

# SCOPO ROUND TABLE REPORTS

## MARCH/APRIL 2014

### CONTRA COSTA

The ongoing hot topic of discussion is the pending ruling (possibly by April 25, 2014) by Judge Flinn on the Pension Lawsuit, which may impact Terminal Pay for Members as it applies to their final compensation calculations for retirement. Merced and Alameda counties are also included in the lawsuit.

The Department has instituted scenario-based hands on training for Field Deputies and also anticipates arming additional Deputies in the future.

The Chief recently reported that even though Title IV-E funds have been cut, it appears that the Department is still financially stable. With that, there are no anticipated layoffs, which can be attributed to the Department not filling Probation Officer's vacancies.

The Food Bank results are in and the Department has regained the trophy as the number one large department. This attributed to the hard work, generous donations and tireless coordination which led to record-breaking donations.

The Department celebrated Black History month on February 25, 2014, with great food, wonderful entertainment and as a featured speaker, current WBA and Middleweight champ, plus Olympic Gold Medal winner, Andre Ware.

The holidays may be over, but the spirit of giving continues with current fundraisers is the donation of shoes, which the proceeds assist an inner city school's band. An additional project the rank and file staff is collecting donations of clothes "Hall Avenue" for the needy from the Richmond office.

Recently, the PPOACCC forwarded letters of support to the State's Legislature regarding the following Assembly Bills: 2526 (Community Corrections Partnership), 2314 (Peace Officers: Firearms), 2373 (Probation Department Mandates to Be Fully Funded) and 1708 (Probation Peace Officers Being Exempt from Serving Jury Duty).

There are a series of fundraisers planned for Probation Officer Andrea Sosa, who was recently diagnosed with cancer. Our thoughts, prayers and support go out to Andrea.

Congrats to recent retirees Probation Officer Bettye and Probation Counselor Pete Neef. Good Luck in your "next adventures".

## **FRESNO**

We are back in negotiations with County, as a reopener, regarding salary only. Vacancies continue, hiring slow and on-going. Due to several vacancies, the Chief is working with County Personnel. Our specialized field officer's, such as ACT, is switching from AR 15's to Tactical equipped Benelli's.

## **MADERA**

Probation and Institution officers have been working without a contract since December 31, 2013. The last offer made by County negotiators was for a 3.5 % pay reduction and for employees to pay for part of their health insurance. The County has asked us to sign an extension to our past contract till July 1, 2014, so they can complete an audit of their books. We have declined to sign the extension. We expect to start back at negotiations in the next couple months. We have no intentions on agreeing to any cutbacks.

We have hired several new Probation Officers. Most of the people hired are filling positions left vacant from retirees. Caseload numbers are extremely high. The Department seems to be more concerned with new supervisor positions as opposed to hiring line staff positions.\

## **MONO**

Mono County is currently in Contract Negotiations. We have been without a contract since January 1, 2013. The County is looking for concessions equivalent to 5% of our "total compensation" (pay and benefits). We have been frozen without steps since our last contact in 2011. Our negotiation team continues to push for the county to recognize our office's increased responsibility from AB 109 and for our pay to reflect the increase in responsibilities.

Our office continues to move in the direction of evidence based programming. We recently completed a three day training. Leading groups and providing EBP

programming have been added to our case management responsibilities. Our County wants more and better services from our department at a lower pay.

## **SAN DIEGO**

Our department is being scrutinized by County Administration. Due to our massive use of overtime and the failure to hire enough officers the county has imposed a County administrator to oversee how management and the department functions. This administrator is stationed in our administrative office. Hopefully she will guide our department in the right direction. Obviously not hiring enough staff, blaming officers for the usage of overtime and other administrative misadventures was not the right direction.

