

# **THE COUNTY JAIL, JUVENILE HALL, AND HOLDING CELLS: INSPECTION AND INFORMATION REPORT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the 2011-2012 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury's inquiry into the conditions and management of the San Luis Obispo County Jail (Jail), San Luis Obispo County Juvenile Hall (Juvenile Hall), and city and county temporary holding facilities.

## **AUTHORITY**

State law mandates "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county."<sup>1</sup> Authorization extends to interviewing inmates and reviewing inmates' grievances.

## **METHOD**

Members of the current grand jury received specialized training in prison inspections by a representative of the California Corrections Standards Authority.

Members of the Grand Jury conducted the following inspection tours:

- County Jail, October 31, 2011; see Appendix A for inspection checklist
- Juvenile Hall, November 18, 2011
- County Courthouse holding facility, December 8, 2011
- The seven city police departments<sup>2</sup> from November 2011 through January 2012

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<sup>1</sup> California Penal Code 919 (b)

Documents reviewed included:

- “Inspection of County Prisons, Jails and Allied Agencies,” *Final Report, 2010-2011 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report*.
- *Inmate Rules* for the Jail.
- “Grand Jury Jail Tour, October 31, 2011,” San Luis Obispo Sheriff’s Department handout.

Interviews with staff included:

- County Sheriff /Coroner
- Undersheriff and Chief Administrator of County Jail
- Correctional Lieutenant, Services, overseer of Honor Farm
- Correctional Lieutenant, Operations, overseer of Main Jail
- Director of Probation and Chair of County Community Correction Partnership Executive Committee
- Chief Deputy Probation Officer, Superintendent of Juvenile Hall
- Police Chiefs, Watch Commanders and/or Lieutenants of seven city police departments

A Grand Jury team interviewed nine inmate volunteers at the Jail and Juvenile Hall on February 18, 2012. Interviews with inmates included:

- 7 County Jail inmates, 4 males and 3 females
- 2 Juvenile Hall inmates, 1 long-time resident (male) and 1 short-time resident (female)

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<sup>2</sup> City police departments: Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Morro Bay, Grover Beach, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo

## NARRATIVE

### The County Jail

Impact of Realignment: The 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109, was enacted to reduce overcrowding in California state prisons. As a result, targeted offenders are now incarcerated in the county where the offense occurred. This law has exacerbated already crowded conditions at the Jail, and it has resulted in a reduction of inmate services. There are too few housing units, beds and blankets. The impact of the law is visible and notable for all inmate populations, but it is worse among the female population, where overcrowding has existed for years. In addition, the costs of medical and psychiatric services have increased significantly.

#### Facility:

The facility is both a Class I (temporary lockup) holding facility and a Class II lockup facility (for sentenced and yet-to-be-sentenced inmates). The State Board of Corrections rated the Jail as sufficient to house 518 inmates. On October 31, 2011, the inmate count was about 660. When the 2010-2011 Grand Jury inspected, there were 555 inmates.<sup>3</sup> While there are more inmates per square foot than state standards allow, management reports that the State Board observed “no noted deficiencies” in its last inspection. The Jail Custody Annual Budget is about \$23,000,000, including both salaries and services.

The Jail houses a wide range of inmates, not just those convicted of lower-level offenses. It houses patients from Atascadero State Hospital (ASH) charged with a crime while at ASH. It also holds all county suspects charged with any level of offense before sentencing. Now, as a result of the realignment, it houses state-realigned felons convicted of non-serious, non-violent, non-predatory offenses in this county and all other felons who violate state prison parole within this county. As a result, the Jail may house some felons for an extended period of time.

