

# Monterey County Civil Grand Jury

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## PRESS RELEASE

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Immediate Release

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The 2008 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury has released a Mid-Year Final Report focusing on the need for the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to act immediately on opportunities provided by Assembly Bill 900 (The Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007).

The State of California has awarded Monterey County a conditional grant of \$80 million dollars for updating and building additional jail facilities, provided the County names a site where the State can build a correctional re-entry facility for offenders who will be re-entering the communities where their crimes were committed after fulfilling their prison sentences. To make the new jail a reality, Monterey County would have to provide approximately \$59 million to cover one-time costs of jail construction and approximately \$11 million to \$15 million annually to cover costs of operations and services that support the re-entry facility.

Overcrowding in correctional facilities, including the Monterey County Jail, has been a finding of the Civil Grand Jury every year since 1999 and was highlighted in 2003. Although numbers vary from day-to-day, the Monterey County Jail typically houses approximately 140% of its designed inmate capacity. The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Mid-Year Final Report urges the Board of Supervisors to take action before the County's grant request is reevaluated by the State of California in early September 2008 or run the risk of losing the conditional grant.

The Mid-Year Final Report recommends that the Board of Supervisors identify specific responsibility and accountability for implementing broad and intense public information programs related to the window of opportunity represented by AB 900. The Report also suggests that the Board of Supervisors appoint a responsible party, such as one of the public information officers of the organizations most involved, to oversee the building project. Citizens who live or work near the sites of new construction, especially the re-entry facility, should be engaged and heard. At the same time, as the issues and opportunities related to AB 900 will touch every citizen in the County, an aggressive countywide public information program should be initiated and executed.

The 2008 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury continues its deliberations for the balance of the calendar year and will produce a Final Report in December 2008.

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