

# **CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES**

## **SUMMARY**

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) faced many unusual challenges during our term, predominately the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in numerous rescheduling of inspections, changes that limited inspection access in facilities and created attendance restrictions for Grand Jurors. The Grand Jury annually visits and evaluates the physical condition and management of public prisons (Eel River Conservation Camp is the only prison in Humboldt County) and inspects the Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF) as required by PC §919(b).

The 2021-2022 Civil Grand Jury also inspected the following facilities:

- Sheriff's Work Alternative Facilities (SWAP)
- Humboldt County Juvenile Hall
- Humboldt County Animal Shelter
- Humboldt County Sheriff's Boat Yard and Evidence Rooms
- Office of Emergency Services
- Sheriff's Office
- Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility
- Coroner's Office
- Public Administration Office
- County Probation Office
- County Community Corrections Resource Center

A few of the facilities that the Grand Jury inspected were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic such as the HCCF restricting visitors and the SWAP farm limiting inmate work schedules. Additionally, the Humboldt County Animal Shelter did not allow potential adopters open access to the adoption areas and the kennels.

It was evident to the Grand Jury that staff were motivated, hard-working and passionate about successful outcomes for their programs and our community. They spoke very highly of the volunteer support received during the COVID-19 pandemic and suggested that these organizations/individuals deserve special recognition by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (Board). The Grand Jury also found that the volunteers at the various facilities were very positive about their working relationship with County employees.

The Grand Jury noted peeling paint, ceiling leaks, deteriorating stairways and damaged ceiling tiles at several facilities. Also noted in selected facilities throughout the inspections were partially demolished areas in need of repair, inoperable lighting in rooms and janitorial services that were not scheduled on a regular basis.

In the discussion section below, the Grand Jury offers greater detail on the issues that we believe require action by the County.

The Grand Jury finds these significant concerns: deferred maintenance; substandard facilities resulting in safety and functional issues; and mental health and substance use disorders which

overwhelm our systems. Additionally, there are multiple vacant positions. To attract new employees, affordable housing must be available for individuals and families. Without sufficient housing, jobs will go unfilled in numerous critical areas of the County.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Grand Jury's mandate to conduct inspections of the management and condition of custody facilities is rooted in the California State Constitution. The Grand Jury is one of the oldest civil institutions in America and has been part of California law since statehood in 1850. The Grand Jury is an independent body and, as an instrument of the court, subject only to the court's jurisdiction. The primary function of the Grand Jury is to act as a public watchdog by investigating and reporting on affairs of local government. As part of this watchdog mandate, the Grand Jury annually visits and evaluates the physical condition and management of public prisons (Eel River State Conservation Camp #31 is the only prison in Humboldt County) and has the prerogative to inspect the county jail (California Penal Code, Section 919(b)). This includes county jails, mental health facilities, state prisons and work camps, or any place in the County a person in custody may be taken. The Grand Jury also conducts inspections of the management and conditions of non-custody county facilities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Members of the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury conducted inspections and interviews at the locations listed below. Additional research and follow-up interviews were conducted to confirm and clarify details:

- Humboldt County Correctional Facility
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Eel River Conservation Camp #31
- Sheriff's Work Alternative Facilities (SWAP)
- Humboldt County Juvenile Hall
- Humboldt County Animal Shelter
- Humboldt County Sheriff's Evidence Yard and Evidence Rooms
- Office of Emergency Services
- Sheriff's Office
- Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility
- Coroner's Office
- Public Administration Office
- County Probation Office
- County Community Corrections Resource Center

## **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

The Sheriff's Office has responsibility for the following: Humboldt County Correctional Facility, Eel River Conservation Camp, SWAP Farm and Woodyard, Administrative Services, Animal Control, Coroner-Public Administrator, Dispatch, Major Crimes, Court Services, Custody

Services, Sheriff's Evidence Yard and Evidence Rooms, the Office of Emergency Services and Special Operations (Boating Unit and Marijuana Enforcement).

This inspection focuses on the offices of the Administrative Services Division located on the ground floor of the County Courthouse, in a space previously part of the old jail. The reception area is clean and inviting. Staff are welcoming and professional. The Sheriff's Office Mission, Vision, Values and Principles statement is framed and posted at Reception and on corridor walls throughout.

There are a total of 14 employees within four departments: Records, Training, Property/Evidence and Financial Services. In addition to maintaining criminal records, the Records department also processes business licenses and concealed carry permits.

During our inspection we noted efforts the Sheriff's Office team has made to enhance the dedicated spaces by painting walls and keeping the areas as clutter-free as possible. The Grand Jury noted areas in need of improvement as follows:

- much needed space could be made available to the team if the outdated/excess IT computer equipment currently stored in one of the rooms was removed.
- water damaged ceiling tiles were noted throughout, but a large area of open ceiling in one of the Sheriff's Office corridors is in need of immediate repair. It poses potential health and safety risks (from possible mold, leaks, dust) and results in energy inefficiency (in a time of heightened awareness of energy costs). *See photo attached.*
- upgrades to the Armor room, including a steel door and electronic locks, would make this weapons room more secure.
- reliable back-up power should be available throughout the Courthouse building. During PG&E's Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) multiple departments, including some located in the Sheriff's Office, were without power.
- daily janitorial services should be a minimum standard, especially in bathrooms and locker rooms.

The Grand Jury learned about the current County communications dispatch system and believes that there is much redundancy in services offered. There are four independently working dispatch centers now serving Humboldt County, located in Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna and at the Sheriff's Office. Pooling all 9-1-1 resources under one roof would streamline staff hiring, ensure all dispatchers receive the appropriate emergency medical training, and would allow all operations to be on the same frequency.

A comment voiced during this inspection, and a theme noted at the majority of sites we inspected, was the concern that the County needs to focus more attention on providing new housing along the entire spectrum (from affordable to higher priced). This will support recruiting efforts countywide.



Ceiling in Sheriff's Office corridor in need of immediate repair.

### **FINDINGS: SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**F1:** There is surplus and/or outdated IT department equipment stored in the Sheriff's Office. (R1)

**F2:** The Sheriff's Office Armor room lacks electronic locks and a steel door. (R2)

**F3:** There are four independent Dispatch Centers serving Humboldt County, located in Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna and at the Sheriff's Office. (R3)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS: SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**R1:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that surplus and/or outdated IT department equipment be removed from the Sheriff's Office by November 30, 2022. (F1)

**R2:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for the electronic locks and steel door security upgrades to the Sheriff's Office Armor room by October 31, 2022. (F2)

**R3:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors take the lead to prepare a plan that combines the four Dispatch Centers into one Centralized Dispatch Center by March 31, 2023, and prepare a request for proposals for the construction of a new Dispatch Center by June 30, 2023. (F3)

## **SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (SWAP)**

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) is an alternative to incarceration where safety of participants and community is a priority. Inmates (workers) available for SWAP include male and female workers, 18 – 80 years of age, who have a sentence of 180 days or less. Currently there are about 140 workers in this program. Qualified workers may choose to participate in the Farm or Wood operations instead of serving time in jail. Workers usually have been convicted of non-violent misdemeanors, although a few workers have non-violent felonies. Those with a history of violence, sexual abuse and/or mental illness are not eligible to participate. Other disqualifying criteria include inmates on disability or those with worker's compensation claims. Workers labor on weekdays or weekends allowing them to live at home and maintain their current employment. Each day worked at the SWAP facility reduces their sentence one day. Both operations provide community services as well as teaching skills that can prove valuable once the sentence is served.

The SWAP Wood Yard is located in Eureka, on county property, and produces about 200 cords of wood per year. In the past the Wood Yard produced 1,000 to 1,500 cords per year. Workers cut, split, and stack firewood into cords. Safety gear and related equipment are provided and maintained by the Sheriff's Department. The wood is sold to senior citizens through a voucher system at a reduced price per cord. There has been a shortage of wood in the last few years. However, currently the Wood Yard is receiving wood from PG&E and Caltrans due to downed trees cleared this winter. The Wood Yard recently received a donation of two small greenhouses to be used by detainees at Juvenile Hall (located next door) who will receive training to grow vegetables for their own use and for use by Seniors.

