SUTTER COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2001 – 2002

Roster

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>James F. Bowman</td>
<td>Donald L. Massy</td>
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<td>Doug Coleman</td>
<td>James C. Morris *</td>
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<td>Sharon D. Foote – Pro-Tem</td>
<td>Kenneth Nightingale</td>
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<td>Nathan L. Gossett</td>
<td>Robert T. Nunez – Foreperson</td>
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<td>John C. Hackman *</td>
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<td>Carleen A. Hagen *</td>
<td>Dennis M. Richardson</td>
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<td>Darnell Howe *</td>
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<td>Larry Jones</td>
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<td>Steve Joyner</td>
<td>Charles F. Sperbeck *</td>
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<td>Brad Willoughby *</td>
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* Committee Chair
COMMITTEES

Audit & Finance
County Government
Criminal Justice
Education
Fire/Emergency Services/Public Buildings/Property
Health/Mental Health/Social Services
Planning & Environment
Edit
1.0  Audit & Finance

1.1  INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury Audit and Finance Committee conducted an inspection and review of the Information Technology Department on November 9, 2001. We met with Department head, Bernadette Kucharczuk, and her assistant, Truman Skelly. Prior to our meeting, we received information that was requested in our initial contact letter. These documents included:

- Department Mission
- Annual Budget: type of funding (primary), controls, shortfalls
- Personnel Staffing:
- Employee Turnover (For last two years)
- Contract Purchases
- Internal Controls for Sensitive Equipment

MISSION

As defined in the County Budget, the description of the Information Technology Department reads:

“This department provides services to departments to more efficiently handle the volume of data that must be managed as part of the County’s varied activities. Throughout the system, these services include: the responsibility for administering various automated activities; the overall management of computer hardware and software; the feasibility and evaluation studies necessary for acquisition of potential new application; system development activities; computer operations activities; and other desktop/laptop computer related activities. The Director of Information Technology serves as an Assistant County Purchasing Agent and coordinates all hardware and software purchases.”

Also, as described in the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan prepared by the County Auditor-Controller:

“The Information Technology Department is responsible for the overall management of computer hardware and software; feasibility and evaluation studies necessary for the acquisition of potential new applications; systems development activities; computer operations activities; and microcomputer-related activities. Services provided include: the processing of County accounting ledgers; payroll warrants; maintenance of the accounting systems; preparation of the tax assessment roll and printing of tax bills; tax apportionment; inventory control of fixed assets; personnel records; cataloguing of audiovisual materials; voter registration; mental health patient statistics; health statistics; engineering calculations; welfare and vendor warrants; and budget worksheets. The department also provides service to other government agencies when it does not impede the processing of County applications.
Costs for this department are allocated by direct billings, which are prepared by Information Technology calculated utilizing Robot/CPA System Usage software program which tracks jobs by CPU minute time, printer mount, sign-on time, interactive transactions, and telecommunication gets and puts.”

REPORT

The audit and review was necessary to determine if proper management guidelines and security controls for the office were in place at the time of a theft of county systems and reports. The audit was necessary to determine how an employee of this unit was able to remove and sell County information and computer systems information to private individuals.

The theft of county systems and information came to public awareness as a direct result of an investigation by the Sacramento High Tech Crimes unit, a part of the Sacramento Sheriff’s office and was also reported in local newspapers. The employee involved in the theft was arrested and convicted of his crimes and removed from county employment.

During the first interview and audit of the IT Department, several items of concern were brought to the attention of members of the Grand Jury. After a careful review of the audit and interview notes and tape recordings, it was determined a follow up review should be conducted. This was accomplished on January 29, 2002. As a result of this second interview and audit, the following information on the operation of the Information and Technology Department was determined as unsatisfactory for government operations by the members of the 2001/2002 Sutter County Grand Jury Audit and Finance Committee.

FINDINGS

Internal Security

During the first visit of the Information and Technology Department, we noted a lack of internal security for sensitive items controlled by their department. These items were: checks, floppy disks, hard drives, key cards and reports on county operations. All of the items, except the hard drive were stored in an open mail cubical which had no form of security to prevent pilferage or theft.

Although this area is adjacent to an employee’s workstation, this affords only minimal protection. A week prior to the official visit, a member of the Grand Jury had full access to this area including the area where county welfare checks were being printed and was not questioned or challenged by any person of the unit. Further, the Grand Jury member was able to remove a key card and a check, dispensed from the State of California, from the mail area and examined both without notice. Both items were returned upon leaving the area.

Inventory Management and Accountability
The control for and accountability of Sutter County’s computer equipment is the direct responsibility of the Information and Technology Department. This department maintains repairs, upgrades and purchases all computer and related equipment used in the county. During the second review of this department, the Grand Jury requested a copy of the county’s inventory report for review. The report provided the Grand Jury revealed the following:

| Employee Name |
| Work Station |
| Computer (desk top/laptop) |
| County financial operation code |

With this information in hand, members of the Grand Jury tried to identify computer equipment in the Clerk of the Courts office and were unable to ascertain if any of the equipment in the office was actually on the inventory provided (It was latter determined that computer equipment for the courts is not under the control of the Information and Technology Department and therefore should not be considered in the committees recommendations for inventory control). We then requested from the Information and Technology Department, additional information for all computer equipment under their control. The information requested was very basic:

**Type of Computer – Manufacturer**
- Purchase Date and Value
- Physical Location/Serial Number
- Upgrade
- Scheduled Replacement Date

We were informed this information was not available or necessary, as the county only required an inventory control tag for equipment over $5,000.00 in value. We were uncertain of the total value of computers and related equipment owned by the county, we feel safe in estimating the total value to be in excess of $500,000.00. This to the Grand Jury requires a complete management re-think for accountability and control of county owned computer equipment.

**Storage/Repair Area**

During our initial visit, members of the Grand Jury were given a tour of the basaltite block, tin roofed building behind the County Office Buildings where the Information and Technology Department repairs, maintains and stores computers and related equipment for the county. The building, which can only be considered as dry storage, does not have any HVAC. Computer equipment for the county is stored, maintained and upgraded by county employees on site as weather conditions/humidity/cold/heat allow. On occasion, employees are required to perform repairs/upgrades at their desks, as the repair shop is too cold, hot, damp or wet.

It was noted by the Grand Jury members during our visit that much of the equipment was in varying stages of repair and service considerable new equipment in packing cartons were present. The space appears to be totally unsuited for the intended purpose or provides little security from theft, water and cold.
Computer Equipment Systems Upgrade/Replacement Schedule

The Office of Information Technology informed the Grand Jury members they had a six-month plan for computer/equipment replacement to keep the county updated in the computer field. We requested a copy of the plan and became quite concerned when the plan provided, proved only to be an inter-office memo, with proposed replacement by department, but without real substance as to the type of equipment to be replaced or upgraded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended by the Sutter County Grand Jury the following procedures and control guidelines be implemented by Information Technology immediately:

All access doors pertaining to the operations of the IT area should be controlled by key or key card only. Public access should be strictly limited to full time employee control.

The mail distribution unit, which consists of open cubicles, should be replaced with lock box access only.

It is recommended that all county equipment under the control of IT, be stored in a secured and HVAC controlled space. In addition, a system should be established for controlled removal and placement of computers and related equipment.

Regarding Inventory Management Control Records, the following information is suggested for control, accountability and management of county computers and related equipment:

A workable format for inventory management would include the following:

- Employee name and Department
- Make and Manufacturer of Equipment
- Purchase Date and Purchase Price
- Date Equipment put into service
- Estimated Replacement/Upgrade Date

Although the six-month plan that was requested by the Grand Jury provided some degree of planning it was not useful as a management tool for budget, planning and manpower utilization. A comprehensive plan for replacement/upgrade of county systems should be developed by the county departments and in conjunction with Information Technology develop a Five year/Ten year plan for the entire county which will afford proper management, planning and budget control.

In addition, this type of document/equipment replacement program will allow the county to have a realistic value base for its operations should a recurrence of a natural disaster force the county to seek replacement of its computer program systems.
In the opinion of the Grand Jury members, the current storage/repair facility adjacent to the levee is inadequate. The Grand Jurors realize space availability is limited, however, since this department, services the entire county, serious consideration must be given to relocation and consolidation of all functions of Information Technology with the exception of the main frame computer room. Consolidation of the function would provide much needed space, secure storage and accountability.

Considering the number of computers and computer equipment the county owns, and the vulnerability and portability of this equipment, as discovered by the Grand Jury, the system currently in place, invites continued problems and possible theft.

**RESPONDENT**

Information and Technology Department
SUTTER COUNTY TREASURER AND TAX COLLECTOR’S OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

The Treasurer Tax Collector for the County of Sutter has the direct responsibility for, and to, protect, preserve and maintain cash and investments placed in his hands on behalf of the citizens of Sutter County. The office handles all facets of the county’s tax collection, departmental fees, court fees and any other revenue generated by county departments.

All revenues generated within the County of Sutter are deposited with the treasurer’s office for financial posting and safekeeping prior to collection from the Treasurer’s Office by armored car and deposited into the county’s bank account daily. A close and secure financial accounting is made of all funds received and credited to the county’s bank account daily. The treasurer and members of his staff perform a daily review of all accounts and funds found in excess to daily obligations are placed overnight into a SWEEP account, which generates additional revenue for the county.

REPORT

The members of the Sutter County Grand Jury, Audit and Finance Committee conducted an interview and review of the Sutter County Treasurer and Tax Collector’s office on January 21, 2002. The review and interview was held with the Treasurer Tax Collector, Jim Stevens and Assistant Treasurer Tax Collector, Tanya Martin. Both parties have occupied their respective positions for a period of over 18 years and appear well informed and qualified for their county duties.

The system of control and review by the Treasurer Tax Collector’s Office appears to work well, and provides the county with excellent security and financial accountability.

Government codes require the County Treasurer Tax Collector, through consultation with the Board of Supervisors for Sutter County, establish an oversight committee to review and audit as necessary all investment transactions made by the Treasurer Tax Collector. This committee known as the Sutter County Pooled Money Investment Board meets semi-annually to review audit and discuss all investments portfolio’s of the county. The Pooled Money Investment Board, which consists of 5 members, the Superintendent of Schools, County Administrative Officer, Auditor Controller of the County of Sutter, Special District Representative, and a public citizen, requested a outside audit of all accounts handled by the County Treasurer in 2001. The audit revealed no irregularities in the accounts or the procedures used to handle these accounts. Appendix A.2 depicts the current investment portfolio for Sutter County as of December 31, 2001.

FINDINGS

1. The investment portfolio for the County of Sutter appears to be financially sound and operated in a manner consistent with the California Government Codes, as specified.
2. Employee compensation: Treasurer Tax Collectors Staff. During our visit to this office, supervisory members, of the office, informed us, the current employees’ compensation for staff members is far below that of other county treasurer’s offices within the 10 county areas for compensation standards. The low pay scale has raised some concerns with the management personnel of this office. Considerable time and money is invested in each employee of the unit. As the employees gain sufficient experience and training in the performance of the duties of the office, they are continually seeking other employment opportunities with neighboring counties, in the same field of endeavor, at a higher rate of pay. (i.e. Yuba County, Colusa County). Even though these counties do not enjoy the financial freedom and limited debt, as Sutter County does, their pay scale for like work is considerably higher. Attachment A.1 in the Appendix shows the difference in pay scales of the Treasurer Tax Collector positions in comparison with those in surrounding counties.

OBSERVATION AND FINDING

During our review of the operations of the staff of the tax collectors office it was noted considerable time was spent by the employees' on the telephone and computers providing information and searching records for members of the general public and other government agencies. They did this by cradling the telephone on their shoulder/hand and operating the computer terminal with the other hand. At times the telephone had to be laid down for the employee to perform these tasks.

We felt this is a very inefficient manner to perform the tasks at hand and could be accomplished in a more efficient manner if the personnel were furnished with telephone operators head sets that connect directly into the telephone base, thus freeing up their hands to perform their work unencumbered. Our review of this matter determined the cost of conversion to be only $85.00/100.00 per station and required no special equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the pay issue, the committee recommends an honest and forthright attempt should be made by all parties, (Treasurer Tax Collectors Office, and the Personnel Compensation Officer for Sutter County) to try and resolve this matter through job reclassification and compensation review.

Regarding the purchase of telephone headsets, to improve the efficiency of the employees, the committee recommends a budget item be approved for this office and the purchase and conversion is accomplished as soon as funds are available.

RESPONDENT
Sutter County Treasurer and Tax Collector

ATTACHMENTS
Appendix A.1: County to County Salary Comparison
Appendix A.2: Investment Portfolio
2.0 County Government

2.1 SUTTER COUNTY AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury visited Mr. Robert E. Stark, the Auditor-Controller on December 3, 2001.

The Auditor-Controller, an elected official, is responsible for maintaining the fiscal records of the County and those of the special districts governed by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, control accounts are maintained for self-governed special districts and school districts depositing money with the County Treasurer. The traditional audit functions include auditing special districts, auditing treasury cash and investments, accounting for payments and receipts, budget control, financial reporting, payroll, and cost accounting. The controller function is to oversee accounting procedures and audit County departments, with an emphasis on internal control, economy, and efficiency. Other responsibilities include calculation of property taxes due based on the assessment roll, apportionment of property taxes collected, and accounting for various types of benefit assessments, special assessment, and bonds. The office also provides specialized services to the Welfare Department to facilitate the distribution of welfare payments.

REPORT

Audit of the County as required by the California Code of County Government is accomplished by awarding a three-year contract to a private accounting firm by the County Administrative Officer (CAO). The Auditor-Controller is not involved with the awarding of the contract.

The Auditor-Controller receives assessments from the County Assessor, applies the tax rate to the assessment, and forwards the information to the Tax Collector.

The County Administrative Officer develops the Auditor-Controller’s budget with input from the department.

Employee turnover has not been a problem. Two long-time employees retired last summer, and one additional employee was added this year. One position remained open at the time of the interview.

The Auditor-Controller serves on the County Investment Committee. This Committee meets twice a year. Other members of the Investment Committee include the County Administrative Officer, Treasurer, Superintendent of Schools, a representative of special districts and one public member. The government code sets the type of investments, and the Board of Supervisors sets investment goals. Actual investment of funds is by the County Treasurer.
County internal audit policy complies with County Ordinances and Government Code.

The Department of Information Technology generates a significant portion of reports for the Auditor-Controller. These include but are not limited to the following: account billings, debit processing, payment of county vouchers, county payroll, inventory control of county assets, welfare payments, and fleet management reports. Much of this material is directly imputed to information technology by the departments involved. The Auditor-Controller verifies that funds are available and expenditures comply with legitimate department functions. Backup and storage of accounting data is handled by the Information and Technology Department. The Auditor-Controller has no direct supervision of information technology.

