



Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

For business meeting on April 29, 2011

Title	Agenda Item Type
Court Facilities: Location of New Inyo County Courthouse	Action Required
Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected	Effective Date
None	April 29, 2011
Recommended by	Date of Report
Lee Willoughby, Director	April 13, 2011
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Executive Summary

Determining the location of the New Inyo County Courthouse is controversial as defined by the Judicial Council's *Site Selection and Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities*. The Administrative Director of the Courts requests that the Judicial Council determine the location for the Inyo project in accordance with that policy. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) analyzed this matter in 2010, solicited public comment on that analysis, and recommends the location in the Bishop area because it improves access to justice for the majority of Inyo County residents.

Recommendation

The Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council determine that the New Inyo County Courthouse be located in the Bishop area and direct staff to proceed with selection and acquisition of a site in accordance with this determination.

Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council's site policy, adopted in 2007 and updated in August 2009,¹ outlines goals and principles for siting new courthouses, describes the roles of participants, sets forth site evaluation guidelines, and describes the process of site selection and acquisition.

The site policy also provides a process for identifying and resolving "controversial sites," as defined here:

Section 2. Definitions

2.3 Controversial Sites: Sites or matters related to site selection and/or acquisition for new court facilities, which include unresolved issues or disputes about criteria, cost, location, potential environmental impacts, or any other feature of a specific site or sites, which are raised by members of the staff of the AOC, the Project Advisory Group, the court or courts involved in the project, the local or regional jurisdictions, the public or private business entities.

AOC staff brought the issue of the location of the New Inyo County Courthouse (referred to here and in the attached location options report as "the Inyo project") to the Administrative Director of the Courts, who agreed that based on news media coverage, Internet communications, and letters to the court and the AOC on this issue, the siting of the Inyo project was controversial and should be directed to the Judicial Council in accordance with section 3 of the site policy:

Section 3. Decision Making Authority—Role of the Administrative Director of the Courts

3.1.6. Refer to the Judicial Council the approval decision for the selection and acquisition of those recommended sites that the Administrative Director of the Courts, in his or her discretion, with input from the AOC staff, determines are controversial, as that term is defined in Section 2 or as otherwise required or deemed appropriate by the Administrative Director of the Courts, or by the Executive and Planning Committee of the Judicial Council.

The location of the Inyo project is the first controversial site recommendation to be brought to the council for a new superior court courthouse.² Since 2007 and excluding donations and renovations of existing buildings, the AOC has completed site selection and acquisition for

¹ View the current policy at www.courts.ca.gov/xbcr/cc/site_selection_acquisition_policy.pdf.

² Before the adoption of the site policy, the council in April 2005 determined that the site of the new courthouse for the Fourth Appellate District, Division Three, would be in Santa Ana. The Judicial Council report outlining the two site options is available online at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/reports/0405itemd.pdf and the meeting minutes at www.courts.ca.gov/4565.htm.

approximately 18 projects without the need for council action on a controversial site. Sites have also been selected for 15 additional projects anticipated to move forward and be acquired without need for council siting decisions.

In October 2008 and based on AOC staff recommendations, the Judicial Council took three actions regarding court facilities in Inyo County. The first two actions related to the routine annual update to the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan (the plan), the prioritized list of projects from which the council selects courthouse construction projects for funding. The priorities are determined by applying the *Prioritization Methodology for Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects* adopted by the council in August 2006.³ The categories of priority according to that methodology are Immediate Need, Critical Need, High Need, Medium Need, and Low Need.

The first council action in 2008 was to change the priority group for the New Bishop Courthouse project from Medium Need to High Need, based on a confirmation of overcrowding of the existing courthouse. The council's next action was to add a second project to the plan for the Superior Court of Inyo County, for a new courthouse in Independence. This project, which was prioritized as a Critical Need project, had not been added to prior plans because the county had already been planning to build a new courthouse in Independence—a plan it did not follow through with for a variety of reasons. With these actions, the plan contained 153 court construction projects.

The third Inyo-related action of the council was to select 41 projects from the plan's list of 153 projects for funding by SB 1407. Of the 41 projects, only one project was selected for the Superior Court of Inyo County.

Rationale for Recommendation

Background of the Superior Court of Inyo County

Inyo County is a large, sparsely populated, and rural county located in the Owens Valley of the Eastern Sierra. The county is California's second-largest county in area and the third-largest county in the United States. The county's permanent population is approximately 17,000–18,000. As many as 5.5 million visitors annually travel through the county on U.S. Route 395, the only north-south highway in the county and the main highway between the populous Southern California metropolitan areas and the vacation destinations of Inyo and Mono Counties, including the Mammoth Lakes-area ski resorts.

