



## **Texas Commission on Jail Standards**

### **2008 Annual Report**

*Empowering local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas.*

**Adan Muñoz, Jr.**

**Executive Director**

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**TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS**  
**CALENDAR YEAR 2008**  
**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR,**  
**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR AND SPEAKER**  
**OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF TEXAS**

**JANUARY 31, 2009**

This report is made pursuant to Chapter 511, Section 511.015 Government Code and covers activities of calendar year 2008.

**I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards is to empower local government to provide safe, secure, and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas.

During its regular session of 1975, the 64<sup>th</sup> Legislature enacted House Bill 272 creating the Texas Commission on Jail Standards in an effort to end federal court intervention into county jail matters and return jail control to state and local jurisdictions. Formerly through Title 81 of the Civil Statutes and currently through Chapters 499 and 511 of the Government Code, the state has evinced a strong commitment to improving conditions in the jails by granting the Commission the authority and responsibility to promulgate and enforce minimum standards for jail construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation. Related duties and rules are set forth in Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code, Title 37 of the Administrative Code, and Minimum Jail Standards.

The Commission serves the citizens of Texas with programs and services for the custody, care, treatment, and supervision of adult inmates in county jails. Although we retain the responsibility to regulate privately operated municipal facilities, most of our activities are oriented toward county functions. Our principal operations include on-site inspections of jails to verify compliance with Standards, review of proposed construction and renovation plans to assess conformity to Standards, provision of jail management technical assistance and training, administration of inmate population reports and audits, resolution of prisoner grievances, and various other activities relating to policy development and enforcement. Contrary to popular belief, the Commission does not have authority over the state prison system or juvenile detention facilities. We do have facilities under our authority which contract with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and federal systems to house state and federal inmates. We also regulate any Texas facility housing out-of-state inmates.

We work closely with city, county, and state government officials in our duties to enforce jail standards. Primary relationships exist with county judges,

commissioners, sheriffs and private management companies to provide consultation and technical assistance; review and comment on plans for construction, modification, and renovation of jails; and regular inspections of jails to ensure compliance with state law. Secondary relationships extend to architectural and criminal justice professional associations and to regulatory agencies concerned with fire safety, legal issues, civil liberties, health and mental health. Jail inmates awaiting criminal trial or administrative hearings, serving misdemeanor sentences, or awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice after felony convictions benefit from our efforts by being housed in safe and sanitary environments. We provide a service to the citizens of Texas communities through our Standards, which mandate secure jail design and operation, effective inmate management, use of accepted correctional methods, and programming based on available resources.

## II. ORGANIZATION

Our policy-making body consists of nine Commission members appointed by the governor to staggered six-year terms expiring on January 31 of odd-numbered years. The Commission consists of a sheriff from a county with a population of more than 35,000, a sheriff from a county with a population of 35,000 or less, a county judge, a county commissioner, a practitioner of medicine, and four private citizens, at least one of whom is from a county with a population of 35,000 or less. The chairperson is designated by the governor, with the vice-chairperson elected by the membership. Our Commission holds regular meetings each calendar quarter as required. Special meetings are held as needed. Responsibilities of the Commissioners include promulgation, adoption, revision, amendment, and repeal of rules; enforcement of rules through remedial action or action in district court; and consideration of applications for variances to minimum standards. Members are not compensated for their work except for allowable travel and per diem expenses.

Commission members as of December 31, 2008 were as follows:

<u>Member</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Sheriff David Gutierrez (Chair)	Lubbock	2009
Irene A. Armendariz	El Paso	2009
Albert L. Black	Austin	2011
Stanley D. Egger	Abilene	2011
Judge Donna Klaeger	Burnet	2013
Jerry Lowry	New Caney	2013
Larry May	Sweetwater	2013
Michael M. Seale, M.D.	Houston	2011
Sheriff Tam Terry	Panhandle	2009

At the end of 2008, the staff consisted of the following positions:

Executive Director	Exempt
Manager I	B13
Program Specialist III	B11
Staff Services Officer II	B11
Program Specialist II	B10
Network Specialist II	B10
Inspector VI	B10
Planner I	B9
Program Specialist I	B9
Research Specialist II	B9
Budget Analyst	B8
Inspector V (3)	B8
Project Design Asst.	B8
Administrative Tech II	A11
Clerk	A4

The Commission on Jail Standards is headquartered in Austin, Texas.