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<sup>3</sup> *Final Report, 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report*, p. 120

Staffing: Allocated positions are 158 Sheriff's Department County Jail employees, plus medical/psychiatric staff, substance abuse counselors and numerous volunteers. There are one or two floor sergeants per shift. A typical shift has eighteen employees, thirteen officers and five technicians.<sup>4</sup>

Medical/Psychiatric Services:<sup>5</sup> Three full-time staff members meet inmates' health, medical and psychiatric needs on a seven day per week schedule. Dental services include a Thursday Evaluation Clinic, one hour per week, and Friday Treatment, one and one-half to two hours per week. On average, there are 1,700 inmate appointments per month for medical and/or psychiatric services, ranging from alcohol withdrawal to heart problems.

Psychiatric Services had over 6,000 contacts in 2010 or about 17-18 per day. It is not unusual to receive 20-40 requests per day. This does not include staff telephone calls for emergency situations (a common occurrence), court-ordered evaluations or various requests from service providers and family members for immediate evaluation of an at-risk inmate.

Staff reported that prescription costs exceed \$370,000, of which \$280,000 is for psychiatric medication. Inmates from ASH and inmates receiving HIV medication are the primary sources of these costs. Roughly two-thirds of the Jail population is on prescription medication. A medical dispensary is staffed 24/7, with additional support from local hospitals, as needed. About 25 percent of the inmates are on psychiatric medication, down from 27 percent in the past. Health professionals at the Jail expressed concern regarding the high cost of anti-psychotic drugs required for inmates transferred from ASH due to violent activity.

Housing: The Jail has six housing units and an Honor Farm. The Grand Jury found the cells to be clean and saw no graffiti. Personal possessions (art and books) are allowed in the cells.

There are too few real beds. Due to overcrowding in certain areas, some inmates sleep in hard plastic "boats" (also known as "portable beds") or on floor mattresses. Although the "boats"

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<sup>4</sup> "Grand Jury Jail Tour, October 31, 2011," p. 1

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 4

cannot be stowed under existing beds when not in use, the floor mattresses can be. Currently, twelve inmates in the Main Jail are sleeping on mattresses on the floor.

When the count exceeds 40 in the Women's Jail, some women also sleep either in "boats" or on floor mattresses. Currently eighteen women in the Women's Jail are in this situation.<sup>6</sup>

Two modular units in the Women's Jail are being remodeled. These units will house 24 female Honor Farm inmates and include 8 additional beds in an area used for program activity. Once the remodeling is complete, video supervision will be installed.

Inmates: The inmates appeared respectful, well-groomed, and clean. Their clothing fits. Inmates have access to telephones and are aware that their incoming and outgoing mail may be read. Confidential correspondence is allowed with attorneys, legal assistants and legislators. Inmates are allowed unlimited visits by attorneys and ministers. Social visitation is limited to two hours per week, or three hours per week on the Honor Farm. Staff supervises all visits.

Inmate Programs:<sup>7</sup> The Jail provides numerous rehabilitative services, several of which are financed by the Inmate Welfare Fund.<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for a more detailed description of these programs. Volunteers provide religious services, as well as education and counseling programs.

Inmate Interviews: A team of three Grand Jurors interviewed seven volunteer inmates, four men and three women, housed in the Honor Farm and in the general population.

Interviewed inmates, all of whom have spent years in and out of state prisons and other county jails, commented that the conditions and management at the County Jail are very good compared with other facilities.

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<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant Kelly Kenitz email to Law and Justice Committee, May 7, 2012

<sup>7</sup> Grand Jury Tour, pp. 5-10

<sup>8</sup> Under the California Penal Code Section 4025, an Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF) is mandated to provide services essential to the benefit, welfare, and educational needs of the inmates confined in the detention facilities. It is financed through the revenue generated from inmate use of public telephones, profits from inmate purchases from the jail commissary, revenue generated from contracts with educational agencies, and interest earned on unused funds.

All inmates interviewed, including the juveniles, said they had received the facility's *Rule Book*. However, few had actually read it and said they did so only out of boredom from not having anything else to read. The inmates said they learn the rules from the Jail staff and other inmates.

