At the time of this inspection, there were 291 inmates at this location.

Claybank is a Type III facility, which is designed to detain inmates that have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment. This location is also a Type IV facility used for work furlough programs.

This facility is well maintained for its age and the amount of usage. This facility provides all the laundry needs for the Main Jail and Claybank inmates. The Main Jail downtown provides all the meals for both locations. This facility is staffed by sworn and non-sworn personnel. The Grand Jury was impressed with the appearance of the facility, officers and inmates.

The Claybank Detention Center averages 9 to 10 assaults on Correctional Officers per year. There has been no significant work loss due to these incidents.

The Claybank Detention Center is well staffed with medical personnel. Nurses are provided by a private contractor. Nurses are always accompanied by a Correctional Officer when dispensing medication. A medical doctor and a psychiatrist are on site once a week. The use of this contractor does not decrease or increase cost effectiveness.

All medicines are strictly monitored and detailed logs are kept for security reasons. Only one key is available to all nurses to obtain medication. Emergency patients are sent to North Bay Hospital in Fairfield, CA.

The facility was well prepared for an outbreak of H1N1 flu. There were 10,000 type 95 masks in stock. An 80 bed wing was cleared and awaiting flu patients from both facilities in the event that isolation was required.

### **Programs/Alternative Sentencing**

The Alternative Sentencing Program is an example of the Sheriff Office's commitment to a community corrections program. The program is designed to provide the offender the opportunity to serve their court-ordered sentences from their residences in lieu of incarceration. This approach improves officers' safety by relieving jail overcrowding and reduces the cost of care and housing of inmates. In addition, it keeps the family unit intact while the offender remains out of custody, able to work or attend educational classes.

At the time of this inspection, using current year data, the electronic monitoring program produced a savings of \$2,016,707.00 and the Work Furlough program saved an additional \$254,100.00.

Before anyone is permitted to take advantage of these programs, a thorough background check is done on each applicant to assess any apparent threat to the community or the likelihood of re-offending. Each program has a fee schedule based on the offender's income. This allows offenders an opportunity to receive any of the programs offered by the Sheriff's Office.

Programs offered: Work Furlough, Work Release, Electronic Home Monitoring and Sobriety (used for persons under zero tolerance for alcohol supervision, felony offenders, 2nd time DUI offenders and for those under the influence during their offense).

### **Claybank Central Control**

This area is the heart of the detention facility and necessary to maintain officer and inmate safety and security. The Claybank Central Control equipment is over 20 years old and parts are no longer manufactured. The wiring for all the monitors and doors need to be replaced. There is a lack of total vision coverage in vital areas where inmates are congregating, i.e., day rooms, corridors and door check points. The inability of cameras to zoom in on incidents or areas is detrimental to the safety of the officers and those for whom they are responsible.

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Finding 1** – Claybank Central Control needs to be upgraded for security and safety of employees and inmates.

**Recommendation 1** – Monies should be budgeted to cover the cost of these vitally needed improvements.

**Finding 2** – The Claybank facility is currently inadequate to house the current and projected inmate population.

**Recommendation 2** – Solano County should explore every possible source for financing expansion of the Claybank facility.

**RESPONDING AGENCIES**  
Solano County Sheriff/Coroner

**COURTESY COPIES**  
Solano County Board of Supervisors

*No comments were received from the responding agencies by the Grand Jury.*