The Bishop area in the northern part of the county is where nearly 80 percent of the county's population resides, with the remaining 20 percent living in the Independence area or the southern part of the county. It is likely that the Bishop area will remain the population center of the county for many decades due to residential development constraints, such as limited availability of

³ The prioritization methodology was updated to conform to SB 1407 in October 2008, and the current version is available at www.courts.ca.gov/xbcr/cc/methodology-080124.pdf.

private land for development, physical and environmental conditions, and low population growth.

The Superior Court of Inyo County is served by three judicial officers⁴ and currently operates from three facilities in two cities, Bishop and Independence, located 42 miles apart along U.S. Route 395. None of the current court facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the court.

In Bishop, the court operates in approximately 4,340 square feet of leased space in the former municipal court located at the City Hall building (a former school). There is only one courtroom in Bishop, and the clerk's office is very small and limits the ability of the court to accept paper filings.

Independence, the county seat and home to 600–700 residents, is served by three courtrooms—two in the county-owned historic courthouse and one in a leased facility secured by the county to provide an ADA-accessible courtroom. The court occupies approximately 7,400 usable square feet between the two Independence facilities. The County of Inyo occupies the majority of available space in the historic courthouse, which was constructed in 1921 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Designed by William H. Weeks, one of the leading architects on the Pacific Coast at the time, the building is the most symbolic structure in Inyo County and a source of pride for the community.

The court provides a range of court services at each existing location in Independence and Bishop, handling general jurisdiction and limited jurisdiction matters, including criminal, civil, family, and juvenile cases. Currently, the court hears and decides cases on a nearly daily basis in both Independence and Bishop. Virtually all in-custody criminal proceedings, including arraignments and felony trials, are heard in Independence because of the proximity of the Independence court facilities to the Inyo County Jail. More jury trials are held in Independence than in Bishop for several reasons, primarily to prevent the sole Bishop courtroom from being occupied by a lengthy jury trial resulting in delays to other court proceedings.

Due to document storage space and staff limitations in Bishop, the court's historic and consistent practice has been to require most unlimited civil, family, probate, and juvenile cases to be filed in Independence. Many of these types of cases are filed by self-represented litigants, who need trained staff assistance to file complex court documents. The court staff requires work space and adequate public counter space to provide proper service to the public.

Chronology of events

Based on the council's decision to replace the Independence facilities with a new two-courtroom courthouse project, AOC staff prepared a funding request in 2009. After review by the state Department of Finance and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the State Public Works Board authorized funding for site acquisition and preliminary plans in November 2009. A project advisory group was formed in November 2009, and the AOC held an initial meeting for the Inyo

⁴ The court operates with two judges, one part-time AB 1058 commissioner, and assigned judges.

project later that month. In fall 2009, the AOC interviewed real estate brokers to assist in identifying potential sites for the Inyo project in Independence. In accordance with the site policy, site criteria were established, and subsequently, site visits were conducted in January 2010.

During the evaluation of potential sites in Independence, the court and the AOC more closely examined the best location for the Inyo project, given that current funding is authorized for only one new courthouse and future funding for a second capital-outlay project is uncertain. In early 2010, the AOC and the court discussed the question of whether the most prudent use of state funds was to build in the Independence area or to build in the Bishop area, where the majority of case filings originate and the majority of case participants—including jurors, victims, and witnesses—live. The AOC and the court examined countywide population distribution, reviewed the availability of funds for improvements to existing court facilities in the county, and assessed the possibility of funding another sizeable replacement court facility in the future. After a period of discussion and debate in the local community and between the AOC and the court, and after review of news reports and editorials and social web sites, the court and the AOC determined that the AOC would review the primary location options for the Inyo project.

AOC staff reviewed the matter with the Administrative Director of the Courts, who agreed based on the media activity and letters to the court and the AOC on this issue that the siting of the Inyo project was controversial and should be directed to the Judicial Council in accordance with section 3 of the site policy.

At the request of the Administrative Director of the Courts, AOC staff prepared the attached report entitled *Review of Location Options: New Inyo County Courthouse, Superior Court of Inyo County*. This report outlines Inyo County's population distribution, potential for future development, existing court facilities and court services, location of legal services and justice partners, case filings and juror service statistics, and available public transportation. The report sets forth criteria used to evaluate the two principal location options, Bishop and Independence, and then analyzes each option for the proposed new courthouse against these criteria.