During our contract negotiations we were able to eliminate mandatory overtime in the institutions, officers were getting burnt out. We still have overtime issues in adult investigations. Officers in investigations were moved to cover AB109 and not replaced. AB109 is still out there and will be in place as long as the funding comes in from the state. One of our PRO's was involved in a chase and then the shooting of a San Diego Police Officer. So much for

We have gone out to meet the chiefs of staff for every board of supervisor in the county. We have educated them on what a probation officer does in the field, institution and in the courts. They come away with an appreciation of what we do. We hope to move forward with this relationship to help our members and their families.

## **SAN FRANCISCO**

We are currently in contract negotiations. We have binding arbitration and have selected an arbitrator and have scheduled arbitration dates. Most of the City unions are also in negotiations. The Public Employee's Committee has made Citywide Health and Wellness proposals. The intentions of these proposals are to increase employee health and wellness and to reduce the costs of health care. At Adult Probation we have hired two supervisors, one from another county. Two Probation officers from Adult Probation have transferred to Juvenile Probation and appear to be happy with their transfers.

## **SAN JOAQUIN**

The Department is continuing to hire deputy probation officers (DPOs) and juvenile detention officers (JDOs) to fill vacancies, and will likely continue to do so until at least the end of this fiscal year. As of this writing, we have six DPOs in PO Core. While the statewide Title IV-E debacle will have an impact on juvenile DPO positions, we still have vacancies elsewhere which need to be filled. Thankfully the County's budget has turned around in the last 18-24 months, and continues to improve looking ahead.

In February, negotiations for a successor MOU began with the County. Since our initial meeting we have had two meetings with multiple meetings scheduled for the month of April. Even though we have several issues to work through, I still have some hope that we'll get a deal done prior to the expiration of the current MOU; which expires June 30, 2014. At our next scheduled meeting, we expect that the County will present several proposals - one asking for increased contributions towards our Retirement COLA Cost Share (capped by the passage of PEPPRA), a second involving increased medical premiums for our members covered by Kaiser, and a third proposal tying future COLAs to the County's annual revenues in lieu of the traditional Consumer Price Index (CPI). Based on the recently presented equity study, we believe we have a good argument to make for equity increases for our DPOs.

Politically, we have been working with the San Joaquin Labor Coalition (SJLC) to assess and interview a number of candidates for local 2014 races. Our Association is in the process of determining who it will support in several upcoming county impacted races.

Last night our Association, in conjunction with other county-based peace officer labor groups, participated in the Stockton Thunder Law & Order Night. Everyone present had a great time supporting the local minor league hockey team, with a portion of the proceeds going to the refurbishment of the San Joaquin County Peace Officer Memorial. We hope to do the same thing again next year.

## **SAN LUIS OBISPO**

Our Juvenile Hall is fully staffed.

Our Adult Division is fully staffed.

Our Juvenile Division has 2 vacancies currently, with a 3rd possibly looming.

Our Chief just recently had his hiring freeze, so to speak, lifted by the board. He can now hire without having to ask permission from the board

Our long term goal as a department is to have a bigger building, as we are just about maxed out on space.

The PRCS/AB 109 impact in our county....good to the prison system, bad to the community

We are seeing a slow effective decrease in funding from the state re: AB 109 as well, with all monies expected to be completely depleted fairly soon, since most went to our jail.

We have a Women's Honor Farm in affect and new construction started on a new wing for our jail.

Eventually, to make more room at the jail, Pre-Trial Releases will take effect. Tentatively, the plan is to have those released on PTR will be supervised by Probation officers.

Shotguns have been approved for our PRCS Team members, Gang and NTF officers.

Our department is beginning to train our field officers on:

Tactical Field Trauma

Field training scenarios (Basic, intermediate, and advanced classes)

We also have 2 full time Field Training Officers, and 2 1/2 time FTO's. 3 of these officers are state certified to train officers on scenarios involving vehicle stops, one on one field contacts, and building entry and clearing. **The scenario classes (Basic course) is open, per our Chief Deputy Reyes, for any other county to attend free of charge. Please contact our training coordinator, Ulianos Brinez for the information (ubrinez@co.slo.ca.us)**

Lastly, our department has enacted a PRCS Extradition Team. Two of our Senior Deputy's have been trained to travel via plane to extradite any PRCS offender who is arrested out of state on an active warrant, at the directive of our Chief/Chief Deputy.

