

FILED

MAY - 4 2000

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF TRINITY
BY: DONNA REGNANI, DEPUTY CLERK**

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
1999-2000**

**JUDICIAL COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT**

JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER

**This report was approved
On April 13, 2000**

**1999-2000 TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
JUDICIAL COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT
JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER**

PURPOSE:

The Grand Jury is required to conduct periodic reviews of county government. Findings and recommendations in the 1998-1999 Grand Jury regarding juvenile crime, juvenile detention and the supervision of juvenile offenders, merited follow-up review by the current Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND:

Juvenile crime has escalated dramatically in the 1990's. Statistics can be seen in the "Trinity County Juvenile Facility Needs Assessment", completed in March 1999, by Terry Lee, Chief Probation Officer. A copy of this report will be maintained, with this report, in the Grand Jury Files.

It is believed that some of the increase in juvenile crime is associated with domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse. Crimes committed range from "out of control behavior" such as runaways, to the most severe, including rape and murder. Repeat offenders are becoming more common, and their crimes often become more serious with each repeat offense.

The challenges of detaining, supervising and treating juvenile offenders, press the Probation Department personnel and facilities to the limit of their present staffing and housing. More violent and serious offenders are housed in secure facilities outside of the county at a great expense to Trinity County. The Juvenile Assessment Center is housed in a converted residence that is a non-secure facility. Juveniles can be held at this facility for a maximum of ninety-six hours. Juveniles that need longer non-secure care are held for 96 hours, then sent home on electronic surveillance for 3 days, and finally can be returned to the Juvenile Assessment Center for another 96 hours, if necessary. The county has recently been successful in obtaining the necessary funds to construct a new, secure juvenile detention facility.

The Juvenile Assessment Center houses an on site Community School which is run in cooperation with Trinity High School. Some students from the community are court-ordered to attend this school. A Probation Officer monitors behavior, both on the bus and during class time.

Probationary juveniles performing required hours of public service spend weekends at the facility: reporting Friday afternoon, and leaving Sunday night or Monday morning. Over the weekends these juveniles work in teams performing community service projects such as graffiti eradication, trash clean up, school grounds maintenance, animal shelter work, gardening/landscaping, firewood cutting, splitting and stacking.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

The Judicial Committee met with the Trinity County Chief Probation Officer and the Manager of the Juvenile Assessment Program. Committee members inspected the Juvenile Assessment Center, reviewed plans for new facility, and reviewed the report "Trinity County

Juvenile Facility Needs Assessment," dated March 1999, completed by Terry Lee, Chief Probation Officer.

FINDING #1:

The present non-secure facility is not adequate to house all juvenile detention cases that occur in Trinity County. The County is doing a very good job with the non-secure cases. Without secure beds, Trinity County cannot detain violent and serious offender cases, and still keep them housed close to their families. The County cannot provide the needed secure areas, provide needed care, and still keep costs contained. It cost more than \$250,000 to house minors in Juvenile Detention Halls inside and outside of Trinity County. Group Homes cost approximately an additional \$560,000 per year of which the County is responsible for 40% of the cost. It is expected that each year the number of secure beds needed will rise. For specialized treatment (sexual predators, youths with drug and alcohol problems, mentally ill, and developmentally disabled offenders) beds can cost as much as \$9,000 each per month.

The proposed new facility will provide approximately 20 secure beds (with another room which may provide additional expansion later), kitchen, classroom, padded cell, office space, and a variety of other needed areas. This new facility will reduce travel expenses (both for transporting minors to and from out-of-county placements, for court appearances, as well as for mandated inspections of facilities where we have placements). The new facility may also provide an additional source of future income, by renting our extra juvenile detention services to other counties, which have exceeded their capabilities.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

Continue with the planned building of the secure Juvenile Detention Facility.

The Grand Jury additionally recommends that the existing non-secure facility be retained as operable, to be utilized as a step-down unit. This can be accomplished as a county directed or leased facility, or by selling the existing facility to a group that specializes in non-secure group homes. The local community seems to have accepted the reality of this present non-secure detention center, and there will always be juveniles in need of this less severe service; therefore, it should not be closed.

FINDINGS #2:

The present Juvenile Facility contains a community school. Juveniles receiving this instruction can be from the detention facility, or may be subject to a court order directing them to attend such a school, from the community at large. Trinity High School works in cooperation with the Community School. Each student works at his/her level on an established program.

In the new Detention Facility, a classroom is planned in the secure area. This classroom would provide for increased space and increased usage.

