

Modoc County Grand Jury Report



2019-2021

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Modoc County Grand Jury Roster 2019-2021

Kevin Kunkel-Foreman

Ed Stevenson

Amanda Hoy

Alice Lybarger

Jim Cavasso

Roberta Hohman

Linda Marchy

Paul Saubolle

Alan Cain

Letter from the Foreperson

Public service and volunteerism in Modoc County are two critical components in how Modoc County operates. Without these two components, many tasks, and obligations both necessary, and for the greater good of the County would not take place. One of these obligations, that is in turn a critical component yet filled by volunteers, is being called to serve on any jury in our county. Service to our community in any capacity should be on the minds of all who reside here. We are lucky in Modoc County; we are buffered from many of the issues that the rest of California faces. We rely on each other. We're accountable to one another. This accountability to one another is what makes us different from the rest of the State, and what supports the overall success of our communities.

Modoc County is the second least funded county in the State of California. There isn't a lot of money to go around. However, we have many services. Our roads are always plowed, our police departments, sheriff's departments, and medics always respond to calls quickly, efficiently and effectively. We have a brand-new hospital. We have a county health department that works for the health and safety of our county every single day. We have nearly every service here that the largest, fully funded counties in the rest of the state have. Service on the Grand Jury has allowed us to see that bigger picture; to see what operating funds the County is working with; to see the flow of money from the general fund to various departments; to see what it actually costs to hire one employee. All of this information is public information and available to anyone. I encourage anyone with questions about budgets in our county to take a look at our county's budget. It's posted online and available to all.

As Foreman for the Grand Jury from 2019 to 2021, I have had the opportunity to have many conversations with many leaders in our county. I'd like to personally thank a few of them here. Sheriff Tex Dowdy works diligently to ensure that our county is safe, and more importantly, he works to maintain our autonomy up here. Our protection and our way of life is his number one concern. We all have an advocate in Tex. Chester Robertson, our Chief Administrative Officer, literally scrapes two nickels together to ensure we have the money to operate our county and save the money needed to improve our infrastructure. Our CAO works tirelessly and is 100% committed to the financial success of this County. We would not have all the services that we do if not for Chester. Gary Fensler, our Agriculture Commissioner has worked very hard and diligently to provide more services to our agriculture community and make the county Ag Department more financially solvent. Gary's department even took on a huge new role, operating the Migrant Work Center in Newell. No other Ag department in California has that responsibility.

There are many, many, many other people to thank in this county for their service. There are countless volunteers and civil servants who are personally invested in our success as a county.

I'd encourage anyone who is called to serve on any jury in Modoc County to view it as an opportunity and your constitutional duty. You meet many people, and you gain a full understanding of the inner workings of our county.

It's been a pleasure to serve you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Kunkel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Kunkel,

Modoc County Grand Jury Foreman 2019-2021

Acknowledgements

The 2019-2021 Grand Jury would like to thank the following:

Honorable Judge David A. Mason

Honorable Judge Francis W. Barclay

Rebekah Ingraham- Grand Jury Clerk

Gary Fensler-Modoc County Agriculture Commissioner

Susie Philpot-Modoc County Agriculture Department Fiscal Officer

Tex Dowdy-Modoc County Sheriff

Chester Robertson-Modoc County Chief Administrative Officer

Superior Court of California

County of Modoc

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FRANCIS W. BARCLAY
PRESIDING JUDGE

RONDA GYSIN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

October 18, 2021

To: Grand Jury Members

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I want to take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation and the appreciation of the Superior Court to all the members of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Modoc County Grand Jury for a job well done.

I want to specifically and specially recognize Mr. Kevin Kunkel for his leadership as Foreperson and the entire panel for their extra diligence, dedication and commitment to their duties as Grand Jurors while facing the difficult challenges presented to all of us in dealing with our public health crisis. Not only did this panel continue to perform their duties during these difficult times, Mr. Kunkel as Foreperson and the entirety of the remaining panel actually served two terms to make sure they were able to complete their investigations and submit their report. The report submitted reflects the extra commitment and hard work put in by this panel during very difficult times.

Serving as a Grand Juror is not an easy task and I commend each and every one of you for your sincere efforts and a job well done especially during these very challenging times.

