

# **HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

It is the mission of the Health, Education and Social Services Committee of the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury pursuant to California Penal Code §§925 and 933.5 to observe, investigate and report on citizen complaints of health, education and social service activities, safeguard the public from misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance and recommend reasonable action addressing related concerns of the community. It is the Committee's concern not only to make the citizens of Kern County aware of its findings but also make long-term positive impact and economic recommendations on behalf of the community.

## **HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**



Judith Waters, Chair  
Ella Abrams  
Shirley Ann Hawk  
Beverly Traynor

# **HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee has written and published the following reports:

- A. Miriam Jamison Children's Center
- California Partnership Academies
- Children's Group Homes
- Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center
- Kern County Mental Health Department
- Safely Surrender Baby Law
- The Shafter Research Center

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee received and responded to seven complaints.

Additionally, the Health, Education and Social Services Committee toured the Kern County Crime Lab, County of Kern Election and served on various Grand Jury Ad Hoc Committees.

Approximate investigative miles traveled by Committee: 135

## **A. MIRIAM JAMISON CHILDREN'S CENTER**

### **PREFACE:**

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) of the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited the A. Miriam Jamison Children's Center (Center) on November 7, 2013. A. Miriam Jamison was a former Program Director honored for her service. The Center is located at 1010 Shalimar Drive, Bakersfield, California 93306.

### **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

The California Penal Code §§ 925 and 933 authorizes the Grand Jury to investigate and report on various departments throughout Kern County. Previous visits were conducted by the 2002-2003 and 2009-2010 Kern County Grand Juries.

### **PROCESS:**

The Committee reviewed previous Grand Jury reports pertaining to the Center. The Program Director (Director) led a tour which included reception areas, bedrooms, recreation rooms, cafeteria, classrooms and outdoor recreation areas. The Committee viewed a ten-minute video shown to children first entering the facility. Several phone calls and e-mails were exchanged with the Director.

### **BACKGROUND/FACTS:**

- A. The Vision Statement of the Center is "To provide children who need emergency shelter and protection a safe, warm and nurturing environment." The Mission Statement is, "Provide the abused, neglected and abandoned children of Kern County a temporary, safe haven where their needs can be met."
- B. The Center is operated by Kern County Department of Human Services.
- C. The Center received a group home license on July 31, 2001. Title XXII states, "The Childcare Licensing Program (CCLP) is to ensure the health and safety of children in care. The CCLP is mandated by law to provide preventative, protective and quality services to children."
- D. There were 1,514 children admitted between January 1 and December 31, 2012.
- E. Bed capacity is 56. The current occupancy is much lower because of concerted efforts to place children with relatives, extended family members or non-relatives known to the child.

- F. The daily average number of children is 17. The average length of stay is five days. County Social Workers are responsible for placement at Jamison or a foster home. The Center works with 11 agencies and 27 group homes.
- G. The entrance is designed to comfort children. There is an aquarium, well-stocked and maintained. The walls are painted with fairy tale characters which are lively and colorful.
- H. The children are provided the basic living essentials: food, clothing, shelter, education and health care. The Center Staff strives to replace the children's fear with hope and a sense of security.
- I. There is year-round school for grades K through 12 operated on the premises by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Court Division. Each classroom houses students of various grades. The Center employs two teachers, one substitute and one teaching aide.
- J. Students earn regular credits that are applied when they return to their assigned school.
- K. Staff positions are listed below:

| <b>POSITION</b>                | <b>NUMBER</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Group Counselors III           | 7             |
| Group Counselors II            | 17            |
| Group Counselors I             | 3             |
| Extra-Help Group Counselors    | 2             |
| Program Director               | 1             |
| Clerical Staff                 | 4             |
| Human Service Aide             | 1             |
| Food Services Staff            | 3             |
| Extra-Help Food Services Staff | 2             |
| Housekeeping Staff             | 2             |
| Maintenance Staff              | 1             |

- L. The Center partners with other agencies to provide care. Partners include:
  - 1. Kern Medical Center
  - 2. Kern Mental Health
  - 3. Interim Health Care
- M. The Center has two playrooms designed for children of different ages. Some of the wood on the furniture looks well-used.
- N. Community Service Organizations help maintain the grounds. The rest of the maintenance is performed by one paid employee.



O. Security includes various devices:

1. Common areas are monitored but not recorded.
2. Grounds are surrounded by fencing which includes privacy fencing where appropriate.
3. State Law prohibits locking down the children in the facility. Some older residents run away by climbing over a fence. Often they return on their own.

**FINDINGS:**

- F1. The outdoor Center sign is unattractive and does not look professional.
- F2. The 10 minute introductory video that gives a virtual tour of the facility may be outdated. It is designed to explain to the children that they are not alone.
- F3. The décor in the recreation rooms and the children's bedrooms is not inviting.
- F4. The cafeteria serves 1,000 meals each month. Children receive three meals and two snacks each day. The Health Department has rated the kitchen **A** for the current year.
- F5. The building has closed circuit cameras but only one monitor. The monitor is not under constant surveillance nor are the activities recorded.

**COMMENTS:**

The Center provides food, shelter and safety for children at risk. A previous Grand Jury Report recommended that injections be given only by the RN. Staff has been trained to give oral medications and log the medications in the charts. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet inside a locked room. The room is furnished with a locked Dutch door so that the person inside can see out the top half while the children outside cannot enter through the bottom half. The Center is now in compliance with the previous Grand Jury recommendation.