RECOMMENDATIONS #2:

In the present facility, the cooperation between the Juvenile Center and Trinity High School has been a benefit to the students. A Probation Officer present in the classroom to monitor/correct behavior has improved the ability of the students to learn. Both of these activities need to continue.

In the proposed Detention Center the classroom will be inside the secured area. Any community court ordered students/teachers would be subject to a search prior to entering the facility each day. The Grand Jury recommends that Trinity High School maintain their cooperation with the Juvenile Center in providing these students with the best education possible in these circumstances. If the new Detention Center is filled to capacity, the school may not be able to admit additional court-ordered community students who are not detained. If this becomes a reality, Trinity County and the Schools need to have a back up plan for the over capacity events.

FINDINGS #3:

Contracts at present for food service are provided by Trinity Hospital and the Jail. A Duty Officer must go for the meals and bring them back.

At present laundry is done by juveniles.

RECOMMENDATIONS #3:

Continue with this at present. Prepare cost analysis for new facility to see if meal preparation on-site, or contract service, is more cost effective.

As part of the planning process for the new facility, a contract for laundry services is being considered. The Grand Jury recommends that a cost analysis be completed prior to adopting a plan.

FINDINGS #4:

At present time, video arraignment is not used in minor cases. The new Detention Facility is being designed to be wired so as to be able to accommodate video arraignment from the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS #4:

Continue with the plans to wire the new facility for video arraignment capabilities.

The Grand Jury recommends that representatives from the Court House, Jail Facility, and the Juvenile Detention Center form a committee to study the needs for a new video arraignment center. How to finance the cost of the equipment and maintenance contracts should also be considered.

FINDINGS #5:

At the present facility, cooperation is maintained with County Mental Health for necessary programs for juveniles. Drug/alcohol testing is done on admittance and at regular intervals. All probationers' performance is evaluated. Sentences can be reduced for good behavior, or the juveniles can be sent to secure facilities outside the county for bad behavior. The juveniles can also earn privileges by good behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS #5:

Continue with these present programs at the new facility.

At the new facility, it is planned to have a full time Mental Health Employee and a full time Drug/Alcohol Counselor. With a capacity of 20 juveniles in a secure setting, these programs are extremely important in trying to reform the children. Many of these juveniles (prior to committing crimes) have a long history of domestic violence/abuse in the home, drug/alcohol abuse, by themselves or family members, and/or additionally: mental health problems.

The Grand Jury recommends a program, in cooperation with public schools that would recognize potential juvenile offenders prior to crimes being committed. These children could enter such a program on referrals from teachers, parents and/or concerned citizens. This program could be run as an outreach of the proposed full time Mental Health Position in the new Juvenile Detention Center and would include recognition, intervention, and treatment as needed.

CONCLUSION:

The Probation Department and Juvenile Counselors are doing an outstanding job administering a comprehensive program of education, as well as overseeing juvenile offenders. Early identification of juvenile offenders, and the diagnosis and treatment of underlying problems, need to be improved. This Department is looking for ways to save and increase funds while increasing the capabilities. The proposed new Juvenile Detention Center is a necessity. At the same time, the Grand Jury recommends that the county continue to plan to meet the need for a non-secure facility as a step-down unit. It is believed that most "At-risk" children start showing identifying signs in early grade school. "At-risk" children need to be identified earlier in order to reduce teen-age crime.

30-DAY RESPONSES REQUESTED FROM: Board of Supervisors, Trial Court Judges,
Chief Probation Officer



TRINITY COUNTY

SUPERIOR COURT

P.O. Box 1258 (530) 623-1208
Weaverville, California 96093-1258

May 17, 2000

Ralph Modine, Chairman
Trinity County Board of Supervisors
P.O. Box 1258
Weaverville, CA 96093

Pat Hamilton, Foreperson
1999-2000 Trinity County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 1117
Weaverville, CA 96093

RE: Response to 1999-2000 Trinity County Grand Jury
Final Report on the *Juvenile Assessment Center*

I agree with Finding #1. I believe Recommendation #1 is being implemented by the Probation Department.

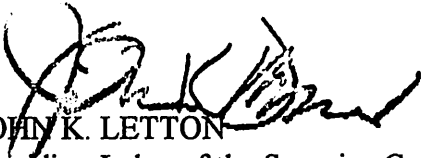
I agree with Finding #2, and I believe the cooperation between the Probation Department and the Trinity County Office of Education is good. I agree that open communication and cooperation are essential in order to best incorporate the new detention center in the overall plan for alternative education opportunities.

I agree with Finding #3. I believe the cost analyses recommended are part of the planning for the new detention facility.

