



## **EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY 2010-2011**

### **SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS BUDGET ANALYSIS**

Case Number GJ010-015

#### **REASON FOR REPORT**

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office (EDCSO) accounts for approximately 20% (\$41 million) of the County's General Fund. This investigation examines the historical and current Sheriff's Office Operations budget, including cost and revenue implications, with the goal of determining how and where cost savings are possible. The Grand Jury's emphasis was to identify potential cost savings through means other than staff reductions.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Mission Statement of the EDCSO states that *"The Sheriff's Office is responsible for law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of the County, liaison, coordination and cooperation with other law enforcement agencies at the local, State and Federal levels; court security and inmate transportation; service of Civil processes and warrants; operation of the County's adult detention facilities. The Sheriff also functions as the County Coroner and Public Administrator."*

The EDCSO is made up of three Divisions; Custody, Patrol-Investigative Services, and Support Services. The Department is headed by the Sheriff and Undersheriff. According

to the EDCSO, as of January 2011, there are 364.5 allocated positions, of which 20 are vacant and 180 are sworn deputies.

The EDCSO has experienced substantial budget reductions over the past three years and operates at reduced staffing levels. This report demonstrates there are significant budget reduction opportunities.

Comparative data for El Dorado and Placer Counties:

	<u>Placer County</u>	<u>El Dorado County</u>
Total Population	348,432	178,447
Incorporated Population	236,439 (6 cities)	34,409 (2 cities)
Unincorporated Area Population	112,000	144,038
Square miles	1,404	1,711
Allocated positions	451	364.5
Sworn positions	212	180

The population of Placer County is almost twice as large as EDC but its geographical area is about 20% smaller. The Placer County Sheriff's 2010-2011 budget is \$83 million which represents 13% of their General Fund. It is important to note that there are six cities in Placer County. Placer County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services in two of these cities (Colfax and Loomis) on a contract basis. There are approximately 6.5 deputies assigned to contract duties (2 in Colfax, 4.5 in Loomis). Contract patrol service is divided into beat areas which overlap adjacent unincorporated County land. Since these deputies provide service in both contract and unincorporated areas they are included in the number of sworn positions for Placer County listed above.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Grand Jury interviewed the following persons:

- The immediate past El Dorado County Sheriff
- El Dorado County Undersheriff
- Placer County Undersheriff
- Sheriff's Captains
- Sheriff's Lieutenants
- Correctional Lieutenant
- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) analysts
- Sheriff's Dispatch Manager
- El Dorado County Sheriff's Financial Manager
- Placer County Sheriff's current and former Financial Managers

- Sheriff's Financial Technician

The Grand Jury reviewed the following documents:

- 2008 South Lake Tahoe Patrol Allocation Study (March 31, 2010 by Lt. Marc Adams)
- 2009 Patrol Allocation Study West Slope Patrol (undated document)
- Budget Reduction Impacts to Sheriff's Office from former Sheriff Fred Kollar (11/1/2010)
- CAO memorandum to Board Of Supervisors Re: Agenda Item #10-0990 FY 2011-2012 Budget Reduction Plan (October 29, 2010)
- CAO recommendation for 2011-2012 Budget Reductions dated 10/18/2010
- Computer generated list from EDCDOT showing EDCSO vehicle usage and maintenance data for F/Y 2009-2010 (3 pages, undated document)
- Computer generated list of all EDCSO Vehicles (93) and marked Take Home (63) or At Office (30) (undated document)
- Cook/Chill introduction information from "Victory" web site, printed from web March 25, 2011 (no URL or page numbers available)
- EDCBOS Special Meeting Agenda For Law and Justice Departments (November 1, 2010)
- EDCSO Ten Year budget history (fiscal years 2001-2002 to 2010-2011)
- El Dorado County Crime Statistics for 2007 (Criminal.com website 11/17/2010)
- El Dorado County Crime Statistics for 2007 (historical data from 1998-2006)
- FBI news story "Some Good News" (from the FBI website 01/12/2009)
- Patrol Staffing and Deployment Study (International Association of Chiefs of Police – undated)
- Placer County Annual Report from 2009
- Placer County Sheriff's Office Strategic Plan (January 1, 2006)

## **FINDINGS**

During this investigation the Grand Jury focused on the areas listed below.

1. **Salaries:** Salary schedules were reviewed for Sheriff's Departments in the following Counties: Amador, El Dorado, Placer, and Yolo. Some of these agencies report actual base salaries, while others show salaries including incentives. For comparison purposes the lowest and highest base salaries of each agency were used and compiled to form a median salary, which was \$5,264 per month. The median salary for El Dorado County deputies is \$5,420. While El Dorado County is slightly above the median (\$156), the variables mentioned

indicate El Dorado County deputy salaries are in line with those in several nearby jurisdictions.