An earlier Grand Jury Report also recommended that the Center's ability to transport non-ambulatory children be improved. Staff has now been trained by the fire department in how to lift heavy loads.

The Committee wishes to thank the entire staff of the A. Miriam Jamison Center for taking the time to explain about the residents and graciously answering all questions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. The outdoor sign should be refurbished. (Finding 1)
- R2. The 10-minute introductory video should be updated. (Findings 2)

- R3. The wood furniture in the recreation rooms needs regular maintenance. (Finding 3)
- R4. Children's rooms are plain and cheerless. (Finding 3)
- R5. As funding becomes available surveillance equipment should be utilized to record activities. The County Counsel considers it "best practice" for each client to have a photograph on file. (Finding 5)

**NOTES:**

The Center should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), click on: Sign up for early releases.

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**RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:** (for a Public Agency)

**PRESIDING JUDGE  
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREPERSON  
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

### A. MIRIAM JAMISON CHILDREN'S CENTER

#### Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct. The department had identified several opportunities for improvement and initiated some changes to the Jamison Children's Center prior to the Grand Jury investigation. These changes are incorporated in the response below.

#### Response to Recommendation:

R1: *The outdoor sign should be refurbished.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with this recommendation. The outdoor sign has recently been renovated and is appropriate.

R2: *The 10-minute introductory video should be updated.*

The video is intended to serve as a visual aid to explain and describe the facility to children who are new to the shelter. As the video currently meets this purpose, staff at the Jamison Children's Center will explore updating this video once other recommended changes to the Center are completed.

R3: *The wood furniture in the recreation rooms needs regular maintenance.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with this recommendation. Refurbishment and maintenance of the furniture will be assigned to maintenance staff.

R4: *Children's rooms are plain and cheerless.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with this recommendation. The department is in the process of repainting and installing curtains in all of the bedrooms so that they are more appealing.

R5: *As funding becomes available, surveillance equipment should be utilized to record activities. The County Counsel considers it "best practice" for each client to have a photograph on file.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with this recommendation. The department is in the process of undertaking upgrading this equipment. The department will continue to maintain a photograph of each client in their resident folder.

# JESS DIAMOND CHILD ASSESSMENT CENTER

## PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The California Penal Codes §§925 and 933 authorize the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County.

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) made a visit to inquire into the management and operation of the Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center (Center) located at 1010 Shalimar Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

## PROCESS:

After preparation conducted by online research, the Committee visited the Center on September 26, 2013, where a tour was conducted by the Program Director and a Social Worker.

## BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. *“The concept of the Center is the vision of local community leaders, particularly Dr. Jess Diamond, who, several years ago, expressed their commitment to providing more efficient and effective services to the children in Kern County.”* In September 1993 the Kern County Board of Supervisors approved the concept of a centralized, child friendly interviewing site for child victims of sexual abuse. The Department of Human Services was authorized to assume the lead in developing a multi-disciplinary team and protocol for the program.
- B. The Mission Statement of the Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center is:  
*“To provide child abuse victims a safe environment where their needs for protection, emotional support, and/or medical attention can be met through coordinated abuse investigation and integrated social, mental health, and health services.”*
- C. The Revised Jess Diamond Multi-Disciplinary Team Protocol Agreement says:  
*“The Child Assessment Center is a partnership of the City of Bakersfield Police Department, the Kern County Department of Human Services and Mental Health, Kern County Probation Department Victim Witness Assistance Program, Kern Medical Center, the Office of the District Attorney, the Sheriff’s Department, the A. Miriam Jamison Children’s Center Foundation and the community of Kern County.”*

D. The goals of the Center are:

1. *“As a multi-disciplinary child assessment team, to treat children with dignity and respect while minimizing their trauma from child abuse by limiting interviews and conducting investigations in a coordinated manner. This is achieved by:*
  - *Providing a centralized and coordinated forensic interviewing site for social service, law enforcement and/or medical personnel involved in the investigation of child abuse.*
  - *Coordinating contacts for personnel in social services, law enforcement and other investigative agencies.*
  - *Providing a non-threatening and child-friendly site for forensic medical examinations of sexual and/or physical abuse and neglect victims.*
  - *Providing crisis intervention for child victims and their families in addition to mental health and medical services.*
2. *Services are integrated by coordinating child abuse investigation and prevention efforts of multi-disciplinary agencies with public and private support.*
3. *Establish a mechanism and system to collect, store and retrieve data for evaluation and policy development and improve service delivery to child abuse victims.”*

E. Kern County Department of Human Services (KCDHS) provides funds for structure and equipment.

F. The Kern County District Attorney provides funding for all medical exams.

G. A pediatrician works the first week of each month. The doctor also works Monday and Tuesday of each subsequent week of the month in addition to maintaining a private practice.

H. Kern Medical Center (KMC) pays for one Registered Nurse (RN). The RN conducts exams of female patients when the doctor is unavailable or the patient does not wish to be examined by a male. The RN is taking additional training in forensic interviews.

## **FINDINGS:**

F1. Children at the Center have various backgrounds. Many of them have been reported by social workers, school personnel, healthcare workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, medical examiners and/or law enforcement. Collectively these are mandated reporters.

F2. Approximately 30 children are seen each month.

- F3. Children ages 3 to 17 are seen at the Center.
- F4. Each child is interviewed individually in a highly controlled environment. California law requires the first interview to be recorded so trauma caused by repetition or outdated equipment is avoided.
- F5. Every effort is made to keep each child comfortable. Soothing artwork features fantasy animal characters. The walls were created by a local artist using pastel colors.
- F6. Each child chooses a new stuffed toy to keep. The presence of the toy may help put the child at ease. The toys are donated by the community at large and collected at the Condors Hockey Team Annual Teddy Bear Toss.
- F7. The lobby of the Center is peaceful and well maintained. Nothing visible in the room showed what to expect or the responsibility of each person in the Center. Two clerical staff members greet visitors with friendliness and a helpful attitude. Toys, games and television keep the children entertained while waiting to be interviewed.

