

EL DORADO COUNTY
2015-2016 GRAND JURY
REPORT



**SHERIFF'S HEADQUARTERS:
HOW OLD IS TOO OLD?**

CASE 15-08 • JUNE 2, 2016

Public Release
JUNE 16, 2016

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INTRODUCTION

This year's grand jury toured the Sheriff's headquarters located on Fair Lane in Placerville. When the Sheriff's headquarters was first dedicated in 1970, it also housed the county jail. When a larger jail was built in 1988, the Sheriff expanded operations into the space that had housed the old jail.

METHODOLOGY

- Toured Sheriff's headquarters and offsite facilities
- Interviewed Sheriff's department personnel

DISCUSSION

The visitors' lobby of the Sheriff's headquarters has a cold and unwelcoming air about it. The entrance and lobby is visibly clean and tidy, however there is an underlying odor that cannot be ignored. The ceiling shows evidence of water damage like other areas throughout the building. We were told it was caused by a leaking roof. Just off of the lobby, a reception office provides minimal security or protection from visitors. A few steps down from the main level is Records and an interview/interrogation room which also provides little in the way of security or privacy. Visitors sitting in the lobby waiting for assistance can easily witness and hear what transpires.

The old jail area is downstairs where the bars of the cells and doors remain. Even though the jail cell toilets and showers were removed and covered over some time ago a distinct sewer gas odor is pervasive. Continual dampness creates a dank atmosphere adding to an omnipresent odor permeating the building.

All biohazard evidence must be kept in a controlled environment to preserve the integrity of evidence. Yet, there is no on-site emergency generator that can, in the event of a power outage, provide power to the large refrigerators and freezers.

The evidence room for weapons is extremely overcrowded and without a controlled temperature or ventilation system. Water leaks and the gnawing of rodents have reportedly caused damage in the department's secure ammunition store room. Narrow halls are filled with tables cluttered with weapons, cleaning materials and parts and pieces of miscellaneous items.

The condition of the Sheriff's headquarters has been deteriorating for a long time. It presents an unhealthy and substandard working environment.

The Sheriff's department has leased, at a cost of \$300,000 per year, several offices and storage buildings in and around Placerville due to the inadequacy of available space at the main facility to house all of the Sheriff's operations. The grand jury made onsite visits to the leased facilities on Forni Road, Pierroz Road, and Broadway. The Sheriff has storage for boats and dive team gear, Search and Rescue vehicles, radio maintenance/towers, and evidence vehicle storage off of China Garden Road in Diamond Springs. The grand jury did not visit the Search and Rescue training facility on Fort Jim Road.

FINDINGS

F1. The current facility used for the Sheriff's headquarters is visibly overcrowded and is a substandard work environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. A new Sheriff's headquarters should be established to house all departmental operations saving the cost of leased space and resulting in increased efficiencies.

R2. The Board of Supervisors must replace the Sheriff's headquarters.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Responses to both findings and recommendations in this report are required by law in accordance with California Penal Code §933 and §933.05.

From the following:

- El Dorado County Sheriff on or before August 8, 2016
- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on or before September 7, 2016

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

The Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court additionally requests that responses be sent electronically as a *Word* or *PDF* file to facilitate the economical and timely distribution of such responses. Please email responses to El Dorado County Grand Jury reports to: courtadmin@eldoradocourt.org.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.