Rationale for siting the New Inyo County Courthouse

There has been a historical mismatch between where the county's cases originate and where court users and jurors live—the Bishop area—and where most of the court space is located—in Independence. Given that Bishop is the county's population center and the lack of available funding in the near term for another sizable replacement facility for Inyo County, the recommended location for the Inyo project is the Bishop area. Locating the new courthouse in Bishop will provide more Inyo County residents with enhanced access to court services and redistribute court space where it is needed to better serve the population.

This recommendation assumes that the court will continue to provide daily access to court services and hold in-custody criminal and other judicial proceedings in Independence. Having adequate court services in both locations to meet the demand for judicial proceedings is vital to

providing access to court services for Inyo County residents. The court has publicly, repeatedly stated—in news articles and at community meetings—that it will continue to provide full services, including holding in-custody criminal proceedings, in Independence because of the proximity to the county jail. The court’s commitment to ensuring continued access to court services for Independence-area residents was a key consideration in recommending the Inyo project be located in the Bishop area.

The County of Inyo and the court have access to funds that can be used to make modest improvements to a court location, but these funds are inadequate to provide two courtrooms in Bishop or to fully renovate the historic courthouse in Independence. These funds could be used, however, to develop a one-courtroom secure facility in Independence adjacent to the county jail, if the County of Inyo were to provide the state with a site for the facility on concessionary terms. The development of this secure courtroom would address the current shortcomings of security in the Independence court facilities, a particular issue related to in-custody proceedings. The County of Inyo would benefit from this development by reducing its current costs and risks in transporting in-custody defendants to either of the court facilities in Independence.

Locating the Inyo project in Bishop supports the Judicial Council’s strategic plan goal of increasing access to court services. Key supporting facts, as outlined in the attached report, include:

1. While almost 80 percent of all residents of Inyo County live in the Bishop area, they are currently served by only one-quarter of the county’s courtrooms and 37 percent of its total court space.
2. Most court business originates in the Bishop area—approximately 75 percent of all criminal and civil filings.
3. Nearly all the county’s potential jurors live in the Bishop area. Approximately 80 percent of those who serve jury duty in Independence live in the Bishop area, while all jurors who serve jury duty in Bishop live in the Bishop area. Locating the Inyo project in the Bishop area will add a second courtroom to allow the court to hold more of its jury trials there, thus relieving travel demands on many residents called for jury duty.
4. Expanded court services in the Bishop area would decrease reliance on the limited public transportation operating between Bishop and Independence and reduce the number of up-to-80-mile round trips to Independence required of Bishop-area residents who must appear there for jury duty or to file court documents.
5. The legal and social services integral to court operations in Inyo County are all located in Bishop.

Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications

A draft of the attached report was posted on December 13, 2010, for a six-week public comment period. A total of 51 comments were received from the public, all provided verbatim in the attached comments summary.

A total of 28 comments supported locating the new courthouse in Independence, with most citing reasons related to Independence being the county seat and historic home of the main courthouse. Many expressed concerns that the court will cease to operate in Independence if the Inyo project is located in Bishop, when in fact the court's facilities in Independence will remain in full operation regardless of where the new facility is built. Others expressed fears that Independence businesses will lose revenues if the Inyo project is not located in Independence.

The AOC recognizes how important the superior court and its operations are to the Independence community. While staff considered recommending that the new courthouse be located in Independence as originally envisioned, this option was rejected in favor of a Bishop area location, in order to enhance access to court services for the majority of Inyo County residents. Given the limited availability of funding for more than one new courthouse in this county, AOC staff believe that locating the Inyo project in the Bishop area is the best use of limited state resources and given the court's publicly stated commitment to continue to provide full court services in Independence.

A total of 23 comments supported a Bishop-area location for the new courthouse, with virtually all citing concurrence with the analysis presented in the attached report.

Implementation Requirements, Costs, and Operational Impacts

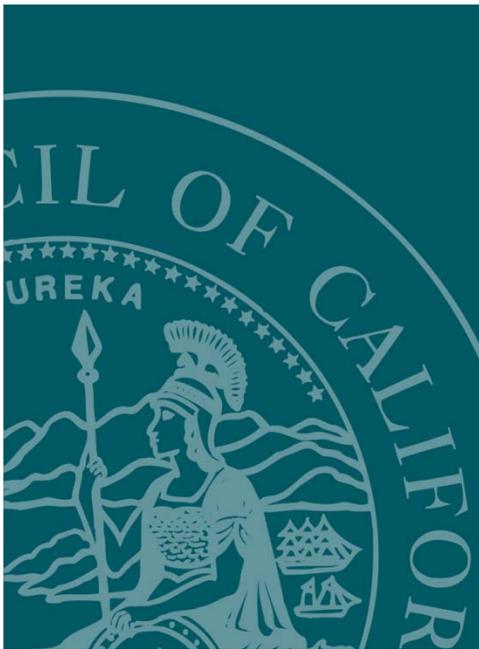
The costs to implement this recommendation—selecting and acquiring a site in the Bishop area for the Inyo project—are funded by SB 1407 resources. The Inyo project has been delayed by approximately 18 months so far because of the controversy over its location. The cost impact of this delay is difficult to estimate due to lack of current documentation on increases in land, construction labor, and material costs. However, if future cost increases occur at an annual rate of five percent by the time the project is put to bid for construction, the estimated cost of delay will be approximately \$3 million. The AOC will endeavor to remain within the existing total authorized project cost of \$32.3 million as it proceeds with the project's site acquisition, design, and construction.