The CROWN JEWEL OF THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT is the SWAP Farm located in Fortuna on 84 acres of airport property adjacent to the Rohnerville Airport. The Farm is 17 acres and the remaining property is utilized for cattle and hay production. The Farm raises various vegetables and livestock. When we visited, there were many pigs of various ages, including several new piglets and chickens producing 30 eggs per day. Animal and vegetable products, including kale, squash, zucchini, tomatoes, broccoli, lettuce, potatoes, carrots, cauliflower, beets, and pumpkins are used in the preparation of meals at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF). In 2021, the Farm produced 10,000 pounds of produce. HCCF receives about 85% of their pork and about 25% of their beef from the Farm. 95% of the vegetation/green waste produced is fed to the cows and pigs. The Farm is maintained 24/7 as livestock needs feeding daily.

At the time of the tour, it was noted that the barn did not have doors to prevent weather damage to the equipment and hay stored in this facility. The SWAP farm recently received a donation of a greenhouse and is hoping to receive one more donated greenhouse that would allow the production of vegetables year-round to feed inmates at HCCF. The SWAP Farm is currently using timers for the garden so watering can be done early in the morning and evening. The Farm is discussing the purchase of a more efficient drip line watering system, which would require the procurement of a grant.

SWAP provides excellent benefits that include cost savings to the community in the form of affordable firewood, food for Seniors and food for the inmates at HCCF. Correctional Officers

invite 4H and FFA members to the Farm where they are educated in gardening and care of livestock. The children interact exclusively with the correctional staff. 4H and FFA members can also purchase piglets at a reduced price, which they raise and sell at the County fair.

The Farm has been impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic. SWAP workers were not allowed at the Farm when restrictions were put in place by the County. During this period the Sheriff Deputies arrived at the Farm to support the care of the animals and weeding/harvesting the gardens.

Workers interviewed at the Farm mentioned that the work is very difficult but rewarding because they are acquiring skills they intend to use after completing their sentence such as how to prepare/plant a garden and care for livestock. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and the Superior Court Judges tour the SWAP Farm to see what this facility provides to the community and the workers.



## **FINDINGS: SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM**

**F4:** SWAP Farm barn has no doors to protect vehicles and hay from weather. (R4)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM**

**R4:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals for the purchase and installation of doors for the SWAP Farm barn by October 31, 2022. Funding to be approved by December 31, 2022. (F4)

## **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Four years ago the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) toured the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES). The detailed report that followed found the "OES in need of upgrades to better plan for the emergencies to come." Our County has experienced significant and disastrous flooding, continuous seismic events, the now evident threat of sea level rise, and increased widespread destruction from wildfires and worldwide pandemics. Now we must add the new reality of severe drought that will alter our County's landscape and livelihoods.

Natural disasters are by no means unique to Humboldt County as the planet bears witness to seemingly unlimited and more severe events. However, 2020-2022 delivered a different challenging event, the COVID-19 pandemic, testing our County's resources and abilities across all levels of services and governance.

Our ability to respond to any disaster lies with the OES, still in its old and inadequate office space in the County Courthouse basement. This vintage 1950s “bomb shelter” structure was not intended to serve as a County-wide OES facility. It lacks the basic upgrades most County offices have received to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as evidenced by the stairwell leading into the Department. This structure, unfortunately, does not lend itself to required ADA upgrades.

Under the direction of the Humboldt County Sheriff, and in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners, the OES coordinates and participates in emergency planning, response, and recovery. OES is the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations in the County.

This vitally important government department is staffed with highly qualified and trained personnel who have consistently displayed competence and ingenuity. They have distinguished themselves through the constant service they provide to assure our County’s readiness and safety in the face of disaster.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the OES Staff identified the need for a much larger space to accommodate the increased personnel recruited to assure the highest level of emergency and sustained services to our County. The relocation of the entire Department to another location in Eureka was accomplished within a week and showed extraordinary capabilities and dedication. However, this feat was successfully accomplished without extraordinary circumstances such as earthquake, flooding and fire.

The recruitment and training of personnel who will work alongside the County’s First Responders requires a building with sufficient space to accommodate this important sharing of information and equally important team building. FEMA, among other State and Federal agencies, offers training to OES personnel and other stakeholders, yet the current building lacks sufficient space.

OES manages emergency response from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), using the Incident Command System (ICS). The State Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), the Federal National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the National Response Framework (NRF) establish common operating procedures, best practices, and a whole community approach to disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

### **Zonehaven**

OES in collaboration with local governments and public safety partners, has established over 300 emergency zones throughout Humboldt County utilizing Zonehaven, an evacuation management platform.

Pre-established evacuation Zones help fire, law and emergency service agencies prepare for, streamline and reduce confusion around the evacuation process so that roads are clear for those who need to evacuate quickly. By evacuating the most at-risk Zones first, emergency personnel are able to manage the traffic flow and more easily prevent the traffic jams that occur when an

entire town or city tries to evacuate all at the same time. It also provides a common reference system for all first responders and the community.

In the event of an emergency, first responders and emergency service officials will use Zonehaven to determine necessary evacuations. From there, officials communicate evacuation orders and zone statuses to the public through Humboldt Alert and the Zonehaven community site. The map will be updated real-time to reflect current evacuation orders and warnings for impacted zones. Local cities utilizing other emergency alert systems such as Nixle or Code Red will also issue alerts to their respective zones should an emergency occur in that area.

Residents are encouraged to "Know Your Zone" before the next emergency occurs by visiting the new interactive map on Zonehaven Aware.

## **Managing A Disaster**

A review of the Emergency Operations Center Organizational Chart reveals the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (Board) leads the chain of command and oversees the Disaster Council. An Incident Commander is identified to head the remaining and very extensive Response Team. Public Information, Liaison, Safety, and Legal Officers are assigned.

Four Chiefs are in charge of the Operations Section, Planning and Intelligence Section, Logistics Section and Finance. Operations oversee the Branch of Health/Welfare, Emergency Medical Services, Environmental Health Support, Mental Health and Social Services and also include the Red Cross Representative.

Operations Second Branch, Response and Safety, are in charge of Sheriff's Emergency Response, California Highway Patrol, California National Guard, US Coast Guard, Civil Air Patrol, Fire and Rescue, Coroner's Response, Public Works Unit, and the Animal Care and Rescue Unit.

The Planning/Intelligence Chief's purview includes Building Inspection and Public Works Support, Damage/Safety Assessment Unit, Advance Planning and Demobilization Units.

The Finance Chief is responsible for time keeping for perhaps hundreds of responders, and includes a Cost Unit and Recovery Unit.

Lastly, but vitally important, is the Logistics Section. This unit requires a state-of-the-art, highly sophisticated office from which it directs and monitors an extensive Communications Unit, Medical Unit, Food Unit and is responsible for a Support Branch including Supply/Procurement Unit, Transportation, Facilities, and Personnel Units.

The Emergency Operations Center becomes the physical or virtual location from which the emergency operations coordination and support of incident management activities is directed. Humboldt County needs to act now to relocate OES to a larger, more functional facility that can accommodate projected needs in the event of fires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and pandemics. All of our lives may depend on the expertise and functionality of our OES during these disasters.

## **FINDINGS: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**F5:** The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) plans, organizes and participates in emergency planning, response, and recovery in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners. OES is the primary office for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations in the County.

**F6:** The OES currently uses WIFI for internet communication and needs to be upgraded to fiber optic service. (R5)

**F7:** The current office of the OES lacks sufficient space to effectively prepare for and monitor a natural or other disaster within our County. (R6)

**F8:** The current OES facility does not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and retrofitting would be difficult to achieve in the current facility. (R6)

**F9:** The current OES facility does not have a sufficient or reliable backup generator with fuel supply storage to provide the needed power in the event of a prolonged power outage. (R7)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**R5:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for fiber optic internet service in the OES for this critical communication upgrade by October 31, 2022. (F6)

**R6:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors commit budget funding for the planning, purchase of property, materials and equipment, and the construction of a new OES facility that can house all pertinent agencies during a major disaster and/or emergency by December 31, 2022. (F7) (F8) (F9)

**R7:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for a reliable generator with sufficient fuel storage to assure continuation of OES functions and mandates during a prolonged emergency situation by November 30, 2022. (F9)

## **COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER**

*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

Situated on open lands near our County airport, the Humboldt County Animal Shelter (Shelter) provides a safe and promising haven for lost and discarded companion animals. The Shelter cares for stray, abandoned and neglected domesticated animals in our community while providing a safe and promising haven for animals needing a new home.

