



SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
BRANDON BARNES  
SHERIFF – CORONER

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ENDORSED FILED

June 20, 2025

SEP 24 2025

Superior Court of California, County of Sutter

Attn: The Honorable David I. Ashby - Presiding Judge

1175 Civic Center Blvd.

Yuba City, CA. 95993

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SUTTER  
CLERK OF THE COURT  
By JACKIE LASWELL Deputy

Please accept this response on behalf of the Sutter County Sheriff's Office regarding the findings of the Grand Jury for FY 24/25. It has been my honor to get to know the Grand Jury members and to provide an overview of the operations of the sheriff's office. I want to express my appreciation of the Grand Jury and the role they play in helping to bring deficiencies to our attention. I have reviewed the proposed report and offer the following responses to both the "Findings" and the "Recommendations" as suggested by the Grand Jury.

SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**FINDINGS:**

1. **F1.** Ineffective cooling system is causing potential health risk to incarcerated persons and jail staff (e.g., heat, related medical issues).

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding. The issues with the jail HVAC system have been well documented and the Sheriff's Office have been working for years to find solutions that are viable and fiscally responsible.

2. **F2.** There are currently several ligature points throughout the jail, particularly in the female holding cells, observation cells and the old portion of the jail which uses grill gates.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding and steps have been taken to correct the issue.

3. **F3.** The maintenance staff and outside contractors have addressed some of the issues by resealing seams and other peak points of the roof.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees there are issues with the roof. The jail infrastructure is dated, and leaks are a routine occurrence during inclement weather. As noted, some of the issues have been addressed by county maintenance.

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COUNTY OF SUTTER



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4. **F4.** The jail facility staff sought funding for new lighting. Approval was granted and the installation of new lights was scheduled to begin in March of 2025. A projected completion date of June 2025 was provided by the Sutter County Sheriff.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding and steps have been taken to correct this issue

5. **F5.** The Jail Flooring project is 80% complete as of February 2025. The flooring was also tinted to enhance the jail esthetically and psychologically.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding and the matter has been successfully completed prior to the receipt of this report.

6. **F6.** The CCTV system has been updated, and repairs have been made. The new CCTV system was installed January 2025 to address issues.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding.

7. **F7.** The antiquated showers underwent grout repair and were epoxied to enhance easy cleaning.

**Response:** The Sheriff agrees with this finding and the matter has been resolved through county maintenance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **R1.** The SCGJ recommends the Sutter County Sheriff's Office work with Sutter County Facilities and Development Services as well as Board of Supervisors to begin phasing in the repairs of the outdated cooling system inside the jail this fiscal year or the beginning of Fiscal Year 2026.

**Response:** Sutter County contracted with Kitchell CEM for an assessment of the HVAC project. This contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. On September 4th, 2024, Kitchell conducted a visual assessment of the mechanical, plumbing, and electrical equipment to obtain deficiency evaluations, propose corrective and maintenance recommendations, recommend energy saving improvements, and prepare budget estimates for the corrective work for the facility. The Sheriff's Office received the Kitchell CEM's assessment report from Development Services in January of 2025. The assessment report cost summary provided an estimated cost of approx. \$14,774,131. This estimate has been provided to the County Administrator's Office for review.



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Since January 2025 the Sheriff's Office, Sutter County Facilities, and Development Services have held several meetings to develop strategies to split the project into 3 phases, to access better funding opportunities and a development project plan. At this point, we are in the final stages of concluding the plans to reach out and secure potential funding sources. This project will be ongoing over multiple years.

2. **R2.** The SCGJ recommends the Sutter County Sheriff's Office address the remaining ligature points (pipe enclosures) within the jail addressed by the BSCC. The SCGJ also recommends the Sutter County Sheriff's Office seek funding for retrofitting of the grill gates through the Board of Supervisors this fiscal year or the beginning of Fiscal Year 2026.

**Response:** The Sutter County Sheriff's Office has allocated \$185,000 for a grill gate retrofit project during FY 25/26. This initiative will involve the installation of durable polycarbonate/Lexan material, incorporating ventilation holes and corrections-grade fasteners to ensure security and functionality. The work on this project is set to commence in the first quarter of FY 25/26.

Additionally, pipe enclosures for sinks and toilets have been ordered, received, and are partially installed, with final completion dependent on maintenance scheduling. To enhance safety, potential ligature points—such as shelves and hooks—have been replaced with ligature-resistant shelving and towel holders. Furthermore, wiring throughout the facility has been securely covered to minimize ligature risks, contributing to a safer environment overall.

3. **R3.** The SCGJ recommends the Sutter County Sheriff develop a plan to address a more permanent solution and work with the Sutter County Board of Supervisors to obtain funding to support the maintenance of the roof project. The SCGJ recommends this plan be in place by the beginning of Fiscal Year 2027.

**Response:** The Sheriff's Office has partnered with county maintenance staff and outside vendors over the past few months to complete the roof repair over the maximum-security hallways. This work successfully sealed the gaps between the stem walls where the concrete roof meets the concrete walls. This was done at a cost of \$6000.

However, additional repairs are still needed to ensure long-term stability and prevent leaks in the roof. The estimated cost for completing these remaining repairs is \$24,000. The Sheriff's Office will be working with the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors to locate potential funding sources to complete the necessary repairs.



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4. **R4.** The SCGJ recommends completing the multi-phased lighting project by the end of the Fiscal Year 2026.

**Response:** The Sutter County Sheriff's Office has utilized funds from previous budget cycles to procure 112 dimmable lighting fixtures from a national correctional lighting distributor. As the final phase of facility-wide lighting upgrades, this project will specifically address issues within the Max tank, I-Block, holding cells, hallways and female holding cells, which will address all deficient areas within the jail. These enhancements are designed to improve both morale and safety throughout the facility. Installation is scheduled for the first quarter of the FY 25/26.

5. **R5.** The SCGJ recommends completing the Jail Flooring Project to assist in mitigating slip and fall accidents by the end of Fiscal Year 2025. If additional funding is needed to complete this project, the Grand Jury recommends requesting funds through the Board of Supervisors by the end of Fiscal Year 2025.

**Response:** The facility's flooring project has been successfully completed. Epoxy coating has been applied throughout previously painted floor areas, including block housing and showers, holding cells, female holding cells, and all hallways. To enhance safety, a non-slip coating was used in areas prone to frequent moisture, such as cells and shower spaces. Additionally, ventilation has been improved through vent cleaning, the use of fans, and enhanced cleaning measures.

6. **R6.** There is no response required as there was no recommendation requested by the Grand Jury.

**R7.** The Grand Jury recommends continuing routine maintenance to keep shower areas in working order.

**Response:** The shower areas have been incorporated into a regular maintenance schedule to ensure consistent upkeep and functionality. As part of this initiative, showerheads have been carefully adjusted to optimize water flow, ensuring sufficient and evenly distributed water streams. This adjustment enhances user experience while promoting water efficiency. Additionally, routine inspections will be conducted to identify and address any potential issues, such as clogs, leaks, or pressure inconsistencies, ensuring the long-term reliability of the facility's shower system.



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The Sheriff's Office continues to be dedicated to meeting, or exceeding, industry standards for public safety operations and corrections. We appreciate the recommendations of the Grand Jury and further thank you for accepting these responses on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Barnes", is written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Barnes

Sheriff-Coroner