

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
GRAND JURY REPORT
2008 – 2009



Cover Photo.

Pinecrest Lake is a PG&E storage reservoir used to provide water for hydroelectric power downstream on the South Fork of the Stanislaus. The meadow at the signed junction with a trail to Cleo's Baths usually has an abundance of wildflowers. Pinecrest represents Tuolumne County's commitment to renewable energy and natural beauty.

The lake is also a destination for the outdoors with boating, fishing, hiking, bicycling, camping and enjoying the shoreline.

June 24, 2009

The Honorable Eleanor Provost
Superior Court of Tuolumne County
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Dear Judge Provost,

The 2008-2009 Tuolumne County Grand Jury is pleased to present its Final Report to you, the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Tuolumne County.

The nineteen members of the Tuolumne County Grand Jury dedicated countless hours of personal time in evening meetings and daytime investigative work to bring this Final Report to fruition. We came from varied walks of life and backgrounds, yet coalesced into a diligent working group that met many times in committees and in plenary sessions to fulfill our obligations as specified in the oath of office. Among the duties we carried out were the following:

- Reviewed all written citizen's complaints
- Reached a majority decision regarding investigations
- Reviewed documents, contracts, policies, procedures and financial information
- Discussed the progress and issues on each case weekly
- Visited the sites in question
- Wrote a final report on each case investigated, which included our findings and recommendations

On behalf of the entire Grand Jury, I sincerely thank you for your support and guidance throughout the year. I would also like to express thanks and gratitude to the county and Sierra Conservation Center officials who took time to make presentations to the Grand Jury and those that allowed us to visit on-site. A special thanks goes to Laurie Wyman, Jury Coordinator, for her cheerful and tireless support of the Grand Jury.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the individual members of the Grand Jury for their hard work, resiliency and dedication to our mission. It is in this spirit that we offer our report and strongly encourage every citizen of Tuolumne County to review the Grand Jury's findings, recommendations and responses from their public officials.

This past year has been an education, a privilege and an honor to serve. Thank you for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Dolores E. Blanchard

DOLORES E. BLANCHARD, Foreperson
Tuolumne County Grand Jury 2008-2009

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**TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009**

TUOLUMNE COUNTY GRAND JURY
MEMBERS
2008-2009

Dolores E. Blanchard - Foreperson
East Sonora

Eric D. Marvel *- Foreperson Pro Tem
Twain Harte

Peter Stancavage* - Secretary
Jamestown

Pamela Hughes - Secretary Pro Tem
Sonora

Jeffrey Aguiar	Sonora
Linda S. Berry	Sonora
Julie Bright	Sonora
Erin Callahan	Jamestown
David Forrest	Chinese Camp
Linda J. Fox-Gibbs	Twain Harte
Kathleen Gough	Sonora
Robert Higgins	Columbia
Nancy M. Jones	Soulsbyville
Lanelle A. Lovelace	Jamestown
Roberta Remmel	Sonora
Andrew Riehl	Sonora
Joseph J. Sparagna	Sonora
Tonya Taylor	Jamestown
Steven G. Treat	Jamestown
Pamela A. Young	East Sonora

*Denotes Committee Chair

**Resigned Member

MISSION STATEMENT

The Tuolumne County Grand Jury will diligently and impartially perform their duties to the best of their individual and collective abilities. The Grand Jury's function is to make independent investigations on behalf of the people of the County of Tuolumne and make recommendations for improvement. Grand Jury findings will be based on facts, not emotions or perceptions, be clearly presented and within the course and scope of their charge.

DISCLAIMER

This Grand Jury sought to preclude any conflict of interest in which a grand juror may have a personal involvement, a material, economic or financial interest, or could not be an impartial third party. Each juror brought to the attention of the full Grand Jury any relationship that could be, or even give the appearance of, a conflict of interest and agreed not to participate in any investigation involving that relationship including interviews or acceptance of any report involving any such relationship. The Grand Jury is composed of 19 jurors and at least 12 jurors must approve each individual report. The printed Final Report is composed of the approved individual reports, which are based on information obtained from outside sources with none of the information being obtained from any excluded Grand Juror.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person, or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Civil Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.

PRESENTATIONS

The 2008-2009 Tuolumne County Grand Jury wishes to thank numerous county officials who generously gave of their time to come to Grand Jury meetings in the evening and present information concerning their departmental/agency work. We also wish to thank those who cleared their busy work calendars and made the time for us to visit their work site. The following individuals gave presentations to the full Grand Jury.

Craig Pedro Tuolumne County Administrator

Gregory J. Oliver Tuolumne County Counsel

Donald I. Segerstrom, Jr. Tuolumne County District Attorney

Jim Mele Tuolumne County Sheriff – Coroner

Ivan Clay Warden, Sierra Conservation Center

The Grand Jury would also like to acknowledge and thank Judge Eleanor Provost for her guidance and assistance throughout the year.

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

The Citizen Complaints Committee is just one of the teams on the Grand Jury. For the 2008-2009 Grand Jury, the Citizen Complaints Committee was composed of five jurors. The purpose of this committee was to review complaints from Tuolumne County citizens and provide the full Grand Jury with a recommendation for or against investigation. A final decision was then voted on by the full Grand Jury.

Tuolumne County citizens may communicate their concerns about local government to the Grand Jury by submitting a Citizen's Complaint form. This form is available through the county web site on the Grand Jury Complaints page. Essentially any governmental entity within the county is subject to investigation by the Grand Jury. All citizen complaints are acknowledged and reviewed by the Grand Jury. Complaints and investigations are handled in the strictest confidence. Because of the volume of potential investigations, not all complaints can be investigated by the Jury.

The 2008-2009 Grand Jury chose to pass each complaint through the Citizen Complaints Committee. This group developed and used a criteria-weighting worksheet to process each issue it received. The Citizen Complaints Committee then used the Investigation Criteria Worksheet to assign a score to each potential investigation it reviewed. This made the process of recommending for or against full investigation more objective. A total of thirteen citizen complaints were meticulously reviewed by the committee.

By law, certain circumstances automatically preclude Grand Jury investigation. These include matters that are currently in litigation, potential criminal matters (which are directed to the District Attorney), and special "prohibited investigations." County Grand Juries are prohibited from investigating Federal and State entities and issues of school personnel or curriculum. However, Grand Juries are required to inspect any jails and/or prisons in their jurisdiction.

Finally, during meetings of the full Grand Jury, proposed investigations submitted by citizens were discussed in detail. By majority vote, citizen complaints were either accepted or rejected for investigation by the Grand Jury. Because of the strict secrecy and privacy employed by Grand Juries, citizens were not informed of the decision regarding their specific complaint. All investigations conducted by the Grand Jury are detailed in this Final Report.

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

THE REST OF THE STORY

MAINTAINING CONTINUITY ON THE GRAND JURY

It is the role of the Grand Jury to follow-up on the findings and recommendations of the preceding jury and conduct follow-up where necessary. “An essential element of continuity is lost if the subsequent grand jury does not assess whether Recommendations made by the prior grand jury are implemented by the target governmental agencies/departments.”¹ Early in the year an assigned group of members familiarizes itself with the work of the previous jury so as to provide information for the new teams and the entire Grand Jury regarding the findings, recommendations and responses of the previous year to ensure a seamless transition of oversight from year to year and jury to jury. Every Grand Jury in their capacity as an observer of county government-in-process, serves with the hope that their investigations, findings and recommendations will provide a useful and useable tool to any county agency under scrutiny.

All completed reports are sent to a Superior Court judge for review. If needed, the judge makes comments and recommendations to the report. Once approved by the judge, the Grand Jury assembles the final report and forwards to the investigated departments and/or agencies for their response to the investigation. The procedure for correct submission of a response is specifically set by the California Penal Code. (See Appendix 1)²

The investigated agency responding to the jury’s recommendations has the option to agree or disagree (wholly or partially) with the jury findings and makes the determination to implement or not implement the recommendation. In cases where the implementation is scheduled for the future, a date and a time frame is required. A delayed or future analysis requires a projected date of response. In some instances a recommendation is declared unwarranted or unreasonable and an explanation is a part of the response. The responses do not return to the jury that submitted the report, but rather to the newly appointed jury panel that succeeds them. A successful committee effort will prepare the way for the succeeding jury to carefully research ongoing concerns and follow-up.

The report of the Grand Jury of 2007-2008 was reviewed and reported 63 findings: 51 agreed, 2 partially agreed and 10 disagreed with the conclusions as stated in the report (See Chart 1).

¹ Grand Jury Training Manual – Revised March 2008 Website: www.cgja.org

² <http://63.202.159.175/grandjury/reports/individual-reports-2006/authority-agency-resp.pdf>

THE REST OF THE STORY

MAINTAINING CONTINUITY ON THE GRAND JURY

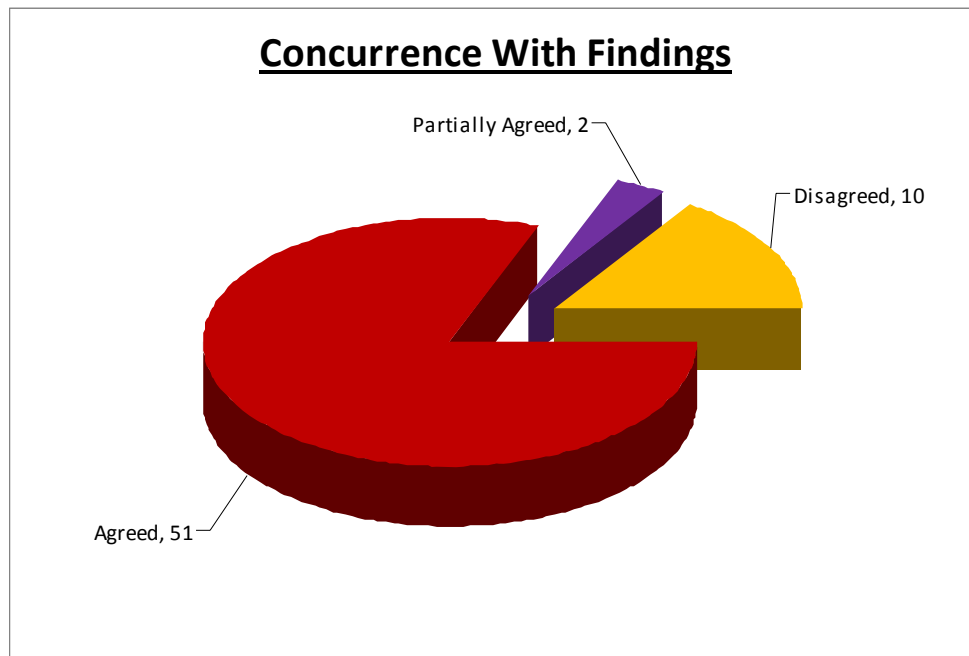


Chart 1

The agencies indicated their intent regarding the implementation of the recommendations. At the time of the agencies reporting there had been 29 implementations: 8 that had not been implemented but were scheduled, 15 areas required further analyses and were to be reported by the end of 2008 and 10 recommendations were not to be implemented (See Chart 2).

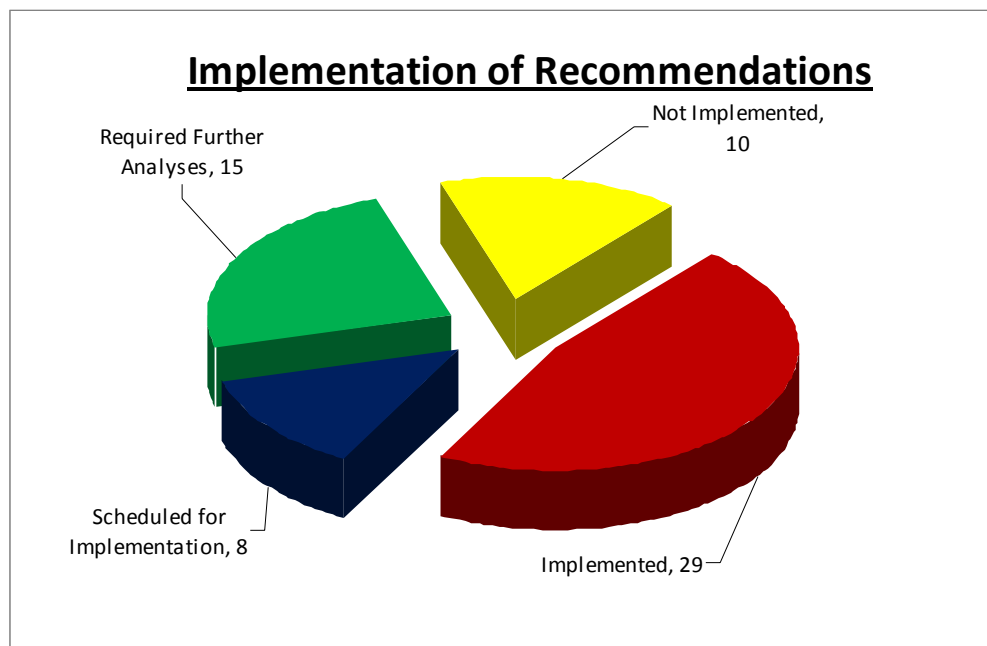


Chart 2

THE REST OF THE STORY

MAINTAINING CONTINUITY ON THE GRAND JURY

The 2008-2009 Tuolumne County Grand Jury found that between eight departments there were 15 issues for which there had been no response. Reports were to have been forthcoming by the end of 2008 but were not received. Follow-up letters were sent to request the outcome of their analyses and progress to date. (See Chart 3). The responses (after analyses) to the jury letters indicated:

Solid Waste, Division of Public Works Department - Two implementations in process.