Relevant Strategic Plan Goals and Operational Plan Objectives

The recommended Judicial Council action supports Goal I: Access, Fairness, and Diversity by increasing the space available for court services in the Bishop area.

Attachments

1. Attachment A: *Review of Location Options: New Inyo County Courthouse, Superior Court of Inyo County*
2. Attachment B: Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse
3. Attachment C: Newspaper Articles: Court Commitment to Maintaining Court Services in Independence



Review of Location Options: New Inyo County Courthouse, Superior Court of Inyo County

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

APRIL 29, 2011



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF COURT CONSTRUCTION
AND MANAGEMENT

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1. Introduction

In October 2008, the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan (the plan) and a list of 41 projects to be funded by Senate Bill 1407, including the New Independence Courthouse. Initial funding for site acquisition and preliminary plans phases was authorized by the State Public Works Board in November 2009.

Because of ongoing discussions with the Superior Court of Inyo County regarding the location for the project, the name of this project was changed to the New Inyo County Courthouse, reflected in the August 27, 2010, Judicial Council report listing the projects to be removed from the plan due to approval of initial funding. The New Inyo County Courthouse is referred to in this report as “the Inyo project”.

This report presents a review of location options for the Inyo project. The principal location options are the Independence and the Bishop areas. The City of Independence is the county seat, and the county’s population center is the Bishop area.

The AOC has determined that the location of the Inyo project is controversial because Inyo County residents have voiced concerns about the possibility of locating the new courthouse in Bishop. Opposition by Inyo County residents to building the Inyo project in the Bishop area has been expressed at community meetings, in e-mails and letters sent to the court and the AOC, and in the local media. Many of the concerns relate to the county seat of Independence’s historically having been the main location for court services in the historic Independence Courthouse, as well as the location of the county jail. Concerns have been expressed about the negative effects on the local Independence area economy should the new courthouse be located in the Bishop area. Concerns have also been expressed that potential future development south of the Independence area will not be adequately served if the new courthouse is located in the Bishop area. Concerns regarding the location of the new courthouse near the northern county border rather than in Independence, which is centrally located, have also been expressed.

This report reviews various types of information to consider the question of where the state should construct a new two-courtroom courthouse in Inyo County, including:

- The county’s demographics and origin of case filings in relation to current court locations and types of services provided at each location;
- The potential for future development in the county;
- The location of the county’s legal services and justice partners;
- Where the jurors who serve jury duty live;
- Where county residents work; and
- The county’s transportation infrastructure.

This information is then considered in the context of the *Site Selection and Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities* adopted by the Judicial Council in August 2009.¹ This policy sets forth both broad goals and principles guiding site selection and acquisition and specific criteria that are the basis for analyzing specific sites for new courthouses.

¹ View the current policy at www.courts.ca.gov/xbcr/cc/site_selection_acquisition_policy.pdf.

2. Project Background

The 2003 Facilities Master Plan for the Superior Court of Inyo County outlined a plan for two projects: a new two-courtroom courthouse in Independence, which was in design and scheduled to be completed by the County of Inyo, and a new two-courtroom courthouse in Bishop. Consequently, the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plans adopted by the Judicial Council from 2004 to 2007, listed only one project—the New Bishop Courthouse—for the Superior Court of Inyo County.

For a variety of reasons, the County of Inyo did not follow through with plans to build the new courthouse in Independence. In July 2007, the Superior Court of Inyo County requested that the AOC evaluate the project to build a new courthouse in Independence according to the *Prioritization Methodology for Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects* and to add it to the plan. In addition, the court requested a reevaluation of the New Bishop Courthouse project according to the methodology because of a change in underlying conditions since the New Bishop Courthouse project was originally evaluated.

