

**2023 – 2024
YUBA COUNTY
GRAND JURY
REPORT**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Yuba County Civil Grand Jury5

History of the Grand Jury6

REPORTS2

Is Yuba County Prepared to Combat Potential Flooding?4

Staffing Losses Affect Operations Yuba County Jail Report.....9

Yuba County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit Keeping Yuba County Safe.....14

Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer – Models of Excellence20

The Future of Marysville Joint Unified School District Students24

Yuba County's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic30

Lighting the Streets of Marysville.....35

Yuba County 2023-2024 Grand Jury Previous Investigations Grid41

The Honorable Stephen Berrier Supervising
Judge of the Grand Jury Superior Court of
the State of California County of Yuba
215 Fifth Street
Marysville, CA 95901

Dear Judge Berrier:

On behalf of the entire 2023-2024 Yuba County Grand Jury and in accordance with the provision of Penal Code 933(a), I respectfully submit our Final Report compiled through this year of our service.

This Grand Jury consisted of 14 members from various backgrounds and locations within the county, who performed their tasks with professionalism and diligence. I have enjoyed serving as Foreperson of our Grand Jury. All members of this Grand Jury have toiled countless hours in the production of this report. I would personally like to commend each and every extraordinary juror for their tireless efforts performing their tasks with dedication and integrity.

All Grand Jury complaints received were given thorough attention and, when necessary, investigated in a professional manner. The jurors were divided into six committees. These committees were: County and Special District, Health and Human Services, Court and Law, Cities, and Editorial. All jurors served on multiple committees.

Additionally, the Grand Jury and I would like to extend our gratitude to you as judicial administrator with the Superior Court.

We would also like to extend our personal thanks to County Counsel, Ms. Tahmina Morrow; Ms. Mary Pasillas, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and Ms. Robyn Hauck, Jury Commissioner. Without their assistance, advice and expertise, this year would have been challenging.

Lastly, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the officials and staff of the numerous Cities, County and Agency offices for their cooperation.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your faith in the 2023-2024 Grand Jury members and me as its Foreperson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. Adams".

Wesley Adams

2023 – 2024
Yuba County Civil Grand Jury

Wesley Adams, Foreperson	Oregon House
Aaron Rose, Foreperson, Pro Tem	Browns Valley
Pamela Morgan, Secretary	Oregon House
Sondra Mallow, Treasurer	Marysville
Devin Lafayette, Librarian	Forbestown
Christine Beerman, Technical Advisor	Browns Valley
Roland D’Arcy, Sergeant-at-Arms	Browns Valley
Laura Jones	Marysville
William Robinson	Plumas Lake
Mary Jane Matthews	Marysville
Susan Williams	Marysville
Christopher Poole	Olivehurst
Kuldip Atwal	Olivehurst
Melinda Vue	Olivehurst

We thank those members who were part of the process but were unable to complete their year of service.

2023-2024 Yuba County Grand Jury

History of the Grand Jury





Before American Development

Some historians believe that the earliest versions of the grand jury existed in Athens, where the Greeks used citizen groups to develop accusations. Others find traces of the concept in all the Teutonic peoples, including early Anglo-Saxons. For example, the concept was employed in the early Scandinavian countries. Evidence also exists that the early French developed the "King's Audit" involving citizens who were sworn and required to provide fiscal information related to the operation of the kingdom.

However, most commentators believe that the grand jury arose as an institution in England. In the first millennium, English individuals prosecuted criminals, with the king personally involved in the system. Under the Doom Law of Anglo-Saxon King Aethelred (AD 980-1016), a dozen landowners were appointed to investigate alleged crimes. In 1166, King Henry II established a system of local "informers" (twelve men from every one hundred) to identify those who were "suspected of" various crimes. If the suspects survived their "trials by ordeal," they paid fines to the King. However, the informers were fined if they failed to indict any suspect or even enough suspects. After 1188, they became tax collectors as well, and after the reign of Henry III, they were charged with "looking into the condition and maintenance of public works".

The Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1215, did not mention the grand jury specifically but did establish various procedures to ensure fairness in the dispensation of justice. Thereafter, until the mid-1300s, the 12-men juries served both to present indictments and to rule on the validity of charges. During Edward III's reign, from 1312- 1377, the 12 individuals were replaced by 24 knights, called "le grande inquest," and the 12 became a "petit jury" responsible only for declaring innocent or guilty verdicts.

Ultimately, in the 1600s, the English grand jury developed as a process to determine whether there was probable cause to believe that an accused individual was guilty of a crime. Grand juries reached their English pinnacle of citizen protectors in 1681 when they refused to indict enemies of King Charles II for alleged crimes. English laws establishing grand juries were repealed in 1933.

Early American Development

The use of juries was limited in early colonial history. In the New Haven colony, religious beliefs resulted in the residents eliminating trial by jury because there was no reference to juries in the laws of Moses. However, procedures similar to grand juries were used to hear criminal charges of larceny (Boston, 1644), holding a disorderly meeting (Plymouth, 1651), and witchcraft (Pennsylvania, 1683.) In the early 1600s, colonial representatives of the English monarchs made laws and prosecuted violators. The first grand juries recommended civil charges against those crown agents, thus establishing themselves as representatives of the governed, similar to grand juries today.

The first grand juries also investigated government misconduct or neglect. For example, the first colonial grand jury, established in Massachusetts in 1635, "presented" town officials for neglecting to repair stocks, and considered cases of murder, robbery and spousal abuse.

Other early grand juries performed a variety of administrative functions, including audits of county funds (New Jersey), inspections of public buildings (Carolinas), and review of taxes and public works (Virginia). Virginia grand juries also investigated whether each family planted two acres of corn per person. In the Colonies, grand juries were considering criminal accusations and investigating government officials and activities, but with a populist view. Grand jurors included popular leaders such as Paul Revere and John Hancock's brother. These grand juries played a critical role in the pre-Revolutionary period. Three grand juries refused to indict John Peter

Zenger, whose newspaper criticized the royal governor's actions in New York (he ultimately was prosecuted by the provincial attorney, defended by Alexander Hamilton, and acquitted). Grand juries also denounced arbitrary royal intrusions on citizens' rights, refused to indict the leaders against the Stamp Act of 1765, and refused to bring libel charges against the editors of the Boston Gazette in 1766.

After the Revolutionary War ended, the new federal constitution did not include a grand jury. Early American leaders such as John Hancock and James Madison objected. Thereafter, the grand jury was included in the Bill of Rights, as part of the Fifth Amendment, which states, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger..."

From then until today, the federal grand jury remains an integral part of the justice system, used by federal prosecutors for a variety of potential crimes. In 1801, a federal grand jury indicted Colonel Aaron Burr for treason. Most recently, federal grand juries considered allegations related to the Oklahoma City and New York Trade Center bombings, President Clinton's conduct both before and during his term of office, and the claims of wrongdoing by former California Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush and some associates.

Adaptation by the States

As the various states were admitted to the Union and adopted their legal and operating procedures, almost all initially included some reliance on grand juries for review of criminal indictments and/or inquiries into government activities. Some states' grand juries were very active in administrative affairs, even recommending new laws. Others carried out investigations of government officials; one Tennessee grand jury indicted the entire state court of appeals and another opposed a judge's reappointment on the grounds of "mental imbecility."

Throughout this state-by-state development, the underlying concept remained the same: ordinary citizens, neighbors, and others on grand juries were a necessary part of government to ensure that public prosecutors were not swayed by personal or political prejudices, and that government officials efficiently and effectively performed their jobs.

Since the mid-1800s, a number of reformers criticized grand juries as ineffective or out-of-date because they were slow, lacked expertise, and on other grounds. Others criticized the "star chamber" atmosphere of secret hearings without customary due process rights. However, these complaints were offset by effective grand jury investigations, including those of the Boss Tweed ring in New York City (1871) and racketeering charges brought by a grand jury assisted by Thomas Dewey in the 1930s. Since the nineteenth century, various minor and major changes have been made in grand jury selection, procedures, and qualifications, often resulting in fairer and more efficient jury operations.

Today, all states except Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, may use grand juries to indict and begin criminal trials. 23 states and the District of Columbia require that grand jury indictments be used for certain more serious crimes. California and 24 other states make use of grand jury indictments optional. All states and the District of Columbia use grand juries for investigative purposes.

