

SENIOR CENTER

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury was requested to investigate the Sierra Foothill Senior Center. The last time it had been investigated was 1994/1995.

BACKGROUND

In 1996, Tuolumne County contracted with Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. to manage the Senior Center at 540 Greenley Road, Sonora. Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. is a non-profit organization, and is solely responsible for obtaining the necessary funding, managing and conducting all senior programs within the facility. Tuolumne County owns the building and is responsible for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, the plumbing of the building and the exterior landscaping. Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. leases the building rent-free as part of their contract with the county.

METHODOLOGY

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sierra Senior Providers Inc. gave a presentation for the Grand Jury. Later, members of the Grand Jury had a tour of the facility, interviewed the CEO, and met many of the staff. A follow up visit was then conducted in the computer room at the Center to complete the Jury's investigation. Afterwards a few members enjoyed lunch served at the Senior Center.

FINDINGS

Sierra Senior Providers, Inc.:

1. Provides an important service to the county by offering free and low cost meals for seniors at the Senior Center and through the Meals on Wheels program.
2. Is responsible for cleaning the inside of the building which they contract out to the Work Activities for Tuolumne/Calaveras Handicapped (WATCH) program.
3. Rents out rooms and facilities to other organizations and events, both private and public.
4. Offers a computer room at the facility with several computers, a printer and internet access. This is available to seniors free of charge, and to the public for a small donation. Computer classes are offered weekly.
5. Maintains a large selection of senior-oriented pamphlets and printed materials. These are available to seniors, their families and the public.
6. Provides transportation for seniors to doctor's appointments or other medical needs.
7. Has a vast selection of activities available to seniors, from exercise classes to pinochle.
8. Is funded in part by Area 12 Agency on Aging as well as private donations. They are a tax-exempt organization.
9. Maintains an excellent working relationship with the county and many volunteer organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury has no recommendations for the county, as it is the Jury's opinion that the facility at 540 Greenley Road is being put to very good use by Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. It is not within the Grand Jury's purview to make recommendations as to Sierra Senior Providers, Inc.'s conducting of their programs, as they are not a county entity.