

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY GJ04-042

Reason for the report

The 2004-2005 Grand Jury, per Penal Code 925, inspected several county buildings, parking lots, and adjacent grounds. We also followed up on some of the concerns identified by previous Grand Juries.

Scope of the Investigation

People Interviewed

- Prison Staff
- Fire Marshall – Placerville/South Lake Tahoe
- Interim Director General Services
- Real Estate Manager
- Program Coordinators
- Senior C.A.D.D. Technician, General Services
- Engineering Specialist, Public Works City of Placerville
- Engineering Technician, Public Works / Placerville Engineering Department
- Risk Manager, County Administrative Office
- Director Mental Health Department
- Nutrition Services Supervisor
- Engineers, Department of Transportation
- Field Supervisors, Animal Control
- Kitchen Staff, Placerville Senior Center

Sites Visited

- Jail – Placerville
- Juvenile Hall – Placerville/South Lake Tahoe
- Growlersberg Conservation Camp
- Georgetown – Airport / Library
- Senior Center – Placerville
- Mental Health Buildings & Services – Placerville / South Lake Tahoe
- Animal Control – South Lake Tahoe
- Department of Transportation – South Lake Tahoe

Documents Reviewed

- Placerville topographic map
- Risk Management Claim Register / Litigation Report
- Risk Management Facility Incident Report
- Property Lease Agreements
- Grand Jury Final Report / Responses for 2003-04; 2002-03; 2001-02; 2000-01

Background

Mental Health Services, South Lake Tahoe (SLT) and Georgetown Airport and Library were chosen for inspection, since they had not been visited in the last four years. The leased facility at 3rd Street, SLT (a prior residence) has modifications with safety concerns. **We requested the Fire Marshall to inspect several buildings when safety issues were found.** Previous Grand Juries identified potentially hazardous conditions at the Placerville Spring Street Complex and South Lake Tahoe Animal Control.

MENTAL HEALTH BUILDINGS – South Lake Tahoe

Findings/Recommendations

1a. **Finding:** The leased building at 1120 3rd Street has an awkward floor plan. Kitchen area, offices, and storage areas are inadequate. Although three floors are in use only the first floor is ADA compliant. A wheel chair lift to the basement is under construction.

1b. **Recommendation:** Relocate this department to a facility adequate to serve the clientele, to create a safe work environment for the employees and to meet ADA requirements.

2a. **Finding:** Cleanliness is a problem. The bathrooms are potential health hazards. There are cobwebs in stairwells, bathrooms, and ceiling vents. Several fluorescent lights have been flickering for months. Staff and clients perform janitorial duties.

2b. **Recommendation:** Hire a janitorial service.

3a. **Finding:** The Fire Marshall and the County Building Inspector found the inside stairway failed to meet required codes. The building inspector has condemned the stairway until it is rebuilt to code.

3b. **Recommendation:** Require the landlord to provide a proper inside stairway

4a. **Finding:** The basement furniture is dirty and worn. This room was a former swimming pool and has no windows.

4b. **Recommendation:** Purchase better furniture for the basement.

5a. **Finding:** Clothing, boxes, bags, suitcases, etc, are stacked in corners and on counter tops. New tires (about 12) are stored in the corner of the main meeting room.

5b. **Recommendation:** Provide lockers or cabinets for clients' belongings, and store tires at DOT.

6a. **Finding:** The front entrance is hazardous in the winter due to melting snow and ice falling off the roof. The outside basement entrance is a concrete stairwell where ice accumulates. The rear entrance is icy and uneven. Sign on outside building wall warns of falling ice and snow. This dangerous condition should not be allowed to exist. *See photo on page 26.*

6b. **Recommendation:** Ensure entrances and fire exits are free of ice and snow as needed (daily or hourly).

- 7a. **Finding:** The main door sticks. Pulling/pushing may result in slipping and/or falling.
7b. **Recommendation:** Request landlord to repair front door.

- 8a. **Finding:** Wood rot resulting in peeling paint under eaves was evident on the upstairs balcony.
8b. **Recommendation:** Request landlord to repair roof and gutter.

- 9a. **Finding:** The heating system results in a difference of 10 degrees between the basement and first floor and a similar difference between the first and second floors. The top floor is too warm while the basement is too cool. The multi-stage construction of this former private residence has resulted in inadequate air circulation with inadequate thermostat controls.
9b. **Recommendation:** Request landlord to improve heat and air circulation.

- 10a. **Finding:** The second floor bathroom is under re-construction due to mold abatement.
10b. **Recommendation:** Ensure mold problems have been eliminated.

MENTAL HEALTH and PUBLIC HEALTH BUILDINGS – Placerville

Findings/Recommendations

- 11a. **Finding:** The building at 344 Placerville Drive has numerous areas where carpet seams have separated and worn bumpy areas have erupted. Since May 2000 five accidents occurred in various county buildings due to carpet problems.
11b. **Recommendation:** Replace “bumpy/worn” carpet as soon as possible to minimize County liability and prevent injury accidents/lawsuits.

- 12a. **Finding:** The Fire Marshall required inappropriate exit signs removed, and proper fire exits clearly marked. The “Fire Escape Routes” will be clearly posted.
12b. **Recommendation:** Inform employees of the necessity to keep Fire Exits clear. The Fire Marshall should perform unannounced inspections periodically.

- 13a. **Finding:** The building at 2808 Mallard Street is sometimes closed and locked during regular business hours, with no explanation posted on the locked door.
13b. **Recommendation:** Post hours open/closed for each day, when they vary from the regular business hours. This should go into effect immediately.

- 14a. **Finding:** The Mallard Street building is generally well maintained. The kitchen area was cluttered but clean. The office layout, meeting rooms and general traffic flow promote efficient service to clients.
14b. **Commendation:** The Grand Jury commends the staff at 2808 Mallard Lane for their friendly and helpful environment.

SENIOR CENTER – Placerville Spring Street Complex

- 15a. **Finding:** Access to the Spring Street Complex is via a narrow road, Robin Court.
15a. **Recommendation:** Construct a proper encroachment on Robin Court per County specifications.
- 16a. **Finding:** Emergency shut-off valves and electrical sub-panels are poorly marked.
16b. **Recommendation:** Mark emergency shut-off valves and sub-panels.

ANIMAL CONTROL – South Lake Tahoe

- 17a. **Finding:** Architectural drawings have been done to remodel the existing buildings, and add a new building (per GJ Report 2003-2004). The County is in the process of purchasing adjacent land. Needed improvements should be completed by the end of 2005.
17b. **Recommendation:** Complete improvements as soon as possible.

JUVENILE HALL – Placerville / South Lake Tahoe

- 18a. **Finding:** The Placerville Juvenile Hall is well run and functions just under capacity with the opening of the new facility at South Lake Tahoe. The new facility at South Lake Tahoe is clean, modern and well run.
18b. **Commendation:** The Grand Jury commends both staffs for their efficiency.

GROWLERSBERG CONSERVATION CAMP – Georgetown

- 19a. **Finding:** Growlersberg is well run and in good condition, however, the woodworking shop, which offers excellent training to inmates, is not operating due to lack of funds.
19b. **Recommendation:** Make funds available for the woodwork shop.

A response is required by the Board of Supervisors within 90 days. See Table of Contents, “*Notice to Respondents*”.



Front entrance of Mental Health Facility, Third St., South Lake Tahoe.