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REPORTS

- 1. Is Yuba County Prepared to Combat Potential Flooding?**
- 2. Staffing Losses Affect Operations – Yuba County Jail**
- 3. Yuba County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit - Keeping Yuba County Safe**
- 4. Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer – Models of Excellence**
- 5. The Future of Marysville Joint Unified School District Students**
- 6. Yuba County's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**
- 7. Lighting the Streets of Marysville**

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Is Yuba County Prepared to Combat Potential Flooding?



SUMMARY

Yuba County is prone to floods and had floods as recently as 1986 and 1997. The scope of this investigation is to review the emergency plan that may include preparedness based upon:

- a) Lessons learned from previous floods; and
- b) Concern of the population growth near previously inundated areas.

The adjoining areas of Yuba River, Feather River, and Bear River levees have a varying topography unknown to the public. The evacuation of the public from those areas during an emergency without a specific evacuation plan can result in human loss and congestion of business and main traffic arteries.

BACKGROUND

On February 20, 1986, a levee break occurred on the south bank of the Yuba River, south of Marysville, east of the Highway 70 Bridge, and west of the railroad tracks. The breach inundated the towns of Linda and Olivehurst, flooding more than 4,000 homes and businesses, displacing more than 26,000 residents, and causing over \$400 million in damages.¹

On January 2, 1997, a levee break occurred in the Arboga area on the east bank of the Feather River approximately 8 miles downstream from the confluence of Yuba and Feather Rivers. The flood water resulted in the loss of three lives, destroyed roughly 1,000 homes, with damage estimated at \$1.8 billion.² The 1997 flood was the largest in Northern California's history and is considered a 100-year flood event.³

Since the 1997 flood, Yuba Water Agency, in partnership with Yuba County, Local Reclamation Districts, the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority (TRLIA), the California Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others, spearheaded improvements that resulted in Yuba County now having some of the most modern levees in the state. These improvements include:⁴

- Feather River and Bear River setback levees,
- Marysville Ring Levee,
- Implementing Forecast-Coordinated Operations at Lake Oroville and New Bullard Bar Reservoir, and
- Partnering with leading researchers to better understand flood-causing storms like atmospheric rivers.

METHODOLOGY

This investigation was conducted pursuant to California Penal Code Section 925, which states in part: "investigations may be conducted on some selective basis each year." The investigation of the Office of Emergency Services' (OES) Emergency Plan (EP) was selected as it has not been updated since August 2017. The Yuba County 2023-2024 Grand Jury has not received any citizen's complaint regarding any aspect of the Office of Emergency Service.

¹ <http://appeal-democrat.com/1986-yuba-flood-disaster-was-call-for-levee-renovation/article>

² <http://yuba.water.org/379/1997-NewYears-Flood>

³ <http://yuba.water.org/379/1997-NewYears-Flood>

⁴ <http://yuba.water.org/379/1997-NewYears-Flood>

This investigation was conducted by no less than two (2) members of the Yuba County Grand Jury pursuant to California Penal Code 916. Interviews were conducted with key personnel from four Yuba County agencies, as noted below in the Discussion.

DISCUSSION

The Yuba County Office of Emergency Service (OES) is 90% funded by grants. The current Yuba County Emergency Plan (EP) was adopted by Yuba County in 2015 and has not been updated since 8/25/2015⁵. However, nine of the 15 Yuba County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Annexes were updated in March of 2019, with the remaining six Annexes updated between July 2012 and February 2020. OES has begun work on updating the Yuba County EP with an estimated finished timetable of 2024. OES plans to have new guidelines for a water emergency and a plan for five days of forecasting. OES is updating the succession plan due to increased staffing. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remote access plan was to be implemented within a month of our interview in November 2023.

OES has grant funds to create a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which will train citizens in emergency response. OES does community outreach: a spring fair in the foothills, a fall fair in the valley, outreach in schools, and mailing flood preparedness fliers to Yuba County homes. OES uses a Ladriss artificial intelligence modeling system for real-time traffic and water modeling.⁶ Water level monitoring is done at the following locations: Feather River west levee north of 10th Street Bridge, Yuba River at Simpson Lane, Dry Creek, and Bear River. OES wants an additional monitor at Bear River and Highway 70.

The Yuba County Sheriff's Department (SD) plays a vital role in any emergency. There is a Liaison Officer between SD and OES. During the meeting with the Liaison Officer, the topics discussed included: pending update of the county emergency plan by OES; existing river water level monitors for Feather River and Yuba River; public and animal evacuation during an emergency; emergency public alert system; use of Yuba Sutter Transit buses during evacuation; potential evacuee sites; public safety fairs arranged jointly by SD, OES, Marysville Police Department, Fire Department, and Reclamation District (RD) 784. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is at the Yuba County Government Center in Marysville and a web based EOC is being developed by OES. SD clarified the Sycamore Ranch location is just an evacuation site and not a backup EOC. There is a Memorandum of Understanding for animal shelters.

The Yuba County Health & Human Services (HHS) is the largest department in the county. During an emergency, HHS serves under OES and SD and provides shelter and care to people, medical care of evacuees but not injuries, and contracting with other evacuation sites. HHS employees are often trained in disaster preparedness with Yuba County OES, State of California, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). After the CoVid-19 emergency, employees have been trained in long-term emergency response and are allowed to volunteer for cross-training in different areas. HHS has satellite communications, 2-way radios, and trailers full of ready-to-go supplies. HHS contracts with outside vendors for extreme weather such as cooling or heating centers. HHS has appeared at fairs mentioned above to provide information and "go-bags" to help citizens be prepared.

Reclamation District (RD) 784 is responsible for 33 miles of levee in the Linda, Olvehurst, and Plumas Lake areas. There are 10 pumping stations that are monitored manually by employees. They are also monitored automatically using a program called Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA)⁷. Each pump is

⁵ Yuba County OES Plan

⁶ <https://www.ladriss.com/product>

⁷ <https://www.scadaintegrators.com/>

designed to come on after a two-foot rise in water. RD 784 attends OES meetings quarterly and provided their update to the County EP about 2 years ago. RD 784 has weekly safety meetings in-house to discuss situations and safety techniques. RD 784 attends annual Department of Water Resources training and receives certificates of completion. RD 784's funding is based on benefit assessment according to whoever benefits from the service and from grant funding.

FINDINGS

- F1. The Yuba County Emergency Plan has not been updated since August 2015.
- F2. An additional river water level monitoring system is needed at the confluence of Yuba River and Feather River near Shanghai Bend.
- F3. There is no flow rate gauge at or below the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers.
- F4. Need evacuation plans for specific critical areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Update the Yuba County Office of Emergency Service Emergency Plan.
- R2. Provide an additional river water level monitoring system.
- R3. Install a flow rate gauge at or below the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers.
- R4. Based on the previously inundated areas, we recommend dividing the county into critical zones and developing specific evacuation plans for these areas.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

- 1. Office of Emergency Service (OES) as to Findings F1-F4 and Recommendations R1-R4 within 90 days.
- 2. Reclamation District (RD) 784 as to Findings F2-F3 and Recommendations R2-R3 within 90 days.
- 3. Sheriff's Department (SD) as to Findings F4 and Recommendations R4 within 90 days.

INVITED RESPONSES

None.

APPENDIX

CONFLUENCE - Where the Yuba River flows into the Feather River located in MARYSVILLE.

Bibliography:

Yuba County Office of Emergency Services Emergency Operations Plan - Originally Adopted and Published 1997, Updated and Adopted August 2015.

Yuba County Office of Emergency Services Emergency Operations Plan Annex E: Evacuations - Published September 2006, Revised March 2019.

Yuba County Office of Emergency Services Emergency Operations Plan Annex K: Slow-Rise Flood Event - Published December 2006, Revised February 2020.

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Staffing Losses Affect Operations

Yuba County Jail Report



SUMMARY

The Yuba County Jail (YCJ) is located at 215 Fifth Street, Marysville. It was constructed in 1962 and enlarged and modernized in the early 1990s. There is still a section of the jail that dates to 1962. The jail has a capacity for 428 inmates and as of January 2024 housed 275 County inmates and 69 Federal Marshal detainees. As of the writing of this report, the reduced number is due in part to the loss of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) contract that was terminated on February 8, 2023. For more than three decades, the YCJ housed ICE detainees and benefited from the money collected as part of the contract with ICE. Since the ICE contract was removed, the YCJ has been added to the Federal Marshall's contract and is housing inmates from this contract. The funds gained from this contract only provide one-third of the previous funds that the ICE contract provided. This has resulted in a loss of staffing in the jail.