The Shelter's multiple services include the protection and well-being of its resident companion animals and other homeless species seeking a second chance.

The Shelter offers individuals and families the opportunity to meet with a companion animal seeking its "forever home." Officers, Staff, and Volunteers are on site to match animals with prospective adopters and reunite lost animals with their owners. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury members toured the facility in the autumn of 2021. Despite the many restrictions placed on County facilities due to COVID-19, we found the Shelter adequately staffed and intent on providing the highest quality care.

During our inspection, the public services of dog licensing, remitting fines and impound fees, and reporting concerns and issues, were open to the public at the Service Desk in the Front Lobby. However, open access to the Adoption areas and kennels was restricted.

The entryway into the Shelter is inviting and very accessible. There are large readable signs requesting that personal pets be left in your car. The landscaping was sparse, but we were informed that the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) had been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions and this support had assisted with landscaping maintenance.

The Shelter is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Hours are extended until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays to accommodate more potential adopters and others needing related services. Staff is available in the Shelter Office during these hours to respond to telephone calls.

The Shelter operates with three full-time Receptionists and four full-time Kennel Attendants. Two Senior Animal Control Officers are employed to provide services and safety at the Shelter and throughout the jurisdiction of Humboldt County. The Shelter Manager is also a Senior Control Officer. These Officers are recruited by and operate under the directives of the Humboldt County Sheriff.

The majority of the care and handling of the Shelter residents is performed by the Kennel Attendants. They also oversee the Volunteers from Friends for Life, Miranda's Rescue, Companion Animal Foundation, and Bless the Beasts. If available, these volunteers assist in kennel cleaning and outdoor dog walking, at least twice a day if volunteers are available, and socializing with cats and other impounded animals. Volunteers provide an average of 545 hours annually.

### **Physical Aspects of the Shelter**

Impounded dogs are housed within individual kennels. Each has interior cubicles, heated for cold weather, and an outdoor access to a small fenced-in dog run. Water is available in individual cubicles and dogs are fed in their own space. There is a separate area for small dogs. Dogs are sequestered from the public hallway by glass-lined walls and only Shelter personnel have access to the dog kennels.

Dogs brought to the Shelter by Animal Control officers and County Sheriff deputies are secured in kennels in a separate section with limited access.

The Shelter Manager expressed the need for additional dog kennels. There is contiguous and sufficient land available for the construction of these kennels.

There is a Grooming Room for washing and necessary grooming of animals.

Cats are housed in standard stainless-steel cages but are released to communal rooms for exercise and socialization. Small rooms are available for litters of kittens and larger rooms are available with outside fresh air flow, important in reducing airborne feline viruses.

Sick animals are treated and recuperate in isolation areas.

Experienced on-site staff provide properly refrigerated medications and vaccines in the facility's Sick Bay.

The Laundry Facility has commercial-sized washers and dryers that provide daily, clean bedding for both cats and dogs. The facility houses three water heaters for adequate sanitation and comfort.

There are multiple security cameras mounted throughout the Shelter. Some of these cameras are outdated, with low quality resolution, and need to be replaced.

## **Operations at the Shelter**

The Shelter cares for stray, abandoned and neglected domesticated animals in our community. Due to the high population of these types of animals, the Shelter does not typically take in unwanted pets from their owners. The Shelter depends on other non-profit organizations such as Friends for Life, Miranda's Rescue, Companion Animal Foundation, Bless the Beasts, and Sequoia Humane Society to take in owner surrenders.

Incoming animals are immediately evaluated for apparent medical problems and depending upon the severity of illnesses and injuries, emergency treatment is provided. Dogs and cats are scanned for Microchip IDs and every effort is made to contact the owners. Dogs with licenses are identified and owners are contacted.

After the four business-days hold required by California State law for impounded companion animals, the Staff evaluates the temperament and health of the animals. Animals that fail these evaluations are recommended to the various volunteer groups who might assist in placing special needs animals. Each animal is photographed, described, and included on the Shelter Website as being available for adoption to the public. Cats are felv/fiv (Feline Leukemia/Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) tested and dogs are temperament tested.

The Shelter's Volunteer rescue coordinators pursue every possible avenue in and out of the County to find an appropriate home for each animal. If these efforts fail, the Shelter has the animal humanely euthanized on site in a designated treatment room. For example, feral cats determined to be unadoptable by the general public as a Companion Animal can be placed on available farms or ranches where they live out their lives as Integrated Rodent and Pest Managers. Dogs identified as difficult to place due to behavioral or physical limitations are also given many considerations for placement in a home. All animals are spayed/neutered and vaccinated against Rabies prior to placement.

Local Veterinarians perform major medical procedures at their respective Animal Hospitals. Animal Control Officers are responsible for delivering and retrieving the patients.

Spays and Neuters are also performed at local Veterinary Hospitals.

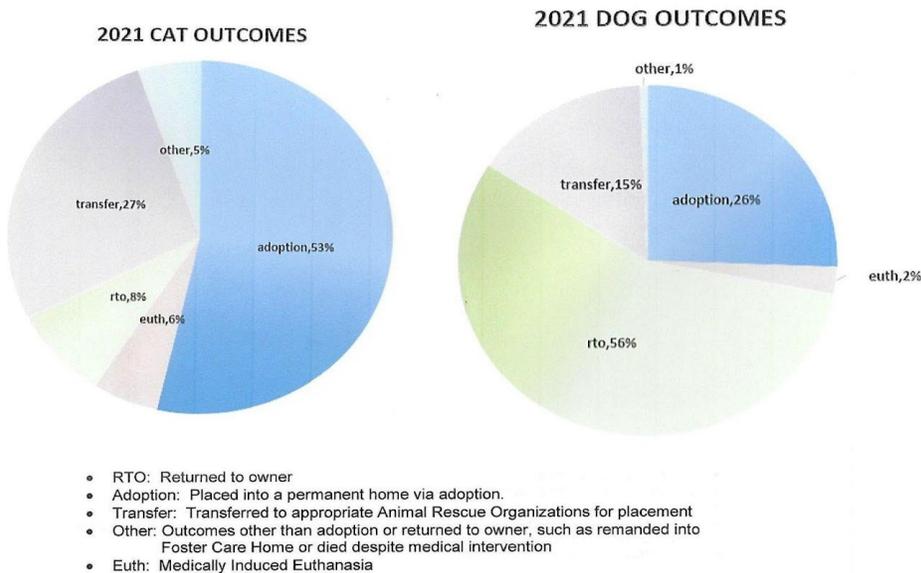
All cats and dogs receive standard vaccinations and are spayed or neutered prior to being placed in new homes.

### Daily Care

Shelter staff and volunteers clean kennels and communal areas at least once daily or more often as needed.

Water is always available and dog and cat kibble are provided daily. Special dietary needs are met by providing canned food and special diet foods when identified. The Shelter relies primarily on donations from the community for canned food.

Dogs are walked at least once daily outside the shelter. Cats are rotated out of cages into the communal areas to roam freely. Volunteers provide interaction and socialization which enhances the animals' chances for adoption.



### FINDINGS: COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

**F10:** The Shelter security cameras are 18 years old and do not provide clear images. (R8)

**F11:** The Shelter lacks sufficient kennels to house dogs. (R9)

**F12:** Currently the Shelter is closed to the public for adoptions on Saturdays. This is an impediment to potential adopters and their families who are unable to visit the Shelter during weekdays. (R10)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER**

**R8:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding to replace the security cameras at the Shelter with high-definition video equipment by October 31, 2022. (F10)

**R9:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and approve funding for the design, purchase, and construction of additional kennels in the current Shelter yard area. Request for Proposals to be submitted by October 31, 2022. Funds to be approved by December 31, 2022. (F11)

**R10:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Shelter open to the public every Saturday, bi-monthly at a minimum, by October 31, 2022. If deemed necessary, limited Saturday hours are acceptable. This accommodation to families enhances the opportunities for adoptions and retrieval of lost pets. (F12)

## **SHERIFF'S BOATYARD**

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Boatyard serves as a storage area for both the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department (HCSD) and the Humboldt County Search and Rescue Posse (HCSR), a volunteer organization that assists with search and rescue operations. The two organizations share office space that is not conducive to their operations. HCSR stores vehicles and large animal trailers on the premises. The HCSD stores boats, water skis, an airboat, a snowcat and a 20-year-old Mobile Command Center in a covered structure that has sides open to the elements. Other stored items include several generators of different sizes (some impounded as evidence) and various types of trailers. One of the trailers, a shower trailer, is loaned for use at other locations such as fire camps. HCSD also has a large evidence storage facility at the Boatyard.

