



## SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

Grand Jury

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**Jim Monteton**

**Judith Parise**

**Karen Richmond**

January 12, 2011

To the Citizens of Sacramento County

The grand jury's job is to observe and investigate government agencies to ensure they are being run efficiently, honestly and fairly. When the grand jury convened last summer, jury members expressed an interest in having an overview of many agencies within the county. Members had heard about budget cuts and the resulting problems. It was our intention to observe what has occurred in our county.

We found many county agencies and departments, while understaffed, have made modifications to try to perform with efficient responses along with keeping employees motivated and focused. This has been accomplished with changing work schedules, moving staff and consolidating jobs.

The Interim County Executive has been studying several agencies and is working on plans to consolidate and streamline operations. It was the intention of the grand jury to collect important factual information about county agencies and in no way enter into any political areas. In addition, we are not making comments on or suggestions regarding the budget adopted earlier this year.

Once again, the members of the grand jury want to thank all of the hardworking county government employees we interviewed for their help in providing the information incorporated in this report. There are no findings or recommendations offered as this is simply a report to let citizens know what we learned on our tours to various agencies. We hope this report will promote a better future for all county employees and for the citizens of Sacramento County.

Sincerely,

DONALD PRANGE SR., Foreperson  
2010-2011 Sacramento County Grand Jury  
DP/bc

# **Sacramento County Under Duress: Problems and Opportunities**

## **Summary**

Sacramento County and its cities are suffering tremendous budget reductions, putting their operations under great duress. This report is intended to inform residents of Sacramento County about the state of public services within the county, the extent to which those services have changed in recent months, and the impact which those changes may have on Sacramento County's citizens.

## **Background**

Every year each California county convenes a grand jury, as State law requires. Nineteen Sacramento County residents volunteer to serve from July 1 to June 30 of the following year under the guidance of the California Superior Court of Sacramento County. The grand jury's task is to review and comment on the services provided by public agencies within Sacramento County, and to bring to bear a citizen's perspective on problems it may encounter.

During July through September 2010, this grand jury met with managers of many, but not all, public agencies within the county, was briefed on current operations, and toured public facilities. Through this process, the grand jury learned of the severe fiscal constraints under which local government is currently operating. This report describes the jury's initial observations and passes on information provided by public agency representatives.

## **Introduction**

The Sacramento County Grand Jury was impressed with the manner in which city and county agencies are approaching the recent reductions in staffing and operations caused by budget limitations. Some agencies have made, or are making, changes which might not have been possible or desirable under different circumstances. Other agencies are thinking creatively and are searching for new ways to carry out their responsibilities. Our cities, county and special districts have been forward thinking over the years in matters of consolidation, as witnessed by the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District and the Regional County Sanitation District. More innovation is required. The grand jury was especially encouraged by the Sacramento County Executive's broad agenda for potential changes. These include consolidation both within and between agencies, contracting out when legally possible and economically viable, and strengthening both fiscal management and employee relations, while tackling the pension and health care promises of the past.

Even under, or perhaps because of, current circumstances, opportunities for constructive changes are many and varied. However, in many respects the impact on county residents is severe and unlikely to be alleviated without significant changes in spending, service delivery or increased funding. Large portions of the county budget are spent on public safety functions for all residents and services for our most vulnerable residents. Public safety has been compromised and the safety net is in tatters.

The following sections provide more specific examples of the grand jury's observations.

### **Sacramento County Executive**

The Sacramento County Executive plans, organizes, directs, controls and coordinates activities of Sacramento County agencies. With a management team, the executive exercises fiscal oversight of county operations and is responsible for preparation of the county budget. The incumbent was hired in early 2010 on an interim basis and has agreed to serve through the current fiscal year.

County General Fund revenue comes primarily from property taxes and county sales taxes. Fees collected from water, liquid and solid waste management, and airports are earmarked for the specific agencies that impose them. In Fiscal Year 2009–2010, Sacramento County revenue was \$3.4 billion. Expected revenue for Fiscal Year 2010–2011 is \$3.2 billion, a reduction of about \$200 million.

Since Fiscal Year 2008–2009 to the present, the county reduced full time equivalent positions from 14,124 to 11,600. Even with these staffing cuts and attendant service reductions, the county budget for Fiscal Year 2010–2011 was about \$181 million out of balance.

The county executive has directed agency managers to be creative in seeking ideas for changes in, and improvements to, the county's service delivery system. A list of projects in various stages of study and implementation focuses on strengthening the budget and finances of the county (see appendix: New Efficiencies List). One of the first of these projects to be implemented was the Reserve and Reinvestment Policy. This policy established a minimum reserve amount using Fiscal Year 2007 as the high point and Fiscal Year 2010 as the low point. One half of all revenue exceeding the 2010 mark will go into a reserve fund until the Fiscal Year 2007 level is reached. The other half will be invested to find new ways to provide services to the public.

The county executive will be negotiating contracts with 18 existing labor unions. Additional labor organizations may be formed in the coming months. Previously, almost all labor contracts had been set for a five-year period and came up for renegotiation at the same time. This practice is changing and contracts are being negotiated for one, two, or three-year periods. Changes are also being negotiated in pension formulas, retiree health stipends and salary schedules.