## **SOLANO**

As our Department continues to strive towards reducing recidivism through behavior change, we are on the verge of a complete reorganization of our Adult division. This is creating a good deal of confusion and anxiety among our members, as change is never an easy process. Those like myself who have been with the Department for some time are watching as things go full circle. Where we previously cut our general supervision caseloads, implementing the phone reporting system, we are now reinstating the general supervision caseloads we previously eliminated. This is requiring the shuffling of potentially thousands of cases. The difference, this time, is that we are implementing the use of a wide variety of assessment tools, to better assess risk and needs. The results of these tests will determine which caseloads offenders are assigned to and which services are more likely to lead to changes in their thinking and behavior. We now have two Centers for Positive Change up and running that offer employment services, cognitive behavioral groups, and mental health services. At this time we are utilizing cognitive behavioral groups including the likes of Thinking for Change, R & R II, Aggression Replacement Treatment. Fortunately for us, these changes are leading to the hiring of a fair number of additional staff. In addition to continued efforts to hire Probation Officers, we have an open recruitment for Group Counselors as well.

Our Department is finally moving forward on the arming front with our Chief exploring the idea of arming our PRCS unit as well as our Probation Enforcement Search Team. A committee has been formed, and a consultant hired, to explore options, policies, and processes. That will be a lengthy process, we know, but we look forward to the movement.

This month we welcomed a new Superintendent for our Juvenile Detention Facility, and the Association looks forward to building a positive working relationship with him as he establishes himself within our organization.

One thing we know for certain..... Things are changing.

Stay safe my friends.

## **TRINITY**

We have a new Chief Probation Officer, Hal Ridlehuber. Hal was appointed February 25, 2014 and has almost 20 years with our department.

Title 4E claiming restrictions are putting a serious crimp in the current year's budget and also budgets going forward.

## **VENTURA**

VCPPOA continues its slow, painful negotiations process with the County of Ventura. Our contract expired in June 2013, and very little progress has been made since. Not only is Ventura County last in total compensation of the seven nearby counties surveyed, the County's current proposal only puts us deeper in the hole. To date, there has been very little acknowledgment given for the impacts of Public Safety Realignment; not by the County, nor by our Agency. Nonetheless, VCPPOA continues to press forward. We have recently called for our membership to boycott certain Agency events, with more to come soon. Grievances, a PERB complaint, "cease and desist" demand letters, and other actions have been filed. Other, more impactful, actions will soon follow. With three years of negative management survey results on their backs, our Agency's leadership is at a critical juncture. Not only is our Agency's executive management team not interested in improving working conditions or morale within the Agency, they have been less than supportive at the bargaining table.

Stay tuned for more negotiations drama from Ventura County!

Since the end of 2011, the Probation Agency has been constantly recruiting new Corrections Services Officers (CSOs) and Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs). Unfortunately, even with all their efforts in "streamlining" the hiring process, we are still seeking to fill 25 vacancies. Over the past six months, we have hired 10 staff and lost 5. In fact, one new hire resigned after only two weeks on the job. Was it the pay and benefits? Was it the job expectations? Was it the increased risks and responsibilities? Was it the negative working environment? We may never know. What we do know is that our officers are seriously undervalued for the services that they provide and that our Agency executives do not seem to care.

Lastly, on a more positive note, Chief Probation Officer Mark Varela has seen the need to provide our officers with a less-than-lethal use of force option and has authorized the purchase of Tasers. While this decision will begin with a pilot project for our Armed Unit officers, VCPPOA is hopeful that the trend will soon transition to our other Field Unit officers. The initial selected officers just completed the necessary training in order to qualify and carry Tasers. Thanks go out to Chief Varela for providing an additional level of officer safety equipment for our officers.