### **III. AGENCY FUNDING & OBJECTIVES**

In order to carry out its mission, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards relies primarily on appropriations by the legislature from the state General Revenue Fund. In addition to these appropriated funds, the agency is allowed to charge a fee in order to cover the cost of inspecting facilities housing 30% or more non-Texas sentenced inmates or for conducting a re-inspection if the areas of non-compliance have not been corrected. These inspection fees combined with appropriated receipts from the sale of manuals account for only 2% of the agency budget.

While each of the following strategies contributes to the regulatory function of the agency, the inspection process provides the monitoring capability necessary to identify counties in need of planning or management assistance and to initiate appropriate enforcement action.

In order to meet agency objectives, each strategy is allocated a specific number of full-time equivalent positions.

#### **A. Jail Standards**

Maintaining constitutional standards is the primary goal of the agency. The jail standards process reviews and amends minimum standards for the purpose of building and maintaining safe, secure, and efficient jail operations. National research, statewide input, and case law are among the resources considered when developing or revising the Standards.

Proposed revisions to the Standards, after Commission approval, are published in the Texas Register for public comment. These comments are reviewed in order to ascertain whether revision would be appropriate. The final version, whether altered from the original or not, is again presented to the Commission for approval and again published in the Texas Register.

## **B. Inspection**

Inspection activities, to which 7.4 full-time equivalent positions are assigned, consist of fair and impartial monitoring and enforcing compliance of adopted rules and procedures. This objective includes development and implementation of a uniform inspection process. Uniform inspection reports and procedures for inspecting jail facilities are developed under the provision of Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code and Chapter 511 of the Government Code.

All operating jail facilities are inspected at least annually. Newly constructed or renovated jails require an occupancy inspection, or inspections, to ensure that construction was completed in compliance with Minimum Jail Standards. Not less than once each fiscal year, at least one announced or unannounced inspection for each facility under Commission jurisdiction is performed, inquiring into security, control, conditions, and compliance with the established Minimum Standards. In addition to regular inspections, special inspections may be conducted to determine compliance. The inspection includes a walk-through of the facility and a review of the books, records, data, documents, and accounts pertaining to the facility and the inmates confined within.

Following a review of the Inspector's report by the Executive Director, facilities that have been found to be in compliance are issued a certificate of compliance. If deficient items are noted during the inspection, a report is filed by the Inspector and a notice of noncompliance is issued. Counties are provided a reasonable time to respond to the notice and to initiate corrective action.

Special inspections may be conducted on facilities that have either been identified as high-risk or found to be in noncompliance. These unannounced inspections may also be performed when county officials indicate that the noncompliant items have been corrected.

## **C. Juvenile Justice Survey**

The Commission on Jail Standards has responsibility for two separate but related activities concerning juveniles in adult jails and lockups.

The agency continues to have statutory responsibility for collecting and processing the juvenile jail logs containing information on all juveniles held in secure confinement in adult jails and lockups. That report is collected annually from each sheriff's department and each municipal lockup.

The agency also continues to offer technical assistance and is responsible for coordinating on-site visits at the request of the Governor's Office-Criminal Justice Division through a contract provider. Information provided by the survey and on-site visits are used to determine compliance with the laws concerning the handling of juveniles in adult jails and lockups in the state. Results of the survey are reported to the Criminal Justice Division, which is responsible for monitoring the state's compliance with the Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

In addition to the activities outlined above, the Commission is responsible for identifying and compiling a directory of all adult jails and lockups with a juvenile detention, correctional, or holdover center collocated in the same building or on the same grounds. The Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act provides that states receiving federal funds under the Act must comply with certain requirements concerning juvenile detention facilities and adult jails and lockups collocated within the same building or on the same grounds. In addition to utilizing a contracted specialist to conduct the annual survey, the agency allocates 0.1 full-time equivalent positions to administer the grant and to provide technical and administrative support.

