

Wayne Brown Correctional Facility

Summary

California Penal Code Section 919(b) requires the Nevada County Grand Jury to inquire annually into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county. As a result, members of the Nevada County Grand Jury inspected the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility on October 5, 2010.

The Wayne Brown Correctional Facility, administered by the Nevada County Sheriff's Office, was dedicated on December 17, 1991. It has the capacity to hold 274 inmates with adjacent land available for expansion.

While the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility is well-managed, the Nevada County Grand Jury found that security improvements should be made as soon as possible. These include:

- Upgrading the security system.
- Providing centralized control of visiting-room and multi-purpose-room doors.
- Adding several cameras to the video surveillance system.
- Upgrading the recording function of the video surveillance system.
- Replacing the drop-down ceilings in the minimum-security dormitories.

The Nevada County Grand Jury is aware that a comprehensive study regarding the security system at Wayne Brown Correctional Facility was conducted by an outside consultant. The report, *A Study of the Security & Control Systems in the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility*, was submitted to the Nevada County Sheriff's Office in February 2010. The Nevada County Grand Jury is also aware that the Nevada County Board of Supervisors recently approved a Request for Proposal, soliciting bids for the work needed to implement the report's recommendations. The Nevada County Board of Supervisors should be commended for taking this step.

Reasons for Investigation

California Penal Code section 919(b) requires the Nevada County Grand Jury (Jury) to inquire annually into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county. A critical part of any such inquiry involves a physical inspection of each facility. The Jury inspected the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility (WBCF) on October 5, 2010.

Background

The WBCF was dedicated on December 17, 1991. It has a capacity to hold 274 inmates with adjacent land available for expansion. It is a Type II facility that houses those pending arraignment or trial, as well as those who have been sentenced.

The following classification elements are used to determine the housing of all inmates: gender, age, criminal sophistication, type of crime, assaultive/non-assaultive behavior and physical or mental health needs, among others. This system provides a greater level of safety for both the inmates and the staff.

The Jury is aware that a comprehensive study regarding the security system at WBCF was conducted by an outside consultant. The report, *A Study of the Security & Control Systems in the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility* was submitted to the Nevada County Sheriff's Office in February 2010. The Jury is also aware that the Nevada County Board of Supervisors recently approved a Request for Proposal, soliciting bids for the work needed to implement the report's recommendations.

Procedures Followed

The Jury inspected the WBCF. This inspection included a tour of the facility, a review of documents and interviews with representatives of the Nevada County Sheriff's Office.

Facts

1. The centralized security system used by the WBCF controls the movement of staff and inmates throughout the facility.
2. The security system's controls are operated at four locations: the central control room, the minimum-security area and in inmate housing pods A and B.
3. The controls located in the central control room can override those at all other locations.
4. The controls are attended by officers at all times.
5. Officers use the system to lock and unlock doors to secured areas.
6. The security system currently in use was installed when the facility was built in 1991.
7. The Jury was advised that the security system occasionally fails to operate properly.
8. WBCF procedures require a written incident report when the security system malfunctions.

9. An internal department memorandum stated that the malfunctions of the security system's control panels were happening so frequently that the staff often did not report incidents.
10. The same memorandum stated that the unreliability and inconsistency of the control panels posed a bigger safety and security issue than if they were not used at all.
11. The same memorandum stated, in the worst-case scenario, continued failures of the control panels could jeopardize the safety of the staff, inmates and public.
12. The recording function of the video camera surveillance system is not used.
13. The doors to the multi-purpose rooms are not controlled by the security system. They can only be secured with a key.
14. The minimum-security dormitories have drop-down ceilings made of removable tiles.
15. The Jury was advised that the visiting-room door locks are not controlled by the security system and often malfunction.
16. The Jury observed and was told that many areas in the facility are not covered by the video surveillance system, including the minimum-security dormitories, the library, the kitchen, the laundry, the multi-purpose rooms, the recreation area, as well as much of pods A and B, including the housing and day-use areas.

