

2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury Report

Code Compliance for Economic Development and Detention Facility Inquiry Statement

June 24, 2026

Civil Grand Jury Roster

John Allen, Davis Creek	Chuck Huffman, Tulelake
Marsha Barnes, Foreperson, Alturas	Laurie Keick, Lookout
Moire Donald, Eagleville	Abbey Kingdon, Alturas
Michael Hinton, Cedarville	Brooke Mansfield, Alturas
Karl Huebchen, Alturas	Ron Murdock, Cedarville



**Superior Court of California
County of Modoc**

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RANDALL L. HARR
SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

WENDY J. DIER
PRESIDING JUDGE

BRANDY L. MALCOLM
COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

July 15, 2026

To: 2025-2026 Grand Jury Members

Dear Grand Jury Members:

Please accept my personal appreciation and that of the Modoc Superior Court for an excellent report and job well done!

I would like to also commend Foreperson Marsha Barnes for her dedication and perseverance in leadership, as well as commending the Grand Jury Panel for their collective dedication, diligence and commitment to their duties as jurors.

Those jurors who served a consecutive term are to be recognized for their willingness to serve a second term, and their contribution of their experience to make the mission of the Grand Jury a success for the 2025-2026 term.

Your work product is an impressive and well written document!
Again, thank you for the job well done. Congratulations!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Randall L. Harr", is written over the printed name.

Randall L. Harr
Superior Court Judge

I certify that the Modoc County Grand Jury Final Report complies with Title Four of the California Penal Code and direct the Court Executive Officer to accept and file the final report as a public document.

Randall L. Harr

Randall L. Harr, Superior Court Judge

Date: July 15, 2026



2025-26 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury Report

Letter from the Foreperson

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury got off to a rough start this term. We started in August 2025, a month later than usual. When we started, we had a full jury of eleven as well as multiple alternate jurors. Within our first two days, during our orientation training, we lost our original foreperson. I was asked to step in as foreperson, and I accepted. After orientation we quickly lost all of our alternate jurors. Soon after that we went down to only seven jurors. By early November we were finally able to bolster our ranks back up to ten jurors.

Though we got off to a slow start, we didn't let that stop us. We managed to look into six different inquiries, conduct one investigation, conduct twenty-two total interviews, and write a report. Two of our six inquiries as well as our investigation were based on official citizen complaints. We encourage county citizens to continue submitting official Modoc County Grand Jury Citizen Complaint Forms.

We chose to investigate the one complaint that we thought would affect the most citizens of Modoc County. We are proud of the report we've produced, believing that it has the potential to result in positive change for the county.

Throughout our term, the civil grand jury discovered that our public servants are highly capable individuals serving in difficult roles constrained by lack of resources, be it financial, staffing or other factors. Many of them are even serving in multiple roles. Tight budgets and understaffing can lead to problems. Losing critical staff with limited or no redundancy is a huge problem, leading to the loss of critical institutional knowledge. As the saying goes, "a problem is not a problem until it is, and then it's usually a BIG problem."

I hope that you, the readers of this report, find this report beneficial and educational. Likewise, I hope the county employees and public servants understand our sense of gratitude for all their fine work.

If you were one of the county citizens to receive a civil grand jury questionnaire from the superior court, I encourage you to fill it out and submit it. Serving on the civil grand jury can be a very rewarding, educational, and fun experience. To be clear, it has nothing to do with crime or criminal investigations. This is a unique jury experience where you learn the inner workings of your county.

Thank you to the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jurors and our community public servants.

Sincerely,



Marsha Barnes, Foreperson

2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury

2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury Report

CODE COMPLIANCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

June 24, 2026

SUMMARY

As the 2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury, we want to begin by sharing our gratitude for the level of department dedication across the county, especially considering that most are working with limited resources.

The 2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury initiated this investigation following a citizen complaint regarding lax code enforcement and squatter concerns in a small unincorporated area of the county. Upon further inquiry, the Grand Jury determined that these issues are not isolated but are pervasive throughout Modoc County, particularly in the unincorporated communities of Newell, Lookout, New Pine Creek, and California Pines (Cal Pines).

