

Tuolumne County  
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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE**

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August 2, 2022

Judge of Superior Court  
Honorable Laura Krieg  
Tuolumne County Superior Court  
12855 Justice Center Drive  
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report – **Dambacher Detention Center Facility  
dated June 3, 2022**

The following is submitted in response to the 2020-2022 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to the Dambacher Detention Center. The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff-Coroner wish to extend their gratitude to the Grand Jury members for their time in preparing the final Grand Jury reports. Please accept this as a joint response.

**Finding #1.** The new Dambacher Detention Center facility offers vastly improved safety and security for inmates, staff, and the public at large through a multitude of design improvements compared to the old jail.

***Response: Agree***

**Finding #2.** The new Dambacher Detention Center facilities and esthetics offer an improved environment for inmates and staff that could be expected to result in behavioral benefits in the inmate population as well as help with staff recruitment and retention.

***Response: Agree***

**Finding #3.** The new Dambacher Detention Center has expanded classroom facilities to support improved educational and training opportunities for inmates as compared to the old jail and the hiring of an educator demonstrates commitment to improving educational programs for inmates.

***Response: Agree***

**Finding #4.** Mechanical HVAC systems at Dambacher Detention Center have not been working properly or reliably, which endangers some inmates with heat sensitivities. The new system problems which could be caused by design or installation errors have persisted for an unreasonable amount of time.

***Response: Agree***

**Recommendation #1.** The Grand Jury recommends to have facilities maintenance test HVAC air conditioning systems by June 1, 2022, and if the problems are not resolved and the system is not functioning correctly by July 1, 2022, then hire a third party consultant to analyze and recommend a solution by August 1, 2022. (F4)

***Response: Agree – This recommendation has already been implemented - The HVAC system is currently operating correctly. We will continue monitoring it with county maintenance's assistance and take prompt action.***

**Finding #5.** The hot water system has not been reliable, causing hardships to inmates who have to take cold showers and cannot have hot beverages. The new system teething problems, which could be caused by design or installation errors, have persisted for an unreasonable amount of time.

***Response: Agree***

**Recommendation #2.** The Grand Jury recommends that inmate complaints about the availability of hot water continue to be monitored. If complaints continue, then a third-party consultant should be hired to analyze and recommend a solution by August 1, 2022. (F5)

***Response: Agree – This recommendation is partially implemented and requires further analysis and will not meet the August 1, 2022 requirement. The County continues to work with the Contractor and Architect on this issue. Some changes have been made to the system and the number of complaints has been significantly reduced. While the number of complaints has been reduced, the County believes that the domestic hot water system is still not operating as designed. The County will continue to work with the Contractor and Architect until it can be shown that the domestic hot water system is operating as designed.***

**Finding #6.** Education programs were largely suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and this has adversely affected inmates by failing to keep inmates occupied with productive activities that focus on positive behavior. These programs can impact public safety with reduced recidivism and increase prison safety with improved conduct; this opportunity is being missed.

**Response: Agree**

**Findings #7.** While Dambacher Detention Center has the technological infrastructure in place to be able to offer virtual education and programs it has not done so during COVID-19 when in-person programs have been limited. This lack of programs has adversely affected inmates by failing to keep inmates occupied with productive activities that focus on positive behavior. These programs can impact public safety with reduced recidivism and increasing prison safety with improved conduct; this opportunity is being missed.

**Response: Agree**

**Recommendation #3.** The Grand Jury recommends that virtual education and programs be offered during COVID-19 restrictions and continue as additional programs when in-person education and programs are offered September 1, 2022. (F6, F7)

**Response: Agree – This recommendation has been implemented -** Since your visit, we have been able to start some in-person programs. As a result of this, we had one inmate graduate with their high school diploma and enrolled inmates in our GEO program. In addition, we are currently working with Columbia College to establish online college course work and the County Schools to provide GED testing and Save Serve certificates online. We are also working with a local Pastor to provide religious services through streaming.

**Finding #8.** The staffing shortage at Dambacher Detention Center causes mandated overtime which can lead to staff burnout, lower staff retention and adversely affects the County budget.

**Response: Agree**

**Finding #9.** The discrepancy in pay compared to other counties leads to higher staff turnover and recruitment challenges.

**Response: Agree**

**Recommendation #4.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors consider an off-cycle increase in the pay level of the respective jail staff. It is recommended that a class and compensation study be performed of the parity of salaries be completed and the salary adjustments made before the end of the calendar year 2022. (F8, F9)

**Response: Agree – This recommendation requires further analysis.** The staffing shortages at the jail have caused retention issues. The County is about to begin negotiations with the Deputy Sheriff's Association.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the above findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Daniel Anaiah Kirk,  
Board Chair



Bill Pooley,  
Sheriff-Coroner