



MONO COUNTY
SHERIFF **911**

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Ralph Obenberger
Sheriff/Coroner

MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Robert Weber
Undersheriff

September 23, 2014

Honorable Judge Stan Eller
Presiding Judge Mono County Superior Court
100 Thompson Way
PO Box 1037
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Re: Response to the Mono County 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Eller,

I am writing in response to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report relating to the jail tour, I will respond to each finding and recommendation separately.

Findings and/or Recommendations:

1. 13/14 Finding: The Grand Jury found no changes from 12/13 concerning the condition of the jail and treatment of the prisoners.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

2. 13/14 Finding: The Grand Jury found no changes from 12/13, other than inmate population numbers.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

3. 13/14 Finding: The Grand Jury found that (1) additional staff member was hired with AB109 funding, allowing more voluntary work assignments for inmates.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

4. 13/14 Finding: The Grand Jury found no change from 12/13 Grand Jury visit.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

5. Finding: The Grand Jury found no change from the 12/13 Grand Jury visit. The Grand Jury stated that it is of critical importance to have at least one extra staff member on duty, other than the dispatcher and jailer, during evening shifts.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

6. Finding: The Grand Jury found that dispatch and the computer control system have been completely replaced via AB109 funding.

Recommendation: None Stated

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

7. Finding: The Grand Jury determined the exercise yard has not changed. Some inmates have more outside time due to the expanded work programs, but others have only the state required (3) hours per week, with the women possibly having less than the required amount of (3) hours. There is also a work order (via Public Works) to move the current Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from its current location to a nearby county facility.

Recommendation: Explore additional ways of adding books to the library and add training opportunities using prisoner' skills whenever possible.

Sheriff's Response: I partially agree with finding. Title 15 identifies that inmates have to be given the opportunity to have a minimum of (3) hours per week of yard exercise. Inmates have the right to refuse this opportunity. We track when we offer such opportunities, as well as when inmates accept or refuse these yard calls. The recommendation to add books to the inmate library is in my opinion unnecessary. The current inmate library contains over one thousand books and these books are routinely replaced (using inmate welfare funds). I believe the amount of books available for the actual inmate population we house, which has been fluctuating between 20 and 35, is more than sufficient. We currently use inmates and their specific jobs skills as often as possible while they are on voluntary work assignments. Once the EOC is moved and we convert that space into a classroom setting the inmates will drastically have increased opportunities for life skills training.

Additional 13/14 findings and recommendations:

1. Counseling: One prisoner states that prisoners get very little counseling (15mins per week) to help them learn how to deal with life and avoid future mistakes.

Recommendation: Increase the amount of time for counseling.

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding. We have recently implemented, with the assistance of Mono County Behavior Health, a weekly opportunity for inmates to sit with counselors dealing with life skills, etc. This weekly training session runs for (90) minutes and is open to all inmates.

2. Changes in State Law: The Sheriff spends considerable time on weekly conference calls relating to AB109 issues.

Recommendation: None.

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding.

3. Mono County Supervisors: All departments are experiencing budget cuts and it is important for the new Board of Supervisors understand the effects of AB109, so that the Board can work more collaboratively with the Sheriff.

Recommendation: The new Board of Supervisors should receive a tour of the jail, similar to the one given to the Grand Jury, focusing on the impacts of AB109.

Sheriff's Response: I agree with finding

Respectfully,

Ralph Obenberger
Sheriff / Coroner