

PASO ROBLES POLICE DEPARTMENT

August 21, 2012

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The Honorable Barry T. LaBarbera
Presiding Judge, Superior Court
San Luis Obispo Superior Court
1050 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

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SLO COUNTY GRAND JURY

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Dear Judge LaBarbera,

On behalf of the City of Paso Robles, I would like to thank you and the Grand Jury for reviewing and making suggestions for improvement to policies and procedures to San Luis Obispo Law Enforcement agencies. The information provided has allowed us to review our process and policies concerning these issues, and make appropriate changes and refinements. The Grand Jury has been extremely helpful in this endeavor.

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933 (c), this serves as my official response to the 2012 Grand Jury Final Report findings and recommendations concerning "A Vital Function of the Judicial System: Law Enforcement Evidence Rooms." A copy is being sent concurrently to the Grand Jury.

FINDINGS:

1. **The Police Departments of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Paso Robles, and the Sheriff's Department are not in full compliance with their respective policies pertaining to evidence room inspections.**

I agree with the Grand Jury Finding regarding the Paso Robles Police Department. The Paso Robles Police Department is retaining the services of an outside consultant and audit service to provide recommendations to ensure full compliance with policies pertaining to evidence room inspections.

5. **Paso Robles Police Department was unable to advise the number of evidence items purged due to a data entry error that occurred routinely over a period of time.**

As noted above, the Paso Robles Police Department will be retaining an outside consultant and audit service to provide recommendations in order to prevent future data entry errors.

6. **Paso Robles Police Department has advised the Grand Jury that it will complete a full inventory within the year.**

The Paso Robles Police Department has begun the inventory process and expects to have this process complete by November 1, 2012.

7. **Paso Robles Police Department does not store guns, money and drugs in a neat and orderly manner.**

Since the Grand Jury inspection, the PRPD continues to purge inventory and improve storage procedures to ensure a neat and orderly function.

8. **In the Paso Robles Police Department, five people have access to the evidence room and staff rotates every two to four years.**

I agree with the Grand Jury finding. The Paso Robles Police Department plans to reduce the number of staff with access to the evidence room.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **All law enforcement agencies in the County should adhere to their respective policies relating to property/evidence room inspections.**

PRPD continues to perform monthly property room inspections to ensure a neat and orderly function. PRPD will implement this recommendation by adhering to its policies relating to property / evidence room inspections.

3. **The Paso Robles Police Department should maintain their property/evidence room in a neat and orderly manner.**

PRPD continues to address this recommendation by improved monitoring of assigned property room personnel which includes monthly inspections. PRPD will implement this recommendation by maintaining its property /evidence room in a neat and orderly manner.

4. **The Paso Robles Police Department should consider using the services of POST or an independent consulting service to conduct a full review of its property/evidence room function.**

PRPD has implemented this recommendation by retaining the services of an outside consultant and audit service. An audit of the PRPD property room has been scheduled for September 2012. PRPD has requested the consultant to prepare a report of recommendations for improving the property room function.

5. **To reduce audit-related personnel costs, the Paso Robles Police Department should consider staffing the property/evidence room with a single dedicated Property/Evidence Technician.**

The ability to add a dedicated employee to the property room will be regularly evaluated as the economy recovers within Paso Robles. However, the PRPD sees the value in this recommendation and has already reduced the number of Property / Evidence Technicians from 5 to 3.

9. **All personnel assigned to property/evidence rooms in the county should continue their training and/or update their knowledge through professional organizations. It is also highly recommended that they join the county chapter of CAPE.**

The PRPD continues affiliation and training opportunities with the International Association of Property and Evidence. PRPD will finalize personnel membership with the California Association of Property and Evidence (CAPE) by November 1, 2012.

11. **The following police departments shall submit evidence of a full property/evidence room audit to the Grand Jury: Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo, and the Sheriff's Department.**

PRPD has retained the services of an outside consultant and audit service. An audit of the PRPD property room has been scheduled for September 2012. PRPD has requested the consultant to prepare a report of recommendations for improving the property room function. The results of the audit and recommendations will be made available to the Grand Jury upon completion.

12. **The Grand Jury recommends that the police chiefs and County Sheriff explore the feasibility of a county-wide property/evidence room consolidation, possibly under a joint powers agreement.**

This recommendation requires further analysis.

On June 13th, 2012 the Sheriff discussed the idea of consolidation with the County Chief's at the Criminal Justice Administrators Association meeting. As a result of that meeting the Sheriff contacted the San Mateo Sheriff's Office. San Mateo Sheriff's office was mentioned in the Grand Jury report as a County that was pursuing consolidation. It was determined that San Mateo County is only attempting to consolidate their property rooms with cities they contract with and they have no plans to consolidate with other agencies. On the surface this appears to be a logical plan, however upon discussion with the other police Chiefs, this idea would impose significant costs and logistical operational difficulties for Cities and the County. The Chiefs and Sheriff will continue to look for

opportunities to collaborate on evidence disposal and evaluate the possibility of the consolidation of the long term storage of refrigerated items of evidence.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Burton", written in a cursive style.

Robert Burton
Acting Chief of Police
City of Paso Robles

Cc: City Manager
San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury ✓
Paso Robles City Council