## **Juvenile Hall**

The County Probation Department oversees the Juvenile Hall. It was built in 1983 and was a state-of-the-art facility for that time. A three-phase improvement program, including a new wing, is now under way. It will create separate areas for criminally sophisticated juveniles resistant to rehabilitation programs and add 20 beds. It will also include separate entryways for the public and for law enforcement.

Juvenile Hall houses juveniles who have committed felonies and is a last resort for offenders under the age of 18. They are separated into three blocks, based on the seriousness of their offense. The average stay is three weeks, but a few may be incarcerated for a year or more. The dissolution of the California Youth Authority will require Juvenile Hall to hold juveniles longer, including those with violent records.

San Luis Obispo County has fewer youth incarcerated than counties of similar demographics, such as Sonoma and Marin. According to staff, recidivism is currently at 20 percent. Staff relies upon evidence-based cognitive treatments to help juvenile inmates change their ways of thinking. Programs such as anger-replacement training and an emphasis on pro-social activities support this goal. Offenders can receive high school credits and attend other special programs. The facility has a low use-of-force rate; staff attributes this in part to using pepper spray, instead of force, when inmates become unruly.

*Staffing:* The Juvenile Hall Superintendent oversees a staff of three Supervising Deputy Probation Officers (SDPOs), 6 Juvenile Services Officers III (JSOs) and 22 JSOs I and II. In addition, there is one Home Supervisor supplemented by four Correction Technicians and four temporary workers. The Department of Public Health provides 2.5 full time equivalent (FTE)

nurses, and the County Office of Education provides two FTE teachers and three instructional assistants.<sup>9</sup>

Volunteerism at Juvenile Hall is significant, as local churches, Cal Poly and other groups provide people and materials for juvenile programs and activities. Sister Theresa Harpin organized about 50 volunteers under a program called Restorative Partnership to teach juveniles art, jewelry making and yoga. The yoga program has received local media attention for reducing violence in the Juvenile Hall by at least 20 percent.<sup>10</sup>

*Medical/Psychiatric Services:* The facility has 3 full-time nurses and 1 nurse practitioner. The Jail provides back-up medical care, as necessary. An on-call dentist addresses dental problems.

*Interviews at Juvenile Hall:*

The staff, education system, special programs, visitation regime, and food are generally very good. Sister Theresa and the Cal Poly volunteers are well-liked. The facility is not overcrowded.

However, individually interviewed juveniles and staff identified certain sanitation problems, which are being addressed. The juveniles reported that they must take all their meals inside their cells, thereby creating mice and insect infestations in the cells. Management acknowledged the problem and is addressing it. It was explained that staff shortages prohibit adequate supervision of a common dining area. In addition, management is addressing keeping common surfaces, including floors and carpets, in good sanitary condition.

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<sup>9</sup> San Luis Obispo County Probation Organizational Chart, provided to current Grand Jury by Chief Deputy and Juvenile Hall Superintendent, Gary Joralemon, via email, March 12, 2012

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ksby.com/news/nun-leads-program-for-yoga-music-in-slo-county-jail-juvenile-hall/#!/prettyPhoto/0/>

## **City Police and County Courthouse Holding Facilities (Holding Facilities)**

Holding facilities are small, minimum security lockups intended to hold someone for a very brief time, up to four hours. The holding cell facilities appeared clean and safe. Although each city in the county has a holding cell, for all practical purposes, only the cities of San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles use them. Typically, a city will transport a suspect directly to the Jail for booking and thereby avoid using its own holding cell. Paso Robles has the largest holding cell and uses it primarily during the California Mid State Fair.

The San Luis Obispo County Courthouse (Courthouse) holding facility is generally crowded with inmates awaiting judicial action. These inmates come from CMC, the Jail and ASH. Inmates enter the Courthouse through a secure sally port and are held in separate confinement areas. Wheelchair-bound inmates enter the holding cells through public corridors. The ADA-compliant holding cells appeared clean and orderly.