### **COMMENTS:**

The Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center is a warm and comforting place for traumatized children, families and friends and is a quiet oasis in the midst of chaos.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. The Center should develop a plan to provide for the upgrading and maintenance of electronic equipment in the area of the Interview Room. (Finding 4)
- R2. Information regarding the responsibilities of personnel should be visible in the lobby and/or available on request. (Finding 7)

### **NOTES:**

The Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), and click on: Sign up for early releases.

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
GRAND JURY REPORT  
JESS DIAMOND CHILD ASSESSMENT CENTER

**Response to Findings**

The Department's response to each of the Grand Jury recommendations is as follows:

**Finding**

The Center should develop a plan to provide for the upgrading and maintenance of electronic equipment in the area of the Interview Room.

**Response**

The Kern Partnership for Children and Families, a 501c3 which supports the Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center, maintains funding to repair or purchase new electronic equipment as necessary. Procedures are in place to facilitate requests by the Center for funds for this purpose.

**Finding**

Information regarding the responsibilities of personnel should be visible in the lobby and/or available on request.

**Response**

The Center maintains brochures in English and in Spanish that describe the responsibilities of the personnel who use the Center (social workers, law enforcement, attorneys, etc.). the brochures are affixed to a wall, along with several other informational brochures about related services. The Center will place the brochures on the receptionist's counter for higher visibility and easier accessibility. Additionally, the Center will purchase a desk-top sign with the word "Receptionist" on it to ensure that visitors are aware of the receptionists' presence and function.



**JESS DIAMOND CHILD ASSESSMENT CENTER**

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendation:

*R1: The Center should develop a plan to provide for the upgrading and maintenance of electronic equipment in the area of the Interview Room.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Grand Jury recommendation. The Kern Partnership for Children and Families (a 501c3 organization) maintains funding to repair and/or purchase new electronic equipment, and procedures are in place to facilitate requesting funds for this purpose.

*R2: Information regarding the responsibilities of personnel should be visible in the lobby and /or available on request.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Grand Jury recommendation. The Jess Diamond Child Assessment Center maintains brochures in English and Spanish describing the roles and responsibilities of personnel that are available in the lobby, and will improve visibility of signage identifying personnel.

# KERN COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOLS

## PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Penal Code §925 authorizes the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury to investigate and report on various departments throughout Kern County. After investigating high school academies, the Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) determined to learn more about Kern County charter schools.

## PROCESS:

The Committee conducted internet research and visited various school sites. Interviews were held with administrative staff, school personnel and students.

## FACTS:

- A. The first charter school was created in Minnesota in 1991. California's legislature passed a law enabling charter schools to open in 1992. The growth of charter schools has been rapid with innovative educational systems.
- B. Charter schools are publicly funded except for facilities.
- C. Charter schools are exempt from some provisions of the State Education Code. Charters are granted for a period of three to five years.
- D. Most charter schools are created or organized by a group of concerned citizens, teachers and parents. The primary advantage of charter schools is to give students and parents educational choices.
- E. The four types of entities that authorize charter schools are: the local/county school boards, state universities, community colleges and State Board of Education. Successful schools may receive additional support from parents, educational foundations or other organizations.
- F. An existing school board or a county board of education is required to assume responsibility for the school. The sponsor is required to conduct periodic inspections of documents maintained by the charter school which authorize individuals to teach in the school.



G. Charters will include information on how students are selected for the school.

- A school may use a lottery system or a waiting list
- Schools may give preference to:
  - Children of teachers or other employees of the school
  - Students previously enrolled at the school
  - Siblings of current or former students
  - Children considered to be academically at-risk
  - Children of ethnic and/or racial backgrounds reflective of the regular public schools in the area

H. Many charter schools are designed to support home schooling. Prospective students may be having difficulties with scheduling, attendance or motivation in the traditional school setting.

I. Teachers in charter schools may or may not be credentialed. Some schools offer merit pay to teachers.

J. The failure of a charter school may be caused by:

- Lack of finances
- Limited academic performance
- Low enrollment

K.

| <i>PRO ARGUMENTS</i>   | <i>CON ARGUMENTS</i>  |
|--|---|
| <i>1. Families are provided with choice.</i>   | <i>1. Because of their small size and limited number, only some families have choice and thus fairness and equity are in question.</i>                                    |
| <i>2. Charter schools can serve as laboratories for experimentation with transfer of successful methodologies to the broader public school system.</i> | <i>2. There are several reform models already that are deemed successful, which might be implemented.</i>   |
| <i>3. The creation of competition will lead to the appropriate pressure to reform unsuccessful practices.</i>  | <i>3. Charter schools have an unfair advantage due to smaller size, fewer regulations and access to federal funds that are unavailable to traditional public schools.</i> |
| <i>4. Systemic reform will result from the pressure and competition of the mechanism.</i>  | <i>4. The limited scope of the charters is inadequate to provide adequate reform to the entire public school system.</i>  |
| <i>5. Charter schools are held accountable. If they do not perform, they are not renewed.</i>  | <i>5. Charters are not accountable because they are freed from the same rules and regulations that are used to ensure quality in other public schools.</i>                |