Other studies on the New Efficiencies List will examine county operations to identify ways to deliver services more efficiently without increasing the work force. The Carryover Incentive Plan encourages departments to save money with the reward being retention of those savings for use the following year. The retained money can be used for such purposes as equipment or training, but not for staffing. The possibility of reorganizing county departments or creating joint powers authorities is also under discussion. Potential examples are consolidation of the county, city and SPCA animal shelters or the communication centers operated by the Sheriff and Sacramento City Police.

The county executive's plan for debt management involves the conversion of debt from variable rate financing to fixed rates. The goal is to lower interest payments over time,

giving the county more predictability in budgeting for debt management and improving the county's credit rating.

The grand jury considers the Sacramento County Executive's agenda to be commendable. In fact, items on that agenda are sufficiently important to have deserved serious attention even without the impetus of a recession.

### **Sacramento County Main Jail**

The Sacramento Main Jail is a stand-alone downtown tower completed in 1989. It was originally designed for single cell occupancy for 1,250 inmates. It currently uses double cell configuration and houses approximately 2,400 inmates. A planned second tower was not built due to budget restrictions. The jail operates in conjunction with the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Facility to house city and county offenders.

Budget cuts have had a severe impact. In the past two years, 139 full-time staff positions were eliminated, including 122 deputy positions. Currently, only 38 deputies are available per shift; this is a ratio of 1 deputy for 63 inmates. Staff shortages and deputy reassignments back to the jail cause safety issues and low morale, along with the increased use of sick leave.

Staff shortages also adversely affect the booking process. For example, nursing staff assigned to the booking area was cut from three to one. During times of high intake volume, the booking process can take up to eight hours, partly due to the lack of available nurses. Also, since the intake and booking process requires an arresting officer to be present, intake processing can keep an officer tied up for hours.

Budget limitations have led to several undesirable outcomes. Since most felony prisoners must be incarcerated, only thirty to forty misdemeanor inmates can be accommodated. Inmates only get the required minimum of three hours per week out of their cells due to the limited staff. This presents a potential "boil over" situation. Assaults among inmates are increasing. Cuts of 50 percent to the medical staff result in a three to four day wait before some non-critical cases are seen by a doctor.

The building exterior and lobby are clean and well maintained. The interior, however, is in disrepair; some areas are poorly lit and others are not clean. The grand jury observed falling ceiling tiles, faulty electrical outlets, areas in need of paint and broken door locks. Elevators need repair and maintenance. The limited maintenance staff cannot keep up with maintenance needs and necessary repairs.

The primary functions of the Main Jail are being performed as efficiently as possible considering the drastic budget reductions. On September 30, 2010 the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department received \$21 million in federal funds for 50 sworn patrol deputies. This may alleviate some of the problems.

### **Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center**

Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center (RCCC), located in rural southern Sacramento County, operates in conjunction with the Main Jail. This 70 acre double-fenced facility currently houses 1,700–1,900 inmates and is separated into maximum, medium and

minimum security areas. When the Main Jail is full, inmates are sent to RCCC. About 500 overcapacity pre-trial inmates are housed at RCCC.

RCCC is also the central transportation point for all individuals sentenced to state prisons. The Larson Women's Facility located on the site was closed in July due to budget cuts. Incarcerated women are now housed only at the Main Jail.

Staffing cuts have affected all areas of RCCC. The grand jury noted that some deputies have taken a reduction in rank and reassignment to the Main Jail and RCCC in order to preserve jobs. Staffing in the maximum security area has been cut to one control deputy and two floor deputies who work 12 hour shifts. Staffing previously was four to five deputies. All maximum security inmates must be escorted to medical, dental and other services thereby removing a deputy from the secured area. Before budget cuts such services were provided in special areas within the cell blocks.

The RCCC roving response team, which is trained to handle inmate disturbances, is no longer funded. Currently responses to incidents are delayed because deputies must assemble from various sites within RCCC.

Additional burdens in the minimum security units are caused by the growing number of incarcerated gang members, who require segregation from each other. The minimum security areas designed for petty criminals and non-violent offenders are being elevated to medium security requiring additional personnel.

The medical facilities at RCCC are old. Medical staff reductions as high as 50 percent result in inmates waiting up to seven days for non urgent care. About one in five inmates require psychiatric medications.

Deputies are required to accompany inmates being transported to and from the Mail Jail. About 3,000 inmates are transported each month for various court appearances. Unlike the Main Jail, RCCC does not have court facilities.

Due to budget cuts, vocational training opportunities are limited. Vocational training, such as graphics instruction, and cooking apprenticeships can only accommodate a small number of inmates. A sign shop which gives inmates job skill training is self-supporting. It can provide signs for 20 to 30 percent less than private shops.

Conditions for the inmates, with more yard time and space, are better than those at the Main Jail. The water and sewer systems are at full capacity, and moreover, are old and in need of repair.

### **Sacramento City Police Department**

The Sacramento City Police Department (SPD) budget has suffered a \$5 million cut over the last two years. The SPD now has 1.40 sworn officers and 0.62 civilian staff for every 1,000 residents. The ratio for comparable cities is 2.37 sworn officers and 1.31 civilian staff. This does not take into account that Sacramento is a capital city which requires more staff due to visiting dignitaries and demonstrations. According to the Chief of Police, comparing similarly sized capital cities, Sacramento is 800 positions short of meeting program goals.

