

Sacramento County Sheriff's Department Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center

Issue

The Grand Jury evaluated Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center (RCCC) to determine whether it is operating efficiently and is properly staffed.

Reason for Investigation

California Penal Code section 919(b) requires the Grand Jury to inquire into the condition and management of county jails.

Method of Investigation

The Grand Jury toured the entire facility and interviewed the following staff members:

- Sacramento County Sheriff
- RCCC Commander
- RCCC Assistant Commander
- Sheriff's Deputies
- Medical staff
- Education staff
- Food Service Training staff
- Engraving staff
- Welding staff
- Gardening and Landscaping staff
- Inmates

Background and Facts

RCCC is the primary custody facility for inmates sentenced to county jail from Sacramento County courts. RCCC also houses inmates in transit to and from other jurisdictions. RCCC is the primary reception point for parole violators held pending revocation hearings and is the transfer point for defendants sentenced to state prison.

RCCC is located 27 miles south of Sacramento on 640 acres of land. Several facilities were

constructed in the 1960s with the capacity to house 750 inmates. By the late 1970s, the institution needed to expand due to the demands of a growing jail population. Under a project called Plan 2000, facilities were remodeled and expanded. This project provided a master plan for expansion that raised the inmate capacity to 2,300. The current population ranges from approximately 1,900 - 2,100 and occasionally exceeds 2,100.

In addition to being the primary confinement facility, RCCC is equipped to accept newly arrested persons 24 hours a day. Police departments such as Galt, Isleton, Lodi and Elk Grove book the majority of their arrests into RCCC. Other agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game, California Highway Patrol, State Parole Office, State Park Rangers and the Sheriff's Department also book arrests into RCCC.

The women's jail at RCCC, the Sandra Larson Facility, houses minimum, medium and maximum security inmates.

RCCC has approximately 140 sworn officers and 65 civilian personnel assigned to the institution.

Medical Staffing

The Grand Jury learned that the nurses had filed a grievance with Sacramento County over pay issues and staffing shortages at RCCC. There were also concerns regarding safety because there were no officers assigned to the medical unit to provide security for the nurses.

The safety issue may have been resolved since the Board of Supervisors allocated four new deputy staff for RCCC. In addition, the Board approved seven new nursing positions and one additional nurse practitioner. The Board also approved a raise in salary for the nurses.

Vocational Training

Food Service

RCCC has a food service training program. Female inmates who meet specific criteria are instructed by a professional chef in the art of cooking, meal preparation, serving, table decoration and full service restaurant work. Participation is limited due to space constraints.

Engraving Shop

The engraving shop is staffed with accredited teachers from the Elk Grove Unified School District which is under contract with Sacramento County. The shop teaches procedures and techniques by creating plaques, signs, banners, emblems, and other items, for numerous governmental and nonprofit agencies statewide. The program enrolls up to eight inmates at any time and offers a certificate of completion upon release from RCCC.

Welding Shop

The welding shop is a multifaceted repair and manufacturing area in which inmate workers fabricate, repair and maintain metal and wood items for county agencies. The shop maintains or constructs farm implements, tractors, security gates, screens, bunks, tables and specialty items. The Grand Jury observed inmates and the instructor retrofitting a police van to provide secure transportation. The instructor indicated that there is more work available, but not enough room or staff to complete similar projects.

Gardening and Landscaping

RCCC has an active horticulture program. In addition to landscaping, they produce vegetables which are used in the food service program. The horticulture program has limited inmate participation due to lack of supervisory staffing.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: Noncompetitive compensation and the lack of security for medical personnel have generated complaints from medical staff.

Recommendation 1: The additional nurses and deputies authorized by the Board of Supervisors should be selected and assigned as soon as possible.

Finding 2: The few available vocational programs afford inmates the opportunity to increase their knowledge, training, self-esteem and the possibility for employment upon release. However, those programs appeared to be understaffed and lacking in resources. A complete evaluation of vocational training is needed to determine inmate needs and opportunities. Significant new resources should be devoted to vocational training, prospective employer contacts and community acceptance.

Recommendation 2: RCCC has a physical plant large enough to expand the current vocational programs and add other disciplines.

Response Requirements

Response Required: Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 require that specific responses to both the findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Sacramento Superior Court by October 1, 2007, from:

- **Sacramento County Sheriff**