FINDINGS

The Auditor-Controllers office has adequate staff and low employee turnover.

The departmental organization chart shows thirteen members of the Information and Technology Department, although the Auditor-Controller has no direct supervision of this unit. The CAO supervises Information Technology in this area. This seems inconsistent; but since Information Technology Department that is headed by Bernadette Kucharczuk, acts as a service unit for all county departments, the CAO is probably the proper supervisor. The Auditor-Controller can perform his duties without supervision of Information Technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

RESPONDENT

Sutter County Auditor-Controller
INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Sutter County Animal Shelter, January 11, 2002. This visitation was made specifically as a follow up of unresolved issues published in the 2000-2001 Grand Jury report. Mr. Larry Bagley, Permitting Services Officer, represented the Animal Control Office.

REPORT

The facility seemed very clean and well maintained. Mr. Bagley noted that the personnel did not know that the Grand Jury was making a visitation. The animals, cages, and the surroundings, were clean and in proper order. A complete tour of the facility was made.

STATUS OF THE 2000-2001 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation for updating the computer system was reported as being in progress. New computer equipment had just been received but had not been installed.

The two year plan for replacing the six (6) compact pick up trucks, with standard size pick up trucks, will be met as follows: Three (3) will be replaced in this current fiscal year (2002), and three (3) will be replaced the next fiscal year (2003), according to information received.

At the time of this interview, two (2) trucks had been replaced so far for this fiscal year (2002).

The provisions of purchasing a new larger stock trailer will be included in next year’s budget, if funds are available. Mr. Bagley reported that a stock trailer is used so infrequently, that purchasing a new one at this time is not critical.

The existing facility appears to be adequate at this time, but a larger facility may be required in the future. Expansion at the existing location may not be feasible, however, the existing location precludes complaints of noise or traffic.

Problems with the handling of cash are still unresolved. Mr. Bagley stated this problem has been referred to the Sutter County Auditor with the recommendation a cash register be purchased. The matter is under consideration at this time. It was noted that the issue of personnel making up for the cash shortages has been resolved. Cash differences are now entered in an account set up by the Administrative Services Officer.

FINDING
Problems reported in the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Final Report are being reviewed by all the proper officials involved and are being addressed as recommended and as funds permit.

**RECOMMENDATION**


**RESPONDENTS**

Sutter County Animal Control  
Richard L. Hall, Community Services Department  
Sutter County Board of Supervisors
3.0 Criminal Justice

3.1 SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2002, 5 members of the Grand Jury met with Sheriff Jim Denney and his Command Staff. Primary discussion centered on staffing and the County Jail function. We toured the jail facility with Captain Parker, the Jail Commander.

There are 4 divisions within the Sheriff’s Department, the Patrol division, the Detective Division, the Jail Division, and the Support Service Division. A Captain, who is the Division Commander, heads each Division and they all answer to the Under-sheriff.

The Patrol Division consists of 3 functions, Road Patrol, Boat Patrol, and the Live Oak City contract.

The Detective Division includes the Coroner and Public Administrator.

The Jail Division includes the Court Bailiffs.

The Support Service Division includes the Dispatch/Communication Center.

Road Patrol is currently down 13 positions. This includes 6 new positions that have not been filled. The salary savings are not being realized because the labor shortfall is being made up with the Deputies working overtime. In the last 6 months, Deputies have left the Department because of salary and benefit discrepancies. The County has addressed the problem this year in that the Patrol Deputies pay has been increased 1 pay grade. There have also been changes that allow lateral hiring from other agencies. Their new contract also addressed benefits. In addition to the pay scale being increased, the retirement benefits are now competitive with other law enforcement agencies.

The Boat Patrol is assigned patrol and rescue operations on the river. The patrol boats and equipment are furnished by the State, and the County is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the boats. The Boat Patrol Deputies have received extensive training in the operation of these boats.

The Patrol Division provides all patrol duties for the City of Live Oak. The city contracts and reimburses the County for these services.

All three of the Patrol Divisions utilize Reserve Deputies. There are approximately 30 reserves and they receive compensation based upon their training and abilities.

The Detective Division includes the Coroner and Public Administration.

The Jail Division utilizes Correctional Officers, Food Service personnel, and Reserve Deputies. Correctional Officers are not sworn Peace Officers. When they are off duty they have no Peace Officer powers. The maximum population of the jail is 341 inmates, but the average population is about 250.
There were 232 inmates the day we toured the facility. Board of Correctional standards sets staffing levels. There is a great deal of emphasis placed on classifying prisoners by an extensive interview system. Low and medium security prisoners are housed in a dormitory. The jail also has single cells for prisoners that need to be separated from the general population. Felony prisoners can be sentenced to the County Jail, but only if their sentence is less than 1 year.

The Support Services Division handles Communications and Records. The Dispatchers receive both Sheriff and Fire Emergency calls. The Dispatch Center is currently short 4 positions. The last contract raised their pay 2 grades. This increase will help the department fill existing vacancies. The Department is in the process of upgrading the system, but because of vacancies in the department this cannot now be completed. When they become fully staffed they will complete the upgrading system.

**FINDINGS**

The Sheriff’s Department is providing patrol service to Yuba City in the newly annexed area. This service is not provided on a normal contract basis, but the County is reimbursed by taxes generated in the area. When the city annexes a specified percentage of an area Yuba City Police Department will gradually take over police services.

It is anticipated that current vacancies in the Patrol and the Support Services Division will be filled in a timely manner. It was noted that unfilled positions are not an isolated problem within the Sheriff’s Department. Law enforcement agencies in the area have experienced similar problems.

The Boat Patrol is going to be relocating one of their boats closer to the Pleasant Grove Fire Department service area. A qualified Deputy lives within the area and will be available for response for rescue with the boat.

All full-time Patrol Deputies have vehicles assigned to them and take them home at the conclusion of their shift. This enables the Deputies to respond and be utilized on an emergency basis when they are off duty. The vehicles are also available for necessary maintenance and repair when the Deputies are off duty.

The Jail population is well within their holding capacity, and staffing is sufficient to meet current needs.

A Registered Nurse who is furnished by the Health Department is on duty 18 hours a day at the Jail and provides medical supervision. Medical emergencies are handled at the hospital. All prisoners are screened before being booked, and if a medical problem is detected, they are sent directly to Rideout Hospital. A doctor’s release is required before the prisoner can be jailed.

All inmates are checked every hour and notation is made confirming the time of the check. Inmates on suicide watch are checked at least every 15 minutes. There are several surprise inspections every week. They include a shakedown and a complete search of each cell. These searches are conducted totally at random. Not even the Correctional Officers know when they will be conducted.
Visitation for inmates is set at 1 hour per week. Current policy allows for 2 one half hour visits a week. Visiting days are 6 days a week. No “contact visits” are allowed. Visiting privileges can be revoked if rules are not followed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to actively recruit additional Deputies and Dispatchers to fill current vacancies.

Move one of the Patrol Boats to the site located near the Pleasant Grove Fire Department.

Complete the Fire CAD system improvements as the vacancies are filled within the Department.
LEO CHESNEY COMMUNITY CORRECTION FACILITY

INTRODUCTION

On October 29, 2001 members of the criminal justice committee of the Sutter County Grand Jury visited the Leo Chesney Community Correction Facility in Live Oak, California. Sue Hickey, who has been the facility director since 1995, met with the members, answered questions and also conducted a tour of the facility.

Leo Chesney Community Correctional Facility is a private institution overseen by Cornell Corrections based in Houston, Texas. The Facility has approximately 200 minimum to medium security female inmates, contracting with the California Department of Corrections. The Facility covers 10 acres with seven buildings, 38 full time employees, 4 California Department of Corrections full time staff and 10 on call employees. The women assigned to the Leo Chesney Center are there for no more than 18 months, averaging 6 to 8 months with most of them going to parole after they are released. It was also reported there have been no escapes from the facility since it’s existence. The Chesney Center revenue is obtained through their contract with the California Department of Corrections. The biggest concern stated by Sue Hickey is that at this time the Governor’s budget proposals may not include funds for the Leo Chesney Center after June 30, 2002. Services available for inmates of the Leo Chesney Center include basic education, health care, individual and group counseling drug and alcohol rehabilitation, life skills training, religious activities, and services as well as recreational activities. The TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) Test is given to each inmate as they are entered into the prison system, if their education level is below 6th grade they must attend school. Help is also offered towards preparing for the GED exam and classes are offered through Yuba College.

REPORT

Education Opportunities

Basic math and English skills are required for all inmates who do not reach the 6th grade level on the TABE test. Instruction is given to all who would like to prepare for their GED exam with the GED exam being made available at different times of the year. The prison has had many inmates who have passed their GED while incarcerated at the Leo Chesney Center. The prison also has 25 workstations, each with a computer, for more advanced training with some of the classes being made available through Yuba Community College. Tutoring is provided inmate to inmate.

Work Opportunities
All inmates must work if they are not in school full time. Inmates can earn between $12.00 and $50.00 per month for their jobs, which is put in the inmate trust accounts. Staff assigns jobs with preference given to inmate requests. Inmates may request to change jobs once every 30 days. A variety of jobs are available, clerical, library, maintenance, and housekeeping. Jobs are also available through the dining facility. Training is given in food services at the dining facilities. Inmates receiving enough training in food service should have qualifications for entry-level positions into a Denny’s type restaurant. The wood shop also provides training opportunities, in painting, woodworking and metalworking. These skills are used to provide services to the community and to make the now famous Leo Chesney center Rocking Horses that are donated to non-profit organizations for their fund raising purposes.

**Community Relations**

The Chesney Center provides many opportunities for inmates to work in the community of Live Oak, mostly through the wood shop program and landscape maintenance. Annually Leo Chesney Center inmates provide tens of thousands of dollars of donated time to help keeping the City’s landscape properly maintained, little league park signs painted and other special maintenance needs, as the wood shop is able to provide. The wood shop program also donates labor to any non-profit group that provides the materials needed to complete a project. The inmates also provide a prison prevention program. Inmates go to local schools to tell their stories to the school kids in a prison prevention program. Inmate’s presentations are thoroughly prepared and presented to other inmates and staff before any inmate is allowed to participate in a school program. Other community programs include AA, NA, and Lion’s Club donating books to the library and different organizations donating items to the Inmate Christmas Party. The Chesney Center also services as a site for a Yuba College sub-campus, which allows all Live Oak residents to attend classes at the facility.

**Follow up from Last Year’s Grand Jury Recommendation**

Last Year’s Grand Jury recommended obtaining a recidivism report from the Department of Corrections. Sue Hickey presented us with the recidivism of Releases to Parole from the Leo Chesney Correctional Facility. The Resource Branch Office of Correctional Planning, California Department of Corrections October 2001, prepared it. Sue Hickey reported the findings of the report showed that there was not a significant difference in the percentage of the eligible releases that returned to prison by Leo Chesney Correctional Facility and other facilities in the state.

**FINDINGS**

Leo Chesney Correctional Facility appears to be a very well run facility. The information that was requested by the prior Grand Jury’s recommendation was provided. The biggest fear is the likelihood that the facility will be put on the list by Governor Gray Davis to close in June 2002. The closure of the prison would be a devastating blow to the city of Live Oak, as well as the women who would be housed by the facility in the future.
INTRODUCTION

On March 14, 2002, four members of the Grand Jury met with Police Chief Richard Doscher and members of the Senior Staff. We were able to examine the recently refurbished armored vehicle and learn some of the “Peacekeeper’s” functions within the S.W.A.T. Team. The Twin Cities S.W.A.T. Team is comprised of staff from both the Yuba City and Marysville Police Departments, and provides tactical support services the cities of Marysville, Yuba City, Beale Air Force Base, and other surrounding communities as requested through Mutual Aide.

Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police, Shawna Terrell gave an extensive tour of a well-maintained and properly utilized police facility. We were shown some of the latest state-of-the-art equipment, much of which was purchased through Federal and State grants. As the facility was toured, and various unit leaders were interviewed, Grand Jurors were made aware of the efficient use of space, equipment, and manpower within the Police Department.

REPORT

There are ten (10) units within the department. Some units are manned by “sworn personnel”, and others not. For example, those whose duties directly involve them in enforcing the law such as patrol, traffic, and investigations would be “sworn personnel”. Those within support positions that do not have contact with enforcement, such as Dispatchers, and Record Clerks do not require “sworn personnel”. They may, however, be supervised by “sworn Personnel”. There are currently seventy-one (71) full-time paid staff positions, forty-five (45) of which are sworn officers with two (2) vacancies. The remaining twenty-six (26) are non-sworn personnel, with one (1) vacancy. There are twenty-nine (29) non-paid Volunteer In Policing (VIP), nineteen (19) Reserve Officers, and twenty (20) Police Cadets. The minimum age requirement for Cadets is fifteen (15) years of age, and they may serve in that capacity until they are twenty-two (22) years of age unless they drop out of school, or their GPA falls below 2.5.

Although there are currently only two (2) vacancies among sworn officers, Y.C.P.D. has had good results in hiring new officers. This is accomplished through several components: the obvious technology within the department

(Y.C.P.D. has been commended by the State Attorney General’s Office as being a standard of technology for the State), and the assurance to Police Officer Candidates that grant monies will not be used for filling permanent positions, thereby giving them a greater sense of job security. The current average longevity for sworn officers is six (6) to seven (7) years, for senior command staff twelve (12) years, and for the top-level command staff twenty (20) years. Finally, the department as a whole touts the goodness of this area as being a great place to live and raise a family.

The current philosophy of the department requires patrol officers to get out of their vehicles, talk to people, interact with students on campuses, and genuinely become involved with the citizenry of the community. The idea of “community policing”, and beat responsibility has become the norm for the department.
An excellent Police Cadet Program has been established within Y.C.H.S. through the R.O.P. training program and the services of the School Resource Officer/Positive Attendance Officer. Those students found to show an interest in law enforcement, and considered good candidates for the Cadet Program are encouraged to look into those possibilities. Brochures are available which outline the program for the students.

There are two (2) levels of Reserve Officers: Level I Reserve, requiring the same P.O.S.T. training as regular Police Officers, and Level II Reserve officers who are given a much abbreviated course. Each level is paid for the time they are on duty at the rate of $12.31 per hour for Level I, and $9.79 for Level II.

