

Humboldt County Jails Sites Visits Report

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury is required by law to visit and report on the condition and management of all correctional facilities in Humboldt County each year. This report is a summary of those visits and subsequent findings. All law enforcement officers are required to receive twenty four hours of Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) every two years. The Grand Jury found that both the Eureka Police Department and the Sheriff's Department Boatyard had in adequate storage to accommodate the amount of evidence and equipment needing to be stored. The Eel River Conservation Camp was found to have unsecured hazardous materials.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Penal Code 919(b) the Humboldt County Grand Jury "shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county". To meet the requirements of this code, the Humboldt Grand Jury annually makes visits to various facilities within the county to inspect these facilities and their operation. Some of the facilities are managed by agencies outside Humboldt County but have direct ties to law enforcement agencies within Humboldt County

Facilities inspected

- Sheriff's Department
 - Humboldt County Correctional Facility
 - McKinleyville Sheriff's Station
 - Garberville Sheriff's Station
 - Humboldt County Animal Shelter
 - Sheriff's Boatyard
 - Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) Woodyard
 - Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) Farm
 - Humboldt County Coroner's Office
- City Police Departments
 - Eureka City Police Department
 - Arcata City Police Department
 - Fortuna City Police Department
 - Fortuna Animal Shelter

- Ferndale City Police Department
- Rio Dell City Police Department
- Humboldt County Probation Department
 - Juvenile Hall
 - Northern California Regional Center
 - Community Corrections Resource Center
- State of California facilities located in Humboldt County
 - Eel River Conservation Camp #31
 - High Rock Conservation Camp #32

METHODOLOGY

Grand Jury members made scheduled visits to the various law enforcement facilities in the county between September 2014 and January 2015. Reports of the visits were brought back to the Grand Jury for discussion and follow-up questions were emailed to the appropriate administrators. Follow-up visits were also scheduled as needed.

DISCUSSION

Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF)

The Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF) is situated in Eureka on Fifth Street. It is a newer concrete structure capable of housing 411 inmates. Most inmates are housed in open dormitories with male and female inmates housed in separate areas. Segregated housing is available for high-risk inmates such as the medically quarantined, the uncooperative, and/or violent offenders. It is the only facility in Humboldt County for the detention and incarceration of individuals either accused or convicted of crimes. The facility employs electronic control systems for the majority of operations. The modern infrastructure allows a minimal staff to manage the population while maintaining a high degree of security and safety. There seems to be adequate security when inmates need to be escorted out of the facility such as for court appearances. The officer in charge usually resolves personal problems between inmates.

The Humboldt County Grand Jury found no evidence of overcrowding due to prison realignment, a concern that was raised by the 2012-2013 Humboldt County Grand Jury. If necessary, inmates can be double-celled in the more secure wings of the facility. Overall the facilities are clean, well maintained and in good condition. Inspected areas included the cells, bathrooms, study, recreation areas, sickbay, control room, and visitor rooms.

The HCCF allows for substantial freedom of inmate movement due to the way the facility was designed. Staff is encouraged to interact with the inmates in a non-threatening manner. All

movement of staff and inmates is controlled and monitored from a central command post where staff can maintain visual contact with all aspects of the facility via cameras. The sick bay is staffed 24/7 by licensed personnel with a doctor on call. In addition to exam rooms there are secure rooms to house inmates needing close medical supervision. Medications are secure, and the staff has the ability to contact personal physicians for medical information. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Department offers a number of voluntary, as well as court-mandated programs for HCCF inmates. These programs include GED Certificate preparation and adult education courses in parenting, anger management, substance abuse, and employment skills. HCCF also offers training programs for its staff members. These programs include both in-service training sessions and training using outside resources such as those available at the College of the Redwoods. When interviewed, HCCF personnel were forthcoming and appeared to be well-versed in their areas of responsibility.

McKinleyville Sheriff's Station

The McKinleyville Sheriff's Station is a clean, well-maintained 1800 sq. ft. facility. It has a reception area, a large work area, locker rooms, a computer crime lab, and a small evidence room. The lockers are used to store uniforms and weapons. Stored evidence is transferred weekly to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. The station's fenced yard is used to house 11 departmental vehicles. The station provides two deputies per shift for law enforcement services to the residents of McKinleyville, Fieldbrook, Westhaven, Orick, and all other unincorporated areas north of Arcata. The cities of Blue Lake and Trinidad have contracts with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement coverage, consisting of two assigned deputies for Blue Lake and one for Trinidad. Willow Creek has two assigned resident deputies. The department is also mandated, by Public Law 280, to assist Tribal Police when needed.

Garberville Sheriff's Station

One sergeant and one deputy man the Garberville Sheriff's station. There is also one office person who works during the day Monday through Friday. The staff works with various municipal, county and state organizations to address emergency situations. There are three former holding cells that are no longer being used for that purpose. Detainees are transported to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility in Eureka.