## **FINDINGS:**

- F1. In 2014 for the first time over 1,000,000 students are on waiting lists for charter schools throughout the United States.
- F2. Some schools provide transportation services while others do not.
- F3. Charter schools are free to make curriculum choices different from traditional schools.
- Edible Schoolyard - an organic garden and kitchen classroom that is integrated into the curriculum, culture and food preparation program
  - Blended Learning - includes small group work, individual differentiation, less direct instruction and more technology-enhanced instruction
  - Independent Instruction - traditional curriculum is used in the student's home with parents as teachers
- F4. Charter schools with on-site instruction require students to wear uniforms.
- F5. Charter schools are encouraged to try informal and innovative lessons, e.g. every classroom and every playground gathering has a designated student host to welcome visitors. A different host is chosen each day.
- F6. Schools visited by the Committee are family oriented. Parents are required to volunteer hours of service. Upon student enrollment parents are required to volunteer to do cafeteria work, classroom tutoring, chaperone field trips, other after school activities, etc.

## **COMMENTS:**

All Kern County charter schools visited by the Committee allowed enough time to ask questions and discuss concerns. The staff welcomed the Committee and was well-prepared for the visit. Everyone concerned was knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to the program.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- R1. Charter schools need to compile statistics comparing charter and traditional schools, e.g.
- Academic success can be determined with standardized testing
  - Innovative testing can be used to determine other types of success
    - Is attendance better during some activities compared to other activities?
    - Are creative projects encouraged? (Findings 3 and 5)



**NOTES:**

Kern County Superintendent of Schools should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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**PRESIDING JUDGE  
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREPERSON  
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

September 30, 2014

Presiding Judge  
Kern County Superior Court  
1415 Truxtun Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

We are please to respond to the Grand Jury's report regarding Kern County Charter Schools. We appreciate the time and effort the Grand Jury took in exploring the charter school movement in Kern County.

In response to the Grand Jury's recommendation that Charter Schools should compile statistics comparing charter schools and traditional schools, we agree. In fact, as public schools, Charter Schools are under the same requirements to provide data as traditional schools, and in fact Charter Schools are measured using the same standardized tests as traditional schools in terms of academic performance. Additionally, Charter Schools are always encouraged to consider other data sources that help measure the success of their programs, classes, school environment, etc.

We welcome the Grand Jury's input at any time. Please call me at (661) 636-4262 if I may answer any questions or provide additional information. Please note that this response will be posted and available for public review. Thank you.

Regards,



Stephen L. Sanders  
Chief of Staff

CC: Foreperson, Kern County Grand Jury



# KERN COUNTY GROUP HOMES

## **PREFACE:**

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (HESS) of the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visited a Level 8 group home for boys on March 18, 2014. Recent newspaper articles and television reports stimulated the Committee's interest.

## **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

The California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorize the Grand Jury to investigate and report on various departments throughout Kern County. Previous visits to group homes were reported by the HESS Committee of the 2011-2012 Kern County Grand Jury.

## **PROCESS:**

The HESS Committee researched group homes by interviewing administrators from the Department of Human Services, Social Workers, Group Home Managers and Assistants. Internet research and previous reports supplemented the study.

## **BACKGROUND/FACTS:**

- A. Group Homes are State licensed residential houses with a maximum of six children and are exempt from local zoning laws.
- B. California has 1,700 group homes.
- C. The State has the power to revoke a license.
- D. Group homes are classified into one of 14 levels based on care and supervision provided.
- E. The Rate Classification Levels of a group home are determined by ratings based on:
  - 1. Child care and supervision hours
  - 2. Experience in residential care
  - 3. Formal education
  - 4. Training
  - 5. Social work activities
  - 6. Mental health treatment services
  - 7. Paid-awake hours
  - 8. 54 work hours per week cap
  - 9. Allocation of hours

- F. Rate of payment per child from local, state and federal agencies is based on levels. In California rates vary from \$2,282 per month for Level 1 to \$9,669 per month for Level 14. Group Homes are audited annually by the State.
- G. Children with discipline, emotional or family problems are assigned placement by a judge based on social worker evaluations.
- H. The children are sent to the A. Miriam Jamison Center to wait for placement which usually occurs within three to seven days after leaving court. A social worker decides what level of care is needed.
- I. On average children stay for three to six months. Some stay for years.
- J. Children may arrive needing clothing or necessities for personal hygiene. Medi-Cal pays for health care.
- K. Social workers observe and evaluate children at least once per month or more often if needed. Group Homes may have an in-house social worker.
- L. Children may leave a group home if a suitable placement is available.
- M. Children may walk to school, ride a school bus or be transported by van.
- N. A parent, group home staff member or a social worker may attend school conferences.
- O. Discipline is designed to teach children there are consequences for their actions.
- P. Children are taught family structure by interacting with staff and often come to think of the group home as an extended family.

## **FINDINGS:**

- F1. Community Care Licensing is in charge of maintaining standards.
- F2. Kern County has homes providing service for levels 8 through 12. Higher levels are served by other counties.
- F3. In Kern County rates vary from \$6,256 per month for Level 8 to \$8,529 per month for Level 12. Level 14 children are usually placed into a group home in another county. Kern County has no Level 14 Group Homes.
- F4. It is the responsibility of a social worker to:
  1. Reunite families, if possible
  2. Place a child with a foster family, if there is no reunification



3. Place a child in a group home as a last option
- F5. Children have chores which are rotated weekly.
- F6. Discipline often involves denoting a day as having good or bad behavior. Too many bad days and privileges may be forfeited.
- F7. Children are given an allowance based on age which may be reduced as a form of discipline.
- F8. During school vacations and other free time, children with good behavior may be rewarded with movies, skating, picnics, park outings or swimming.