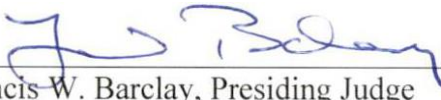
Thank you once again for your service.

Sincerely,



Francis W. Barclay
Presiding Judge

I certify that the Modoc County Grand Jury Final Report complies with Title Four of the California Penal Code and direct the Court Executive Officer to accept and file the final report as a public document.


Francis W. Barclay, Presiding Judge

Date: August 9, 2021



Law Enforcement

MODOC COUNTY GRAND JURY

2020-2021

DEVILS GARDEN CONSERVATION CAMP

SUMMARY

The Devils Garden Conservation Camp was started in 1988 as a correctional facility housing approximately 100 inmates who provided services for supervised fire suppression and firefighting. In November 2020 the California Department of Corrections, as a result of depopulating prison facilities decided to also close the Devils Garden facility. This resulted in an economical loss to Modoc County, local business and the relocation of employees. In December, CalFire announced that it would take the 35 acre leased facility and transform it to a fire station/training facility with 40 firefighters for the 2021 season, growing to 15 crews (80 firefighters) in 2022. The facility also has maintenance shops, Helicopter pad and administrative offices. The Operation will benefit Modoc County and its Residents both economically and through enhanced fire protection.

BACKGROUND

The closure of the correctional facility meant the relocation of approximately 100 inmates as well as 35 permanent staff. Also, the services that these inmates provided in terms of forest combustible material removal and assisting in firefighting meant more exposure from fire to the land and the residents of Modoc County.

Relief came with the announcement by CalFire that they would be taking over the leased 35 acre USFS facility. Modoc County would have an enhanced, permanent facility to address the rising rate of forest fires in Northern California. Enhancement comes by way of having a professionally trained, permanent (9-month work season) group of Firefighters, Maintenance personnel, Administrative staff, Equipment and Helicopter pad facility. Not having to have inmate security provisions means a faster response time and more effective firefighting ability.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury met as an entire group to discuss items pertaining to the duties of the Grand Jury, the governmental departments and agencies under its jurisdiction.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the extent of Grand Jury activity was extremely limited for the 2020 – 2021 period. The Grand Jury created a subcommittee to explore what investigation would be possible in a limited time frame. The closure of the Devils Garden Facility was announced by the California Department of Corrections, which was a substantial loss to Modoc County. The Jury decided this was an event and its consequences needed to be investigated and reported on. In the same time frame CalFire announced its plan to establish a Fire station facility at this location. The Jury determined that it was beneficial to the residents of Modoc County to have a detailed report on the new Facility.

A tour of the facilities and subsequent meetings of selected team of Jurors were involved in the tour of the facility, as well as questions for the Division Capitan Steve Walker and Capitan Robert Vererka. The subcommittee, upon completion of the research and interviews presented a draft of the report to the Grand Jury as a whole, from which procedural issues were addressed and a report request was sent to the report writing subcommittee. Once the report was completed it was submitted to the Grand Jury for review and comment. Upon approval the final report was created and presented to the agencies and general public, pursuant to applicable laws.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The facility is in relatively good condition, but needs to be modified from an incarceration facility to house firefighters, with provision for co-ed habitation.
- F2. The administration building will be opened up inside to better utilize space
- F3. The barracks have been freshened on the lower level and are being used. The upper level is currently being freshened. Sleeping quarters, restrooms and showers are co-ed, with procedures for privacy in place. Showers are now private. Max capacity is about 130. Cell service and Wi-Fi are being improved for the site.
- F4. Eventually 5 cooks/helpers will be on staff. Some cleaning/upgrading is needed, otherwise the kitchen is in good order.F5. The recreation room will be upgraded as time allows.
- F6. The training room is being upgraded and is currently utilized. It will be available for use by other government agencies. **There is currently mutual training offered for local fire departments.**

F7. Tool room is still stocked with hand tools and power equipment as in CCC days.F8. Truck and equipment building remain utilized. All heavy equipment from CCC days remains on site. A mechanic will eventually be on site.