Humboldt County Animal Shelter

The Humboldt County Animal Shelter is located in McKinleyville near the airport. It covers the unincorporated areas of the county with contracts to cover Trinidad and Blue Lake. They have a kennel capacity for 52 dogs and 50 cats. They are staffed by a supervising sergeant, three animal control officers, four full time and two part time kennel attendants, and over 100 certified volunteers. They have a \$95,000 contract with the McKinleyville Animal Care Center for animal care. For animal feed they rely on donations and a \$2,000 per month contract with The Farm Store. They have a euthanasia rate of 3%, mostly animals with severe medical issues or irresolvable temperament issues. Their adoption process includes a mandatory four-day waiting period. The shelter has a website that utilizes PetFinder and PetHarbor for those wishing to adopt an animal. They also have a Facebook page.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Boatyard

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Boatyard serves as a storage area for both the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department (HCSD) and the Humboldt County Sheriff's Posse (HCSP). The HCSP is a volunteer organization that assists with search and rescue operations. The HCSD stores equipment such as boats, trailers and vehicles in the boatyard. HCSD stores SWAT equipment here. The boatyard serves as storage area for maintenance supplies and equipment, an area to process and store equipment and materials confiscated during drug raids, and as an evidence storage facility. The boatyard also serves as a vehicle maintenance area. The HCSP uses the boatyard as a storage area for its vehicles and boats. Both HCSD and HCSP staff verbalized storage concerns. The HCSP has an open but covered area to store boats and vehicles but the HCSD has no such area and their boats and vehicles are stored exposed to the elements. There are several large racks donated by a lumber company for storing confiscated equipment. Weather makes much of this storage space unusable. Although the area is secure more space and buildings are needed.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) is an alternative to incarceration. Qualified participants perform eight hours of work for one day in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. The program's intent is to provide qualified, low-risk offenders alternatives to incarceration and to allow participants to retain or obtain employment. To qualify for this program the individual's sentence must be 180 days or less and not a sex or violent crime offense. At the time of the Humboldt County Grand Jury's inspection there were 173 people participating in the program at the woodyard. Participants work eight hours a day with two breaks and a lunch period, and are covered by Workers Compensation Insurance. There are two focuses within the SWAP program. One is the woodyard in Eureka and the other is the pig farm in Fortuna

The pig farm sits on 56 acres of land owned by the Fortuna airport. Rent is paid for by inmate work at the airport. There are several buildings, an enclosure for pigs, a garden area and a fenced off enclosure for cows. The pig farm is a self-supporting system, selling the pigs and cows for meat and the piglets to local 4H and Future Farmers of America groups. The produce goes to HCCF for meals as does the pork. All money earned goes back into the program. The program has been in existence since 1984 and has served as a model to other agencies.

The woodyard is situated in Eureka where participants cut, split, and stack firewood into cords. These cords are sold at lower-than-market prices through the Humboldt Senior Resource Center to eligible seniors on a sliding scale from \$78.00 to \$121.00 per cord.

Humboldt County Coroner's Office

The Coroner's Office is situated in the old General Hospital building on I Street. The staff consists of the Coroner and four deputy coroners. There is someone on call 24/7. The current staffing level makes the work unduly demanding and debilitating. Many of the autopsies are conducted by outside doctors, with the cost running about \$1500 per autopsy.

In addition to being charged with investigations into Cause of Deaths, the Coroner's Office is responsible for the personal belongings of the deceased and the disposition or auction of these items.

The physical space occupied by the department is old, with equipment dating back at least 50 years. The facility is not efficiently designed and difficult to keep clean. There is an open access between the autopsy room and the office that cannot be closed and presents an environmental hazard to anyone working in the office. There is a noted lack of safe storage. The department does not have a private space to talk to families of the deceased. There is a room, seldom used by Social Services that would be adequate for this purpose.

About a month after the Grand Jury's visit was made, the Coroner announced his retirement and made a recommendation that the Coroner's Office be placed under the control of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department. In his press conference, he stated that with the budget cuts his office was having a difficult time completing tasks in a timely and efficient manner. Overtime was also an issue as was the need for more deputies. The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors subsequently voted to approve the Coroner's recommendation.

Eureka Police Department

Two visits were made to the Eureka Police Department (EPD) which included offices, communication center, weapons' lockers, exercise room, evidence storage area, and the enclosed vehicle yard. At the time of the visits there were 50 full-time officers out of a 54-officer allotment. Officers work four ten-hour shifts per week. The EPD has 22 marked police cars and several motorcycles. The building, although showing signs of wear, is well maintained. The communication and dispatch equipment is sophisticated. There is trained computer communications/network staff as well as a contracted expert employed to maintain and upgrade the equipment. Two EPD officers have recently been promoted and given specific geographic responsibilities to oversee. Funding sources for the department are varied. Some sources are grants, asset forfeiture (none of which can be used for salaries), city state, and federal funds. In addition to the on-going state-mandated training, there are multiple levels of training for the officers. The mandated training includes weapons qualification, first aid, domestic violence and racial discrimination training, as well as critical incidence training and dealing with the mentally challenged. No weapons are used by EPD officers without prior training and practice. There is also leadership training courses available lasting 18 months to two years depending on the career path chosen by each officer. Some POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) is available.