### **COMMENTS:**

The HESS Committee would like to thank the Group Home Administrators that donated their valuable time to help us understand group home dynamics. Administrators work untold hours with endless paperwork while taking time to help each child feel special. Each Group Home must adjust its program whenever a child is first placed there or when a child leaves. Each Group Home is unique.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

No recommendations

### **NOTES:**

The Department of Human Services should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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### **NO RESPONSE REQUIRED**

# KERN COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The California Penal Codes §§925 and 933 authorize the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County.

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Committee) read a newspaper article regarding Kern County Mental Health (KCMH) and the possible impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

## PROCESS:

The Committee conducted online research, interviewed the Director of Mental Health and visited the Mary K. Shell Mental Health Center (Center) where the Director of Crisis Services provided a tour of the facility. Other interviews included Department Supervisors within Crisis Services. The Committee also visited the Consumer Family Learning Center.

## BACKGROUND/FACTS:

- A. The Mission Statement for the Kern County Mental Health Department is:  
*“Working together toward Hope, Recovery and Independence.”*
- B. The Mission Statement for the Center is:  
*“Working together to achieve hope, healing and a meaningful life in the community.”*
- C. The Mission Statement for the Consumer Family Learning Center (Vocational Services Team) is:  
*“To provide adults with psychiatric disabilities or co-occurring substance abuse issues with vocational assessment, job preparation and development, benefits counseling, and support in securing and maintaining gainful employment, education, or community work activity.”*
- D. The Mary K. Shell Mental Health Center was opened in 1978 and is located at 2151 College Avenue, Bakersfield, California. Crisis Services are located there.
- E. Crisis Intervention and Prevention includes programs for:
  - Problem Solving Skills
  - Anxiety
  - Coping Skills
  - Depression
  - Relationship Problems

- Anger Management
- Substance Abuse

F. Crisis Services include:

- Access Center
- Mobile Evaluation Team
- Psychiatric Evaluation Center/Crisis Stabilization Unit
- Mental Health Hotline
- Crisis Case Management/Outreach & Adult Wraparound
- Authorization Unit
- Freise Hope House
- Assessment Center/Kern Medical Center (KMC) Health Plan

G. KCMH employs 509 full-time employees. Forty additional employees are hired as extra help:

- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Residents
- Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers
- Interns
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors
- Pre-Licensed Masters of Social Work
- Recovery Specialists
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Accountants
- Clerical Staff
- Computer Technicians

H. The recommended spending plan for fiscal year 2013-2014:

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Salaries/Benefits   | \$ 48,588,271        |
| Operating Expenses (Including<br>Contracts and Hospitals) | \$ 60,239,966        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$108,828,237</b> |

**FINDINGS:**

F1. KMHC maintains contracts with the University of California, Los Angeles and Ross University of the Caribbean. The 21 residents and interns have medical degrees and are training for psychiatry as their specialization. Four medical students from Ross University rotate through Mental Health every two weeks.

- Five first year residents i.e. interns

- Four second year residents
- Six third year residents
- Six fourth year residents

F2. CRISES SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013

| ACCESS TO CARE              | YEAR TO DATE (JUNE 30, 2013) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Total Walk-ins              | 3,123                        |
| Funded                      | 1,367                        |
| Unfunded                    | 1,756                        |
|                             |                              |
| CCMO                        | YEAR TO DATE (2013)          |
| Total Served                | 774                          |
|                             |                              |
| MET                         | YEAR TO DATE (2013)          |
| Number of Services Provided | 3,795                        |
|                             |                              |
| PEC-CSU                     | YEAR TO DATE (2013)          |
| Total Client Admitted       | 6,505                        |
|                             |                              |
| KMCHP                       | YEAR TO DATE (2013)          |
| Total Active Caseload       | 2,776                        |

- Crisis Case Management Outreach (CCMO)
- Mobile Evaluation Team (MET)
- Psychiatric Evaluation Center (PEC)
- Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)
- Kern Medical Center Health Plan (KMCHP)

F3. Laura's Law is a California state law passed by the legislature in 2002. The law allows for court-ordered treatment of seriously mentally ill patients with a history of psychiatric hospitalization. This applies to people presenting a threat to themselves or others. The law is only operative in counties where the Board of Supervisors authorizes its use and is not to reduce voluntary Mental Health programs for adults and children.

F4. The Mental Health Services Act (State Proposition 63) passed by voters in 2004 raises taxes by 1% on incomes over \$1,000,000. Use of the money is limited to five specific categories:

- Community Services and Supports (CSS)
- Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)
- Workforce Education and Training (WET)
- Capital Facilities and Technology Needs (CFTN)
- Innovation (INN)

- F5. Substance abuse is treated by Kern County Mental Health. Suicide is closely correlated with substance abuse. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death nationwide and is the third leading cause of death in the demographic age 15-24.
- F6. The Kern County Suicide Hotline receives in excess of 2,200 calls per month. The hotline is staffed by recovery specialists, substance abuse counselors and volunteers. Each has received at least 40 hours of specialized training. Twelve paid staff members answer the hotline along with other duties. Twenty-seven volunteers also answer the hotline. Patients without means are never turned away.
- F7. The Consumer Family Learning Center (CFLC) is open for adults ages 18 and older recovering from mental illness, substance abuse or both.
- There is a staff of eight full-time employees and over 30 active volunteers. The Board of Directors includes consumers who are members for a one-year term.
  - The CFLC offers GED classes, socialization activities, cooking classes, art classes, quilting, computer lessons and other pre-employment skills.
  - Many of the groups are led by peers or volunteers.
  - There are two satellite support centers, one in Ridgecrest and one in Tehachapi.
  - Lack of community recognition indicates limited publicity/public relations.
- F8. The Affordable Care Act will bring changes to the number of patients being served. KCMH has prepared for this by concentrating on early intervention when illnesses are more tractable and treatment is less costly. The cost of maintaining one California State Hospital bed for psychiatric patients is in excess of \$240,000 per year. The cost may exceed \$330,000 in the near future.