The department's new budget policy departs from the previous practice of imposing the same or similar percentage cuts across all areas of services. The SPD now concentrates on responding to and reducing Part 1 crimes and to providing greater customer service. Part 1 crimes are violent crimes, crimes in progress, and serious property crimes, such as robbery and burglary. The chief states that Sacramento is number two in California, only behind Oakland, in the number of these major crimes.

The department believes it is a leader in using technology resources to promote customer services. SPD uses town hall meetings to encourage public awareness, to learn what the citizens want and expect of their police force and to inform the citizens what is going on in their neighborhoods. Residents can use the internet to monitor neighborhood crime patterns. Crime reports can be prepared on-line. The SPD has a program on local radio station KFBK as part of engaging the public.

The Chief of Police states that serious violent crime is up 20 percent in the city and believes this is the product of the poor economy and the early release of prisoners. The latter is exacerbated by the devastating budget cuts to the parole and probation systems. The Chief of Police believes that the California State Legislature's decision to enact the early release program shifted the problem from the state to the local level.

### **Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District**

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (SMFD) was established in the year 2000 with the merger of several adjacent fire districts. The SMFD is the seventh largest fire district in the state. It provides services for an area of 417 square miles and serves roughly 640,000 residents. The SMFD has 42 stations and approximately 750 personnel.

SMFD has suffered a \$12.5 million reduction in the budget since Fiscal Year 2008–2009. To compensate for this budget reduction, SMFD decreased staff by reorganizing shifts, and downsizing some “non-safety” divisions. Also, the district negotiated with labor groups to forego planned increases and reduce incentive pay. Fourteen employees were reassigned to a lower classification. SMFD closed two stations and moved the helicopter pad to a centrally located site.

SMFD receives some revenue by charging residents for some services such as transport to hospitals and hazardous materials cleanup. A proposal is pending to recover costs for responses to auto accidents caused by out of county drivers.

Over the last three years 130 employees retired or left for other reasons, and were not replaced. No pensions were “bought out.” The administrative staff was cut in half and the remaining staff reorganized by function. A time clock is used to increase accountability and efficiency. For the past two years, SMFD has followed a new sick leave policy for fire suppression personnel resulting in lower use of sick leave.

### **Sacramento City Fire Department**

The Sacramento City Fire Department (SCFD) provides services over an area of 146 square miles which includes some non-city contracted areas. The department responds to over 70,000 calls per year. Approximately 68 percent of calls are for ambulance services. SCFD operates a fee-based ambulance service that costs the General Fund nothing and has, in some years, produced a small surplus that goes into the General Fund. SCFD

provides hazardous materials clean-up and water rescue services. The hazardous materials clean-up is a fee-based service. Collection of fees is handled by a private company that recovers about 80 percent of assessed fees. SCFD has 23 stations and 32 companies. Currently 13 of their companies respond to more than 3,400 calls each per year which is considered the maximum for safe operation.

SCFD's current budget is \$98 million. In recent years the department has responded to budget cuts by trying to protect operational staff as much as possible and making cuts to administration and other services. The number of firefighters was reduced from 554 to 511. The department has not hired new staff in three years. The administrative staff participates in a furlough program. SCFD has closed fire houses and reduced the number of fire companies. In a process called "brown-out," the department reduces two companies a day on a revolving basis. In browned-out districts the response time goes up about two minutes. To gain perspective on what this means, consider the fact that a fire doubles in size every minute it burns.

SCFD reduced its administrative staff to a level below generally accepted fire department standards. The department has also reduced fire safety inspections and investigative staff. The loss of safety inspections may cost the public in the long run. Currently, the Sacramento City Council is discussing levying of accident recovery fees from negligent drivers.

SCFD has improved coordination with neighboring fire safety agencies. The agency continues to strengthen communications and shorten response times with other agencies including local police and fire districts.

Budget restrictions caused the department to cut back on recruitment and training. SCFD thoroughly reviewed its operations and procedures and is applying innovation to keep operations as complete as possible. There is a cost to public safety because of the reductions. Additional reductions may result in increased response times, putting the public in further jeopardy.

### **Communication and Dispatch Services**

The police and sheriff departments receive 911 calls in their respective jurisdictions. Emergencies are handled within the appropriate law enforcement service areas, while fire and medical emergency calls are forwarded to the Sacramento Regional Fire and Emergency Communications Center.

Call center personnel evaluate incoming calls, entering relevant information into Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) systems that help prioritize the calls. The information is forwarded to dispatchers who route the calls to field units for the appropriate response. Calls are re-evaluated as emergency personnel arrive at the scene. Dispatchers continue to monitor calls and help coordinate responses by other agencies. All the centers use translation services for non-English speaking callers.

The California Highway Patrol receives cellular 911 calls. The calls are forwarded to the appropriate police or fire agency. Operators must first determine the location of the emergency before forwarding the call. This may slow response time, especially when the caller is unsure of the emergency location.

The **Sacramento Sheriff Call and Dispatch Center (SCC)** is shoe-horned into the Sheriff's downtown office, an older building not specifically designed for modern communications equipment. While the CAD system and hardware are new, the facility will not easily accommodate expansion of systems or staff. SCC receives land line 911 calls directly. The SCC processes approximately 600,000 calls per year on an out-dated analog phone system. The SCC has about 75 personnel who provide round-the-clock service.