The EPD responded to three SWAT calls in 2014 to assist the Sheriff's department. All calls

were outside of the city limits. The EPD states that SWAT is only one of the tools available to the Incident Commander and should only be used as a last resort. They do have a Mine Resistant Armored Personnel Carrier that has never been used and is kept in storage. The amount of evidence and the length of time the evidence is stored in the EPD facility is of concern to the staff. In the main storage room there is evidence from 1947. The weapons are stored in a separate room that is also filled to capacity. There is evidence stored in former temporary holding cells. There is also marijuana evidence that is stored and it creates an odor throughout the building.

Arcata Police Department

The Arcata Police Department is located adjacent to city hall. The facility includes a reception area, several offices, an evidence room, locker room, conference room, and one holding cell that is never used. Department vehicles are parked in an adjoining lot that is shared with the library. At the time of the visit in September, the staff included 27 officers out of a 28-officer allotment. The Arcata Police Department has a support staff of seven employees which includes a Youth/Family Counselor. They have 25 volunteers who function as data/vacation clerks. They function on 12 hour shifts with a minimum of a dispatcher, two officers and a watch commander on each shift. They have an emphasis on Plaza coverage at midday and on Thursdays through Saturdays from 4:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. There is also a park ranger who patrols the Arcata Marsh and the Arcata Community Forest. Officers receive scheduled POST training, rapid response training, perishable skills training, and defensive tactics training. The department holds monthly liaison meetings with Humboldt State University, and the Arcata Fire Department.

Fortuna Police Department

The Fortuna Police Department has two rooms that were used as holding cells, but are now used as an evidence processing room and an armory. If a person arrested cannot be immediately transported to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility, they have a secure holding area. All Fortuna Police Officers receive scheduled POST training. In addition, all but two officers, have had Children in Crisis training. The department is planning on building a new facility but will continue transporting detainees to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. The department has reciprocal agreements with other local law enforcement agencies when additional assistance is needed.

Fortuna Animal Shelter

The Fortuna Animal Shelter holds animals found in the Fortuna, Ferndale and Rio Dell area. The shelter is a clean well-cared for facility with cages cleaned and animals fed daily. A local veterinarian is used for spay and neutering services. If the animal's owner is not found the animals are moved to the Humboldt County Animal Shelter in McKinleyville. Feral cats are placed with local farmers.

Ferndale Police Department

The Ferndale Police Department consists of five officers and one police chief. All officers reside in Ferndale. All officers receive training on a scheduled basis including Children in Crisis training. All officers are equipped with digital video cameras. As all 911 calls go to Fortuna, Ferndale officers are dispatched by the Fortuna Police Department. There is a reciprocal agreement with local law enforcement agencies when additional assistance is needed. The facility is clean, friendly and well organized with no holding cell. Detainees are transported to the Humboldt County Correction Facility. A former holding cell now serves as a space for processing and securing evidence. They also have a secure space for storing firearms and riot equipment.

Rio Dell Police Department

Five officers staff the Rio Dell Police Department. Each officer carries a cell phone and is dispatched from the Fortuna Police Department. All five officers are current with POST training requirements and all reside in Rio Dell. The facility is clean and well maintained with no holding cell. Detainees are transported to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. There are reciprocal agreements with other local law enforcement agencies.

Juvenile Hall

Juvenile Hall was built in 1968 and is well maintained but showing signs of age. A new facility, being built behind the existing one, is currently scheduled to be opened in January 2017 with the outside recreational space to be completed by March 2017. Juvenile Hall has 16 regular Juvenile Correctional Officers (JCOs). By law cameras cannot be substituted for direct visual contact with juveniles, so all cells are equipped with windows.

The average daily population, during the last three years, has been approximately 18 juveniles. The population has declined in recent years. One of the reasons given for this decrease is that there are currently fewer children living in Humboldt County. A juvenile could be detained for a few hours or a few years. There are only four or five foster homes in Humboldt County willing to take wards of the court and they generally will only take one youth at a time. Often more homes are needed, so it is not uncommon to place juveniles into foster homes outside Humboldt County. The goal, however, is to keep children in Humboldt County rather than to place them in group homes out of the county. Juvenile Hall seldom admits juveniles younger than 13 years of age and when admitted it is rare that they stay more than a couple of days. A County Mental Health clinician checks on juveniles every day. There is a nurse on staff employed by the County Forensic Medical Group, an organization that specializes in bringing health care to inmates. The County Forensic Medical Group provides the only privatized service in Juvenile Hall. The Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) provides instruction.