During the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Boatyard inspection, the first item noted was the manually operated entrance gate. In poor weather conditions it could be hazardous to open and shut the gate. The paved parking area inside the gate was sloped to a low point in the middle of the lot with no drain. This could become a hazard during heavy rain. The security and communication systems are outdated and the lighting in some of the offices and areas of the evidence room are not functioning.

Additionally, an updated communication and security system with fiber optics service, new high-definition video cameras and outdoor lighting is needed. As noted above the paved parking lot requires re-sloping to provide proper drainage.

There is a need for a weather protected facility to house the generators and other equipment as well as to allow for the storage of impounded vehicles. These impounded vehicles are currently stored at commercial towing facilities that charge the County a daily rate.

The Grand Jury noted that the current Mobile Command Center is 20 years old and should be replaced with a new vehicle that features up-to-date equipment.

The Grand Jury was informed that the HCSD received a federal grant from Homeland Security to purchase a new boat for operation on the bay and the boat should be received in late 2022.

### **FINDINGS: BOATYARD**

**F13:** The facilities at the Boatyard do not meet the needs of the HCSO and HCSRP. Areas that need improvement include office space, video surveillance, security systems, parking lot, gates and fencing. (R11)

**F14:** The Boatyard should be fully weather protected for proper shielding of evidence and equipment from inclement weather. (R12)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS: BOATYARD**

**R11:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and funding approval for remodeling and upgrades at the Boatyard including office space, security system, video surveillance system, parking lot, fencing and gates. Proposals to be Requested by October 31, 2022. Funding to be approved by January 31, 2023. (F13)

**R12:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and approve funding for the purchase and construction of a structure at the Boatyard to house vehicles and equipment. Request for Proposals to be submitted by March 30, 2023. Funding to be approved by June 30, 2023. (F14)

## **EVIDENCE ROOMS**

The Grand Jury inspected four evidence rooms: 1) one at the Boatyard, 2) two in the Courthouse and 3) one at the Coroner's Office (see Coroner's Report). The Grand Jury found the evidence room at the Boatyard was well organized and retrieval of evidence can easily be accomplished from a computer-based system. The Boatyard evidence room is organized with multiple rows of shelves that store evidence of all sizes. The majority of the evidence is stored in cardboard boxes.

The Sergeant in charge of the evidence rooms visits several times a month to verify that items are stored properly and can be found easily using the computer system. The addition of a permanent office at the Boatyard evidence room would provide a secure location for the computer and evidence log binders.

One of the two evidence rooms is located in old jail cells in the Courthouse. Items located here are stored with proper identification. However, it appeared more difficult to retrieve items from this evidence room since it consists of two floors of jail cells used for evidence storage as well as inmate backpacks and belongings.

The other evidence room at the Courthouse is located in the basement and has sufficient shelving for storage of evidence. This evidence room has several climate control units; however, there is no

back-up generator support when there is a Public Safety Power Shutdown (PSPS) by Pacific Gas & Electric.

There is a need for proper storage containers designed for all high-density data storage media at each of the four evidence rooms.

## **FINDINGS: EVIDENCE ROOMS**

**F15:** Tapes and video recordings, particularly magnetic recordings, are currently stored in cardboard boxes at the evidence storage facility at the Boatyard. (R13)

**F16:** There are currently four evidence rooms: two located in the Courthouse, one at the Boatyard and one at the Coroner's Office. Relocating these evidence rooms into one location would allow evidence to be efficiently retrieved by staff. (R14)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: EVIDENCE ROOMS**

**R13:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve funding for purchase of storage containers designed for all high-density data storage media at the Boatyard by November 30, 2022. (F15)

**R14:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff propose to the Board of Supervisors by March 31, 2023 that all four evidence rooms be located in one facility so evidence could be retrieved much more efficiently. (F16)

## **CORONER'S OFFICE**

The Coroner's facility is located in a portion of the original General Hospital in Eureka.

Updating and modernization of the building has taken place over the past decades, but aging will continue to be a factor. Except for minor paint peeling and ceiling tile damage, the Coroner's Office appears clean and efficiently run. Required long-term storage of physical evidence is organized but could benefit from a larger, updated storage room.

Humboldt Bay Fire Department conducts an inspection annually, but OSHA has not inspected the building in the past ten years. The Grand Jury expressed concern about the ventilation system and the reliability of a temporary replacement for the backup generator. We were assured that the ventilation system, particularly in the Autopsy room, affords adequate ventilation and air replacement every two minutes. It was also reported that the backup generator has not failed to start when a power outage occurs.

Previous Grand Juries recommended the purchase of an on-site X-ray machine, which has since been purchased and is operational. The additional acquisition of ancestry and DNA identification software have also improved the Coroner's ability to complete body identification.

The scope of duties required from coroners and their deputies is far-ranging and our Grand Jury found the Chief Deputy Coroner and his deputies to be professional and skilled. Coroners and their deputies frequently must be on-site at the actual place of death. This requires a high level of

investigative skills and the ability to secure a death scene; be it natural, accidental, suicide or homicide.

## **Operations**

Reception and clerical duties are provided by two seasoned volunteers who have dedicated several years of service and volunteered thousands of hours in 2021. The paid county staff of the coroner's facility include four Deputy Coroner investigators and one Chief Deputy Coroner, who is also charged with Public Administrator responsibilities for Humboldt County. This office is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Deputy Sheriffs have the ability to rotate into a three-to-five-year assignment.

There is a lack of residential pathologists throughout the country. In Humboldt County, three Forensic Pathologists conduct autopsies on-site, but only one resides in the County. For this reason, autopsies can be delayed by several days, but it was reported that the need for immediate autopsies is rare.

## **Responsibilities of the County Coroner**

The Coroner's Office investigates all deaths reportable to the Coroner and notifies and counsels next of kin. The Sheriff-Coroner is also the Public Administrator in Humboldt County. This is a related but separate responsibility and is discussed in the Public Administrator narrative.

The decision to proceed with an autopsy lies with the Coroner or his representative. It may be possible to determine the cause of death without an autopsy. Autopsies may uncover genetic medical problems and provide valuable information for family members. Public Health concerns may require an autopsy in order to reveal contagious diseases so that any close contacts of the deceased can be notified. An autopsy may provide evidence necessary for insurance claims or death benefits.

A typical autopsy is completed within two weeks. Completing the required reports can extend the process several more weeks.

Circumstances may require the Coroner, at the residence of a person who died as sole resident, to secure the scene with a "Coroner's Seal." Although it is not intended to deprive legal heirs of their rights, it is a misdemeanor to break the seal without permission of the Coroner.

New reportable deaths increased by 169 (46%) in 2021 for a total of 535 cases. Of these, 338 were investigated of which the Pathologist performed 177 autopsies. The breakdown of death investigations is as follows: 185 died of natural causes, 89 died from an accident, 45 died from suicide or homicide and 19 from other causes.

## **Facilities Management**

This facility provides several individual offices for the Chief Deputy Coroner, his deputy coroners and the local Forensic Pathologist. A small conference room is available for in-house meetings and potential meetings with the deceased's family.

A well-equipped autopsy room is modest in size but adequate for the general needs of Humboldt County. Another modest sized "cooler" room provides refrigeration for up to 25 bodies awaiting

autopsies or final disposition to the mortuary. These two rooms are adjacent to an outside ramp that accommodates gurneys.

The Coroner has two customized Coroner's Transport vans for retrieval of bodies.

Small rooms provide areas for short and long term evidence storage including refrigeration for tissue samples. A compact but efficient “research” space allows the Coroner to access important database information in the investigation of unidentified bodies. 75% of these cases are identified by fingerprints. The Coroner and investigators attend annual training sessions to maintain skills and increase knowledge.

This facility does not house a laboratory for tissue and blood samples requiring toxicology, micro-tissue samples, histology, and other testing. These samples are forwarded to local hospital labs. Occasionally samples are sent to Department of Justice labs when required. Organ donations are performed at the local hospitals.

## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR**

The Public Administrator (PA) provides legal estate services on behalf of county residents who die without a Will and without a clear heir to their property. In Humboldt County (County) the PA is also the Sheriff-Coroner. These are related but separate responsibilities. The Sheriff-Coroner investigates all deaths reportable to the Coroner, safeguards the property of the deceased, notifies and counsels next of kin and conducts inquests. The PA maintains an office staff experienced in the investigation and administration of estates of deceased persons.

The PA advises the Superior Court when a decedent has left no Will or directive regarding their property. The PA manages and disposes of the property per California Probate Code. In Humboldt County the majority of the cases involve the property of a decedent without a Will or much money. The PA is required to assume control of their property while investigating the possibility of rightful heirs. The PA can sell the property at the request of the heirs and provide the heirs the money from the sale.

The County assumes responsibility for the body and pays for the burial. The PA encourages next of kin to seek an attorney for disposition of the estate and to provide them an avenue for handling the property themselves.

This is a difficult role for the Deputy Coroner to perform while investigating a death. If the deceased has a residence, the PA is responsible for maintaining the residence and paying all property bills. The PA must be able to inventory all the assets, not just the physical property. Other assets that must be inventoried include bank accounts, stocks and properties. Some counties hire analysts to perform this essential function. The analysts can perform all these duties and then turn the property over to the PA for disposal.

Currently the PA has limited space in the Coroner’s Office for storage of deceased properties and there is no space for storage of large estates, resulting in the county renting storage units.

During multiple interviews with these employees, they shared the importance of the Public Administrator role and their desire to ensure the PA duties are performed with utmost focus and care.

## **FINDINGS: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR**

**F17:** Currently the Chief Deputy Coroner also has the responsibilities of the functioning Public Administrator, a complex role that is very difficult to perform adequately while focused on a death investigation. (R15)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR**

**R15:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve funding to hire a civilian analyst to the Public Administrator's office to manage the Public Administrator duties by December 31, 2022. (F17)

## **HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY**

Per the requirements of California Penal Code section § 919(b), the Civil Grand Jury inspected the Humboldt County Correctional Facility (the facility) and received an explanation of leadership's management philosophy.

The facility's staff are employees of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. Top leadership includes a captain and three lieutenants. The four shifts provide 24 hour per day, 365 day per year coverage and each shift includes 1 supervisor, 4 corporals and 17 line staff. Other staff are court officers, transportation officers, Sheriff's Work Alternative Program officers, contractors and civilians.

Despite recent staff salary increases, recruitment continues to be a top priority. The facility has 24 open positions and struggles to attract qualified staff. The leadership team experienced great recruiting success in the California Central Valley pre-COVID-19, however, the continuing Humboldt County housing crisis and the County's overall high cost of living are negatively impacting current recruiting efforts. Due to the staffing shortages, Administration now works a shift in the Inmate Processing department in addition to performing their leadership duties.

There are multiple Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) projects in progress in this eight-story facility that encompasses 155,000 square feet. The facility's maximum capacity is 417 inmates. Due to COVID-19 and AB 109 (*California Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011*), the 2021 population was 279 and this year, 2022, the population is 290.

To ensure the safety of staff and inmates during COVID-19, a quarantine policy was initiated at the beginning of state mandated lockdowns in March 2020. That initial quarantine period has been reduced from 14 days at the height of the pandemic, to 7 days, and is currently down to 5 days as pandemic risks have lessened. The facility's leadership works closely with the County Health Department and should there be a COVID-19 uptick, leadership is able to quickly adjust the length of the quarantine. Inmates who test positive for COVID-19 are placed in isolation cells. The facility reports that throughout the pandemic only one inmate had a serious case of COVID-19 that required hospitalization. After testing negative, the inmate was then returned to the facility.

Leadership operates the facility using the philosophy of direct supervision. Officers are stationed within the housing units where they directly interact continuously with inmates, actively

supervising them to identify problems in the early stages. The officers' goal is to create an environment that is safe and secure for inmates, staff and visitors.

## **Housing**

Inmates are housed based on one of three classifications they receive when initially processed: 1) protective custody, 2) administrative segregation, or 3) general population.

Protective Custody dorms are reserved for inmates who are classified unsafe in general population units, whether due to the nature of their charges, a fear for their safety if they are about to provide testimony in an upcoming case, or if they have learning disabilities that could make them vulnerable.

Violent inmates, those with serious mental health issues and other inmates who have demonstrated they are not able to live in general population dorms are housed in individual locked cells. In keeping with leadership's efforts to encourage best eventual outcomes, the status of these inmates is reviewed every seven days with the goal of moving them to the general population as appropriate.

General population dorms have open sleeping and gathering areas, as well as private showers and toilets, and are leadership's preferred method for housing inmates. This housing arrangement is an option for minimum and mixed security inmates. There are three dorm units with 50-70 inmates in a dorm. No physical barriers exist between the officers and the inmates in these units.

Movement of staff and inmates facility-wide, including the release of doors for their passage from one location to the next, is controlled and monitored from a central command post staffed 24/7.

The Sick Bay is staffed 24/7 with licensed personnel and an on-call doctor. In addition to exam rooms there are secure rooms for inmates who need close medical supervision.

Services performed by inmates include laundry, janitorial and cooking detail. The cleanliness of the facility is due to the janitorial services inmates provide three times a day.

## **Inmate Programs**

Programs offered to the inmates include GED and college-level courses, religious services, substance abuse counseling, meditation and yoga, and veterans' aftercare and treatment. Mental health services are provided seven days a week during regular work hours by four Department of Health & Human Services licensed clinicians. Recreational offerings include two indoor basketball courts.

## **Mental Health Crisis**

Leadership reports the correctional facility's main ongoing challenge is the escalating mental health crisis in Humboldt County. The correctional facility serves as the largest de facto mental

health facility north of Santa Rosa, with 90 percent of the inmates having mental health conditions. Often these conditions are related to drug use which makes it difficult for officers to differentiate between mental health-induced and drug-induced behaviors. Although the Department of Health & Human Services has provided 5150 training and de-escalation training to the correctional officers, these officers are not mental health professionals and they would welcome more training.

The facility continues to incarcerate individuals experiencing serious mental health issues who should be housed in a mental health facility. Sempervirens, Humboldt County's 16-bed acute psychiatric hospital located at the Clark Complex in Eureka, does not have the capacity, security or staff to house incarcerated inmates. This mental health crisis was detailed in the 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury report "The Last Resort," and the situation at the facility has only worsened.

Violent inmate behavior has increased dramatically due to an increase in inmates who suffer from mental health issues. From 2020 to 2021 inmate-on-inmate assaults were up by more than 50 percent. This creates a potentially unsafe environment for officers and inmates. Seven years ago, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommended the installation of safety netting between floors as a fall and suicide prevention safety measure. Per leadership, this netting should be installed by November 2022.

### **Facility Expansion**

Summer 2023 is the new projected opening date for the adjunct building that has been in the planning stages since 2015. This 23,712 square foot "one-stop-shop" was originally budgeted at \$20 million, but multiple delays and corresponding rises in construction costs have added an additional \$10 million to the projected cost. The structure's first level will include a day reporting center for AB109 post-release community supervision clients and Sheriff's Work Alternative Program workers. The second level will be strictly for inmates in custody. 38 beds on this level will be reserved for a minimum-security transitioning housing unit focused on preparing inmates to successfully re-enter society. There will also be a six-bed mental health unit for inmates with less severe mental health issues.

### **FINDINGS: HUMBOLDT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY**

**F18:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds a high percentage of inmates at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility have mental health issues and many are violent. This creates a potentially unsafe environment for officers and other inmates. (R16)

**F19:** Officers receive and implement de-escalation training with incarcerated mental health patients. However, these officers are not mental health professionals and lack behavioral health training and certification in counseling. (R16)

**F20:** The County's acute care psychiatric hospital, Sempervirens, does not provide enough space or services to reduce the strain on the Humboldt County Correctional Facility and ensure mental health patients receive appropriate placement and care. (R16)

**F21:** Neither incarceration at the correctional facility nor a short stay at Sempervirens will address the County's challenge of meeting the mental health needs of inmates. (R16)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: HUMBOLDT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY**

**R16:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors request that the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, local hospitals and community health centers meet jointly to develop a comprehensive action plan with a three-fold focus, to be in place by January 31, 2023 as detailed below (F18, F19, F20, F21)

1. Address the increased flow of fentanyl, high potency methamphetamine and other dangerous illicit drugs into our County,
1. Provide appropriate services for users experiencing serious physical and mental health issues, including brain damage resulting in violent behavior, and
2. Examine the stigma associated with seeking appropriate behavioral health and treatment services.