#### **D. Construction Plan Review**

Construction technical assistance, to which 3.6 full-time equivalent positions are assigned, provides consultation and technical assistance to local governments for the most efficient, effective, and economic means of jail construction that meet minimum standards.

Comprehensive facility needs analyses, which include population projections and historical data regarding incarceration trends as well as other pertinent factors, determine incarceration needs of the counties. The counties are furnished recommendations regarding the need for additional or improved jail space or alternatives thereto, based upon the analyses.

Reviews and comments on construction documents for construction projects are also conducted by staff. This includes a formal plan review with design professionals, consultants, county officials and sheriffs. Plan documents are reviewed at three phases of completion: schematic design, design development and construction documents. At each phase, items requiring resolution are noted and satisfied prior to proceeding to the next phase. This process assists in ensuring that counties understand jail requirements; it also provides more effective and economic jails that, upon completion, will comply with Minimum Jail Standards.

#### **E. Management Consultation**

The jail management objective is met through the allocation of 4.0 full-time equivalent positions. Aiding counties in meeting Standards, Commission staff provide ongoing assistance through the review, comment, and approval of standard-qualified jail operational plans in several areas including the classification of inmates, health services, sanitation, inmate discipline and

grievances, recreation and exercise, education and rehabilitation, emergencies, and inmate rights and privileges such as telephone usage, visitation, correspondence and religious activities.

Staff also provides jail management training and consultation to counties. This includes clarifying Minimum Jail Standards as well as establishing procedures and documentation consistent with the standards. This assistance includes working with county representatives in the Austin office, on the phone, through written correspondence and by conducting on-site visits and regional training classes. Oral presentations to appropriate groups are also frequently conducted.

As part of technical assistance, staffing analyses are conducted to assist counties in operating safe and secure facilities. Staff reviews facility design, facility capacity, county needs and jail operations, among other issues, when conducting staffing analyses.

#### **F. Auditing**

The auditing objective, to which 2.0 full-time equivalent positions are assigned, is met through collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data concerning inmate populations, felony backlog, and jail operational costs. Counties are assisted in completing their jail population reports, and technical assistance is provided. Oral presentations and one-on-one technical assistance activities are also conducted, as circumstances require. Statistical data is collected, analyzed, and provided to state and local agencies in planning and predicting trends in incarceration in the state.

### **IV. FINDINGS**

#### **A. Changes to Standards**

In 2008, there was one change to Minimum Jail Standards. The change adopted was to clarify imprecise wording in Jail Standard 277.2-Inmate Laundry. Standards require that inmates receive a change of clothing at least once a week. The word *exchange* was substituted for the word *change* so that inmates will receive an immediate exchange of clothing.

#### **B. Jail Inspections**

During the year, 250 annual jail inspections were conducted. Legislation has exempted certain private jails from annual inspection since Sept. 1, 2003, and this number may fluctuate during the course of any given year as conditions warrant. Staff also completed 110 special inspections on high-risk and/or non-compliant jails during 2008. Out of the combined 360 inspections, 176 were unannounced, representing 49% of all inspections. Despite a rising number of constructed jail beds, the Commission continues to operate with four jail inspectors, who conduct annual, special, and re-inspections of Texas jails.



26 occupancy inspections on completed construction projects were conducted during 2008.

### **1. Compliant Counties**

As of January 1, 2008, 212 of 251 jails (84%) complied with Minimum Jail Standards. As of December 31, 2008, 207 of 248 jails were certified, comprising 83% of the county and private facilities under our regulatory review. Three facilities fell out of the Commission's purview during 2008.