In October 2008 and based on AOC staff recommendations, the Judicial Council took three actions based on the above requests:

- (1) The AOC prepared an updated evaluation of the New Bishop Courthouse project in collaboration with the local court, based on a confirmation of the project's overcrowding rating. Based on the evaluation, the priority of this project was changed from Medium Need to High Need, and the Judicial Council-adopted update to the plan which lists the New Bishop Courthouse project in the High Need priority group.
- (2) AOC staff applied the methodology to the project to build a new courthouse in Independence and determined it was a Critical Need project. The Judicial Council-adopted update to the plan lists this project in the Critical Need priority group.
- (3) The Judicial Council adopted a list of 41 projects to be funded by SB 1407 revenues, which included a new courthouse in Inyo County.

Based on these council actions, AOC staff prepared and submitted a funding request for the Inyo project that the State Public Works Board authorized for funding for site acquisition and preliminary plans in November 2009. A project advisory group was formed, and the AOC held a project kick-off meeting in November 2009. In fall 2009, the AOC interviewed real estate brokers to assist in identifying potential sites for the Inyo project in Independence. In accordance with the site policy, site criteria were established and site visits were conducted in January 2010.

In early 2010, the AOC and the court discussed the question of whether the best use of state funds is to build a new courthouse in the Independence area or Bishop area, given county demographics. After a period of ongoing discussions in the local community and between the AOC and the court, it was determined that the AOC would review the primary location options for the Inyo project. This report presents the AOC's findings based on this review, as well as a recommended location option.

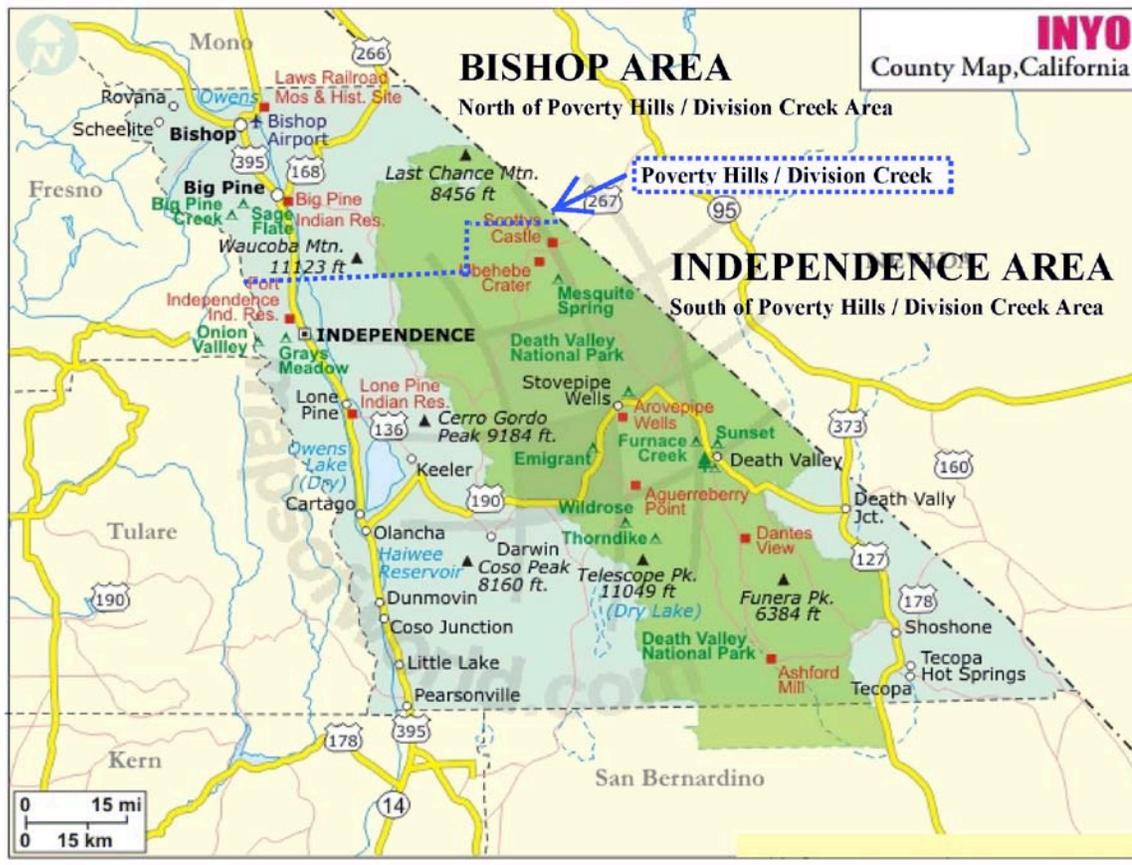
3. Inyo County Demographic Profile

Inyo County is located in the Owens Valley of the Eastern Sierra. It is bounded by Tulare and Fresno Counties to the west, Mono County to the north, the state of Nevada to the east, and San Bernardino and Kern Counties to the south. Inyo County is California’s second largest county in area, covering 10,412 square miles, and the third largest county in the United States.

