



San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office

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Ian S. Parkinson
Sheriff - Coroner

July 3, 2012

The Honorable Barry LaBarbera
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
1050 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408

RE: Grand Jury 2011–2012 Report- Evidence Rooms

Dear Judge LaBarbera:

I have reviewed the 2011-2012 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report regarding their inspection of the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Office Evidence Room. My response to their findings and recommendations are as follows:

Evidence Room:

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 policies pertaining to evidence room inspections."*

The respondent disagrees in part with the finding. The Sheriff's Office is not aware of issues with other agencies' evidence room inspections.

Beginning in March of 2011, the Sheriff's Office began a complete audit and purge of the property room. At the time an audit was not required by policy, even though it was clear to the new administration that this was needed. At the time this audit and purge was started there were four different methods still utilized for documenting evidence that was contained in the property/evidence room. The reason for this was that over the years as the method and software changed there was no plan to transfer the old data into the newest system. Much of the old evidence was evidence that the Sheriff's Office was required to keep indefinitely. This made a traditional audit very difficult. Over the past year the property/evidence room has been tasked with transferring the old data into the current record management system. This process has had a supervisor involved at various stages for oversight. In July of 2011, the Sheriff's Office implemented a complete policy change. This change was to "Lexipol", a nationally recognize

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policy manual. The new policy requires a regular audit. It is the Sheriff's intention to start a regular documented audit once the current steps are complete.

12. ***"The Sheriff's Department has advised that it will move its property/evidence room operation to a new facility."***

The respondent agrees with this finding.

The Sheriff's Office has identified a location at the Sheriff's Office headquarters facility that will be the new location of the property/evidence room. This location will provide for an immediate 50% increase in capacity and allow for future expansion, as it may be needed. The Sheriff's Office received funding approval for the new location and expects to begin the construction in July.

Recommendations

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

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office plans to follow all policy requirements set forth in Lexipol.

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 recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office seeks regular training for property officers and will continue to do so. Property officers are members of the county chapter of CAPE.

10. ***"The Grand Jury encourages the county law enforcement agencies to utilize the services of either POST for management assistance or a qualified consultant specializing in property/evidence room management."***

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented during the relocation of the property/evidence room.

The Sheriff's Office plans to utilize the services of POST and others during the design and move of the evidence room.

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

This recommendation has been implemented by the Sheriff's Office.

The audit mentioned previously in this response under "Findings 1" was documented in an audit memo on June 14th by Chief Deputy Reid. Another audit will take place in the fall, after the new property/evidence room is completed.

12. *"The Grand Jury recommends that the Police Chiefs and the 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 Chief's this idea would result in significant costs and logistical operational difficulties for Cities and the County. The Chief's 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,

Ian S. Parkinson
Sheriff-Coroner