The investigation revealed that Modoc County's code enforcement system is complaint-driven, fragmented across multiple agencies, and severely constrained by limited staffing and funding. With only approximately 0.5 full-time equivalent staff dedicated to code enforcement, employees are stretched thin, often holding multiple roles such as animal control or environmental health duties. Consequently, the county lacks a centralized authority to prioritize expenditures or meet eligibility requirements for some state and federal grants.

The grand jury found that the current reactive model fails to address the root causes of blight in areas with weak real estate markets and high vacancy rates. Residents expressed fear of retaliation and a lack of familiarity with the complaint process, leading to under-reporting. Furthermore, the absence of a unified, publicly accessible explanation of the enforcement workflow has fostered distrust and a perception that the county has abandoned unincorporated areas to decay.

While the City of Alturas has successfully implemented a proactive rental inspection program, the county has not adopted a similar model for unincorporated jurisdictions. Additionally, the county currently does not participate in the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

vehicle abatement program, missing a critical opportunity to address the significant issue of abandoned vehicles without risking general fund exposure.

To address these systemic shortcomings, the grand jury recommends a shift toward proactive code compliance. Key recommendations include:

- Creating a Standing Steering Committee on Code Compliance by October 1, 2026, to coordinate inter-departmental efforts and develop a prioritization matrix.
- Conducting a feasibility study on the DMV Vehicle Abatement Program by February 1, 2027, to determine the viability of removing abandoned vehicles without general fund risk.
- Establishing a Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) as a pilot program by April 1, 2027, to provide rural communities with a structured voice in governance.
- Gauging public interest in the establishment of a small annual parcel assessment tax specifically for code compliance by July 1, 2027.
- Adopting a Strategic Code Compliance Plan by July 1, 2027, modeled after the City of Alturas' program, to transition from reactive complaints to proactive blight reduction.

These measures aim to transform code enforcement from a fragmented, under-resourced reaction into a strategic, collaborative tool for neighborhood stabilization, public safety, and economic revitalization in Modoc County's unincorporated areas.

BACKGROUND

This investigation, which sought to address the effectiveness of code enforcement in unincorporated areas of Modoc County, California, began as a complaint brought to the Grand Jury by a citizen regarding alleged lax code enforcement and squatter concerns from one small unincorporated area in the county. As the Grand Jury looked further into the issue, we realized that the problem was not an isolated case but was actually pervasive throughout Modoc County. Our investigation discovered that the top four unincorporated communities within Modoc County that are dealing with unaddressed code infractions are Newell, Lookout, New Pine Creek, and Cal Pines.

Code enforcement is not only a regulatory requirement, but when done effectively, is a way to ensure that communities and land throughout Modoc County are not only free of blight and decay but rather are safe and clean places for people to live. A robust body of literature exists to support the link between effective code enforcement and safe, livable, and clean communities. As an example, an article by the Center for Community Progress published in 2024, entitled *Reevaluating Code Enforcement: A New Approach to Addressing Problem Properties*, asserted that “code enforcement is one of a government’s most important tools to stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods.”

Numerous other studies have examined the possible causes of blight and decay in communities. One particular investigation that may be relevant to conditions in the unincorporated areas of Modoc County was presented by social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling in 1982, as the Broken Window Theory. According to their research, properties in a community that were blighted, degraded, or abandoned invited squatters and minor criminals to take refuge, thereby further diminishing the safety and livability of the community. Their research further asserts that regardless of whether the community was affluent or poverty-stricken, a single broken window would soon lead to many more windows being broken, with increased disorder creating fear among residents. The consequences of this situation are further withdrawal by citizens from their community and decreased participation in informal social control.

While it is beyond the scope of this investigation for the grand jury to provide firm solutions to these ongoing problems in unincorporated communities in Modoc County, it does suggest to the Board of Supervisors possible mitigative measures whereby these issues may be addressed more effectively going forward.

METHODOLOGY

The 2025-26 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury interviewed ten county employees and citizens in the process of this investigation. Sources we referenced include multiple research documents, California state legislation, county public documents, articles, and other regional counties’ grand jury reports. Notable sources are listed in the Bibliography of this report.

DISCUSSION

The Condition of Code Enforcement in Modoc County's Unincorporated Areas

Code enforcement serves as one of the local government's most important tools to stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods and unincorporated areas. According to the Center for Community Progress 2024 report [2], effective code enforcement protects public health and safety, improves land values, increases sense of community, and increases the likelihood of economic development. However, our investigation found that Modoc County's approach to code enforcement in unincorporated areas faces significant structural and resource challenges that limit its effectiveness.