Claims and Settlements Departments - Two recommendations, will not be implemented.

Risk Management, Division of Human Resources Department - One recommendation, implementation halted due to budgetary constraints.

Sheriff's Department: Dispatch, Jail and Narcotics Team –Four in process of implementation, two will not be implemented.

CAL FIRE - Two recommendations were implemented.

Welfare to Work, Division of Human Services Department - Two recommendations are in process of implementation.

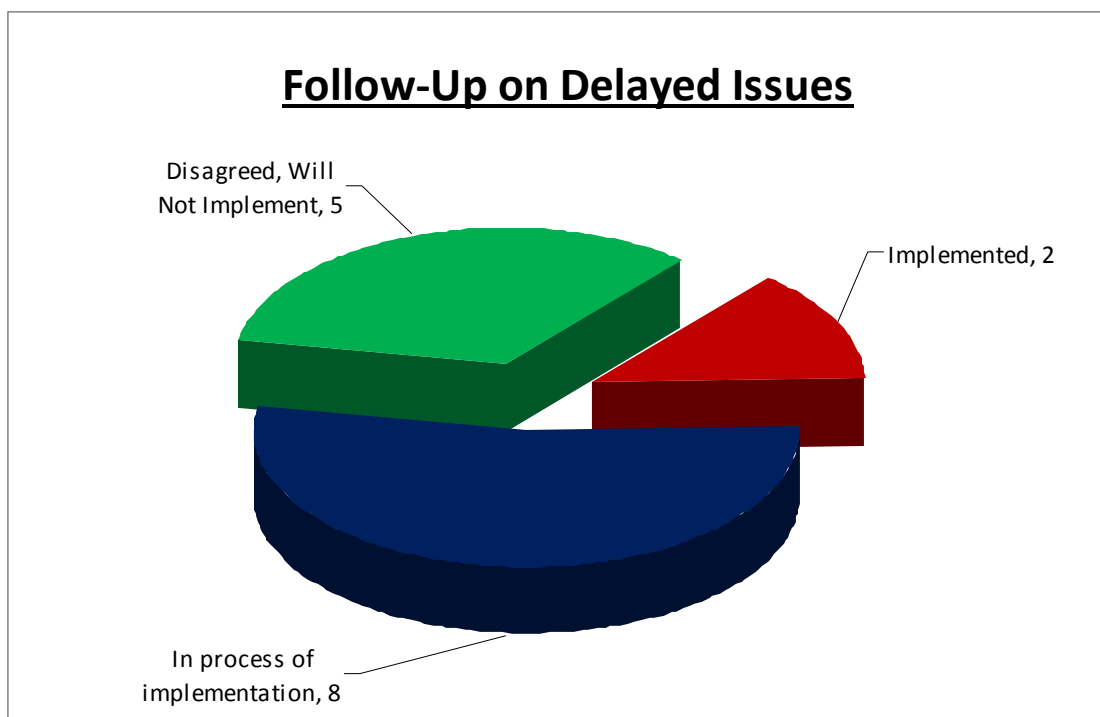


Chart 3

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

Tuolumne County General/Presidential Election

SUMMARY

The 2008-2009 Grand Jury had the rare opportunity, afforded only once every four years, to participate in the General/Presidential election. Members of the Grand Jury were observers at polling stations throughout the county on November 4, 2008.

The Grand Jury extends special thanks to the Tuolumne County Auditor-Controller Deborah Russell and the Tuolumne County Elections Committee for including the Grand Jury in the Election Observer Panel. The Grand Jury would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication by the election officials and the numerous volunteers that made last November's election a proficient process.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the Grand Jury went to 11 county polling places to observe the voting process at each location.

FINDINGS

- F1.** The Grand Jury found that many volunteers worked long days, often without breaks, and must generally supply their own food and drink.
- F2.** Each polling place had experienced staff to resolve issues and train new volunteers. Some polling places had the benefit of enthusiastic high school students who seemed eager to learn the voting process and help where needed.
- F3.** The county has an adequate number of polling places; however, some located in more rural settings may have less accessibility, particularly in inclement weather.
- F4.** Signage to polling places is not easily visible to cars driving by.
- F5.** Vote by mail* and provisional ballots were not secured in some locations, but placed out in the open in loose stacks or in cardboard boxes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** No recommendation
- R2.** No recommendation
- R3.** No recommendation
- R4.** Signage to polling locations should be improved, especially in more rural locations.
- R5.** Increase the number of containers as needed for vote by mail and provisional ballots and the training to use them.

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

Tuolumne County General/Presidential Election

***VOTE-BY-MAIL** (formerly named “absentee ballot”)

In order to be counted, an elections official in your county of residence must receive your ballot no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day. Elections Code §§ 3020, 14212

You can mail your ballot or bring it to the elections office or to any worker at a polling place within your county of residence. Ballots received after the polls close on Election Day cannot be counted regardless of postmarks. Elections Code § 3017

If you are unable to surrender your vote-by-mail ballot, you may still cast a “provisional” ballot at your polling place which will not be counted until the county elections official can determine that you have not also voted a vote-by-mail ballot. Elections Code § 3016 and § 14310

A substantial number of additional vote-by-mail ballots are returned **on** Election Day either to the polling place or to the elections office. These ballots, because they require the extra handling of checking the voter’s signature, and ensuring that the voter did not also vote at the polling place, are usually the **last** ballots counted, and are not likely to be reported in the vote totals until after the Election Day. Elections Code §§ 3017, 3019

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...

Investigation of Ethics Reform

SUMMARY

This is a complaint-driven report in which a citizen requested actions be taken to install official standards of ethics for county employees. The Board of Supervisors included in their 2008 goals the adoption of a formal Code of Ethics. The 2008-2009 Grand Jury investigation found that although there is not currently a formal code of ethics in place relevant training has been ongoing for the past couple of years within the county. There were several reasons cited by the County Administrator's Office (CAO) for the delay in implementing these standards.

The CAO has committed to completing a comprehensive tailored ethics reform document by the end of 2009 and implementing a "change of culture" to improve county image.

GLOSSARY

AB1234 (Assembly Bill No. 1234): The law that requires mandatory ethics training for county officials

Brown Act: California statute that governs open meetings for local government bodies

CAO: County Administrator's Office

Form 700: "Statement of Economic Interest" To avoid conflicts of interest, public officials at every level of state and local government must disclose their personal financial interests using this Fair Political Practices Commission form.

IT (Information Technologies): Management of computer based technologies

Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship (from Michael Josephson's, *Making Ethical Decisions*)

BACKGROUND

Adopting a Code of Ethics was added to the Strategic Goals of the Board of Supervisors on February 5, 2008. To date, there has been no progress on achieving this goal. Meanwhile, the Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint requesting that the County install "Ethics Reform". The CAO is tasked to prepare a comprehensive Code of Ethics document for the Board of Supervisors. In the interim, the CAO has been using published ethics documents but intends to develop a tailored plan for all county employees.

To ensure employees are properly educated the CAO and four other staffers have been trained on Michael Josephson's "Six Pillars of Character", as well as various other ethics-related programs. These staff members hold mandatory training classes for all employees. Also, the CAO meets with all new employees during orientation to discuss ethical conduct, "County Government 101" and customer service. Disciplinary action is taken against employees when they are found guilty of improper conduct

The task of developing a Code of Ethics has been delayed about one year due to distractions caused by state budget delays and the new Federal Stimulus activity.

APPROACH

The Grand Jury reviewed a citizen's complaint requesting ethics reform for county employees at the department level.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...

Investigation of Ethics Reform

The Grand Jury's plan was to meet with the CAO and to review the Board of Supervisors quarterly goals, meeting minutes and audio tapes concerning the adoption of the Code of Ethics.

DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury met with the CAO on March 16, 2009. The CAO explained where he and his staff were in the process of codifying a formal document on ethics and code of conduct subjects to be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Staff has compiled a significant amount of information on the subject, but they have not found time to write a comprehensive document because of the budget crisis, etc.

For the past few years, the CAO and his training staff have been using an off-the-shelf Code of Ethics developed by a professional vendor. These documents cover the Six Pillars of Character.

Tuolumne County is targeting the largest departments (Community Development and Public Works) for the earliest implementation of training.

The CAO attends the kick-off of department training sessions; trainers provide lectures. General material is tailored to each department's functional jobs.

The CAO is trying to meet all new employees during orientation and discuss code of conduct to start them off correctly (i.e., "County Government 101" and customer services). He stated a cultural change needs to take place throughout the many county organizational elements with a comprehensive document from the CAO.

The CAO uses AB1234, Form 700 and the Brown Act (which are legal requirements) to hold staff accountable. These mandates are used by state and other local government organizations. The County requires all Information Technologies (IT) users to sign a letter attesting that they understand proper use of IT systems and commit to it. Several abuses have been found and corrected.

One supervisor brought up the ethics issue before the Board of Supervisors on February 5, 2008 and referred to a single one-page version of ethics used by the City of Sonora.

The CAO states a more comprehensive document needs to be generated. His target for completion is by calendar year end 2009. It would include the code of conduct and ethics for the Board of Supervisors and all county employees.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...

Investigation of Ethics Reform

FINDINGS

- F1** On February 5, 2008, the CAO was tasked by the Board of Supervisors to create a Code of Ethics document. As of December 31, 2008, Board Goals reflects, “No progress to report- pursuing other goals during this reporting period”.
- F2.** The CAO is planning to codify a comprehensive document by the end of 2009 for all county employees and the Board of Supervisors which will include both a Code of Conduct and a Code of Ethics. The document will include the Six Pillars of Character.
- F3.** The CAO has been using a number of tools to train all departments and new employees. Staff members have received ethics training and classes have been held for the larger departments for the last two years.
- F4.** The CAO has been enforcing good ethical practices. He has taken disciplinary actions in 2008-2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** As directed by the Board of Supervisors, the CAO should create a Code of Ethics document which should provide a specific section for the Board of Supervisors. The CAO should also adopt a Code of Conduct/Ethics for all county employees.
- R2.** CAO should create a schedule of milestones to ensure meeting the 2009 deadline.
- R3.** Continue to use existing ethics material and mandatory training until a new document is completed. Consider a schedule of refresher courses, on some periodic basis, for those departments who have significant customer interfaces.
- R4.** No recommendation.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

From the following individual:

Tuolumne County Administrator, Craig Pedro

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation



Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Department - Photo used with permission

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury chose to review the Behavioral Health Department (BHD) and its transition from Kings View Corporation to Tuolumne County control. This investigation was not complaint driven. The Grand Jury investigated this issue to determine whether county residents were receiving quality care during and after the transition.

The Grand Jury found that many forms of assistance are available to residents of all ages in Tuolumne County through the BHD. Spawned by the closing of Tuolumne General Hospital (TGH), the BHD opened the new Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) for acute psychiatric care in January of 2009. Born out of necessity, Tuolumne County citizens now have access to a state-of-the-art behavioral health crisis care facility, known as the Crisis Assessment Intervention Program (CAIP). The transition also provided the BHD with the opportunity to integrate all BHD programs, such as Managed Care, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan, Core Programs/Services and judicially mandated programs.

Challenges faced by the BHD in providing services are geographic isolation and a culture of independence and self-reliance, leading many people to wait until a crisis occurs

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

before looking for assistance. The ultimate goal of the staff is to “stop the log from rolling downhill.” Their message to the public is, “If you think you may need help do not let embarrassment get in the way, come in and get help before you find yourself in crisis.” The BHD is staffed with exceedingly dedicated, compassionate and hardworking professionals. Their purpose is to provide the citizens of Tuolumne County with excellent care to prevent them from reaching crisis mode, as well as to assist those who find themselves at that point. The BHD is committed to helping all citizens in need and coordinates with other organizations and entities, both public and private, to ensure care for all of the county's citizens.

GLOSSARY

BHD: Behavioral Health Department

BOS: Board of Supervisors

CAIP: Crisis Assessment/Intervention Program

CSS: Community Services and Supports

CSU: Crisis Stabilization Unit

ESL: English as a Second Language

FSP: Full Services Partnership

GAO: Government Accountability Office

MACT: Mariposa Amador Calaveras Tuolumne

MCOT: Mobile Crisis Outreach Team

MHSA: Mental Health Services Act

NAMI: National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

PEI: Prevention/Early Intervention

PTA: Parent Teacher Association

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

TGH: Tuolumne General Hospital

USDVA: United States Department of Veterans Affairs

WET: Workforce Education and Training

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

BACKGROUND

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a recommendation by the County Administrator and the Behavioral Health Department (BHD) Director on December 11, 2007 that Tuolumne County no longer contract with Kings View Corporation for traditional core behavioral health services. This recommendation was made after nine months of review and evaluation by the County and Kings View. This decision was due to the fact that Tuolumne County could no longer afford the cost of a whole county contract for core services.

In addition, after reviewing the projected revenue for the inpatient acute psychiatric care unit at Tuolumne General Hospital (TGH), the County Administrator found that it would not be fiscally possible to keep it afloat. The required license for the 72-hour (or longer) inpatient acute psychiatric care unit expired with the closure of TGH. The BOS decided in June 2008 to close the inpatient acute psychiatric care unit at TGH and have a new system in place by December 2008.

