



**SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY
2011-12**

FOUTS SPRINGS YOUTH FACILITY

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2011-12 Solano County Grand Jury

I. SUMMARY

On January 12, 2011, the Fouts Springs Board of Directors approved the closure of Fouts Springs Youth Facility (Fouts Springs). On July 31, 2011, the Solano County Probation Department ceased operations at Fouts Springs.

The 2011-12 Solano County Grand Jury, pursuant to California Penal Code §919(b), made an inquiry into the closure of Fouts Springs, and the relocation of wards at the facility. The previous Grand Jury's report had recommended the decision to close Fouts Springs was appropriate and in the best interest of Solano County. At the time the facility was closed, relocation of wards placed at Fouts Springs to other facilities was accomplished without difficulties. Of the 32 employees at Fouts Springs, 20 were reassigned to Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility, four retired, and eight were laid off.

II. INTRODUCTION

Fouts Springs is located in Mendocino National Forest near Stonyford in Colusa County. This property, while not in Solano County, is still under its jurisdiction. Fouts Springs operates under a joint powers agreement between Solano and Colusa Counties. Prior to July 31, 2011, the Solano County Probation Department had administrative authority over the facility. Solano County does not own the land at Fouts Springs. The County has a long-term land use agreement with the United States Forest Service at a cost of \$6,250 annually. The County owns the buildings and other facilities at Fouts Springs.

The 2011-12 Solano County Grand Jury, in compliance to California Penal Code §919(b), interviewed staff at the Probation Department inquiring into the dispositions of the remaining wards at Fouts and its staff when the facility closed.

III. METHODOLOGY

- Interviewed the Chief Probation Officer.
- Reviewed the 2010-11 Solano County Grand Jury "*Fouts Springs Youth Facility*" final report and agency response.
- Reviewed oral and written communications with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Probation Department.
- Reviewed financial information provided by the Solano County Department of General Services.

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

In the 2010-11 Solano County Grand Jury Final Report "*Fouts Springs Youth Facility*," the Grand Jury stated "the high cost of operating Fouts Springs is an inefficient use of taxpayers' money." Probation Department "agrees with the finding" and the Board of Supervisors concurred with the Probation Department's reply. Furthermore, the Solano County Board of Supervisors also stated in their response to the 2010-11 Solano County Grand Jury Report, that "Solano County has advised Colusa County of its desire to terminate the Fouts Springs Joints Power of Agreement (JPA) no later than June 30, 2012." As a result, on January 12, 2011, the Fouts Board of Directors approved the closure of Fouts Springs and it ceased operations on July 31, 2011.

There were several factors that contributed to the closure of Fouts Springs:

- There was a gradual decline in ward enrollments, from all counties placing wards at Fouts.
- Early intervention programs by the Probation Department contributed to the decline of serious crimes committed by young men ages 14 through 18.
- As a result of the State budget cut, in July 1, 2011, Solano County lost \$500,000 in funding which would have resulted in an increase in the operations cost to run Fouts Springs.
- The cost per ward at Fouts Springs continued to increase and it was at \$9,200 per month when it closed.

Prior to the closure of Fouts Springs the wards were transported to their respective counties. Solano County had 16 wards transported with the assistance of the Sheriff's Office to the Juvenile Detention Facility's Challenge Unit, a detached 28-bed facility, located in Fairfield. After one month at the Challenge Unit, the 16 wards were relocated in the following manner:

- Nine went to the Fairfield Juvenile Hall.
- Two were placed in "Right of Passage" program, an out-of-county boot camp for boys.
- Two were placed in New Foundations, a detached 30-bed ranch-style placement program of the Juvenile Detention Facility directed toward family reunification and drug abuse avoidance.
- Three were released to parental custody.

With the closing of Fouts Springs, an alternative option to house these juvenile offenders is group homes. The Grand Jury learned that group homes cost the Probation Department less than \$4,000 per ward per month, versus \$9,200 per ward per month at Fouts Springs. Depending on the circumstances, the Probation Department receives State and Federal funding up to \$2,000 per month per ward for the group home placement.

Below is the summary of the disposition of the 32 Solano County employees at Fouts Springs:

• **Retirements:**

- Supervising Group Counselor: 1 (April 30, 2011)
- Supervising Kitchen Cook: 1 (July 30, 2011)

- Staff Analyst: 1 (April 30, 2011)
- Senior Correctional Care Nurse: 1 (July 23, 2011)
- **Lay-offs:**
 - Kitchen Cooks: 2 (July 30, 2011)
 - Lead Building Trades Mechanic 1 (August 6, 2011)
 - Confidential Administrative Secretary: 1 (July 23, 2011)
- **Extra-Help Released:**
 - Group Counselors: 2 (July 5, 2011)
 - Kitchen Cooks: 2 (July 16, 2011)
- **Reassignments to Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility:**
 - Probation Services Manager: 1 (August 7, 2011)
 - Supervising Group Counselor: 1 (July 17, 2011)
 - Senior Group Counselors: 4 (July 17, 2011)
 - Group Counselors: 14 (July 17, 2011)
- **Total Fouts Springs Youth Facility Personnel: 32**

COMMENTS

Solano County expects the closing of Fouts Springs Youth Facility will save \$1 million annually. The facility closure ended the Probation Department's involvement with the facility. The Solano County Department of General Services is now responsible for the Fouts Springs facility. Existing agreements, maintenance costs, and insurance are approximately \$32,500 monthly.

COURTESY COPIES

Chief Probation Officer, Solano County Probation Department
 Solano County Board of Supervisors
 Solano County Administrative Officer
 Colusa County Board of Supervisors
 Colusa County Superintendent of Schools
 Chief Probation Officer, Colusa County Department of Probation

This is an informational report. No response is required