California Penal Code 919 (b) states “The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prison within the county.” This requires the Grand Jury to conduct a jail walk-through of the county jail and juvenile detention facilities. The focus of this inquiry is the general health and welfare of the inmates and the staff. The Second Amended Consent Decree requires the third-party monitor to investigate mental health services and corrections officer training.

Upon jail detainment, inmates are medically screened and quarantined before being placed in the general population. All inmates are provided with the Yuba County Inmate/Detainee Handbook. This is available in English and Spanish. If other languages are needed, those requests are accommodated. The handbook details the rights and responsibilities of the inmates, as well as outlining inmate privileges and disciplinary procedures. Furthermore, the handbook outlines how inmates are sheltered, obtain food, and medication, and receive recreational time. An inmate's personal belongings are collected and stored until the inmate's release.

Inmates are housed according to security classification, court status, and health. There are multiple programs in place for the inmates, as outlined in the Inmate Handbook. Additionally, inmates have access to computers or are issued tablets to attend online classes and virtual visits.

BACKGROUND

For over forty years, the Grand Jury was required annually to inspect and report on the County Jail conditions and operations per the Amended Consent Decree. The Second Amended Consent Decree signed in 2023 has changed that requirement. This report will outline the boundaries and assist future Grand Jurors on the criteria to best navigate jail inquiries as required in Penal Code 919 (b).

The previous jail inspections were outlined by a class action lawsuit filed in 1976 (Hedrick et al v. Grant et al, 1979/2019) resulting in an Amended Consent Decree. Under this guidance, the Grand Jury was required to conduct yearly jail inspections and report to the court on conditions found. Adherence to the Amended Consent Decree includes, but is not limited to:

- Recordkeeping
- Inmate grievances
- Recreation
- Cell size
- Medical services
- Inspections

The Second Amended Consent Decree was signed on September 13, 2023 and added a third-party monitor to accomplish the inspections that were previously required per the Amended Consent Decree.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury researched jail policies and reviewed grievances sent by inmates during the previous year. Tours of the jail were conducted on October 26, 2023, and December 28, 2023. The Grand Jury examined daily operations, kitchen facilities, and inmates. Before conducting tours, Grand Jury members studied the Consent Decree, amended Consent Decrees, previous jail reports, and plans for the construction of a mental and health wing. To devise tour questions, the Grand Jury reviewed information about the holding of inmates, meal preparation, and changes because of the newly signed Second Amended Consent Decree. Topics discussed during the Grand Jury tours included:

- Jail intake
- Holding and isolation cells
- Medical facilities
- Kitchen
- Law Library
- Recreation areas
- Marshalls holding wing
- General conditions of the jail
- Male and female general housing dormitory cells

Additionally, the Grand Jury reviewed the Board of State and Community Corrections report from May 2, 2023. This report focuses on the jail meeting Title 15 and 24 requirements for state corrections facilities. They found no violations. Title 15 regulations are focused on the procedural processes for the facility. Title 24 regulations are focused on the Physical Plant (Facility) requirements for the jail.

DISCUSSION

The Yuba County Grand Jury was satisfied with the general operations and maintenance of the Yuba County Jail. The only areas that needed attention were discovered by members of the Grand Jury that conducted the walk-through and extracted from three inmate complaints received during the year. The Grand Jury believes any minor issues noted are primarily due to the loss of staffing from the loss of the ICE contract.

The Grand Jury discussed the County's update to the jail to meet current growth. During last year's inspection of the jail, the Grand Jury reviewed the expansion project to add a 15,000-square-foot medical and mental health facility. This project broke ground on October 24, 2022. The project was originally scheduled for completion in December 2023 but has now been delayed to December 2024.

Staffing losses of officers who manage and ensure inmates are keeping the jail clean have impacted jail operations. Per jail staff, the current staffing is being overloaded and having to work overtime to compensate for the loss of staffing to an estimated amount of over 7000 hours annually.

FINDINGS

F1. Repeated issues with sewer backups in the jails causing standing water and sewage.

F2. Grand Jury noted a few areas of the jail emanated odors that made a few of the Grand Jury members touring the facility physically ill. The areas noted as having the strongest odors from the clothing/laundry room, the medical hold cells, and the women's dorm-style cells (large).

F3. The loss of the ICE contract has resulted in a marked staffing issue that could be contributing to some of the previous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Recommend retrofitting sewage pipes and considering replacing toilets with specially made toilets that catch items being flushed. This could limit or prevent inmates from stuffing items in the lines and causing backups. The cost of retrofitting may be offset by the cost of repeated sewage cleanouts by sewage companies.

R2. Change the laundry detergent used to a more eco-friendly and odorless variety.

R3. Conduct a study on staffing shortages and determine critical positions that would alleviate health and welfare concerns for the staff and inmates.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

- Yuba County Sheriff as to Findings 1, 2, and 3.

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Yuba County Board of Supervisors as to Findings 1, 2, and 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Board of State and Community Corrections <https://www.bscc.ca.gov/>

Yuba County Inmate/Detainee Handbook

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Yuba County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit Keeping Yuba County Safe



SUMMARY

Yuba County is geographically large and unique. The county has forests, foothills, farming, river bottoms, and urban areas. The availability of K-9 units allows for better coverage of the county. The Yuba County K-9 Unit is a highly desirable career opportunity for the Yuba County Sheriffs. There is a detailed application process, and the officers are required to maintain specialized training. Education begins before the dog is selected by the officer and is ongoing while working with these dogs. The dog is an extension of the officer, providing increased safety and security while locating suspects.

The K-9 is a member of the family, living at their home to allow for daily training and veterinary care. The K-9 deputy does not drop the K-9 at a facility at the end of their shift. These dogs are highly trained for a specific purpose, and they are not pets that would be playing in a park - they require constant training and care. Many times, when the dog is ready to retire, the officer will choose to buy the dog back from the county to retire at home with their family. The Grand Jury (GJ) finds patrol dogs in Yuba County provide an essential service to the citizens as well as deputies. The K-9s are an important deterrent to potentially violent situations, with the primary intent being to de-escalate with a suspect. According to the K-9 Officers interviewed, there have been instances where the dog was injured by suspects, instead of the officer being injured.

Overall, the Grand Jury finds the Yuba County K-9 Officers to be well-trained with multiple tracking programs in place to ensure the safety of the public, the officers, and the K-9s. The Grand Jury interviewed multiple K-9 officers and trainers. The Grand Jury concluded that the K-9 program is beneficial to the community and all the K-9 Officers are well-trained and cognizant of the safety of our citizens.

BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury's last inquiry into the Yuba County Sheriff's Department (YCSD) K-9 Unit was in 2021. The Grand Jury (GJ) had an interest in the YCSD K-9 Unit due to concern for public safety. The K-9 unit is one tool that law enforcement has at its disposal. Dogs have been used by law enforcement agencies for over 100 years. In the search for Jack the Ripper in 1888, England used bloodhounds to accompany police on patrol. In World War II the United States Army began the War Dog Program, or "K-9 Corps", under the training of the Quartermaster Corps (QMC). (History.com Editors, 2020). Through years of careful breeding and training, K-9 units around the world have enhanced their ability to arrest violent and uncooperative suspects while aiding their law enforcement partners.

The first patrol dog in Yuba County was a Belgian Malinois that was funded by his handler in 1964, establishing the K-9 Unit. This dog, "Jet", and his deputy/handler served the County from 1964 -1974. The K-9 Unit was established to support officers on patrol with a variety of functions which historically have included drug and building searches, crowd control, public demonstrations, protection, as well as suspect apprehension. The K-9 Unit allows for a higher level of safety for officers. The YCSD K-9 Association was formed shortly after 1964. This nonprofit organization provides care, equipment, and replacement dogs to the YCSD K-9 Unit. On occasion, they hold events and sell merchandise to raise funds for this program.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the GJ interviewed a member of the Yuba County K-9 Association on October 26, 2023. Several members observed a K-9 training day on January 23, 2024, and received a demonstration of the dogs performing a variety of tasks. The GJ gathered information from the handlers and trainers. GJ members reviewed websites and internet media as well.