This new system is the result of a comprehensive, broad based and community driven planning process. Consistent with the intent of the MHSA, this process was the beginning of the local BHD transformation. The promise was made to the community and kept by the BHD that the planning process would be broad, include consumers and families and be driven by the community—not the BHD. This resulted in approximately 1,200 individuals participating in the public planning meetings and providing nearly 5,800 comments regarding mental health needs, impacts and issues facing Tuolumne County. It was one of the largest and most inclusive community planning processes undertaken in Tuolumne County.

For the past 20 years the behavioral health system had been planned around access to acute psychiatric services at TGH. Meanwhile, more effective ways of helping people in psychiatric crisis have been developed with the emphasis on providing care before the crisis becomes debilitating. The BHD's new program is known as the Crisis Assessment/Intervention Program (CAIP) and provides enhanced outpatient crisis and early intervention services for children, adults and older adults. As a result of these changes, many crisis situations that would have previously required hospitalization can now be resolved with the enhanced services provided by the CAIP staff. These services include assessment for hospitalization 24 hours a day, seven days per week, crisis intervention during working hours and augmented walk-in services. If a person is in need of more intensive, longer-term care he or she is transferred to Doctors' Medical Center in Modesto.

APPROACH

To determine whether county residents were receiving quality care during and after the transition from Kings View to County control of the BHD, the Grand Jury reviewed administrative documents, budgets, financial statements and statistical data; attended the "Open House" tour of the Crisis Stabilization Unit December 18, 2008, provided for the

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

public by the BHD; conducted an interview with the BHD Director; toured the David Lambert Drop-In Center and the Peer Help Center and interviewed the BHD Program Managers regarding the programs and services they provide, which included the provision of services for veterans, specifically veterans returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas of conflict.

DISCUSSION

The transition from Kings View to County operation was well planned and smoothly executed, incorporating existing services with new state-of-the-art programs. As a result, Tuolumne County citizens initially continued to receive the traditional quality of care to which they were accustomed. As new programs continue to be implemented the quality of care provided continues to increase. For example, the programs have reduced the number of acute psychiatric care hospitalizations required from 103 in 2008 to 58 in 2009.

Due to the newness of some programs, many county residents are not aware of the full spectrum of services offered. Therefore a description of new services follows.

Crisis Assessment and Intervention Program (CAIP) – see Appendix 1

The New Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)

The CSU for acute psychiatric care was opened in January of 2009. The facility is located on the main floor under the BHD Administrative Offices at 105 Hospital Road, Sonora. Tuolumne County citizens now have access to a four-bed state-of-the-art behavioral health crisis care facility.

This model of care has been successfully implemented throughout the state. There are three stages of triage provided for patient care to determine whether the person is presenting with true mental illness or is struggling with basic living needs or other issues. If the person is in need of assistance with basic living needs, the staff assists them in creating a Care Plan. Or, if it is determined that the person is in need of inpatient care, the individual receives a medical examination, a review of any medications being taken and is then placed at the facility for up to 23 hours or is moved to hospital long-term care if deemed necessary based on the examination results.

To date the CSU has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of people sent out of county for inpatient care. Tuolumne County's responsibility for out of county hospitalizations during the months of January 1, 2008 – April 30, 2008 was 17 children under 18 and 86 adults, for a total of 103. During the same timeframe in 2009, just 3 children under 18 and 55 adults, for a total of 58, were hospitalized out of county³.

³ Figures may be higher than shown as the hospitals have 14 days from the discharge date to send the records to the BHD for payment.

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

In addition to access to the 23-hour crisis stabilization services, augmented walk-in services by crisis intervention staff are available from 3:00 pm – 11:00 pm 7 days a week.

The Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) continues to provide mobile response in the field to law enforcement and Sonora Regional Medical Center. The MCOT hours are Monday – Thursday 5:00 pm - 8:00 am and from 5:00 pm Friday to 8:00 am Monday. The MCOT has served 286 people to date, including services provided by phone.

To date there have been 719 crisis intervention intakes with existing clients and 212 with new clients.

CAIP was also enhanced by moving the rest of the behavioral health adult system of care into an adjoining area of TGH. The building was renovated to provide the necessary group use areas, staff offices, as well as laundry facilities and showers to best serve clients.

MHSA Integrated Plan

Community Services and Supports (CSS)

CSS serves all age groups with a serious mental illness or severe emotional disorder. Due to their mental illness this population is homeless or at-risk for homelessness and unable to access mental health services because of social and geographic isolation. They may also have a dual diagnosis (such as serious mental illness with a substance abuse problem) and are often un-served or underserved by other mental health programs.

Full Services Partnership (FSP) Program

FSP staff assists participants and their families in obtaining needed behavioral health services, transportation, stable housing and other systems of support. Staff also focuses on reducing incarcerations, homelessness and hospitalizations. FSP assists participants in obtaining housing, schooling and work skills with the purpose of increasing the goals of independence, education and employment.

The System Development Services or Outreach and Engagement Services

The Peer Coordination Program

A Peer Advisory Board runs this program with assistance and support from the Peer Coordinator and the BHD. Approximately 25 individuals use the Peer Help Center daily. The Center currently has 10 support groups run by Peer Volunteers each week and complements the services provided by the David Lambert Drop-In Center.

Don't Wait For A Crisis

The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

The David Lambert Drop-In Center

The Drop-In Center has been in operation for 10 years and has served thousands of people. It is open Monday through Friday from 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm. An average of 35 – 40 people receive assistance daily at the Drop-In Center. Last year the average was 25, but as the unemployment rate increased so did the number of people coming into the Center. Community businesses, churches and grocery stores donate food and the kitchen has a well-stocked pantry. Those who are homeless know that this is a comfortable and safe place to go for a good meal, to use the telephone or Internet, watch television or relax. Keeping the Center open until 9:00 pm in the winter months is being considered. Volunteer help is always needed and appreciated.

The Teen Drop-In Center

The BHD also provides outreach services to the county's transitional age youth through the development of a Teen Drop-In Center located at the Peer Help Center. At-risk teens are provided a safe place to socialize, receive support and practice self-help skills. An average of 25 youth attend each week.

Older Adults and Native American Children Outreach

Two contracts with community-based organizations provide outreach to the older adult population and to Native American children. One is the Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton, which provides referrals to services for older adults in the community. Mariposa/Amador/Calaveras/Tuolumne (MACT) Indian Health Services and the Tuolumne Me-Wuk Indian Health Clinic have partnered to provide outreach and engagement services to Native American youth and their families.

The Benefit Development Program

This program is housed at the Peer Help Center and assists clients in applying for and obtaining public benefits such as Medi-Cal and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The program also reduces barriers to access by providing transportation assistance and a very flexible schedule, including weekend appointments.

Housing and Transportation Development

The Housing and Transportation Development consultant provides services such as assisting with the housing application process, seeking transportation grant opportunities and works specifically to provide information and understanding of both the barriers to, and some of the underutilized programs for, housing and transportation.

Promotion and Community Education

The Promotion and Community Education consultant provides community education, media outreach and behavioral health promotion. Examples of activities to date include assisting with depression screenings at the county health

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The Behavioral Health Department Transformation

fair and community college; articles in the local newspaper, radio and cable TV shows to demystify behavioral health for the general public; a bi-monthly BHD newsletter; and ongoing work with community agencies to develop better understanding of and access to behavioral health services.

The Prevention/Early Intervention (PEI) Program

The Early Childhood Education Project

This is a new program that is not yet underway. The plan is that up to 363 at-risk children 0-5 years of age and their families will be served by the end of the first year. Over 50 childhood professionals will be trained in the “Nurturing Parenting” curriculum in order to provide multi-level parenting and family support to prevent severe behavioral, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. This project also targets parents with foster care and adopted children.

The School Based Violence Prevention Programs

The Bullying Prevention Program

This elementary school curriculum provides 4th grade students with recognition of bullying behavior, discussion of tolerance, role plays in respect, empathy, intervention strategies and how to get help. Up to 3,971 youth in 7 elementary schools in the county will benefit from this program.

Breaking Down the Walls

This high school curriculum creates an atmosphere of tolerance and respect on campus, helps to eliminate harassment in all its forms, enhances self-management skills (especially communication skills) and fosters positive connections. It is also a leadership program as it empowers positive leaders from a variety of peer groups to help create a school climate that is safe, comfortable and supportive for all. This program will be implemented in two high schools in the county.

The Suicide Prevention Project

This project targets individuals of all ages who may be at risk of suicide by providing education and training for professionals and community members in suicide prevention. This includes mental health therapists, case managers, law enforcement, school counselors, public health nurses, community-based paraprofessionals, peer help services staff, churches, businesses, civic groups and other sectors. These groups and individuals will be qualified to train others to recognize, review risk behaviors of and intervene to prevent, the immediate threat of suicide.

The Stigma Reduction Education Project

This project will include ongoing public service announcements and media articles about the effectiveness of treatment for mental illnesses and substance

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abuse disorders. Educational presentations will be offered regarding the stigma of mental illness to an array of civic organizations, businesses, social service agencies, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), church groups, peer support center consumers, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and parents as part of the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through the family resource centers, family literacy sites and the general public.

Workforce Education and Training (WET) – see Appendix 2

The WET program addresses the shortage of qualified individuals who provide services in this county's Mental Health system. It is consistent with and supportive of the vision, values, mission, goals, objectives and proposed actions of California's MHSA WET Five-Year Strategic Plan and this county's current MHSA CSS component. "Actions" to be funded through WET supplement state administered workforce programs.

All proposed education, training and workforce development programs and activities contribute to developing and maintaining a culturally competent workforce. This will include individuals with client and family member experiences that are capable of providing client/family-driven services that promote wellness, recovery and resiliency, leading to measurable, values-driven outcomes. WET has been developed with community organizations and public participation.

Veterans' Services

Although the federal government has earmarked funds for mental health treatment for returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, much of the money set aside for that treatment has been diverted elsewhere by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) according to a recent study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Increasingly, our nation's veterans with serious mental health needs, primarily those returning from combat service in Iraq and Afghanistan, are turning to county mental health departments because they are not receiving timely access to mental health services through the USDVA. Counties are encouraged to create and/or improve services that will be needed for the expected increase of military personnel returning from the recent war efforts and for their families.

Although the BHD does not receive any additional monies earmarked for veterans the department is in the process of gearing up to provide services for those in need. Key personnel are currently undergoing comprehensive training (at no additional pay) offered by the California Institute for Mental Health. The BHD intends to utilize this training to educate any and all county entities that wish to understand the complicated nature of dealing with veterans' mental health issues.

The BHD wants the public to know that there are a wide range of services that exist to help veterans and their families. The Tuolumne County Veterans Service office, located at 105 Hospital Road, Sonora, exists to advise veterans about *ALL* benefits available

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through the Veterans Administration. There is a new veteran's clinic under construction on Mono Way in the Junction Shopping Center area and improved services for mental health are anticipated. Peer support groups are meeting regularly throughout the county addressing issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and substance abuse. Treatment for alcohol and other substance abuse can be found in both the BHD and the private sector.

The BHD stands ready to fill the gap for military personnel who may not have health benefits or insurance, or may experience delays in receiving benefits from the VA, but need to receive a mental health evaluation for themselves or their family members. Veterans who use the CSU at the BHD are closely followed during post-crisis care to insure that their status as a veteran is known and they are helped accordingly.

FINDINGS

- F1.** The transition from Kings View Corporation to Tuolumne County control of the BHD was relatively seamless, resulting in fewer referrals to out of county in-patient facilities.
- F2.** Although the BHD is operating with a reduced budget, Tuolumne County citizens are receiving cutting edge behavioral health standard of care.
- F3.** The public does not seem to be aware of the multitude of programs offered by the BHD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** No recommendation.
- R2.** The county needs to actively seek additional funding for the BHD.
- R3.** Pursue alternative funding to improve public awareness of the BHD's programs.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses to recommendations within 60 days from the following individuals:

- Behavioral Health Department Director, Bea Readell
- County Administrator, Craig Pedro

