



County of Santa Cruz

Sheriff-Coroner

701 Ocean Street, Suite 340, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2440 FAX: (831) 454-2353

Steve Robbins
Sheriff-Coroner

August 25, 2005

Agenda: September 20, 2005

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, California 95060

RE: Status Report on Jail Overcrowding

Dear Members of the Board:

On February 15, 2005, your Board requested that the Sheriffs Office return in September with a status report regarding the planning, implementation and success of various strategies used by the Sheriffs Office and other justice system stakeholders to address jail overcrowding in Santa Cruz County. This letter provides background information and a status report regarding these efforts.

Since the February report, we have made significant progress in our efforts to address jail overcrowding. During this period of time, the Jail Overcrowding Committee has met on a regular basis and through the efforts of the committee's working groups and the departments and agencies comprising the committee, successful strategies have been introduced with plans to explore additional opportunities in the months ahead.

National Institute of Corrections' (NIC) Focus on Main Jail Overcrowding

As discussed in the February report to your Board, the **Sheriffs** Office received assistance from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to help identify systemic conditions that contribute to jail overcrowding in County detention facilities. As part of these efforts, **NIC** recommended strategies to effect change

in the inmate population. A number of their recommendations focused on reducing the inmate population at the Main Jail because this was the only County detention facility that was experiencing conditions of overcrowding based on rated bed capacity.

At the time that the Sheriff requested assistance from NIC, the Main Jail population had risen significantly to a total figure of 412 on August 2, 2004. The rated capacity of that facility is 311. The potential impact of the strategies to reduce jail overcrowding that have been implemented since that time and those that are being introduced currently will not be reflected in the jail population statistics for some months to come. However, the jail population analysis system, which has been in effect for the past nine months, already indicates a drop in the Main Jail population to an average figure of 376, ranging from a low of 352 to a high of 397. It is anticipated that a consistent reduction trend in the jail population will be evident by early 2006 when the new programs and procedures are fully operational.

Efforts to Address Jail Overcrowding

- < The February report to your Board identified a number of recommendations cited by NIC for implementation at County detention facilities by the Sheriffs Office. As examples, the jail population data report is now distributed on a regular basis to Jail Overcrowding Committee members, a Detention Bureau Sergeant has been assigned to work with the Main Jail Lieutenant regarding population control issues and staffing at the Main Jail has been increased through the addition of two medical rover correction officers.

An analysis of the current sentenced classification system indicated that as a result of revisions that were made to the system in September 2004, a shift had occurred in the overall inmate population reflecting a 14.2% increase in population at the Jail Farm compared to the three other detention facilities which showed an overall reduction in the number of inmates. Detention staff will continue to evaluate these population figures and explore other potential modifications to the classification system.

- < During the 2005-06 budget hearings, the Sheriffs' Office provided your Board with a report documenting the progress that had been made on a number of fronts involving the Sheriffs Office and the Probation Department.

Additionally, Gemma, a not-for-profit agency, proposed an innovative treatment program to help reduce jail overcrowding and high rates of recidivism among women in Santa Cruz County. On the September 13, 2005, Board agenda, the Probation Department recommended that their department, in conjunction with the Human Resources Agency, the Health

Services Agency and the Planning Department, work with Gemma to develop a service delivery model and a budget for the program and to return to your Board with a status report on January 24, 2006.

< As part of the Probation Department's budget hearing, your Board approved approximately \$300,000 to finance the addition of two deputy probation officers and contract services for alternatives to incarceration including a warrant reduction program, a work crew program and an electronic monitoring program. Since that time, the Probation Department has actively pursued the following:

1. Ongoing recruitment and hiring activities resulting in a newly hired probation officer and a time line that will provide a fully staffed pretrial program as early as the end of October.
2. Assignment of a deputy probation officer supervisor to train staff, assist in the oversight of contracts and develop protocols for the supervised release programs with implementation beginning as soon as November 2005.
3. Design and implementation of the first pretrial case management system and template pretrial report which includes a validated risk instrument that will assist staff in reducing failures to appear in court as well as recidivism during pretrial release. The system also automatically calculates beds saved by the pretrial release programs.
4. Development of data tracking systems that will provide information on the number of completed pretrial reports.

In recent months, the pretrial unit has focused its limited resources on increasing pretrial release authorized verbally after judicial review by phone. From the first quarter of 2005 to the second, these releases have doubled from seven to fifteen a month. Similarly, the amount of pretrial interviews conducted is increasing. It is anticipated that there will be significant impact on jail crowding beginning the last quarter of this year and into the first half of 2006, as the new alternative programs become fully implemented. The Probation Department intends to measure outcomes and jail bed days averted by each program and will provide this information in future reports to your Board.

Additional Efforts

< The Probation Department and the County Mental Health Agency are working jointly to address the needs of probationers with mental health and substance abuse problems. Staff has submitted a grant for federal funding to develop jail diversion programs for this population.

- < The Sheriff's Office has developed a volunteer-based phone call reminder program to help ensure that persons who are released on "promise to appear" make their scheduled court date. The department is also reviewing the inmates released on their "own recognizant" for misdemeanors using revised standards and is developing an improved immigration detainer transfer system.
- < The Sheriffs Office will continue to evaluate staffing patterns at the Main Jail. The department has moved mental health to a larger unit in the Main Jail to better utilize staff and available housing space and has established a special unit to support inmates trying to separate from gang affiliation.
- < The Sheriffs Office is working with the Probation Department and Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA) to provide continued support for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program despite the unreliability of federal funding. This issue is addressed in a separate letter from the Sheriffs Office scheduled for the September 27, 2005 Board agenda.
- < The Information Services Department is merging jail booking data with a pretrial investigation template report to eliminate the duplication of entries into the system and thus reduce the time required for pretrial interviews.
- < The Court Processing work group will continue to explore potential strategies to expedite court processing and reduce unnecessary delays.

Conclusion

The Sheriffs Office has chaired the Jail Overcrowding Committee since July 23, **2004**, providing justice system stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss the numerous and complex issues related to jail overcrowding and to develop strategies for reducing the inmate population in local detention facilities. The Sheriffs Office will continue to collaborate with the members of the Committee to increase the efficiency and quality of systems, seek additional resources through grants and other revenue sources and identify additional programs to reduce jail overcrowding without compromising public safety.

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It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report.

Very truly yours,



STEVE ROBBINS
Sheriff-Coroner

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

cc: Probation
courts
HSA
Sheriff, Attn: Susan Rozario
CAO

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