DISCUSSION

YCSD K-9 Unit currently consists of four patrol dogs. Patrol dogs are used for the security of the handler, apprehension of (or to search for) suspects, and to locate evidence. The dogs are transported in a vehicle that provides adequate climate control. The K-9 vehicle is equipped with a door release button that is controlled remotely by the handler when needed. The threat of deploying the dog will diffuse most situations. Some dogs have had multiple handlers during their lifetime. Yuba County patrol dogs live with their handlers and their families. Once the dog is geared up, they understand they are in work mode. The K-9 Officers and dogs are trained in the use of specialized commands to properly manage the dogs on patrol. Due to the need for extensive training and an adaptive temperament, police dogs can be costly.

Yuba County pays for food, veterinary bills, and other needs. The K-9 team has been certified by an outside agency to train dogs and their handlers before release for work as a K-9 team. The current budget for expenses is adequate and ensures the officers do not incur any out-of-pocket cost. YCSD K-9 Association, a nonprofit organization, funds the acquisition of the dogs that are then employed by the Sheriff's Office. The Association maintains ownership of these dogs during their working career. The YCSD K-9 Association can provide dogs through fundraising and donations.

The current patrol dog of choice for Yuba County is the Belgian Malinois, but they also use German Shepherds and Dutch Shepherds. Each new dog is paired, by personality, with their handler. Most patrol dogs are intact males who must show an aggressive nature when commanded. Male and female dogs must be energetic, intelligent, and trainable. They begin service as young as one year old and are retired at about seven years of age. The Yuba County Sheriff's Department does not currently have a drug dog for use in detecting contraband in the jail.

All dogs and handlers have intensive training from day one. The focus of training is searching for concealed persons or items. Although bite and attack training does take place, handlers feel the training can be important to defuse an aggressive situation. Training scenarios are reinforced bi-weekly in a variety of scenarios. The K-9 Unit teams work together seamlessly. The deputies practice multiple scenarios including scenarios with the officer/handler being incapacitated and another officer may need to take command of the dog. Certified K-9 handlers can house coworkers' dogs when needed or requested, such as for personal leave or vacation. Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification is given to the dog and handler as a team.

Training and incident logs are maintained for each dog and are retained for the working life of the dog. They are used to evaluate the progress of the dog and handler and are an accountability resource. Every time a dog is deployed in the field, the incident log is used to tabulate the experiences of the dog. There is at least one dog handler on duty 24/7. The four current patrol dogs meet the needs of Yuba County at this time. Due to time and distance challenges while traveling to the foothills and mountain areas, there may be a need for a resident dog and handler stationed in that area in the future.

FINDINGS

F1. Patrol dogs in Yuba County provide an essential service to the citizens as well as deputies. The K-9s are an important deterrent to potentially violent situations. They are a valuable resource that provides a positive bridge between the community and the Sheriff's Department.

F2. The financial impact of the dogs on the county is minimal when compared to the service they provide.

F3. There is currently no trained drug dog to assist with contraband in the jail and community services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. None.

R2. None.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the county expand the program to include a drug dog. The drug dog program would be a great asset to assist with detecting contraband in the jail and minimize the workload on the officers in the jail.

COMMENDATION

The Grand Jury commends the Yuba County K-9 Unit on its effective and efficient management, training, and deployment. The handlers/deputies and K-9s are very enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and dedicated to the community in which they serve.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 the Grand Jury requires responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

- Yuba County Sheriff as to Findings 1, 2, and 3.

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Yuba County Board of Supervisors as to Finding 1, 2, and 3.

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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.

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Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer – Models of Excellence



SUMMARY

A surprise visit to Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer by members of the Grand Jury resulted in a full tour of the facility with outstanding results. Not only were all the staff positive and cooperative, answering all our questions, but the facility was spotless and well-maintained. The inmates are well cared for, have access to education, recreation, mental and physical wellness help, and nutritional food. We see this facility as a model of excellence for other juvenile facilities.

BACKGROUND

California Penal Code §919(b) states, “The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.”

METHODOLOGY

Three members of the Grand Jury went to the Juvenile Hall on January 8, 2024, without an appointment, not having reached the administration by telephone. We were not expecting a tour, only attempting to reach someone to arrange one, but we were prepared for a tour. Officers of the facility gave us a tour of both Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer where we were able to observe conditions and ask questions. We were introduced to medical personnel, kitchen staff, and several employees in Camp Singer. Additionally, we were able to observe classroom conditions within Camp Singer.

DISCUSSION

The Juvenile Hall buildings date from the 1970s and a new facility has been built across the street from the existing facility. Despite the age of the current buildings, the facility was spotless and odor-free. We observed most of the facility, including the medical rooms, common rooms, sleeping quarters, kitchen, and recreational area in the Juvenile Hall. In Camp Singer, we saw sleeping quarters, a classroom, and outside and recreational areas. The two facilities share medical rooms and a kitchen.

The Grand Jury tour of the facilities included areas for intake, visiting, medical, housing, kitchen, dining hall, indoor and outdoor recreation, and classrooms. At the time of the tour, the census for the facilities was 23 males and 2 females ages 12-18 from Colusa, Sutter, and Yuba Counties housed in the Juvenile Hall; 12 males ages 13-18 housed in Camp Singer. Other counties that contract with the facility are Shasta, Tuolumne, Placer, and Napa.

There is a full-time nurse. Staffing levels appear to be sufficient to provide a safe living and working environment for both the youths and employees of the facility.

We were impressed with the thoroughness of the tour, especially given the unannounced nature. We were also struck with the care and concern for the inmates expressed by the entire staff.

The kitchen was clean and efficient, and although we arrived at the time that lunch preparation was underway, the staff took time to answer our questions regarding diet and how any food restrictions are handled. We were impressed with the quality of the menu for lunch, and how during the growing season, vegetables and fruits grown by the inmates are incorporated into the meals.

The educational and trade skill preparation programs in Camp Singer are appropriate to the inmate population, and they provide good preparation for life beyond the facility. The Construction Industry Education Foundation Design Build Competition projects, which Camp Singer won in 2023 with a chicken coop, provide a source of both education and pride in completion of a challenging endeavor.

FINDINGS

- F1. The Tri-County Juvenile Hall is very clean, organized, and despite the age of the facility, exhibits every indication of being well run and serving the needs of its inmates and the community.
- F2. The Maxine Singer Youth Guidance Center (Camp Singer) is very clean, organized, well equipped, and exhibits every indication of being well run and serving the needs of its inmates and the community.
- F3. The automated telephone system serving both the Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer did not capture the voicemails that two of the Grand Jury members left to arrange an appointment for a tour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. No recommendations necessary – please keep up the good work!
- R2. No recommendations necessary – please keep up the good work!
- R3. A review of the automated telephone system serving the Juvenile Hall and Camp Singer should be reviewed to ensure that voicemails are received by the appropriate officers and individuals.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

- None

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- None

INVITED RESPONSES

- Program Manager, Juvenile Hall – R3

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

California Penal Code § 919 (b)

Appeal-Democrat, “Camp Singer youth win best in show in build contest”, May 17, 2023

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The Future of Marysville Joint Unified School District Students



SUMMARY

The 2023-24 Yuba County Grand Jury (YCGJ) reviewed the Marysville Joint Unified School District's (MJUSD) student performance data, including test scores and graduation rates, to assess the effectiveness of the educational system. The Grand Jury has evaluated whether the school district has adequately prepared students for success.

The Grand Jury reviewed various matters related to financial management, accountability, and improvement in the educational system. The Grand Jury believes it is important to ensure financial records are efficient, transparent, and in-line with educational goals. It is also important to ensure financial records are easily accessible to the public and the district follows all relevant laws regarding financial transparency and reporting.

BACKGROUND

Known as "The Gateway to the Gold Fields", Marysville is a city filled with a rich and diverse history that is reflected in our community and student population. The students and staff come from many diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. More than seven languages are spoken among the families that are served in the district.⁸MJUSD is a school district headquartered in Marysville, CA. It serves areas of Yuba County including Marysville, Linda, Olivehurst, Challenge, Brownsville, Dobbins, Loma Rica and a part of Plumas Lake. MJUSD was officially unified in 1966, but the district has operated schools in the area for more than 160 years. On the internet, MJUSD can be found at this site: www.mjusd.com

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was conducted by no less than two (2) members of the Yuba County Grand Jury pursuant to California Penal Code 916. Interviews were conducted in our jury room and at site visits at the MJUSD Office. Members also attended or live-streamed school board and town hall meetings. The 2023-2024 Yuba County Grand Jury has not received any citizen's complaint regarding any aspect of the MJUSD. Employees of MJUSD and Yuba County Office of Education were interviewed, as noted in the Discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Educational services and new practices are being developed by MJUSD. District-wide professional development plans have been implemented each year since 2021, as well as a literacy plan. Training includes: TK-12 Assessment plan, instructional coaching, principal data analysis, improvement planning, and curriculum development training.

