

Grand jury says crime county's worst problem

Crime is the major problem facing Santa Cruz county today and law enforcement agencies should be given top budget priority for the money to cope with it, the grand jury stated in its report released Friday.

The jury's law enforcement committee warned that there has been a "dramatic up-surge in crime...and without a substantial increase in funds our law enforcement agencies will be unable to cope with it."

The committee's report was based upon a study of the following county offices: sheriff-coroner, district attorney, rehabilitation center, juvenile hall and probation department.

No criticism was leveled at any of the departments, although "numerous complaints from citizens were investigated."

The committee stated the crime rate in 1970, compared with earlier years, parallels "the national trend towards a general breakdown of law and order within our society."

Drug use was cited as one of the major contributing elements to the rise in crime. The committee said that in over 75 per cent of all arrests made in 1970, drugs were either found at the scene or the person arrested was under the influence of drugs.

They added that "43 per cent of our current inmate population is attributable to the misuse of drugs."

(Drug use, according to another committee's report, is one of the county's significant public health problems for which

Guilty plea to marijuana charge

Victoria Irene Hatch, 27, of 2-1610 East Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor marijuana possession charge, at a hearing last week in Santa Cruz Municipal Court, and sentencing was set for February 26.

Another charge of being drunk in public was dismissed, "in the interests of justice."

there is inadequate personnel and money to combat.)

Sheriff Doug James, who got into hot water with the county board of supervisors this week for unauthorized expenditures of overtime pay and for asking for additional deputies to staff the antiquated county jail, got considerable sympathy for his problems.

Both the law enforcement committee and the public buildings and properties committee recommended the county start planning immediately for a

Bologna theft brings \$65 fine

Walter Dean Rhine, of 3840 Cherryvale Ave., Soquel, pleaded guilty to a charge of petty theft and was fined \$65 at a hearing in Santa Cruz Municipal Court Monday last week.

Rhine was arrested after taking a 46-cent package of bologna from Kings Market in Capitola last month.

new county jail and sheriff's office complex.

The law enforcement committee also urged supervisors to allocate additional funds immediately for two full-time jail deputies on a 24-hour basis, saying that one officer alone could not possibly handle a crisis such as an attempted jail break, without putting his physical well being in jeopardy.

This was echoed by the other committee which stated there are many areas in the jail where a prisoner might escape notice by the jailer for a long period of time. A closed circuit television system was suggested to monitor the "hidden-areas".

The jail also lacks proper fire exits and a "general uncleanliness and odors are

evident" in the cell block area, due to the old structure and inadequate ventilation, the committee added.

The general public, reporters and criminals were lumped together, in the law enforcement committee's recommendation that "scramblers" be purchased for the sheriff's two-way radios.

"This communication system can be monitored by anyone through the purchase of an inexpensive radio. This enables the general public, reporters and criminals to know where patrol cars are going, what investigation is being carried out, and who is being

The sheriff also got some backing for equipment he has asked for and had cut out of his budget in the past.

questioned....this possibly interferes with effective operation of the department..."

(During the Ohta murder investigation, one reporter's radio was confiscated by a sheriff's officer, but was returned a few days later.)

More patrol cars were suggested by the public buildings and properties committee: "...the county should give the law enforcement agencies all of the best equipment which they need in carrying out their duties. Trying to save a dollar where a life is involved, doesn't make sense."

The law enforcement committee drew the economic line, however, after its investigation of the often proposed sheriff's substation at the Watsonville

Courthouse annex.

"The estimated cost of this operation per year would be \$387,000, which is equal to four full-time patrol cars serving the entire county," the committee said.

Opening the station would require additional money for a new building or enlarging the old one and a complete set of duplicate records; the substation is "not economically feasible at this time," the committee stated.

No other major recommendations were made regarding the law enforcement agencies, although the law enforcement committee noted the district attorney's office "is also faced with an increase in criminal cases.

"In 1969, 902 files were opened,

compared with 1203 in 1970; preliminary hearings increased from 454 to 601; superior court jury trials were up 40 per cent and mid-meanor jury trials were up 38 per cent."

The committee praised the D.A.'s office for its "high degree of professionalism, evident throughout the office," and added that cooperation between it and the sheriff's office was "outstanding."

In conclusion, it was recommended "the board of supervisors appoint a permanent enforcement committee supervisors, lay people enforcement personnel and county government to make a concerted effort to reverse the rate in our county

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