#### **COMMENTS:**

The Committee thanks the Director of Mental Health, the Administrator of Crisis Services and Staff for the gracious cooperation during visits. The Committee also expresses thanks for patience with endless phone calls and questions.

The Committee commends the Director of Mental Health and Staff for a well-functioning department that manages with far too little resources. The positive attitude of all employees reflects a deep commitment to care for people in need.

The Consumer Family Learning Center is to be commended for enthusiasm and willingness to be innovative. Staff and volunteers show incredible dedication to the consumers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. The Consumer Family Learning Center is a hidden gem in the community. Increased public relations/publicity would broaden the service area. (Finding 7)
- R2. Additional satellite support groups should be formed. (Finding 7)

**NOTES:**

The Kern County Mental Health Department should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), and click on: Sign up for early releases.

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**RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:**

**PRESIDING JUDGE  
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREPERSON  
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

### Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

### Response to Recommendations:

*R1. The Consumer Family Learning Center is a hidden gem in the community. Increase public relations/publicity would broaden the service area.*

The Kern County Mental Health Department recognizes the importance of increasing participation and public awareness of the Consumer Family Learning Center (CFLC). The department plans on studying the feasibility of an additional CFLC site in the Oildale area as funds allow. CFLC leadership will be assigned to study and make recommendations regarding steps to increase public awareness. Additionally, a better site location for the current CFLC is being considered; Mental Health Services Act funds have been designated for the purchase of a building. The department is also planning on reassigning dollars from the Tehachapi consumer center to a new Mojave consumer center, which has the potential to reach more individuals.

*R2. Additional satellite support groups should be formed.*

The department plans on adding satellite groups, in cooperation with Garden Pathways, at the Martin Luther King Center to better serve individuals in the southeast Bakersfield area.

# **KERN HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES**

## **PREFACE:**

While touring Kern Medical Center, the Health, Education and Social Services Committee (HESS) of the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) encountered a group of high school students dressed uniformly. The students identified themselves as members of a health academy from a nearby high school.

## **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

The California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorize the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the various departments in Kern County.

## **PROCESS:**

Information was acquired by internet research, phone calls and faxes. Since each academy is unique, on site data was obtained from visitations held on March 24, 2014.

## **BACKGROUND/FACTS:**

In 1984 the California State Legislature passed AB 3104 enabling the creation of the California Partnership Academies (Academies). Academies are small learning communities within larger schools enrolling students in grades 10 – 12. Students are provided with a firm foundation upon which to build a future.

Students enrolled in academies are self-selecting. Counselors are directed to recruit students if class sizes are too small. By law 50% of the students in each cohort meet three or more of the six criteria to be designated at risk. The criteria consist of:

- Being significantly behind in credits
- Poor attendance
- Low motivation for the regular school program
- Economically disadvantaged
- Low state test scores
- Low grade point average

Academies frame curriculum around industrial fields such as:

- Health Careers
- Information Technology
- Media and Communications
- Engineering
- Education



- Agriculture
- Law and Justice
- Transportation
- Automotive Technology

Academies are designed to infuse Career Education into the academic curriculum. Students prepare for a career while meeting university entrance requirements. This is accomplished through partnerships between the California Department of Education, the school, industrial partners and providers of additional training programs.

## **FINDINGS:**

- F1. Academy students strive to meet these objectives:
- Graduate high school
  - Be prepared to obtain employment
  - Be prepared for community college, four-year college or university
- F2. Local businesses have pledged support through:
- Curriculum Development
  - Lessons
  - Mentoring
  - Field Trips
  - Senior Internships
- F3. The local area offers many career opportunities in engineering and other math-science related occupations. In addition to the major oil producers and refineries, there is a network of companies that support these industries.
- F4. The local job market is inadequately staffed in the areas of instrumentation, automation, process control and maintenance, fabrication of control systems, petroleum engineering and process control engineering.

## **COMMENTS:**

The Committee wishes to thank the administrators and staff for the time given so generously and for being so dedicated to the students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. Academy informational brochures should include academic results, e.g. statistical information in the school report card (a short summary of school progress). (Finding 1)
- R2. Data should be collected tracking the progress of academy students after graduation. (Finding 1)

**NOTES:**

The Kern High School District should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), click on: Sign up for early releases.

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# KERN HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chad Vegas, President

Mike Williams, Vice President

Martha Miller, Clerk

William R. Perry Ed.D, Clerk Pro Tem

J. Bryan Batey, Member

DONALD E. CARTER, Ed.D., SUPERINTENDENT

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5801 SUNDALE AVENUE • BAKERSFIELD • CALIFORNIA • 93309-2924 • (661) 827-3100 • FAX: (661) 827-3307

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Michael Zulfa  
Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

June 23, 2014

Mahlon L. Keel, Foreperson Pro Tem  
2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury  
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Ste. 600  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RE: Kern County Grand Jury Recommendations

Dear Mr. Keel,

Thank you for sending us your recommendations in regards to our Academies.