Courthouse correctional deputies have outdated video equipment to monitor inmate activity.

The restroom for the Courthouse correctional deputies remains a problem, as noted in previous Grand Jury reports. Maintenance costs under \$15,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013 reportedly will be under the control of the local Superior Court in San Luis Obispo County,<sup>11</sup> which may allow this issue to be addressed.

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<sup>11</sup> "Court a test case for facility upkeep," Nick Wilson, (<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2012/04/16>: accessed 26 April 2012); confirmed by telephone with Court Executive Officer, 26 April 2012.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Grand Jurors who participated in the tours found the conditions at each inspected facility generally clean, safe and secure for all inmates and staff, with the exception of Juvenile Hall where a sanitation issue is being addressed by staff.

The Grand Jurors also observed a high degree of professionalism and respectful behavior among correctional officers, management and inmates. The inmate interviewees concurred that this observation was correct. They also agreed that facilities, food, recreation and rehabilitation programs, and visitation policies are satisfactory.

Overcrowding at the Jail is a continuing observable fact, particularly for women inmates. Staff and inmates agreed that the inmate population is increasing at the Jail due to the state realignment mandate.

Mental health services comprise a substantial portion of the medical services provided at the Jail and Juvenile Hall, and approximately two-thirds of the Jail inmates are on prescription medication.

Management and inmates agreed that volunteers play an important role in providing services to inmates at the Jail and Juvenile Hall. Their service in providing education and counseling to inmates is invaluable.

## **FINDINGS**

### **County Jail:**

1. Overcrowding at the Jail remains a problem.
2. Realignment is causing an increase in the Jail population.
3. Many inmates sleep in plastic “boats” on the floor.
4. Costs and workload for inmate services are increasing, particularly in the area of medical and mental care.
5. Transfers from ASH have substantially increased costs for psychiatric medications.

### **Juvenile Hall:**

6. Juveniles and Juvenile Hall management agree that certain identifiable unsanitary conditions are in need of correction.

### **Courthouse Holding Facility:**

7. Correctional officers at the Courthouse do not have ready access to restroom facilities.
8. Inmates in wheelchairs are transported to holding cells through the public corridors of the Courthouse.
9. Video surveillance systems are out of date in the Courthouse holding area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Sheriff’s Office should aggressively pursue reimbursement from ASH for medications prescribed for ASH patients who are transferred to the Jail.
2. Juvenile Hall management should take preventive and maintenance measures to address sanitation issues.
3. Courthouse Correctional Officers should explore an alternative route for wheel-chair bound prison inmates other than through public corridors.

## COMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury commends the high degree of professionalism of management and Correctional Officers at the Jail and at the Juvenile Hall. This includes the prompt response of management to follow-up questions posed by the Grand Jury and their prompt efforts to correct noted problems.

The Grand Jury commends the Jail kitchen management and staff for producing quality meals at low cost.

The Grand Jury commends Sister Theresa and her Restorative Partnership volunteers, Cal Poly students, and other volunteers for their service at Juvenile Hall.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

The County Sheriff's Department should respond to Findings 1 through 5 and 7 through 9, and Recommendations 1 and 3.

The County Probation Department should respond to Finding 6 and Recommendation 2.

The mailing addresses for delivery are:

<b>Presiding Judge</b>	<b>Grand Jury</b>
Presiding Judge Barry T. LaBarbera Superior Court of California 1050 Monterey Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury P.O. Box 4910 San Luis Obispo, CA 93402

The email address for the Grand Jury is: [GrandJury@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:GrandJury@co.slo.ca.us)

