

2001-2002 GRAND JURY REPORT

Riverside County Sheriff's Department

Banning Jail and Booking Facility

Background

The Banning Sheriff's Station, located in downtown Banning, has a 32-bed jail that was used as a booking and holding facility from 1970 to 1993. During that period, it had an average daily inmate population of 15. It was rated a Type I detention facility, which could hold detainees up to 96 hours after booking. The jail's booking and holding facility served the Banning and Beaumont Police Departments, Banning Sheriff's Station, and the California Highway Patrol. It was closed in 1993 in order to transfer the staff to the newly opened Southwest County Jail. The 32-bed jail is now used only as a temporary (eight hours or less) holding facility for detainees awaiting appearance in the Banning Branch of the Riverside County Superior Court.

Most arrestees from the area are now booked and held at Banning Correctional Facility (BCF), a facility not designed or intended for booking and holding.

Findings

A: Banning Correction Facility Booking Area

1. The booking area is part of a room that was originally designed as a clothing and property storage area. It is now used for four additional functions:
 - a. Booking new arrestees.
 - b. Receiving prisoners from other jails.
 - c. Changing clothes by inmates for outside work details and court appearances.
 - d. Waiting area for inmate sick call.
2. Some of the above activities must wait while others are completed: e.g., when a bus arrives, sick call and bookings are suspended while the detainees are processed.
3. There was an average of 154 bookings per month in the year 2000.
4. There are no holding or observation cells in the area. Arrestees are handcuffed to a bench while awaiting processing.

5. Females under the influence of drugs or alcohol cannot be booked at the BCF because there is no place to segregate them from male arrestees. They must be individually transported by the arresting agency to Robert Presley Detention Center or Southwest County Jail.
6. There is a potential for injury if arrestees stumble and fall onto sharp corners on the booking counter.
7. Arrestees, including those who are intoxicated or uncooperative, must be escorted from the booking area to a distant holding area located in a separate building.
8. Arrestees who are released must be transported to downtown Banning where public transportation is available.
9. Vehicular traffic is increased by law enforcement agencies transporting arrestees through the residential area on Hargrave Street, the only access to the BCF.
10. Arrestees are booked by Deputies assigned to the BCF.

Findings

B: Former Banning Jail and Booking Facility

1. The former Banning Jail and Booking Facility has 32 beds in a multiple cell configuration.
2. There is a large booking area directly adjacent to the holding cells.
3. There is an existing visitor room.
4. There are observation cells in the booking area.
5. Two cells, with a total of eight beds, are separate from the main corridor of cells, and can be used to hold female arrestees.
6. Detainees who are released will have direct access to public transportation.
7. Use of the jail as a booking and holding facility would reduce law enforcement traffic on Hargrave Street.

8. Arrestees could be held up to 96 hours, eliminating many one-person trips to other facilities by arresting agencies.

Recommendations

Riverside County Board of Supervisors Riverside County Sheriff's Department

1. Discontinue use of the BCF as a booking and holding facility.
2. Reopen the former Banning Jail and Booking Facility as a Type I detention facility for use by local arresting agencies.
3. Continue to use the jail to temporarily hold inmates who are awaiting court proceedings.
4. Assign management of the Banning Jail and Booking Facility to the Commander of the BCF.
5. Continue the use of BCF deputies to operate the reopened facility, adding more staff when and if necessary.