**Sacramento City Police Department Communication Center (PCC)** is housed in a new (2006) spacious facility designed specifically as a regional communications center. The department has state-of-the-art security, including fenced perimeter and surveillance cameras. There is additional space for ancillary functions including support and training. This building was designed with growth and consolidation in mind. The PCC has about 89 personnel and processes approximately 340,000 calls per year.

The **Sacramento Regional Fire and Emergency Services Communication Center (FESCC)** dispatches for all Sacramento County fire departments and ambulance services. Its jurisdiction covers almost 1,000 square miles and 1.4 million residents. Calls cover fire, medical, hazardous spills, aircraft, water (floods), law enforcement, public assistance, helicopter and special rescues. It is operated under a joint powers agreement, with contributions proportional to the number of calls received by the member agencies. FESCC is housed in a building constructed in 1985 equipped with backup generators and an uninterruptible power source system and has been seismically upgraded. The building has a perimeter electrical grounding system and a computer floor has been installed. The building is monitored by external cameras, but is not security hardened. It has ample floor space for its function. The CAD system is based on COBOL, a software language that is no longer generally used or supported. Budget constraints prohibit upgrading to more modern CAD system software.

All three agencies (SCC, PCC, and FESCC) suffered budget cuts impacting staff size and have taken steps to minimize effects on their levels of service. Because 911 communication and dispatch are essential to the functioning of these agencies, budget cuts have been minimal. However, modernization has been stalled.

Training programs vary among these agencies. All programs require substantial classroom instruction and simulated call training. It may take over one year for a trainee to become proficient. The hiring and training cycle is ongoing. Vacancies occur regularly, in part due to job stress.

The PCC complex was designed as a regional communication center and has ample room to house law enforcement centers. Combining the SCC and PCC centers into one facility may provide potential budget savings for the city and county. However, there are concerns that this is not possible because the need for back up facilities.

### **Sacramento District Attorney's Laboratory of Forensic Services**

The Sacramento District Attorney's Laboratory of Forensic Services (Crime Lab) provides scientific examination of physical evidence for police, sheriff, fire and district attorney investigations. Even though the Crime Lab is funded through the Sacramento County District Attorney's budget, it operates independently. No fee is charged for

services to agencies within Sacramento County's jurisdiction. The Crime Lab is organized by function: (1) biology, (2) criminalistics (comparative evidence, ballistics, trace hair, fibers, and arson), (3) chemistry (controlled substances), (4) toxicology, and (5) quality assurance. There are 12 special purpose labs constructed to provide specialized facilities for the various types of evidence and to prevent cross-contamination. The Crime Lab is accredited by ASCLAD-LAB, and is among the first in the state to be accredited to ISO (International Standards Organization) standards. Staff scientists are college graduates, who complete competency and proficiency tests regularly, as required by accreditation. They are also all trained to testify in court.

The total budget for the Crime Lab is \$9.2 million; this is \$1 million less than last year. The lab also receives grants, but this source of funding has also been reduced.

The Crime Lab has 45 employees, a reduction of six positions from a year ago. The loss has reduced the ability to complete case examinations. The toxicology lab had seven scientists, but three have been lost to layoffs. The evidence lab is down to one custodian. The result of staff cuts is an increase in the backlog of cases which is defined as cases not worked within 30 days of submission. The Integrated Ballistics Identification System, a database used to determine linkage among firearm-related evidence, has had its staff position eliminated, and is shut down.

Drug analysis turnaround time has increased. The ability is decreasing to meet the goals of an expedited drug analysis program. This is a program to provide results within a 48 hour turnaround to meet court appearance needs. The unit providing blood and urine alcohol analysis is reduced to one person. This unit is behind more than 300 cases. The delay in analysis, especially of drug and toxicology cases, affects adjudication of cases upon the first court appearance, and may result in substantial additional court and law enforcement costs.

The Crime Lab has successfully integrated into its operations the relatively new field of DNA-related evidence. The newer staff members who provide the core of this technical expertise may be more vulnerable to layoffs due to their low seniority.

The bottom line for the Sacramento Crime Lab is that workloads are increasing and staffing is decreasing, resulting in backlogs and missed deadlines. When laboratory examinations are not completed in a timely manner, additional costs are incurred by police, sheriff, and fire departments, the district attorney's office and the courts.

### **Sacramento County Department of the Coroner**

The county coroner must determine the cause and manner of all unexpected, traumatic and violent deaths. This includes all cases of infant death, work-related deaths where Cal OSHA requests an investigation, and jail or prison deaths. Deaths where a doctor can specify a cause of death are not routinely investigated. The coroner works with a team of law enforcement, social services, and child protective service (CPS) representatives to review the deaths of children and elders. The office also handles all indigent cremations and prepares bodies donated for medical research. Additionally, the coroner's office takes possession of and stores the belongings of the deceased until claimed.

Each day there are about 17 deaths among Sacramento County's 1.4 million people. The coroner conducts about 1,400 autopsies each year (three or four per day). The office

received \$3.6 million from the general fund last year, down \$900,000 from the previous year. It generated \$1.2 million, mostly from transporting bodies.

The staff includes 34 full-time equivalent employees; this is fewer than in 1964. Administrative staff was cut from 4 to 2.5 positions. The public window is open only four hours per day. The doctor and investigative deputy coroner positions have both been cut from four to two. Deputy coroners were reduced from 15 to 11. Eleven autopsy technicians now retrieve bodies, a function previously contracted to a private mortuary company.