### **2. Noncompliant Counties**

On December 31, 2008, 41 jails were in a status of noncompliance, representing 17% of the facilities on the inspection list. At the end of 2007, there were 39 jails, or 16% in noncompliance. Although the number of non-compliant jails decreased, the percentage increased 1.0% due to the removal of three facilities from the inspection list. Notices of non-compliance are issued in three categories: Life Safety, Management, and Structural. In most instances, the counties receiving the notices have taken positive and responsible action toward eliminating cited deficiencies to meet the requirements of state law. Counties, which were not believed to be acting expeditiously to resolve deficiencies, were requested to appear before the Commission to address the corrective action necessary in order to prevent remedial action by the Commission. These meetings resulted in firm commitments aimed at eliminating the deficiencies from the counties concerned. Commission staff conducts monthly risk assessment reviews of noncompliant counties to assess the progress and status of these facilities as they move toward compliance with Minimum Jail Standards.

### **3. Closed Jails**

Presently, 17 counties have closed jails. The following counties opted to board their few inmates in an adjacent county rather than maintaining their own facilities:

Baylor, Borden, Briscoe, Coke, Concho, Cottle, Floyd, Hartley, Irion, Jeff Davis, Kenedy, Kent, King, Loving, McMullen, Motley, Throckmorton.

### **C. Juvenile Justice Survey**

During the calendar year, the Commission's contracted service provider reviewed all adult jails and lock-ups in the State of Texas for compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. This is accomplished through the review of juvenile jail logs to ensure that adult facilities are reporting juveniles held securely longer than six hours, status offenders held securely, and juveniles are sight-and-sound separated from adult offenders. The actual number of facilities may fluctuate during any given year and from year-to-year; for most of 2008, this figure is most accurately represented as 644.

#### **D. Construction Plan Review**

Forty-four construction/renovation documents were reviewed in 2008. Several counties are embarking upon renovations of ageing facilities, while others are planning new facilities to replace well-worn facilities or to add additional beds to meet local needs.

##### **Construction Completed**

Eight Counties opened new facilities during the year. These projects represented a net gain of 2,365 additional beds due to the fact that several of the counties replaced an existing facility.

1.	Bexar County Minimum Security	96
2.	Montgomery (P) Detention Center	1007
3.	Lee County Jail*	107
4.	Maverick (P) Detention Center	61
5.	Yoakum County Jail*	48
6.	Nueces (P) Coastal Bend Detention Center	325
7.	Garza County Jail*	96
8.	Childress County Jail*	96

\*Indicates the county closed their existing facility after completion of new jail.

##### **Major Renovations/Additions Completed**

Eight counties completed major renovations or additions during the year, adding 963 beds. The counties were.

1.	Bastrop County Addition	194
2.	Matagorda County Addition	66
3.	Collin County Addition	72
4.	Harris County Wallisville Substation	0
5.	Parker County Addition	285
6.	San Jacinto County Addition	91
7.	Henderson County Addition	255
8.	Denton County Court Holding Renovation	0

All construction and renovation/additions projects totaled 3,399 beds.

##### **Jails under Construction or Planning**

At the end of 2008, 43 counties were involved in planning or construction on 49 projects. These projects are expected to result in an additional 8,119 beds in 2009. This figure is an estimate based on projects identified on January 1, 2009 and scheduled for completion by December 31, 2009; other projects identified during the year may cause this number to be adjusted further. In addition to plan reviews, the Planning Department completed 10 Facility Needs Analyses, which assisted counties in determining their future jail needs

## **E. Management Consultation**

Technical assistance on jail matters such as alternative programs, population control, structural issues, life safety, and overall operations was provided to county officials throughout the year. Although telephone calls are not routinely logged, it is estimated that several thousand telephone calls were received during the year for technical assistance regarding jail management and operations. In addition, eight in-house management consultations were conducted at the Austin office in 2008. 280 management consultations were conducted on-site with County Judges, Commissioner's Courts, and Sheriffs concerning the most economical and feasible way to achieve compliance with state law, and in some cases, federal court orders. Finally, 12 counties received assistance with analyses of jail staffing needs, and 1136 operational plans were reviewed in 2008.

The Commission continued the program of technical assistance to jails on management related issues through regional jail management workshops during the calendar year. The workshops were developed under the direction of the Commission's Education Committee to provide training and credits afforded by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education.