We are currently in the process of contracting with a business that will allow us to track our students after high school if they go to college.

We are also looking for ways to track our students who enter the workforce in the area they studied in our Academies. There is an informal way that we track those students now; all CTE teachers are required to call their former students after high school to find out if they are working in their field of study.

Having the data is very important. The data will show us if we are being successful and also may show us areas that we need to improve. It will also be a tool that we can use to advertise to students in hopes of gaining their interest in our academies.

Sincerely,

Michael Zulfa  
Assistant Superintendent, Instruction Division

mz/mla

# **SAFELY SURRENDER BABY LAW**

## **PREFACE:**

The Safely Surrender Baby Law (SSB) was implemented on January 1, 2001, with the intent to prevent harm and possible death to newborns. Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation extending the SSB Law permanently into state law as of January 1, 2006.

## **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee (HESS) began an inquiry to understand the SSB Law and how it functions inside Kern County. The Kern County Board of Supervisors proclaimed February as Safely Surrender Baby Awareness Month.

## **PROCESS:**

The HESS Committee of the 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) conducted an in-depth interview with the Director of Human Services and two Assistants regarding SSB. Investigation also included internet research and literature given to the Committee by the Department of Human Services.

## **FACTS:**

- A. Under SSB a person may surrender their baby confidentially without fear of arrest or prosecution for abandonment.
- B. A parent who is unable or unwilling to care for an infant can surrender the baby within three days of birth. The only requirement is that the baby be brought to any fire station or emergency room.
- C. A baby may be surrendered any time, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
- D. A bracelet will be placed on the baby for identification. A matching bracelet will be given to the parent. The bracelets will help identify the connection between parent and child if the parent reclaims the baby within fourteen days.
- E. The hospital personnel will give the parent an optional health questionnaire that is designed to gather family medical history. No identifying information about the parent will be collected.
- F. Medical social workers are available after delivery to counsel parents if so desired.



- G. Fifty counties in California have implemented the law.
- H. Funding for the program is provided by a voluntary contribution on the State Income Tax Form.
- I. Thirty-nine babies have been confidentially and safely surrendered in Kern County since the implementation of SSB. Only two babies in Kern County have been reclaimed.

## **FINDINGS:**

- F1. The Safely Surrender Baby Coalition continues to lead the effort to educate Kern County residents about the law. This group of individuals represents a long list of social-service departments, non-profits, hospitals and stake-holders.
- F2. *“Adoption is always a choice and should be considered first. Whenever parents have decided that they are unable to care for a baby, whatever the reason, adoption is by far the best choice,”* Department of Human Services.
- F3. Further information may be obtained at: [www.babysafe.ca.gov](http://www.babysafe.ca.gov)
- F4. *“In California, no one ever has to abandon a child again. No shame. No blame. No names,”* Department of Human Services.

## **COMMENTS:**

The Committee wishes to thank the Department of Human Services for expanding public knowledge of the Safely Surrender Baby Law. People who work with the law as well as people who hear about the law express an enthusiasm which is highly contagious.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. The Department of Human Services and the Safely Surrender Baby Coalition should continue to expand public knowledge about this law. (Finding 1)

## **NOTES:**

The Department of Human Services should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), click on: Sign up for early releases.

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Kern County Board of Supervisors  
Response to Grand Jury Final Report

**SAFELY SURRENDER BABY LAW**

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendation:

*R1: The Department of Human Services and the Safely Surrender Baby Coalition should continue to expand public knowledge about this law.*

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Grand Jury recommendation and is committed to continuing efforts to market and improve outreach to cities and outlying communities within the County.

# THE SHAFTER RESEARCH STATION

## **PREFACE:**

The 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury (Jury) Health, Education and Social Services (HESS) Committee made a return visit on November 12, 2013, to the Shafter Research Station (Station) at the invitation of the Executive Vice President and General Manager (GM). The Station is located in Shafter, California.

Mission of Stewardship: *“San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association will manage and operate the Shafter Research Station as a multi-purpose facility which will host valuable agricultural research as its core function, while simultaneously providing educational and historical preservation opportunities designed to support and complement the core function.”*

## **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorize the Jury to investigate and report on the various departments throughout Kern County. The GM presented a plan changing a publicly managed agency, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to a privately managed/public sector agency that supports a more diverse array of beneficiaries.

## **PROCESS:**

HESS reviewed the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury Report supplemented by on-line research. The GM presented HESS with a progress report at the beginning of a tour. The report included the recommendations from the previous Jury so that progress could be evaluated. Further, a video presentation gave HESS an overview of the property.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Station was established in 1922 by the USDA to investigate types of cotton. By 1925 research had shown Acala cotton was the highest quality variety of long-staple cotton. The research led to the California One Variety Cotton Act. The result of the policy led to an international reputation for research. The Station was added to the National Register of Historic Places on October 17, 1997.

In June of 2012 the USDA withdrew monetary support for the Research Station due to budget constraints. Equipment was donated to the Kern Community College District. Real Property belongs to Kern County. Presently some buildings remain empty while other facilities are leased.

At the present time the management of the Station is under the control of the San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association (Association). The Association ensures the highest quality cotton is produced in the San Joaquin Valley.



Professors from several universities work with students to provide work experience and internship opportunities.