## **SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY**

Sempervirens (SV) is a secured 16-bed acute psychiatric hospital licensed by the California Department of Healthcare Services. Only two psychiatric hospitals exist in California, one in Eureka and the other in Santa Barbara.

SV provides comprehensive psychiatric and physical assessment, evaluation and treatment for people who have significant, urgent, and continuing mental illness. Admissions are voluntary or based on a legal hold, and patients are admitted from many sources that include hospital emergency rooms, police, community health clinics and patient self-referrals.

Most admissions begin at the crisis stabilization unit, a 23-hour locked unit with a four-bed capacity. If the psychiatrist determines the need for a longer stay, the patient is admitted to Sempervirens on a 5150 hold, which is a 72-hour legal hold used to detain people who are a danger to themselves, others, or gravely disabled due to mental illness.

Minors are admitted to the crisis stabilization unit as voluntary or on a 72-hour legal hold for minors. If a minor requires longer hospitalization, SV finds a bed at an out-of-county hospital that accepts MediCal.

There are additional involuntary holds that can extend the 72-hour legal hold based upon the patient's need for continued treatment. When this occurs, a Patient's Rights Advocate helps patients obtain a probable cause hearing. Patients may file a writ of habeas corpus at this time that offers a hearing with an administrative law judge. In lieu of an in-person court appearance, SV provides an interactive video monitor for communication with the court system. This has been very helpful and necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff teams at SV consist of a psychiatrist, registered nurses and a medication nurse, social worker and mental health workers. They function as a multidisciplinary treatment team. Additional staff members include a discharge planner, recreational therapist, dietician and ward clerks. The

hospital administrator and director of nursing manage all activities. SV staff have access to secure office space and conference rooms. There are offices for psychiatric staff who deliver treatment for released SV patients and also see other clients of SV who haven't been treated there.

The Joint Conference Committee (JCC) supervises the overall functioning and performance of SV, working with various program standing committees. Two members of the Board of Supervisors serve on the JCC. At meetings, key facility reports and performance measures are reviewed.

The major sources of revenue that pay for services at SV are the following patient insurances: Medi-Cal, Medicare, Veterans insurance, and private insurance. Humboldt County General Fund dollars are also allocated for care.

SV is located within a portion of the original General Hospital building in Eureka, built in the early 1900s. The building is extremely dated and has not been seismically retrofitted. When the building loses electricity in a power outage, there is an outside generator that detects the outage and starts. This generator's placement seems precarious due to access from passers-by and potential vandalism.

During the Civil Grand Jury's inspection, we noted the following: 1) The building is ADA compliant 2) interior is clean 3) interior paint is peeling in many locations 4) the heating, ventilation, air-conditioning system cannot be retrofitted. The fire alarm system is regularly checked. SV has fire drills and emergency drills for earthquakes, cyber-attacks and potential armed attacks.

Most patients are housed two to each room. There is no room for further expansion in the building. Patients have a written Bill of Rights that consists of "undeniable rights" and "rights that may be denied with good cause." Patients receive three hot meals per day. The kitchen area is clean. The movements of patients and staff are regularly monitored.

Mental Health Step Down is housing that provides an intermediate level of care for patients with severe mental illness who do not require inpatient treatment. Goals for individuals in a Mental Health Step Down program include minimizing relapses and the need for inpatient hospitalizations while increasing abilities to function. The need for Step Down housing for SV patients is critical. Patients leaving SV require a stable housing environment after beginning treatment at SV. More than two years ago, the Board of Supervisors approved the establishment and management of an adult health crisis center. It would provide 24-hour care to prevent the need for placement in SV as well as offer housing for released SV patients. The County has contracted with Willow Glen Care Center to locate and manage this facility.

The Department of Health & Human Services' Mobile Response Team (MRT) responds to serious mental health episodes in the community and at our hospital emergency departments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this team has been instrumental in evaluating individuals in crisis situations and assessing admittance to SV from our local hospitals. Although job descriptions at MRT have been re-evaluated and updated, there are still vacancies in the MRT. Focusing additional resources to MRT would be very helpful to our community, hospital emergency departments, and supportive of law enforcement during potentially dangerous incidents.

The 2019-2020 Humboldt County Grand Jury recommended that the Board of Supervisors complete the comprehensive infrastructure plan relative to County buildings and grounds, and specifically include SV as a high priority project. The 2019-2020 Grand Jury recommended a completion date of January 1, 2021. The Board responded that the County was in the process of developing a Facilities Master Plan to guide construction of new County facilities. Now in mid-year of 2022, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury again recommends that the Facilities Master Plan as related to Sempervirens be completed and approved.

The Civil Grand Jury strongly advocates for the creation of a new building for SV so Humboldt County can continue providing acute psychiatric care in our community. Humboldt County grapples with negative perceptions and stigmas associated with behavioral health and mental health treatment. People in our community need access to an updated and state-of-the art facility that treats mental health conditions, similar to the facilities that treat physical health conditions here.

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury proposes that the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Health & Human Services seek partnerships with our local hospitals and community health centers to establish the construction of a new facility. It will take ongoing funding and long-term commitment to support this endeavor at all levels. It's time to make that commitment.

## **FINDINGS: SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY**

**F22:** The Step-Down housing facility approved by the Board of Supervisors two years ago has not been constructed. Currently, without the approved facility, there is inadequate local Step-Down housing for Sempervirens patients. This is a critical community-wide issue. (R17)

**F23:** The Mobile Response Team (MRT) is a key component of evaluating individuals in mental health crises and assessing admittance to Sempervirens from our local hospitals. This unit requires 24/7/365 staff coverage. (R18)

**F24:** Humboldt County is in the process of completing a Facilities Master Plan to guide construction of new County Facilities. (R19)

**F25:** Our community deserves access to an updated and state of the art facility that treats mental health conditions. (R20)

**F26:** The placement of an exposed outside generator that provides power to Sempervirens during electrical outages is unsecured. (R21)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY**

**R17:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services ensure implementation of step-down housing for patients being discharged from Sempervirens by June 30, 2023. (F22)

**R18:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services provide the necessary staff, either through increased recruitment efforts or staff transfers, to expand Mobile Response Team (MRT) staffing to around-the-clock, effective by December 31, 2022. (F23)

**R19:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors complete and approve the Countywide Facilities Master Plan, effective by December 31, 2022. (F24)

**R20:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors move forward immediately with the recommendation of the 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury to replace Sempervirens Psychiatric Facility with a larger, modern facility designed to accommodate both adults and juveniles. (F25)

**R21:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services authorize construction of a protective barrier for the Sempervirens outdoor generator to prevent potential vandalism and assure electricity to the building in the event of an electrical outage, effective by December 31, 2022. (F26)

## **HUMBOLDT COUNTY ADULT PROBATION SERVICES AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS RESOURCE CENTER**

The 2021-2022 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited Humboldt County Adult Probation Services. In addition to inspecting the premises, the Grand Jury wished to better understand how our County has fared since implementation of AB109 (*California Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011*). This report addresses both topics.

### **The Facilities**

Both the Community Corrections Resource Center and the separately housed Adult Probation Services department appear welcoming to the public as well as adult offenders. There are multiple, readily accessible bulletin boards throughout both buildings that provide a variety of resources for jobs and potential housing, as well as inspirational reminders and tips for rehabilitation efforts. Although some of the individual counseling offices are in close proximity to public hallways, white noise machines are provided to enhance privacy. The restrooms are ADA compliant. The Fire Department inspects the buildings annually.

### **Understanding the Impact of AB109**

AB109 shifted populations of offenders with higher levels of criminal sophistication, from State prisons and the State parole system, to the County level. This law came about to address the overcrowding of California State prisons and is often referred to as “public safety realignment.”

The law created a post-release community supervision population of inmates released from State prison to County probation (instead of state parole). It also shifted incarceration responsibilities for non-serious, non-violent, non-sex offense prison sentences (3Ns) from the State prison system

to the County jail system. The majority of 3N inmates are sentenced to a period of mandatory supervision monitored by Humboldt County Adult Probation Services.