Inyo County is sparsely populated. The county’s permanent population is approximately 17,000 to 18,000. Approximately 5.5 million visitors annually travel through the county on U.S. Route 395, the only north-south highway in the county and the main highway between the urban Los Angeles-Orange-Riverside-San Diego metropolitan areas and the vacation areas of Inyo and Mono Counties, including the Mammoth Lakes-area ski resorts.

For the purpose of this report and as shown in Figure 1 below, the county’s area is divided into two parts—the Bishop area, located north of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area, and the Independence area, located south of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area. In this report, the terms “Bishop area” and “Independence area” refer to the areas indicated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Map of Inyo County—Bishop and Independence Areas Defined



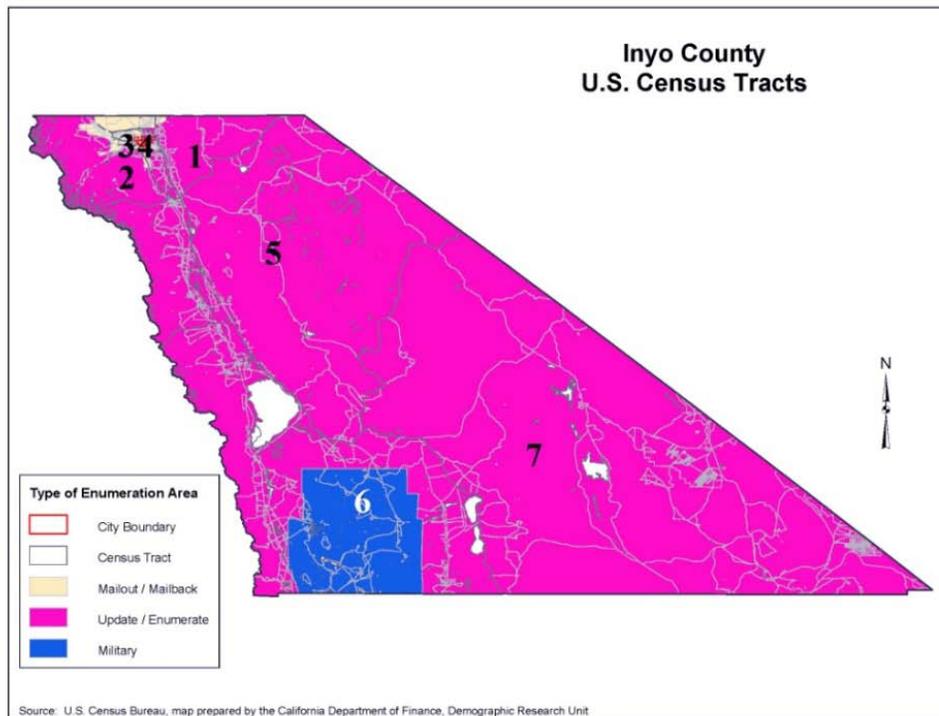
The Bishop area is the county’s population center, with approximately 78 percent of all county residents living north of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area, as shown below in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Inyo County Population (2000 U.S. Census)