Alturas is the only incorporated area in the entire County of Modoc. Thus, everywhere else and all other citizens fall under the county government's jurisdiction. The top four unincorporated communities in the county dealing with the issue of code compliance violations are: Lookout, Newell, New Pine Creek, and Cal Pines. These areas face compounding challenges including weak real estate markets, high vacancy rates, and limited county resources.

Complaint-Driven Enforcement Limits Community Stabilization

Our investigation revealed that code enforcement in the county operates on a complaint-driven model. According to interviews with code enforcement personnel, the county's online code complaint portal is managed by the county's Environmental Health Department, which organizes complaints and forwards them to appropriate parties or agencies. While the portal maintains confidentiality for complainants, it does not accept anonymous entries, which may contribute to residents' reluctance to report violations.

Residents in unincorporated areas expressed fear of reporting and unfamiliarity with the complaint process. Our initial investigation indicated resistance and reluctance to formalizing complaints, with only one individual pursuing a formal complaint, while many other residents talked about it. Furthermore, the county reporting mechanism does not alert county supervisors to complaints, and there is no designated person in unincorporated areas to report initial concerns to and coordinate with the public agencies that can respond.

This complaint-driven approach has limitations. Complaint-driven inspection and enforcement is incapable of leading to broader community stabilization [2]. In neighborhoods with high

levels of property deterioration and vacancy, the fundamental underlying challenge is economics. Weak real estate markets dissuade investment and can persuade both financially insecure households and landlords who are extractive or exploitative (a.k.a. slumlords) to defer maintenance. On its own, traditional code enforcement can only ever address one parcel at a time.

Additionally, there is a public expectation that when a code enforcement officer responds to a complaint, they will address other violations on the property. In order to preclude accusations of harassment, officers can only address and respond to the direct issue reported in the complaint. This limitation contributes to resident frustration and the perception that the county has abandoned unincorporated areas.

Fragmented Authority and Insufficient Resources

Authority for code enforcement in Modoc County is dispersed among multiple agencies, leaving no single department responsible for enforcement outcomes. Code enforcement responsibilities are distributed across the Sheriff's Department, Environmental Health, Building and Safety, and many other county departments. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors addressed code enforcement head-on with the development of an ad hoc committee to focus on it, but ad hoc committees are temporary. This was a good start, but a standing committee is needed to address this issue on an ongoing basis. Code compliance is a long-term issue, not a short term one.

The county faces significant staffing and funding constraints. County officials stated that funds to enforce code are insufficient, and there is inadequate code enforcement dedicated staff—approximately half of a full-time employee—in comparison to other California counties. Employees who work on code enforcement have multiple other duties. For example, the county code enforcement officer under the Sheriff's Department is also 50% animal control, and the Environmental Health Department covers 21 other programs in addition to code enforcement.

Currently, there is no way to prioritize code enforcement expenditures. Code enforcement actions are prioritized by public safety first, and the number of citizens affected by the issue. However, without a formal prioritization framework, resources may not be allocated to the properties causing the most harm to communities.

Weak Real Estate Markets and Vacant Properties

Modoc County has a historically weak real estate market that exacerbates code enforcement challenges. A weak real estate market, also called a buyer's market, is characterized by low transaction volume, falling home prices, and excess inventory where sellers outnumber buyers. It typically features reduced demand, longer days on market, and high buyer hesitation due to high interest rates or economic uncertainty. Currently, the national real estate market is weak as well. Neighborhoods with stagnant or weak real estate markets, households with limited resources, and high vacancy rates are the places where the limitations of traditional code enforcement become most evident [2].

Absentee landowners present an easy way for squatters to move in. Cal Pines, Newell, Lookout, and New Pine Creek are problem areas for squatter issues due to absentee landowners. The eviction process must be initiated by the landowner under the Civil Code, and adjacent property owners have no power to evict squatters. This creates a situation where properties can remain in violation for extended periods without effective intervention.

Weak real estate markets with abandoned properties of high visibility, such as those in Modoc County's unincorporated areas, are qualified candidates for proactive code compliance programs to reverse the trend of community decay.