A volunteer program is in place called Volunteers In Policing (VIP). These are citizens of the community who are at least twenty-one (21) years of age (there is no upward age limit). They are required to go through a twelve (12) week Citizens Academy Class to gain a basic understanding of the department as a whole. They must also be able to commit to sixteen (16) hours of service per month. The V.I.P.’s are provided uniforms and perform a wide variety of services within the community. Some assist with clerical functions within the police facility, while others are involved in various activities within the community. Currently there are twenty-nine (29) members.

The Communications Unit of the Y.C.P.D. primarily provides for the dispatching of police units in the field. They can, and do, update fire units, ambulances, and the Public Works Department as to events while in route to their destinations.

The budget for the Police Department represents 34% of Yuba City’s budget, or $6,137,606. Between $500,000 and $600,000 will be returned to the General Fund due to; people leaving, and others being brought on staff at a lower starting salary. Some degree of salary savings has been realized because of the department’s commitment to fill patrol vacancies at the expense of not filling command position vacancies. The Police Department charges for crowd control at various functions within the community. Those monies, however, go directly into the General Fund rather than to the department. Only fees for the storage of vehicles goes into the Police Department budget, and is earmarked solely for traffic related expenses.

In the area of Budget breakdown the Grand Jury had questions in two areas: (1) Explain the 2% ($127,136) from the annual budget allocated for Crime Analysis, & (2) How is the 1% ($90,028) of the budget used for Technology Resources? The Committee learned the 2% of the Crime Analysis budget is used for everything having to do with the crime analysis. This would include the salaries and benefit packages of a Crime Analyst, a Crime Analysis Clerk, and all the equipment, maintenance and supplies used in obtaining the necessary crime information. Within the next fiscal year beat Sergeants will be required to use crime statistics taken from their beat, and then be held accountable for reduction of crime in that area. This will force them to go to Crime Analysis and obtain crime profiles and crime trends in their specific reporting district, and then report as to what measures have been taken for the reduction of crime in that area. Technology Resources handles everything computer related as far as the purchase of equipment, upkeep, and keeping ahead of the curve in technology. Because of the monetary accountability involved, a Sergeant is placed in this function, and is responsible for being project manager for all technical redesign or additions. He is responsible for tracking all departmental grants, grant revenue, and does all grant reporting. Technology Resources is in the process of
developing a “paperless reporting system” within the next two (2) years. Officers in the field will be able to enter data into their computers, drive by one of the two “automatic downloading” locations which will automatically pull the data from their computer and send it directly to the Department. There the report is reviewed; suggestions are made and sent back to the Officer for any needed corrections. The report is then corrected and sent back to the office for final approval. It then goes directly to records where it will be stored on coded compact disks.

Relative to property, three (3) categories are used and classified as: In Storage, which is evidence be it firearms, bicycles, or “other”. Found Property, property such as bicycles and firearms that are abandoned or turned in.

Finally, items such as firearms that should not be left in a home with minors or distraught individuals are taken and categorized as Safekeeping. Firearms taken for safekeeping are returned to families if not a part of an investigation.

Much to the delight of local merchants, especially on Plumas Street, parking enforcement has been re-activated. Community Service Officers will man the parking enforcement vehicles, and it is expected the revenue will be between $25,000 - $50,000 per year.

FINDINGS

The Department has resolved most of the issues relative to vacancies. Three (3) vacancies out of a paid staff of seventy-one (71), this is far below the vacancy rate reported throughout the State.

The Reserve Officers Program, the Police Cadet Program, and the Volunteers In Policing (VIP) Program are all in place, and functioning very well. The Police Department is, however, always in the process of filling and refilling vacant positions.

For the quality of service the Department is providing the community, the allocated budget for the fiscal year appears to be reasonable.

The Department has developed a philosophy of “community policing”. Where possible, Patrol Officers are expected to get out of their patrol vehicles in order to better interact with citizens in the community. Beat Sergeants are being required to begin using data obtained from Crime Analysis, thereby making plans for the reduction of crime in their areas of responsibility.

The Technology Resources Unit has embarked upon a vigorous plan for a “paperless reporting system”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitor the continued success of recruitment in all areas.

Follow-up on: the “paperless reporting system”, the success of “community policing”, and the utilization of Crime Analysis for the reduction of crime within specific beat areas.
BI-COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2002, representatives of the Criminal Justice committee met with Mr. Frank Sorgea, the superintendent of the Juvenile Hall. We discussed staffing; funding and we toured the facility.

REPORT

The Juvenile Hall is a division of the Probation Department. There is a bi-county governing committee consisting of Board of Supervisor members, two from Yuba, two from Sutter, and county administration from both counties. All staff members are Yuba county employees. The superintendent reports to the committee and Chief Probation Officers.

There are 2 separate departments that make up the facility. They are the Juvenile Hall and the Camp Singer Guidance Center. Each department has a deputy superintendent that reports to the superintendent. The medical director, mental health personnel, clerical support staff, food services, and the school staff also report to the superintendent. The deputy superintendents have supervising group counselors reporting to them. Each facility operates 24 hours a day with three shifts.

There are currently no vacancies for staff positions. They added 18 new personnel last year with an aggressive program that included attending job fairs and college graduations. They have minimum education requirement, which is a 3-year degree. A number of new hires have recently received their 2-year degrees and want to pursue a 4-year degree. They are able to schedule classes in the morning, afternoon or evening because of the facility having three shifts.

There is a single budget for the facility, and the costs are split between the counties. The budget has a base, or fixed cost, and a pro-rate cost. The governing committee meets quarterly and calculates the pro-rata cost. The costs are normally very close between the counties.

The staff places a lot of emphasis on classifying the inmates when they are admitted. They separate them by age, size, maturity, sophistication, criminal history, violent behavior, seriousness or gravity of offense, and look for suicide tendencies. They also look to see what the outcome will be. If some inmates will be sent to prison, they do not want them to have access to minor offenders.

FINDINGS

The construction project has recently been completed on time and within budget. The construction included new kitchen facilities and dining halls. There is a large warehouse on site that was converted to commercial laundry and two classrooms. One of the classrooms will be utilized as a computer-learning center with multiple computers and workstations. All inmates are required to attend school daily. Yuba County operates the school through the Department of education. The remainder of the warehouse will be converted to a gymnasium sometime in the future.
Camp Singer has been operating as a 12-bed facility since 1995. The recently completed construction has increased the camp to a 60-bed center, the same as the juvenile hall. There is no contact between the residents of the camp and the Juvenile hall. The Camp Singer residents are classified as low risk and are assigned to the camp by the courts. There are no material witness or dependent children housed at the facility. They are handled by Child Protective Services and are placed in foster homes.

Visitors are allowed 7 days a week. Each inmate is allowed 2 half-hour visits per week, which has to be scheduled. Contact visits are allowed, but the inmates are searched before they are allowed to return to their quarters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee received a copy of the Departmental Policies/Procedures on a diskette. The manual in its present form is cumbersome and difficult to read. They have recently signed a contract to rewrite the manual. The committee recommends that the 2002/2003 Grand Jury receive a copy of the new manual.
4.0 Education

4.1

BRIDGE STREET SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Bridge Street School (Yuba City Unified School District-YCUSD) on January 2, 2002. The results of this inspection with findings and recommendation follow.

REPORT

The Bridge Street School is a kindergarten through fifth grade school (K-5) with students matriculating primarily to Gray Avenue School. The current enrollment according to the school’s October 2001 reporting to the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) was 545. The school is at capacity. Over the years portable classrooms have been erected for the fourth grade (4 portable units) and fifth grade (3 portable units). The original school’s campus and physical plant was erected about 30 years ago and provides for connecting and open modular classrooms in the main building surrounding a central media center. Although the school does not have a multi-purpose room, the school does provide multi and diverse programs, including a pre-school, hot breakfast for students (400+ each school day), school-based health clinic which incorporates medical, dental, and visual care, as well as access to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programming and adult education for parents in English language skills and preparation for becoming a citizen. Principal Frank Alvarez and Health Coordinator Lavena Williams (B.E.S.T. – Bridging Education and Students with Teamwork) were interviewed during the on-site inspection.

The school population was one of three issues of special interest to the Grand Jury. Following is a breakout of population by grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stability of the school population is affected by the student demographics and a variety of factors, including:

- Even though the numbers of students in the school’s service area appears to remain constant over recent years, there remains about a 30%+ turnover of students each school year;
- The school draws a significant number of students from families that do not speak English as their primary language in the home;
- A large number of students appear to be from families that are dependent for employment in the agricultural field, which impacts their access to health care, healthy meals and stability in attendance.

To address these factors and the impact it can have upon the young children’s’ learning, the school administration has developed an impressive collaborative of the school’s resources coupled with additional public and private resources in providing focused services for the students and their families. The Bridge Street School newsletter, specifically the “Principal’s Message” in the December 2001/January 2002 issue, lists the many support services for the students and families. Our inspection and review observed and discussed just a few of these in action. Some of the most significant services reported include:

- 90 minutes of daily uninterrupted reading instruction grouped at the student’s instructional levels to prepare and challenge their abilities;
- English language development interventions;
- Active parent involvement programs;
- Provision each school day of a hot breakfast for almost 90% of the student body; and,
- Healthy start programs.

This collaboration, spearheaded and/or housed on the school campus, involves the school personnel, city and county agencies, YCUSD and County Schools support and personnel, local and regional health and medical services and practitioners, etc. These ambitious efforts have been well received and the rewards are readily observable in the eyes and behavior of the children in the classroom and on campus.

The second area of interest during the inspection was the use of computer technology in support of teaching and learning. According to the school’s CBEDS report there are 57 computers available to the students but only 27 have the capability of running CD-ROM software that would serve as an adjunct to the teachers in support of reading and math skills. It was noted that about 10 additional new computers had recently arrived and were to be installed. The students in the first through fifth grades have access to the computer lab at least once a week and shared access to a computer in their classrooms. This ratio of about 1 computer to 9 students is much higher than the ratio of other schools inspected this year (about 1 to 5). However, this may be an appropriate ratio since the school administration guesstimates that only about 5% to 6% of the families served by the school have a computer at home that could be used to supplement and reinforce the students’ study at home.

The third area of interest was the school’s Stanford 9 test scores as reported by the California Department of Education Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR). For grades two to five the state reports that the percentage of students ranked at the 50th percentile or higher is lower than the percentage of students countywide from the same grades in Sutter County.
A cursory review of these statistics by an individual year is alarming. However, there are causative factors that are not reported in the state’s STAR reporting system (and often in the media). Some have already been noted, i.e.:

- A yearly turnover of 30% or more students;
- Children coming from homes where English is not the primary spoken language and, thus, students who have enrolled who lack English speaking, grammar and spelling skills; and
- 400+ children who arrive daily at school in need of a breakfast (their school day starts before 8 a.m.).

Further, the school administration’s philosophy and actions are to specifically take on this challenge and through the current and past years they have focused on the development of these children through aggressive and collaborative efforts, including:

- After the individual assessments of the students, they are placed in appropriate reading and math levels with the intent to raise them to grade appropriate and higher levels;
- Individual tutors volunteer and are obtained through resources such as the Yuba City High School Key Club, the local Career Training and Education Center (CTEC), teaching credential students, parents;
- Adult education efforts for the children’s family members; and
- Recognition that all of the students participate in their growth and are positively reminded of the worth to grow in these skills.

As a result, 210 students already are reading at grade level and this number increases monthly, if not weekly. Further the STAR reports document that on a cumulative basis the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade classes have increased in scores as each class progresses each year, rising slowly but significantly over the last 3 years.

Documents Received

- Parent and Student Handbook
- Bridge Street School Newsletter (December 2001/January 2002)
- California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) School Information Form, October 2001
- YCUSD Student Discipline Policy Handbook and Legal Notifications - 2001-2002 School Year
- Bridge Street School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan
- Fire and Earthquake Drill Schedule 2001-2002 School Year
- Bridge Street School Physical Plant Map
- Home Language Survey Form
- Even Start Survey form for adult education in English skills
- Promotion/Retention Policy
- Miscellaneous student and parent YCUSD and state informational pamphlets
- YCUSD Substitute Teacher Handbook
- STAR reports provided by California Department of Education

FINDING
No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of operations. The Grand Jury appreciates the time spent by staff with us and the information and the documents that were provided. The Grand Jury encourages the continuation of the efforts taken by the school’s administration, staff, and students to achieve academic success and to maintain a healthy learning environment, supporting the most important school system of all, each individual child’s family.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

Bridge Street School Administration
Yuba City Unified School District
4.2

KING AVENUE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the King Avenue School (Yuba City Unified School District-YCUSD) on November 30, 2001. The results of this inspection with finding and recommendation follow.

REPORT

The King Avenue School is a kindergarten through fifth grade school (K-5) with graduates matriculating to Gray Avenue School. The current enrollment is 419 although it has the capacity for just over 600 students. Principal Donna Hajduk was interviewed and provided copies of documents noted in this report. Unnamed school staff and students offered extemporaneous remarks.

The school population was one of two issues of special interest to the Grand Jury. Following is a breakout of population by grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of available students in the school’s service area seems to be diminishing. In fact, even though the school is capable of housing up to 600 students, because of their lower numbers three classrooms have been designated for other purposes, two music rooms and one staff meeting area/break room. The above numbers document a decreasing number of students entering the lower grade levels each year. The principal also noted that these numbers do not reflect a trend of students moving out of the area, but rather of students not moving into the area. It was surmised that the lower population numbers might be as the result of a maturing neighborhood with younger families moving to newer
construction areas. It is not known how many students who live in the service area may instead have received transfers to other YCUSD or other district schools in Sutter County.

The second area of note was the positive actions that the school has taken with their student, parent, and staff culture and student performance. The school has established a school motto that is provided to all new and continuing students and their parents on a regular and repetitive basis, i.e., “…The King Avenue Promise is, We respect all people and all things at all times and in all places.” This is a core philosophy that was readily observable throughout our visit.

A lengthy discussion centered on student performance and the schools Accountability Report Card 1999-2000, specifically in the area of Training and Curriculum Improvement. King Avenue School was chosen to be an “Immediate Intervention Under performing Schools Program” school site. During that school year, because of underperformance in specific subject areas as determined through state testing programs, the school staff, parents and community representatives met with skilled improvement facilitators to develop a “Leadership Team Action Plan” specific to King Avenue School. A 3-school year plan (years 2001-2002; 2002-2003; 2003-2004), with three focused and specific goal statements, was developed. These are repeated here because of their significance.

- Attendance at King Avenue School will be 100% on time, daily, as measured by school attendance program.
- All students at King Avenue School will be performing at/or above grade level in English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) as measured by Standards of Excellence, District Level assessments, HBJ Performance/Skills assessments, Writing Rubrics, and SAT 9/Content Clusters.
- All students at King Avenue School will be performing at/or above grade level in Math as measured by Standards of Excellence, District Level assessments, SAT 9/Content clusters, and Math Program Skills assessments.

