

MEMORANDUM
PLACER COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

To: The Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Thomas M. Miller, County Executive Officer
Mike Boyle, Assistant County Executive Officer
By: Michael E. Paddock, Senior Management Analyst
Date: September 12, 2006
Subject: Placer County Grand Jury – FY 2005-06 Final Report – Tahoe Justice Center

Recommendation:

It is recommended that your Board approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the attached letter of response to the findings and recommendations contained in the FY 2005-06 Final Report of the Placer County Grand Jury concerning the Tahoe Justice Center or provide other direction to the CEO regarding the response.

Background:

In June 2006 the Placer County Grand Jury issued its Final Report for FY 2005-06. The Report contains various findings and recommendations related to the Tahoe Justice Center facility and its affect upon law enforcement operations. The Grand Jury has concluded that the current facility has limitations in space and function that require the Sheriff to divide his operation into separate locations and to transport prisoners to more distant facilities (Truckee, Auburn) and this creates a less efficient operation and may increase overall costs. As a result of their conclusions the Grand Jury is also recommending that a replacement facility be constructed on the existing site as soon as possible. Your Board and the County Executive Officer are listed by the Grand Jury as respondents to these findings and recommendations and therefore must submit a formal reply (response) to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within ninety days. A letter of response has been prepared for consideration and approval by your Board and it is included in this memorandum as an attachment. It reaffirms the policy decision of your Board to construct a replacement facility by the year 2010 for an estimated cost of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) with initial planning and preliminary design work to begin in FY 2006-07.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no direct cost or other expense related to the recommendation, however, there is a significant cost of \$20,000,000 to plan, design and construct a replacement facility for the Sheriff in the Tahoe area.

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

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EDWARD "TED" M. GAINES
District 4

BRUCE KRANZ
District 5



September 7, 2006

The Honorable Frances Kearney
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Placer
11546 B Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Judge Kearney:

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors I am pleased to submit our response to the findings and recommendations contained in the FY 2005-06 Final Report of the Grand Jury concerning the Tahoe Justice Center. We have carefully reviewed and considered the information and conclusions of the Grand Jury related to the current condition of the justice center facility and its effect on law enforcement operations in the Tahoe area. We have also consulted the County Executive Officer regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the Report to gain his insights and possible remedies to help plan for a replacement Justice Center in the Tahoe area. The specific responses of the Board follow below:

Tahoe Justice Center

Finding:

1. The Placer County law enforcement operations in Eastern Placer County are inefficient due to inadequate facilities.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding. It is possible that peak efficiency in law enforcement operations is affected by separation of patrol and the investigations unit and also due in part to transporting prisoners to more distant locations (Truckee, Auburn) as a result of the limitations of the current facility. However, in our view, the overall law enforcement operations in this area are effective and adequately serves the needs of the citizens of the County.

Finding:

2. There are direct costs in dollars and man-hours and potential financial costs due to unnecessary additional exposures that can be attributed to these inefficiencies.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding. Although peak efficiency may be affected by the condition of the current facility, e.g., separation of some functions and prisoner transports, the overall operations are effective and adequate. Also, the findings by the Grand Jury have not quantified the degree of extra expense or cost, if any, that may occur as a result of the condition of the current facility.

Finding:

3. The Grand Jury supports the Site Analysis Report, and we believe that the time has come to move the planning and construction process forward.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding. As indicated in the response of the County Executive Officer, the "Site Analysis Report" is a study conducted by a consultant to the Sheriff for capital projects with assistance from staff of the Facility Services Department. This study provides useful information with thoughtful reasoning and recommendations regarding various options to replace the current Justice Center. It offers another planning tool to help develop a replacement facility, however, further study and analysis is required before a replacement facility may be constructed.

Finding:

4. A new all inclusive Tahoe Justice Center at Burton Creek would encourage a dynamic synergy among personnel, improve efficiency, lessen liability exposure and serve the citizens of Eastern Placer County.

Response:

We agree with the finding. A new Justice Center may improve the level of efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement functions relative to the current facility. In addition, a new facility may also reduce costs over the long term resulting in better service to the citizens of Placer County and the local community.

Finding:

5. Our County Sheriff is concerned for the residents and his employees in the Tahoe area and supports a new modern facility for his operations.

Response:

We agree with the finding that the Sheriff has submitted a letter to the Grand Jury expressing his concern about the current facility and his support for a new or replacement Justice Center in Tahoe.