The City of Alturas has implemented a Rental Housing Inspection Program that involves a mandatory annual fee for each unit, with established penalty fees if units fail inspection. The city expects to get a return on the investment in its Rental Housing Inspection Program within five years. This is a proactive approach to code compliance, effectively cleaning up that community, which the grand jury recommends the county evaluate.

Abandoned Vehicles and the DMV Abatement Program

Abandoned vehicles represent the biggest issue in code enforcement in Modoc County. There are no funds for a vehicle abatement program in the county, and the overabundance of abandoned nonfunctional vehicles reduces property values in communities. Abandoned vehicles cause issues for snowplows, creating additional public safety and road maintenance concerns.

California State Vehicle Code 22710 and 9250.7 are some mechanisms for local governments to obtain funding for the abatement of abandoned vehicles. Section 22710 permits the county and incorporated cities governing the majority of the county's population to create an abandoned vehicle abatement authority (AVAA), which can in turn imposes a \$1 charge to the cost of registering vehicles in the county—the charge being specifically only for the purposes of vehicle abatement. Should an AVAA be created, Section 9250.7 provides that the state will provide an additional \$2 per commercial vehicle registration within the county to the AVAA for purposes of abatement should some other prerequisites be fulfilled.

Modoc County is currently not participating in the state DMV vehicle abatement program offered by California. According to our research, there is no risk to the Modoc County General Fund created by participating in the DMV vehicle abatement program provided by the state of California. The program is a viable option for counties seeking to address abandoned vehicle issues without general fund exposure.

Municipal Advisory Councils and Rural Representation

Other counties in California have Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs), which give residents of unincorporated areas a voice with their Board of Supervisors and help manage code compliance in unincorporated areas. MACs are formed pursuant to Government Code § 31010, which provides that "the board of supervisors of any county may by resolution establish and provide funds for the operation of a municipal advisory council for any unincorporated area in the county to advise the board on such matters which relate to that area as may be designated by the board concerning services which are or may be provided to the area by the county or other local governmental agencies, including but not limited to advice on matters of public health, safety, welfare, public works, and planning." Under current county codes modeled on this statute, MAC members must be residents and registered voters of the area served, are appointed by the Board of Supervisors following a recommendation from the district Supervisor, and serve terms of up to four years.

MACs are strictly advisory bodies; they have no authority to disburse funds, sign contracts, or direct County operations, but they may study problems, make recommendations to the Board in the form of resolutions or motions, and engage with community members. MACs are subject

to the Brown Act and must conduct meetings with posted agendas, public comment periods, and transparent voting procedures. For Modoc County, a MAC could provide ongoing representation and oversight for code enforcement in unincorporated areas, ensuring that resident concerns are communicated to the Board of Supervisors and that code enforcement priorities reflect community needs.

Strategic Code Compliance as an Alternative Approach

A strategic code compliance approach to vacant properties focuses on quickly reducing the harm these properties cause, recouping public expenses to maintain these properties, and, where necessary, compelling the transfer of these properties to new, more responsible ownership.

The City of Alturas is already taking a proactive approach through its rental improvement program. However, the county government has not yet adopted a similar proactive model for unincorporated areas. A strategic approach would require the county to use parcel, market, and social data to inform proactive actions and strategic allocation of resources, rather than relying solely on complaints to identify violations.

Property owners facing delinquent property tax issues are encouraged to contact the Tax Collector's Office regarding programs that may be available to them so that properties do not become delinquent or face lien sales.

Conclusion

The limitations of traditional code enforcement in Modoc County are evident in the fragmented authority structure, insufficient staffing and funding, and complaint-driven enforcement model. These challenges are compounded by weak real estate markets, high vacancy rates, and the presence of absentee landowners in problem areas. The county's non-participation in the state DMV vehicle abatement program represents a missed opportunity to address abandoned vehicles without general fund exposure.

The jury acknowledges that addressing insufficient funding can be difficult. While grant programs offer a potential avenue for acquiring necessary assets, they are inherently finite and often require matching funds from the county, which may strain the general fund.

Consequently, a more sustainable funding mechanism may be the establishment of a small annual parcel assessment tax dedicated specifically to a Clean-Up and Abatement Fund. This approach would generate reliable, dedicated revenue to support proactive code compliance efforts, thereby reducing the fiscal risk associated with relying solely on fluctuating grant dollars or general fund allocations.