Although the school is not even mid-way through the first year, specific actions that the school has already implemented to support the achievement of these goals were discussed and the principal and her staff team are to be commended.

During the tour of the physical plant the question of availability of computers to support learning activities was also addressed. The school has 90 computers spread throughout 25 classrooms and there is one classroom specifically designated for computer lab activities. This is more than one computer for every five students, and these afford students and staff the opportunity to complement a learning environment.

Documents Received

Student Handbook
King Avenue School Leadership Team Action Plan
California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) School Information Form, October 2001
YCUSD Student Discipline Policy Handbook and Legal Notifications (2001-2002 School Year)
King Avenue School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan
FINDING

No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of operations. The Grand Jury appreciates the actions taken by the school’s administration, staff, and students to seek and maintain a healthy learning environment and increase the skills of all students. Also, of particular interest was the school’s pursuit of their Leadership Team Action Plan with specifically defined goals and the Grand Jury encourages their achievement of those goals.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

King Avenue School Administration
Yuba City Unified School District
4.3

TRI-COUNTRY REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM
ROP

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Tri-County Regional Occupational Program (ROP) in November 2001. The results of this inspection with finding and recommendation follow.

MISSION

The Tri-County Regional Occupational Program (ROP) provides training for specific occupations, often at existing schools and with the school’s teachers. The program offers the advantage of counseling, awareness of the job market, and connections to available jobs for its trainees.

REPORT

The Grand Jury Interviewed Randy Page, Director of the Tri-County Regional Occupational Program (ROP). Further, specific documents were received and reviewed (provided by Mr. Page) which included:

- Tri-County ROP Course Information Manual,
- 2001-2002 Program Class List,
- Tri-County Schedule of Classes,
- Tri-County Income Budget for 2000-2201 and 2001-2002, and
- ROP Internet website.

The ROP program services Colusa, Yuba, and Sutter Counties and is located on Klamath Lane in Yuba City. Informative and detailed information on the ROP program can also be found on their website at: http://www.sutter.k12.ca.us/rop/rop.htm.

Mr. Page has been the director for the past eighteen months and has a staff of four employees, with a combined total of over fifty years with the ROP program.

The ROP programs serve anyone in the Sutter, Yuba, or Colusa Counties from age sixteen through adult. Many of their programs are located on high school campuses and their classes are offered as part of the daily curriculum. Other programs are provided at various off campus locations that provide a wide variety of vocational training.

The program has a budget with a total income over $3.6 million for fiscal year 2001-2002 with total expenditures of approximately $3.5 million. Mr. Page stated that his budget has always been in the black with the majority of their funds coming from the California Department of Education. The funds are allocated on a per diem basis for a base amount of students and also a per diem for Cal Works participants. The program also receives funds from grants and the California State Lottery.
Mr. Page stated that his biggest asset to the program was the framework left by the former director who had over thirty years in service and his highly skilled and dedicated staff. Because of the staff’s abilities to run all of the day-to-day operations, Mr. Page has been able to be active in reaching out to community leaders, business leaders, and educators in an attempt to bring them together to make this a successful program.

Mr. Page’s biggest concerns are potential cuts in education budgets from the State of California and his ability to continue to keep top-flight instructors in place.

FINDING

No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of operations. The Grand Jury appreciates the fact that the Tri-County ROP program is a major educational and vocational asset to the development and growth of our community and citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

Randy Page, Director, Tri-County ROP
Sutter County Office of Education
4.4

WINSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Winship Elementary School (Winship Elementary School District) on December 11, 2001. The school is a kindergarten through eighth grade school (K-8) with graduates primarily matriculating to Sutter Union High School. The school is located south of Meridian and serves the western edge of Sutter County. The Winship Elementary School District Board is comprised of three members/trustees. Tom Reusser is the principal of the school but he also serves as the district’s Superintendent and at one time carried three responsibilities of teacher, principal, and superintendent. The principal was the primary source of the information provided in this report.

REPORT

The current enrollment of 60 students includes 14 who actually live in the district (capacity is 64-but 4 slots are saved for potential intra-district growth). The remaining students come from other school districts in Sutter County, Colusa County, and one student from Yuba Co. The majority of the Sutter County students live within the Yuba City Unified School District. Daily school bus service to Winship Elementary is provided from and returning to Franklin Avenue School for out of district students. The principal reports that student family members transport a sizable number of students to the school. The California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) report notes that of the 60 students, 11 are Hispanic and 1 is Pacific Islander.

Principal Reusser occasionally advertises in the local paper to interest parents in the school and draw more students. He also reports that if Winship did not have these other “out of district area” students the school could financially survive for only about 2 years before having to close.

There are 3 classrooms; a K to 2nd grade classroom, and two others with combined grades 3rd to 8th. It was reported that staff have found that the mixture of grades provides a supportive role for the older students in sponsoring the learning of the younger grade level students. Principal Reusser suggests that this coupled with the skills of his staff may be the reason that out of 133 other elementary schools in the previously noted areas, Winship ranks fifth on the statewide Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) tests. According to the principal, the previous year’s scores noted that the school was first out of the 133 schools. Documents that record these ratings were not made available. Further, California Department of Education STAR Comparison Reports do not support this statement since their reports do not provide score data for any class grade group of 10 or less students (in order to protect confidentiality). Winship Elementary School fits this criterion.
The school even though small in student body has a GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program for exceptionally skilled students.

English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is provided on a one-to-one basis with the individual students. This is because there is not a significant population that has a different primary language in their home. All teachers are trained to provide ESL services pursuant to state standards.

School behavioral and/or discipline problems are not like those typically found at larger student body schools. Negative behavioral problems when they do occur are typically incidents involving chewing gum or throwing walnuts. The atmosphere and school culture reminds one of a country school of 50 years ago, which could explain why the school draws students from other districts.

Staff is significantly stable in tenure. Principal Reusser started at Winship Elementary School as a teacher and he is the youngest in seniority. The remaining staff varies from 9 years (next least tenured teacher) to 20 years (an instructional aide and substitute teacher).

The Sutter County Superintendent of Schools office, on an as needed basis, provides support services for medical or behavioral/mental health student concerns that may be beyond the abilities of on-site personnel.

Each classroom has computers available for student use. There are several also in the school library. The CBEDS report records a total of 17 computers at the school. This would provide about one computer for every three students. All computers are recent models and each classroom has access to the Internet.

The school has an on-grounds resident physical plant custodian and supervisor, and is also responsible for transporting those students who travel to school by bus. School lunches for the students are prepared on site.

The school did suffer extensive damage from the Meridian flood of January 1997. However, a positive outcome did occur, i.e., the overwhelming majority of student materials and capital items (e.g., chairs, desks, books, etc.) are fairly recent models and in good condition.

Documents Received

Student Handbook
New Student Packet
School Disciplinary Policy
Draft Teacher’s Handbook
Winship Elementary School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan
Fire and Earthquake Drill Schedule 2001-2002 School Year
California School Boards Association (CSBA) Nondiscrimination in Employment Policy
Playground Safety Inspection Report
Winship School Monthly Water Testing Report
Winship Elementary School Board Promotion/Retention Policy
FINDING

No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of operations. The Grand Jury appreciates the time spent by the principal with us and the information and documents that were provided.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

Winship Elementary School Administration
Winship Elementary School District Board of Trustees
4.5

CITIZEN COMPLAINT

FAMILY HEALTH AND PREVENTION EVENT SPONSORED BY THE

YUBA CITY UNIFIED 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER GRANT AND ANDROS KAPEROS MIDDLE SCHOOL

ISSUE

The Grand Jury received a citizen complaint regarding the Family Health and Prevention event held on January 24, 2002 that was sponsored by the Yuba City Unified School District (YCUSD) through the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant and Andros Karperos Middle School.

Complaint

That a publicly funded event sponsored by YCUSD and Andros Karperos Middle School invited and/or selected specific public and private community organizations, specifically Planned Parenthood, Inc., rather than openly soliciting additional local agencies that may or may not have alternative viewpoints on the subjects of crisis pregnancies and sexual abstinence education, during the informational community booths portion of the event.

The issues presented were:

1. were other groups that provide alternative viewpoints invited (e.g., abstinence education, crisis pregnancies), and
2. Was Planned Parenthood invited to participate in this event and why.

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury approached the issues from the position that whatever information was received and whatever recommendation the Grand Jury should make, it is important to

- aid YCUSD in the pursuit of their stated Vision and Mission Statements and specifically their adopted Goal #2 (“Yuba City Unified School District will effectively communicate to parents, students, staff, community, and other institutions in order to promote collaboration, commitment, and support for the District’s vision.”) and
- Ensure that such events are inclusive of all of our citizens, being careful to not challenge and/or contest the many personally held values of families whose children attend our public school system.
The event coordinator, Ms. Terry Jackson, was contacted and provided the following background information:

1. Yuba City Unified School District (YCUSD) and Andros Karperos Middle School administered the program.
2. Funds spent for the organizing and presenting of the event were public funds.
3. Having a short amount of time to organize and present the event, the coordinator contacted many of the community booth participants on her own, having worked with them in the past.
4. She did not have a list of community agencies in order to make a formal invitation to participate and did not advertise anywhere in the local community for any group or organization to participate.
5. She indicated that Planned Parenthood contacted her and asked to be able to participate.
6. She did ask one additional community liaison coordinator if he knew of any other groups that would like to participate. However, she did not indicate what the response was.

RECOMMENDATION

The Grand Jury recommends that when organizing future public informational and publicly funded events that YCUSD provide a formal open invitation, soliciting voluntary participation from local community-based organizations. This “open door” invitation will provide an opportunity for all local community-based resources to participate, thereby providing a full range of viewpoints that are germane to the focus of the informational event or forum.

RESPONDENTS

Yuba City Unified School District
Andros Karperos Middle School
5.0 Fire & Emergency

5.1 SUTTER COUNTY AIRPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Fire and Emergency Services Committee visited the Sutter County Airport on February 6, 2002. The meeting was held to discuss safety and security at the airport. Present at the meeting was Robert Barrett, Public Works Director, and Satwat Takhar, Administrative Services Officer. Members of the Grand Jury Fire and Emergency Services Committee also attended the Airport Committee Meeting on February 20, 2002.

REPORT

After the September 11 terrorist attack, the Grand Jury felt it was important to assess airport security for the county. The Sutter County Airport is located at 180 2nd Street adjacent to the levee. The county has staff at the airport only about four hours per week but, the airport is operational 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and has approximately 800 landings per year. Without assigning personnel on a full time basis, keys or combination locks would need to be assigned to numerous individuals for access to their aircraft as well as some method of access to operators of transient aircraft.

There are hangers for lease and “tie downs” available for planes. Fuel is on site and available 24 hours per day. Lease income from hangers and profits from fuel sales is currently used for the maintenance of the airport. Any major improvements for the airport are usually provided by funds from State or Federal Agencies.

FINDINGS

The security fence surrounding the airport is approximately 20 years old and in need of repairs. Although the Sheriff’s Department has stepped up patrols of the airport, there is no security gate at this time, at the entrance to the airport. There is nothing prohibiting anyone from driving on the runways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury would recommend a new fence, security gate and surveillance camera for the airport. Since our first meeting with the airport, we have learned Federal grant money has become available for security upgrades. Funding for the next two years is committed to resurfacing the runway and resurfacing the taxiways. Other improvements though, are up to 3 to 4 years away.

The Grand Jury would encourage the 2002-03 Grand Jury to re-visit the Sutter County Airport, to see if the new security equipment has been installed.
INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Yuba City Fire Department on December 18, 2001. The inspection was held at Yuba City Fire Department Station One located at 824 Clark Avenue. Marc Bumgarden, the Fire Chief, has been with Yuba City Fire Department for 17 years. The Fire Chief, Bumgarden, was the primary source of the information provided in this report.

REPORT

The YCFD provides emergency services to approximately 60,000 people in a 30 square mile area bordered by Eager Road, Township Road and Reed Road. Coverage is provided from five fire stations, which are staffed by 43 full time and 18 volunteers. The stations are staffed 24/7 and 365 days per year. The five stations allow YCFD to be at an emergency within their coverage area within 4 to 6 minutes.

YCFD has approximately 5400 emergency requests per year. Emergency medical response represents 70% of these calls, with Fire Suppression accounting for five to seven percent. The remaining calls are water and technical rescue, disaster response, hazardous materials and special service.

Preventative services are also a responsibility of the YCFD. This includes, fire code enforcement, building plan review, public education, CPR training, fire cause investigation and fire prevention.

The physical resources of the YCFD are as follows:

- 5 Fire Houses
- 3 Vegetation Fire Engines
- 2 Rescue Units
- 1 Inflatable boat
- 1 Water Tank Truck
- 10 Structural Fire Engines
- 1 Aerial Truck
- 1 Personal Water Craft
- 2 Utility Pick Ups

The YCFD has identified four major issues facing the department. These include human resources, physical resources, financial issues and political issues. One of the issues affecting Human Resources is NFPA 1710, which may require an increase in staffing. Instead of 13 firefighters, they may have to send 14 to each call. Instead of 3 firefighters to a truck, they may have to increase staff to 4 people per engine. This would require FCFD to add staff and increase wages to stay competitive with other Fire Departments.

New construction has began on a new administration training building. This new building is being constructed adjacent to Fire Station One, and will provide much needed room. Work will also include refurbishment to Station One (Clark Avenue) Station Four at Walton Avenue. Backup power will be
provided for Stations Four and Seven as well as diesel exhaust removal. Unfinished construction will be completed at Station Seven.

FINDINGS

The merging of the Walton Fire Department and Yuba City Fire Department appears to have been accomplished with no disruption to services.

RECOMMENDATION

None
5.3

PLEASANT GROVE FIRE DEPARTMENT


BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury of 2000 – 2001 in their Final Report, Chapter Title “The Pleasant Grove Fire “ made the following Finding on this department. “The Fire Department’s communication system was not adequate. Because of their remoteness in the county, they are not always able to communicate neither their in-route status nor their need for additional equipment, mutual aid or safety concerns. The County Dispatch systems for fire services are antiquated. While the Sheriff’s Department operate from a modern CAD system, the Fire Dispatch System still operates from a ‘card’ system that dates back to the 1960’s. Fire Dispatchers, who may be regular Sheriff’s dispatchers, are not well trained in Fire Dispatching. Fire calls are prioritized as secondary.”

