

Report on the Rountree Facility

Background

The Rountree Lane Jail is located at 90 and 100 Rountree Lane, Watsonville. It consists of two detention installations at one site near Buena Vista Landfill in Santa Cruz County: a minimum-security and a medium security facility. Inmates may be incarcerated for various criminal offenses including Vehicle Code, Penal Code, or Health and Safety violations.

Rountree 1, referred to as “Medium Security”, is a medium security jail for men with two direct-supervision-housing units. The men detained are serving sentences of over 60 days but less than one year. One-half of the facility was opened in May 1996, and the other half was opened in February 1999. Medium Security is located next door to Rountree 2, referred to as “the Jail Farm”. The Jail Farm is a minimum-security facility housing male inmates. The Jail Farm is for men sentenced to less than 60 days. Jail Farm inmates may participate in educational and vocational programs or are assigned to work details.

An on-site kitchen services both Medium Security and the Jail Farm. Medical and other services are also provided. Educational programs are available from Government funded providers, Community providers (programs funded by the Inmate Welfare Fund) and Volunteer groups.

The underlying philosophy of the Sheriff’s Department is rehabilitation of inmates. The Santa Cruz County Inmate Programs have two main goals: to release the inmate better equipped to lead a productive life outside; and to provide meaningful programs that improve behavior, thereby increasing security within the facility and outside.

Sources

- a. Chief of Detention, Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Dept.
- b. Rountree Facility Commander
- c. Alcohol and Drug Program Administrator
- d. Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Dept. Web site <http://www.scsheriff.com/>
- e. Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office, Sheriff’s Detention Bureau 1999
- f. IWF Trust Annual Report 2001-2002
- g. Rountree Jail tour

Findings

1. Medium Security has a total rated capacity of 96 inmates. Population on the day of our visit was 77. The Jail Farm has a rated capacity of 162 inmates and on the day of our visit the population was 115. Both Rountree facilities are clean and well maintained by inmates under staff supervision.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES

2. There is no staff relief for illness, vacation, etc. after a recent 12.5% cut in funding led to a loss of officers. The economy and State budget crisis will likely require new budget cuts at County jails.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

Though there is no relief factor at Rountree, we are fully staffed. If in fact there are budget cuts, it will be up to the Sheriff where he wants to make the cuts.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY AGREES

Staff relief for illness and vacations is provided through overtime and by extra-help employees. The County concurs that the State budget crisis will impact services in the future.

3. On occasion, inmates are separated for disciplinary reasons. Inmates can only be separated temporarily due to the open plan at Medium Security.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

The Medium Facility does have temporary holding rooms, however, because the Medium is a direct supervision jail, they are rarely used. If an inmate is unable to live in this open plan, his classification would change and he would be moved to the Main Jail.

4. There are currently about 10 women in the county who qualify for medium security incarceration. No women are housed at Rountree. (See the Main Jail Report).

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

Rountree is an all male facility.

5. Staff estimates that 80% of inmates countywide are substance abusers. Most do not qualify for drug treatment under Proposition 36 Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (Prop. 36). Furthermore, Prop. 36 does not apply to alcohol abuse. There are no Prop. 36 cases at Rountree.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

The percentage of 80% is a figure that may be higher or lower. The statement is making reference to inmate's cases being affected even though their sentence may not indicate drugs or alcohol. It is true that there are no Prop. 36 cases at Rountree, however, the drug and alcohol unit at Rountree, (SAFE PROGRAM) houses many inmates that have been in Prop. 36 programs and failed.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES

6. Drug and alcohol treatment is available for inmates at a lower cost than from outside providers. For instance, residential drug treatment costs approximately \$135 per person per day. Rountree cost is about \$75 per inmate per day using Pajaro Valley Prevention (which is also an outside provider). However, comparison of service is difficult due to the large number of variables in the programs.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff

These figures were given by Chief Simpson.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY AGREES

Residential drug treatment costs an average of \$106 per day, and includes all room and board costs as well as staffing for client supervision (e.g., night shift). If the Pajaro Valley Prevention per day cost includes only treatment costs and not the room, board and supervision related to the Rountree facility, the cost estimates may not be comparable.

7. About one-half of inmates at Medium Security are illegal aliens. When each inmate's sentence is up the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) picks the inmate up for deportation. INS requires that illegal aliens convicted of crimes be housed in at least a medium security facility until sentences are served. This federal requirement provides no funding.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

The number of illegal aliens housed at Rountree constantly changes. The county does receive some reimbursement from a federal grant for housing illegal aliens, (SCAAP). The amount of reimbursement changes from year to year. Reimbursement is determined by the amount of money available, numbers of inmates and the types of crimes. It should be noted that the only illegal aliens housed at Rountree are completing sentences on local charges before they are released to INS.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES

8. Medium Security offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and preparatory classes for the General Education Diploma (GED). Substance Abuse Prevention classes are also taught at this facility. Classes in both English and Spanish are provided in substance abuse, anger management and job skills.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

9. The County Office of Education, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office, provides five teachers to the Jail Farm. These teachers instruct Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) classes in auto body repair, food services, landscaping, building maintenance and computer operation. The facility also offers English as a Second Language and preparatory classes for the GED and an animal-bonding program. Substance Abuse

Prevention, anger management and job skills training are provided in both English and Spanish.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

The Sheriff's Office also contracts with Watsonville Adult Education for GED and Pajaro Prevention and Student Assistance for the SAFE Program, ESL, Substance Abuse Prevention and Job Skills. Both the Medium and the Minimum also have a variety of counseling services provided such as Aids Awareness, Religious Services, AA and NA. Rountree does give preparatory classes for the GED, but we also do testing, which allows inmates to receive a completed GED while in custody.

