



PLACER COUNTY GRAND JURY

Placer County Jails and Holding Facilities: A Consolidated Report

Annual Inspections



Santucci Courthouse

Photo courtesy of Placer County Sheriff's Office

June 26, 2015

Placer County Jails and Holding Facilities: A Consolidated Report Annual Inspections

Summary

This report summarizes thorough inspections conducted at the six Placer County jails and holding facilities:

- Historic Courthouse in Auburn (September 2, 2014)
- Burton Creek Sheriff's Substation in Tahoe City (September 9, 2014)
- South Placer Main Jail in Roseville (October 17, 2014)
- South Placer Minimum Security Facility in Roseville (October 17, 2014)
- Santucci Courthouse in Roseville (October 24, 2014)
- Placer County Main Jail in Auburn (November 12, 2014)

On the whole, the jurors found these facilities to be clean, secure, and well-managed, with relatively few problems.

The main challenge facing Placer County correctional facilities has been overcrowding, primarily due to public safety realignment as the result of State legislation (AB109), which in April 2011, sought to reduce state prison overcrowding by:

- Sentencing most non-serious, non-violent, and non-sexual offenders to a county jail rather than to State prisons. Prior to realignment, any felony sentence of more than a year would routinely be served in State prison. Now offenders sentenced to serve up to seven or eight years can be housed in a county jail.
- Sentencing parole or probation violators to serve their violations in a county jail rather than being returned to a state prison.

Placer County, like most counties, is dealing with many issues that have arisen as a result of realignment. While many overcrowding issues will be alleviated by the recent opening of the new South Placer Main Jail, other issues associated with housing more sophisticated prisoners for longer periods of time are still being addressed. In the past, county jails have not had to deal with critical long-term health issues or rehabilitation needs of inmates.

In addition, State Proposition 47, which went into effect after the November 2014 election, has added a new burden to jail staff. Because it reduces penalties for drug and other nonviolent crimes, many county inmates have petitioned to have their convictions reclassified from felonies to misdemeanors, and sentences reduced or erased. An estimated 40,000 inmates in California are eligible. This creates a huge need for more jail and court personnel to facilitate this complicated process.

Background

“The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county” as stated in §919(b) of the California Penal Code.

Investigation Methods

Inspections were led by the following Placer County Sheriff’s Officers:

Historic Courthouse:	Deputy Kathryn Raffetto
Burton Creek Substation:	Lt. John Weaver
South Placer Main Jail:	Stacey Toy-DeNardi, Compliance Officer
South Placer Minimum Security:	Stacey Toy-DeNardi, Compliance Officer
Santucci Courthouse:	Lt. Carol Walsh
Placer County Main Jail:	James Rashid, Compliance Officer

Facts

- Three of these six facilities (Historic Courthouse, Burton Creek, and Santucci Courthouse) are temporary holding facilities, usually used only for a few hours, while inmates are awaiting scheduled court proceedings. Court appearances occur between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and if an inmate is held during mealtimes, a sack lunch and drink are provided.
- The three other facilities (both South Placer facilities and the Auburn Main Jail) are designed to house inmates awaiting court dates or serving out their sentences, some of which can last as long as eight years.

- All six facilities have a sally port through which inmates are brought into a secure area and then escorted by one or more deputies to a holding cell. All facilities have a weapons screening device, and all bags are subject to inspection. They also are well-covered and monitored by numerous security cameras.
- All holding cells have a toilet, sink, and concrete bench. The toilet is out of direct view of officers and the security camera. Each holding cell is capable of housing up to five inmates. Inmates are checked every 30 minutes, but inmates on security watch are checked every 15 minutes.
- The **Historic Courthouse** was dedicated in 1898, has three holding cells and six courtrooms. Deputy Raffetto was an excellent guide and displayed great public relations. Jurors did observe the following areas of concern:
 - In Dept. 1, the glass is transparent enough for inmates to look into the judge's office area.
 - There was no epi-pen on the premises.
 - There were no cameras focused on the back parking lot.
 - The metal detector in the lobby was triggered by the movement of the elevator.
 - There is an unbarred window in the stairwell where inmates pass.
 - The emergency PA is not building-wide.
- The **Burton Creek** facility was built in 1959; it has four holding cells and one small courtroom. Placer County has a contract with the Truckee Jail in Nevada County, for housing inmates as needed. The county has made excellent use of a very outdated facility, including using modern technology. They have staff capable of speaking five languages. Jurors did observe the following areas of concern:
 - The sally port needs securing, and flares need to be locked up.
 - There was no epi-pen or defibrillator on the premises.
 - The heater was broken.
 - Staff was concerned about the security of evidence.
 - The facility is not fully ADA-compliant (some examples: no elevator to the second floor and hallways are narrow).
- The **Santucci Courthouse** opened in 2008, has 12 basement holding cells (connected via a tunnel to the adjacent Main Jail), six holding cells between the courtrooms on the first floor, and four holding cells between courtrooms on the second floor, with nine total

courtrooms. The jurors did not observe any areas of concern and thought it was a beautiful, modern facility that was well-managed.

