



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

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William B. Kolender, Sheriff

William D. Gore, Undersheriff

July 19, 2006

Honorable Janis Sammartino
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
County Courthouse
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

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SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

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Dear Judge Sammartino:

Response to the San Diego County Grand Jury's Report Dated May 23, 2006
"Conditions and Management of Detention Facilities in San Diego County"

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933, the following is my response to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations 06-59 through 06-64.

San Diego Central Jail:

Grand Jury Finding:

- The San Diego Central Jail is understaffed by 40 positions.

Our Response:

We agree with this finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department recognizes the staffing needs of not only this facility, but the Bureau as a whole. We are committed in our efforts to minimize the staff shortages we are experiencing today.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-59: Recognize the needs of the Central Jail Facility by giving the San Diego County Jail high priority for filling vacancies.

Our Response:

We agree with this recommendation and efforts to address this recommendation have been implemented.

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For the past several years, law enforcement across the United States has experienced difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified employees. For a variety of societal reasons, finding qualified candidates has been a major challenge. Competition for candidates is a present reality for the law enforcement community. Agencies are looking at creative and sometimes unconventional means to attract new employees.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department recently partnered with San Diego State University to work on marketing campaign strategies. The students in the Marketing Program, led by Professor Mickey Belch, spent a semester reviewing and analyzing the marketing tools the San Diego County Sheriff's Department uses to attract candidates. The students reviewed our flyers, ads that appear in a variety of print media, television commercials, our outdoor advertising, etc. They engaged in random polls to determine the audience best suited for a career in law enforcement and/or detentions. Their recommendations were effective, having a positive impact on our recruiting efforts.

In addition, recruiting efforts have been expanded, ad campaigns are being re-evaluated, additional tests are being given each month and lateral candidates are being actively pursued with up to a \$5,000 bonus being offered for their experience.

Beginning July 7, 2006, a second Sheriff's Sergeant was added to assume responsibility for our Recruiting Unit. An additional Deputy Sheriff will be added to the Recruiting Unit and we are working toward hiring a marketing professional. This individual will work with our Personnel Division to assist them in maximizing their recruitment and hiring efforts.

The Sheriff's Personnel Division is exploring ways to streamline the candidate background process without having a negative impact on the integrity of the background investigation. One method currently being pursued is to convert much of the paper process to on-line technology. Additional procedural changes are being evaluated to assist in decreasing the time it takes to process a potential employee.

The Sheriff's Department is confident these efforts will have a meaningful impact.

South Bay Detention Facility:

Fact: This Facility continues to have problems with the sewer system.

Fact: The inmates continue to stuff the air conditioning vents with toilet paper.

Grand Jury Finding:

- Staff states that, the sewer system has been an issue for many years. Almost every time Deputies conduct an inspection, clothing and contraband have been flushed down the toilet, causing problems.

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Our Response:

We agree with this finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department recognizes the need to address these issues and is currently working toward viable solutions.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-60: Have the sewer system and air conditioning system evaluated to determine a method by which the sewer and air conditioning systems can be improved.

Our Response:

Sewer System: We agree with this recommendation and efforts to address this recommendation have been implemented. The Sheriff's Department Facilities and Special Projects Unit are currently soliciting bids to replace key elements of the sewer system at the South Bay Detention Facility. The intent is to replace all pumps, pump grinders and purchase a new "Muffin Muncher." The pump grinders and the "Muffin Muncher" work in tandem to prepare sewage and associated debris for disposal through the sewer outlets. Facilities Maintenance is confident the new system will resolve the problems related to sewage backup. Projected completion of this project is prior to the end of FY 06-07.

Air Handling System: We agree with this recommendation and efforts to address this recommendation have been implemented. The problems associated with the facility air conditioning are not related to the engineering or mechanics of the system.

The problematic variance of temperature is caused by inmates obstructing air flow through the cell vents. As in most building air conditioning systems, there are some areas within this facility that get a little colder than others. When this occurs at the South Bay Detention Facility, the inmates attempt to control the temperature by plugging the cell ventilation duct with tissue or newspaper. This in turn causes more cold air to flow to other areas or cells.