Despite severe budgetary reductions the coroner's office is still meeting all minimum legal requirements. By reducing public window hours to afternoons only, administrative staff can use morning hours more productively. The coroner is considering an assembly line autopsy process that Los Angeles has been using for many years. By allowing autopsy technicians to do routine parts of the autopsy, forensic pathologists' time and skills could be used more productively.

Sacramento County has an autonomous coroner appointed by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. Most counties combine their medical examiner functions with the sheriff's department. The county executive's office is studying such a reorganization.

### **Sacramento County Probation Department**

The Sacramento County Probation Department has a current year budget of \$105.5 million; 56 percent is funded from the county General Fund and 44 percent by state and federal grants. Reductions of almost 30 percent since Fiscal Year 2008–2009 have resulted in a loss of 349 positions, almost 40 percent of the staff. Sworn positions have been reduced from 760 to 480. Non-sworn positions are down to 126. As a result of these staff reductions, the Background Investigations Unit and the Community Protection Unit have been eliminated. There has been a massive reduction to adult field services. Fiscal constraints have also forced the closure of the Boy's Ranch, the Neighborhood Alternative Center, and the Thornton Youth Center, along with the elimination of many youth-oriented programs.

As a consequence of these cuts, 96 percent of the 27,000 adult probationers and 86 percent of juvenile offenders are now unsupervised by a probation officer. In addition, the staff focused on gang members and registered sexual offenders was drastically reduced, resulting in only 20 percent of each group receiving attention from a probation officer.

One bright spot is the Adult Reporting Center, a pilot program for high-risk male offenders 18 to 25 years old. The program is aimed at channeling at-risk probationers into classes, mental health counseling and other services to keep them from re-offending. The average cost from time of arrest through conviction and sentencing is \$15,500 per offender. This cost escalates to \$50,000 if the offender commits a new crime and goes to state prison. Substantial amounts of court and prison costs could be avoided if this program were successful. In addition, the recidivism rate could decline if this program prevents its participants from re-offending. Lack of funding permits staff to handle only 50–75 of these probationers although there are nearly 5,000 in Sacramento County who could benefit from this program.

County budget cuts have devastated the probation department. It cannot provide the basic services needed to protect the public. The lack of probation supervision impacts city police, county sheriff, district attorney and court departments to the extent that the safety of the public is at risk.

### **Sacramento County Juvenile Hall**

The Sacramento County Juvenile Hall, referred to as the Hall, is part of the probation department. It was expanded and remodeled extensively over ten years, with all activity completed in 2007 at a cost of \$43 million. This is a modern facility designed specifically to house juvenile offenders up to 18 years of age. At full capacity it can hold 445. It now holds 325 juveniles. The facility currently has a staff of 220.

The Hall has 15 housing units. Most juvenile detainees are subject to the juvenile court. However, one unit houses maximum security detainees accused of major crimes who are being treated as adults by the courts.

The Hall has a complete clinic including dental services. It has laundry facilities and a modern kitchen where all meals are prepared. There is extensive camera monitoring of almost all spaces. Electronic doors throughout the facility are controlled by a central monitoring station. Each detention unit holds up to 30 detainees and has a staff of 12. The units have mainly single cell rooms and a core area where staff is based that contains tables for eating. The kitchen delivers the meals on carts to each unit. Off this core area are a recreation yard, two classrooms and rooms for medical staff where prescription drugs are dispensed.

At intake, each inmate receives a physical, psychological and literacy evaluation. Within 72 hours of intake a Detention Risk Assessment (DRA) is completed. The DRA is a tool that predicts behavior. It helps in determining inmate placement; that is, whether they should be placed in a group home, a foster home or released to the family. The average stay is 17 days, but many are released after 72 hours.

By law juveniles are required to attend school while in detention. A school within the facility is run by the Sacramento County Office of Education. The director of the Hall believes that many of the detainees get the best care they have had in their lives while in detention, including medical, psychological, dental, educational and nutritional services.

An influx of detainees has occurred due to the closure of other youth programs and facilities. Recurring budget cuts, which reduce monitoring of detainees after they leave the Hall, are likely to result in more repeat offenders recycling through the system. The only positive results from these cuts may be that more experienced staff who worked in the field are now returning to work in the Hall.

### **Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento**

The Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento (CRH) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization under contract with Sacramento County. It serves as an emergency care shelter to provide short-term care to children ages 1 through 17 who are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect.

CRH has 98 beds and serves about 1,000 children each year. The facility provides early intervention and placement assessment of the child's immediate and extended families in order to prevent future problems. The CRH also has medical care, counseling and education available for the children in its care.

The staff ratio is 1:3 for children one to six years old and 1:10 for older children. Younger children cannot remain in the facility for longer than 30 days; older children can remain for a longer period. The CRH has “shelter children,” i.e., girls 13–17 who are on site for 6–9 months for intense rehabilitation and follow-up upon release.

There is an “independent living” facility of 20 beds for teens who are about to age out of the system and need training in time management, cooking and job hunting. Children one to six years of age are housed in cottages designed to accommodate them in a home-like setting.

All children have access to a health clinic with two licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) on site to treat immediate needs. A doctor evaluates the children's health care needs once a week. Food is prepared on the premises. There are four classrooms; CRH has a contract with the San Juan Unified School District to provide educational courses.