Recommendation:

This grand Jury strongly urges the County to proceed promptly with planning and construction on the all-inclusive law enforcement facility for the citizens and taxpayers of eastern Placer County and Lake Tahoe.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. On July 24, 2006 the Placer County Board of Supervisors approved a comprehensive Capital Facilities Financing Plan that includes a multi-year, phased project to plan, design and construct a replacement Justice Center in Tahoe by 2010 for an estimated cost of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000). The proposed financing plan for FY 2006-07 includes an appropriation of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to initiate planning and preliminary design work for this project.

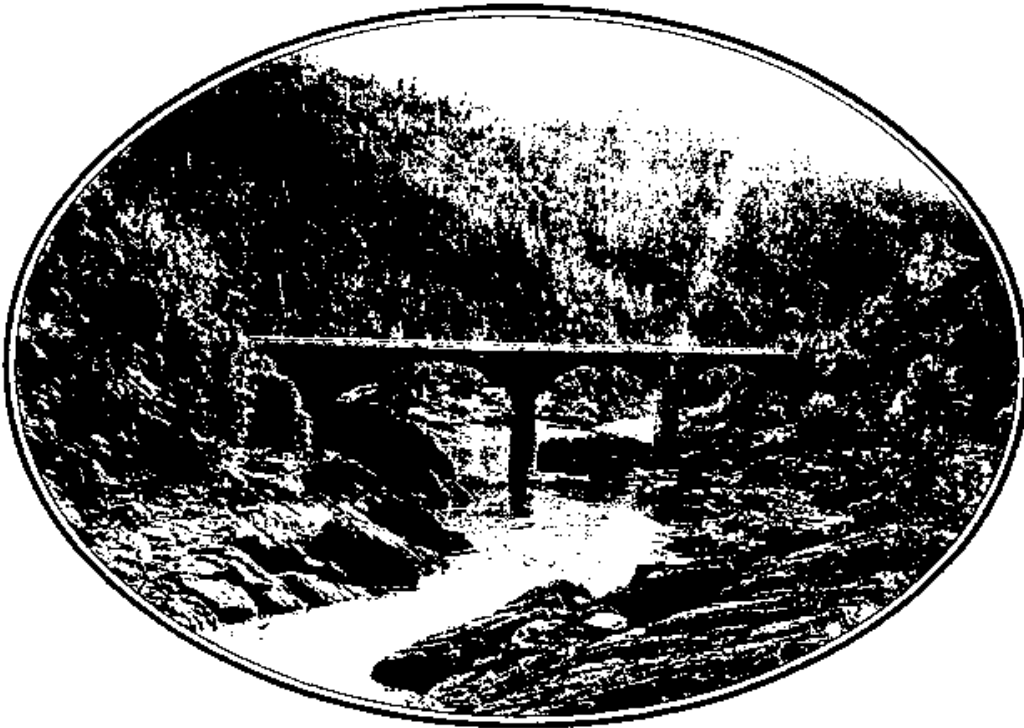
Sincerely,

Bill Santucci, Chairman,
Placer County Board of Supervisors

Cc

Thomas M. Miller, County Executive Officer
Mike Boyle, Assistant County Executive Officer
Edward Bonner, Placer County Sheriff
Anthony La Bouff, County Counsel
Jim Durfee, Director, Facility Services
Mary Dietrich, Assistant Director, Facility Services

Placer County



Mountain Quarry Bridge

GRAND JURY
FINAL REPORT
2005-2006

Tahoe Justice Center

SUMMARY:

Placer County's law enforcement facilities in the Lake Tahoe area have been recognized to be inadequate for more than ten years. Virtually all Placer County Grand Juries over that period have commented on this deficiency. There is inadequate space at the existing Burton Creek facility to house all essential functions, and many have been dispersed to rented facilities. The rental costs plus operational inefficiencies are significant. The County Sheriff has voiced his concerns and written a memo to our panel explaining some of the serious consequences his department is forced to deal with due to inadequate facilities in this part of the county.

Within the past year, a comprehensive Site Analysis Report has been completed which recommends Burton Creek as the best location for a new Tahoe Justice Center. The 2005-2006 Placer County Grand Jury recommends that an all-inclusive Justice Center be built in eastern Placer County per the recommendation of this Site Analysis Report. We believe it will save considerable operational money by allowing an officer to arrest, book and jail suspects at one convenient location. The close proximity of related departments will encourage better interaction, eliminate inefficiencies and ultimately provide better service to the people of our county. We believe the money that would be saved and the reduced exposure to potential liabilities are overwhelming reasons to consolidate the County law enforcement services into a new all-inclusive Tahoe Justice Center.