F9. The road into the camp will eventually be paved, and the camp parking improved over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The nature of this report was to respond to Community fears due to the closure of the Devils Garden Conservation Camp and therefore is directed more as an informational report. The Facility, under CalFire remains a viable asset to the local community and economy. Cal Fire will remain a large employer and the level of work accomplished will see improvement due to the caliber of workers. Fire suppression for the northeast of the state will see improved response times. There is a clear sense of Cal Fire wanting the community to know that they are here with us, and for us.

INVITED/REQUIRED RESPONSES:

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies (within 60 days):

None as this was for community information only.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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MODOC COUNTY GRAND JURY
2019-2020
MODOC COUNTY JAIL ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

SUMMARY

The combination of an aged facility, modern incarceration practices, and changes in state legislation pertaining to keeping long term prisoners at the local facility (rather than state prisons) have placed difficulties in the operation of the Modoc County Jail. This is evidenced by the types of infractions cited in the 2018-2020 Biennial Inspection by the Board of State Community Corrections (BSCC). Whereas most of the infractions have been, or are in the process of being corrected, some infractions can only be corrected upon the completion of a new facility where the design

incorporates spaces necessary to become compliant. The Modoc County Jail, under leadership of the Sheriff, is managing the corrections cited as well as improving the organization within the 2019-2020 Budget. Modoc County has submitted the necessary requests for the construction and funding of a new facility. Grant funds and Facility configuration have been approved by the State of California. However, front-funding of the project is required by Modoc County as a condition of the grant. This creates a financial obstacle that Modoc County needs to overcome.



BACKGROUND

The Modoc County Sheriff's Office and Jail, located next to the Modoc County Administration building, was built in late 1970's and currently accommodates 43 beds. After approximately 40 years of use it has become obsolete to serve as an adult rehabilitation facility, in view of legal and social developments in the treatment and care of those serving time. Originally, the jail was designed to house pre-trial inmates and low-level offenders for short-term periods, with serious long-term incarcerations and parole violators being sent to state facilities. State legislation (AB109) mandated certain non-serious offenders serve time at local facilities rather than state prisons. This legislation placed a strain on the facility in both staffing and ability to keep within the 43 maximum capacity. There are occurrences where early releases result, in order to provide space for incoming prisoners. The changes in the jail inmate population is also necessitating for the provision of medical, rehabilitation, mental health and recreational services. In the February 15, 2017 Alturas Planning Commission meeting, approval was given to proceed with a new Sheriff's Office and Modoc County Jail. Subsequently, Modoc County qualified for \$24,516,000 in state funding for a new facility. Funding was approved in the form of a grant, with no matching contribution, other than 1% soft incidental costs. The new facility will be a two storied structure, with incarceration rooms located on the second floor behind the old jail which will be repurposed as administrative storage space.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury met on numerous occasions as an entire body to discuss items pertaining to the duties of the Grand Jury, the governmental departments and agencies under its jurisdiction.

Among these departments and agencies is the Modoc County Sheriff's Office and Jail, which was unanimously selected by the entire body for review in the 2019 – 2020 period. The Grand Jury created a subcommittee to investigate this department through research, interview questions, a tour of the facilities and subsequent meetings with the Sheriff and other personnel within the department. A selected team of Jurors were involved in the tour of the facility, as well as questions for the Sheriff. The subcommittee, upon completion of the research and interviews presented a draft of the report to the Grand Jury as a whole, from which procedural issues were addressed and a report request was sent to the report writing subcommittee. Once the report was completed it was submitted to the Grand Jury for review and comment. Upon approval, the final report was created and presented to the agencies and general public, pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 888-939.91.