## APPENDIX A

### INSPECTION REPORT SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY JAIL

Facility Name: San Luis Obispo County Jail	Inspection Date: October 31, 2011
Facility Capacity: 518	Last Inspection Date: 10/2010
Address: Kansas Avenue, San Luis Obispo	Facility Administrator: Undersheriff
Interviews with: Sheriff, Undersheriff, Lieutenant in charge of Correctional Services, Lieutenant in charge of Correctional Operations, and others.	
Inspection Team: 2011-2012 SLO County Grand Jurors	
<b>Findings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The exterior of the building was in good condition. The interior of buildings appeared in good condition, except for the main linear old jail, where paint was peeling. Hallways were clear. There was adequate lighting. The temperature was comfortable. The exercise yards are inside, except at the Honor Farm.</li><li>2. <i>Intake/Release:</i> The center is 62,000 square feet, completed in 1993 at a cost of \$8,000,000. Here inmates are searched; their money and personal items are stored in Reception. They are given an Intoxilyzer test (if necessary), and medical and property forms are completed. Once booked by Correctional Technicians, they are taken to a holding or sobering cell. Holding cells are used for inmates not under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Arrestees are given access to a telephone while in the holding cells. Sobering cells with rubberized floors and no benches, and are used for inmates under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</li><li>3. <i>Processing Room:</i> Digital photographs and wrist bands are made. Fingerprints are taken with modern technology.</li><li>4. <i>Inmate Dress-out Rooms:</i> Two rooms (one for males, one for females) are available for inmates to shower and receive jail clothing. Street clothing and bulk items are stored. Deputies interview inmates to determine appropriate housing. Decisions are based on the inmates' criminal history, criminal sophistication, past history of disciplinary problems, and medical and mental health problems.</li><li>5. <i>The Control Rooms:</i> All exterior doors and selected interior doors are centrally controlled. Exterior and interior locations have camera surveillance. Fire alarm panels</li></ol>	

and interior doors, lights, telephones and televisions are also centrally controlled. The Jail staff conducts fire drills on a regular basis. There were no successful suicides in the past year, although numerous attempts were made. There have been few escapes.

6. *Transportation and Court Service:* From 35 to 85 inmates per day are transported to court in 6 transportation vehicles. Staffing includes 1 Sergeant, 1 Senior Correctional Deputy and 8 Deputies. Transportation is also provided for:
  - medical and dental appointments outside the jail
  - inmates sentenced to state prisons and from other counties on San Luis Obispo warrants.
7. *The Kitchen* is located on the Honor Farm, and is staffed by 6 cooks and 1 supervisor. Honor Farm inmates provide the labor, 12 inmates per shift, and 2 shifts per day. Meals are delivered to the jail and juvenile hall by truck at 6 a.m., 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Meals are served in the cells and dayrooms. The inmates may converse during meals. About 635,625 meals were served in 2010. The kitchen bakery saves \$40,000 per year by baking its own baked goods. The average cost per meal is about 90-95 cents, up from 86 cents in 2010. The kitchen area is clean. Knives and chemicals are locked. The inmates who work here and are fully trained in food safety receive a certificate that allows them to pursue food safety employment upon release.
8. *Medical/Psychiatric Services:* Medical staff is present 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Physician hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., with a total of 15 hours per week split between them. Hours of operation are generally 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., but can vary according to the schedule and availability of doctors. Only 1 mental health therapist is on duty on the weekend.
9. Medical and Psychiatric staff includes:
  - two physicians
  - three dentists
  - twelve registered nurses and one nurse supervisor
  - one licensed vocational nurse
  - two psychiatric doctors
  - three mental health therapists

