This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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Elections Department Review of Procedures
Election Scanning Department Report

Report of inspection of ballot scanning procedures requested by Plumas County Clerk/Recorder's Office conducted on 9/25/09
Supervisors: Kathy Williams, Deputy Clerk Recorder/Registrar of Voters
Marcy DeMartile, Election Coordinator
Tina Aubrey, Department Clerk Recorder
Procedures:

- Ballots are printed and tallied by precinct
- Polling places are limited to 1000 voters
- A tape records all votes and it is saved
- Memory card is used to show election tallying on computer screen
- In counting ballots, the machine will spit back any ballot with no votes on it.

Security:

- Multiple verification approaches used
- Machines re-set for each election. No ballot goes through without verification.
- The memory card is saved in the safe
- Tapes are held for several months as a record; 22 months for federal elections and 6 months for local for any challenges
- Tapes are then destroyed
- During the ballot count, red plastic locks secure the machines. Lots of checks and balances.
- The machines can't be uploaded twice, and they are not connected outside the room.

The subcommittee that made the requested inspection believed that the election process was well-organized and the processes were reliable.

Jail Inspection Report

Reason for Inspection:
The Plumas County Grand Jury is annually required to inspect any jail within the County in accordance with the California Penal Code.

Procedure:
The Plumas County Grand jury conducted an inspection of the Plumas County correctional facility (jail), accompanied by the Sheriff and a Staff Sergeant.

Background:
The jail was constructed in 1976 for a maximum of 37 inmates. In the 1990s it was expanded to accommodate 67 inmates. Unfortunately staffing of the jail was not increased to accommodate the nearly doubling in the number of inmates. This dangerous situation has existed for more than a decade and needs to be remedied. The location of the jail is in East Quincy and is adjacent to a maintenance yard, a transfer station and a recycling facility. The jail is bordered in the back by the access road to the aforementioned facilities.

Findings and Recommendations:
The Grand jury recognizes that with the current economic downturn it is difficult to provide adequate funding for a new jail or to facilitate improvements to the existing facility and to increase the staffing needed to improve the efficiency and safety of current working conditions.
However, there are very critical needs that must be addressed somehow before a serious incident involving injury or death occurs. We request that the County take a very hard look at the conditions presented in the following report.

Facility:
Finding 1: The current jail is one of the last linear designed jails in California. The design has the cells and other rooms in a straight line where it does not permit the staff to easily observe inmates in different locations of the jail or to be able to respond to emergencies.
Finding 2: In addition, due to the poor construction design, radio communication within the facility is spotty, allowing potentially dangerous situation to develop with weak response.
Finding 3: Another concern, which is due to occasional overcrowding are the forced early release of inmates into the community. A larger facility would alleviate this reoccurring problem.

Finding 4: The perimeter fence in the exercise yard is bordered by a public access road. Outsiders have clear access to the fence enclosing the exercise yard. They can then place drugs, weapons and other contraband where inmates can retrieve them. There have been two escapes (one being abetted by an accomplice) in the past dozen years, but both were soon captured.
Finding 5: There are risks involved in transporting prisoners to the courthouse. Video arraignment, where the inmate is arraigned from the jail was tried, but poor acoustics in the jail precluded its use.
Finding 6: The washer and dryer need replacing but the kitchen was adequate and clean but is overdue for a fire inspection. Meals are well-prepared and nutritious.

***Recommendations*:**
1: New jail is needed
In the last Grand Jury report it was noted that Plumas County is to receive state funding for a new courthouse. A new jail facility must be part of the planned construction, one with improved design to insure better inmate monitoring and more consistent communication between staff.
2: Critical Need
Short of the building of a new facility, it is imperative that the current jail be provided a safer enclosure for the exercise yard which would prevent escape attempts and ensure greater exclusion from the outside public.
3 Soundproofing one of the jail rooms might enable the use of video arraignment, thereby reducing the need for dangerous transportation of inmates to the current courthouse.
4 Critical need
An efficient and dependable communication system needs to be installed in the current facility so that quick responses would help mitigate any emergencies arising within.

Staffing:
Finding 1: The current level of 15 correctional officers (three of 18 are on long term sick leave) is wholly inadequate for a jail of this size. While the staff is doing a superb job in our estimation. Understaffing encourages dangerous and threatening conditions to exist for both staff and inmates alike.
Finding 2: Because of the numerous programs going on during the evening and graveyard shift involving much movement of inmates the possibility of disruption or attack are greatest at this time. They are manned by only two officers, too few to respond effectively and safely to any problems.
Finding 3: Beside the potential problems expressed in the previous findings, there exists the possibility for future lawsuits, costing the county millions of dollars in settlements.
Finding 4: Inspections by the California Dept of corrections and rehabilitation have found the current jail to be understaffed by a minimum of five correctional officers. In addition, four previous grand juries and this one have also found the jail staffing to be terribly inadequate and unsafe.

Recommendation - Critical need:
The Board of Supervisors should immediately seek funding to bring staffing up to an adequate level. Yes it will be expensive, (the Sheriff estimates it will cost $500,000 to