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San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Post Office Box 939062 • San Diego, California 92193-9062

William B. Kolender, Sheriff

William D. Gore, Undersheriff

July 6, 2007

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SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

The Honorable Janis Sammartino, Presiding Judge
San Diego Superior Court
PO Box 122724
San Diego, CA 92112

Dear Judge Sammartino:

Response To The Grand Jury Report "Sheriff's Chaplaincy Program – It's about Caring" - In Accordance With §933(c) PC.

This report is in response to the San Diego County Grand Jury Report 2006-2007, filed on May 8, 2007. This report covers the Grand Jury's investigation to learn about the San Diego County Sheriff's Chaplaincy Program and determine its impact as a Department asset.

The Grand Jury's report states two separate facts upon which it makes a finding for each. Those findings are followed with a recommendation to the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. This report will address each finding and recommendation 07-14 to the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Grand Jury Finding: The Grand Jury's report stated as fact, "The Sheriff's Department supports two chaplaincy programs." Their finding followed with: "The first program serves deputies and law enforcement personal (personnel). The second program cares for inmates at the seven detention facilities in San Diego County. Both programs are voluntary, but different and the two shall never be one. It is a matter of trust that they remain separate. Should a chaplain serve both deputy and inmate, he would not be trusted by either. This distinction in no way implies that one is more important than the other. The Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Program was selected for its uniqueness and other chaplaincy programs such as that of the San Diego Police Department, are emulating this organization. Both programs know that it is all about caring."

Sheriff's Department Response: The San Diego County Sheriff's Department agrees with this finding. We continuously monitor both chaplaincy programs to identify ways to improve this resource to our employees and those incarcerated in our detention facilities.

Grand Jury Finding: "Sheriff's chaplains experience difficulty communicating with law enforcement and other chaplains who are responding to a crisis event and maintaining performance levels as a crisis plays out. Cell phones and land lines are often over-loaded putting the chaplain crisis coordinator at a disadvantage in communication."

Sheriff's Department Response: The San Diego County Sheriff's Department does not agree that limitations on cellular and land line telephones during critical incidents are placing chaplain crisis coordinators at a disadvantage in communication as it relates to their role within departmental operations. Chaplains are not primary responders to such incidents and are not utilized in any manner that requires immediate or priority communication during a crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

07-14: *"Provide 800 MHZ radios permanently to the chaplaincy executive board members to enhance communication during routine and crisis situations."*

Sheriff's Department Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Sheriff's Chaplaincy Program, both the portion dealing with employees or with inmates, would not have a need to communicate by radio during routine and/or crisis situations. The more effective communication method for the program is by cellular telephone or in person at command areas where they would be staged during crisis situations. The cost to implement this recommendation is in excess of $27,000 to purchase the five necessary radios and would incur additional annual Regional Communication System user fees. The 800 MHZ Regional Communications System is primarily intended for instant communication between dispatch centers and first responders in the field, as well as between other field units in a manner that allows multiple users to also hear the information being relayed. The Sheriff's Chaplaincy executive board would not be utilized in such a manner.

Sincerely,

William B. Kolender, Sheriff

WBK/jfd

cc: Board of Supervisors