

DIVISION OF ADULT INSTITUTIONS

SIERRA CONSERVATION CENTER

5100 O'Byrnes Ferry Road
Jamestown CA 95327

FILED

AUG 02 2011

Superior Court of California
County of TuolumneBY *Joyce Barnes*
Clerk

July 25, 2011

Honorable Eric L. DuTemple
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, Tuolumne County
60 North Washington Street
Sonora CA 95370

Dear Judge DuTemple:

I have reviewed the 2010/2011 Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury Report as it pertains to Sierra Conservation Center. I want to thank all of the jury members for their time and effort while visiting our facility and Baseline Conservation Camp, CC# 30. I also want to thank them for the positive information concerning our operation documented in the report.

I have reviewed the report findings and recommendations carefully and provide the following response:

- Finding #1: *In regards to nutrition, the diet, while adequate in calories and meeting heart-healthy guidelines, is limited due to budget. The lunch provided to Grand Jury members was high in carbohydrates and low in fiber content. However, a review of the monthly menu indicates that, over the course of the day, the inmates do receive the minimum required amount of fiber and fruit.*
- Recommendation #1: *In an effort to be more heart-healthy, the Jury recommends canned foods be replaced with frozen foods whenever possible. This would reduce sodium content and add nutritional value. A vitamin supplement should be discussed with medical staff. More fiber and fresh fruit would be healthier.*

I partially agree with the finding and recommendation. This recommendation is basically already in place. The Grand Jury members were provided lunch during their visit to our facility and a copy of our three month menu. The menu is standardized statewide and complies with a heart healthy diet and meets the Recommended Allowances for calories, vitamins, minerals, and fiber set forth by the National Academy of Science, Food and Nutrition Board. At every breakfast inmates are given fresh fruit servings with their meal and must consume the fruit prior to leaving the dining hall. There is an inherent security risk of inmates manufacturing alcohol from fruit. Therefore fruit is not included in a bag lunch because the inmates pick up their lunch as they exit the dining hall. Our Food Services Department receives fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables on a weekly delivery to be served to the inmate population. Canned goods are served weekly as well to add variety to the menu.

- Finding #2: *Lack of sufficient personnel results in overtime for existing personnel: i.e.: RNs and transport.*
- Recommendation #2: *Hire additional RNs to reduce overtime costs. Work at State level to get legislation passed to recognize Certified Nurse Assistants, thereby reducing the cost of contracted registries. Seek a better rotation system for transportation of inmates to avoid overtime costs.*

I partially agree with the finding and recommendation, and the majority of this recommendation is already in place. The Office of the Receiver has determined the number of positions allocated for Registered Nurses (RN's) to ensure the constitutional level of care for the inmate population. The number of RN vacancies at Sierra Conservation Center is currently two, and the Health Care Services Department is actively recruiting to fill those positions, thereby mitigating overtime usage in this classification. Additionally, we have a contract with the Registry to utilize their services to hire behind vacancies in order to reduce overtime costs. Certified Nurse Assistants (CNA's) are authorized for usage by the medical department. Since May of 2011 Sierra Conservation Center has been utilizing CNA's to assist in the delivery of medical services. There is currently one vacant position in the CNA classification, which is actively being recruited. The variations in type of medical services required, the locations of service providers, and the composition of the inmate population being served create a complicated process that is a continual challenge to maximize efficiency. The transportation department, in conjunction with the Medical Specialty Services scheduling staff, continually works to be as efficient as possible in the transportation of inmates that require medical services that are outside the capacity of the Sierra Conservation Center medical department. A majority of overtime costs associated in the transportation of inmates are for emergency services, which are difficult to predict and are not pre-scheduled.

- Finding #3: *Members of the jury panel questioned the number of inmates (an average of six per day) treated off-site due to the fact that SCC is not certified for acute care Correctional Treatment Center. In response to that concern, SCC provided the following information:*

The current Medical Outpatient Housing Unit (MOHU) at SCC would not be able to meet the physical standards for conversion to a Correction Treatment Center (CTC).

- Recommendation #3: *No Recommendation*

I disagree with the finding and concern the Grand Jury had with SCC not being certified as a Correctional Treatment Center (CTC). Due to the infrastructure, SCC cannot currently be converted to a CTC. SCC has a mission to train inmates to become wild land firefighters and provide a service to our community and other communities. This would add a new mission for SCC and would conflict with our current mission of training inmate firefighters. SCC provides the appropriate constitutional level of care to all inmates who arrive at our facility. In the event an inmate needs additional services we are unable to provide, a transfer to a CTC, such as Mule Creek State Prison, would be made.

- Finding #4: *The quality of work viewed in the vocational shops was high, the staff and administration found to be dedicated and rightly proud of the students' work. Work areas were clean and neat, and safety issues regarding tool accountability strictly monitored. Because instruction is being given to incoming students as well as advanced students at the same time, the flexibility of the instructor is essential. The staff of the Vocational Center welcomes the Trade Advisory Committee members who volunteer to assist in the various disciplines.*

- Recommendation #4: *Members of the community who are either members of the Trade Advisory Committee or someone within the industry who is familiar with current techniques are encouraged to volunteer their time and expertise for the vocational programs.*

I partially agree with the Grand Jury members, and we are always actively seeking volunteers for our facility. Our vocational classes currently operate Monday through Friday, during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and are funded for custody coverage. Anytime outside of these hours would constitute safety concerns for the volunteers. Because a custodial officer will not be present coupled with the remote location of our vocational classes, there would be a significant delay of staff response in an emergency situation.

- Finding #5: *Members of the Grand Jury investigating the educational and social programs at SCC were impressed with the dedication of the staff involved in providing educational opportunities for the inmates. Because the programs depend on volunteers, there is always a turnover and an ongoing need for more volunteers.*

- Recommendation #5: *While it might be appropriate to recommend more credentialed teachers be hired and the suspended classes be reinstated, the reality of budget cuts renders such a recommendation impractical. Members of the community are encouraged to consider volunteering for assistance in the academic and social programs. This is an opportunity to share skills and knowledge and make a difference in the lives of others.*

I agree with the Grand Jury members, and we are always actively seeking volunteers for our facility.

- Finding #6: *The Base Camp was found to be a well-run facility.*
- Recommendation #6: *No Recommendation*

I agree with the finding and no recommendation is necessary.

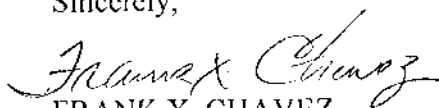
- Finding #7: *The Citizens' Advisory Committee oversees the County's largest employer and conducts bi-monthly meetings which serve as a vehicle of disseminating information to the public of the work at the prison.*
- Recommendation #7: *The Union Democrat should make sure these meetings are covered on a regular basis.*

I agree with the finding, and we will again provide the Union Democrat with our Citizens' Advisory Committee schedule. The Union Democrat is more than welcome to attend these meetings.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the 2010/2011 Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury satisfying the requirements of Penal Code 933 and 933.05.

If you have any questions, please contact Correctional Lieutenant David Fish, Administrative Assistant, at (209) 984-5291 extension 5499.

Sincerely,


FRANK X. CHAVEZ
Warden