FINDINGS

- F1. The aged Jail is not optimal in design, having been described (JNA, Jail Needs Assessment, 8/15/2015) as linear, inadequate and unsafe.
- F2. In order to reduce the overcrowding of California State Prisons, AB 109 shifted the number of prisoners from state prisons to local jails, resulting in the lengthening of time prisoners are locally incarcerated, as well as having more criminally sophisticated inmates.
- F3. Because of F1 & F2, the conditions for supervising and protecting inmates, availability for privacy, as well as suicide risk are exacerbated. The current 43 bed capacity was “grandfathered” in with the requirement of additional staff to manage.
- F4. The Sheriffs' Department Dispatch Center services all Modoc County departments, as well as some private organizations (Surprise Valley Electric in power outage reporting). The call center does not handle Cal Fire, Highway Patrol or Federal Agencies).
- F5. Proposal for the construction of a new Modoc County Jail was submitted and a state grant approved in the amount of \$24,516,000. Final approval for release of funding and start of construction is in the process of being finalized.
- F6. The approval of the project, as supported by the Jail Needs Assessment shows a facility with 54 beds (net increase of 11 beds) providing rooms for required activities such as dayrooms, exercise areas, medical treatment areas and vocational program spaces.
- F7. In conjunction with the new facility, the addition of new program space, will lead to successful programs incorporating the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) Plan.
- F8. It is anticipated the new facility, added programs, (and meet Title 15 staffing requirements regarding female staffing) will require the addition of two full time staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The planned new facility will bring the Modoc County Jail facility in compliance with current state regulations. However, the preloading of costs prior to the release of the approved bond funding, place Modoc County at some risk. Available funding requirements to front load the grant are currently not available.
- R2. Due to Assembly Bill 109 legislation, “shifting” prisoners from state prisons to local jails created the need for additional beds, placing additional burden on Modoc County. Managing minor infractions by not processing into jail, rather through court appearance has relieved the number of persons incarcerated. Planned rehabilitation through work programs will likewise reduce the prison population. Continuation and expansion of these policies are strongly recommended.
- R3. Relocation within the facility and equipment modernization (already in progress at the time of this writing) as well as additions to staff will improve response.
- R4. Review of the original needs assessment should be revisited to ascertain (if allowed) minor changes could be made.
- R5. The Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) Plan is an integral part of the funding proposal and should be implemented as soon as possible.
- R6. The prison facility needs to increase the number of female staff in order to accommodate the processing and supervision of female prisoners.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05, the grand jury requests the following governing bodies to respond within 90 days of the date of this report’s publication in the Modoc County Record:

Modoc County Board of Supervisors: F7, F8, R1-R6.

County Administrative Officer: R1- provide the Grand Jury with an outline for a plan that will enable Modoc County to secure the necessary front funding for the Modoc County Jail project and the timeline of obtaining the approved bond grant to complete the construction.

INVITED RESPONSES

California State Assembly Member Megan Dahle, 1st Assembly District

California State Senator Brian Dahle, 1st Senatorial District

United States Congressman Doug La Malfa, 1st California District

Responses are to be submitted to the presiding judge of the Modoc County Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of Penal Code section 933.05.

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**Modoc County Grand Jury
2019-2020
Modoc County Agricultural Department**

SUMMARY

The importance of Agriculture to the well-being of Modoc County cannot be overstated. As the primary generator of Gross Product Revenue, any assistance provided by the Agricultural Department to the Ranchers, Farmers and Growers help to increase productivity and therefore grow the industry. Among the numerous functions the Agriculture Department performs in support of the industry, The Grand Jury selected to review the **Noxious Weed Abatement Program** and **The Migrant Housing Facilities**. Proliferation of noxious weeds in production crop fields can substantially reduce crop yield. Not being able to attract sufficient Farm Labor, like- wise affects harvest productivity. In review of these two important functions the consensus of the Modoc County Civil Grand Jury is that the Agricultural Department needs to be commended for their work in these areas in the 2019-2020 period.



BACKGROUND

The Modoc County Agricultural Department (MCAD) has the responsibility to oversee Modoc Counties' largest contributor of revenues. In 2018, Agricultural activities generated \$159,836,423.00 in gross production. The MCCGJ therefore found it appropriate to focus its review on the functioning of this Department, and its' support to ranchers, farmers and growers alike. Two specific areas of overview were the facilities managed by the departments within the MCAD; **Migrant Housing Facilities** and the **Noxious Weed Abatement Program**. Both of these functions provide great benefit to the Agricultural activities within the County.

The Weed Abatement Program encompasses all 2,689,920 acres of Modoc County. Scotch thistle, Canadian thistle, knapweed and leafy spurge are targeted for eradication, with several other species under limited control. The Program managed 160 sites with eight to nine trained technicians (2018) utilizing chemical and mechanical control methods. There are fees dependent on land ownership and type, with violations cited for infractions and failure to comply. Occasional resistance occurs. Absentee land ownership is also an issue resulting in the MCAD working to develop an educational outreach program. The department has County wide spray services, with what (the MCCGJ) considered very reasonable rates. At this time, the charges are \$64/hour for a crew, equipment, and product. Aerial spraying is charged at \$125 per acre.