BACKGROUND:

It has been more than ten years since it was determined that the county's law enforcement facilities in Eastern Placer County (Lake Tahoe) are inadequate. The existing Burton Creek facility has been remodeled for security and safety reasons on many occasions. The various staffs and offices are spread out at many separate rented locations in the area. The county presently contracts with Nevada County to share its jail facility in Truckee. To reach this facility requires many additional travel miles and man-hours, which heightens the security and safety issues.

Virtually all of the past eleven Placer County Grand Juries have recommended major improvements, and most have recommended a new all-inclusive Justice Center facility. The 1998/99 Grand Jury stated: "the Burton Creek facility is obsolete, unsafe and marginally functional." The county responded that it was working toward a long-term solution. Two years later the Grand Jury wrote, "The 2000/01 Grand Jury believes nothing short of complete replacement can provide a level of safety and adequacy required of public buildings." The county, at that time, believed that this might happen by 2005. The 2002/03 Grand Jury noted, "the patrol division has moved to a rental facility in Carnelian Bay providing more room at Burton Creek." This Grand Jury also recommended a new facility. The County Executive Office wrote, "The County is anxious to...focus its attention on the design and construction of a new justice facility in Tahoe, which we expect to be a vast improvement over the facilities we now have."

METHODOLOGY:

In its investigation, the Grand Jury did the following:

- 1) Reviewed ten past Grand Jury reports regarding law enforcement operations in the eastern part of Placer County.
- 2) Toured the Burton Creek substation at Lake Tahoe.
- 3) Interviewed facility and operational personnel involved in the day-to-day operation of the law enforcement agencies in eastern Placer County.
- 4) Interviewed responsible County agency and departmental officials, (Placer County Sheriff, County Facility Director, assistant County Executive Officer and the elected County, Tahoe district, Supervisor)
- 5) Reviewed the September 8, 2005, Site Analysis Report.

NARRATIVE/FACTS:

The current sheriff's facility at Burton Creek is inadequate. The building, built in 1960, is currently used for the following:

- 1) Sheriff administration.
- 2) Jail/booking facility (weekday only, no overnight stays)
- 3) Sheriff's dispatch, investigations and records clerk offices,
- 4) Superior Court
- 5) Traffic Court,
- 6) Small Claims Court
- 7) The District Attorney's office.

None of the above department accommodations are adequate by present-day standards. Our Sheriff, Ed Bonner, has enthusiastically offered the attached memo to point out his concerns with the Tahoe substation and with the welfare of his employees working that area of the county.

Several related offices and departments are not located at Burton Creek due to lack of space. These include the following:

- 1) Sheriff patrol division (currently in rented facility in Carmelian Bay).
- 2) A 24/7 Jail/booking facility (currently split between a contract agreement with Nevada County Jail in Truckee and the main Placer County Jail in Auburn),
- 3) Separate Juvenile Jail/booking facility (currently available only in the Auburn facility),
- 4) Probation department offices (currently in rented facility in Tahoe Vista),
- 5) Office space suitable for defense attorney interviews or public defender accommodations.

These separated office locations tend to inhibit the "team approach" which is so important in law enforcement agencies.

The current necessity to disperse essential functions has financial consequences and potential liabilities including the following:

- 1) Rented Facilities – It is costly to find a location, secure a lease, remodel rented space to make secure and workable, and then to pay rent.
- 2) Personnel – Extra man-hours are required to transport prisoners for booking, jailing, court appearance, and interviews. This not only costs salary and overtime but at times results in patrol areas not covered.
- 3) Vehicle – Extra miles driven increase county vehicle wear and tear. Fuel costs, extra maintenance, and depreciation costs are also incurred.
- 4) Security, Safety and Inefficiency – Exposure to liability is increased substantially by additional miles driven to transport prisoners, meet with colleagues, rent outside offices, and having law enforcement people traveling outside secured offices to do their jobs.

Of course, the severe winter conditions at high altitude eastern Placer County magnify all these costs and liability exposures.

To address the need for a new facility, a Site Analysis Report, dated September 8, 2005, was completed by Facility Services Department architect Bill Lardner and Sheriff Capital Project's consultant Steven Reader.

This Site Analysis Report for the future Tahoe Justice Center is comprehensive and thorough. The recommended facility would include all Sheriff operations including jail and patrol divisions, the District Attorney's office, the Probation department and the Courts and their staff. The recommended site for this Justice Center is the Burton Creek location and involves moving the public works road maintenance operations to Cabin Creek. In addition, this report suggests a progression in building this project that would allow the continuation of present services with minimal inconvenience.