10. The GED program at Rountree directly interfaces with outside programs. Due to short tenure many inmates start programs and must finish GED and other programs outside when their sentences are over. Self-motivation is required to complete unfinished programs.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

Inmates that start a GED program while in custody can finish the program out of Custody at no cost. Inmates receive certificates for the programs that they complete while in custody. They can use these certificates to show prospective employers that they are trained in given areas.

11. A significant portion of inmate training programs are self-funded through pay phones, commissary sales and other such income and do not require the use of tax money.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

Some inmate programs are funded through the inmate welfare fund; however, most are funded through state and federal funds. That number of students allowed is fixed. Funding for new classes has to be done through different revenue sources such as the inmate welfare fund or grants.

12. At the Jail Farm, a number of programs including Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings, AIDS education classes, yoga, and church services are offered and operated by volunteer organizations.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

13. Many inmates at the Jail Farm are on work release, which is available to qualifying inmates sentenced to less than 60-days. They work at outside jobs or for state parks, the dump, animal control, and beach or road debris clean up.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

There are no inmates on work release at Rountree. Work Release is an out of custody program administered by the Main Jail. Rountree does send out work crews to assist other government entities in their functions as described above.

14. It appears from the most recent statistics that recidivism countywide has increased from 85% to 89% (1995-1999). There are no accurate up-to-date mechanisms to assess the impact of various programs on recidivism.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff PARTIALLY AGREES

The Sheriff's Office does have statistics on recidivism in the form arrest and booking records. It is true that there are few up-to-date mechanisms to evaluate the impact of programs on recidivism. The sheriff is tasked with the responsibility of custody and does not have the funding, staff or responsibility for conducting post sentence studies.

15. In follow-up to last year's Grand Jury report, a review of the Inmate Welfare Fund indicates an accounting system is in place.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

Conclusions

1. Rountree jail is well run and the staff is doing a good job of operating these facilities.
2. Another budget cut would likely require closing a unit at Medium Security due to lack of staff.
3. Staff loss requiring closure of a unit at Medium Security would increase inmate to staff ratio. This could lead to overcrowding and compromise security.
4. Rountree jail is below capacity and therefore exceeds standards in that area. Although occupancy is below capacity it would be difficult to add a medium security jail for women at this site because of the design of the facilities.
5. Due to the open plan at Medium Security, no locked restraint area is available except for temporary inmate separation. Security could potentially be compromised.
6. Incarceration of illegal aliens mandated by the federal government is expensive for the County. The cost of implementing this mandate should be reimbursed.
7. Effectiveness of the Vocational and Educational training programs and marketability of learned skills at Rountree are unknown. The success of these programs should be judged by the effect they have on the recidivism rate.
8. If available space were utilized at Rountree for Prop. 36 drug treatment, the County may have an opportunity to save money while improving access to Prop. 36 treatment.

9. Current reliable statistics are needed to determine success of programs. Inmate Programs should lower recidivism. However, it appears recidivism has increased in spite of the programs offered. Recidivism causes must be addressed.

Recommendations

1. In order to maintain quality of services and adequate staff, the Board of Supervisors should not cut funding.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff AGREES

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The needs of the County's detention system continue to be a high priority. However, given the state of finances in California, future reductions in all areas may be necessary.

2. The County should seek compensation from the Federal government for unfunded mandates resulting in jail expenses for illegal alien deportees.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office has implemented this.

The county has received funding from the Federal Government for the past five years. (SCAAP Grant)

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

This recommendation will be implemented.

3. The Sheriff's Department should consider utilization of unused space at the Rountree facilities by renting or subcontracting this space for Prop.36 drug treatment and other related purposes.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office has implemented this.

The Sheriff's Office has started a drug and alcohol treatment unit in one half of the Medium Facility. The (SAFE PROGRAM) serves clients that have failed in Prop. 36 programs, as well as other inmates with drug and alcohol sentences.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The County Alcohol and Drug Program does not plan to implement this recommendation at this time, but will keep this recommendation in mind as it plans for the future. Current

budget pressures are threatening the closure of existing residential treatment programs, and there are licensed treatment beds going unfilled because there are not sufficient funds to pay for the staff to provide treatment services. The County Alcohol and Drug Program's first priority will be to preserve existing residential treatment services. If funding becomes available to expand in-custody residential treatment, this recommendation will be reconsidered.

4. The Sheriff's Department should compile, track and report accurate data and crime statistics for substance abuse, recidivism and program success rates.

Response: Santa Cruz County Sheriff

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office has implemented this.

The Sheriff's Office does report data and crime statistics for substance abuse, recidivism and program success in the form of a variety of Sheriff's Reports, including; arrest reports, booking and housing records. The Sheriff contracts with organizations such as Parajo Valley Prevention and Student Assistance that keep records and statistics on programs such as the SAFE PROGRAM. By law the Sheriff is responsible for the welfare of inmates while they are in custody and does not have the responsibility or the mechanism to track inmates that are out of custody.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	1-15	3, 4	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)
Santa Cruz County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrator	5, 6	3	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
County Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz	1, 2, 7	1, 2	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)

Note: County Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz responded for Santa Cruz County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrator.

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