Intervention and Acceleration, a student progress monitoring plan, is tied to summer school. In previous years, a revised version of intervention materials was used. All of these plans have been implemented and finalized in the 2022-23 school year.

MJUSD offers rigorous college-ready courses, which include honors courses and Advancement via

⁸ <https://www.mjusd.com/Divisions/Superintendent/about-mjUSD/>

Individual Determination (AVID⁹), which are taught in high school. Participating in AVID will boost a student's chances of college admission. It provides students with the skills and habits needed to earn good grades. Also, many AVID programs demand that students maintain a certain GPA which ensures they deliver a college ready academic performance. In providing program options, students will have access to educational support, course acceleration and hands on focus learning. Advanced Placement (AP) program enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school.

The Middle College Academy is a new school that opened in the fall of 2023. The Middle College Academy is a separate high school on the Yuba College/Marysville campus. Students have the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and an AA degree of their choice in their four years of high school. Dual enrollment creates opportunities for high school students to take college courses while in high school. Courses count for both high school and college credit. A program called “Development of the Graduate Profile,” to tie all work around student results, was finalized in 2022-23 and implemented in the 2023-24 school year.

Marysville Joint Unified consists of 24 schools with 10,562 students. The average daily attendance is 8,985 out of 10,562 students - 85% of students are attending school daily. MJUSD serves its diverse community through multiple programs, supportive environments, and innovative opportunities for student learning.

One area that is of concern to MJUSD is poor attendance, which has been a significant problem and has serious implications for later outcomes in life. The effects of lost school days may eventually lead to high levels of apathy and disengagement.

Student chronic absences for MJUSD, defined as missing 10% or 18 days per school year or more, in 2021-22 was 39.1% - almost 4 in 10 students. In 2022-23, chronic absences were 29.4%. So far in 2023-24, chronic absences are about 23%. For the 2023 school year to date:

- Almost 48% of students have missed 5.6 days or less.
- 29% of students have missed 5.6 - 11.3 days.
- 23% of students have missed 11.4 or more days.
- Edgewater, Browns Valley, and Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts have less than 10% chronic absences.

The district has created a new community focus with a program called “Commit to 180 Days!”. Students are encouraged to attend school for 180 days out of the school year. If students have missed five days or more in a school year, attendance is reviewed with their parents. District student attendance was improved by 46.2% as a result of 165 conferences held with students and their parents. According to Public School Review¹⁰, MJUSD ranks at the bottom 50% of schools in California¹¹. MJUSD ranks at 14% math proficiency. This is well below the California public school average for

⁹ <http://blog.collegevine.com>

¹⁰ <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/>

¹¹ Overall district rank is based on a Math and English proficiency test scores/ranking for the 2020-2021 school year (latest year available). Rank is calculated within a school district within a particular state only.

math proficiency of 34%, as compared to other districts in the state¹². Reading proficiency is 49% statewide, with MJUSD at 28%¹³.



Photo taken by Yuba County Grand Jury Member

English Language Arts student test scores have improved at MJUSD. According to MJUSD staff, in 2020-21, 28% met or exceeded California state standards. In 2022-23, 31% met or exceeded the standard, which is a 3% increase. In math for 2020-21, 13% met or exceeded standards. In 2022-23, 18% met or exceeded the state standard, which is a 5% increase.

Literacy is being targeted with a goal of students having the ability to read in kindergarten. The literacy program will help to increase student comprehension. Literacy and math coaches are being used.

¹² Percentage of students in this school district that scored at or above proficient levels in math for the 2020-21 school year (latest year available).

¹³ Percentage of students in this school district that scored at or above proficient levels in reading/language arts for the 2020-21 school year (latest year available).

There are wellness centers at many schools with a school psychologist on staff. Peach Tree Health Clinic and Rideout Adventist Medical Centers have collaborated to form these wellness groups and centers and more are anticipated in the future. After-school tutoring is available at the wellness centers with the goal of increasing test scores and literacy.

There was a 22% increase in the hiring of district office staff since 2017 as compared to 2023. Most of the positions are grant-funded and these grants resulted in added administrative requirements and oversight. MJUSD is doing well in getting new teachers credentialed quicker through a new educator pipeline, outreach consultants, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. Adult Education programs have been reinstated and are working well.

Staff training and safety is a huge focus at the schools. All classrooms will have a communication system to contact security. Raptor and Catapult software is used for emergencies so that staff can be alerted through email communication.

All schools have security fencing and visitors check in at the school's office with staff assigned to monitor ingress and egress of service vehicles. The schools have a single secure entry way with additional cameras.

The current budget is \$228 million with 77-80% used for personnel. The budget is built around district priorities, specifically the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)¹⁴

Grants and Bonds provide additional funding for schools. Property owners pay for bonds when they pay their property taxes.

There were many projects completed and are in progress in the years 2021-2025, costing \$73 million dollars. The measure P Bond (2022) and developer fees were used in the amount of \$20 million for the Arboga TK-8 expansion, which included a multi-purpose room and two classroom buildings. Most of the proposed projects are paid for with general funds or grants. A list of projects are as follows:

- Loma Rica classroom building update.
- Secure fencing and a new gym at Lindhurst High School.
- District-wide siding jobs, flooring, asphalt and roofing.
- Multi-site fire alarm, side doors, and window upgrades.
- A new music center project at Yuba Gardens Intermediate School.
- A middle school is being proposed near Hammonton Smartsville Road at Dantoni Ranch.
- New buildings are being proposed for Covillaud and Foothill Intermediate School.
- New track and field at Lindhurst High School (LHS) and Marysville High School (MHS) with bleachers and new gym floors.
- A science lab at Yuba Gardens Intermediate School is being proposed.
- Fencing is needed at Marysville High School and Marysville Charter Academy of the Arts (MCAA).

¹⁴ <https://www.mjusd.com/Divisions/Business-Services/LCAP-Information/>

- MCAA needs a new dance studio.
- The office at Olivehurst Elementary needs an upgrade.

FINDINGS

F1. Chronic absenteeism is directly linked to lower test scores and graduation rates for students. There was a 16% reduction in chronic absenteeism in two years district-wide.

F2. Student test scores have improved at MJUSD in the 2022-23 school year.

F3. MJUSD ranks in the bottom 50% in California public school system test ranking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. None. MJUSD is doing a great job to help address chronic absenteeism.

R2. MJUSD has been successful at improving test scores by using set goals and key driver programs.

R3. Review spending to continue to increase in the improvement of student test scores and student-to-teacher ratio.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

- None

INVITED RESPONSES:

- MJUSD Superintendent and School Board as to findings F1-F3 and Recommendations R1-R3.

GLOSSARY

Raptor: School safety software is an alert system that integrates with your emergency calls and delivers rich data. This system keeps staff and students safe, expedites awareness, and meets emergency mandates by connecting to 911 quickly.

Catapult EMS: A school emergency alert notification and crisis system to help develop an emergency communication plan. The system stays clear, is centralized, and communicates at all times with teachers, sites, districts, and law enforcement in real-time.

CTE: Career Technical Education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<http://blog.collegevine.com>

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Yuba County's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic



SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic was the largest public health crisis in recent history. The emergency response lasted from March 2020 to May 2023. The federal COVID-19 public health emergency declaration officially ended on May 11, 2023. Following a super majority vote, the Grand Jury decided it was a practical time to inquire and investigate Yuba County's pandemic response. Undertaking this task sooner would not have captured the emergency declaration in its entirety. Our goal was to examine Yuba County's own evaluation, discover potential shortcomings, and open these areas up for discussion and recommendations to help ensure Yuba County's preparedness and trust in Public Officials for future emergency events.

METHODOLOGY

Facts were collected from various sources and interviews. All Board of Supervisors meetings, relevant press releases, and public health orders from January 2020 to May 2023 were reviewed. The Bi-County COVID-19 After Action Report was obtained and examined. Interviews were conducted with two County Officials from the Health and Human Services Department (HHS), one from the Office of Emergency Services, and one from the Sheriff's Department.