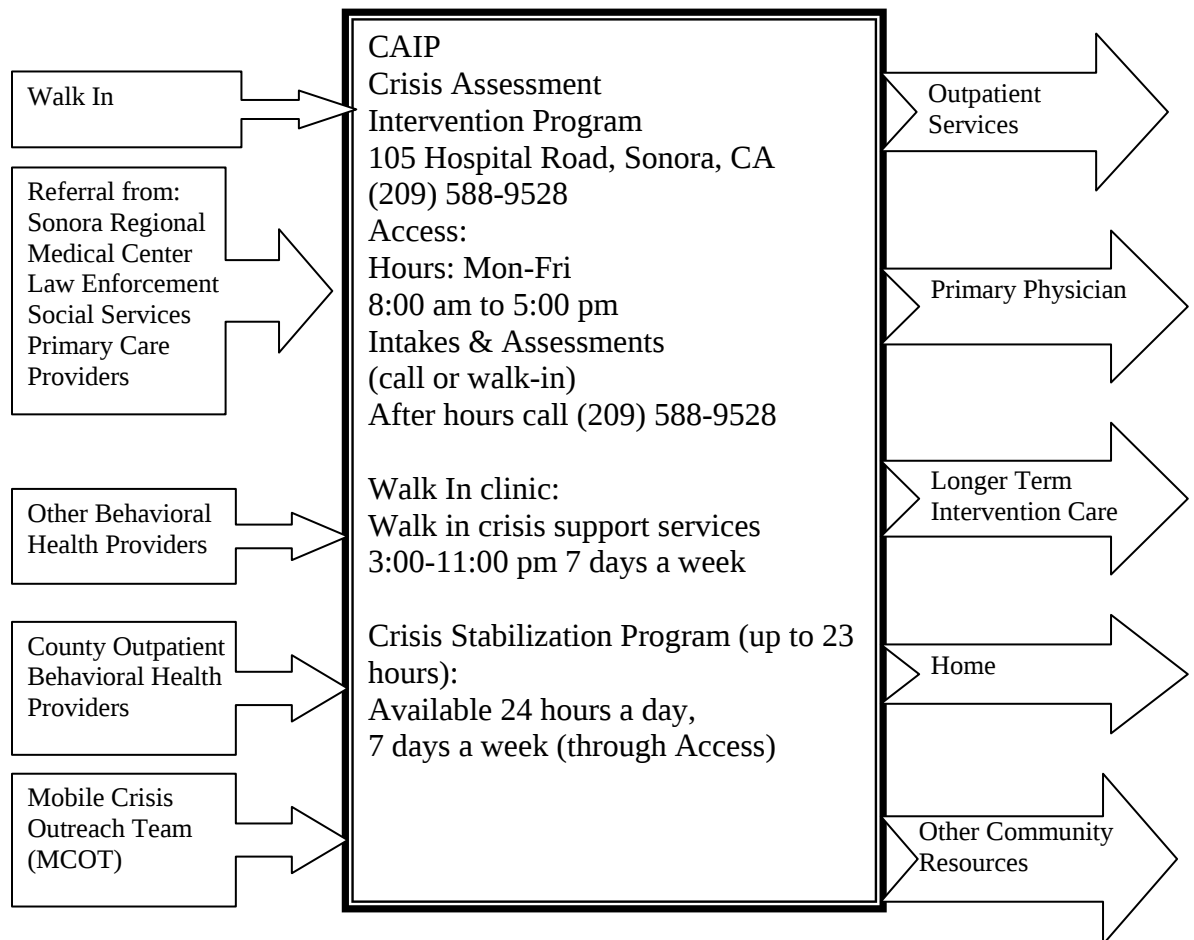
APPENDIX 1

CAIP Care Flow Chart

Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Department

Enter by:

Leave to:



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APPENDIX 2

WET Action Matrix

Actions	Promotes wellness, recovery, and resilience	Promotes culturally competent service delivery	Promotes meaningful inclusion of clients/family members	Promotes an integrated service experience for clients and their	Promotes community collaboration	Staff support (infrastructure for workforce development)	Resolves occupational shortages	Expands postsecondary education capacity	Loan forgiveness, scholarships, and stipends	Regional partnerships	Distance learning	Career pathway programs	Employment of clients and family members within MH system
Action #1: Workforce Education and Training Coordinator & fiscal Support	X	X		X	X	X	X			X			
Action #2: All - Staff Training on MHSA Essential Elements	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Action #3: Individual Training on MHSA Essential Elements	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Action #4: Individual Training for leaders of Public Mental Health	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Action #5: Training on Parenting and Family Engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Action #6: Psychosocial Rehabilitation Training for Consumers	X		X									X	X
Action #7: GED Testing for Consumers Returning to School or Work	X		X									X	X

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Actions	Promotes wellness, recovery, and resilience	Promotes culturally competent service delivery	Promotes meaningful inclusion of clients/family members	Promotes an integrated service experience for clients and their	Promotes community collaboration	Staff support (infrastructure for workforce development)	Resolves occupational shortages	Expands postsecondary education capacity	Loan forgiveness, scholarships, and stipends	Regional partnerships	Distance learning	Career pathway programs	Employment of clients and family members within MH system
Action #8 Peer Support Certificate	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Action #9 Psychosocial Rehabilitation Certificate sponsorship	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Action #10: Accessible Masters in Social Work Program Sponsorship	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Action #11 Internship Supervision	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X
Action #12 Community College Education Reimbursement Plan	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Action #13 Bachelor's Loan Assistance Program	X		X			X	X	X	X			X	X
Action #14 Clinician Loan Assumption Program	X		X			X	X	X	X			X	X
Action # 15 Underserved Population SCH.	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X

SERVING CALIFORNIA WHILE SERVING TIME

Sierra Conservation Center



Photo of Sierra Conservation Center. *Photo used by permission.*

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury visited Sierra Conservation Center (SCC) in Jamestown for a mandatory inspection as well as a tour of baseline conservation camp. These facilities are operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

The SCC website states “The primary mission of Sierra Conservation Center is to provide housing, programs and services for minimum and medium custody inmates. SCC is one of only two prisons in the state responsible for the training and placement of male inmates in the Conservation Camp Program. SCC administers 19 male camps located from Central California to the Mexican border.”

The campus appearance, the staff’s professionalism, the health care available to the inmates and the wide variety of programs available to the inmates were impressive. However, occupancy is at a level above the capacity for which the facility was designed.

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Sierra Conservation Center

Tuolumne County as well as state entities receive many benefits from having the facility located here. The benefits include jobs within the county and services for public entities.

GLOSSARY

Baseline Conservation Camp: Baseline is located five miles from the prison's main facility and is a joint CAL FIRE – CDCR operation.

CAL FIRE: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CDCR: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

SAP: Substance Abuse Program

SCC: Sierra Conservation Center

SNY: Sensitive Needs Yard is a protective custody unit/yard for inmates who are unable to be housed with general population inmates due to various factors, i.e., their commitment offense (crime), gang affiliation and history while incarcerated.

BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury is required by California State Penal Code §919(a) and §919(b) to annually inspect any jail and/or prison facility located within the county limits. SCC is a state prison facility located at 5100 O'Byrnes Ferry Road, Jamestown, California 95327, Tuolumne County. The investigation primarily focused on inmate vocational and educational programs and the Substance Abuse Program (SAP).

APPROACH

In preparing for this investigation, the Grand Jury reviewed prior reports. The Warden gave a presentation regarding SCC to the full Grand Jury. The prison was visited twice. The third visit was to Baseline Conservation Camp.

DISCUSSION

On the first and second visits the Grand Jury inspected the administrative area, the two general population yards, the medical facility, the library and classrooms, the vocational program area, the Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY), the kitchen and food preparation area, the mail room, the prisoner Receiving and Release area and the dormitories. The third visit was to Baseline Conservation Camp where the Grand Jury members were shown the camp and given a typical meal that the inmates would receive while on a fire.

The following observations were made:

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Sierra Conservation Center

Housing

All dorms, designed to house 2,240 inmates, are housing 4,200 inmates which is over capacity (see Appendix 1). There is a system in place for fresh clothing exchange and the facilities were generally clean and orderly.

Mattresses are substandard, well worn, and not covered. The medical staff stated, despite the conditions of the mattresses, they had not seen any pattern of communicable skin diseases.

Health Care

Average cost is \$700/year/inmate. The cost is less than the insurance premium for a single individual or the cost of one visit to the Emergency Room.

Onsite Medical Clinic. Well managed and organized. Inmates are seen at the clinic by a Registered Nurse within 24 hours of submitting a written request.

Dental Care -14 staff dentists

Medical Care is provided on a daily basis by a staff of eight MD's, Physician Assistants, several Registered Nurses and Licensed Vocational Nurses. Evening, nights and weekends, a minimum of one RN is on the grounds and a MD on call.

Onsite X-ray

A new addition to the building is expected within 24 months resulting in more clinic space.

Food and Water

Clean drinking water is readily available in all areas of the prison

Cost \$2.61/day/inmate

Two hot meals and a bag lunch are provided daily

Balanced diet

Special needs diets are available

Programs

Vocational Training

11 trades are available including carpentry, welding, masonry, electronics, graphic arts, auto mechanics and landscaping.

Inmates have completed projects for some county entities.

Educational Opportunities

Adult basic education General Educational Development (GED) preparation, some college classes, internet based distance learning classes, life skills and use of library.

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Sierra Conservation Center

The library and classrooms are on the second floor with no elevators. The planned addition for completion in the next 24 months will include an elevator which corrects this problem.

Substance Abuse Program (SAP)

Program designed to help inmates overcome substance abuse problems so they can successfully integrate back into society upon release.

Voluntary program

Baseline Conservation Camp (see Appendix 2)

CAL FIRE helps fund the camp.

Inmates perform various jobs throughout the county such as brush clearing, maintaining streams, cemetery, parks and trails.

Inmates fight fire and help with fire prevention during the fire season. An example, the fall of 2008 Southern California fire saved the state \$80 million.

During winter months inmates help with flood control.

Services are available to public entities

Substance Abuse Program (SAP) is a mandatory part of Baseline Conservation Camp. Inmates are motivated to be in the program. Successful completion of SAP reduces the return rate to prison from 70% to 30%.

Employee Morale

Employees are proud of what they accomplish within the constraints of budget and regulations.

A number of long-term employees stated that it is a desirable assignment within CDCR.

A large number of employees live in Tuolumne County.

FINDINGS

F1. The grand jury found a well run and organized facility.

F2. The grand jury was impressed by the staff at SCC given the court mandates and the continuing limited budget.

F3. SAP, which is a mandatory part of the baseline conservation camp activities, is a very effective part of the rehabilitation program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. No recommendation

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Sierra Conservation Center

R2. No recommendation

R3. No recommendation

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

None

APPENDIX 1: from 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report

SCC opened in 1965 on 420 acres. It was originally designed to house 1240 inmates between two yards: minimum and low-medium security Levels I and II. In 1987 SCC expanded to include a 1000 bed, high-medium security Level III. Today, the prison houses approximately 4200 inmates with 2400 additional inmates housed at 19 conservation camps located throughout the state. SCC employs approximately 1400 staff members and has an annual budget of 145 million dollars. Inmate housing consists of three separate yards, or levels. Levels I and II are for general population inmates. The Level III yard had been a “general population” yard prior to 2007, but it has since been converted to a Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) and is where the SAP operates. Due to prison overcrowding, a gymnasium (G-Dorm) between the Level I and II yards has been converted to house inmates with either physical and/or mental disabilities. The main medical facility is responsible for overall inmate medical treatment at SCC.

This facility also houses the pharmacy and dental clinics. The Level III yard is equipped with its own medical, dental and pharmaceutical dispensing facilities because of the security level of the inmates housed there.

APPENDIX 2: Notes from Baseline Conservation Camp visit

Baseline Conservation Camp is located at a remote location west of Jamestown off O’Byrnes Ferry Road. It is laid out with single-story buildings and workshops arranged to follow the rolling hills within a small valley setting. The facility has a number of unique features and programs suited to support CAL FIRE and Tuolumne County.

Fire Fighting Capabilities

Provides 24-hour “fire ready” fire fighting teams that can be assembled as a “strike team” in less than ten minutes after an alert to support ground fire fighting operations throughout the county and mutual aid support in other state locations.

Seventeen member “crew trucks” based here are serviced and maintained at the automotive shops on a 24-hour basis.

A helicopter pad and water buckets staging complex is set up here to support the “air operations” center at nearby Columbia Airport.

The dormitories support typically 134 inmates for normal operations. Capacity to support up to 200 fire fighters in a fire camp staging area can be achieved.

The camp has a “sew shop”, one of three statewide, which has unique capabilities to make and repair numerous fire support items. They produce items requiring the use of Nomex (fire resistant fabric in “turnout bags”), chain saw covers, back packs, embroidered name tags and

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other specialized items that provide rugged and fire resistant characteristics.

The camp has a “saw shop” where complete 24-hour maintenance is provided to returning crews and departing crews. All small gasoline powered chain saws, weed eaters, and other small hand tools are serviced and repaired. Specialized firefighting tools are also maintained here.

Inmate Rehabilitation Programs

SAP is an eight year old program. It is the primary tool that sets the demeanor of the facility and is a volunteer program in high demand by inmates who have less than 5 years of confinement time left to serve.

SAP participants have a 30% recidivism (return rate) record. This is one of the reasons that security measures are less stringent for the inmates assigned to Baseline Conservation Camp. Inmates have a full day’s work schedule when on campus (6:00 a.m. through 5:30 p.m. work day) and SAP classes in the evening with lights out at midnight. Inmates are checked for attendance every two hours by custody staff.

The camp is racially integrated and provides opportunities for inmates to work, train and condition themselves for the difficult job of fire fighting.

The cost of meals is similar to that of the main prison at \$2.56 per day. A separate increased budget is used for fire meals where more calories and larger meal portions are provided.

This facility is an excellent model for the state prison and appears to provide a solid path to rehabilitating individuals while providing much needed CAL FIRE support.

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:
FACILITIES and OPERATIONS



Photo as approved by the Sheriff

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury is required by the California State Penal Code §919(a) and §919(b) to annually inspect any jail and/or prison facility located within the county limits. The jury chose to also examine the 911 Dispatch Center because four recommendations were made for improvement by last year's Grand Jury and this jury wanted to determine if these recommendations had been implemented. Neither investigation was complaint driven.

For fifteen years Grand Juries have been recommending a centralized Law and Justice Center to house the entire Sheriff's Department operation, including a completely new jail.

The Tuolumne County Jail was built in 1959 and has undergone two additions, the first in 1987 and the second in 2002. However, these expansions take on a "Winchester Mystery House" effect with some hallways reaching a dead end. Many staff offices are actually revamped closets. The Grand Jury members were amazed by how much activity is crowded into the antiquated space that is our County Jail. The aged structure can no longer facilitate the incarceration of the number of individuals required to stay within its walls or the number of staff and the workspace necessary for the appropriate operation of the facility. For fifteen years inmates have been released early due to lack of room available in the jail and the number of those requiring incarceration will only continue to increase. Investing more resources into a facility that needs to be vacated is simply not an option.