Municipalities continued to request information and assistance on jail construction or renovation. While municipal jails other than those privately operated under authority of Chapter 351, Local Government Code, are not required to conform to Texas Minimum Jail Standards, municipalities continue to show confidence in the Commission to provide them unbiased information and guidance upon which to base decisions concerning construction or operation.

## **F. Auditing**

### **Changes in Capacity and Population**

On January 1, 2008, jails were operating at 77.89% of capacity with a population of 67,885 and a capacity of 87,153. During the year, the population continued to increase, ending at 68,012 on December 1, 2008. By December 2008, jail capacity decreased to 85,562. On December 1, 2008, all Texas jails were collectively operating at 79.49% of capacity.

Texas counties continue to house out-of-state inmates. On December 1, 2008, four local facilities were housing 377 inmates for Idaho and New Mexico. The number of federal inmates held by facilities under the Commission's purview decreased from 7,921 on January 1, 2008 to 7,380 on

December 1, 2008. The local population increased from 55,912 on January 1, 2008 to 56,921 on December 1, 2008. This represents an increase of 1.8%. Additionally, in 2008 jails continued housing convicted state inmates through contract with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Four private facilities housed a total of 1,884 state inmates on December 1, 2008.

**County Jail Population by Offense Type\***

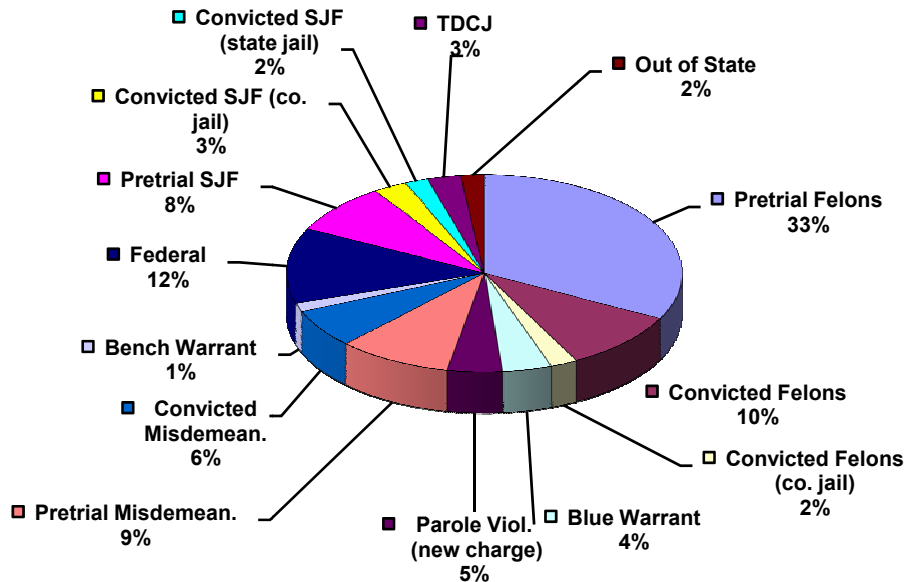
	<b>12/2005</b>	<b>12/2006</b>	<b>12/2007</b>	<b>12/2008</b>
Pretrial Felons	31.65%	31.44%	32.82%	37.15%
Convicted Felons	10.62%	9.38%	8.77%	7.90%
Convicted Felons (Co. jail)	2.27%	2.13%	2.24%	2.081%
Blue Warrant	4.54%	3.86%	3.60%	3.81%
Parole Viol. (New charge)	4.57%	4.34%	4.39%	4.09%
Pretrial Misdemeanants	9.99%	8.99%	9.12%	9.92%
Convicted Misdemeanants	6.75%	6.07%	6.20%	5.45%
Bench Warrant	1.66%	1.36%	1.35%	1.47%
Federal†	11.27%	11.97%	11.65%	10.85%
Pretrial SJF	8.17%	7.96%	8.16%	7.66%
Convicted SJF (Co. jail)	2.37%	2.62%	2.46%	2.14%
Convicted SJF (State jail)	2.16%	1.86%	2.24%	1.83%

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\* This representation does not include all offense categories so totals may not equal 100%

† This only includes those federal inmates in facilities under purview of the Commission on Jail Standards. Under 511.0094 Government Code, facilities housing only federal inmates do not fall under Commission purview.