Probation refers to the sentence granted to the offender by a judge, under which the offender remains out of prison under the supervision of an Adult Deputy Probation Officer (DPO), and must follow the rules set by the court.

Adult Probation Services makes a sentencing report based on a risk assessment of the offender. If the offender receives probation, that probation is served in Humboldt County and can involve no jail time in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility or a split sentence of jail time and probation. If the offender violates probation, they may be sent to a prison facility.

The Grand Jury learned that Adult Probation Services reports to the Superior Court for legal matters and the Board of Supervisors for its budget. The multi-agency Community Corrections Partnership (established by Senate Bill 678 *California Community Corrections Performance Incentive Act of 2009*) serves as an advisory committee, as does the Executive Committee (established by AB 109 in 2011). There are 35 staff (including supervisors) in Adult Probation Services. The Juvenile Probation Department has 14 staff including supervisors. The Adult Deputy Probation Officers are considered peace officers and have the option to receive the training required to become armed officers.

To be considered for the role of Deputy Probation Officer, a person must pass a number of screening tests including background checks, voice stress analysis, a psychological evaluation, and a physical evaluation, before being sworn in by a judge. The position requires a combination of law enforcement and therapeutic skills, as a great deal of responsibility for providing cognitive behavior therapies has been placed on the Deputy Probation Officers. During the first year, inductees attend a 5 ½ week core course (with some components provided at College of the Redwoods Police Academy), 1-2 weeks of firearms training and a mandatory 40 hours of additional work-related education per year. There is a week of training in cognitive behavioral therapies (with updates every three months); a three-day training in motivational interviewing (with refreshers every other year); and ongoing training in the identification of appropriate needs-based medications for probationers.

There are two distinct Deputy Probation Officer responsibilities: 1) needs assessments and case plans for each offender on probation; 2) home checks to ensure probationer compliance with rules set by the court. Humboldt County Adult Probation Services has recently restructured so that there are two officers assigned to each offender. The officer most skilled in developing needs assessments and case plans takes on those office assignments and the officer most skilled and comfortable in the field takes on the home check duties.

## **Needs Assessment and Case Plans**

Adult Probation Services designates a risk level to each offender using a risk assessment tool before developing case plans and assigning caseloads. Every effort is made to keep these assigned caseloads balanced among Probation Officers in order to prevent undue workload and potential stress. High-risk offenders require more monitoring than intervention tools. Low-risk offenders

who made a one-time mistake benefit from less monitoring. The moderate risk offenders benefit from intervention and rehabilitation efforts.

Humboldt County Adult Probation Services uses evidence-based practices developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute to keep probationers on track and modify their behavior. These practices, called Effective Practices in Community Supervision (the EPICS model), use cognitive and behavioral strategies to change moderate and high-risk offender behavior, and have proven very successful. The department has benefited from state incentive funding for client services because of their success in supervising felony probationers.

Pre-COVID-19, Adult Probation Services had a 75 percent success rate. During COVID-19, the state's success metrics were altered somewhat and Adult Probation Services is realizing a 90 percent success rate. Programs that Adult Probation Services provide include life skills, behavioral and mental health counseling, and referrals to substance treatment programs as needed. Public Health nurses are available to coordinate substance abuse treatment and other probationer medication needs. A multi-disciplinary team holds weekly meetings designed to get probationer buy-in to apply for jobs. Incentive funds are also slated for housing (Next Step Program) in partnership with the Arcata House Partnership.

## **Home Checks**

Adult Probation Services has taken multiple steps to ensure the safety of the Deputy Probation Officer while out on home checks:

- The University of Cincinnati caseload standard is in place. This standard identifies the number of high-risk, moderate-risk, and low-risk offenders recommended for supervision per Deputy Probation Officer.
- Probation officers who have received firearms training are armed.
- Probation officers may elect to go on home visits in teams and may coordinate visits with law enforcement.
- Officers are provided with bullet-proof vests, handheld radios (these will be digital in the near future) and car radios.
- Over the last 18 months, due to COVID-19, 90 percent of the home visits are “Knock and Talk” that take place on the front porch of the offender's residence.

The Grand Jury commends Adult Probation Services. Because of their efforts, offenders have an opportunity for intervention, rehabilitation and a fresh start. That, in turn, ensures a safer community for all of us. The Grand Jury suggests an analysis of County expenditures related to the significant initial and ongoing training required for each Probation Officer. These costs should be considered when establishing compensation and benefits. Retention of these well-trained employees would increase department morale and prove less costly than replacing them.

## **JUVENILE HALL**

Humboldt County's new juvenile hall facility was completed in 2021. The building project first broke ground in 2017. Contractor issues, weather delays and the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant interruptions along the way. The total project cost was 15.75 million dollars. The new

facility is located a block west of the General Hospital Campus in Eureka close to the original Juvenile Hall, which was built in 1970.

In the new facility, there are 30 beds split into 12 double occupancy rooms and six single occupancy rooms for the average daily population of 12 youths. Juvenile Hall is a co-ed facility. Each youth is assigned their own sleeping room when they arrive. Youth are assigned sleeping rooms based on classification factors such as their behavior, safety needs, and history in Juvenile Hall. Staff escort youth to their sleeping rooms to ensure they are being placed in the correct room. All youth participate in program and recreation activities together under staff supervision. Single bed sleeping rooms are approximately 79 sq ft. and double bed sleeping rooms are approximately 106 sq ft.

There are two classrooms for Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) teachers and support staff. The HCOE provides the educational component with a curriculum offering 7th-12th grade coursework leading to a high school diploma. Students complete academic assessments and teachers create an individual learning plan. Students receive weekly feedback and progress reviews. Staff includes a credentialed teacher, an instructional aide, and a resource specialist teacher. Additional education staff provide programming in the classroom that includes technology courses, alcohol and other drug education, vocational training, reproductive health and guest speakers. Developmental programs for youth include Independent Living Skills (ILS) facilitated by a Probation Officer. Skill streaming and anger control groups are also led by probation staff.

A large multipurpose room provides game tables, areas for projects and a projector and screen for movie nights. A secured and covered outdoor recreational area includes a basketball court, volleyball court, playing fields and a garden plot.

Juvenile Hall is required to have a staff person in any area of the facility where youth are present. Staff utilize closed circuit TV and also complete safety checks at least every 15 minutes when youth are in their sleeping rooms.

Upon admittance, all youth receive a medical screening and a behavioral health assessment. Medical services are contracted through Wellpath.

The state-of-the-art kitchen provides breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a healthy snack at night, while accommodating special or religious diets.

Youth are held in Juvenile Hall on a predisposition or post-disposition status. The average length of stay for youth in a pre-disposition status is 38 days. Youth in post-disposition status, who have had a disposition before the Court and who are incarcerated at Juvenile Hall, have an average length of stay of 121 days. Youth may be held until age 23 on juvenile matters. Youth ordered to the Secure Youth Treatment Program can potentially be held until age 25. If youth violate the terms of their court orders, they can be found in violation of probation and returned to Juvenile Hall. Between July 2020 and June 2021, about half the youth in custody entered Juvenile Hall for the first time. About 33 percent of those first entry youth returned once again in that time period and approximately 15 percent more have returned since June 2021.

Violent offenses and property offenses are leading types of felonies for which California youth are arrested. Most of the youth booked into Juvenile Hall are not arrested for drug-related offenses. However, many have some level of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) that frequently contributes to what led them to the juvenile justice system. The Adolescent Treatment Program (ATP) delivers substance use disorder services to youth in custody and adolescents in the community. The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) provides two mental health clinicians and two mental health case managers who work onsite Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 2020/2021 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) stated that DHHS had hired uncertified SUD counselors to work with Juvenile Hall youth, and only 33 percent had completed counselor certification requirements. The present Grand Jury investigated this issue and we noted progress. The SUD counselor who provides services in Juvenile Hall holds the highest attainable certification in this job classification. The ATP is currently staffed with two certified substance use disorder counselors and one trainee who is preparing for the credentialing exam. SUD counselors have received training in Evidence Based Practices and are required to complete mandatory training to maintain certification.