CRH receives money from several sources. It has a long-term contract with Sacramento County via Child Protective Services (CPS) and a small contract with the County Department of Mental Health. CRH is paid at state foster care rates. There is no fund development staff on the payroll. CRH benefits from fundraising by community groups and CRH's Board of Directors.

The county proposed a ten percent decrease in funding. The CPS contract has been reduced by \$250,000. Since CPS no longer responds to “borderline cases” and only removes children in cases of obvious physical abuse in accordance with federal guidelines, fewer children are sent to the facility. The staff has been reduced from 150 to 100 employees.

CRH emphasizes early, comprehensive intervention in children's lives with a goal of preventing them from re-entering the system. They would like to have more impact on the ultimate placement of the children and more time to ease transition to foster care to help the children adjust more easily. By regulation the California Community Care Licensing Board (CCL) has imposed a limit of 30 days at CRH for children under six. The previously available option of seeking waivers from the 30 day rule in certain cases was eliminated this year by CCL.

### **Sacramento County Child Protective Services**

Sacramento County Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates child abuse and neglect and provides services to keep children safe while strengthening families. CPS also trains foster parents, acts as an adoption agency, and licenses family daycare homes.

Changes were made at Child Protective Services (CPS) that implement most recommendations of the 2008–2009 Sacramento County Grand Jury and a study by a consulting firm. A major change in CPS procedure comes from assigning one social worker to a child's case who remains with that child until resolution of the case. Another change is the full use of an interactive computer program, Structured Decision Making

(SDM), a tool used at various points during a case investigation to guide decision making, to standardize report writing at all levels of CPS intervention, and to provide information for quality assessment.

Child-related emergency calls are received at one of four Intake Hotline Units. Each unit has one supervisor and six staff. Staff answering the calls evaluate them, classify them and enter the information into the SDM system, assigning them to one of three classifications:

1. Immediate response is required in cases of physical abuse, sexual abuse or hospitalization and can be initiated with a protective custody warrant or, if necessary, with law enforcement.
2. The ten day call list requires investigation because of truancy, neglect or environmental concerns. These generally stem from mandated reporters, i.e., staffs of schools, hospitals, doctors or police who are required by law to report possible abuse.
3. No response necessary.

All calls are recorded and supervisors can override the classification.

Sacramento County's fiscal constraints adversely affected the agency's emergency responses. Previously, the average number of such responses to calls was 1,500 per month. This was reduced to 1,300 per month because some "border line" cases no longer receive emergency response treatment. These cases include teen-parent conflicts, protracted truancy and some types of neglect. Lack of responses to "border line" cases also results in an overall decrease in the number of children sent to emergency shelters or to foster care. There is a concerted effort to place children with their family members. Unfortunately, many parenting classes and preventative intervention tools were cut due to budget constraints. As staff is reduced and personnel shifted from section to section, report writing is slowed, and assessments are compromised.

Upon removal of a child from the family home, CPS staff provides all necessary transportation. Medical and mental health assessments can be done at the Children's Receiving Home or in the family home, if appropriate. Two public health nurses are available to conduct 30 day developmental assessments. If the child becomes a dependent of the court, CPS, in cooperation with the court, investigates the case.

CPS monitors approximately 400 licensed foster care homes in Sacramento County. Approximately 60 percent of children removed from the family home are eventually reunited with their families; about 20 percent are adopted. The remaining children stay in the system for an extended period of time either in group homes or foster care, where they receive services and support from CPS. Approximately 1,300 to 1,500 children up to age 22 are in an Independent Living Program staffed by 4 social workers and a supervisor. This program provides transitional housing, job skills and "community partners" for help with food, household items, and other necessities.

CPS made many changes to their internal operations including an annual employee evaluation program put into place March 2010. Supervisors and program managers are trained to evaluate the work of employees and also to conduct quality assurance

evaluations. CPS increased efficiency in handling staff disciplinary cases, attempting to resolve such cases within 90 days.

### **Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District – Wastewater Treatment Facility**

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1973 encouraged communities to combine sewage treatment facilities wherever possible and was the impetus for the formation of regional treatment facilities. In response, Sacramento County and the cities of Sacramento and Folsom formed the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD), and a \$460 million regional program was developed. Federal funds from the CWA provided 75 percent of the funding for this project, state grants provided 12.5 percent and the remainder was provided by local bond funds.

The SRCSD initiated construction of the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP), and the plant began operation in November 1982. The treatment plant uses 900 acres of a 3,550 acre site in southwest Sacramento County. The remaining acreage provides a buffer. The large treatment plant replaces 22 smaller, less efficient treatment plants. It now collects and treats wastewater from an area greater than 250 square miles and serves 1.3 million area residents.

The SRWTP processes on average 150 million gallons of wastewater a day and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. SRWTP provides secondary treatment of the wastewater, releasing the effluent into the Sacramento River below the Freeport Bridge. Numerous by-products of the treatment process are recycled. Each year the SRWTP processes about 25,000 dry tons of bio-solids and about 7,300 dry tons of “Class A” organic fertilizer pellets that are sold for use on lawns and gardens. Methane gas is another by-product and is collected, cleaned, and sent to a cogeneration plant which produces up to 100 megawatts of electricity and steam that is used in the plant. SRCSD’s Water Recycling Program has provided a safe water supply for non-potable purposes such as landscape irrigation. In 2009, approximately 312 million gallons of recycled water were used in the Elk Grove area.

