

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
RESPONSE TO THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY 2012-2013 REPORT  
"LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DETENTION FACILITIES"

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Lompoc Court Holding Facility, Cypress Avenue**

**Finding 1:** *That the existing bus port creates a potential safety hazard for court officials and employees, as well as the public, because in the process of loading and unloading, the detainees can visually observe the vehicles in the parking lot.*

**Response to Finding 1:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.

**Recommendation 1:** *That the existing bus port be modified so that detainees cannot visually observe the parking lot.*

**Response to Recommendation 1:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation.

The Sheriff's Office agrees with this recommendation but does not own this property; it belongs to the State. The Sheriff's Office continues to work with the State of California and the Santa Barbara Superior Court to develop a security screen which will prohibit detainees from viewing the parking lot. Approval and funding of this screen must be granted from the State of California. If approval and funding are granted, the screen will be built and put into place.

**Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street**

**Finding 2a:** *That the holding cells in the basement of the Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility, Figueroa Street, do not have enough cells to house the detainees whose cases are before the courts that day.*

**Response to Finding 2a:** The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.

**Finding 2b:** *That the detainees are handcuffed to railings in the corridors due to the lack of holding cell space.*

**Response to Finding 2b:** The Sheriff's Office partially agrees with the finding.

Due to intermittent lack of holding cell space, detainees are *occasionally* placed on portable chairs and secured to cell doors in the corridors. The Sheriff's Office makes every reasonable attempt to minimize this by decreasing the amount of time a detainee stays in the court holding facility.

**Finding 2c:** *That this overcrowding creates a dangerous environment for both deputies and detainees.*

**Response to Finding 2c:** **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**

**Finding 2d:** *That shackled detainees have to be escorted across Figueroa Street to courtrooms by deputies in full view of the passing public. Such a procession is a potential security and safety hazard.*

**Response to Finding 2d:** **The Sheriff's Office agrees the finding.**

**Recommendation 2:** *That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff support all efforts to address these potential hazardous situations.*

**Response to Recommendation 2:** **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the recommendation.**

The County of Santa Barbara does not own this property; it belongs to the State of California. Currently, the State has a project plan to replace the Figueroa Street Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility. The Sheriff's Office has worked diligently with the State of California in the design phase of this project to ensure the compound meets the Sheriff's Office current and future needs.

Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn this project has been temporarily placed on hold. However, the Sheriff's Office consistently reviews new ways of ensuring these detainees make their respective court appointments while decreasing the impact on the court holding facility.

The Sheriff's Office is working with the State of California, Santa Barbara Superior Courts to perform scheduled transports according to a detainees scheduled court appointment.

Additionally, the Sheriff's Office has taken a collaborative approach to overcrowding at this holding facility. The Sheriff's Office is working with a cooperative group of stakeholders (Judges, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, Public Defender's Office, etc.) to review the use of technological improvements for detainee arraignments. Currently, the use of video conferencing for detainee arraignments is being reviewed and considered.

#### **Santa Maria Court Services Holding Facility, Cook Street**

**Finding 3:** *That the holding cell level lacks cameras.*

**Response to Finding 3:** **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**

**Recommendation 3:** *That the Sheriff fund and install cameras to be placed on the cell level, for the safety of all detainees and deputies.*

**Response to Recommendation 3: The Sheriff's Office partially agrees with the recommendation.**

The County of Santa Barbara does not own this property as this property belongs to the State of California. The Sheriff's Office will continue to work with the State of California to identify potential funding sources to address this security concern. If funds are earmarked for improvements by either the State or the County, additional security cameras will be installed to increase the safety and security of the facility.

**Santa Maria Station**

**Finding 4:** *That the facility is currently open only from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily.*

**Response to Finding 4: The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**

**Recommendation 4a:** *That the Sheriff fund this location to be open and operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.*

**Recommendation 4b:** *That the Sheriff hire and staff this location to allow it to stay open and be operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.*

**Response to Recommendations 4a and 4b: These recommendations will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.**

The Sheriff's Office is committed to operating safe and secure custodial facilities. Budgetary and staffing shortages, along with the implementation of AB109, have negatively impacted the Sheriff's ability to operate the Santa Maria Branch Jail 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A recent staffing analysis supports the Sheriff's position that additional staffing allocations are necessary to meet the current needs and enable continued safe and secure operations of the Main Jail. Until such time that staffing and funding are obtained to meet the obligations of operating all Custody facilities safely and securely, the Sheriff's Office will continue to partially operate the Santa Maria Branch Jail facility.

Respectfully submitted,



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BILL BROWN  
Sheriff – Coroner