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According to the Tuolumne County Profile 2008 Community Indicators Project, “we are significantly above the state average in assaults. Methamphetamine use continues to be an issue, and negatively affects almost all aspects of our health and safety.” The report goes on to say that, “Our criminal justice system is strapped by lack of funding, decaying buildings, and an inability to attract and retain quality staff,” and “. . . our jail is letting people out early because of overcrowding.” Knowing that the number of incarcerations is constantly increasing and that in its present state it is impossible for the jail to keep up with these numbers, it is imperative that a new jail be built sooner rather than later.

The 911 Dispatch Center is also overburdened, understaffed, lacking in necessary funding and squeezed into a space much smaller than is needed to accomplish their overwhelming task. The 2007-2008 Grand Jury made four recommendations to improve the conditions of the Dispatch Center. During three visits to the Dispatch Center, this year’s Grand Jury found that three of the four recommendations have not been accomplished. Although undergoing a remodeling project to assist in providing a more efficient workspace, this is only a temporary solution. In addition, since the leaky roof referred to in the previous report has still not been repaired, the money spent on the remodel may be literally washed away. As with the jail, it is imperative that the Dispatch Center be relocated to a new facility as soon as possible. The Grand Jury was impressed with the dedication and professionalism that the hardworking employees of the jail and Dispatch Center maintained in spite of the dismal working conditions in conjunction with the many hours of overtime required.

GLOSSARY

AA: Alcoholics Anonymous

AED: Automated External Defibrillator

EMS: Emergency Medical Services

GED: General Educational Development

HAZ-MAT: Hazardous Material

NA: Narcotics Anonymous

BACKGROUND

California State Penal Code §919(a) and §919(b) require that each California County Grand Jury conduct an annual inspection of any jail within their jurisdiction to determine the condition and management of the jail. “Jail” is defined as a locked detention facility that holds both non-sentenced and convicted adult criminal offenders for a period of 12 months or less. The Tuolumne County Jail has been experiencing problems with lack of space, understaffing and a

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

FACILITIES and OPERATIONS

deteriorating building for many years. In addition to not being able to accommodate current and projected inmate populations, there are significant problems with the design and condition of the facility. These issues have been addressed by at least 15 previous Grand Juries.

The 911 Dispatch Center is located at the Sheriff's Office and was established in 1984. It was upgraded in the mid-1990s. The Dispatch Center handles routine Sheriff's Office calls, 911 emergency service calls for the Sheriff's Office as well as emergency and routine ambulance dispatch responsibilities. Fire calls are routed to CAL FIRE dispatch center in San Andreas. The 2007-2008 Grand Jury determined that the Dispatch Center was overburdened, understaffed and overcrowded. It has been 20 years since staffing levels have changed, yet the emergency calls have more than doubled. The 2007-2008 Grand Jury report stated that the Dispatch Center was planning a move to the Fire Department administrative center on Striker Court. This would provide increased space to allow for full staffing and a much needed break-room for dispatchers away from their workstations. The move would also take care of the problem with the leaking roof at the current location. The plan was to use the Striker Court facility for 10 to 15 years. Unfortunately the move to Striker Court did not materialize. However the Dispatch Center did receive approval to renovate and remodel their existing facility.

APPROACH

The Sheriff provided an informational presentation for the Grand Jury, at our invitation, during a regularly scheduled meeting. Administrative documents, budgets, financial statements and statistical data pertaining to the facilities and operations of both facilities were also reviewed.

The Jail was visited on two occasions. Although the first visit was scheduled with jail staff, upon arrival it was clear that the visit was a surprise. The second visit to the jail was unannounced. Each visit to the jail included observation of the entire jail facility, its operation and interviews with staff and inmates.

The Dispatch Center was visited on three occasions. The first visit was scheduled. The second and third visits were unannounced. The third visit to the Dispatch Center was made to follow up on the progress of the remodeling project. Each of the visits to the Dispatch Center included observation of the Dispatch Center's facility, its operation and interviews with staff.

DISCUSSION

All personnel with whom the Grand Jury interacted were professional, helpful and approached their jobs in a positive manner in spite of the many hours of overtime they are required to work and the substandard conditions in which they work. They graciously accommodated us while providing for our physical safety, answering our questions and providing us with all requested information in a timely manner.

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

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Jail Facilities and Operations

Housing

The inmate population remains at or above capacity at all times. Early release is utilized to keep the jail population from surpassing the maximum number of inmates (140). There were 360 inmates released early in 2008.

Female inmates are housed separately from the men.

Protective custody and administrative segregation units are available for inmates that cannot be housed with general population inmates due to various factors such as their commitment offense (crime), gang affiliation and history while incarcerated.

Each inmate is issued a clean, plastic covered mattress, blanket and pillow and a plastic tub to hold their personal belongings. They are also provided soap, shampoo, deodorant, combs, toothpaste, toothbrushes, writing paper, envelopes, and a pencil. Haircuts are available the first Saturday of every month.

Some inmates work by assisting in the kitchen and/or in the laundry facilities. Those that choose to work stated that they like working because it makes the time pass more quickly.

Inmates are given three hours weekly to go out into the “yard” to exercise. This is an enclosed area about the size of a basketball court located on the roof of the Jail. Two “free exercise” machines are available for use; weights are not included due to safety and security reasons. Up to 20 inmates may be in the yard at one time with one deputy to supervise them.

Books are available for the inmates to read. The only complaint from inmates regarding the books is that there are too many romance novels and they would like to have more variety.

The small space allotted for the jail library has many uses. It is used for conducting closed-circuit video arraignments, as well as providing General Educational Development (GED) preparation and holding various meetings for inmates such as worship services, Bible studies, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

Food

Due to budget constraints the jail kitchen was outsourced to Aramark Correctional Services as of February 1, 2009. Inmates receive three meals per day at a cost that is now \$2.18 per meal. The approximate savings for the current 2008/2009 fiscal year is \$70,000. In future fiscal years the savings will be approximately \$175,000. These savings are directly related to the elimination of several full-time positions as well as the retirement benefits for those personnel. The extra money gained in the sheriff’s budget will be going to the Patrol Division rather than being used for the jail.

A balanced diet is provided for inmates, including special needs and vegetarian diets.

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

FACILITIES and OPERATIONS

Health Care

A medical screening is completed during intake and if any medical issues are identified the Registered Nurse will see the inmate.

An onsite medical clinic is staffed by Registered Nurses and Licensed Vocational Nurses 20 hours per day

A physician comes in weekly to see inmates. A psychiatrist is available as needed (not located onsite).

Behavioral Health Department staff is called in if there is a suicide threat or if an inmate has any mental health issues. Behavioral Health Department staff is also available several times daily, five days a week, for group and individual meetings in the jail library.

AA and NA meetings are provided weekly.

There is no Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Safety

The Emergency Procedure Plan in place is dated July 1993.

During interviews with staff it was noted that evacuation for a fire or other emergency situation is a concern. When asked one staff member stated, "My staff is the first concern." The jail staff are concerned that there is no self-contained breathing apparatus available to be used in the case of a fire or HAZ-MAT situation.

A Safety Committee meets annually to review safety concerns noted during inspections and ensure that problems are addressed.

Firearms are no longer allowed inside the facility. The use of TASER devices has successfully reduced the number of deputy injuries and has also reduced injuries to non-compliant inmates.

Additional cameras were added to the jail security system.

Jail computers were upgraded to allow a higher level of safety and security to staff and inmates

Condition of Building

The lighting is poor, especially in the stairwells.

The ventilation system is dirty.

The ceilings are soggy and moldy and some areas appear to be falling down.

There are some leaky water fountains and sinks.

The continued use of outdated systems poses challenges for staff.

The jail roof is supposed to be replaced. The ceiling in the medical unit leaks when it rains.

Inmates may perform minimal maintenance work under the supervision of deputies.

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

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The jail's control room, although just as cramped and crowded as the rest of the jail, appears to run quite efficiently. The console has been replaced and there is now an upgraded touch screen computer system in place but they're keeping the old system as backup.

Staffing Issues

The jail is understaffed and the Grand Jury was informed that there are no funds to hire more staff.

Significant overtime is required of staff. The Grand Jury was informed that the cost of overtime added up to \$312,000 last year. However the Sheriff and his staff stated that it costs less to pay the excessive overtime than it would to hire new people due to the cost of health and retirement benefits.

The lack of appropriate staffing creates potential safety issues for staff and inmates.

911 Dispatch Center Facilities and Operations

The 911 Dispatch Center is located within the Sheriff's Office. The Grand Jury was impressed with the efficiency and dedication of the staff of the Dispatch Center. Despite being confined to such a small space, all of these professionals maintained a surprisingly positive attitude.

Condition of Building

Instead of relocating to Striker Court as recommended in the 2007-2008 Grand Jury report, the funds set aside for the move have been used to refurbish the existing office space. Infrastructure costs at Striker Court were determined to be much greater than estimated. During the refurbishment the Dispatch Center was relocated to a secure temporary location.

The remodeled room features ergonomic workstations and up-to-date equipment. This includes an upgrade from a low-band to high-band frequency radio system. The upgrade to the high-band system was recommended by the 2007-2008 Grand Jury.

An electrical upgrade was necessary to accommodate all of the new updated equipment. The building cannot handle any further upgrades to the electrical system.

Although the 2007-2008 Grand Jury recommended that the leaking roof be repaired at the current facility, the roof in this area continues to leak whenever it rains. It has not been determined where the leak originates. There are two levels of ceilings in the Dispatch Center and buckets, which are kept up in the ceiling to catch the rain, must be periodically brought down and emptied. The potential for catastrophe, both to the staff and the equipment, is immense if any of these buckets were to become too full and fall down.

The remodel was envisioned to provide enough space to comply with the Grand Jury and the Department of Justice recommendation to increase the number of dispatchers.

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THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

FACILITIES and OPERATIONS

Dispatchers spend the majority of their time at their workstations. Breaks are rare due to the lack of space and staff.

Including a break room in the new Dispatch Center was another recommendation by the 2007-2008 Grand Jury. However this was not included in the remodeling of the current facility due to the lack of space.

The move to the Striker Court location was intended to provide adequate space for an up-to-date facility that would last for at least 10-15 years. The current remodeled facility only provides temporary relief rather than a long-term solution.



Photo as approved by the Sheriff

Above: Photo of the Dispatch center in December 2007

Right: Photo of newly refurbished Dispatch Center in May 2009

Photo as approved by Sheriff



HANDCUFFED BY A SHRINKING BUDGET

THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

FACILITIES and OPERATIONS

Staffing Issues

The 2007-2008 Grand Jury recommended that the number of dispatchers be increased from two to three per shift. The Dispatch Center continues to be severely understaffed with excessive overtime required. As of February 2009, three new dispatchers were in training which takes six months to complete. The Grand Jury was informed that to fully staff the Dispatch Center it would take 25 people, but an increase to just 15 dispatchers was requested for the 2009-2010 budget year.

The volume of calls will increase with the addition of the new E911 phone server (Tuolumne County cellular 911). This will replace the existing system where cellular 911 calls are currently routed through Merced County.

FINDINGS

- F1.** The jail staff is highly competent, professional, resourceful, dedicated, and hardworking while exhibiting a “can-do” attitude.
- F2.** Jail building maintenance and repairs are not completed in a timely manner.
- F3.** The lack of appropriate staffing levels in the jail and dispatch center creates potential safety issues for the staff and inmates.
- F4.** Although the dispatch center has been refurbished, the roof still leaks. There is still a potential for damage and injury to equipment and staff.
- F5.** The overtime hours that are required of the dispatch center staff is of grave concern. It is essential that 911 dispatchers are alert at all times. Working dangerously long shifts can result in dispatchers that are physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted and therefore potentially unable to provide the expected and necessary response to citizens in an emergency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** No recommendation.
- R2.** A more effective maintenance program needs to be developed between the Sheriff’s Office and Facilities Management Department.
- R3.** Explore options for identifying increased or new revenue sources.
- R4.** Continue the ongoing efforts to find and eliminate the leak.

HANDCUFFED BY A SHRINKING BUDGET

THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY JAIL and 911 DISPATCH CENTER:

FACILITIES and OPERATIONS

R5. Develop a wellness program.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses from the following :

Tuolumne County Sheriff

Facilities Management Department

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services



Striker Court Complex .Photos courtesy of Joseph Sparagna

SUMMARY

The 2008-2009 Grand Jury investigated the Office of Emergency Services (OES) as a follow up to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report. This was not complaint driven. In the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report, OES was investigated and found to be under-staffed. The Emergency Operating Plan (EOP) was incomplete and out-of-date. The 2008-2009 Grand Jury investigation found a change in staff, a new OES coordinator, Kathleen Rustrum. Craig Pedro, OES Director, and Maureen Frank, OES Coordination are also part of OES. Some problems still exist with the dissemination of the EOP and updated information at the approved sites. There is clear evidence that OES has upgraded the emergency services capabilities, but there is more work to be done. Additional systems are being implemented to fill gaps in contacting the public in real time in the event of an emergency (CityWatch system). A public campaign to unveil CityWatch, the new emergency notification system, is currently in the planning stage. The message from OES: Each person should be prepared to rely on themselves for a period of three days and implement a plan now.