A shift toward strategic code compliance, supported by Municipal Advisory Councils for unincorporated areas, and participation in state abatement programs, could provide a more effective framework for addressing code compliance challenges in Modoc County. Such an approach would help make our communities cleaner, safer, healthier, and overall more desirable places to live.

FINDINGS

- F1. Residents in unincorporated communities are hesitant to report code violations due to a lack of familiarity with the complaint process and a perception that reports will not result in action.
- F2. Interaction between residents of unincorporated areas and county officials regarding code enforcement is largely reactive, occurring only after a formal complaint is filed, rather than through a proactive process. This style of interaction has left residents of unincorporated areas unsatisfied with the current way code enforcement is approached.
- F3. The absence of a unified, publicly accessible explanation of the code enforcement workflow, coupled with a lack of visibility into how complaints are triaged, investigated, and resolved, has fostered public distrust and created a perception among residents that the county has abandoned unincorporated areas to blight and safety hazards.
- F4. Authority for code enforcement is fragmented across multiple agencies (Environmental Health, Sheriff's Department, Building and Safety, etc.), resulting in no single department holding clear accountability for enforcement outcomes. The absence of a centralized permanent authority with clear oversight responsibility for code enforcement prevents Modoc County from meeting eligibility requirements for various state and federal grant

programs, thereby limiting access to critical funding needed to expand enforcement capacity and improve the conditions of unincorporated communities.

- F5. The county currently lacks a risk-based prioritization framework for code enforcement expenditures, leading to inefficient allocation of limited resources and an inability to target high-risk properties effectively.
- F6. Participation in the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) vehicle abatement program poses no financial risk to the Modoc County General Fund, and yet the county has not fully leveraged this state-provided program for removing abandoned vehicles.
- F7. County employees responsible for code enforcement have met their statutory and procedural obligations within the existing complaint-driven system despite operating with limited staffing and funding resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Modoc County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors create a Standing Steering Committee on Code Compliance to coordinate inter-departmental efforts by October 1, 2026. The Committee shall be tasked with developing a prioritization matrix and identifying grant opportunities. It is recommended that the committee include representatives from Environmental Health, the Sheriff's Department, Building and Safety, Planning Department, Public Health, Department of Agriculture, County Administrator's Office, and Board of Supervisors.
- R2. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors direct the relevant departments to conduct a feasibility study on the California DMV Vehicle Abatement Program and similar state grant opportunities. A report detailing the findings, potential cost savings, and a recommendation on adoption or a detailed explanation of infeasibility, to be presented at a public meeting or released as a public report by February 1, 2027.
- R3. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors initiate outreach to residents of unincorporated areas to gauge interest in and facilitate the formation of a Municipal Advisory Council as a

pilot program in at least one unincorporated community, by April 1, 2027, to provide a structured voice for rural communities in code compliance.

R4. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors review county revenue and gauge public interest in the establishment of a small annual parcel assessment tax specifically for code compliance by July 1, 2027. If there is public interest, the county should put this special tax on the ballot of the following general election.

R5. The Modoc County Board of Supervisors adopt a Strategic Code Compliance Plan tailored to the county's fiscal constraints by July 1, 2027, and present the plan to the public via a formal report or public hearing. The plan will include a review of the City of Alturas Rental Housing Inspection Program as a model, and establish a proactive, fiscally sustainable approach to blight reduction.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05:

From the following governing boards within 90 days:

- **Modoc County Board of Supervisors:** Respond to Findings F3, F4, F5, F6, and F7 and Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5.

INVITED RESPONSES

Responses are invited from the following within 90 days:

- **Environmental Health Department:** Respond to Findings F1, F2, and F7 and Recommendations R1 and R5.
- **Sheriff's Department Code Enforcement Division:** Respond to Findings F1, F2, and F7 and Recommendations R1 and R5.
- **County Administrator's Office:** Respond to Findings F4 and F6 and Recommendations R2 and R4.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography is not comprehensive. These sources are just some of the many sources we used throughout our investigations.