**List of Colleges/Universities/Organizations/Companies currently conducting research on site: (100% of Field Plots, 40% of Greenhouses, 40% of Laboratories)**

1. University of California – State Cotton Specialist
2. University of California, Davis – Department of Entomology
3. Vintage Nurseries
4. I. D. Services
5. PhytoGen Seed Co., LLC (Roche)
6. San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton

**List of Colleges/Universities with active educational collaboration:**

1. California State University, Bakersfield
2. Bakersfield College

The Station willingly works with private groups using the facility. Future studies include work with bees, citrus, cotton and grapes. The number one crop in California is grapes followed by: almonds, strawberries, hay, lettuce, walnuts, tomatoes and pistachios.

**FINDINGS:**

- F1. The Station operates its own website: [www.Shafter-Research.com](http://www.Shafter-Research.com)
- F2. The Station no longer solely focuses on cotton research. Other crops are now studied along with related issues such as bee population.
- F3. During last year's visit there was one employee, the General Manager. Currently there are five paid staff members including: General Manager, Groundskeeper, Maintenance, Receptionist and Quality Control Supervisor.
- F4. All recommendations from the 2012-2013 Kern County Grand Jury have been implemented including the establishment of an Advisory Committee representing agriculture, education, growers and scientists.
- F5. During 2015, expectations are 80% of the Station will be occupied.
- F6. Many historical objects are being housed at the Shafter Historical Society. When the Station's Visitor Center is complete the artifacts will be returned.
- F7. Interviews are being conducted with local members of the agricultural community. Records of historical interviews will be housed at the Station.

- F8. Garden Project Volunteers recently harvested 3,000 pounds of fruit from the Station's property. The food was allocated to support the Senior Sack Lunch Program and other food relief programs throughout Kern County.
- F9. The Station's current focus is opening opportunities for students interested in agricultural careers.
- F10. The Station operates on a budget of \$365,000 annually. The Kern County Board of Supervisors allotted \$200,000 for improvements to infrastructure. Lease income from tenants is used to offset operating costs.

**COMMENTS:**

HESS wishes to thank the General Manager for his enthusiasm, knowledge and kindness. All questions were answered graciously and without delay. During the guided tour, staff and tenants were open to all questions, eagerly discussed projects and made the Committee feel welcome.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. Encourage nearby school districts to visit the Station and promote an understanding of local agriculture. (Findings 8 and 9)
- R2. Encourage community groups and individuals to visit the Station and learn about the services provided. (Findings 7 and 8)

**NOTES:**

The Shafter Research Station should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

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# **THE SHAFTER RESEARCH STATION**

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## **PROGRESS REPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY**

April 30, 2014

PRESENTED BY  
Greg F. Palla



San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association  
Managers of **THE SHAFTER RESEARCH STATION**



## 2013-14 HESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. Encourage nearby school districts to visit the Station and promote and understanding of local agriculture.

R2. Encourage community groups and individuals to visit the Station and learn about the services provided.

### NOTES:

The Shafter Research Station should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

### Website portal:

[www.shafter-research.com](http://www.shafter-research.com)

- Website identifies our mission, the facilities available, current research and other items of interest

### School programs and tours:

#### Working with Kern County Farm Bureau to assist in educational programs

- Have hosted students from out of state as well as developing a program for local students to incorporate multiple disciplines with agriculture

## EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIONS:

### Bakersfield College

- Established Contract to Host Student Internship Program
  - Two students – working with Dr. Godfrey, UC Davis

### Cal State University, Bakersfield

- Established an ongoing collaboration with CSUB Engineering Department through Drs. Anne Houtman, Dean and Luis Cabrales, Professor of Engineering
  - One student has been selected for initial phase and will begin a 15-week internship in June 2014



## **HISTORICAL PRESERVATION:**

The CSUB Dean of Libraries has proposed to establish a collaboration providing for professional archival of scientific documents, artifacts, film and photographic collection now housed at The Shafter Research Station.

- Preservation Plan
  - Program in development
  - Site Preservation
    - Historical Buildings
    - Artifacts
  - Public/Special Event Display
    - Memorialization of individual accounts through video interviews

## **POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

Representing Agriculture, Education, and Community at Large

1. Mr. Anthony Azevedo
2. Dr. Michelle Bresso
3. Mr. Ronald Clark
4. Dr. Anne Houtman
5. Mr. Kenneth Kirschenmann
6. Mr. Charles Meyer
7. Mr. Cannon Michael
8. Ms. Beatris Sanders
9. Mr. Theodore Sheely
10. Mr. Fred Starrh
11. Mr. Lawrence Starrh
12. Mr. William Stone
13. Mr. Stanley Wilson

## **SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

Representing Leading Scientists in Agriculture

1. Dr. Luis Cabrales
2. Dr. Kater Hake
3. Dr. Robert Hutmacher
4. Dr. Robert Nichols
5. Dr. Douglas Rushing
6. Dr. Gordon Wardell

## Capital Improvements

### Physical Improvements Completed – (\$76,915)

- Paving & asphalt resurfacing

- Dust Control Paving

- Tree trimming and landscaping additions

- Energy efficient Security Lighting in Equipment Yards

- Domestic Water System Improvement

- Security systems for key areas

  - Video Surveillance

  - Monitored Fire and Burglary Alarms

- Administration Building

  - Acoustic ceiling material removal

  - Interior Plastering and Painting

  - Energy efficient lighting

  - Exterior Painting

### Physical Improvements Planned

- Greenhouse Efficiency Improvement and Modernization Project – (\$149,000 est.)

  - Energy Efficient LED Lightning Fixtures

  - Electrical Backup Generation System Reconfiguration

  - Cooling System Installation

- Solar Power Generation Project - (\$677,556 est.)