- The **South Placer Main Jail** (the main part of the South Placer Adult Corrections Facility or SPACF) at the Santucci Justice Center opened in May 2014 with 200,000 square feet and a rated capacity of 420. Currently in Phase I, it has 120 medium-security inmates in Housing Unit 2, but is designed to accommodate 980 when the eventual build out to 319,000 square feet is completed. It has 31 various types of holding cells in the basement, which is connected to the basement holding cells for the Santucci Courthouse by a 320-foot tunnel. Because this facility has not completed setting up its booking area, local booking is done at the Auburn Main Jail. This is a very modern facility with lots of room for expansion. The kitchen is very modern and prepares 10,000 to 14,000 meals daily, many being transported to the Auburn Main Jail and Burton Creek. The jurors had one main concern:
 - There were numerous cracks in the concrete flooring.
- The **South Placer Minimum Security Facility** opened in May 2014, when 120 inmates were moved from the old World War II U.S. Army hospital warehouse barracks built in the DeWitt Center in Auburn in 1941. Still in Phase I, it currently houses 120 minimum-security inmates in the new facility, which is divided into two pods of 60 each, in a building adjacent to the South Placer Main Jail. Currently the female minimum-security inmates are housed in the main jail next door, until a new female minimum-security facility is built on the property. The Grand Jury was pleased to see so many minimum-security inmates working in the laundry (30 females) and kitchen (up to 40 males), and doing custodial work in the South Placer Main Jail. About four male inmates are transported daily to clean Burton Creek. We were told that for every 5 hours they work, they can deduct 4 hours off their sentences. Staff indicated that female inmates need more opportunity for work hours.
- The **Auburn Main Jail** opened in 1985 with a California State Board of Corrections (BOC) rating of 108 inmates, a population which was immediately exceeded. A new housing wing was built in 1992 to bring the rating up an additional 260 beds. This wing contains three medium-security dorms or pods, two with a capacity of 92 inmates each, and one with a capacity of 44 inmates; and one maximum-security module with a capacity of 32 inmates. The dormitory housing units are of the direct-supervision type,

with a custody officer stationed inside each of the dorms, and indirect supervision from a housing booth. With BOC approval, most of the cells have been doubled-bunked. After the recent Phase I transfer of 120 inmates to South Placer Main Jail, the Auburn facility now houses about 420 medium- and maximum-security inmates. The staff that guided us through our inspection was very resourceful and courteous. We had a new appreciation for their constant classifying and reclassifying of inmates, in order to ensure better compatibility within the housing units. The staff is meeting all Title 15 requirements and is encouraging inmates to make positive change. The Auburn Main Jail has 11 booking cells, 2 holding cells and one courtroom. The Grand Jury only had one concern:

- According to staff, leak problems seem to be an on-going issue.

Findings

The Grand Jury Found that:

- F1. In general, all six Placer County jails and holding facilities are clean, well-maintained, and well-managed. It is clear that all staff is proud of the facilities.
- F2. The Burton Creek Substation Jail/Holding Facility is functional and well-coordinated, especially, considering its age.
- F3. The South Placer Main Jail and the Auburn Main Jail are the most impacted by AB109, which creates overcrowding, as discussed in the Summary section. Long-term rehabilitation and extended medical services are now more vital for those with longer sentences. County facilities were not built to accommodate this AB109 mandate.
- F4. Proposition 47 places a burden on the correctional system because of the sudden surge in petitions for inmates to have their classifications and sentences reduced. Future plans to build a second minimum-security facility on the South Placer property may help alleviate the increase in population of those with lesser sentences, but this is just a small step toward a more permanent solution.

Conclusion

All Placer County jails and holding cells are well-managed and maintained, in spite of the recent significant legislative challenges. While the State has allocated some funds to the counties to

help defray the costs of realignment, the impact highlights the degree to which additional services need to be added. The need to increase staff at both main jails is critical and should be a county budget priority.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that the county make the following improvements:

Auburn Historic Courthouse Recommendations:

- R1. Obscure the glass in Dept. 1, so inmates cannot see into the judge's office area.
- R2. Train and supply staff with epi-pens in case of emergency (bee stings, mosquito bites, food allergies, etc.)
- R3. Install security cameras in the back parking lot (a recurring Grand Jury recommendation from the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report).
- R4. Adjust the sensitivity of the metal detector in the lobby, so it is not triggered by the movement of the elevator.
- R5. Install bars on the window in the stairwell that the inmates utilize.
- R6. Improve the emergency public announcement (PA) system, so it is site-wide.

Burton Creek Recommendations:

- R7. Increase the security of the sally port and lock up the flares stored there.
- R8. Train and supply staff with epi-pens, in case of emergency.
- R9. Repair the heating system.
- R10. Increase the security of the storage of evidence.
- R11. Implement changes to make the facility more ADA-compliant.

South Placer Main Jail Recommendations:

- R12. Assign responsibility for the cracks in the concrete flooring and repair them.

South Placer Minimum Security Facility Recommendations:

R13. Provide more opportunity for work hours for the female inmates.

Auburn Main Jail Recommendations:

R14. Repair the numerous, on-going ceiling water leak problems inside the facility.

Request for Responses:

	<u>Recommendations Requiring Response</u>	<u>Response Due Date</u>
Mr. Edward Bonner Placer County Sheriff-Coroner-Marshal 2929 Richardson Drive Auburn, CA. 95603	R1-R14	August 24, 2015
Mr. David Boesch Placer County CEO 175 Fulweiler Avenue Auburn, CA 95603	R1-R14	August 24, 2015

Copies sent to:

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