To better address this problem, we are more vigilant during our daily/weekly inspections to ensure the inmates remove any material blocking the vents. Additionally, the facility implemented a program for quarterly cleaning of all vents throughout the facility. We have also asked our Facility Maintenance staff to be more active in monitoring and controlling the temperature range as needed.

Las Colinas Detention Facility:

Fact: Deferred Maintenance at Las Colinas is a problem in almost all the buildings and housing units.

Fact: Many portions of this facility are over 40 years of age.

Grand Jury Finding:

- The ability to fix and repair buildings and facilities is becoming less of an option.

Commendations:

The Grand Jury conducted a second visit on November 2, 2005. Many of the maintenance problems noted on the earlier visit had been resolved. The maintenance staff appears to perform admirably in responding to needed repairs.

The Grand Jury interviewed several deputies and found that despite the prevailing conditions, the morale remains high and camaraderie is apparent.

Our Response:

We agree with this finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department recognizes the need to address these issues and is currently working toward viable solutions.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-61: Identify ways to finance the construction of a new women's facility.

Our Response:

We agree with this recommendation and initial steps toward implementation have begun. In 1999, San Diego County undertook a study to determine the future facility needs of the detention system to 2020. Carter Goble Associates, Inc. was hired to conduct this study. One aspect of their study was a master plan for the Las Colinas Detention Facility. This master plan was based upon the decision of the County to replace the existing facility on the City of Santee site. Carter Goble completed their final report in October of 2000.

Carter Goble then provided a new Las Colinas Detention Facility Development Plan on March 17, 2003. This plan included; Historical Inmate Population, Projected Inmate Population, Bed Space Summary, Site Size Requirements, Projected Construction Acreage Requirements and a Conceptual Site Master Plan.

The County of San Diego recently gave the Las Colinas replacement project a high priority on their County-wide Capital Improvement Needs Assessment. County Public Works is currently seeking through RFP, a contract for the Environmental Impact Report on the new Las Colinas Facility site in the City of Santee.

The Sheriff's Department is confident this project is moving forward with the hard work of our Facilities and Special Projects personnel.

The Sheriff's Department understands this project will take several years to complete. As such, our Facilities and Special Projects personnel are currently seeking contracts for significant remodeling of many housing units at the existing Las Colinas Facility. This project is scheduled to begin early fall of 2006.

Vista Detention Facility:

Fact: The facility is understaffed by 30 deputies.

Grand Jury Finding:

- Staffing level needs to be increased.

Our Response:

We agree with this finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department recognizes the staffing needs of not only this facility, but the Bureau as a whole. We are committed in our efforts to minimize the staff shortages we are experiencing today.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-62: Consider means of increasing the number of sworn officers to the authorized staffing level.

Our Response:

We agree with this recommendation. Please see Our Response to the Grand Jury Recommendation for the San Diego Detention Facility on Page 2 of this document, (Grand Jury Recommendation 06-59).

George F. Bailey Detention Facility:

Fact: The Sheriff's staffing at the time of our inspection was 73% of authorized positions.

Grand Jury Finding:

- Increased sworn deputies are needed at this facility.

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Our Response:

We agree with this finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department recognizes the staffing needs of not only this facility, but the Bureau as a whole. We are committed in our efforts to minimize the staff shortages we are experiencing today.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-63: Consider means of increasing the number of sworn officers to the authorized level.

Our Response:

We agree with this recommendation. Please see Our Response to the Grand Jury Recommendation for the San Diego Detention Facility on Page 2 of this document, (Grand Jury Recommendation 06-59).

Fact: New Security control panels were installed last year, however, the problems with faulty cell door mechanisms continue.

Fact: Only 60 of the authorized 250 retro cell door locks had been installed on the date of our inspection in September, 2005.

Grand Jury Recommendation:

The San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff:

06-64: Complete the installation of the retro security kits replacing the faulty cell door locks.

Our Response:

We agree with this recommendation. This recommendation was implemented and completed in March/April of 2006.

In closing, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their efforts in this investigation.

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If they need further clarification or additional discussion, please feel free to contact Commander Al Skoglund of our Detention Services Bureau at (858) 974-2088.

Sincerely,



William B. Kolender, Sheriff

WBK/aas

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Walt F. Ekard, CAO
Thomas Pastuszka, Director, Clerk of the Board
Jim Vlassis, Foreman, 2005-2006 San Diego County Grand Jury