**APPENDIX B**  
**INMATE PROGRAMS**  
**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY JAIL**

1. *General Educational Development (GED)* is open to all inmates and is a state-approved program contracted with Cuesta College for earning a high school diploma. In 2010, two hundred ten inmates participated, seventy-four were tested and twenty-five passed.
2. *Adult Basic Education (ABE)* instructs inmates in the basics of reading and writing. In 2010, nineteen inmates participated.
3. *English as a Second Language (ESL)* teaches the English language. In 2010, ninety-one inmates participated.
4. *Vocational Education (VEP)* teaches vocational job search and clerical office skills. It utilizes ten computer stations with CD ROMS, books and audio/video tapes. It is open to the Women's Jail Honor Farm and Dorm inmates. The goal is to facilitate employment post-release. In 2010, two hundred sixty-eight inmates participated.
5. *Life Skill* is open to female inmates. It teaches building relationships, stress management, job-seeking and maintenance, time-management, self-motivation, child-rearing, goal-setting, and staying healthy. In 2010, one hundred forty inmates participated.
6. *Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS)* is open to male Honor Farm inmates. The program teaches work application skills: computer skills, resume-building, interview techniques, workplace attitude, and time management. In 2010, forty to sixty inmates participated.
7. *Alternatives to Violence Workshops (AVP)* involves workshops for teaching skills and attitudes to reduce recidivism. It helps inmates focus on unresolved conflicts in their lives and those around them. It is open to male Honor Farm inmates and focuses on establishing a base of self-esteem, trust and cooperation, communication and creative problem-solving. Each workshop is unique. These workshops are voluntary and require 18 participants to run. The workshops are 20 hours, consist of two workshops of 10 hours each, and meet on Saturday and Sunday. In 2010, nineteen inmates attended.
8. *Food Safety Certification*: Fifty inmates have taken the Food Safety Certification course; thirty-five have passed and been certified. This certificate is valid for two years.
9. *Culinary* is open to Men's Honor Farm inmates. Kitchen duties include food service, prep work, baking and general cleanup.
10. *Laundry* is open to inmates of the Men and Women's Honor Farm. Inmates learn the operation of commercial grade washers and driers. Inmates also do cleaning, folding, and minor sewing repairs on inmate clothes.

11. *Bike Shop* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Inmates work in one of the largest bike repair shops in the County. Inmates repair bikes for donation to underprivileged children within the County at Christmas.
12. *Landscaping* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Duties include mowing grass, cleaning plant beds and arrangement of landscaping materials.
13. *Horticulture* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Inmates grow tomatoes, broccoli and bell peppers, among other vegetables.
14. *Road Work* is open to inmates of the Men's Honor Farm. Inmates learn skills from County road and tree crews and Cal Trans. Cutting trees, clearing roads, and equipment operation are skills translated into employment upon release.
15. *Communications Shop* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Here inmates learn skills in electronic repairs, such as for radios.
16. *County Garage and Car Wash* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Inmates clean and detail county automobiles.
17. *Kennel Worker* is open to Men's Honor Farm. Duties include cleaning kennels, feeding animals and general maintenance.
18. *Cleaning* is open to Men and Women's Honor Farm. Inmates vacuum and buff floors, dust, and clean windows for the Honor Farm and Court services.
19. *Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous and Ministry Services* are open to all inmates.
20. *Forensic Reentry Services (FRS)* is a Community Service/Outreach Program supervised by County Mental Health. FRS has two full time case managers. The FRS team, together with the jail Psychiatric Services, assists inmates scheduled for release who have a primary mental health diagnosis or co-occurring disorder(s). The goal is to bridge the transition from the jail to community services, including but not limited to housing, food, fiscal planning, employment, medical care, mental health follow-ups, and social security/insurance needs.
21. *Forensic Coordination Team (FCT)* is open to mentally ill offenders who require more intensive supervision.
22. *Police and Corrections Team (PACT)* is open to parolees from the jail or state prison. It involves a monthly meeting and "services fair" for parolees in need of community resources and services.
23. *Drug Court* is open to all inmates through Probation. It consists of an 18 month intensive supervision and counseling program to reduce recidivism for lower-risk inmates.

24. *Mental Health Court* is open to mentally ill offenders through the Probation Department. It attempts to find alternatives to incarceration.
25. *Proposition 36* is open to all inmates. It is similar to Drug Court and offered through the state Parole Department. It directs those arrested for parole violations to participate in alcohol and drug counseling while in the jail.