Also, “the response time by the Sheriff’s River Rescue to the Sacramento River, which includes three marinas, is slow to non-existent. This leaves the Fire Department personnel to stand on the shore and “beg” for fishermen to come ashore to transport them and equipment to an incident.

The Grand Jury at that time made the Recommendation that the County must improve communications. Repeater satellites were suggested to insure that this would occur. Computer added dispatch must be developed and/or applied to Fire Dispatch as well as Law Enforcement Dispatch.

Also, recommended was river rescue be either improved by the Sheriff’s Department, or as an alternative, a rescue boat be made available to the Service Area fire department so that emergencies on the water be handled timely and adequately. A five minute response or less was recommended.”

The Board’s response was:

“ The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding and is in the process of addressing the needs of the fire districts, county wide. They are working with state and federal agencies trying to obtain the appropriate approvals to implement an adequate system. A new repeater has been ordered and will be installed at the Sutter Buttes site. This should greatly improve communications to the south portion of the County. Also, a low - level repeater will be installed at the Catlett Dryers at Highways 99 and 70. This should eliminate the dead spots in the southern portion of the county. The Board agrees partially with the findings that the Dispatch system is antiquated, operating from a card system that dates back to the ‘60s. The information from the old run cards will be loaded into the CAD system. The Board does not agree with the statement that the regular Sheriff’s Dispatchers are not well trained in Fire Dispatching and prioritize fire calls as secondary. The Sheriff indicates that his department “prioritizes all calls for service and ranks them based on the emergency of the call, not by which agency calls it in.” The County’s Fire Services Division agrees with the Sheriff. The Board also disagrees about the response time by Sheriff’s River Rescue to the Sacramento River in this service area. Because volunteers man some service areas, a 15-minute response time may
occasionally occur. Volunteers make a tremendous effort to keep response times as low as possible. According to the Sheriff’s response, dispatch records indicate that there were no calls received by the County’s dispatch center to rescue persons in the Pleasant Grove area between January 1997 and June 2001. Consequently, it is difficult to measure the adequacy of current boat patrol responses to the area. The Sheriff is considering berthing a boat at a Pleasant Grove area marina for use by Sheriff’s boat patrol deputies.”

Documents Reviewed and /or Received

Sutter County Board of Supervisors Response to the 2000-2001 Sutter County Grand Jury Report

FINDING

The Grand Jury of 2001/2002, the Fire and Emergency Committee, did request a follow up inspection with the Pleasant Grove Fire Department. This meeting was held on Wednesday, December 12, 2001 and was attended by Volunteer Fire Chief, Tom Reese. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the new communications system installed by the county and the new boat obtained by the fire department. Fire Chief Reese, reported the communication system was updated with improved coverage and the new boat would make river rescues more timely when the need arose.

RECOMMENDATION

None

RESPONDENTS

Pleasant Grove Fire Department
Sutter County Board of Supervisors
6.0 Health/Mental Health

6.1 WOMEN, INFANTS, CHILDREN (WIC) SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted interviews and an inspection and review of requested documents pertaining to the operation of Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services during the month of January 2002.

Persons interviewed included Edmund C. Smith (Director, Human Services Department), Allan Leavitt (Assistant Director for Public Health Services Division), and Caroline Norton (Program Manager, Women, Infants, Children – WIC Services).

In a letter from Sutter County Grand Jury dated December 12, 2001 it was requested that documents appropriate to the operations of WIC services be provided to the Grand Jury for review prior to our scheduled meeting on January 23, 2002. The specific WIC documents requested were:

1. Mission Statement
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Laws & Codes Governing Operations
4. Number of Clients Served in Fiscal Year
5. Staffing Turnover
6. Funding Sources and Amounts

Unfortunately these documents were not provided before the meeting. At the time of the on-site visit and interview only items 4, 5, and 6 listed above were provided and discussed. The Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives and applicable laws and codes specific to Sutter County’s WIC services were not provided. Some client brochures and documents developed by other statewide agencies were provided. Subsequent to the on-site interview the Grand Jury secured from State and Federal agencies additional documents that specifically govern the Sutter County WIC Services Division. Thus the supplemental documents that were reviewed and evaluated by the Grand Jury included:

1. Letter of December 12, 2001 from Sutter County Grand Jury to Carol Norton.
3. California Department of Health Services – WIC Program, Enrollment by Category by Clinic, data as reported by the Sutter County WIC Program to the state.
4. WIC Income Guideline Table and Medi-Cal Income Guideline Table, May 1, 2001.
5. Reproduced flyer “WIC Plans for Better Health – Basic Facts and Figures.”

7. Kit for New Parents (with miscellaneous educational booklets and videos on the subjects of health, nutrition, child safety, early literacy, discipline, child care), developed by the California Children and Families Partnership (funded by tobacco tax program), and disseminated by Sutter County WIC Services.


9. California Department of Health Services – WIC Branch (internet site): Detailed Description (Program Description, Program Goal, Program Eligibility, Program Effectiveness, Program Outreach, Program Funding); Supplemental Nutrition Program Summary Report; Preliminary Findings of 2001 Focus Group; Clinic Resources.

10. California Health and Safety Code Sections 100100-100140; 104575-104600; 120440; 123275-123355; and, 123475-123525.

11. United States Code, Title 42 (The Public Health and Welfare), Chapter 7 (Social Security), Subchapter V (Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant), Section 701: Authorization of appropriations; purposes; definitions.

**Mission**

A Mission Statement specific to WIC Services was not provided. However, a general Mission Statement for the Human Services Agency was provided, which states: “The Sutter County Human Services Department provides a client centered, outcome oriented, integrated, cost effective delivery of services. Staff of this department are committed to safeguarding the physical, emotional and social well being of others while promoting self-sufficiency and quality of life and health for those we serve.”

Included with this Mission Statement for the umbrella organization was a description of core services of the Public Health Community-Based Services and Epidemiology Division. This description included a statement as to the service provided by WIC: “The Women, Infants and Children’s (WIC) Nutrition Program provides nutrition education and food vouchers for purchase of specified foods for pregnant and lactating women, as well as infants and children to age five (5).”

_WIC is a State Government operated program and the enabling authority for the state’s WIC program provided by the California State Legislature is stated in Section 12375 of the California Health and Safety Code. That code section states that_

“…medical, educational and psychological evidence increasingly points to adequate nutrition as a determinant not only of good physical health but also of full intellectual development and educational achievement, with adequate nutrition in the earliest months and years being particularly important for full development of the child’s mind and body, that problems of child nutrition cut across income lines and can result not
The State of California Department of Health Services (DHS), through their WIC Branch, states that the goal of the WIC program in California is to decrease the risk of poor birth outcomes and to improve the health of participants during critical times of growth and development and to achieve this goal by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion, medical care referrals, and specific supplemental nutritious foods which are high in protein and/or iron. As stated by the California DHS, “The Women’s, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) is a supplemental food and nutrition program for low income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, and children under age five who have a nutritional risk.”

WIC is a program branch within the California’s DHS which contracts with 82 WIC providers to perform federal and state codified and regulated responsibilities on behalf of the state. The bottom line is that the State of California contracts with others for the provision of WIC services.

_Sutter County WIC is one of these 82 contractors in the state. Forty contractors are local health jurisdictions and the remaining forty-two are private, nonprofit agencies. The Grand Jury was able to determine that the Sutter County role as a “WIC service provider” is codified in Section 120440 (a)(3) of the Health and Safety Code._

In addition, in our State there is a statewide organization of WIC service providers, the California WIC Association (CWA). The CWA identifies itself as a non-profit organization formed by directors of local WIC agencies in 1992. The CWA states that their mission is to lead California communities to nourish, educate, support, and empower families in building a healthy future. Sutter County WIC is a member of the CWA.

The CWA reports in their January 2002 update to their website that the Sutter County WIC is one of thirteen service agencies to be awarded a “Small Agency WIC Plus Initiative!” two year grant from the CWA in order to implement an Oral Health Screening and Education program for at risk children.

**Program Operations**

- Sutter County WIC is within the County Human Services Agency, Division of Public Health.

- WIC provides specific nutritious food prescriptions and clients redeem their WIC checks/coupons for these specified food products at grocery stores where the store’s management and staff have been trained in the processing of the checks/coupons and approved by WIC for participating in the program.
• WIC does not provide direct health care to participants, but a document provided by Sutter County WIC states that a primary goal is to encourage and facilitate access to preventive health and social services.

• Sutter County’s WIC provides their services at five different local and accessible facilities in the county, i.e., Bridge Street Elementary School, Career Training and Education Center (CTEC), Live Oak Clinic, Richland Housing, and the Sutter County Health Department’s main office site.

• The CTEC location used to have young parents at the site but there are none there this year.

• A publication provided by Sutter County’s WIC, “WIC Plans for Better Health”, states that many “…local WIC programs are also engaged in intensive efforts to insure (sic) that all WIC kids are fully immunized before kindergarten.”

• Also in Sutter County is the Sutter County Children and Families Commission, which has targeted the same demographically, identified children and families as the WIC program, but it is not part of the WIC program.

• The core service for the Sutter County Children and Families Commission was described to the Grand Jury as an educational readiness program, to ensure that children under 5 were being adequately prepared to enter school and the learning environment.

• The Sutter County Children and Families Commission is a member of a coalition of the statewide California Children and Families Commission and the Children and Families County Commissions. Funding for their activities comes from the Proposition 10 funds, the Tobacco Tax initiative of 1998.

• This coalition distributes a kit known as the Kit for New Parents, which in turn was developed and distributed by the California Children and Families Partnership as part of their coalition activities. This kit is provided to the Sutter County WIC program to distribute to clients.

• The Sutter County WIC program disburses to WIC participants who are new parents this kit that includes training videotapes and a Parents Guide. The kit is in English and Spanish.

• Sutter County WIC staff indicated that they distribute these kits since local hospitals won’t distribute it to new parents because they don’t have the space to store the kits prior to disbursement.

• The majority of information in the materials and tapes focuses on the goals of helping children and their families to be healthy. However, some information goes beyond the focus of the Sutter County WIC program as defined in the federal and state codes and program
mission and definitions. Some questionable information may be important to parents and citizens at large but it is not germane to the focus of WIC.

- The questionable information is found in one specific document in this Kit for New Parents, i.e., the Parents Guide. Included in this “guide” is an advisory that is not germane to the California Legislative intent for WIC programs and the State Department of Health Services mission of WIC previously document.

- The advisory in the Parents Guide includes the statements:

  “To find out about pre-pregnancy planning, family planning or help with decisions about an unwanted pregnancy, call Planned Parenthood or a family planning clinic.

  “You can get free or low-cost birth control even if you don’t have health insurance. Call Planned Parenthood: Family Planning or 800 Family Planning.”

- This apparent endorsement of Planned Parenthood, a private national organization, is a questionable action by Sutter County’s WIC Services, a public agency with a different mission and focus. The endorsement is especially disconcerting since there are over 1,000 similar resources listed in the Yellow Pages throughout California.

- Further, in Sutter County and surrounding communities, as throughout the rest of the state, there are available county public health and medical centers, community-based pregnancy counseling centers, and even religious organizations such as the Catholic Diocesan Family Life and Social Services agencies, that provide these no fee-no cost services. However, they are not referenced or even slightly mentioned by name in the document.

**Caseload/Client Profile**

- Clients who are low income (based on tables established by federal and state governing authorities) and are at nutritional risk qualify for WIC food checks/coupons.

- Those tables are referred to as the WIC Income Guideline Table and the Medi-Cal Income Guideline Table. Those tables are periodically reestablished but the governing formulas for each to qualify is the client recipient income must not exceed:
  1. 185% of Federal Poverty Level for WIC parameters,
  2. 200% of Federal Poverty Level for Medi-Cal parameters.

- As previously noted, Sutter County WIC provides services at 5 regional locations. As of January 19, 2002 a total of 3800 clients had been provided these services. This number of
participants is fluid with some entering the program and leaving the program each fiscal year but this number is the total so far for the fiscal year.

- Over 1,300 clients participate in the program each month.

**Funding Resources**

- *The State DHS WIC Program is funded by the federal government, which operates on an October through September fiscal year. Since California is on a July to June fiscal year the federal funds are a reimbursement for program staffing and operations. Funds are provided to the state and in turn the state reimburses their WIC contractors.*

- Sutter County WIC is 100% funded by a complement of federal, state and grant funds. However, the funding process is a reimbursement for services since the program is a contractor to the state’s Department of Health Services.

- This year Sutter County should be reimbursed $380,000 from the state.

- The funding formula from the federal and state government did provide for a cost of living adjustment this year (COLA).

- The program undergoes yearly financial and programmatic audits.

- The federal United States Department of Agriculture conducts the financial audit and the state Department of Health Service conducts the programmatic audit.

- Sutter County WIC has ten staff and had experienced only one staff turnover in the last three years, allowing for fairly stable operations.

**Records**

- Client records, which may contain confidential information, are housed in a secure area.

- Staff describes their information system as using current available information technologies.
Although Mission, Goals, Objectives and/or Strategies statements were not received from the Sutter County WIC it is easily noted that the intent of the State Legislature, the State of California’s Department of Health Service and the California WIC Association is to provide supplemental food and nutrition to at risk and low income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, and children under age five who have a nutritional risk. The Sutter County WIC strives to achieve these goals but does not have a Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives with Strategies that specifically guide its focus and against which the agency can measure its performance.

There is also a concern about the document Parents Guide developed by the University of California, Berkeley for the California Children and Families Commission. Sutter County WIC is not required to disseminate this document, which is not critical to the WIC services goals, but rather chooses to issue this manual to clients who have newborn children.

Unfortunately, without consideration of the uniqueness of clients and their family practices and beliefs, the document assumes that the recipients and readers of the document have the same belief system as that of the university writers. On pages 8, 47, and 51 the reader is specifically referred (outside of their prenatal provider) to Planned Parenthood or the phone book for advice on the subjects of birth control and unwanted pregnancies.

In Sutter County there are additional specific and unique resources that are not offered as resources for their WIC clients in this document. These resources in our local area include community based pregnancy centers, faith-based social services and family life resources (e.g., the local Catholic Church and Diocesan agencies), and public resources including the Sutter County Public Health Department. By identifying one single resource agency and leaving the reader on their own to find any other resources through the phone book, the reader is left with the impression that Planned Parenthood is the suggested, if not outright endorsed, official agency of referral. This is unfortunate since the Grand Jury assumes that it is not the County’s intent to suggest one resource referral. The Grand Jury prefers that the County Government should seek inclusiveness for all of our citizens and be respectful of their clients and families beliefs and practices by providing additional encompassing resources or not broach the subject matter in a contracted program defined by the State as: “The Women’s, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC)...a supplemental food and nutrition program for low income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, and children under age five who have a nutritional risk.”