## Texas Jail Population January 1, 2009



### G. Additional Services

#### 1. Research

During the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, the Commission's research staff researched legislation and assisted with agency presentations for use in testimony at committee hearings and training sessions. Tracking legislation and preparing correspondence were primary functions of research staff during the legislative session.

Research staff actively participated in meetings and presentations with other professionals and academics to address the challenges of incarcerated individuals with mental health issues. Staff represented the Commission on Jail Standards at advisory meetings of the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments.

An ongoing function of research staff is to answer questions that local jails might have about recent legislation, Jail Standards, statutes, court cases, and best practices. This continued in 2008, with numerous questions being answered, as well as relevant statutes, court cases, and Attorney General Opinions being researched and provided to the jails. In addition to handling numerous technical assistance and information requests, research staff also provided training on legislative matters and legal developments to county officials, jail administrators, and others in local government.

## 2. Inmate Complaints

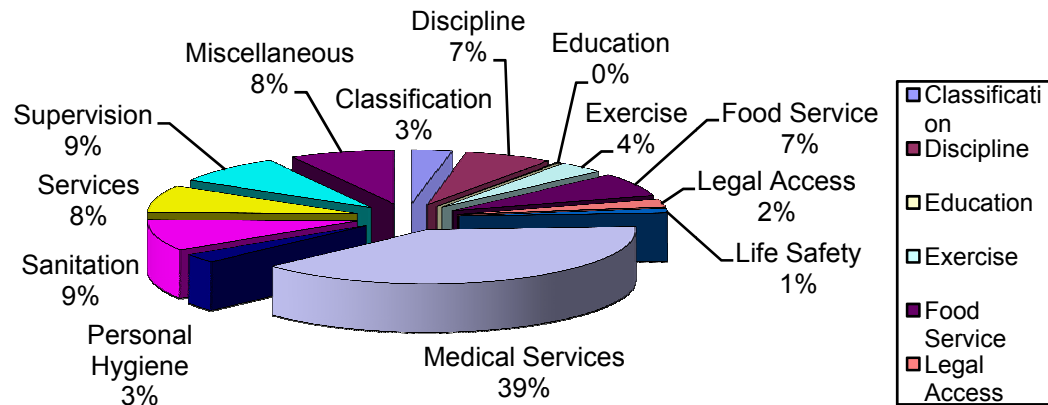
The Commission received 1,191 written requests for inmate assistance or grievance investigation in 2008, with 468 requiring a written response by county officials, and possible action by Commission staff. Consistent with previous years, the category most frequently cited in grievances requiring a formal reply was medical services. For 2008, Medical Services constituted 39% of these grievances.

The following chart illustrates the frequencies (from highest to lowest) of complaints received for 13 categories (Note: combined numbers exceed total number of complaints requiring a formal reply due to letters containing more than one complaint category). In cases where more than one complaint category is addressed in a letter, the three most significant complaints are reported in their respective categories.

### INMATE COMPLAINTS

Medical Services:	268
Sanitation	64
Supervision	58
Services	56
Misc	55
Food Service	48
Discipline	46
Exercise:	24
Classification	21
Personal Hygiene	19
Legal Access	16
Life Safety:	9
Education:	1
Total:	<u>685</u>

## Inmate Complaints by Category for End of Year 2008



468 complaint letters required no response, were beyond the purview of the Commission, or were returned to the sender with instructions to utilize the facility's established jail grievance system. Inquiry into the remainder of the requests either alleviated conditions in need of correction or established the lack of truth in the allegations, and thus aided in eliminating frivolous litigation. Occasionally, areas of concern were addressed with the individual sheriffs involved and recommendations were made to preclude future allegations.