The Migrant Housing Program encompasses two facilities located the northwestern section of the County, in the Tulalake region. The two facilities are distinctly different, even though they are located adjacent to one another.

The Newell Migrant Housing Facility is owned by the State of California (office of Migrant Services) with participation of USDA Rural Development Office. The County of Modoc is the Property Management Agent under an operating agreement. The Modoc Board of Supervisors are responsible for implementation of the Centers operations. Financially, the Center is not part of the County budget; funds are not comingled. This is a family only facility, with 40 rentable units providing duplex type of construction. Season is March – September, with tenants making their own applications and payment of monthly rents. Typically, the Center is fully booked for the season. Social services and daycare are made available with Montessori systems managing the daycare, a service also made available to the whole Newell community.

The Castle Rock Farm Workers Center is owned by Modoc County, an H-2A housing facility with separated single Male/Female occupant units designed for 2-4 persons per unit. The center is maintained by the County Public Works, and is included in the County budget.

Revenue from the 47 units is derived from leases with farmers/growers who block out their needs for worker housing. Adequate occupancy does not seem to be an issue.

Both facilities are managed by two employees and a Supervisor, whose costs are shared by both the State and the County. The facilities are kept in compliance with State and Federal regulations, with audit oversight.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury met on numerous occasions as an entire group to discuss items pertaining to the duties of the Grand Jury, the governmental departments and agencies under its jurisdiction. Among these departments and agencies is the Modoc Agricultural Department, which was unanimously selected by the entire group for review in the 2019 – 2020 period. The Grand Jury created a subcommittee to investigate this department through research, interview questions, a tour of the Migrant Housing Center in Newell, the Castle Rock Farm Worker Center, and subsequent meetings with key personnel within the department.

The subcommittee, upon completion of the research and interviews presented a draft of the report to the Grand Jury as a whole, from which procedural issues were addressed and a report request was sent to the report writing subcommittee. Once the report was completed it was submitted to the Grand Jury for review and comment. Upon approval, the final report was created and presented to the agencies and general public, pursuant to applicable laws.



FINDINGS (Weed Abatement)

- F1. The Agriculture Department surveys 2,689,920 acres, representing all of Modoc County
- F2. Noxious weed control is one of the main activities which is necessary to maintain the health of crop production, one of the largest revenue producers for the County.
- F3. Weed control spraying can be carried out on public and private lands.
- F4. There is a confidential complaint protocol for reporting properties with noxious weed problems leading to inspections.
- F5. Citations can be issued to private land owners (including absentee owners).
- F6. Property owners can request spraying services. Current pricing is \$64 per hour for a crew including equipment and herbicides. Aerial spraying is charged at \$125 per acre.
- F7. The County currently has eight to nine trained abatement technicians.
- F8. A County wide weed mapping program is being developed, however delayed due to lack of funding.

FINDINGS (Migrant Housing)

- F1. Agriculture is the primary revenue generator for Modoc County, generating (2018) \$159,836,423.00 in gross production. Attracting farm labor is crucial in meeting production goals.
- F2. The Newell Migrant Housing Facility and the Castle Rock Farm Workers Center located in the Tulelake farm region provide excellent housing facilities, attracting seasonal farm laborers to this County.
- F3. The Newell Migrant Housing Facility is for family occupancy only, under State ownership, with USDA participation and under a Modoc County operations agreement. Funding is provided by Federal/State sources and is outside of the County budget.
- F4. The Castle Rock Farm Workers Center is for single workers housing, under Modoc County ownership and management. The Operation is part of the County budget, with revenues derived from leases directly with Farmers/Growers who reserve space necessary for their seasonal workers.
- F5. County Public Works department maintains the Castle Rock Facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Noxious Weed Program: Organize a campaign of public outreach (mail, radio, flyers) explaining what harm can be caused to agriculture commodities due to noxious weed encroachment. Disclose services available to the public showing costs.
- R2. Migrant Housing: Information outreach into other counties (like local paper advertising) showing availability of housing and costs to encourage travel to Modoc County.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05, the grand jury requests the following governing bodies to respond within 90 days of the date of this report's publication in the Modoc County Record:

Modoc County Board of Supervisors: Public commendation to the Modoc County Agriculture Department's managers and staff, as well as the County Administrator's Office for their superior service to the citizens of Modoc County.