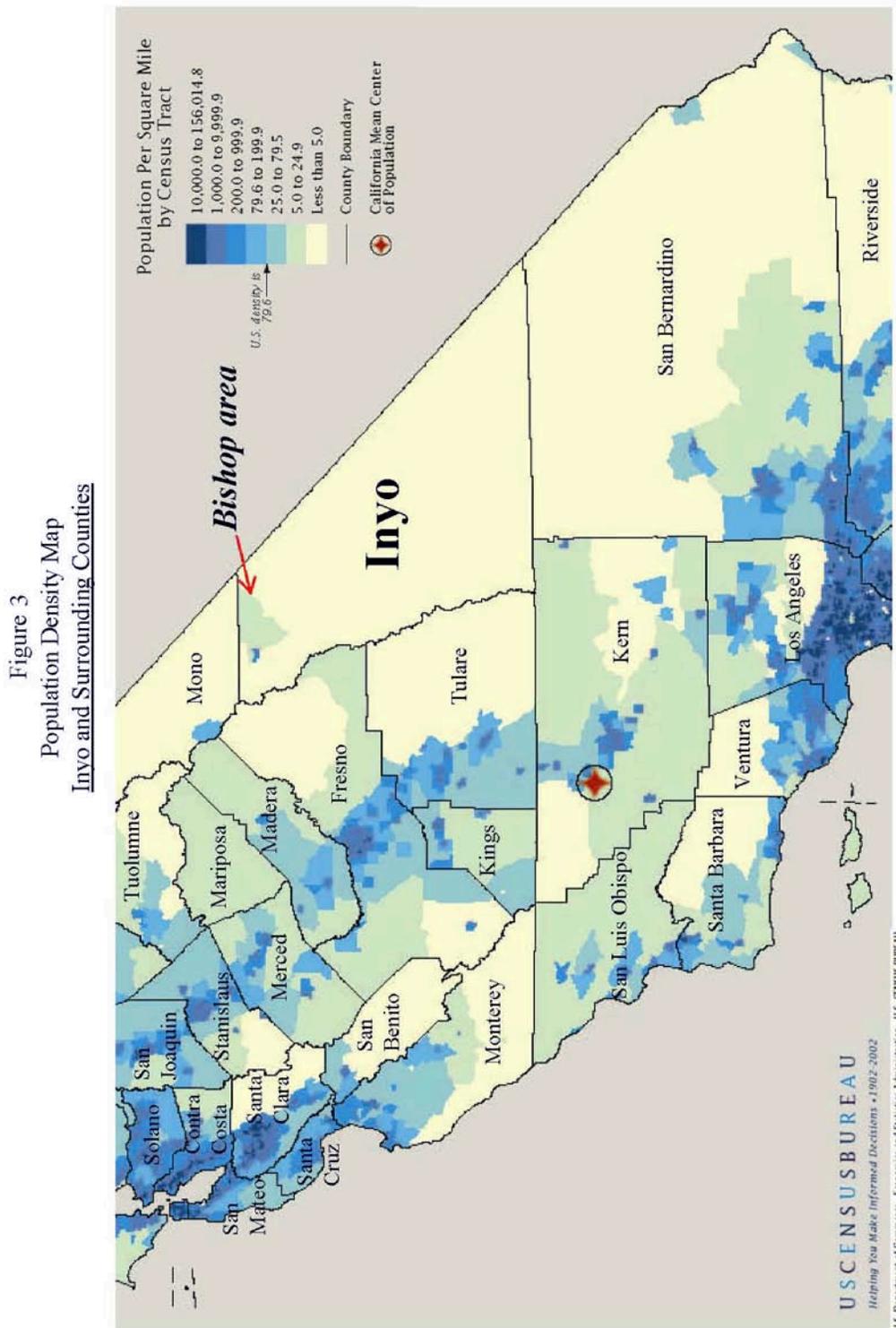
Bishop Area			
Census Tract 1	2,812		
Census Tract 2	1,627		
Census Tract 3	2,612		
Census Tract 4	5,165		
Census Tract 5 – Group 1	1,799	14,015	78.10%
Independence Area			
Census Tract 5 – Group 2	813		
Census Tract 6	2,479		
Census Tract 7	<u>638</u>	3,930	21.90%
Total Inyo Population		<u>17,945</u>	

Figure 2 below presents Inyo County’s U.S. Census Tracts 1–7 for reference purposes.

FIGURE 2
Inyo County Population: U.S. Census Tracts



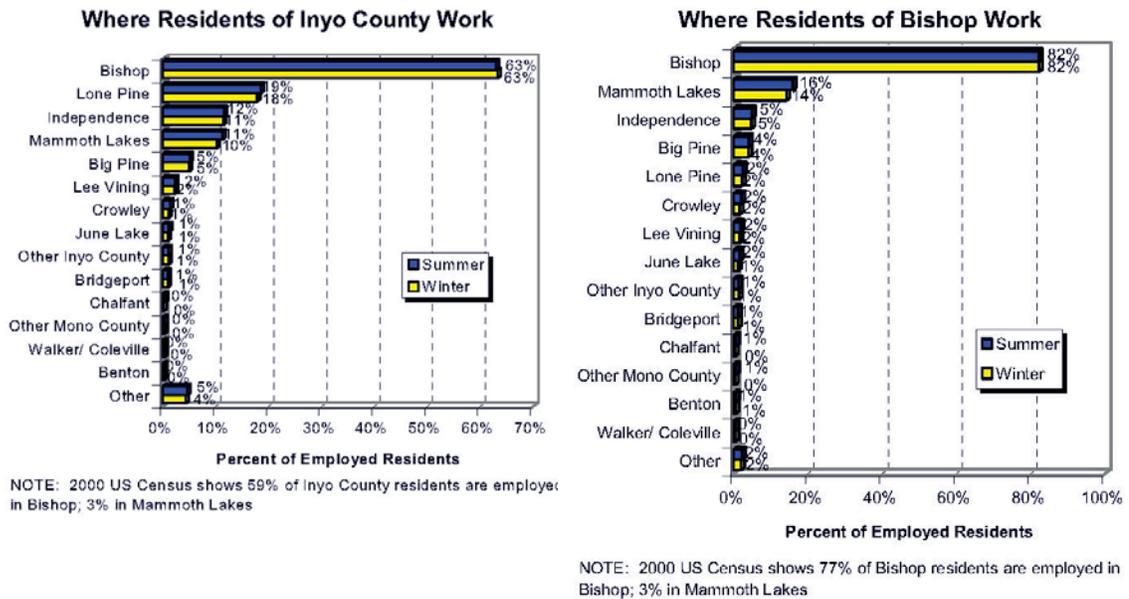
It is estimated that as many as 67 percent of Inyo County residents live within a 15-mile radius of Bishop,² as shown below in Figure 3.



