



ARROYO GRANDE POLICE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

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August 24, 2012

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SLO COUNTY GRAND JURY



Honorable Barry T. LaBarbera, Presiding Judge
Superior Court – San Luis Obispo County
1050 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Re: 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report "Law Enforcement Property and Evidence Rooms" / Required Responses

Dear Judge LaBarbera:

Per California Penal Code Section 933, the following are the required responses regarding the 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report on law enforcement property and evidence rooms as it relates to the Arroyo Grande Police Department.

Response to Finding #1

Immediately following the receipt of the Grand Jury's Report, steps were taken to ensure the annual inventory of property and evidence per department policy. The Grand Jury Report indicated that the last inventory was completed two years prior instead of the required annual inventory. The reason that the inventory was delayed was due in part to the fact that the Police Department was involved in four major cases that were moving toward trial / resolution. These were the Japanese Cultural Center / Boy Scout Hall arson fire; the Cross Burning / Hate crime trial; the Frias / Fair Oaks Bridge trial and the concluding Arnold Case (former Councilmember). The decision was made not to disrupt the nearly 400 pieces of evidence at that time. As far as conducting an audit upon a change in evidence/property room personnel, the current evidence technician was unaware at the time of the Grand Jury visit that there was a complete audit done prior to his appointment.

Response to Finding #9

The Arroyo Grande Police Department facility is quite dated and the Grand Jury is correct regarding both the limited size of the storage area and the lack of ventilation for the area storing drugs/narcotics. It is quite well known that over the past four years the City of Arroyo Grande has aggressively pursued the funding and construction of a new police facility. Two ballot measures failed to achieve the "super majority" required for passage and the City is very aware of the need to take action. Therefore, although we will continue to pursue the construction of a new police facility, we have identified an underutilized area within the existing building that can be modified to serve as a new property and evidence room with adequate ventilation. We hope to complete the modifications and move into the new area within the next six months. Additionally, a complete audit will be conducted at the time of the move.

Ensuring Quality of Life

Response to the Recommendation #1

As stated in the Response to Finding #1, the Arroyo Grande Police Department has taken steps to ensure full compliance with our policies regarding property and evidence.

Response to the Recommendation #2

As stated in the Response to Finding #9, the Arroyo Grande Police Department is currently working on an expansion of the property and evidence storage area which will include proper ventilation of drugs/narcotics. We anticipate moving into the expanded area within six months.

Response to the Recommendation #9

The technician assigned to the property/evidence function has received extensive training regarding contemporary procedures for the handling of property and evidence. The technician is currently an active member of the California Association for Property and Evidence (C.A.P.E.) and will remain involved and participate in sponsored training.

Response to the Recommendation #11

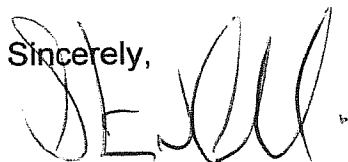
The Arroyo Grande Police Department will be conducting a full audit of the property and evidence function upon the relocation to the expanded storage area. That audit is scheduled to occur within the next six months and a copy of that audit will be forwarded to the Grand Jury.

Response to the Recommendation #12

The Arroyo Grande Police Department believes this recommendation requires further analysis.

On June 13th, 2012 at a meeting of the Criminal Justice Administrators Association of San Luis Obispo County, Sheriff Parkinson discussed the idea of property/evidence consolidation with the represented Chiefs of Police. As a result of that meeting, the Sheriff contacted the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office who was mentioned in the Grand Jury report as a county that was pursuing consolidation. It was determined that San Mateo County is only attempting to consolidate their property rooms with cities they provide contract law enforcement services to and they have no plans to consolidate with other agencies. On the surface this appears to be a logical plan, however upon discussion with the San Luis Obispo County Chiefs this idea would result in significant costs and logistical operational difficulties for cities and the County. The Chiefs and Sheriff will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate on evidence disposal and evaluate the possibility of the consolidation of the long term storage of refrigerated items of evidence.

Sincerely,



Steven N. Annibali
Chief of Police