INVITED RESPONSES

California State Assembly Member Megan Dahle, 1st Assembly District

California State Senator Brian Dahle, 1st Senatorial District

United States Congressman Doug La Malfa, 1st California District

Responses are to be submitted to the presiding judge of the Modoc County Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of Penal Code section 933.05.

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MODOC COUNTY GRAND JURY

2019-2020

ALTURAS RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY

Among the many findings listed, the primary area in need of improvement is the recruitment of new volunteers. In general, the Alturas Rural Fire Department is well organized, with diligent maintenance of older equipment resulting in the ability to respond to community needs in a timely manner. The Board of Directors are constantly looking for additional funding to meet rising costs as well as joining with Cal Fire's Workman's Compensation insurance program to reduce rates. Even with good maintenance practices, the fleet of fire vehicles is ageing and provisions must be planned for a replacement schedule.



BACKGROUND

The Alturas Rural Fire Department (ARFD) was formed in 1948 under its own charter, as an all-volunteer organization serving the greater Alturas area (see F1-F6 below) responding to structure fires, wildland fires and emergency response calls. The ARFD collaborates with Cal Fire, Cal Pines, Canby and Davis Creek fire departments under Mutual Assistance Agreements. The department operates three fire vehicles ranging in age from 1977 to 2008. All are equipped with auxiliary pumps and well maintained to respond at any time. ARFD seasonally rents one truck to Cal Fire, which provides a substantial revenue stream without impeding response calls.

The facility is located at 310 N. Rine Street in Alturas, in an old maintenance shop owned by Modoc County. The facility appears to be adequate for the operation. Equipment maintenance is an absolute priority in order to keep the fleet ready and able to respond. There are 18 active volunteers who benefit from cross training with Cal Fire; however there are occasions where lack of volunteers has hampered response time. With revenues generated from sales tax allocations, funding from the XL Reservation, California Office of Traffic Safety and Cal Fire rentals, the Department operates within its budgets, having a current surplus carryover of \$122,000. The ARFD will need to look at equipment replacement in the near future. Overall observation is that the ARFD is very well organized and poised to respond to the needs of the community at any given time.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury met on numerous occasions as an entire body to discuss items pertaining to the duties of the Grand Jury, the governmental departments, and agencies under its jurisdiction.

Among these departments and agencies is the Alturas Rural Fire Department, which was unanimously selected by the entire body for review in the 2019 – 2020 period. The Grand Jury created a subcommittee to investigate this department through research, interview questions, a tour of the facilities and subsequent meetings with the fire chief and other personnel within the department. A selected team of jurors were involved in the tour of the facility as well as questions for the Fire Chief. The subcommittee, upon completion of the research and interviews, presented a draft of the report to the Grand Jury body from which procedural issues were addressed and a report request was sent to the report writing subcommittee. Once the report was completed, it was submitted to the Grand Jury for review and comment. Upon approval, the final report was created and presented to the agencies and general public, pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 888-939.91.

FINDINGS

- F1. Alturas Rural Fire Department (ARFD) was formed in 1948 by charter and is housed in the old Modoc County maintenance shop at 310 N. Rine St. in Alturas California.
- F2. The ARFD is a volunteer organization with 18 current active members, with the Fire Chief receiving a monthly stipend of \$350.00.
- F3. The Board of Directors consists of five members out of a six-member board (currently one position is vacant). There are two volunteers providing administrative support (one is also a board member).
- F4. Volunteers are recruited by word of mouth, are subject to background checks, and have a one-year probationary period.
- F5. The Department responds to structure fires, wildland fires and emergency response calls within its service area.
- F6. Service area extends between the top of Cedar Pass, Fitzhugh Creek, Fisher Hill, and County Road 118 (Joseph Creek). Severity of an incident can extend this area.
- F7. In 2019, the department responded to 127 calls. (Total of 326 logged entries which were primarily smoke reports.) 99% of calls are routed through the 911 dispatch center at the Modoc County Sheriff's Department, with 80% of the calls coming from outside the Alturas city limits.
- F8. Budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 is \$162,700 with income sources from sales tax proceeds, XL reservation funds, the California Office of Traffic Safety grants, and the seasonal rental of the 2008 fire truck to Cal Fire. There is a current surplus in the budget of \$122,000.