The SRCSD Environmental Laboratory has been in operation at the SRWTP site since 1982. Five years ago a new state-of-the-art facility was built there. The full-service environmental laboratory is certified by the California Department of Public Health to analyze and report analytical results for regulatory purposes. It also provides laboratory services to several federal, state and local agencies.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board is scheduled to issue a new five year permit for the regional sewage treatment system in December 2010. The last five year permit was issued in 2000 with annual extensions beginning in 2005. About ten million pounds of ammonia are in the effluent discharged into the Sacramento River each year. Some people are concerned that the ammonia discharge is disrupting the food web of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The district’s position is that there is no proven scientific evidence that the amount of ammonia being discharged hurts the downstream environment. The SRCSD estimates it could cost \$2 billion to remove ammonia by adding tertiary treatment of the wastewater. Customers could face major rate increases; some estimates suggest monthly bills could double or triple.

The revenue of the SRCSD was reduced because the economic slowdown and the reduction in new home construction caused sewer impact fees to decline. However, the monthly rate revenue has remained fairly constant. The SRCSD Board of Directors made a number of financial adjustments to reduce expenses. These included eliminating or delaying projects, paying off some existing debt early, and using the rate stabilization fund to cover shortfalls.

### **Sacramento Animal Services**

The **Sacramento County Animal Shelter** is a state-of-the-art facility on 8 acres with accommodations for dogs, cats, horses and other animals. The budget this year is \$3.5 million. The latest budget reduced staffing by 49 percent. The director of the shelter position has not been filled; the duties of this position have been assumed by the director of code enforcement. There are 26 employees, including ten animal control officers and five administrative personnel. Only one animal control officer is available at any time. The county has only one veterinarian.

Due to budget limitations, the shelter is open to the public only Wednesday through Sunday. The facility is open from noon into the evening hours to allow public contact which promotes adoption and other services. The facility must reserve time in the morning for care of the animals and facilities, because there is not sufficient staff to handle both animal care and public contact. The limited hours impinge on the efforts to promote animal adoption.

Animal control officers are required to respond to all reports of abuse or abandonment, and must take all unwanted, sick, injured and aged animals. This contrasts to private agencies that can refuse costly or hard to place animals. Unfortunately, about 65 percent of the animals the shelter receives must be euthanized. This downside of public shelters makes a difficult task of attracting and retaining volunteer staff, and obtaining grants which may exclude facilities that must euthanize some animals. Volunteer supporters have been hosting flea markets, silent auctions, wine tasting, and other events to offset the budget reductions.

The **Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA)** is a private organization funded by donations and staffed mainly by about 1,500 volunteers. Its budget is \$5–6 million. The SSPCA is housed in a fairly new facility and its surgery suite costs \$100,000 per year to run. The agency has a higher placement percentage than the other animal shelters. The SSPCA only takes animals it considers adoptable and sends other animals to the city and county shelters.

The County Executive is starting a discourse with representatives of the three animal shelters, including the City of Sacramento Animal Shelter, to consider consolidation to increase efficiency and to reduce costs.

### **Sacramento County Registrar of Voters and Elections**

In Sacramento County the Registrar of Voters is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The registrar is responsible for registering voters, maintaining voter files, conducting local elections, certifying that petitions qualify, and administering provisions of campaign reporting and financing laws.

In the November 2010 General Election there were 501 polling places with 2,505 precinct officials and 43 field coordinators in Sacramento County. The county has 69 districts and elections took place in 67 of these districts this year. There were 177 different ballot types printed in two languages for a cost of \$3.5 to 4 million dollars. The registrar employs 38 permanent office staff and 30–40 temporary staff. The office expands to around 200 at election time.

The registrar streamlined operations to achieve a reduction of \$2 million from last year's budget of \$12 million. There has been a substantial shift toward Vote-by-Mail ballots. Present day elections are like running two elections: one by Vote-by-Mail and another by direct polling. Vote-by-Mail ballots are used by 60 percent of registered voters with a 46 percent rate of return. This is a higher voting percentage than polling place voters. Voting machines cost \$5,000 each. Maintenance of the machines costs \$500,000 per election and another \$85,000 is spent for drayage. Additional polling place costs include ballot boxes, tables, chairs, and other equipment. Polling place voting also requires staff training before every election.

Potential savings, estimated at \$1 million per election, could be achieved if voting were changed to Vote-by-Mail only. This would require a change in state voting law.

Staff reductions were avoided this year by instituting innovative cost cutting measures. Staff reviewed procedures and made reductions while maintaining the intent of the law. Not publishing polling places in newspapers and printing sample ballots in small type resulted in savings of \$200,000.

### **Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD)**

Public education is widely recognized as one of the most important services government can provide. Within Sacramento County, public education is delivered by a number of school districts. During our initial orientation visits, the grand jury chose to meet with the Superintendent of SCUSD. The following information derives from that meeting, and is not necessarily reflective of current conditions in other districts.

The Superintendent of SCUSD is relatively new, having been appointed in 2009. The superintendent is not a professional educator, but is using experiences in other fields to steer the district towards a more collaborative, flexible and effective educational program.

That daunting task is made more difficult by a budget reduction of \$30 million, bringing the district's current fiscal year budget to \$350 million. Since 90 percent of the district's budget is for personnel, staffing costs became an early issue. The positions of chief financial officer and all associate superintendents have been eliminated. The central office staff has been reduced and the superintendent is seeking further concessions from the teachers' union.