GLOSSARY

CityWatch: an alert notification system that utilizes landline telephones and wireless phones to alert citizens

EOP Emergency Operating Plan: 285 page procedural manual

OES Office of Emergency Services

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

BACKGROUND

Initially, the government organizational structure was made up of: U. S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency, State Office of Emergency Services, State Office of Homeland Security, and the Tuolumne County Operational Area. These are now consolidated into a unified structure – California Emergency Management Agency. The reporting and coordination is simplified so local Office of Emergency Services (OES) will be more efficient.

The County's Emergency Management consists of Emergency Operating Procedure which follows County Ordinance 2.40 and the requirements of the National Incident Management Systems, Standardized Emergency Management System, and Incident Command System.

The EOP is the overarching document that directs how emergency service operations are carried out within the County containing three sections: Administration, Common Management Functions, and Hazard Specific Operations.

The OES department consists of three people: Craig Pedro, OES Director, Kathleen Rustrum, OES Coordinator and Maureen Frank, OES Coordination. The primary role of the OES Coordinator is to harmonize local, state and federal efforts and resources (local/state/federal) ensuring that the right people respond to an emergency with the right tools to do their job. The responsibilities of the OES Coordinator are divided into emergency situations and OES management responsibilities.

In the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report, OES was investigated and found to be under-staffed; the EOP was incomplete and out-of-date.

APPROACH

The goal was to investigate emergency preparedness in Tuolumne County. The Grand Jury committee for County Administration reviewed the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report and planned to meet with OES. Also, the plan was to determine the current status of the EOP.

DISCUSSION

Meetings: The Grand Jury committee attended three meetings with OES. All meetings were with the OES coordinators.

The first meeting consisted of a presentation and a facility tour of the OES located at the Striker Court facility:

Overview of OES and EOP(originated in 1996), updated as of 11/1/2008 per OES

Received a copy of the EOP with a distribution list of 69 locations where the EOP could be found (see Appendix 1).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

Tuolumne County website, www.tuolumne.org, was mentioned as a resource for updates of the EOP and other emergency information available.

CityWatch was mentioned as another tool to notify the public in case of emergency.

Toured the facility: state-of-the-art Operations Center and storage of special emergency supplies.



Picture 1: Operations center Picture 2: Emergency Supplies Storage. Photos courtesy of Joseph Sparagna

The second meeting was for additional information and clarification.

The third meeting was a presentation of CityWatch. These are the findings from the presentation.

- CityWatch will have two phases: Phase 1 includes land lines and will be notifying the public this year and Phase 2 includes wireless communication and no timeframe indicated.
- Paid for by Homeland Security at a cost of \$7,000/year for 24 dedicated telephone lines capable of 1,200-1,400 (under 30 seconds) calls/hour with additional capability from vendor(4,800-6,000 additional calls/hour on-demand). The service fee for CityWatch is \$5,500/year and \$210/quarter for database updates.
- The system uses land lines to contact citizens within a selected and defined area of a map for emergency notices. It also includes unlisted numbers, but does not include local businesses.
- Makes three attempts to contact land lines; does not currently call cell phones (will add in Phase 2).Cell phone registration will consist of telephone number and a physical address.
- Leaves a message if answering machine responds but cannot interrupt a busy signal.
- Additional ways to receive emergency information:

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

Two groups, Community Service Unit (CSU) and citizens reply line, get information from TCAR (Tuolumne County Amateur Radio) which is a volunteer ham operator working the phones.

In an emergency, information is released through the Public Information Officers (PIO) using radios, town hall meetings, newspaper, and TV coverage.

Visitors to this area can view CalTrans signs for information in an emergency.

Other sources of information are the Red Cross for shelters, Salvation Army, and Animal Control (pick up animals with a trailer service.) The public is not allowed to use their own trailers for evacuation of animals during an emergency because of congestion issues

- Website:

On the Tuolumne County website, “Evacuation Checklist” item number 7A states “Do not tow any other vehicle or trailer. If necessary to change your escape route, trailers cannot be easily turned around on crowded roads. A motor home is permitted.”

- Contacted Database Administrator, Information Technology (IT):

Each department updates their own website, except the home page. The homepage is set up by IT and IT will help create links for the departments when it relates to the home page.

CityWatch:

The Grand Jury contacted two counties that used CityWatch: Butte and Nevada.

Butte County

Spoke with the Head of OES and IS Senior Analyst.

Butte installed their system in 2008 and originally had their own telephone lines (12).

After having a major fire the system took 45 minutes to alert 8,000 residences, they went with “CityWatch on Demand”.

They do not pay for lines or maintenance fee. Annual fee of \$9,000 and if they go over their allotted minutes, they are charged extra. They have gone over their minutes because of the numerous emergencies.

Per their contract, CityWatch on Demand will contact at least 15,000 phone lines/hr.

They were extremely satisfied with CityWatch on Demand.

Nevada County

Spoke with the OES Manager.

Nevada County has had CityWatch since Oct 2007 and launched it before the fire season.

There are two other departments that have access to CityWatch: Sheriff’s office-dispatch for emergencies and Environmental Health for food recalls.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

Prior to the 2009 fire season, the county will register cell phones on-line via their county website.

They have been working with Butte County.

The CityWatch service is approximately \$10,000/year.

The main use for CityWatch is for evacuation.

The manager urged this is not the only way people should be informed, but CityWatch is a great tool.

Animal Control: Met with Animal Control Manager and staff.

Presented with several documents which included Disaster Planning Tips for Livestock and Wildlife and 2008 Pre-Incident Action Plan for Tuolumne County Animal Control: Fire and disaster procedures. There is also a list of volunteers available.

Personal evacuation of livestock is encouraged as Animal Control officers and volunteers will take only those animals which can be loaded in five minutes or less.

2008 Pre-Incident Action Plan for Tuolumne County Animal Control: Fire and disaster procedures states, "Truck, trailers and other vehicles suitable for transporting livestock (appropriate for transporting each specific type of animal) should be available along with experienced handlers and drivers to transport."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

FINDINGS

- F1.** The Grand Jury found the Striker Facility well organized and were impressed with the staff's enthusiasm.
- F2.** The Grand Jury visited 28 locations on the distribution list (dated 1996) of the EOP (see Appendix 2). The EOP was found at 15 out of 28 locations. However, 13 could not locate the EOP. First responders were aware of the EOP. The survey included school districts, fire stations, the hospital, radio station, Red Cross organizations, etc.
- F3.** CityWatch is scheduled to launch to the public in Spring/Summer 2009. It will be Phase 1 which consists of using only landlines to contact the public.
- F4.** Conflicting information regarding use of trailers during an emergency between OES and Animal Control.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** No recommendation
- R2.** Re-distribute an updated version of the EOP. Provide hard copy and CD to make more accessible for all employees. Dissemination should also include local TV station, such as channel 8. Train all staff to recognize the EOP and know its purpose. Create a verification log at OES level for annual EOP update and compliance.
- R3.** Go forward with Phase 1 to launch to public. Create a Timeline for Phase 2. Recommend regular exercise of CityWatch to minimize human error in an emergency situation.
- R4.** Adopt one common policy for trailer use during an emergency and update website to reflect the change.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Office of Emergency Services with County Administration Office should respond to recommendations within 60 days.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

APPENDIX 1 Plan Distribution List

TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Agricultural Commissioner/Air Pollution Control Office
Airports Department
Building Department
County Administrator
County Counsel (2 copies)
County Fire
County Operations Center (6 copies)
Emergency Services Area Coordinator (2 copies)
Facilities Management
Human Services Agency (3 copies)
Library (2 copies)
Planning Department
Recreation
Sheriff's Department (4 copies: Administration, Mobile EOC, and Dispatch)
Tuolumne County Ambulance Service
Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors
Tuolumne General Hospital/Tuolumne General Medical Facility

CITY

City of Sonora (3 copies)
City Emergency Operations Center (2 copies)

MISCELLANEOUS

California Department of Forestry
California Highway Patrol
City/County of San Francisco
Columbia College
Columbia Fire Protection District
Groveland Community Service District
KKBN-93.5 F.M. Radio Office
KVML-92.7 F.M. Radio Office
Mi-Wuk/Sugar Pine Fire Protection District
Red Cross- Mother Lode Service Delivery Unit
Sonora Community Hospital/Sonora Regional Medical Center
State Office of Emergency Services
Superintendent of Schools and each School District (15 copies)
Tri-Dam Authority
Tuolumne City Fire Protection District
Tuolumne Utilities District
Turlock Irrigation District
Twain Harte Fire Protection District
U.S. Forest Service
Union Democrat

Total 69 copies of EOP

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Investigation of Office of Emergency Services

APPENDIX 2

Name	EOP Manual Available?
Airports Dept.	No
Building Dept.	Yes
County Administrator	Yes
County Fire	No
Library (x2)	Yes(x1)
Planning Dept.	Yes
County Board of Supervisor's	Yes
Ca. Highway Patrol	Yes
City/County of S.F.	No
Groveland Community Services	Yes
Superintendent of Schools & Each School District (x15)	Yes-Superintendent of Schools
Bellevue School	No
Sullivan Creek School	No
Curtis Creek District Office	No
Soulsbyville District Office	Yes
Sonora Elementary	Yes
Sonora City Fire Dept. Garage	No
Groveland Fire Dept.	Yes
Chinese Camp School	No
Cassina High	No
Sonora Union High School	No (Phone Interview)
Union Democrat	No
Tuolumne Utilities District	Yes
Sonora Reg. Med. Center	No
25. Red Cross/ Mother Lode Serv.	No
26. KKBN 93.5	Yes
27. KVML 92.7	Yes
28. Emergency Services Area Coordinator (x2)	Yes(x2)

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury determined that it is in the best interests of our children for our schools to adapt to the changing economic climate by making changes to administration, while not losing focus on the quality of education. The Grand Jury conducted a routine investigation of Tuolumne County School Districts. This investigation was not complaint driven.

Tuolumne County students have a solid foundation that leads to academic success: motivated teachers, parental and community participation, and a great geographical environment in which to learn. When we chose to investigate this issue in October 2008, declining economic conditions were not as apparent as they are today.

The intent of this report is to inform this community that economic change to schools is imminent. Because of the state budget crisis we have had substantial cutbacks in school funding. The County is losing schools and teachers, as is evident by Pink Friday and the closing of Chinese Camp and Sullivan Creek schools.

The accepted norm of separate districts throughout Tuolumne County must be addressed. A reduction in the number of school districts and their administrations can be accomplished through unification and/or consolidation. According to the California Department of Education the state provides increased ADA funds for unified districts, funds that would help offset declining enrollment. Tuolumne County citizens have an opportunity to help preserve the quality of education through school unification. Unification would increase funds from the state, reduce the number of districts and superintendents, funnel more money to the classroom and create a more uniform holiday/break schedule. Reductions in administrative cost could reduce school closures and teacher losses. To stay the current course would ensure losses to our education system that we can't afford.

GLOSSARY

ADA: Average daily attendance. The State of California, through our tax dollars, allocates a certain amount of money to the schools based on attendance. This ADA is per student (and for Tuolumne County not equal between the schools).

Certificated salaries: Teacher salaries

Classified salaries: Administration and support staff salaries

Common Calendar: A common time line by which unified schools would adhere to the same starting and ending date of the school year and all holiday schedules in between.

Consolidation: Combining of business activities, strengthening of position, the increasing of the strength, stability or depth of a group's success.

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

Pink Friday: March 13, 2009; a statewide protest against “pink slips” issued to school staff because of the \$11.6 billion in cuts to state education funding. These pink slips are preliminary layoff notices and/or reduction in hours. Unless more money comes to schools, pink slips will be effective at the end of the 2009 school year.

School Board: Local body overseeing schools. A group of people, elected or appointed, in each county or local school district to make decisions regarding education in public schools.

School District: School Districts are special districts concerned with the administration and operation of public schools. They exist in the State as independent, local governmental units. Local authority is vested in a board, usually directly elected by the voters of the school district. (Selection from article in the Encarta Encyclopedia)

School District Certifications:

Positive - Based on their projections they will meet financial obligations for the current year and subsequent two fiscal years

Qualified - Based on their projections they might not meet financial obligations for the current and subsequent two fiscal years

Negative - Based on their projections they will not meet financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year or for the subsequent fiscal year

Unification: The joining together of several independent schools under one governmental jurisdiction, creating one or more districts, each to include grades K-12.

BACKGROUND

The topic of school unification and consolidation has come up several times over the past decade.