1. *Broken Windows Theory*, reviewed by Psychology Today Staff
(www.psychologytoday.com)
2. Center for Community Progress *Reevaluating Code Enforcement: A New Approach to Addressing Problem Properties*, Washington DC: Center for Community Progress, 2024,
(www.communityprogress.org/code-enforcement-report)
3. California Environmental Protection Agency *Environmental Enforcement and Training Grants* (<https://calepa.ca.gov/enforcement/grants-scholarships-environmental-enforcement/>)
4. California State Legislation: AB 2228: This bill establishes the Code Enforcement Officers Standard Act, which requires the Board of Directors of the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers, a public benefits corporation, to develop and maintain standards for the designation of Certified Code Enforcement Officers. While the legislation does not require all code enforcement officers to have the certification, it does create a new class of “Certified Code Enforcement Officers.”
5. *Code Compliance: Difficulties and Ideas for Small Towns*, Western Planner, 2017 by Kyle Slaughter, Salt Lake City, Utah
6. *Code Enforcement: Challenges and Opportunities 2021-2022* Siskiyou County Civil Grand Jury Report
7. Modoc County Code Enforcement Complaints Portal
(<https://modoccountycode.portal.iworq.net/portalhome/modoccountycode>)
8. Modoc County Website (<https://www.co.modoc.ca.us/>)
9. *Municipal Advisory Councils* by California Unincorporated
(<https://www.caunincorporated.com/municipal-advisory-councils>)
10. *Municipal Advisory Councils: What is a MAC? Report* by the 2023-2024 Placer County Civil Grand Jury
11. *Revitalizing Communities: Code Enforcement Grants* by Katherine Zobre at City Detect, 2023 (<https://www.citydetect.com/blog/revitalizing-communities-code-enforcement-grants>)

12. *Top 5 Mistakes Cities Make in Code Enforcement (and How to Avoid Them)*, Civica Law, by Maria Molina Barrera
13. *Why “Broken Windows” Policing Is Still A Good Idea* by Anthony A. Braga, published in The [PhiladelphiaCitizen.org](https://www.philadelphiacitizen.org) Anthony A. Braga is the Jerry Lee Professor of Criminology and Director of the Crime and Justice Policy Lab at the University of Pennsylvania

APPENDIX A

Photos of blight and vehicle abandonment across unincorporated areas of Modoc County:

Figures 1 and 2. Photos taken in California Pines.



Figures 3, 4, and 5. Photos taken in Lookout.





Figures 6 and 7. Photos taken in New Pine Creek.



Figures 8, 9, and 10. Photos taken in Newell.



APPENDIX B

Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs) – Overview and Authorities

Legal Authority

- Government Code § 31010: Authorizes the Board of Supervisors to establish MACs for unincorporated areas by resolution.
- Government Code § 31000.1: Provides authority for Advisory Committees to study problems of general or special interest.
- Brown Act (Cal. Gov. Code §§ 54950 et seq.): Governs open meeting requirements for MACs.

Formation Process

- Board Resolution Required: The Board of Supervisors must pass a resolution to establish a MAC and provide operational funding.
- Scope Designation: The resolution specifies the matters the MAC will advise on (e.g., public health, safety, welfare, public works, planning).
- Appointment Process:
 - Candidates submit applications to the district Supervisor.
 - The district Supervisor recommends candidates to the full Board.
 - Full Board approves appointments by majority vote of a quorum.
- Membership Requirements: Members must be residents and registered voters of the unincorporated area served. Property ownership is not required unless specified in the resolution.

MAC Authorities and Responsibilities

- Advisory Function: Provide advice to the Board of Supervisors on designated matters relating to the unincorporated area.
- Problem Study: Act as a citizen body to study problems of general or special interest to the Board.
- Recommendations: Submit recommendations in the form of resolutions or motions to the district Supervisor.
- Community Engagement: Attend community meetings to gather input (cannot speak for the Board or oppose Board policies).
- Internal Governance: Elect officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary) and conduct meetings per *Robert's Rules of Order*.

MAC Limitations

- **No Executive Power:** Cannot disburse funds, sign contracts, authorize payments, or direct County operations.
- **No Management Role:** Cannot supervise or manage any government agency or department.
- **No Binding Decisions:** Recommendations are wholly advisory; the Board is not required to follow them.
- **No Individual Authority:** Individual members cannot speak for the MAC or Board unless formally authorized.