2. **Overtime:** EDCSO achieved a substantial reduction in overtime. It is reported that at the end of Fiscal Year 2007-08, overtime costs were \$4,095,143. In the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2009-2010, overtime costs were \$2,015,511. When extrapolated to a full year, that number is \$2,687,348, a reduction of \$1,407,795, or approximately 34%.
3. **Budget:** The CAO budget proposal for F/Y 2010-2011 provides a ten year history of Sheriff's Office financials and staffing patterns. In F/Y 2001-2002 the Sheriff had 362 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and a budget of \$22.5 million. The budget and staffing peaked in F/Y 2007-2008 at 399 FTE and a budget of \$43.3 million. During the three intervening years since F/Y 2007-2008, the Sheriff's Office had to adapt to substantial reductions in budget and staff, with staffing reduced from 399 FTEs to 377, and the budget reduced from \$43.3 million to \$40.5 million, a \$2.8 million reduction.
4. **Position classifications:** Sworn deputy sheriffs are the front line for law enforcement responsibilities. Sworn positions have a rank structure including deputy sheriff, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, undersheriff, and sheriff (an elected official). The majority of jail personnel are non-sworn correctional personnel, but also have a rank structure including correctional officer, sergeant, and lieutenant. Many other civilian personnel are assigned who perform financial, dispatch, and other administrative support functions throughout the Department.
5. **Patrol Staffing:** It is incumbent on law enforcement to deploy their limited resources in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. The EDCSO deploys patrol personnel based on a nationally recognized Patrol Allocation and Deployment Study developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (I.A.C.P.). This study is a workload-based analysis using information produced by the Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD). The computer captures raw data and compiles it in ten different categories of officer status. The predominant category is dispatch related activity which includes calls for service, report writing, and time spent at the jail resulting from an arrest. Also factored into the equation are vacation, sick time and training. The compilation of this data is used to make staffing decisions for the number of deputies required in each of the EDCSO patrol zones. The Patrol Allocation Study indicates the South Lake Tahoe patrol zone has three to four more positions than are justified by the workload. These figures were affirmed by the former Sheriff in printed material used in his budget presentation to the EDCBOS November 1, 2010. The Patrol Allocation Study contrasts sharply with the historical method of making decisions based on one officer per 1,000 population. This had been the historic method used in making patrol deployment decisions and is still used in many patrol

jurisdictions. The CAD based patrol staffing and deployment approach is a superior method in making sound personnel and geographic patrol coverage decisions.

- 6. Vehicle “take home” policy:** Currently, all EDC Sheriff’s detectives, managers above the rank of sergeant, and selected other positions are authorized take home County vehicles without restriction. This policy represents significant cost to the County and does not appear to be in line with current trends in law enforcement. The ability for employees to take EDC vehicles home seems to fall somewhere between operational need and a departmental perk, depending on the position. There are approximately 63 EDC Sheriff’s Office take home vehicles being driven by staff.

A vehicle summary prepared in January, 2011 showed the following costs associated with the 63 take home vehicles:

Fuel	\$134,883
<u>Maintenance</u>	<u>\$346,500</u>
Total	\$481,383

In addition to the above costs, three vehicles listed as “take home” are unassigned (two in narcotics, one in detectives). A Ford F350 crew-cab diesel truck for boat patrol is listed as “take home.” This is a particularly expensive commute vehicle.

Recently, Placer County Sheriff’s Office restricted the practice of “take home” vehicles and saved approximately \$500,000.

- 7. Fleet Management of Patrol Vehicles:** Until recently deputies assigned to patrol were not assigned a particular vehicle for their shift, but would obtain a vehicle based on personal preference. This practice was not a good model for fleet management. EDC Department of Transportation (EDCDOT) and EDC Sheriff’s Office informed the Grand Jury this practice has changed. Vehicles are now being assigned to and shared by one officer on day shift and another on night shift. It is reported that in addition to the obvious benefits of improved accountability, maintenance, and damage tracking, the vehicles are receiving better care as the assigned officers tend to take greater pride in assigned equipment they feel is “theirs.”
- 8. Institutional Food:** Food served to inmates meets State standards for nutrition and quantity. It is currently prepared on site by a combination of county employees and inmates.

The South Lake Tahoe Jail Facility runs a model culinary program in partnership with the local community college. In addition to preparing food for inmates and staff, food is prepared for community events on a contract basis.

A significant cost reduction of \$12,000 per year for inmate food was achieved recently by shifting the cost of condiments from the County to the inmate population through the commissary program.

9. **New Personnel:** Two key vacant positions have been filled in the EDCSO since January 1, 2011, which will potentially contribute significant improvement in the organizational development and management of the EDCSO, particularly as it relates to financial and operational controls.