### 3. Variances

Five variances were approved, no variances were canceled, and six extensions of variances were granted during 2008. Each request was individually reviewed and acted upon by the Commission during the year's four regular meetings. (The Commission may grant reasonable variances, except that no variance may be granted to permit unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions).

## V. 2008 IN REVIEW

### A. Staff Changes

There was one new hire during 2008.

### B. Staff Turnover

One staff member left the Commission during 2008.

### **C. Training Initiatives**

2008 was another successful year for jail training efforts at the Commission. The staff has continued to select timely topics and develop a solid curriculum for the training programs developed in 2001, as evidenced by the positive response all training sessions have received.

The Practitioners' Series Training called the 'The Basics' was conducted at 6 regional sites during September and October. Practitioners who are widely regarded as experts in their field of jail management served as instructors for this training alongside Commission staff, using materials prepared by the agency. This program not only educates those attending the training, but also develops the presentation and leadership skills of the instructors themselves. In 2008, there were 189 participants at the six training sessions, which represents an increase from the previous year's attendance.

Since creating and maintaining a responsible classification system that remains an essential part of county jail management, Objective Jail Classification training by Commission staff continues to be offered to the counties, both on-site and at headquarters. In addition, Commission staff has continued its training for Population and Paper Ready Reports for any county that requests assistance, both on-site and at headquarters. Since this training started in 2007, the number of inaccurate reports has decreased significantly. However, with 69 newly elected sheriff's taking office on January 1, 2009, we anticipate that the need for additional Classification, Population, and Paper Ready training will increase significantly.

Finally, Commission staff conducted a training session regarding jail escapes at the annual Texas Jail Association Conference in Austin, Texas. In addition, "The Courtroom Challenge" game was conducted at the Conference as well. Both presentations received positive evaluations from the attendees and participants alike.

### **D. Legislative Actions**

In 2008, as mandated by statute every twelve years, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards underwent Sunset Review to determine the need and effectiveness of the Commission. Out of the evaluation, Sunset Commission staff recommended that the Commission be continued as an independent state agency. Sunset Commission staff also proposed three recommendations that would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Commission in three areas, risk-based assessment of facilities, improving information sharing, and streamlining complaint procedures.



## **E. Attorney General Action**

On June 24, 2008, the Commission submitted a Request for Opinion to the Attorney General seeking clarification on whether a bailiff may supervise an inmate who is temporarily incarcerated in a court holding cell. The opinion is still under consideration.

## **VI. SUMMARY AND FORECAST**

The year 2008 marked another successful year providing services for Texas counties. An increase in jail beds to be inspected, the increasing jail population, and the ability to maintain a level of service to the counties to prevent federal intervention in the local jails continues to present a challenge. For the first time in several years, the agency was able to meet or exceed each of its objectives in the areas of annual inspections, on site consultations and population report audits. This was accomplished at no additional cost to the agency and demonstrates the necessity of an increased inspection staff. The number of jails in compliance though has remained somewhat static and increasing that number and decreasing the number of jails in non-compliance due to management related deficiencies remains a top priority in this coming year.

As part of the ongoing effort to improve the Commission's customer service, two Strategic Planning Sessions were held in 2008. These sessions allowed the Commission to receive comments from the sheriffs, county judges, and other interested and affected parties on the mission of the agency. It is a principle of this agency to be as transparent as possible, in order to effectively achieve our goals and strategies. State government should work in conjunction with local government on a common goal to reduce liability to county jails.

Illegal immigration and the impact on county jails remains a significant and divisive issue as demonstrated by the number interim legislative hearings that occurred in 2008. At the request of each committee chair, the Executive Director and staff provided testimony and served as resource witnesses as needed. As the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative session commences, all indications are that it will once again be a major topic of discussion and could drastically impact local government.

The most significant event affecting this agency was the review by the Sunset Commission this past year and into the 81st Legislative session, which determined that the agency should be continued as a independent commission.

As Executive Director, it is my responsibility to ensure that we continue to improve on each mandated strategy and provide the necessary documentation that clearly proves that the Texas Commission on Jail Standards should remain an independent agency and funded appropriately for continued success.