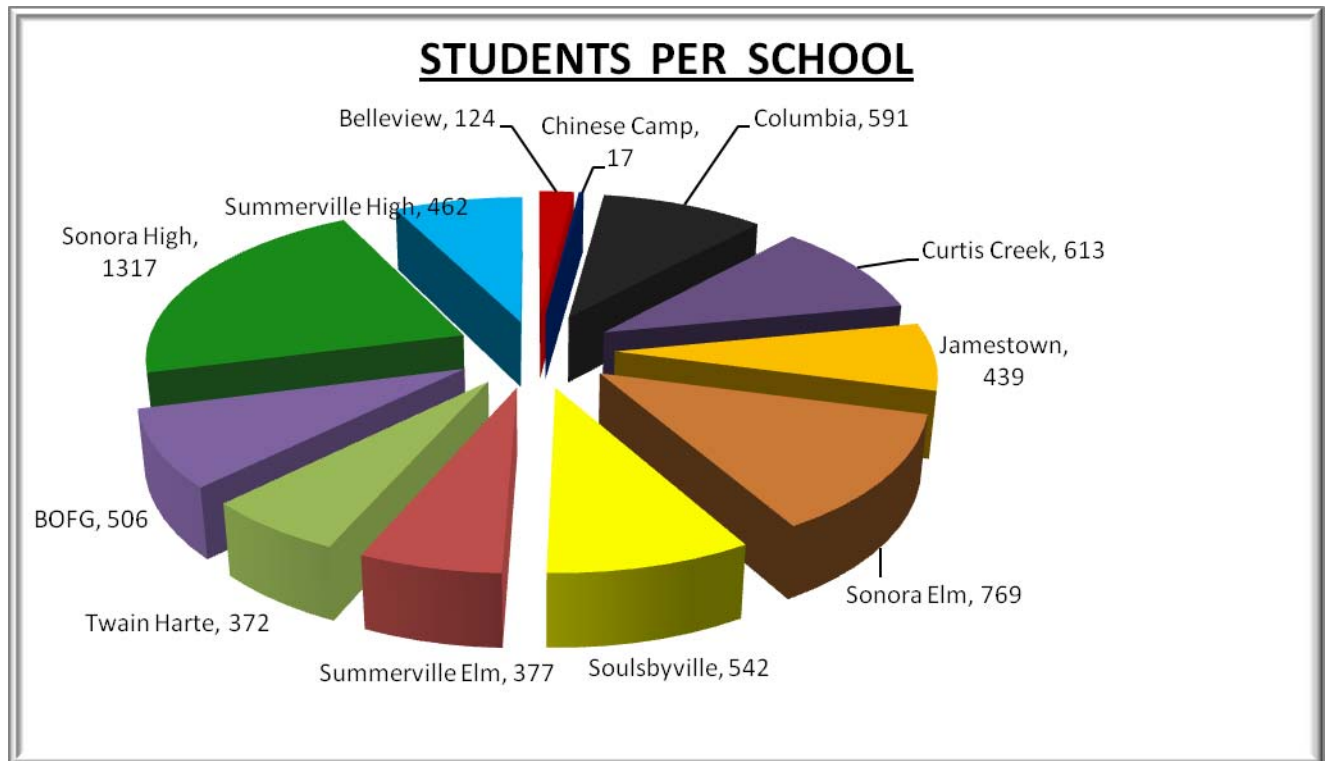
Because of the State’s current economic crisis, this Grand Jury has taken a hard look at the prospects of unification and consolidation, with intent to report our findings to the citizens of Tuolumne County.

The primary source of funding for public schools is from the State of California. The current economic climate and budgetary deficits have brought all state funded programs into the forefront. Public schools are currently subject to state budget cuts and citizens are faced with deciding how to best cope with less funding for public schools. Tuolumne County has lost two schools: Chinese Camp and Sullivan Creek. As a result of this challenging economic climate, some local schools are choosing to share administrative and operational costs. Considerable discussion on both unification and consolidation has occurred in the press and at school board meetings over the past few years. This report investigates these issues in greater detail.

Tuolumne County currently has twelve school districts, eleven superintendents, and thirteen school boards including the County Superintendent of Schools Office.

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION



APPROACH

School District budgets were reviewed to determine a monetary profile.

Salaries and/or stipends of all teachers, administration, support staff, and district board members were obtained for review.

Counties with like demographics and student enrollment were contacted for comparison.

Interviews with key personnel in the districts were conducted.

Phone interviews were conducted with other counties' superintendents to assess their success in running their districts.

DISCUSSION

ADA: State funding to individual schools

The following chart shows each district with the number of students and teachers. The ratio represents class size of students to teachers. The certificated and classified salaries refer to teachers and administrative staff respectively. State ADA is the current money from the state for our county for 2008/09 as of the first interim report in December 2008. The last column shows

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

the state average money per ADA unified. By using the state average ADA, Tuolumne County could receive an estimated increase of \$3 million in state funds per year.

ADA INCREASE WITH UNIFICATION

DISTRICTS ADA	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	RATIO	CERTIFICATED SALARIES	CLASSIFIED SALARIES	STATE ADA	AVERAGE UNIFIED
Bellevue	124	11	11-1	\$ 472,713	\$194,870	\$5,286	\$6,150
Chinese Camp	17	2	8-1	56,659	828,395	6,245	6,150
Columbia	591	30	19-1	2,054,972	818,930	5,235	6,150
Curtis Creek	613	39	15-1	1,745,963	762,095	5,230	6,150
Jamestown	439	26	16-1	1,609,473	354,422	5,226	6,150
Sonora Elm	769	45	16-1	3,142,112	815,531	5,243	6,150
Soulsbyville	542	31	17-1	1,850,133	448,911	5,231	6,150
Summerville Elm	377	25	15-1	1,308,158	612,104	5,246	6,150
Twain Harte	372	22	16-1	1,395,764	436,865	5,237	6,150
BOFG	506	33	15-1	2,277,909	828,395	5,860	6,150
Sonora High	1,317	80	16-1	5,067,842	2,834,746	6,383	6,150
Summerville High	462	41	11-1	2,194,500	1,074,037	6,370	6,150
TOTALS	6,129	352		\$23,176,200	\$9,270,005	\$34,471,392 (Total ADA for County/year 08/09)	\$37,693,350 (State average for County/year 08/09))

*Totals do not add up due to rounding.

Note: March 31, 2009; The Governor reduced the ADA funds by an average of \$450.00 per student per year. The reduction is not reflected in this chart.

Consolidation of services can save schools money

The following are examples of how some districts have dealt with a shrinking budget.

- Summerville High and Twain Harte Union share the same Superintendent (Summerville pays \$111,159; Twain Harte Elementary pays \$72,345; totaling \$183,504). They also share a Chief Business Officer and an Administrative Specialist for payroll.
- Summerville High, Twain Harte Union and Summerville Elementary share bus maintenance and fuel purchases.
- Columbia Elementary and Bellevue Elementary share the same Superintendent (Columbia pays \$118,065 and Bellevue pays \$39,355; totaling \$157,420). They also share a transportation contract for repair/maintenance of buses. Columbia provides other

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

services to Bellevue such as trash collection and custodial/ maintenance supplies as well as looking to share counseling and technology.

- All the school districts in Tuolumne County share operating costs for “Home to School Transportation” for special needs students. Sonora Union High School provides “Home to School Transportation” service at a cost to each District.
- Jamestown Elementary provided Chinese Camp School with hot breakfast and lunch.
- Summerville High shares their Chief Business Officer with Big Oak Flat-Groveland Unified School District.
- Soulsbyville School provides space for the Headstart Program.

Cost Sharing

Cost sharing can reduce administrative burden and provide additional dollars to students and may alleviate teacher/staff reductions.

The following chart shows school districts that share Superintendents

SCHOOL DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT ANNUAL SALARIES	MILEAGE/MO	INSURANCE CAP/YR	SCHOOL SITES
Columbia/Belleview Elementary	\$157,420	\$300	\$7,400	Columbia, Belleview
Summerville High/Twain Harte Elementary	\$183,504	\$600	Included in salary	Summerville High, Twain Harte Elm, Pinecrest, Southfork

NOTE: Insurance Cap refers to the maximum amount a district pays toward insurance

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

The following chart shows school districts that do not share Superintendents

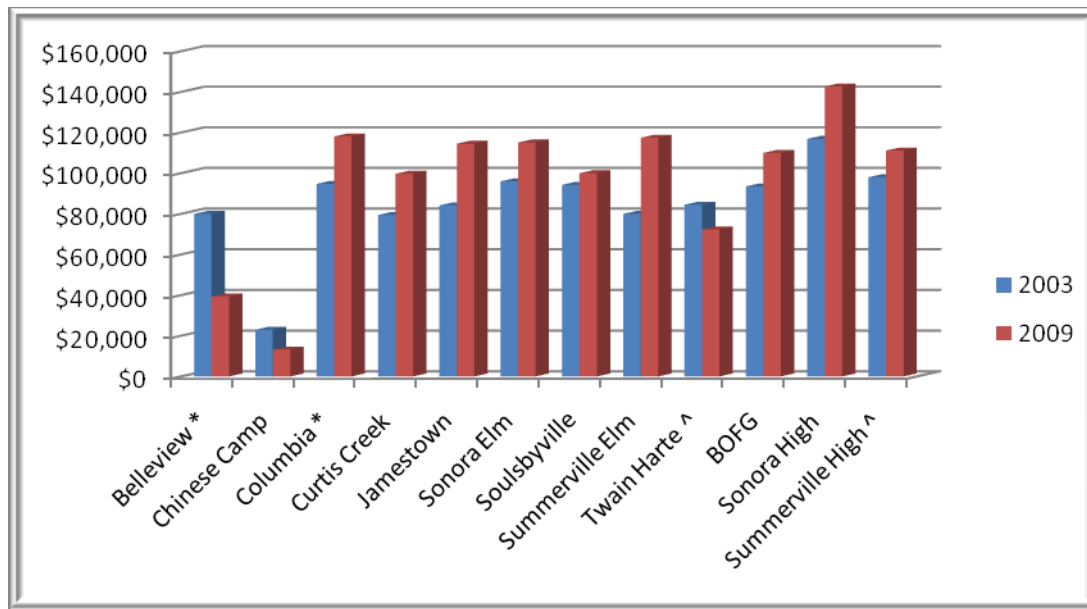
SCHOOL DISTRICTS	SUPERINTENDENT ANNUAL SALARY	MILEAGE ALLOWANCE /MO	INSURANCE CAP PER YEAR	SCHOOL SITES
Chinese Camp Elm	\$13,200	Reimbursable	N/A	Chinese Camp
County Schools Office	\$138,455	\$600	\$7,800	County Schools
Curtis Creek Elm	\$99,733	\$400	\$8,175	Curtis Creek, Sullivan Creek
Groveland Unified	\$110,000	Reimbursable	\$9,210	BOF Unified, Tenaya Elementary, Tioga High, Don Pedro High
Jamestown Elm	\$114,549	Reimbursable	\$8,250	Jamestown
Sonora Elm	\$115,148	\$400	\$7,656	Sonora Elementary
Sonora Union High	\$142,700	\$600	Included in salary	Sonora High Cassina
Soulsbyville Elm	\$100,014	\$300	\$7,402	Soulsbyville
Summerville Elm	\$117,438	Reimbursable	\$7,100	Summerville Elm

•

SUPERINTENDENT SALARIES

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION



Belleview and Columbia share a Superintendent *

Summerville High and Twain Harte Elm share a Superintendent ^

School Boards

The total dollars devoted to school board stipends could be reduced through unification and/or consolidation because the number of board members would be less, thereby freeing up dollars for the classroom.

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

The following chart lists the budgeted costs for Tuolumne County School Boards

SCHOOL BOARD STIPENDS

SCHOOL DISTRICT	MONTHLY BENEFIT COMPENSATION	BOARD MEMBER	BENEFIT RECEIVED	ANNUAL TOTALS
Bellevue	\$120	2 1	Decline \$120	\$1,440
Big Oak Flat Groveland	\$110	5	\$100	\$6,600
Columbia Elementary	\$683 insurance cap \$32 towards insurance	2 2 1	Decline \$683 \$32	\$16,392 \$384
Curtis Creek Elementary	\$120	5	\$120	\$7,200
Jamestown Elementary	\$126	5	\$126	\$7,560
Sonora Elementary	\$150	5	\$150	\$9,000
Sonora High	\$240 or \$628 insurance cap	1 4	\$240 \$628	\$2,880 \$30,144
Soulsbyville Elementary	\$120 or \$617 insurance cap \$126 towards insurance \$15 insurance cap	1 2 1 1	\$120 \$617 \$126 \$15	\$1,440 \$14,808 \$1,512 \$180
Summerville Elementary	None	5	None	0
Summerville High	\$683 insurance cap \$62 toward insurance \$507 towards insurance	3 1 1	\$683 \$62 \$507	\$24,588 \$744 \$6,084
Twain Harte Elementary	\$120	5	\$120	\$7,200
County Schools Office	None	7	None	0
TOTALS		63		\$140,316

NOTE: Insurance Cap refers to the maximum amount a district pays toward insurance.

Tuolumne County school expenditures

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

Expenditures are the total expenses a school expects to pay for services, supplies and salaries. These costs can be reduced through unification or consolidation.