First, the new Undersheriff brings qualifications and experience to the agency which will allow him to employ effective management of day to day operations, and apply discipline to financial controls. Second, the appointment of a new financial manager brings a background in financial management to the Department, gained as a senior staff member for the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Both of these individuals bring what has been missing in the management of the Sheriff's Office, and both fill critical positions that have been vacant for more than one year. The fact that both are new to the department and neither is tied to the past in the organization is a major plus.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. It is imperative that future cost cutting be achieved through careful analysis, rather than simply eliminating staff by across the board cuts.
2. **Take Home Vehicles:** The EDCSO practice on take home county vehicles should be revised and made job related, which would provide substantial savings. Take home vehicles for command staff may be appropriate. Other take home vehicle assignments should be made based on careful analysis. For example, a take home vehicle policy should consider how frequently an employee is called from home outside of normal working hours. Detectives should not be taking cars home just because they are detectives, the weekly on-call detective should be the only detective to routinely take a vehicle home. It is rare that numerous detectives are required to respond to a crime scene without delay. Some other disciplines require a great deal of personal gear (SWAT Team, Bomb Squad, and K-9), although the 24/7 on-call factor should apply here as well. An exception to this would be with the narcotics unit, since the nature of this job and working hours required must remain flexible.

Even where it is deemed proper for an employee to take a county vehicle home, there should be restrictions. Some jurisdictions restrict commute driving only to locations within the county of employment. It would, by extension, seem proper to restrict vehicles to the State of California as well. Employees living outside these boundaries can leave their vehicles at the duty station nearest their residence and commute from there. Another option would be to charge the current county mileage rate for all commute driving.

A reform of the take home vehicle policy may not be popular among the staff, but it represents a prudent use of public funds. As mentioned earlier Placer County realized substantial savings by implementing such a policy.

The Grand Jury was informed there is no written policy on vehicles or take home vehicles. A written policy on vehicles should be developed as soon as possible and distributed to all personnel in the office.

3. **Patrol Staffing:** Staffing in the SLT patrol zone should be reduced to the level indicated by the Patrol Allocation Study.
4. **Re-classifying Positions:** In other jurisdictions cost savings have been achieved by reclassifying positions and staffing them with civilian personnel. Further study is required to determine if any potential cost saving with the EDCSO could be achieved. Several job functions that could lend themselves to potential savings include:
  - Converting sworn civil court bailiffs to civilian court attendants
  - Civilian personnel monitoring building security X-ray machines
  - Lower level process serving in the Civil Unit
  - Vehicle abatement (abandoned vehicle removal)

There may be merit and cost savings associated with the consolidation of some support staff positions. This would be done by cross-training selected personnel who are currently performing support services in a single unit. By cross-training, their skills would be enhanced, enabling them to assume responsibilities in multiple units and broader job responsibilities.

This concept has the potential to reduce personnel costs while affording greater flexibility in staffing patterns. Such a practice follows a general trend in law enforcement in moving from specialist to generalist duties, and it has been adopted in other jurisdictions successfully.

5. **Institutional Food Reform:** Another area for potential savings may exist if the method for food preparation is modernized. This could be accomplished by switching from traditional food preparation to a “Cook/Chill” system. Cook/Chill

is a process whereby food is prepared on or off site, chilled for preservation, reheated and kept warm at the service area just prior to serving. While Cook/Chill is commonly associated with larger institutional food service operations, new compact quick chill equipment designs place a Cook/Chill system within the reach of many types and sizes of food service operations. Cook/Chill methods are used extensively by restaurants, hotels, caterers, and on airplanes and ships. It was learned during interviews that a Cook/Chill program had been considered, but was not adopted. The projected savings of \$50,000 was not considered cost effective. However, if substantial annual savings can be achieved in a reasonable time frame, it is worth further consideration.

6. **Additional areas worthy of mention:** Two additional areas of potential savings were brought to our attention by an official outside EDC. These were not investigated by the EDCGJ due to time constraints but are mentioned here as being deemed worthy of consideration;
  - **Telephones:** A substantial amount of money is spent each month by duplicating telephone service. Basically all EDCSO personnel have a desk set telephone in their work area, the cost of which (currently about \$179,000 per year) is billed to the Sheriff's Office. Some of these same employees may be assigned cell phones. It seems prudent to maintain a limited number of desk telephones to guarantee service in the event of a cellular outage, but routinely maintaining both types of telephones for an employee seems to serve no purpose other than spiking the cost of communication.
  - **Service Centers & Leased Facilities:** The Sheriff's Office currently spends approximately \$200,000 per year on rent or leases. Also, the leased facility on Pierroz Road in Placerville houses the investigative unit and narcotics units. We understand this space was leased in anticipation of planned expansion of the investigative section which has not occurred. It would be beneficial for the EDCSO to evaluate physical plant needs at all Sheriff's facilities, and analyze those needs to identify areas which might lend themselves to space consolidation and ultimately a cost saving.

## RESPONSES

Responses to both numbered findings and recommendations in this report are required in accordance with California Penal Code §933 and §933.05. Address responses to: The Honorable Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court, 1354 Johnson Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.



This report has been provided to the El Dorado County Sheriff, El Dorado County BOS, and El Dorado County CAO for response.

Elected officials under statute are given 60 days to respond, and non-elected officials are provided a 90-day response period from the release date of this report.