When a youth is first arrested, a juvenile correction officer contacts the parent(s) or guardian as part of the booking process. The arrest information is forwarded to the juvenile probation officer who contacts parents to begin an investigation and informs them of the detention hearing date and time. This is 24 to 72 hours based on the offense. Detention may be removed and the youth placed on home supervision.

Basic probation contact standards with parents are at minimum one face-to-face contact per month. The frequency increases as the child and family team meetings, wrap-around meetings, court investigation meetings and court hearings are included. In addition, Probation staff are readily available to parents. Juvenile probation is inherently about serving the youth and the entire family system as the young person prepares for adulthood.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Juvenile Work Service (JAWS) program was successful in providing an alternative to detention options and a platform for youth attempting to satisfy court-ordered community service hours. Since the pandemic began, the JAWS program has been placed on hold to lessen the chance of exposure for youth.

A typical day for youth at Juvenile Hall consists of the following:

At 7 a.m., youth clean their rooms and perform other general duties around the facility. They eat breakfast and attend school from 8:30 a.m. until 2:10 p.m. with a lunch period in-between. After school, youth attend various behavioral health programs such as Anger Replacement Training (ART), Substance Use Disorder (SUD) groups and/or role playing difficult situations they may face after release. They are escorted outside for recreation time. Dinner is served at 4 p.m. and following that, there are various programming opportunities which may include groups facilitated by Project Rebound, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Boys 2 Men, Ink People, and several other community-based organizations. After evening programming ends, youth may participate in free-time activities. Family visits occur during evening hours. Youth are generally secured in their sleeping rooms by 10:00 p.m. each night.

When the Grand Jury conducted an on-site visit, we met personally with two of the youth detainees who had spent time in the old Juvenile Hall. Both had positive comments on the new facility and staff. Both liked the new surveillance cameras, saying that the cameras helped create a much calmer atmosphere in the building. The detainees felt safe and secure. They liked their education, the medical staff, and the additional TVs. They were very appreciative of the outside recreation area, and both expressed appreciation for the quality of the food. On the negative side, the shortage of officer staff was noted, and with that shortage, our interviewees felt that less free time outside of their room was provided.

The Grand Jury spoke to Juvenile Hall management about staffing issues. Recruiting qualified staff has become increasingly difficult due to the low wages for juvenile corrections officers. The Grand Jury finds this disparity will need to be addressed in order to recruit and retain qualified staff at Juvenile Hall. The importance of a qualified and fully staffed Juvenile Hall is key to the safety and progress of youth and reflects the entire community's commitment to our youth.

The Grand Jury is tasked with the inspection of the Juvenile Hall facility. The larger issue for youth is the prevention of the first admission into Juvenile Hall and the risk of subsequent readmissions.

## **EEL RIVER CONSERVATION CAMP**

The Eel River Conservation Camp (CC#31) was activated February 2, 1967. The Camp is jointly operated by the California Department of Forestry (Cal-Fire) and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The primary mission of the camp is to provide inmate fire crews for fire suppression of wildland fires during the summer and fall fire seasons. Inmate hand crews also provide a work force for floods, conservation projects and community services.

It is estimated through the emergency response to fires, floods, and project work, CC#31 provides cost avoidance in excess of a million dollars per year to the taxpayer of California. Noteworthy projects include extensive work at Southern Humboldt Unified School District, Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District (RID), Humboldt County Roads, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Local Community Service District. The inmate crews also provide the numerous Memorial Grove signs posted in State Parks and Avenue of the Giants.

CC#31 comprises 11 California Department of Correctional and Rehabilitation and 14 California Department of Forestry staff members. There are currently 28 inmates at the facility, down from 51 in 2021. CC#31 has a capacity for 120 inmates. 13 of the current population are FireFighters that make up one crew. To become a FireFighter each inmate must pass a medical evaluation and complete 80 hours of hand crew training. Then they must complete an additional 247-hour training to become an Engine/Structure Fire member. The Engine/Structure Fire crew's primary task is fighting wildland fires during the summer and fall fire seasons. Other inmates at CC#31 have duties such as kitchen staff, laundry staff, mechanics and carpentry.

CC#31 hosts a variety of programs in conjunction with local volunteers:

- Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous meetings
- Faith-based services

- Department of Motor Vehicles Pre-Release California I.D. and Driver's License program
- Hobby Craft program
- Camp Gardening Project
- Music Appreciation Program

Unfortunately, inmate enrollment at the camp has been negatively impacted by AB-109 (*California Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011*), Proposition 47 (*The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act of 2014*), and Proposition 57 (*Parole for Non-Violent Criminals 2016*). Inmates with records for arson, violence, rape, or murder are not eligible to be in the Conservation Camp program.

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury inspected the facilities and found them well maintained and well managed. Inmates had painted several murals in the dining area reflecting the work that they do. The kitchen and dining facility had recently been replaced and an air-conditioning unit had been installed to replace the swamp cooler. Other facilities at CC#31 still use swamp coolers. The sleeping facilities were clean, even with the fire crew having just returned from supporting a fire in another county. The 160 acres of athletic fields and emergency base camp grounds were mowed and trimmed should there be an immediate need for the facility to be used as a base camp.

## **GENERAL FACILITIES INSPECTIONS**

The following are Findings from multiple facilities inspected by the Humboldt Civil Grand Jury and rather than identify these items in each facility we are noting them here to avoid repetition.

### **FINDINGS: GENERAL FACILITIES INSPECTIONS**

**F27:** Many county facilities have various volunteer groups and individual volunteers that support the efforts of the County staff. (R22)

**F28:** Volunteer recruitment may be increased through additional County promotional efforts. (R23)

**F29:** Salary ranges and ceilings for County positions do not provide incentive to recruit and retain dedicated and qualified staff. Positions remain unfilled and require upgraded salary incentives. (R24)

**F30:** Many of the County facilities lack preventive maintenance which will eventually result in emergency repair at additional cost. The Grand Jury noted peeling paint, ceiling leaks, deteriorating stairways and damaged ceiling tiles at several facilities. Also noted in selected facilities throughout the inspections were partially demolished areas in need of repair, inoperable lighting in rooms and janitorial services that were not scheduled on a regular basis. (R25)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS: GENERAL FACILITIES INSPECTIONS**

**R22:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors issue an official Proclamation of Support and Appreciation for these volunteers. (F27)

**R23:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors promote volunteer recruitment on existing County websites, County printed advertisements and at Board of Supervisor meetings. (F28)

**R24:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Humboldt County Human Resources identify and review salary ranges and ceilings for County staff on an ongoing basis beginning November 30, 2022. (F29)

**R25:** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors provide sufficient funding to allow preventive maintenance to be in place with the next fiscal year budget. (F30)

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

### **Within 60 days from the following individuals:**

#### **Humboldt County Sheriff Honsal**

Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **F4, R4**

County Animal Shelter: **F11, F12, R9, R10**

Boatyard: **F13, F14, R11, R12**

Evidence Rooms: **F16, R14**

#### **Humboldt County IT Department Jim Storm**

Sheriff's Office: **F1, R1**

#### **Arcata Police Department Chief of Police Brian Ahern**

Sheriff's Office: **F3, R3**

#### **Eureka Police Department Interim Police Chief Todd Jarvis**

Sheriff's Office: **F3, R3**

#### **Fortuna Police Department Chief of Police Casey Day**

Sheriff's Office: **F3, R3**

#### **Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services Connie Beck**

Sempervirens: **F22, F23, F26, R17, R18, R21**

#### **Humboldt County Human Resources Department Zachary O'Hanen**

General Facilities: **F29, R24**

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES (continue)**

**Within 90 days from the following individuals:**

### **Humboldt County Board of Supervisors**

Sheriff's Office: **F2, F3, R2, R3**

Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **F4, R4**

Office of Emergency Services: **F6, F7, F8, F9, R5, R6, R7**

County Animal Shelter: **F10, F11, R8, R9**

Boatyard: **F13, F14, R11, R12**

Evidence Room: **F15, R13**

Public Administrator: **F17, R15**

Humboldt County Correctional Facility: **F18, F19, F20, F21, R16**

Sempervirens: **F24, F25, R19, R20**

General Facilities: **F27, F28, F30, R22, R23, R25**

## **INVITED RESPONSES**

### **Humboldt County Sheriff Honsal**

Office of Emergency Services: **F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, R5, R6, R7**

Public Administrator: **F17, R15**

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California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)

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