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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement

The 2016-2017 Ventura County Grand Jury inquired into the condition and management of the detention facilities in Ventura County. The Grand Jury inspected the Main Jail, Todd Road Jail, the East Valley Jail, all 10 city holding facilities, and two juvenile facilities.

The Grand Jury concluded the Ventura County Sheriff's Office as well as city police departments are still short of achieving their common goal to provide Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to all patrol-based officers, custody deputies, and dispatchers. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff increase the availability of 40-hour CIT training by increasing class size and/or adding additional classes.

The Grand Jury concluded overcrowding exists in both the Main Jail and Todd Road Jail. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff continue to advise the County Board of Supervisors on the overcrowded conditions at the jails and the impact of realignment and new sentencing mandates.

The Grand Jury concluded the financial situation in Port Hueneme has resulted in staff shortages. With limited staffing, the safety of citizens and officers could be compromised. This situation is aggravated when sworn officers are required to work overtime as dispatchers or while performing required arrestee transport and booking. The Grand Jury recommends the Port Hueneme City Council consider the feasibility of contracting with a neighboring law enforcement agency for selected services, such as dispatch and arrestee transport and booking.

The Grand Jury concluded body cameras have become a law enforcement best practice. The Simi Valley Police Department is the only city law enforcement agency in the County not using body cameras. The Grand Jury recommends the Simi Valley City Council approve funds to implement a body camera program for sworn officers.

The complete report may be accessed at www.ventura.org/grand-jury; click on the Annual Reports tab and select "Fiscal Year 2016-2017."