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. The County WIC program should develop a Mission Statement, specific to WIC, with Goals and Core Strategies on how to achieve the goals and mission that are unique to the particular needs of the clients and resources of Sutter County.

2. The County WIC disburses the University of California’s manual titled Parent Guide which endorses a specific agency, that is Planned Parenthood, as the resource for family planning and unwanted pregnancies, the County should either;
   a) Prepare an additional handout to be included with the manual that lists additional community resources for local clients on the issues of family planning, such resources including Sutter County departmental resources, and community private non-profit pregnancy centers, religious social services agencies, etc, or
   b) Remove the manual and cease its disbursement, since it is not a document that is critical to the WIC program focus nor is it inclusive of all beliefs and value systems of the general client population (and thereby preclude any challenge from clients and the community that the Sutter County’s WIC Services endorses a specified resource for these sensitive issues).

RESPONDENTS

Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program
Sutter County Human Services Agency
County of Sutter, Board of Supervisors
6.2

CASA DE ESPERANZA

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted interviews and inspection and review of requested documents pertaining to the operation of Casa de Esperanza during the month of February. The focus of the Grand Jury’s inquiry was on issues relative to program services provided by Casa and the funding sources for program operations.

Persons interviewed were Marsha Krouse-Taylor (Executive Director) and Betty Grosse-Nelson (Deputy Director). Prior to the interview specific source documents were received and/or reviewed. These included:

1. Letter of January 22, 2002 from the Grand Jury to Casa de Esperanza, Inc.
2. Letter of February 9, 2002 from Marsha Krouse-Taylor, Executive Director, Casa de Esperanza, Inc.
5. OCJP Mission Statement and Program Goals, Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning.
7. Goal Statement, Program Evaluation Branch, Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning.
8. Goal Statement, Domestic Violence Branch, Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning.

The result of this inspection with finding and recommendation follow.

Mission

- The stated goal of Casa de Esperanza, Inc. is:
  “…to be a multi-faceted victims’ services center for women and children of our community. We will continue to meet the needs as they become apparent. This often means new programs development, increased funding, staff development and community education and development.

  “It is the administration’s commitment to maintain fiscal stability, quality of services through quality staff, and agency leadership within the community.”
“It is with great pride that Casa pledges itself to the advocacy of women and children from Sutter, Yuba and Colusa counties.”

FINDINGS

Program Description and Target Client Population

- Casa de Esperanza (Casa) is incorporated as a private, not for profit organization under the direction of a board of directors. The Board is comprised of eleven individuals who, serving as unpaid volunteers, represent various community organizations and perspectives. They appoint the Executive Director for Casa de Esperanza. The Executive Director is responsible for the administration and management of the organization, personnel staffing, securing of funding for operations, and program definition and implementation.

- Casa serves a client population that comes from Sutter, Yuba and Colusa Counties.

- Casa has been offering services to our local communities and region since 1977 and prides itself on providing these services to over 90,000 clients since it was established in 1977.

- Casa administration reports that snapshot sample statistical data (primarily on clients in the shelters), shows that 45-48% of the clientele are Yuba County residents, 40-43% are Sutter County residents and 10-11% are Colusa County residents. These percentages fluctuate throughout the year. Also, occasionally “reciprocal beds” are made available, i.e., where a victim needs to be moved to another shelter out of the area for her safety, to another community or state. On those occasions a reciprocal bed in Casa’s shelter is made available for the reciprocal cooperating community or state.

- As a private, not for profit organization Casa is dependent on operational funding from state and/or county-local resources, with said funds being provided specifically for the implementation of identifiable and separate programs, which sometimes restricts target client populations as a requirement for the funding grant.

- Casa provides seven programs with identified goals and objectives for specific clients and groups. Six of these are direct services to clients and citizens within the community and the seventh is directed towards the greater community, providing education and training interventions on the issues and personal risk factors that all the programs seek to correct and/or mitigate.

- The following list provides the focus for each of the different program services that are provided, along with their target population client profiles.
  1. **Domestic Violence Services [established in 1977]**: a 24-hour service that provides safe shelter for women and children from infants through senior citizens, and support that is specific to family/domestic violence issues, risks and needs of the clients.
  2. **Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Services [established in 1980]**: a 24-hour service that provides safe shelter for women and children and support that is
specific to sexual assault (including rape and incest) issues, risks and needs of the targeted clients.

3. **Children/Teen Program [established in 1992]**: a 24-hour service for individual counseling of youth at risk who are in residence at the shelter/transitional housing or in need during post-Casa residency.

4. **Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project [established in 1983]**: a 24-hour service with counseling and training in these issues for children in community schools, in juvenile hall or developmentally disabled children and with their significant adults.

5. **CAP Identification [established in 1987]**: videotaping and fingerprinting of children at local events as a community outreach effort, along with state and nationwide networking for the reduction of the problems inherent in missing and exploited children crimes.

6. **Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention & Treatment [established in 1992]**: a counseling and advocacy program for children and their non-offending parents who are residents of Sutter County and victims of abuse or at high risk.

7. **Community Education [established 1977]**: a service that provides informational presentations and/or formal training seminars for all community groups (public and private) and citizens at large on all Casa programs, interventions, treatment methodologies, etc.

**Funding**

- In F.Y. 2000-2001 Casa’s budget was $864,165 with 85% earmarked for staff salaries and 15% for operations. All services are provided to clients with no cost or user fees.

- According to the 2000-2001 Casa de Esperanza Annual Report, the largest source of and percentage of funds for Casa operations are federal and state funds. These funds are provided through:
  - The Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning or
  - The state’s Department of Health Service, Office of Maternal, Child Health.

In fiscal year 2000-2001 these two state agencies provided over $660,000 to support the Domestic Violence Services and Sexual Assault Prevention Service programs.

- Additional funding resources in Fiscal Year (F.Y.) 2000-2001 included:
  - **Estate of Charlotte Feldman** (F.Y. contribution of $42,000): funds to supplement other resources.
  - **Sutter County Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment-CAPIT** ($38,500): funding provided for a Sutter County residents only program.
  - **County FEMA Awards** (total of $32,900 – Sutter County $24,400; Yuba County $8,500): these are federal funds awarded for the domestic violence and sexual assault shelter supplies and food.
  - **County Marriage License Fees** (total of $22,100 – Sutter County over $12,800; Yuba County over $7,500; Colusa County over $1,800): these funds are earmarked for domestic violence shelters via a legislatively codified formula.
  - **United Way** (over $17,000): provided to address operating expense needs.
Sutter County Community Service Block Grant-CSBG (over $16,000): community block grants originated in 1977 with A.B. 90 and are awarded annually usually to supplement community non-profit programs operations. Casa applied to Yuba County for similar supplemental funding but was not awarded any CSBG funds.

Annual Dinner Fundraiser ($13,000): these funds are used as a supplement to provide for program operations and staffing costs.

County (Sutter-Yuba) Mental Health ($7,000): these funds provided to help to pay for a portion of staffing for Women and Substance Abuse group counseling.

Private Donations, Cash Gifts, Gifts of Services (from businesses, service clubs, and associations, over $5,800): funds to supplement other resources.

- Funding from the Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) was originally withheld after former Casa employees had filed unproven allegations and even though Casa had historically been approved and found in compliance by financial and programmatic audits by the state’s funding agencies. Subsequent inquiry by the California State Senate Finance and Judiciary Committees resulted in a reestablishment of the funding for Casa and several other similar agencies in California. There was also a change in the administration of OCJP, which apparently also contributed to the reestablishment of funding.

Mission Statement, the Stated Goals and Roles of Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning and its Supportive Branches

- As defined in their documents and on the State of California’s internet pages, the “OCJP formulates and implements statewide criminal justice policy through comprehensive planning and program funding.” This is the primary mission as originally established by the federal and state legislatures when the Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning was conceived and legislatively approved in 1968.

- The OCJP Director’s statement of purpose or mission for this agency is: “The Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP), as directed by Governor Gray Davis, provides financial and technical assistance to agencies throughout California to improve the quality of life for the people of our state by:
  - Protecting the public’s safety
  - Supporting services for crime victims
  - Developing policies to reduce crime and delinquency

OCJP is the lead California agency in crime prevention, crime suppression, and criminal justice planning. We are committed to providing resources to fight against crime and, thereby, making California a safer place to live.”

- Over the years OCJP has added the funding of services and treatment programs for victims, which can put the treatment resource agency (for example in this case Casa but hundreds of others in California as well) in conflict with the confidentiality and privacy rights of the victim. There is the occasional potential where Casa may want to aid a local law enforcement agency with confidential information they have but they cannot since disclosing such information could jeopardize a protective and therapeutic obligation they have to a victim. Usually in these instances the type of information that cannot be shared with a criminal justice law enforcement agency is information that pertains to the specific status of legal proceedings or the physical
well-being and safety of the victim (especially if an offender should learn the source of this kind of information).

- Reportedly, the Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) goals include providing support and assistance to the programs that they fund. The following statements are provided to the citizens of California (and the nation) via their documents and paperless Internet site.

  - **OCJP’s Monitoring and Audits (MAB) Branch goal:**
    “...is to support program branches, provide technical assistance to help projects achieve program objectives, and develop special projects. The branch assists policy makers in planning criminal justice programs through process, impact, and outcome evaluations of OCJP projects. The branch oversees and coordinates outside consultant evaluations of federal and state grants. The MAB Branch seeks to ensure the highest quality programs to meet the needs of the criminal justice system of California through statistical processes and quality control procedures.”

  - **OCJP’s Program Evaluation (PE) Branch goal:**
    “...is to support program branches, provide technical assistance to help projects achieve program objectives, and develop special projects. The branch assists policy makers in planning criminal justice programs through process, impact, and outcome evaluations of OCJP projects. The branch oversees and coordinates outside consultant evaluations of federal and state grants. The PE Branch seeks to ensure the highest quality programs to meet the needs of the criminal justice system of California through statistical processes and quality control procedures.”

  - **OCJP’s Domestic Violence Branch:**
    “...funds various programs fashioned to increase the availability of services to battered women and their children including emergency shelter, counseling, and crisis intervention. In addition, the Domestic Violence Branch provides training and technical assistance for those in the field who work with issues of domestic violence.”

- Apparently, the state legislature is looking into the potential of having funds for these types of victim community services and treatment resources being administered by another state agency. This would relieve the community agencies of the conflict inherent with receiving funds from a state program that seeks to prevent, suppress, and attack crime and then secondarily funds services for crime victims. Potential State agencies that could be considered for administering these types of funds are the Commission on Children and Families, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Health Services.

**Staffing**

- Casa has a combination of professional and licensed staff and support staff. Outside of the recently concluded funding issues with the one state department, which resulted in having to temporarily lay off some staff, generally the staff are stable which is conducive to the relationships they have to develop with their clientele.
• Some personnel also have special bilingual language skills including Spanish, Punjabi, and American Sign Language.

• The staff has made accommodations to ensure that the facility is accessible to the physically challenged and they have a telephone typing device (TTY) capability for their clients.

Finding Summary

No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of the Casa de Esperanza program.

Actions taken by the Governor’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning last calendar year, and contrary to their goal statements, the OCJP did not work with Casa from a supportive or advocate position, but, rather, stopped funding Casa and assumed an adversarial position (the first in 25 years of a collaborative relationship). This action impacted the delivery of services by Casa requiring a reduction in the number of personnel available to aid the victims within our communities. Fortunately the remaining Casa staff took on additional work responsibilities on behalf of the victims. Subsequently, early in February of this year, specific legislative committees intervened on behalf of Casa and other similar groups within our state, and funding was restored.

The Grand Jury appreciates the time spent by staff and the information that was provided. The Grand Jury encourages the continuation of the efforts taken by Casa’s administration and staff in their seeking of programmatic funding resources.

RECOMMENDATION

Casa de Esperanza is encouraged to work with their coalition of other similar non-profit organizations and local authorities, in collaborating with the state legislature to establish a relationship with the state-funding agency that balances the State’s oversight responsibilities with victim advocacy.

RESPONDENTS

Board of Supervisors, County of Sutter
Board of Directors, Casa de Esperanza
Executive Director, Casa de Esperanza
INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an inspection and review of the Public Guardian/Conservators Department on January 15, 2002. Director Katherine Covert was open and prepared during the interview and referred to the prior Grand Jury inspection in fiscal year 1999-2000. A brief discussion was also held with her Deputy Janet Wade. Subsequently, on January 23 a discussion was held with Human Services Director Ed Smith and Ed Fischer, Assistant Director for Welfare and Social Services Division. Included with the Grand Jury’s on-site inspection was a review of specific documents provided by the Public Guardian’s office or other local and state agencies. The documents reviewed and received were:

- Letter of December 11, 2001 from Katherine Covert,
- Mission Statement,
- Criteria for Conservatorship,
- Duties of Conservator,
- Duties of Conservatorship Investigator with Forms,
- Appropriation/Revenue Status Report as of 12/03/01,
- Welfare and Institutions Code Sections: 5325-5337; 5350-5371; 5680-5688.6; 5689-5689.9; 8016; 15760-15766; and, 18995-18995.4, and

The results of this inspection with findings and recommendations follow.

Mission:

The mission of the Public Guardian/Conservator’s office is defined as to “…provide a vital, life-sustaining service to the conservatee and the community. Because a conservatorship results after a long process through other public, social, and private health care systems, it is considered to be an action of ‘the last resort’.

“All other alternatives to conservatorship must be considered in order to ensure that basic civil rights are protected. A conservatee will retain his entitlement to respect and kindness while receiving services from the Public Guardian. The Public Guardian values the conservatee and his family as integral parts of the conservatorship process.”

REPORT
Ms. Covert reports that the department is staffed by herself as the Public Guardian, a Deputy Public Guardian, a half time/extra help Account Clerk II and a half time/extra help General Clerk II. With the half time positions operational costs are reduced since these positions do not received county benefits. It was noted that staffing is stable with no turnover experienced for the past 2 years.

As to internal and control procedures it was reported that as to clients “…we observe the rules of confidentiality, and we must adhere to directives of the Probate Code, Welfare and Institutions Code, the LPS [Lanterman-Petris-Short] Code, and the California Government Codes. We also report to the Court once per year with a fiscal accounting of each of our clients’ finances. Another type of control would be the use of our Procedure Manual as a reference tool.”

The data base for client records is not automated, rather a manual system that includes hard copies of working documents in case files is the only system. An accounting or bookkeeping system is entered into a word processing program but then finalized as a “manual bookkeeping system.”