Findings

1. The number of control board malfunctions is considerable. As a result, the WBCF has an immediate need to upgrade its security control system. This same finding has been made in the past, but the need has grown much more serious as the equipment ages.)
2. Failure to use the recording function of the current surveillance system could preclude the capture of vital evidence in any incident at the facility.
3. Contraband could be hidden above the ceiling tiles in the minimum-security dormitories.
4. Staff and inmates could be at risk due to faulty locks on visiting-room doors.
5. All of the doors to the multi-purpose and visitors' rooms need to be controlled centrally to prevent potential confrontations between inmates or between inmates and members of the staff and public.
6. Many critical areas of the facility need to be monitored by video cameras to ensure the safety of the staff, inmates and public.

Recommendations

1. The Nevada County Board of Supervisors and the Nevada County Sheriff's Office should immediately approve the funds needed to upgrade the security system at the WBCF.
2. A comprehensive security system upgrade should be given a high priority and be completed as soon as possible.
3. The upgrade of the security system should include video recording and playback capabilities.
4. The Nevada County Sheriff's Office should re-configure the ceilings in the minimum-security dormitory areas so that they cannot be used to hide contraband.
5. The visiting room and multi-purpose room doors should be brought under central control as part of the upgrade to the security system.

Responses

Nevada County Board of Supervisors: Recommendations 1, 2 & 3 – September 8, 2011

Nevada County Sheriff's Office: Findings, and Recommendations 4 & 5 – August 8, 2011

**NEVADA COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**KEITH ROYAL
SHERIFF/CORONER
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR**

August 1, 2011

Honorable Judge Tom Anderson
Presiding Judge of the Grand Jury
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

**Nevada County
Civil Grand Jury
950 Maidu Ave.
Nevada City, CA 95959**

Keith Royal
8/1/11
BR

RE: Response to 2010-2011 Nevada County Sheriff's Office Wayne Brown Correctional Facility

Dear Honorable Judge Anderson:

The following is our response to the Grand Jury Report dated June 6, 2011 on the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility.

Findings:

1. The number of control board malfunctions is considerable. As a result, the WBCF has an immediate need to upgrade its security control system. This same finding has been made in the past but the need has grown much more serious as the equipment ages.

Agree

2. Failure to use the recording function of the current surveillance system could preclude the capture of vital evidence in any incident at the facility.

Agree

3. Contraband could be hidden above the ceiling tiles in the minimum-security dormitories.

Agree

4. Staff and inmates could be at risk due to faulty locks on visiting-room doors.

Agree

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5. All of the doors to the multi-purpose and visitors' rooms need to be controlled centrally to prevent potential confrontations between inmates or between inmates and members of the staff and public.

Agree

6. Many critical areas of the facility need to be monitored by video cameras to ensure the safety of the staff, inmates and public.

Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please note recommendations 1 through 3 are being responded to by the Board of Supervisors.

4. The Nevada County Sheriff's Office should re-configure the ceilings in the minimum-security dormitory areas so that they cannot be used to hide contraband.

This recommendation has been partially implemented.

We recognize that the drop ceilings have been an issue as a location to conceal contraband. The upcoming security upgrade will include the installation of cameras in the minimum security dormitories. The addition of cameras should serve as a deterrent to the inmates attempting to conceal contraband in the ceiling. Additionally, with the recording capability we will be able to determine the responsible individual(s) should we discover contraband hidden in the drop ceiling.

5. The visiting room and multi-purpose room doors should be brought under central control as part of the upgrade to the security system.

This recommendation has been implemented.

Part of the planned Security Upgrade includes the addition of electromagnetic locks installed on the visitation room and multi-purpose room doors. These locks will be controlled by either Central Control or the appropriate officer's station with an override capability to be totally controlled by Central Control. It is anticipated that we will be bringing a contract for a comprehensive upgrade to the security system for approval by the Board of Supervisors by the end of September 2011.

The Sheriff's Office would like to thank the members of the 2010-2011 Grand Jury for their participation and effort in preparing their Reports and their participation in the Grand Jury process.

Sincerely,



Keith Royal
Sheriff-Coroner

CC: CEO Rick Haffey
Board Analyst, Eve Diamond