The following chart shows the expenditures for the school districts of Tuolumne County

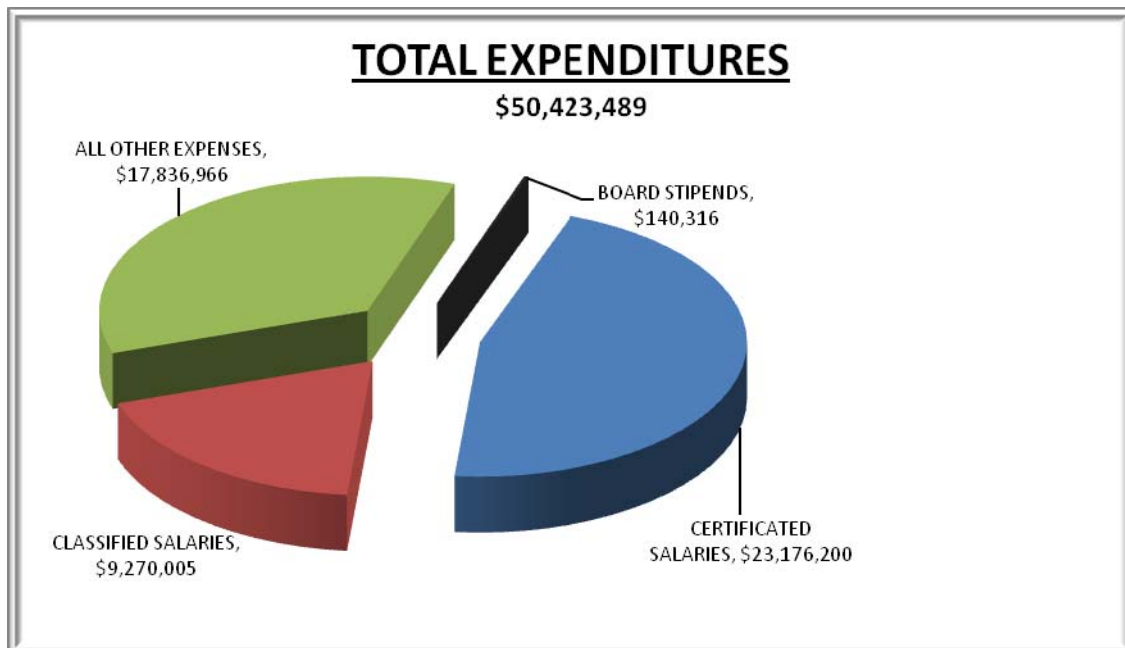
District Expenditures 2008-09*

Bellevue	\$1,139,044.00
Big Oak Flat Groveland	5,111,478.00
Chinese Camp	291,769.10
Columbia Union Elementary	4,491,835.00
Curtis Creek	4,709,924.00
Jamestown	3,407,723.00
Sonora Elementary	5,742,272.00
Sonora Union High	9,356,836.23
Soulsbyville	3,130,441.64
Summerville Elementary	3,349,547.96
Summerville Union High	6,506,209.13
Twain Harte-Long Barn Union High	3,186,409.62
TOTAL	\$50,423,489.68

*These numbers were compiled using the 2008-09 school district budgets

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION



County Superintendent of Schools

The State of California mandates that the County Superintendent of Schools oversees the school district budgets to ensure their ability to pay their bills with reserves of 4% for two years out.

The County Superintendent of Schools reports the certified status of the individual school districts to the State of California.

- In our investigation we found that Chinese Camp School as of the first interim report in December 2008 had a status of Qualified. As of the date of this report, Chinese Camp has a Negative certification and will close.
- As of the first interim report in December 2008, Curtis Creek Elementary had a Positive certification. As of the date of this report, Curtis Creek has a Qualified certification which has resulted in the district closing Sullivan Creek Elementary.

The County Superintendent of Schools provides several services to the districts which include (some at a cost), but are not limited to, the following:

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

- Organizes the Cal Safe program for pregnant teens and alternative lifestyle students
- Filters all student computer activity
- Handles all insurance issues, to include Public Liability and Property Damage (PLPD)
- Provides special education services and teaching materials
- Monitors sports tournaments

Some school districts share services through the County Superintendent of Schools Office.

-
- Tuolumne County Joint Powers Authority: an insurance program providing liability and workers compensation
- SELPA: the Special Education Local Plan area provides an array of services related to special education
- Categorical Programs Cooperative: created by legislators to serve the special needs of students that are not covered by the general fund regular education programs
- School Attendance Review Board
- The “Pony” courier service which moves correspondence between schools
- The Instructional Media Center which provides teaching materials
- The Gifted and Talented Education program

The County Superintendent of Schools has limited control over the districts and states “the districts need to work together”.

The State budget cuts have already affected our schools

Due to the sweeping budget cuts across California, Tuolumne County school funding has decreased. The following are examples of how those cuts have affected our schools.

The Governor’s budget cuts have caused our schools to lose teachers, programs, and in two instances schools were closed. **As of Pink Friday preliminary pink slips were given to the following as reported by each district:**

Bellevue Elementary: 1½ certificated teachers

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

Big Oak Flat Unified: 1 FTE certificated teacher at Don Pedro Community Day School; .71 FTE certificated teacher at Tioga High; .29 FTE certificated teacher from Independent Study; .43 FTE certificated teacher from ROP welding; 2 FTE classified counselors; TOTAL OF 4.43 staff

Chinese Camp: CLOSED

Columbia Elementary: 4 certificated teachers and 3 classified staff

County Superintendent of Schools Office: 3 staff

Curtis Creek Elementary: 11 certificated teachers and the number of classified staff is undetermined at this time. *Due to the closing of Sullivan Creek School, Curtis Creek has received additional ADA funds and may be able to keep their premier programs: music, sports, etc.

Jamestown Elementary: 3 certificated teachers and 1 counselor

Sonora Elementary: 4.4 FTE certificated teachers; approximately \$130,000 cut from classified services (maintenance/food service)

Sonora Union High: 6 FTE certificated teachers and 7 partial (partial reduction means the teachers will be retained but their extra hours will be cut; this cut is made each year.) Sonora High is reducing programs/classes/sections across the board but not due only to the state budget, declining enrollment is a big factor.

Soulsbyville Elementary: 6 FTE certificated teachers, with consideration to eliminate 1 classified PE Teacher/Specialist; the "Breakfast" program has been cut to save labor and food cost and there is concern over more program losses.

Summerville Elementary: 3 FTE certificated teachers; Classified - 7 one hour reductions, 1 three and a half hour reduction and 1 thirty hour a month reduction. Music and counseling programs are currently under review for possible cuts.

Summerville High: No preliminary pink slips have been handed out; however, reduction in classified staff is expected.

Twain Harte-Long Barn Union: 1 FTE certificated probationary teacher, 3 temporary certificated teachers

Tuolumne County citizens have a unique opportunity to effect a positive change to our education system

The following reasons state why a move toward unification and/or consolidation would help our public schools.

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

- Consolidation could ease the burden of administrative and operational cost but with no increased revenue from the state. The reduction of administrative and management costs provides additional monies directly to students and the classroom.
- Unification could provide the same benefits as consolidation but with added revenue, per ADA, from the state. This would allow for retention of teachers, more dollars directed toward students and would provide a Common Calendar for the entire county.
- In staying the current course school districts would continue to be faced with economic uncertainties possibly resulting in fewer teachers, less schools, larger class sizes, and no Common Calendar.
- Professional services are available to assist the County and the public in unification or consolidation efforts.

FINDINGS

- F1.** The initial 2008-09 state budget cut California school funding by \$11+ billion. Tuolumne County school districts are feeling the impact and were advised by the County Superintendent of Schools to report their ADA revenue losses accordingly.
- F2.** Individual school districts share minimal resources with each other.
- F3.** Tuolumne County Schools could receive approximately \$3 million more per year in ADA funds as a result of unification.
- F4.** Consolidation does not provide additional funds but would save money by the sharing of resources. Consolidation could also reduce the administrative burden, thereby providing additional dollars to the classroom.
- F5.** There are professional services available to assist in efforts to unify and/or consolidate county schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1** No Recommendation
- R2** Individual school districts should continue to explore ways to stretch funding and share resources amongst themselves to mitigate the effects of inevitable deeper funding cuts.
- R3.** Bring Unification to the forefront of public debate in each individual school district in order to receive additional ADA dollars for Tuolumne County schools.
- R4.** Bring Consolidation to the forefront of public debate in each individual school district to reduce administrative costs, thereby moving those dollar savings to the classroom.

PANNING FOR EDUCATION IN A DRY CREEK

SCHOOL UNIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

- R5.** Utilize available professional services when unification or consolidation efforts materialize.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

The Grand Jury requests a response to this report from the following individuals:

Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, Joe Silva

Chinese Camp Elementary School District Superintendent, Bill Schneiderman

Columbia/Bellevue Elementary School District Superintendent, John Pendley

Curtis Creek Elementary School District Superintendent, Britta Skavdahl

Big Oak Flat Groveland Unified School District Superintendent, Mari Brabbin

Jamestown Elementary School District Superintendent, Diane Dotson

Sonora Elementary School District Superintendent, Margie Bulkin

Sonora Union High School District Superintendent, Mike McCoy

Soulsbyville Elementary School District Superintendent, Jeff Winfield

Summerville Elementary School District Superintendent, Leigh Shampain

Summerville Union High/Twain Harte-Long Barn Union School District Superintendent, John Keiter

Appendix 1 Authority for Agency Responses

The following section of the California Penal Code is cited as the authority under which each agency must respond to the Superior Court: ¹

§933.05

(a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

(c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

(d) A grand jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the grand jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the grand jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.

(e) During an investigation, the grand jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding the investigation, unless the court, either on its own determination or upon request of the foreperson of the grand jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.

(f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.

¹ <http://63.202.159.1151grandjury/reports/individual-reports-20061authority-agency-resp.pdf>

TUOLUMNE COUNTY
GRAND JURY
2008-2009

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93 ⁴	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Agricultural Commission				X								X				
Ag Commissioner												X				
Ag Programs												X				
Consumer Protection	X															
Environmental Protection	X															
Weights and Measures	X											X				
Air Pollution Control	X											X				
Animal Control				X	X							X				
Y2K Preparedness						X										
Air Pollution Control Office	X											X				
Airports				X						X			X			
Amador/Tuolumne Commission Action Agency																
AN Francisco Bldg. Hours of Operation												X				
Ambulance-Fire																
Animal Control					X	X	X		X							
Area 12 Agency on Aging													X			
Assessor-Recorder			X	X								X				

⁴ 93 refers to the Grand Jury in session during 1993-1994.

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Archives										X		X				
Behavioral Health (formerly mental health)														X		X
Big Oak Flat Groveland Unified School District/Tenaya School					X						X					
Board of Supervisors						X		X			X			X		
Mgt./Oversight of Fiscal Affairs										X						
Building & Safety																
Emergency Services	X															
Environmental Health	X															
Child Support Services (formerly DA CSS)																
City of Sonora-Development Project Bungalows@ Woods Creek												X				
Clerk-Auditor-Controller		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			
Elections							X						X			X
Community Development Department								X								
Building Department	X			X	X								X			
Clerical													X			

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Code Compliance													X			
Development Division of Public Works		X		X	X	X						X	X			
Educational Reimbursement												X				
Fire Prevention													X			
Geographic Information System													X			
Planning	X				X								X			
Conflict of Interest State of Economic Interests Form 700										X						
County Administrative Office		X								X						
County Administrative Officer							X	X	X	X						
County Budget												X				
Ethics																X
Office of Emergency Services				X									X			X
Office of Bio-Terrorism													X			
Officials Travel Expenses			X													
Claims & Settlements																
County Fire	X		X					X							X	
Fire Protection Dist.	X															
County Counsel									X							

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
County Service Areas																
Curtis Creek School			X													
District Attorney				X			X					X				
Criminal Division						X										
Victim Witness							X									
Economic Development Company of Tuolumne Co			X													
Emergency Preparedness				X												
Enterprise Content Management																
Family Support Division	X															
Victim/ Witness																
Facilities Management		X										X				
Farm Advisor																
Financial Services											X					
Forestry	X															
Groveland Community Services District					X											
Financial Services											X					
Grand Jury Recommendation / Responses				X		X	X		X		X		X		X	
Follow Up Final Report						X										

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Correspondence Committee						X										
Investigations Matrix																X
Juror's Guide Book															X	X
Website													X			
Human Resources Department															X	
Adult Protective Services				X				X					X			
Child Protective Services		X		X				X			X	X	X			
Office of Emergency Services																
Women, Infant, Child Program													X			
Environmental Health		X						X								
Emergency Services													X			
Health					X							X				
In-Home Services				X		X					X					
Mental Health/Alcohol/Drug Services	X															
Information Systems and Services					X					X						
Jamestown Beautification Project													X			
Jamestown Landfill			X													
Jamestown Mine Property						X			X							

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Library	X			X	X	X								X		
Monument Fee			X							X						
Parks & Recreation		X							X							
Probation	X			X								X				
Adult												X				
Juvenile		X	X									X				
Public Defender				X						X						
Purchasing																
Registrar of Voters														X		
Resignation of DA Nina Deane							X									X
Revenue & Recovery												X				
Probation	X			X								X				
Salary Increases																
County Administrator									X							
County Counsel																
Schools Consolidation					X	X										X
Sheriffs Department				X												
Boat Patrol					X	X	X	X	X							
911/Emergency Response		X	X												X	X
Jail	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jim Mele														X		
Morale												X				
Narcotic Task Force						X				X					X	
Senior Center		X										X				
Sierra Conservation Center	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Sierra Railroad Right-of-Way										X						
Social Services			X												X	
Early Fraud Prevention	X															
Solid Waste Management															X	
Sonora Union High School				X												
Tax Collector-Treasurer		X	X	X	X							X				
Traffic Model Review County Wide Traffic Circulation System			X													
Tuolumne City Memorial Hall			X													
Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office							X			X						
Superintendent & Staff										X						
County Schools										X						
Special Education										X						
Tuolumne County Transit										X						

Appendix 2 Tuolumne County Grand Jury Investigations Matrix

Department	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau/Film Commission						X										
Tuolumne General Hospital					X		X		X		X	X				
Administration				X												
Personnel Management							X			X						
Contracts							X									
Finances							X									
Laboratory Procedures							X									
Long Term Care							X									
Morale							X									
Psychiatric Unit							X									
Safety & Security			X													
Standard Billing Procedure												X				
Tuolumne Utilities District					X					X	X					
Twain Hart Community Services District					X									X		
Veteran's Services										X	X					