Ten of the last eleven Grand Juries have recommended major improvements and or full replacement of the Burton Creek facility. The reasons include security for the public, the employees and prisoners, fire safety, convenience, suitability for county departments, and the necessity for the county to operate efficiently with taxpayer money.

FINDINGS:

The Placer County Grand Jury makes the following findings:

1. The Placer County law enforcement operations in Eastern Placer County are inefficient due to inadequate facilities.
2. There are direct costs in dollars and man-hours and potential financial costs due to unnecessary additional exposures that can be attributed to these inefficiencies.
3. The Grand Jury supports the Site Analysis Report, and we believe that the time has come to move the planning and construction process forward.
4. A new all inclusive Tahoe Justice Center at Burton Creek would encourage a dynamic synergy among personnel, improve efficiency, lessen liability exposure and serve the citizens of Eastern Placer County well.
5. Our County Sheriff is concerned for the residents and his employees in the Tahoe area and supports a new modern facility for his operations.

CONCLUSIONS:

Regarding the inadequate law enforcement facilities at Lake Tahoe, the same key issues, which are safety, security and inefficiency, surface every year. The safety and security issues involve exposures that are dangerous and are potential liabilities to the County. The inefficiencies of overcrowding, off-site rented offices and transporting prisoners from place to place are costly and wasteful.

Now that a thoroughly researched and comprehensive September. 8, 2005 "Site Analysis Report for the Future Tahoe Justice Center" has been finished and submitted, a suitable location at Burton Creek has been determined. Studies have been completed, recommendations have been submitted, the need has been defined, and it is time for Placer County to build a new Justice Center in Lake Tahoe.

RECOMMENDATION:

This Grand Jury strongly urges the County to proceed promptly with planning and construction on the all-inclusive law enforcement facility for the citizens and taxpayers of eastern Placer County and Lake Tahoe.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE (S):

Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT:

Placer County Sheriff Memo, dated 4-19-06

PLACER COUNTY
SHERIFF
CORONER-MARSHAL



EDWARD N. BONNER
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

DATE: April 19, 2006

TO: Placer County Grand Jury

FROM: Edward N. Bonner, Sheriff-Coroner-Marshal

SUBJECT: BURTON CREEK FACILITY

In 1958 construction of the Burton Creek facility began in preparation for the 1960 Olympics. Over the years it has been extensively remodeled. The building has reached a point where remodeling is futile as there are many inadequacies that cannot be adequately corrected to meet today's building needs and standards. There are numerous safety related issues that I would like to highlight.

The electrical supply is outdated, which causes overloading of some circuits. The building was constructed with materials that are now outdated. The building complies with ADA only because the outside perimeter has not been changed to the point that new standards must be met.

Building security is a concern when examining the Burton Creek facility. Although there is a bulletproof front glass window at the lobby entrance, the perimeter needs additional security features, such as video surveillance.

The jail facility met required standards when it was built; however, it is now inadequate. The linear layout takes the jail deputy away from the primary task to work the front counter on other duties. Within the inner perimeter of the Tahoe jail is a stairway and major pedestrian intersection through which law enforcement officers travel daily. The booking area exposes non-sworn employees and visitors to inmate workers due to the use of common hallways.

Space needs are also a concern. A co-ed restroom is shared by all staff. Current staffing levels exceeds maximum occupancy for the room where training and meetings occur. Storage for evidence is outside. There is inadequate space for support services.

Although we gained some much needed room by relocating the Patrol force to Camelian Woods we have separated patrol deputies from the main office. The opportunity for casual discussion about criminal activity and suspects between Investigation and Patrol staff has been reduced if not eliminated in many cases. In modern, well thought out law enforcement buildings these two functions are placed in close proximity to allow those valuable communications.

After our meeting on March 14, 2006, I have been in contact with CEO Tom Miller, Supervisor Bruce Kranz and have asked our Risk Management Division to do a workplace evaluation of the work stations in the front counter area.

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The Burton Creek facility has for many years been in need of replacement. At least 10 grand juries have rightfully identified the many deficiencies of the facility. Tax payer dollars spent to patch the inadequacies as they arise at this point are tax payer dollars wasted. I support any and all efforts to replace this decaying building with a new facility that will provide the employees of the North Lake Tahoe Substation with a safe working environment.