- F9. In 2019, the department incorporated a mandatory electronic reporting system, facilitating the documentation of call detail, elapsed times and services for EMS and pre-hospital reporting. The cost is \$1,200.00 annually.
- F10. Workman's Compensation cost is a major budget item (\$21,000 annually). The board is attempting to pool this item with Cal Fire to reduce the charge rate.
- F11. Equipment age ranges from 1977 to 2008, all carrying auxiliary pumps. Priority is given to ongoing maintenance with annual preventative maintenance a requirement. All maintenance is performed locally, with the exception of a 2004 truck needing to be maintained in Sacramento.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The opportunity area of the department is the number of volunteers, leading to possible delays in response time. Currently, volunteers are recruited by word of mouth. It is the recommendation of this Grand Jury that additional methods of recruitment be utilized. Advertising in the local newspaper, radio and social media could be utilized.
- R2. Develop a needs assessment for equipment replacement with budgets to reflect future funding requirements.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05, the grand jury requests the following governing bodies to respond within 90 days of the date of this report's publication in the Modoc County Record:

- 1) **R1:** The Modoc Grand Jury requests that the Alturas Rural Fire Department Board of Directors respond on the implementation of a succession plan for the replacement of aging Equipment.
- 2) **R2:** The Modoc County Grand Jury requests that the Alturas Rural Fire Department Board of Directors implement a program that will encourage new volunteer fire fighter opportunities within the Alturas Rural Fire Department.

Responses are to be submitted to the presiding judge of the Modoc County Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of Penal Code section 933.05.

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Become a Grand Juror

The law states grand jury applicants must have the following qualifications:

- Citizen of the United States
- 18 years of age or older
- Resident of state and county or city and county for one year prior to being selected.
- In possession of natural faculties, ordinary intelligence, sound judgment, fair character.
- Possess sufficient knowledge of the English language.

Beyond the legal requirements, there are more specific qualifications which are desirable for a grand juror:

- A general knowledge of the functions, authorities and responsibilities of the county and city governments and other civil entities.
- Research abilities, including complex reading capabilities, background in accessing/analyzing facts and report writing.
- Substantial background in group/committee work.
- Respect and objectivity concerning the positions and views of others.

Contact the Modoc County Superior Court at 205 S. East Street, Alturas, CA 96101 or call 530-233-6516 ext. 1208 to learn more.

MODOC COUNTY GRAND JURY
205 S. East Street, Alturas, CA 96101 Phone: 233-6526
CITIZENS COMPLAINT FORM

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Home Address: _____ Zip: _____

Work Address: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone#: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

1. PERSON(S), OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT, OR AGENCY ABOUT WHOM (WHICH) YOU ARE MAKING THE COMPLAINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____

Director of Agency, if applicable: _____

2. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROBLEM (including dates of events and names of persons, officials, department, and agencies involved. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.)

3. PLEASE LIST THE PERSONS, OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, OTHER GRAND JURIES OR MEDIA WHOM YOU HAVE CONTACTED ABOUT THIS PROBLEM:

ENTITY	ADDRESS	APPROXIMATE DATE OF CONTACT
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. WHO DO YOU THINK THE GRAND JURY SHOULD CONTACT ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE #:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. REASON TO CONTACT THE ABOVE: _____

6. WHAT RESULT DO YOU WANT FROM THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION?

PLEASE ATTACH ANY CORRESPONDENCE OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION THAT WOULD BE PERTINENT TO THIS COMPLAINT.

Among the many powers and responsibilities of the Grand Jury is the investigation of citizen complaints to assure that all branches of County government are being administered efficiently, honestly and in the best interests of its citizens.

All Complaints submitted to the grand jury will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

The undersigned hereby authorizes the Modoc County Grand Jury to disclose my identity to the person or office against whom or which I have made a complaint

Signature of Complainant

Date