To help work towards a more effective educational model, the superintendent has established a strategic plan, drawing from all segments of the community: teachers and principals, maintenance and support staff, parents and community leaders. Task forces are providing continual input. Schools have been ranked according to their current level of performance. Special attention is being given to the six lowest performing schools. Teachers and principals from some of the better performing schools have been transferred

to those six, while the district has taken care to preserve performance at the better schools. District wide changes include establishing full-time kindergartens. Maintenance needs have been addressed to insure that schools are clean, freshly painted and free of graffiti, thus providing attractive surroundings conducive to learning.

A district concern is the link between low achievement and poverty. About 70 percent of district parents live at or below the poverty level and many are not actively involved in their children's education. Moreover, about 40 percent of the district's students read below the state's average reading level. The district has initiated programs to help parents of low achieving students. Teachers and staff make home visits.

State regulations allow students to transfer from lower achieving to higher achieving schools. However, annual standardized test results, upon which decisions could be made, are often not available until after classes have started. The district has achieved some success in making this enrollment option available on a more timely basis.

Another problem the district is addressing relates to special needs students. Segregating such students into special classes is quite expensive. Furthermore, it separates those students from other children with whom they will come in contact outside of school. Task forces are working to place more special needs students into regular classrooms.

Attention is also being given to evaluating results as changes are made. The superintendent has initiated quality reviews of individual schools using peer groups from other schools in the district. Community reviews by non-school groups are also beginning.

Appendix: "Efficiencies List FY 2010-11," <<http://www.ceo.saccounty.net/CostSaving-Measures/default.htm>>

<b>County of Sacramento, California</b>	
<b>New Efficiency List - FY 2010-11</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Policies</b>	
Reserve and Reinvestment Policy	Adopted 2/9/10
Carryover Incentive Plan	Adopted 3/23/10
<b>Alternative Service Provision/Departmental Consolidation Opportunities</b>	
County Jail System Staffing Study	Report in July 2010
Provision of Jail and Juvenile Facility Food Services	Start July 2010
Coroner Department Reorganization Study	Start August 2010
Communication and Media Reorganization Study	Started in May 2010
Development Services Consolidation Study	Started in May 2010
Reorganization of Environmental Management & Agriculture Commission	Start July 2010
Study Feasibility of Remote Inspections	Start July 2010
Information Technology Systems Future Study	ITBP Meeting in July 2010
Law Library Reorganization Study (Including space)	To be completed by Sept 2010
Contract Administration Practices	
Mental Health Services Collaborations	Started June 2010
Options for providing Indigent and Conflict Criminal Defense	Started June 2010
Regional Parks Governance Study	Start September 2010
Non-profit outsourcing:	
Mather Community Campus	Completed
Senior Nutrition Program	Completed
Effie Yeaw Program	RFP issued in June 2010, effective mid July 2010
Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) Program Reorganization	Start September 2010
County Boards & Commissions Study	Start October 2010
<b>Contracting Opportunities</b>	
County Parking Operations	BofA parking completed
Federal and State Use of Local Correctional Facilities	Started June 2010
Golf Operations	Start October 2010
Environmental Review	
County Services Contracting Opportunities Study	
<b>Charter Review Process Study</b>	Start July 2010
<b>Fiscal/Operational Studies</b>	
Asset Management Study and Report	To be completed by September
Review Accounts Receivables procedures , and Financial Accounting functions	Start July 2010
Assessor Staffing Project	Started in June 2010
County Cost Allocation and Overhead Study	Started in June 2010
County Revenue Opportunities Study	On Going
Child Welfare System Peer County Program Analysis	Start July 2010
State/Federal Legislative Reorganization	Start October 2010
Reassessment of County Executive's administrative support staff	Start July 2010
Indigent Defense Financial Evaluation	Start July 2010
Probation - Adult Field Services Peer County Analysis	Start July 2010

<b>County of Sacramento, California</b>	
<b>New Efficiency List - FY 2010-11</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Veterans Meeting Space Fund Raiser	Completed May 2010, next one May 2011
Regional Parks - "Small" maintenance construction Fund	Start June 2010
American River Parkway Operations Study	Start July 2010
<b>Employee Involvement</b>	
Direct Connection to the County Executive	Operational 1/4/2010
County Employee Suggestion Program	Start July 2010
County Whistle Blower Procedure and Policy	Start July 2010
<b>Human Resources</b>	
Flexible Hour Plans Effectiveness Study	Start October 2010
Evaluation of Modified Work Approval Process: Department Efficiency and Employee benefit	Start July 2010
County Payroll System:	
Online Automated Timesheet System	Start July 2010
Payroll Timing Correction Plan	Start July 2010
Countywide Employee Performance Evaluation System	Start October 2010
<b>Functional Service Consolidation with Other Governments:</b>	
Animal Care Collaborative	Started in May 2010
Building Inspection	
Environmental Review	
Emergency Operations Center	
Planning and Zoning	
Code Enforcement	
Waste Management	
Utilities Billing	
Transportation	
Parks Operations & Maintenance	
Golf Courses	
Facility Maintenance & Custodial Services	
Vehicle Maintenance	
Parking	
Law Enforcement - 911 Center	Start September 2010
<b>Economic Development</b>	
County Green/Technology Opportunities Study	