Operational Requirements

- **Meeting Frequency:** Minimum of one meeting per year unless otherwise specified.
- **Brown Act Compliance:**
 - Post agendas 72 hours in advance.
 - Allow public comment on agenda items.
 - Conduct all votes in public
 - Maintain accessible meeting records.
- **Term Limits:** Members serve up to four-year terms; maximum of three consecutive terms permitted.
- **Dissolution:** MAC dissolves when the district Supervisor's term ends or upon redistricting, unless re-established by new Board resolution.

APPENDIX C

Standing Committee versus Ad Hoc Committee

Standing committees are permanent, long-term bodies handling ongoing matters, while ad hoc committees are temporary, specialized groups created to complete a specific, one-time project. Standing committees hold continuous responsibility, whereas ad hoc committees disband immediately upon completing their assigned task

Strategic Code Compliance Guidance

Strategic code compliance literature recommends an approach called "Fix it Up, Pay it Up, Give it Up."

- Fix it Up means giving owners notice of the problem and the chance to achieve compliance. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to provide a willing but resource-limited owner with the support needed to bring the property into compliance.
- Pay it Up means that if an owner is unresponsive to violation notices and unwilling to fix the property, the local government will take responsibility for reducing the harm caused by the property. The local government may quickly secure, maintain, and, where necessary, demolish the property, and then place a priority lien against the property for the full costs of these activities.
- Give it Up means, as a last resort, if the owner refuses to reimburse the local government for the tax dollars used to reduce the harm caused by the property, the local government will take action to compel the transfer of the vacant, harmful property to new ownership, which may include temporary public stewardship.

2025-2026 Modoc County Civil Grand Jury Report

DETENTION FACILITY INQUIRY STATEMENT

June 24, 2026

OVERVIEW

Penal Code section 919(b) obligates the grand jury to “inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.” In 2022, the California Attorney General issued an opinion (No. 18-103) stating the term “public prisons” includes “local detention facilities,” and that a county or city jail is a typical example of such a local detention facility.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about how the Modoc County Grand Jury fulfilled this duty.

While Penal Code section 919(b) requires this inquiry, it does not require the grand jury to conduct an investigation or to write a report about local detention facilities. In fact, a report cannot be written based solely upon an inquiry. To write a report, a full investigation is required and all the facts in the report must be verified. (See Penal Code section 939.9.)

LOCAL DETENTION FACILITIES WITHIN MODOC COUNTY

There is one local detention facility within Modoc County, which is operated by the county. The grand jury fulfilled its duty to inquire into this facility through a variety of methods.

- Modoc County Jail: On December 3, 2025, grand jurors were given an overview and tour of the facility by Sheriff’s Department staff. In 2026, the grand jury interviewed Sheriff’s Department staff regarding the facility as well as a county employee.

CONCLUSION

The grand jury’s legal obligation to inquire into the condition and management of each local detention facility within the county was satisfied by touring the jail and conducting three interviews.



MODOC COUNTY GRAND JURY CITIZENS COMPLAINT FORM

PO Box 78, Alturas, CA 96101

Date: _____

Your name: _____

Home Address: _____ Zip: _____

Work Address: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #:(Home) _____ (Work) _____

**1. PERSON(S), OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT, OR AGENCY ABOUT WHOM (WHICH)
YOU ARE MAKING THE COMPLAINT:**

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____

Director of Agency, if applicable: _____

**2. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROBLEM (including dates of events and names of persons,
officials, department, and agencies involved. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.)**

**3. PLEASE LIST THE PERSONS, OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, OTHER
GRAND JURIES OR MEDIA WHOM YOU HAVE CONTACTED ABOUT THIS
PROBLEM:**

ENTITY	ADDRESS	APPROXIMATE DATE OF CONTACT
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. WHO DO YOU THINK THE GRAND JURY SHOULD CONTACT ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE #:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. REASON TO CONTACT THE ABOVE: _____

6. WHAT RESULT DO YOU WANT FROM THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION?

PLEASE ATTACH ANY CORRESPONDENCE OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION THAT WOULD BE PERTINENT TO THIS COMPLAINT.

Among the many powers and responsibilities of the Grand Jury is the investigation of citizen complaints to assure that all branches of County government are being administered efficiently, honestly and in the best interests of its citizens.

All Complaints submitted to the grand jury will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Signature of Complainant

Date