DISCUSSION

Emergency Response Leader

Our first objective was to find out which County Official was the leader for the Yuba County Emergency Response. On March 9th, 2020, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) informed the public that the people at highest risk for death following a COVID-19 infection would be those over 60 years of age and individuals who have multiple pre-existing conditions. On March 10, 2020, at the Board of Supervisors meeting, the Bi-County Health Officer proposed adopting a resolution to declare a health emergency in Yuba County due to COVID-19.

Per the Yuba County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator were to direct the emergency management response. The County Administrator may delegate the responsibility for implementing the County's EOP to the Deputy Director of Emergency Services and Yuba County Office of Emergency Services. The Director of Emergency Services is responsible to the Board of Supervisors per Chapter 4.20 of the Yuba County Ordinance Code.¹⁵

Through review of all Board of Supervisor meetings, reports were given by both the Deputy Director of Emergency Services and the Bi-County Health Officer. Through investigative interviews, there did not appear to be a clear leader identified to direct the emergency response, but more of a collaboration that heavily relied on the direction of the Bi-County Health Officer.

State and County Directives

We examined how public health directives were disseminated. During the March 17, 2020, Board of Supervisors Meeting, the Health Officer proposed taking public safety guideline action into consideration for essential services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, health clinics, and hardware stores, as outlined by the Governor of California and the President of the United States. The County Administrator advised working with the Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce and the Yuba-Sutter

¹⁵ Yuba County Emergency Operations Plan, page 9

Economic Development. On March 20, 2020, the Statewide “Shelter in Place” order replaced the Yuba-Sutter directive as THREAT TO PUBLIC SERVICES OR FACILITIES per Government Code 54957(a).¹⁶ On April 6, 2020, the Bi-County Health Officer issued an extended and more stringent “Stay Home” order through May 3rd.¹⁷ This order had several differences from the directive, including restrictions on fishing, automotive sales lots, and limited access to parks, lakes, and recreational areas. On May 4th, 2020, the Health Officer declared orders directing persons in the counties of Yuba and Sutter to continue to limit activities to reduce the spread of COVID-19, solidifying the Executive Orders of the Governor and the Orders of the State Public Health Officer.

Information Dissemination

Another objective was to determine how information was disseminated to the public. The Yuba County Emergency Operations Plan states that the Public Information Officer (PIO), once activated by the EOC Director, will be responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to news media and other appropriate agencies. We learned that two Public Information Officers (PIO) worked closely with the Health Officer to provide information to the public on ever-changing directives and public safety statuses. They utilized press releases through the County HHS Department website and local newspaper. The HHS Department also created YouTube videos for the public. The Grand Jury found that while this information was helpful in informing and educating the public, it didn’t encompass all aspects of the public. Information dissemination was an area for improvement listed on the COVID-19 After-Action Report for May to December 2021. It was also unclear if the press release information put out was of the highest benefit for the County.

The After-Action Report

The completion of After-Action Reports is a part of the required Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) reporting process. The Emergency Services Act, Section 8607(f) mandates that the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) in cooperation with involved state and local agencies, complete an After-Action Report within 120 days after each declared disaster. The Grand Jury reviewed and examined the After-Action Report produced by the Yuba County Health and Human Services Department. They utilized a third-party emergency management and public health consulting firm, Constant Associates, to prepare the reports.

After-Action Report analyzed the response from May 2021 to December 2021 to identify strengths and areas for improvement raised by staff, stakeholders, and partners. It is a sampling of activities and not inclusive of all work related to COVID-19. The report was developed based on document reviews, surveys, interviews, and one incident debriefing. The survey results were obtained from 24 internal Yuba County HHS Department responses and 17 external responses from governmental agencies and community partners. Throughout the report, rural communities were heavily targeted as a source of vaccine hesitancy, misinformation, and diminished trust in government agencies.

FINDINGS

¹⁶ <https://yubanet.com/regional/statewide-shelter-in-place-order-replaces-yuba-sutter-directive/>

¹⁷ <https://yubanet.com/regional/yuba-sutter-health-officer-issues-extended-stay-home-order/>

F1: There did not appear to be a clear leader identified to manage emergency response, as there seemed to be a disconnect between multiple departments. However, one department relied heavily on a collaboration that was directed by the Bi-County Health Officer.

F2: Local public health directives did not coordinate with local law enforcement prior to announcement.

F3: The After-Action report was not comprehensive and reflective of the entire pandemic emergency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: There should be an established Emergency Plan available to guide emergency responses, rather than relying primarily on the direction of the Bi-County Health Officer.

R2: The plan should include processes for local Public Health authorities to coordinate with all affected agencies before making public announcements.

R3: There should be a comprehensive process for After-Action Reports that are reflective of the entire pandemic response. The AAR only encompassed May 2021 to December 2021.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

- Emergency Operation Manager
- Yuba County Sheriff
- Public Health Officer

INVITED RESPONSES

- Health and Human Services Director
- Board of Supervisors

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Yuba County Health and Human Services <http://www.yuba.org/coronavirus>

COVID-19 After Action Report and Improvement Plan <https://files4.revize.com/yubaca/3.21.20%20-%20COVID19%20-%20CONFIRMED%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

Emergency Operations Plan August 2015

https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba%20County/Emergency%20Services/YubaCounty_EOP_ADOPTED_August-2015.pdf

Standardized Emergency Management System August 2015

https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba%20County/Emergency%20Services/YubaCounty_EOP_ADOPTED_August-2015.pdf

Yuba County Press Release <https://www.yuba.org/coronavirus/PressReleases.php>

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Lighting the Streets of Marysville



SUMMARY

Improving the City of Marysville’s lighting infrastructure to meet the standard of street light design in local areas is essential to enhance safety and improve visibility for residents and commuters. Based upon conversation with residents and observations by Yuba County Grand Jury (YCGJ) members, there is a concern regarding the lack of sufficient lighting in residential and businesses areas in Marysville.

Ensuring proper lighting is crucial for the safety of residents, as it helps prevent crime and enhances an overall feeling of safety. The issue has become a growing concern among residents who find the darkened streets not only inconvenient, but also a safety concern. In certain areas, the lack of adequate lighting makes it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians, especially at night or during inclement weather. As the City has expanded and more people have moved in, the existing streetlights are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the growing population.

Various citizens at City Council meetings have repeatedly expressed their concerns for safety while walking or traversing these low-lit areas.

“The Public Works Department is responsible for repairing or replacing damaged or non-functioning traffic signals and streetlights, but it is not clear how the City and its residents can identify areas that lack adequate City lighting and take measures to install new lights where needed.”¹⁸

BACKGROUND

Based on interviews with Marysville residents, City Officials, and observations, the YCGJ members determined that there is a lack of adequate street lighting in the City of Marysville. Many residential areas are dark because of burned-out lights, weather-faded light lens covers, damaged poles, trees, and branch growth.

Proper street lighting provides for:

- Neighborhood enhancement.
- Increased nighttime visibility for motorists and pedestrians.
- Reduces risk of robbery, vandalism, burglary, and criminal activity in the area.

The absence of sufficient lighting can increase the likelihood of petty crime, as dimly lit areas provide cover for vandalism and theft. After speaking with, and interviewing several local business owners and residents, there is a recurring sentiment voiced that lighting around the City is insufficient. Some private homeowners have addressed this issue by installing additional lighting on their own property. However, the Grand Jury concludes that the City would be better served with a comprehensive plan for maintaining and expanding street lights as needed.

While there is a service request form that can be found on the City of Marysville’s Public Works website, many residents are unaware of its existence, and may not feel qualified to make a service request for a new streetlight. Furthermore, while service requests for new streetlights may help the City identify areas in need of increased lighting, the members of the Grand Jury felt the City would be

¹⁸ <https://www.marysville.ca.us/public-works>

better served by adopting a comprehensive and proactive plan to enhance the quality of Marysville’s public street lights.

It should be noted that the majority of Marysville’s streetlight’s lights have been switched to Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs to save electrical costs.

