

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

### ***El Dorado County Juvenile Hall – Placerville***

#### **Reason for the Report**

California Penal Code authorizes and directs Grand Juries to inspect and report annually on operations of all public prisons located within the boundaries of each county.

#### **Scope of the Inspection**

Members of the Grand Jury inspected El Dorado County Juvenile Hall - Placerville on August 21, 2002 and April 9, 2003.

- Jury members met with the Chief Probation Officer and the Deputy Chief Probation Officer;
- The Chief Probation Officer and the Deputy Chief Probation Officer jointly conducted comprehensive tours of the facility with the Grand Jury Members
- Inspection reports were reviewed;
- The Principal/lead teacher/counselor and teachers were interviewed;
- Kitchen supervisor and assistants were interviewed;
- Several wards were interviewed;
- Grand Jury reports for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 were reviewed.

#### **Background**

Juvenile Hall was built in 1971 as a “direct supervision” jail for juveniles (wards) where they have direct contact with the staff. The facility, originally built to house 22 juveniles, has been expanded to house 40. When necessary, extra beds are used to accommodate additional wards. Due to Court Orders capping the number of juveniles housed at the facility at 42, Court approval is required and obtained for all exceptions. Juvenile Hall has housed as many as 56. Due to space limitations, counselors, who are contracted, are required to meet with the wards in open activity areas.

While currently there are not any plans for new or expanded juvenile facilities in Placerville, plans are underway for a new juvenile hall in South Lake Tahoe. Groundbreaking for the new facility is scheduled for April 30, 2003, with completion anticipated in about a year. This new facility which will accommodate up to 40 juveniles will help alleviate the periodic overcrowding condition of the current Placerville juvenile facility.

Juvenile Hall is used to house both male and female juveniles between the ages of 8 to 19. On the date of the Jury’s last visit there was a total of 36 juveniles comprised of 29 male and 7 female. Of these juveniles, 25 were from the west slope, 10 from South Lake Tahoe and one from Alpine County. Juvenile Hall does on occasion house, by contract, juveniles from Amador

and Alpine Counties. Amador County does not have a juvenile hall facility. Special arrangements have been made with Alpine County to house four wards a year, one at a time, for 30-day drug/substance abuse treatment.

While the average stay is between 28 to 30 days, some juveniles may stay a day while others up to a year. Juveniles requiring longer detention time are placed at a youth ranch within California as directed by Court Order. In addition, some juveniles are placed on electronic house supervision, which allows them to stay in their homes and continue to go to school.

Four supervisors and 16 permanent line employees staff the facilities. The facilities appear neat, clean, and well run. However, it is in need of painting, as it has not been painted in seven years. New baseboards are needed in the entry, halls, and general-purpose gym. Cell #14 has a cracked door window. In addition, the HVAC vents in the classrooms are dirty.

Juvenile Hall has an outstanding school program administered on premises by the Principal/lead teacher/counselor with three teachers in two classrooms. Individual school programs are prepared and administered for each ward, including Special Education. Juveniles attend school Monday through Friday and weekly meet with a teacher to review the individual's progress in work packets. When juveniles are to be released, their next school is contacted to help provide a smooth transition. In most cases the juveniles are placed back in their previous school.

All food for the juveniles is prepared on premises by the kitchen supervisor and two cooks with clean up performed by the juveniles. Menus are planned for several weeks in advance, and reviewed annually for nutritional value by a contract dietician. Special meals are provided as needed for diet, doctor's orders, allergies, and religious needs with medical related requests approval by the facility nurse.

Medical needs are provided through contracted nursing services with a medical doctor on call. Mental health counseling is provided through contract. In addition drug/substance abuse programs are available. The health facility room has no running water; the nurse has no water to wash her hands between patients.

While the facility is constructed of non-flammable material, any fire could create smoke conditions, which could cause serious harm to anyone in the facility. This Grand Jury concurs with the 2001/2002 Grand Jury recommendations that air packs (emergency breathing apparatus) should be available on premises and staff trained in their use. During our review of all the other correction facilities in the County, with the exception of Juvenile Hall, air packs are available and staffs are trained in their proper use.

### **Findings**

- F1. Adequate space is not available for individual counseling.
- F2. The facility needs painting.
- F3. The baseboards in the entry, halls and general-purpose gym need to be replaced.

- F4. Cell #14 door window is cracked.
- F5. The HVAC vents in the classrooms are dirty.
- F6. No running water is available in the health facility room.
- F7. Air packs are not available in case of fire.

**Recommendations**

- R1. The facilities should be painted.
- R2. Baseboards should be replaced as needed.
- R3. Cell #14 door window should be replaced.
- R4. The health facility room should have running hot and cold water and blankets.
- R5. The HVAC vents in the classrooms should be cleaned.
- R6. Air packs should be available in Juvenile Hall for life safety and to limit potential liability.
- R7. The staff should be trained in the use of air packs.

**Commendations**

The Chief Probation Officer and the staff of Juvenile Hall in Placerville provide outstanding service in an inadequate, old, facility, which is often over capacity. Special recognition is given teaching staff for the exceptional individual educational program.

**Responses Required for Findings**

F1 through F7  
 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors  
 El Dorado County Probation Department

**Responses Required for Recommendations**

R1 through R7  
 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors  
 El Dorado County Probation Department