

CITY OF TAFT MODIFIED COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

On March 10, 2016 the Law and Justice Committee (Committee) of the 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited the City of Taft Modified Community Correctional Facility (MCCF). The visit was to inquire into the operation and management of the Facility pursuant to California Penal Code §925(a).

PROCESS:

The Committee met with the MCCF Facility Manager and several Taft Correctional Officers. A question and answer session was held in the Facility Manager's office followed by a tour of the prison.

BACKGROUND:

The MCCF is located at 330 Commerce Way in Taft, CA adjacent to the Taft Police Department. MCCF began operations as a correctional facility in January 1991 with Level I inmates with less than 18 months left to serve. In November 2011, the facility was closed due to AB109. The facility re-opened in December 2013 as a Level II Special Needs Yard and a second security fence was installed. Since March 2014, the MCCF has housed prisoners with less than ten years to serve. Maximum inmate capacity is 616.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The MCCF is surrounded by a two chain link fences with barbed wire, along with motion detection sensors. As with other MCCFs the Committee has visited, this fence does not prevent contraband from being tossed into the exercise yard.
- F2. There are currently 525 Level I & II general population inmates housed at MCCF.
- F3. Visitation is allowed on Saturday and Sunday between the hours of 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM except when work or training is scheduled. All visitation is supervised.
- F4. Aramark is contracted by the City of Taft to prepare about 1,600 meals per day from predetermined menus, in addition to kosher, religious meat alternative, vegetarian meal nourishment bags for diabetics, liquid nutrition supplements and therapeutic diets. Aramark is allotted \$4.86 per day to feed each inmate. On weekdays, lunch is served cold and breakfast and dinner are served hot. On weekends, all three meals are served hot. Inmate kitchen crews are not rotated out as with other prisons. These inmates have developed a good working relationship with the Kitchen Supervisor and do a great job in food preparation. Inmates from

two dorms will dine at the same time in the chow hall and are given 20 minutes to finish the meal.

- F5. Each able-bodied inmate is assigned and participates in a full-time or combination full-time work, training or educational program six hours per day, five days per week while kitchen crews work 7.5 hours daily.
- F6. Work incentive programs include:
- Food Services
 - Laundry
 - Maintenance
 - Instructional Aide
 - Janitorial Services
 - General Services (barber, shoe shine, clerical, library)
- F7. All qualified inmates are eligible for both academic and vocational training classes:
- GED
 - Carpentry
 - Computer Applications
- F8. There are volunteer programs available to the inmates which include:
- Alcoholics Anonymous
 - CSAP (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention)
 - Veterans Group
- F9. Mental Health, Medical and Dental needs are managed via a triage method. Medical request slips are picked up daily and evaluated and inmates are seen within a 24 hour period. There is a \$5.00 co-pay for each new medical needs appointment. A Doctor and LVN are available 40 hours per week and RNs are available 24/7. A Dentist is available two days per week.
- F10. Inmate appearance looked good. Clothing appeared to be in good shape and appropriate for the season.
- F11. There is limited free postage for inmates without money. All incoming and outgoing mail is screened. Outgoing mail to attorneys is inspected with inmate present, but not read.
- F12. Each housing unit has three telephones. All phone calls are made collect. Inmates cannot receive phone calls. Telephones may be used 24 hours a day and are limited to 10 minutes per call if someone else is waiting to use the phone.

- F13. Inmates are subject to random urinalysis for substance abuse and locker searches. Inmates may not possess, consume or be under the influence of alcohol, unauthorized drugs or narcotics. Possession of drug or narcotic related paraphernalia is also prohibited.
- F14. Total staffing is 79. There are 57 custody personnel, 13 non-custody personnel and nine health care professionals.
- F15. The annual cost to house a single inmate is \$21,900.00 per year which includes medical.
- F16. It was reported that there have been no attempted suicides or escapes.
- F17. Inmate discipline ranges from verbal counseling to solitary confinement to criminal prosecution referral on felony charges.
- F18. Inmates are allowed to shower anytime between 6:00 A.M. to 1:00 A.M.
- F19. Chain link fence brackets and wire wraps are painted red to indicate missing hardware, except on the laundry room fence.
- F20. Inmates working in the laundry room are under direct supervision. The MCCF has two new dryers and three energy efficient washing machines. Inmate laundry is exchanged at least once a week.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury was impressed with its visit to the Taft MCCF along with the knowledge and insight provided to the Committee by the Facility Manager and staff we interviewed. The facility appears to be well run and in good condition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends one or two Corrections Officer do a sweep of the exercise yard to inspect for contraband that has been tossed over the fence prior to inmates entering the yard. (Finding F1)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends inmates should be limited to specific days for showering to help with water conservation. (Finding F18)
- R3. It is recommended that the chain link fence brackets and wire wraps in the laundry room be painted red as they are on the exterior fence. (Finding F19)