The total expenditure for staff services, supplies and operations is just over $148 thousand for fiscal year 2001-2002.

The focus of the Grand Jury inspection and review was on the Public Guardian’s Caseload and Client Profile, Conservatorship Proceedings, Funding Resources, Client Funds, Records and Client Property Maintenance and Security, Staff Safety and Security. Findings in these areas are noted below.

FINDINGS

Caseload/Client Profile

- The current client caseload is 93 clients. Of these clients 43 are probate referrals with the remainder being referrals from the Sutter County Mental Health Department. This is an unusually high caseload since for the majority of past years the caseload has approximated 83 cases at any one time. However, on a few rare occasions in the past the department has climbed to 93 cases.

- Adult Protective Services (APS) is the primary referring agency for probate cases.

- Mental Health Department is the primary referring agency for mentally ill clients.

- Other agencies and individuals can and do make referrals, e.g. local doctors, law enforcement agencies, and even neighbors (although they are usually referred to APS first).]

- A significant number of the mental health cases come under the supervision of the Public Guardian because of the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) act of the late 1960s, which released mentally ill citizens from housing in State operated mental hospitals to the community for community-based treatment. This currently includes a number of homeless persons.
Oldest Client is 94 years of age and the youngest is 20. The majority of younger clients mental health problems appear to be the result of substance abuse.

Files on clients no longer being serviced by the county are achieved in a hangar at the county airport. There is no policy on how to keep these files or when to purge them.

Conservatorship Proceedings

- The Public Guardian’s office initiates all conservatorship proceedings.
- Legal representation for the client in contested conservatorship proceedings is the Public Defender.
- The Public Guardian is represented by County Counsel.
- Since the LPS Act requires that the public guardian serve as the conservator only after the court has made a specific finding that no other person or entity is willing and able to serve as conservator, the Public Guardian and her one deputy have to also conduct investigations on all conservatorship cases before filing for court authority to supervise these clients.
- All cases under the supervision of the Public Guardian undergo intake and investigatory procedures and steps to determine appropriateness of and document justification for a person to be under the supervision of the Public Guardian/Conservator.
- With the growth in caseload size and the growth within Sutter County it is anticipated that consideration will have to be given to increasing staff to carry out the codified and mandated duties of the Public Guardian/Conservator’s office. However, no time line for when this should occur has been decided.

Funding Resources

- The Mental Health Department contracts with the Public Guardian’s office for services provided to their clients, for which this department reimburses the Public Guardian approximately $41,000 per year.
- Additional funds for Probate services are a percentage of the estate of those clients whose estate is probated. This is a sliding scale with estates less than $400 incurring no fee up to estates that are $50,000 or more incurring a fee of 1.5%.
- However, these funds do not cover all the expenditures for salaries and operations of the department.
- The balance of departmental operational costs is funded by the county general tax funds.
Client Funds

- Individual client funds are entered into one Trust account at the local Feather River State Bank. The bank determines and applies the accrued interest on this single trust account, not on the individual client accounts.

- The bank reports the interest accruals monthly to the Public Guardian’s office.

- The Public Guardian’s office staff uses a simple word/data-processing program for tracking client’s money.

- Staff determines how much of a percentage each client’s fund represents within the total of funds in the Trust Account.

- The interest accrued for the total Trust Account then is divided by these percentages and this amount is periodically added to the Public Guardian’s records of individual accounts as individual earnings on that account.

- The Public Guardian at a minimum must reconcile the financial records every two years, however, this responsibility is completed once a year, documented in case files and reported to the Sutter County Court that established jurisdiction over the clients.

Records and Client Property Maintenance and Security

- The Grand Jury Final Report of 1999-2000 noted that outside of some original documents on file with the Court and Mental Health Departments, all client records are kept in individual caseload files. The Grand Jury recommended at that time that the information system should be automated for staff labor and record-keeping efficiency.

- It was noted that just recently the Public Guardian’s office staff were provided with a used facsimile machine to use in support of clerical functions with caseload files. This was one of the technology advances since the Grand Jury’s last inspection over 2 years ago. Other technological advances such as automation of and networking with case files with the court and other appropriate agencies has not been implemented.

- Active case files are kept within a small closet-size area within a small storage room. Some client personal property is also in this room. The outer room houses phone lines and a computer server and router system for other departments in the building, including Mental Health, Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services.

- This corner inner room within the storage area has two walls that do not reach the ceiling. Thus an unauthorized person could access these confidential and sensitive files by climbing over the wall to get into the area where the files are kept.
• This outer room is accessible to other county departmental employees and phone company personnel when they work on those systems.

• Also in this outer room is bagged client personal property.

• This area has exposed ceiling and wall supports for the electrical systems, phone systems, etc.

• This area, as well as the staff working areas, has no sprinkler protection from potential fire damage.

• Archived non-active client files along with additional active clients personal property is housed in a hangar storage facility at the county airport, which is approximately a 12’x12’x10’ metal shed with no insulation from the elements. A single door provides access to the shed that is secured by a breakable padlock.

• The archived boxed files go back to the original time that the Public Guardian’s office was established, possibly over 40 years. Many of the boxes and the shelves upon which they sit are collapsing.

• Client personal property is boxed and bagged and put on the floor. Some of the boxes have obviously suffered water damage from sitting on concrete, through which rainwater seeps in from the outside. The clients’ property has been sitting in this shed for months, if not years, subject to the extreme elements of heat, cold, moisture and vermin.

Staff Safety and Security

• The Public Guardian’s office is housed within the building that currently is for the Departments of Mental Health and Child Protective Services.

• A construction project is underway to move Mental Health personnel to a larger facility and building in the general area but in a new building.

• As previously noted a significant number of Public Guardian clients are Mental Health referrals. Currently if an emergency or an incident should occur with a client, the Public Guardian can use one of two emergency buttons or both to summon aid.

• One button connects to a private security electronic monitoring company that has their dispatcher who will verify the emergency call and then summon the Yuba City Police Department. The other button connects to two clerical support sections in the building near the mental health in-patient and outpatient service areas. These clerical support personnel then locate mental health personnel by looking for some that are nearby and then dispatch them to the public guardian’s section of the building.

• The mental health employees who would eventually respond come from an area in the same building but where they are assigned to work with mental health patients directly under their
supervision. Thus the staff in this area has as a primary responsibility the patients confined in their work area. Responding to an emergency in the Public Guardian’s office section is a secondary issue.

- When conducting the on-site inspection the distance between the two areas were paced and they are approximately 350 feet apart, through four hallways with three dogleg intersections.

- The procedures for summoning personnel to an emergency are obviously not conducive to a rapid response. Fortunately, however, the Public Guardian reports that in the last 3 years to her recollection she has never had to summon aid through the emergency response system.

- It appears that drills are not conducted to test or practice the adequacy of the emergency response protocols, since one of the staff support persons indicated that she could not remember when the alarm was last activated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Client Funds

- The Public Guardian should establish separate and individual client accounts at the financial institution that holds the funds and generates interest (similar to how parents as conservators of their children establish savings accounts to which the children contribute). The bank that holds these monies and uses them in their overall portfolio should apply the interest to the individual client accounts. If there is a contractual arrangement between the county and the bank for administration of the singular trust account, this individual client account separate tracking responsibility should be negotiated into that contract.

- In the interim and immediately, the Public Guardian staff should be provided a financial spreadsheet software program (at the minimum an “off the shelf” financial software program) by the County’s Information Technology Services for this critical obligation for clients’ funds, as protection for the county and the clients.

Records and Client Property Maintenance and Security

- The Public Guardian’s office should have their own secured area for on-site active records and temporary placement of client property. This area should be accessible only to a limited number of Public Guardian staff (probably two persons with their own keys for key control and logging of entry and departure of files and property).

- The Public Guardian’s office and documents should be protected from the potential hazards of fire and flood. At a minimum the area should have a fire suppression sprinkler system and the files should be kept in a fire/water-proofed vault.

- A policy on how long to maintain inactive case files should be established. This should be developed after consideration of the position of California governmental codes, the practices of
other county public guardians, and the concerns of the Court, County Counsel and probate/conservatorship advocates, on how long to retain archived files.

- At a minimum these archived files should be transferred to microfiche or scanned for electronic storage to reduce the amount of space necessary and provision of security for access to sensitive and confidential information.

- The use of the hangar shed for off-site client personal property should be reconsidered. At a minimum the security on the door should be changed to a locking deadbolt system, remove any signage on the outside that would identify it as belonging to the Public Guardian and be subject to the same security and protective protocols recommended for the office site (i.e., fire and flood protection and limit access to identified and key control personnel).

**Staff Safety and Security**

- Public Guardian personnel should participate in all plans for new construction or renovations to the Public Guardian’s office and the impact that the move of Mental Health personnel may or may not have to the security and safety of the Public Guardian’s operations.

- Since the Courts, Sheriff and Probation Departments have similar personnel, client, and client property issues, the Sheriff’s Department should be requested to evaluate the Public Guardian’s office from the perspective of the safety and security of the Public Guardian personnel, security of sensitive/critical documents, and the security of clients’ property.

**RESPONDENTS**

Public Guardian/Conservator
Sutter County Human Services Agency
County of Sutter, Board of Supervisors
6.4

FOSTER HOME PLACEMENT AND LICENSING INSPECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Sutter County Grand Jury conducted interviews and inspection and review of requested documents pertaining to the operation of Foster Home Placement and Licensing during the months of January and February. The focus of the Grand Jury’s inquiry was on issues relative to “Foster Home Placement and Licensing” of these placements for children.

Persons interviewed included Edmund C. Smith (Director, Human Services Department), Ed Fischer (Assistant Director for Welfare and Social Services Division), and Maureen Saunders (Program Manager, Social Services: Children Services-Foster Care). At the time of the interviews the county staff provided complete and detailed copies, of foster home and foster parent recruitment documents, training documents, in-service educational opportunities materials, and licensing documents. State Governmental Codes, administrative operational documents and client materials were also read and evaluated. The documents that were received and/or reviewed included:

1. Letter of December 12, 2001 from Grand Jury to County of Sutter.
2. Letters of December 26 and 27, from Edmund C. Smith, Director of Human Services.
3. Memorandum of December 27, 2001 regarding Social Services Caseload and Funding.
11. Interim Foster Family Homes Standards, California Department of Social Services Manual – CCL (Community Care Licensing), Interim Standards Pending Adoption of Emergency Regulations (January 1999?).
12. Sample flyers from Yuba College Foster Care Education and training program for year 2002 and prior.
13. Sample letter of invitation to prospective Foster Parents with attachments.
14. Samples of instructional information for Foster Parents at time licensing.
15. Samples of brochures, booklets, flyers that are provided to citizens and potential Foster Parents at orientation meetings and community events.
16. Foster Home Application packet of County and State forms and instructions.
17. Title 22 California Code of Regulations, Sections 8700-87088.
18. California Health and Safety Code, Section 1500 et sequitur.

The result of this inspection with finding and recommendation follow.

**Mission**

A Mission Statement specific to the focus of the Foster Home Placement and Licensing Division was not provided. However, a general one for the umbrella department, i.e., the Human Services Department was provided. It states: “The Sutter County Human Services Department provides a client centered, outcome oriented, integrated, cost effective delivery of services. Staff of this department are committed to safeguarding the physical, emotional and social well being of others while promoting self-sufficiency and quality of life and health for those we serve.”

The Foster Home Placement and Licensing Department is referred to as a member of a comprehensive and integrated team within the Children’s System of Care/Family Intervention Team, which was organized to meet the special behavioral needs of at-risk children and their families, this team being a branch of the larger Mental Health Division of the Human Services Department.

The enabling authority for county to provide foster home placement and licensing operations is found in the California Health and Safety Codes: Sections 1500-1519 and the California Code of Regulations, Title 22: Division 6, Chapter 7.5, Sections 80,000 et sequitur; 83,000 et sequitur; 87,000 et sequitur; and, 88,000 et sequitur.

**FINDINGS**

**Caseload/Client Profile**

- Children are referred to the department, specifically Child Protective Services “…from schools, police, grandparents, neighbors, friends, physicians, or anyone else who has contact with children and suspects the child is being abused or neglected.” These referrals are in response to issues of alleged neglect and/or abuse and the children’s status is defined and they are provided protection pursuant to the definitions found within the Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 300, et sequitur.

- When children have been removed from their parents’ custody by county authorities they are either placed in a suitable relative’s home or foster home.

- In Sutter County there are only 39 licensed Foster Homes that may be able to provide board and care for up to 6 children.

- These homes are primarily in lower income areas of the county since there is an attitude of “NIMBY” (not in my backyard) in the more affluent areas.

- However, these homes generally are invisible within the larger community.
When staff first comes into contact with a child they conduct an intake procedure that includes an individual risk and needs assessment unique to that child referred to as “Structured Decision Making Case Management.”

The document presented to the Grand Jury on the assessment protocols and research findings are noteworthy.

In discussions it was apparent that staff who work with children that come to the attention of Child Protective Services are not always welcomed since there are often opposing positions by parents, other relatives, law enforcement, schools, physicians, neighbors. The emotions of many of these persons are personal and sometimes volatile. However, the focus always has to be on the risks and needs associated with each child.

**Funding Resources**

- Funding for Foster Home Care and Licensing services is broken down to program functional areas and operational staffing, including:
  - Foster Care - $4,387,009,
  - Social Services Funding for CPS - $3,074,956 with an available augmentation of $433,007,
  - Social Services Staffing - $1,542,723, which includes positions assigned to Adult Protective Services.

- The overwhelming majority of total costs are covered by federal and state sharing ratios, which vary by program areas. But a general rule of thumb appears to be that at least 60% to 85% of total expenditures are covered by these other governmental entities for the various operations.

- The majority of these funds are used for the costs associated with foster home and institutional group home care. The later is much more expensive averaging up to $3,000 more per month because of the needs of the children. Foster homes are much more cost-effective and with a smaller number of children most likely a more healthy environment. However, most foster homes are not equipped to deal with needs and the risks of those children who have to be in an institutional environment.

**Staffing**

- There are 35.5 Social Worker positions that perform social services responsibilities in Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS). 27.5 of these positions are assigned to CPS, and many of their responsibilities are specific to the placement of children in foster homes, as well as recruiting and licensing foster homes.

- Within the last year the county experienced a turnover of four of these staff, which is about 11% of the total. Causative factors centered mainly on salary and growth potential with similar positions in larger and/or more affluent counties.
Client Records

- The Grand Jury Final Report of 1999-2000 noted that outside of some original documents on file with the Court and Mental Health Departments, all client records are kept in individual caseload files. The Grand Jury recommended at that time that the information system should be automated for staff labor and record-keeping efficiency.