City of Marysville Street Lights						
Committee Members: Stuart Gilchrist; Valerie Sutton, Michelle Barker, Märgie Rollins, Marilyn Russell, Melanee Vieira, Betty Huckins and Diana McHugh						
Date	Lamp Number	Lamp Status	Location	Troubleshooting Status	Fixed?	Comments
1/24/2022	10	Out	Ramirez and E 14th St		Yes	
1/17/2022	164	Out	7 and G St. (southeast corner)		Yes	
1/24/2022	175	Out	Featherside Way (northside) of 10th St and old CVS down ramp		Yes	
1/24/2022	329	Out	9th St @ railroad tracks		Yes	
1/24/2022	435	Out	Johnson St	Blue Cap	Yes	
1/24/2022	519	Out	Elm St and 17th (southside) corner across from Vet Hall		Yes	
1/24/2022	555	Out	E 14th and Diver		Yes	
1/17/2022	580	Out	Ramirez and 22nd St		Yes	
1/24/2022	589	Out	E 15th and Diver		Yes	
1/24/2022	618	Out	Glen Ct and Hobart		Yes	
1/24/2022	669	Out	17th St	Blue Cap	Yes	
1/17/2022	683	Out	Buchanan and Rideout Street	Bad photocell	Yes	
1/24/2022	746	Out	E 14th and Rubel St. (behind fence new construction)		Yes	
1/17/2022	804	Blinking	1st St. (Southeast corner)		Yes	
1/17/2022	805	Blinking	1st St. and C St. (Southeast corner)		Yes	
1/17/2022	818	Out	3 and D St. (southeast)		Yes	
1/17/2022	847	Out	2nd between Bing Ong St and D St. (southside)		Yes	PGE Bad Transformer
1/17/2022	848	Out	2nd St - By Library parking lot and Bing Ong St. (northeast)	No power at pole	Yes	PGE Bad Transformer
1/17/2022	849	Out	2nd St. and Bing Ong St (Southwest)	No power at pole	Yes	PGE Bad Transformer
1/17/2022	896	Out	3 and C St. (mid street; west side)		Yes	
1/17/2022	898	Out	3 and C St.		Yes	
1/17/2022	900	Out	2nd and C St. (Northwest corner)		Yes	
1/17/2022	914	Out	B St. between 2nd and 3rd St. (westside)	Bad photocell	Yes	
1/17/2022	916	Out	2nd and B St. (Southeast corner)		Yes	
1/24/2022	956	Out	Orange St between 13th and 14th (mid-street westside) Not tagged due to trash		Yes	
1/24/2022	1085	Dim	4th St and end of Street @ railroad tracks (southeast)		Yes	
1/17/2022	4239	Out	6 and F St. (southwest corner)		Yes	
1/17/2022	6142	Dim	Sicard Street bet Rideout and E. 22nd		Yes	Just an electric pole, no light
1/17/2022	120035943	Out	7 and F St. (Northwest corner)		Yes	
1/24/2022	120351482	Out	B St in front of Frosty (westside) North of 14th St		Yes	
1/17/2022	120564828	Out	2nd and A St. (southeast)	Bad photocell	Yes	
1/24/2022	120565868	Out	C and 14th St. (northside)		Yes	
1/24/2022	120565936	Out	F St and 11th (southeast corner)		Yes	
1/24/2022	120567380	Out	6th St between F and G St (mid street northside)		Yes	
1/24/2022	022B2	Dim & Blinking	Sampson and Levee		Yes	
1/24/2022	175D #3	Out	Sampson and 12th St		Yes	
1/24/2022	36015 & 12043896	Out	6th St between Yuba and railroad tracks (southside)		Yes	
1/17/2022	36641-0	Out	Covillaud and Covillaud Place		Yes	
1/17/2022	6917-0	Out	Triplett and 24th St		Yes	
1/17/2022	933 or 902	Out	2nd and B St. (mid street)		Yes	
1/17/2022	Unknown	Dim	6th St. and C St (southwest)		Yes	
1/17/2022	459	Out	3 St (between I & J St; northside)		No	Missing Poles, Bears Elec to give quote
1/17/2022	460	Out	3 St. (between I & J St.; southside)		No	Missing Poles, Bears Elec to give quote
1/17/2022	461	Out	3 and I St. (North)		No	No power, dependent on other three that
1/17/2022	580	Out	Ramirez and 22nd St.		No	No Power, PGE
1/24/2022	120565893	Out	12th St between D and E (mid block southside)		No	Too close to powerlines to fix, Bears Elec to
1/24/2022	A11 & 120565873	Out	Ellis Lake Dr between 14th and 15th		No	No power at pole, broken underground wi
1/24/2022	A12 & 120565882	Out	Ellis Lake Dr and 15th St		No	No power at pole, broken underground wi
1/24/2022	Caltrans	Out	9th St between B & C (southside) in front of Farmers Ins.		No	to refer to Caltrans
1/24/2022	Unknown	Out	Yuba Park 10th and Yuba St (no lights on in park)		No	No Power, PGE cut overhead wires over 10
1/17/2022	Unknown	Out	3 and I St. (South)		No	Missing Poles, Bears Elec to give quote
Private Property:						
1/17/2022		Out	Miller Building Parking Lot: Chire Lacona?			
1/24/2022	SMJ	Out	6th and Railroad track at Union Station			
Totals:						
1/17/2022	Public Streets		52			
1/17/2022	Private Property		1			

METHODOLOGY

This investigation was conducted by the Grand Jury by doing the following:

- Watching YouTube livestream of City Council meetings.
- Reviewing City Council meetings.
- Conducting interviews with City appointees.
- Interviewing City citizens and businesses.
- Reviewing online City, County, and State websites.

Marysville City staff were interviewed as well as Marysville residents. YCGJ members conducted nighttime visual inspections of the City's lighting systems. Additionally, reports regarding street lighting inspection and maintenance were reviewed.



DISCUSSION

Many, if not most, streets in Marysville have inadequate lighting. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are dark at night creating safety hazards. The inadequate lighting is due to the locations of streetlights, old and faded lenses, pole damage, and tree growth. There is no system for scheduling maintenance or nighttime observations within the City of Marysville for identifying and repairing malfunctions.

Currently, the City's Public Works relies on citizen complaints and other City employees. Some citizen complaints serve as a valuable source of information for identifying areas in need as they provide direct information relating to things that effect the community. City employees, as those working in Planning, Engineering, or Transportation Departments, have a deeper understanding of the City's infrastructure and can identify potential problems before they become major issues. Citizen complaints and the involvement of other City employees allow a more comprehensive and effective approach to Public Works and ensuring that the needs and concerns of citizens are met while planning growth and development of the City. At present, there is no plan or budget to do any streetlamps projects in

Marysville. YCGJ members were informed that the possibility for new lights would be street improvement projects if there is a provision in the contract for lights.

In order to enhance the quality of Marysville's nightlife and increase safety across the City, the Grand Jury believes implementing a comprehensive plan to maintain and update streetlights would have a strong positive impact on the City.

FINDINGS

F1. The design of the streetlights in the City of Marysville has not been updated to keep with the growth in the City.

F2. The City of Marysville does not have a maintenance program to identify and repair deficient streetlights.

F3. The City of Marysville has no procedures for residents to request new streetlights in their neighborhood, making it more difficult to enhance pedestrian visibility and reduce crime.

F4. There is a service request form on the Marysville Public Works' website which residents can use to submit service requests for replacing burnt-out bulbs and other Public Works items.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The YCGJ recommends the City of Marysville complete a comprehensive study of its streetlights. The YCGJ recommends the City of Marysville develop a master plan for identifying areas in need of increased lighting in the City and budget for implementation of the plan.

R2. The YCGJ recommends the City of Marysville develop a maintenance program to identify deficient lighting that needs repair and removal of any tree growth that may be associated with causing poor lighting.

R3. Marysville City Council and City Manager should adopt a procedure for residents to request new streetlights in their neighborhood by June 30, 2025.

R4. No Recommendation.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 90 days:

- The City of Marysville as to Findings F1, F2, F3 as to Recommendations R1 and R2.

INVITED RESPONSES:

From the following elected county officials within 90 days:

- The City of Marysville as to Recommendations R3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City of Marysville, <https://www.marysville.ca.us/> (last visited February 2023).

City Development, <https://www.marysville.ca.us/development> (last visited January 2023).