In addition to the cells and an admission area, there is a classroom, a control room, a large recreation room, a kitchen that also services the Northern California Regional Center, an outdoor recreational area, and administrative offices.

Northern California Regional Center

The Northern California Regional Center (New Horizons Program) is a fairly new facility that houses juveniles who have a serious criminal history and/or mental health issues. The average stay is 4 ½ to 6 months.

The facility is brighter and more spacious and the cells are less dismal than those in Juvenile Hall. Half of the population is from outside Humboldt County and is a source of revenue from the referring counties. There are spaces for counseling, visiting and recreation. In addition to the inmate's cells, the facility includes a day room, laundry, classroom, and nurse's office. There is also an outdoor recreational area. The New Horizons Program clinicians provide three Aggression Replacement Training (ART) groups and two substance abuse groups each week. Juveniles also receive at least one hour of individual therapy per week and all youth receive weekly family counseling.

Instruction is provided via independent studies due to the varied ages and stages of development of the juveniles. The classroom is well equipped with laptop and desktop computers, desks, and white boards. Humboldt County Mental Health evaluates the New Horizons Program and files quarterly reports.

Humboldt County Community Corrections Resource Center

As part of the county's probation department, the County Corrections Resource Center is in direct response to Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109). AB109 was passed by the California legislature in 2011 in response to the US Supreme Court order that California cut its prison population. Also known as "prison alignment", the bill dramatically shifted responsibility from the state to the counties for tens of thousands of low-risk offenders. In addition to this shift, AB 109 provides state funding to the counties to invest in alternatives to incarceration, including out-of-custody rehabilitative treatment programs. The Community Corrections Partnership, a group that includes representatives from the district attorney's office, sheriff's office, police departments, county mental health, and probation staff, oversees distribution of these funds to the various agencies involved. The staff at the Community Corrections Resource Center is tasked with out-of-jail supervision of those split sentences (jail time and supervised time) as well as pre-trial assessment, pre-trial releases, and pre-trial supervision.

The Ohio risk assessment is the primary tool when assessing someone for inclusion in the pre-trial program. Inmates who are booked on serious/violent offenses (PC 667.5), have a detainer, are on parole, or refuse the assessment interview, are not recommended in the pre-trial program. The jail has one officer conducting assessments for pre-trial release participation. The program is new and evolving.

Some of the services available through the Humboldt County Community Corrections Resource Center include: nurses and doctors, probation supervision staff, mental health clinicians, navigators to assist with housing and medical insurance, and jobs counselors.

The Humboldt County Community Corrections Resource Center is in a converted office building and the space is inadequate for the various services it is mandated to provide.

High Rock and Eel River Conservation Camps

The Eel River Conservation Camp and the High Rock Conservation Camp are two separate camps operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. They are situated north of the Garberville/Redway area. The High Rock Camp has a capacity for 110 inmates. Younger men are trained to be firefighters. In addition to living quarters there is a wood shop, a repair shop, and a saw mill. Equipment and buildings are kept clean, in good repair and meet safety standards.

The Eel River Camp has a capacity for 120 inmates but during fire season, when necessary, can accommodate up to 1000 persons. The camp is well maintained. Structures include a greenhouse that supplies inmates from both camps with in-season fresh vegetables, a warehouse that is used for storing supplies that are used during firefighting season and a sawmill that is used to produce lumber that is used for maintenance and repair. Inmates use some of the wood to make rocking horses, which are donated to schools for fund raising purposes. The buildings are clean and in good repair. It was noted that the cleaning supplies necessary for maintenance are stored in the warehouse but not locked up. Anyone has access to these potentially hazardous materials.

FINDINGS

- F1. There are unsecured hazardous materials at the Eel River Conservation Camp.
- F2. The Eureka Police Department storage facilities are inadequate to accommodate the amount and type of evidence needing to be stored.
- F3. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Department Boatyard storage facilities are inadequate to accommodate the amount and type of equipment and evidence stored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends securing the hazardous materials at the Eel River Conservation Camp. (F1)
- R2. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends the relocation of evidence at the Eureka Police Department facility to a larger, more secure facility to make available much needed space for staff and day-to-day operations. (F2)
- R3. The Humboldt County Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department Boatyard provide weather-secured storage access for perishable equipment. (F3)

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department to respond to recommendation 3.

From the Eureka Police Department to respond to recommendation 2.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Humboldt County Grand Jury invites the following to respond:

The California State Department of corrections to recommendation 1.

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.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY (if needed)

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APPENDIX (IF NEEDED)

DISCLAIMER (IF NEEDED)