

Riverside County Law Enforcement

Background

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RCSD) has the responsibility of providing law enforcement in the unincorporated area of Riverside County. The RCSD also provides contract law enforcement to eleven cities within Riverside County.

RCSD maintains and operates a system of jails within Riverside County. This system includes five jails: Robert Presley Detention Center (RPDC), Southwest Detention Center (SDC), Banning Correctional Facility (BCF), Indio and Blythe Jails providing a combined total of 2,879 beds. Expansion for two housing units (360 beds) at SDC has been approved and funded. RPDC has a total of 1,266 beds. Four hundred seventy-three of these beds are in the old jail facility located in proximity to the Riverside County Courthouse that is presently being renovated. A common plumbing system is a major reason that the renovation of the courthouse is being complicated. Because of this, the future of this section of RPDC is uncertain.

In 1990, all counties in the State of California were given the right, by the state, to collect fees for booking persons at county jails. RCSD is presently charging \$110.40 to cities to book an arrestee into the county jail system. Arrestees may be released due to overcrowding or the degree of the charges after they are booked at the jails and cited to appear in court.

RCSD maintains a file of outstanding warrants. This file provides data that can be used to evaluate persons coming in contact with county law enforcement agencies. Warrants are issued when persons who are cited and released fail to appear in court as directed. This file presently contains 150,033 total individual warrant cases.

Findings

1. The BCF, with present staffing, houses 520 inmates. Using staff from other facilities, on an overtime basis, two additional units have been opened to provide housing for a total of 630 inmates at BCF.
2. The prisoner classification process typically limits the occupancy rate at the jails from 96 to 98 percent. For various reasons, inmates may not be safely placed in the same housing units. The problems associated with classification, court requirements and overcrowding are addressed with a transportation system that is constantly relocating inmates.
3. A person is not always placed in jail as a result of booking at any of the five county jails. Persons cited and released:

1996 - 10,904

1997 - 11,604

RPDC accounted for 45 percent of the releases in 1996 and 1997.

4. Inmates in the county jail system may receive a federally-mandated early release due to lack of space. Releases were:

1996 - felony = 53, misdemeanor = 390

1997 - felony = 7, misdemeanor = 414

5. Police officials have stated that the cost of booking causes a person to be cited and released when, in some cases, they should be booked into jail. This has a direct effect on the file of outstanding warrants. When a person cited fails to appear in court as directed, a warrant is issued. Some annual booking fee costs to Riverside County cities are:

Riverside

\$540,000

Moreno Valley

\$280,000

Temecula

\$135,000

6. Booking fees vary from county to county within the State of California:

Riverside	\$110.40
San Diego	\$154.00
San Bernardino	\$159.72
Los Angeles	\$133.52/\$145.84
Orange	Was \$176, but recently removed as taxes collected are sufficient to fund the cost of the jails.

Ventura	\$120, assessed to individuals at time of sentencing.
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7. Crimes are not always committed by criminals where they reside, but the resulting booking fees are a cost to the city where they are arrested.

8. Palm Springs has attempted to reduce the effects of the cost of booking fees by establishing a jail that is qualified to house arrestees until arraignment. Arraignment is simplified by use of a video camera system connected to the Indio Court. If persons are released by the court, they are released at the Palm Springs Jail, eliminating transportation costs. If confined after arraignment, the arrestee is the responsibility of the court. Transportation is the responsibility of the sheriff who books the arrestee into the county jail at no further cost. Some persons will be booked immediately into the county jail system. In this case, Palm Springs will transport and pay the standard booking fee.

To reduce operating costs by more than \$100,000 annually, Palm Springs contracted with a private firm to supply personnel to operate the jail.

9. Cathedral City and Desert Hot Springs police agencies contract with Palm Springs for the use of their jail. Cathedral City contracts to pay a \$30,000 annual payment for the first 300 bookings and \$100

per booking thereafter. Desert Hot Springs pays \$110 per booking. These two cities combined provide close to \$100,000 annually toward the cost of operating the Palm Springs Jail.

10. Cathedral City is building a new police facility scheduled to open in July 1998. A decision was made to increase the number of jail cells from two to five and build to Type-I jail specifications at the new facility. This decision was made, in part, because of the uncertainty of the effects of booking fees in the future.

11. In 1991, the City of San Diego began a program to address the process of cite and release within their city. A 200-bed jail facility was built, in partnership with a private firm, to house misdemeanor cases. The private firm then contracted to manage and operate the jail for a monthly fee. To date, warrants have been reduced from approximately 800,000 to approximately 200,000 since the jail was opened in 1992.

12. Activity in the file of outstanding warrants maintained by RCSD has been:

Warrants entered and still active: 1996 - 19,163

1997 - 26,802

Warrants served: 1996 - 34,743

1997 - 42,067

Presently, there are 26,295 individual active cases with two to nine warrants each; 1,542 of these cases have five or more warrants each.

13. California Penal Code Section 1214.1 permits a civil assessment of up to \$250 against any defendant who fails to appear after being notified. Riverside County does not presently use this assessment.

14. Disrespect for the judicial system occurs when the options for sentencing are limited. The caseload for the probation department, at all levels, is at a point where probation officers are not able to monitor effectively, including the intensive surveillance program.

15. RPDC records show that the number of illegal aliens released to the border patrol, after court proceedings or incarceration, were:

1996 - 233

1997 - 193

In fiscal year 1996-97, during the booking process, approximately 1,690 persons were identified as possible illegal aliens. One-third of the cost of incarcerating illegal aliens was reimbursed in 1997 by the federal government.

16. The California Department of Corrections (CDC) contracts with private firms to provide a number of medium community correctional facilities within the State of California. A private firm contracts to operate the jail facility with CDC providing personnel to provide general oversight and ensure that adequate security is provided.

A state correctional facility is located at Eagle Mountain, between Indio and Blythe. This facility is operated at a cost of \$34 per day, per bed.

This year, CDC has initiated a "request for proposal" to private firms to provide up to 5,000 beds statewide. The number of beds per contract may be limited to 500.

17. California Government Code Section 23013 states: "The board of supervisors of any county may, by resolution, establish a department of corrections, to be headed by an officer appointed by the board, which shall have jurisdiction over all county functions, personnel, and facilities, or so many as the board names in its resolution, relating to institutional punishment, care, treatment, and rehabilitation of prisoners, including, but not limited to, the county jail and industrial farms and road camps, their functions and personnel.

The boards of supervisors of two or more counties may, by agreement and the enactment of ordinances in conformity thereto, establish a joint department of

corrections to serve all the counties included in the agreement, to be headed by an officer appointed by the boards jointly."

Recommendations

Board of Supervisors:

1. Establish two medium-security jails, one in the western part and one in the eastern part of Riverside County, or provide support for other private or governmental agencies that would provide these jails.
2. Establish funding for medium security jails that will distribute all costs equitably.
3. Provide support for legislation that will eliminate or reduce the cost to Riverside County, for confinement of noncitizen inmates.
4. Consider adoption of Penal Code Section 1214.1 to provide an assessment of \$250 against persons failing to appear as directed.
5. Establish a booking fee that will be assessed to the individual at the time of sentencing.

Riverside County Sheriff:

1. Provide support for the establishment of two medium-security jails.
2. Provide intensive support for the processing of potential illegal aliens by the Immigration and Naturalization Service agents at Riverside County jails.