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Yuba County 2023-2024 Grand Jury Previous Investigations Grid

County and Special Districts	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
North Yuba Water District									X		X			
Office of Emergency Services		X			X		X							
Oliverhurst Public Utility District (OPUD)								X						
Olivehurst PUD - Fire														
Olivehurst PUD - Water								X					X	
Personnel Risk Management														
Plumas/Brophy Fire Protection District														
Print Shop														
Public Administrator														
Public Works Road Department				X										
Ramirez Water District														
Reclamation District 10														
Reclamation District 784														
Reclamation District 817														
Reclamation District 2103														
River Highlands Community Service														
Smartvill Fire Department														
South Yuba Water District														
Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority	X													
Treasurer/Tax Collector														
Weights and Measures														
Wheatland Water District														
Yuba County Airport				X	X							X		

Health & Human Services	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Adults Services														
CAL Works														
Child Protective Services				X										
Day Care														
Environmental Health														
Environmental Health - Personnel														
Environmental Health - Onsite Sewage														
Environmental Health - YSDI	X													
First Five Yuba Commission														
Fraud Investigations														
Health and Human Services									X	X		X		X
H&H Services Home Safety Visits		X												
Health Department										X				
Life Bldg/14Forward								X						
Mental Health Services														
Peach Tree Clinic														
Public Guardian														
Yuba Sutter Veterans Services							X							

The Yuba County Civil Grand Jury Process

Any United States citizen who is a resident of Yuba County may apply to serve on the Grand Jury. Application forms are available from the Yuba County Superior Court or on the Yuba County Grand Jury website: <http://www.co.yuba.ca.us/departments/grand%20jury/default.aspx>. The Jury Commissioner receives applications and the presiding judge reviews them. Every effort is made to impanel a jury of qualified men and women, including the following factors:

- Age
- Diversity
- Socio-economic background
- Ethnic background
- Educational background
- Geographical areas of the county

By court policy, and at the discretion of the Presiding Judge, up to 10 members of the previous year's jury may serve a second term to provide continuity. A total of 19 people serve on the Grand Jury. A drawing of names of qualified applicants names is made to bring the number of grand jurors to 19. Another drawing of the remaining applicants' names is held to provide a pool of alternates.

Jurors are sworn in and begin their one-year term commencing the first day of July. The presiding judge appoints a foreperson to preside over meetings. The jury then chooses the remaining officers and organizes itself into committees. Meetings investigations and interviews are set by each group. Committees investigate various departments and functions of local government, as decided by a super majority (12 or more) vote of the plenary. (all members of the grand jury) Jurors interview Department personnel, conduct site visits and investigate policy compliance, fiscal management, and operations. The grand jury may choose to review previous civil grand jury recommendations.

Some of the matters investigated by the grand jury are brought forward from citizen complaints about mistreatment, suspected misconduct or inefficiencies of local government. All complaints are kept confidential. If the situation warrants further investigation, the grand jury may follow up and make a report with recommendations for action.

A large portion of the public mistakenly believes an individual's appearance before the grand jury, particularly a public official, indicates suspicion of wrongdoing. It is the responsibility of the grand jury to review the conduct of city, county and other

government entities each year. This often requires public officials appearing before the grand jury to provide departmental information.

Grand jurors are a part of the judicial system and considered officers of the court. The grand jury is an independent body. The presiding judge, the district attorney, the county counsel, and the state attorney general act as advisors, but cannot limit or direct the actions of the jury except for illegality.

The confidential nature of the grand jury's work requires most business be done in closed session. Members of a grand jury are sworn to secrecy, assuring confidential testimony for all who appear. No one may be present during meetings of the grand jury except those specified by law (Penal Code 939). The minutes of grand jury meetings may not be inspected, nor can records be subpoenaed.

Grand juror statements or votes may not be disclosed. Evidence given before the grand jury must be kept secret. It is a misdemeanor to violate the secrecy of the grand jury room. A grand juror cannot confide any witness information, testimony, or action of the jury. Leaks concerning proceedings might impair or destroy the effectiveness of the jurors' efforts.

Final reports describe investigations, contain findings, and recommendations. Responses are required within 90 days for public agencies and 60 days for elected county officers or agency heads specified in these reports.



**YUBA COUNTY
GRAND JURY
COMPLAINT
FORM**

COMPLAINT PROCESS

- Present your complaint as soon as possible. The Grand Jury's term of service begins July 1st and ends June 30th of the following year.
- Identify your specific concern and describe the circumstances as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Document your complaint with copies of pertinent information and evidence in your possession.
- Mail or deliver your complaint in a sealed envelope to:

Yuba County Grand Jury
215 5th Street, Suite 213
Marysville, Ca 95901

Among the responsibilities of the Grand Jury is the investigation of the public's complaints to assure that all branches of city and county government are being administered efficiently, honestly and in the best interest of its citizens.

Complaints submitted to the Grand Jury will be treated confidentially whenever possible.

However, it may be impossible to conduct an investigation without revealing your name and complaint.

The results of the complaints investigated by the Grand Jury are published in its final report in which the residents of the county are made aware

GENERAL INFORMATION

A major function of the Yuba County Grand Jury is to examine local county and city government, special districts, school districts, and any joint powers agency located in the county to ensure their duties are being carried out lawfully.

The Grand Jury:

- May review and evaluate procedures used by these entities to determine whether more efficient and economical methods may be employed;
- May inspect and audit the books, records and financial expenditures as noted above to ensure that public funds are properly accounted for and legally spent;
- May investigate any charges of willful misconduct in office by public officials;
- Shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.

Anyone may ask the Grand Jury to conduct an investigation of an issue within its jurisdiction.

Whether it chooses to investigate such a complaint is entirely in its discretion and may be affected by workload, resource limitations or legal restrictions. It is important to note that the Grand Jury may not investigate a matter that is currently being litigated in the court system.

of its investigations, findings and recommendations and the entities reported on are required by statute to respond.

By law, the proceedings of the Grand Jury are confidential. The findings and recommendations and issues it chooses to address are published in its final report.

GRAND JURY COMPLAINT FORM

PERSON OR AGENCY ABOUT WHICH COMPLAINT IS MADE

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

GRAND JURY USE ONLY:

Date Received: _____

Number: _____

Subject: _____

NATURE OF COMPLAINT (Describe events in the order they occurred as clearly and concisely as possible. Use extra sheets if necessary and attach copies of any correspondence you feel is pertinent. Documentation becomes the property of the Grand Jury and will not be returned. **Please note: The Yuba County Grand Jury has no jurisdiction over state or federal agencies, the courts, judicial officers, private companies or most organizations.**)

WHAT PERSONS OR AGENCIES HAVE YOU CONTACTED ABOUT YOUR COMPLAINT?

Person or Agency	Address	Date of Contact	Results

WHO SHOULD THE GRAND JURY CONTACT ABOUT THIS MATTER?

Person or Agency	Address	Telephone No.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Complainant's Signature

Date

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF YUBA**

GRAND JURY APPLICATION
(Please print legibly in black or blue ink)

To: Office of the Jury Commissioner, 215 Fifth Street, Suite 200, Marysville, CA 95901

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ BIRTHDATE/PLACE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

DURATION OF RESIDENCE IN YUBA COUNTY: _____ MARITAL STATUS: _____ SEX: _____

EMPLOYER: _____ OCCUPATION: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

RETIRED (If retired please indicate your former employer and occupation above.)

Personal Information is confidential and will not be disclosed unless otherwise required by law.

1. **Have you ever served as a member of the Grand Jury?** Yes No
If yes, where and when? _____
2. **Are you a United States Citizen?** Yes No
3. **Have you been convicted of malfeasance in office or of any felony?** Yes No
4. **Have you ever been an employee of Yuba County?** Yes No
5. **Do you have any relatives employed by Yuba County? If so,** Yes No
Name: _____ Dept. _____ Relationship: _____
6. **Spouses employer** _____ **Occupation** _____ N/A
7. **Have you ever been in the military service? If yes, Branch** _____ Yes No
Nature of Employment _____ Period served _____ Highest rank or grade held _____
8. **Highest school grade completed** _____ **Degrees held** _____ **School/University**
attended _____ **Years of attendance** _____
9. **If appointed to the Grand Jury, will you make a conscientious effort to attend and participate in all of those sessions of the jury as a whole and of the committees of which you are a member?**
 Yes No
10. **If appointed to the Grand Jury, will you conscientiously adhere to all applicable rules on confidentiality and security?** Yes No
11. **Are you interested in serving as a Grand Juror?** Yes No
12. **Will you be available for jury service for approximately four hours per week?** Yes No

Other comments: _____

I affirm that the information provided in this questionnaire is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed on _____ (date) in _____ (city), California

Signature