I agree with Finding #4. With regard to Recommendation #4 I feel there is less need for a video arraignment procedure in juvenile cases, and greater policy reasons for juveniles to be present in court for all stages of their cases. This is particularly significant in order to encourage parental involvement. I would be happy to participate on a committee to evaluate the possibility of video arraignment equipment at the new detention center.

I agree with Finding #5. Recommendation #5 is very general and could run the risk of "tagging" certain children as pre-identified "trouble makers". This concept is fraught with difficulties. On the other hand, there is no doubt that early intervention through behavioral health staff and probation staff is very important and should be pursued by all county departments. There are several programmatic plans presently in the works to do this, and I support each of them.

Very truly yours,



JOHN K. LETTON
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

cc: Terry Lee, Chief Probation Officer
Anthony C. Edwards, Judge of the Superior Court
Jim French, Superintendent Trinity County Office of Education



TRINITY COUNTY

RECEIVED

SEP 28 2000

SUPERIOR COURT
JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

TRINITY COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Post Office Box 158
Weaverville, CA 96093
Telephone (530) 623-1204 Fax (530) 623-1237

TERRY LEE, Chief Probation Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: John K. Letton, Judge Superior Court
Board of Supervisors

FROM: Terry Lee, Chief Probation Officer

DATE: May 5, 2000

RE: Response to Grand Jury's Final Report on the Juvenile Assessment
Center

I have reviewed and considered the findings of the Grand Jury. These findings are both thoughtful and insightful in regard to the Juvenile Assessment Center. This Department continues to make every effort to ensure public safety while affording minors opportunities at rehabilitation and accountability for their actions. I concur with the findings of the Grand Jury and it is my intention to explore all fiscally viable options for operating the Trinity County Secure Juvenile Detention Facility. This department enters into contracts for food and medical services that make fiscal sense and comply with Title 15 standards.

This department continues to actively seek federal and state grant monies to offset the financial costs of operating a full time Juvenile Hall. Recently this department was awarded a three-year grant to purchase the equipment necessary to provide for the safe and secure transportation of detained minors.

There should be no misunderstanding in regard to the operational philosophy of this department. This department continues to believe in the possibilities of change for those young people who enter into the criminal justice system. We are building a secure detention facility that will provide fiscal relief to the rising costs of out of county detention and the opportunity to provide programming that addresses local needs and concerns.

The Trinity County Juvenile Detention Facility is in no way an indication that there is a substantial out of control criminal population of youthful offenders in Trinity County. Trinity County will simply be able to apply the ultimate consequence for minors who are temporarily beyond control and in need of immediate sanctions for their actions. Majorities of our youth involved in the criminal justice system respond well to progressive intervention services. The Trinity County Juvenile Assessment Center has served that purpose and served it well. With dedicated and professionally trained staff the Juvenile Assessment Center has been a place for youth to engage in community work projects, address substance abuse and behavioral issues that are impeding success in their lives. However good the Juvenile Assessment Center is, it is limited in meeting the needs of those few minors who must have secure detention. It is our intention that the new Trinity County Juvenile Hall incorporates the best elements of the Juvenile Assessment Center while still providing secure detention for minors.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to quality government and support for Juvenile programs in Trinity County.



TRINITY COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

P.O. Drawer 1613 (530) 623-1217
WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093

Dero B. Forslund, Clerk
Jeannie Nix-Temple, County Administrative Officer

July 19, 2000

To: Honorable John K. Letton, Presiding Judge
Superior Court

From: Supervisor Robert A. Reiss

Subject: 1999-2000 Trinity County Grand Jury Report
Juvenile Assessment Center

Dear Judge Letton,

The following response is provided as requested regarding the above report:

Recommendation #1:

I agree with the recommendation.

Recommendation #2:

I agree with the recommendation. I also support having a backup plan in place to meet the educational needs of the incarcerated juveniles, should the new facility become filled to capacity.

Recommendation #3:

I agree with the recommendation. I support preparing cost analysis for services at the new facility.

Recommendation #4:

I agree with the recommendation. I would suggest that either the CAO or the Auditor be included on a committee designed to study the needs for a video arraignment center, mainly for the purpose of determining if the County would be responsible for a portion of the cost of the equipment or maintenance.

Recommendation #5:

I agree with the recommendation concerning the present programs. While I support early intervention and education regarding potential alcohol/drug abuse and juvenile offenders, I have a concern about creating a program based on referrals from teachers, parents, and/or concerned citizens. I support educating teachers, parents and concerned citizens as to what programs may be available, and the correct procedure to access them.

I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work and the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Reiss

DATE: November 9, 2000

APPROVED: Robert A. Reiss

CHAIRMAN-Board of Supervisors