FINDINGS SUMMARY

No statewide and local compliance issues presented themselves in our review of the Foster Home Placement and Licensing operations. However, the Foster Home Placement and Licensing branch of the Human Services Department has not developed and defined a Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives and Strategies that is specific to itself and to the community of Sutter County and client needs. To develop these statements is a proven methodology and practice in the management of organizations that aids departments in focusing on current needs, changing technologies, and socio-economic dynamics in order to meet the targeted client needs.

The Grand Jury appreciates the time provided by staff and the information and the documents that were made available. The Grand Jury encourages the continuation of the efforts taken by department’s administration and staff in their ongoing risk and needs assessments of the children using the Structured Decision Making Case Management process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Foster Home Placement and Licensing Division of the Human Services Department should develop a Mission Statement, specific to operations, with Goals and Core Strategies that are unique to the particular needs of its identified clients and stakeholders in the greater community of Sutter County.

RESPONDENTS

Foster Home Placement and Licensing Program
Sutter County Human Services Agency
County of Sutter, Board of Supervisors
6.5

BI-COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT


BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury of 2000-2001 in their Final Report, Chapter Title “Bi-County Mental Health Department” made the following Finding on this department: “The Mental Health facilities were not adequate in regards to office space and parking of staff and clients.” They also noted that the Grand Jury of 1999-2000 reported on the need for portable units and increased parking spaces.

The Grand Jury at the time made the Recommendation that the County “(e)xpedite the process of the portable/modular units and accelerate the situation with parking for employees and clients.” The Grand Jury also requested that the County’s response and follow up to this recommendation be followed-up by the Grand Jury of 2001-2002. On September 19, 2001 the Board of Supervisors’ response to this Recommendation was presented to the Grand Jury of 2001-2002. The Board’s response was:

“The Board of Supervisors agrees with this recommendation and is in the process of addressing Mental Health’s space needs. The Board recently awarded a contract for construction and set-up of a 12,888 sq.f. modular building to be located adjacent to the Mental Health building. The modular should be ready for occupancy by November 2001. The county is moving forward with plans to remodel the Mental Health building staring in December 2001. Additionally, the County’s Facilities Master Plan, completed in December 2000, includes plans to construct a new 60,000 sq.f. Welfare/Social Services building at 1965 Live Oak Boulevard, which will house the Welfare Division, Cal Works Employment Services, and a portion of the Mental Health Division. Currently, the Public Works Department is estimating that the building will be ready for occupancy in the early part of the 2004 calendar year. In conjunction with this project, parking for the entire complex at 1965 Live Oak Boulevard will be modified to provide adequate parking for employees and clients.”

Documents Reviewed and/or Received

Sutter County Board of Supervisors Response to the 2000-2001 Sutter County Grand Jury Report
Letter of December 5, 2002 from Edmund Smith, Director Human Services Department

FINDING

68
The Grand Jury of 2001-2002 did request an update from Mr. Edmund Smith, Director of the Human Services Department as to the statements made in the above response. He states “(i)n September our Social Services and Mental Health children’s staff moved into 12,888 sq. ft. modular building space located adjacent to the existing Mental Health/Social Services building at 1965 Live Oak Blvd. in Yuba City. Additional parking has been created at the same site, and is currently being utilized by staff and the public.”

In addition the Grand Jury did make observations of the area while conducting on-site visits with another county department and conducted interviews with departmental staff on January 23 and February 1, 2002. The Grand Jury’s observation and information received confirms the above statement.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

Sutter County Human Services Department
Sutter County Board of Supervisors
6.6

HEALTH DIVISION/WELFARE & SOCIAL SERVICES


BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury of 2000-2001 in their Final Report, Chapter Title “Health Division/Welfare & Social Services” made the following Finding on this department: “All departments visited seemed to run efficiently and effectively, working well under all conditions. The CAL WORKS Employment Services, Welfare and Sutter County Social Services building appeared to have inadequate office space. Most employees worked in cramped conditions.”

The Grand Jury at that time made the Recommendation that the County should “…look into expanding the current Welfare and Social Services building and combine it with CAL WORKS Employment Services.” The Grand Jury also requested that the County’s response and follow up to this recommendation be followed-up by the Grand Jury of 2001-2002.

On September 19, 2001 the Board of Supervisors’ response to this Recommendation was presented to the Grand Jury of 2001-2002. The Board’s response was: “The Board of Supervisors partially agrees with this recommendation. The County does not intend to expand the current Welfare and Social Services Building at 190 Garden Highway for continued use by the Welfare Division of Human Services. The Board is aware that the County’s currently owned facilities no longer adequately meet all departments’ space needs. Consequently, a countywide study of present and future space requirements was conducted last year, culminating with the presentation of a Facilities Master Plan to the Board in December 2000. Consistent with the Facilities Master Plan recommendations, the County has begun the development process to construct a 60,000 sq.f. building, which will be located on county-owned property adjacent to the Mental Health Building on live Oak Blvd. It will house the Welfare Division, Cal Works Employment Services, and a portion of the Mental Health Division. The building at 190 Garden Highway will eventually be remodeled and occupied by the Agricultural Commissioner.”

Documents Reviewed and/or Received

Sutter County Board of Supervisors Response to the 2000-2001 Sutter County Grand Jury Report
Letter of December 5, 2002 from Edmund Smith, Director Human Services Department

FINDING
The Grand Jury of 2001-2002 did request an update from Mr. Ed Smith, Director of the Human Services Department as to the statements made in the above response. He states, “…we have as of this date (February 1, 2002) retained an architect. The architect has met with staff of Welfare and Social Services, Cal works/Employment Services, Mental Health, and other elements of the Human services Department. This architect is designing the program stage for a building (approximately 60,000 sq. ft.), which will be constructed at 1965 Live Oak blvd., where the Welfare and Social Services functions would be combined with Calworks/Employment Services.

“We have had recent discussions with cost estimators to identify construction costs as well as site preparation costs and soft costs that goes into developing such a building. It is my anticipation that within the next six weeks the status of this project will go to the Board of Supervisors for review and appropriate action.”

The focus of this written response also confirms discussions held with Mr. Smith and Deputy Directors within his management staff on January 23 and February 1, 2002.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

RESPONDENTS

Sutter County Human Services Department
Sutter County Board of Supervisors
7.0 Planning & Environment

7.1 SUTTER COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

INTRODUCTION

Members of the Grand Jury met with Sutter County Public Works Director Robert Barrett and Assistant Public Works Director George Musallam on January 17, 2002, as part of the annual review. Specifically, inquiries were made regarding the Stonegate Village Treatment Plant and the Sutter County Water Works District #1, facility in Robbins. Both facilities appear to function well. They are regularly monitored and have reported minimal problems.

REPORT

The California Regional Water Control Board physically inspects facilities annually and grants permits to the county approving operations. The requirements for monitoring the facility are set forth in the permit. Monitoring also requires daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual inspection.

User fees for services pay operating expense for each facility. An Operator I monitors systems. The Operator is also responsible for obtaining required sample and ensuring a chain of custody from the initial gathering of the sample until it is turned over to the Cranmer Analytical Laboratory for analysis. The Operators working in the facility obtain their specific classification through a combination of work experience and a written examination, which is given by the State. Road maintenance personnel are trained to react to emergencies and control the situation until the Operator I arrive on scene.

Waste matter from users is released to the lot septic tank. When the tank reaches a predetermined level the raw effluent is pumped through a collection pipeline to the respective treatment plant. Stonegate operates a leach field system and Robbins uses an evaporation system.

All individual septic tanks have an individual alarm system to indicate a problem in their system. Sutter County maintains the lines and pumps individual tanks when required.

Stonegate Village sewer treatment plant

The Stonegate Sewage treatment plant is located just west of the area known as Tierra Buena. The service area consists of approximately 108 single-family homes, fourteen units in the Tierra Buena mobile home park and an elderly care rest home. The rest home purchased a lot in the Stonegate district to allow hook up to the facility. The county will not issue a building permit on this lot without
an amendment to the permit, which requires approval from the California Regional Water Quality
Control Board.

A block wall fence encloses the facility and the Sutter County Sheriff’s Department conducts periodic
checks of the area. Additionally, the residents in the area are security conscious and maintain
vigilance.

The treatment facility consists of two 10000-gallon dosing tanks; two recirculating sand filters, a
chlorinating system, and a 2.0 million gallon lined holding pond and the adjacent leach field system.
An additional site disposal area was required due to insufficient storage and disposal capacity in the
existing system. This additional off site disposal area is in addition to the existing one acre leach field
and does not result in an increase in the volume of processed waste water. Discharge rates are based on
“dry weather” discharges. Accordingly, extremely wet weather requires the additional off site disposal
area.

**Robbins Waste Water Treatment Facility**

The Robbins facility is located near the rural community of Robbins in the southern end of Sutter
County. This facility consists of four recirculating sand filters and a 10000-gallon dosing tank.
Disposal is to three evaporating ponds.

A chain link fence, with barbed wire, provides security for the facility as well as periodic patrols by the
Sutter County Sheriff’s Department. The use of evaporating system in this area is mandated due to the
high level of ground water. Ponds are raised, almost to the point of being above ground level and lined
with a heavy plastic.

The Robbins facility was constructed with use of a grant (97.5% of total cost) and a low cost loan
(2.5%). User fees for service pay for maintenance of the facility. The loan is being repaid with
monthly user/property owner fees. Currently there are 7 available vacancies on the facility’s permit.

**FINDING**

The Robbins Trailer Park has been responsible for an infiltration to the system. The owner of the
trailer park is aware of and working closely with Sutter County to correct the problem. To date, the
problem of infiltration has not been corrected. It has, however, been improved. The county will
monitor to ensure compliance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2002/2003 Grand Jury should schedule a visitation with Public Works to ascertain the progress of
this problem.
7.2

YUBA CITY UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

Members of the Grand jury met with Mr. William Lewis, Yuba City Utilities Director, on January 15, 2002, to discuss the water treatment plant and the wastewater treatment plant. During our visit we toured the water treatment plant located at 701 Northgate Drive. The utilities department is responsible for providing potable water, providing environmentally responsible wastewater treatment and maintaining a laboratory to ensure the required standards are maintained.

REPORT

Water Treatment

The 1997 master plan to serve existing city limits is currently being revised to include the sphere of influence of the Yuba City area. The revision is partially due to the recent acquisition of the former Hillcrest Water District.

There are four contracts (permits) that allow Yuba City the use of surface water. Two of these permits are issued by the State of California Water Resources Control Board and allow Yuba City to use surface water from November through March. From April through October the city gains its water from permits issued by the Yuba County Water District and State Water Contractors. All four permits allow the city to draw surface water from the Feather River.

Water meters in use by the surface water users are considered a conservation measure to ensure the equity of payment. Yuba City will complete the current water meter program this year by adding meters to approximately 500 customers of surface water. At this time there are no other plans that require users to install additional water meters.

There are four distinct pressure zones in the area for ground water, all independent of each other. Each has distinct and different water qualities. Thirteen wells supply these areas. These wells can supply the current approved subdivisions. Future subdivisions will require new wells.

The city purchased the Hillcrest Water District in May 2001. The change of ownership is in progress at this time. The updated permit will include all of the wells not previously included in the existing permit. The Master Plan will be completed prior to obtaining the new permit as much of the required information in the permit is found in the updated Master Plan.

Some initial problems were incurred due to the change from private to public ownership. Due to the high level of manganese in the ground water, users of the former Hillcrest Water District experienced slightly discolored water, which in turn led to complaints. Users were kept informed of the corrective measures to eliminate the problems. Since the improvements were completed complaints have been at a minimum. At this time there are no plans to require Hillcrest ground water users to install water
meters. The Yuba City City Council will need to approve such a measure, if and when deemed appropriate.

The Yuba City water plan rate is revenue neutral. Water fees are based on cost of replacement of capital, fixed costs, cost of water and cost of service. Currently, water connection fees are approximately $2,300.

Yuba City requires certain users, most businesses, irrigation only systems, and sites using city water in conjunction with private wells to have a back flow prevention device installed. The back flow prevention program requires that the devices be inspected annually at the owner’s expense. Yuba City oversees the program, which is monitored and controlled by the State Health Services Department.

Two elevated water storage tanks are in place in Yuba City, both are out of service. The water tank on Plumas Street has become a landmark and the tank on Forbes is a source of revenue from the antenna attached to it. These two above ground tanks are obsolete due to current demand, health risks, and newer more efficient equipment being used to supply the city customers with water.

The annual system deficiency report completed by Department of Heath Services found minor discrepancies that are being corrected as part of routine maintenance, when work load permits. Noted in the cover letter addressing the annual inspection from DHS were two comments worth being mentioned in the Grand Jury report. The DHS stated, “I found the (Yuba City) water system to be very well operated and maintained.” and “The city is commended for completion of the recent improvements at the water treatment plant. These projects have significantly improved the reliability of the plant and provided needed operational flexibility.”

The California Department of Health Services requires that the Yuba City treatment plant employ a Grade 5 Operator. To become a Grade 5 the operator must pass a state test and have considerable work experience. Yuba City has no Grade 5 Operator at this time. This position is difficult to fill due to the competitive pay scale and lack of qualified personnel. The Department of Health Services determines the enforcement of requiring a Grade 5 Operator by considering the size of the facility, the quality of the water produced and the location within the state.

Waste Water

The Regional Water Quality Control Board regulates Yuba City wastewater treatment. The wastewater treatment plant generates approximately 2,000 tons of biosolids per year. Biosolids are the left over product of treated solids. Solids are air dried then shipped to the Yuba Sutter Disposal site and used as a ground cover. The city is charged for the disposal of the biosolids.

From May 15 to October 31st wastewater is pumped to holding ponds. During the rest of the year treated wastewater is dumped into the Feather River.

When it comes to planning, the city and county work together for the benefit of the citizens of Sutter County. The city’s prospective is that future customers to the city system must coincide with responsible growth. As the city grows, the wastewater infrastructure will increase. Currently, the city maintains that new user owners bear the cost of new infrastructure based on needs.

Approximately 140 miles of sewer lines are regularly monitored. When appropriate, line inspection is achieved by using a camera.
The wastewater treatment plant is down two operator positions. Recruitment is difficult due to the limited number of certified operators and the benefit package available. In house-training is being considered to correct this problem.

There are no present enforcement actions pending.

Security at both the water treatment plant and wastewater treatment facility appears adequate. They are both fenced and manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week 365 days a year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

RESPONDENTS

8.0 Appendix

Appendix – A.1
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