² *Inyo-Mono Counties Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*, prepared by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates for the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission and Mono County Local Transportation Commission (October 2008).

Bishop is also the county’s employment center. According to a 2005 report, “Eastern Sierra Housing Needs Assessment,” which relied on employee, employer, and household surveys in Inyo and Mono Counties to develop a series of recommendations for meeting housing needs, 63 percent of Inyo County residents work in Bishop, and of the Inyo County residents living in Bishop proper, 82 percent work in Bishop, as shown in Figure 4 below.³

FIGURE 4
Employment Location of Inyo County and Bishop



4. Future Development in Inyo County

Future population growth and associated development of residential housing in Inyo County is anticipated to be limited for several reasons, resulting in little or no change to current land use patterns. First, Inyo County has almost no land available for private development. According to the County of Inyo’s Planning Department website, 92 percent of Inyo County is federally owned, 2.4 percent is state owned, and only 1.7 percent is privately owned.⁴ Therefore, growth opportunities are limited to small holdings of private land scattered around the county.

Second, physical and environmental characteristics of the county’s land impede development on vacant and underutilized sites. For example, most of the undeveloped private land in the county is

³ The data gathered by the Employee and Household Survey were weighted to benchmark the results to the demographics and employment patterns in the region as determined from the 2000 Census and employment information from the State of California. This effort sought to ensure the survey results represented overall households in the region. This does not confirm how it defined “Bishop area,” and therefore this statistic may not directly align with caseload and population statistics in other sections of this report based on how this report defines the Bishop area in Figure 1. See <http://inyoplanning.org/housing/documents/ESierraHousingNeedsAssessmt.pdf>.

⁴ *Inyo County Planning Department: Population and Demographics, Inyo County Quick Facts* <http://inyoplanning.org/demographics.htm>; *General Plan, Land Use and Conservation/Open Space Elements, Diagram 1 County-Wide* www.inyoplanning.org/general_plan/graphics/landuse/Diag01.pdf; *Housing Element, August 4, 2009 (p.73, Provision of Adequate Sites)* www.inyoplanning.org/housing/documents/HE-Final.pdf (as of April 8, 2011).

located in remote or rural communities with no water or sewer systems. Environmental conditions, such as wetlands and the presence of endangered species, further restrict development or increase development costs. Other physical constraints include geologic hazards, soils with low permeability rates, and excessive slopes.

Third, the County of Inyo projects a relatively low need for additional housing. The Inyo County General Plan 2009 Housing Element indicates that the county has an unmet projected housing unit need of 423 based on household growth expected between 2007 and 2014—but notes that, in past Housing Element updates, the county has not experienced the predicted population increases and therefore previously projected housing needs have not materialized.

Most of the capacity for developing additional housing units in the county exists in the Bishop area. The 2009 Housing Element presents a summary of current “realistic capacity” of private properties, including those that may be released to the private market pending settlement of litigation between Inyo County and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power over the construction of a second aqueduct and associated groundwater pumping and water export, based on a site-by-site inventory and analysis of zoning, surrounding uses, and location of the primarily vacant land that is currently available to provide sites to meet the county’s unmet projected housing need. The “realistic capacity,” which factors in ability to provide infrastructure to sites, is approximately 435 housing units—12 more than the unmet projected need. Of these 435 housing units, 77 percent are located in the Bishop area and 23 percent are located in the Independence area.⁵

A fourth reason there is unlikely to be much development of additional housing in the county is that the county’s population is aging. According to the 2009 Housing Element, 19 percent of the county’s population was at least 65 years of age. Statewide, only 10.5 percent of the population was at least 65 years old in 2000. The relatively high percentage of residents aged 65 and over means that there are relatively fewer people of childbearing age that will help grow the Inyo County population.

Due to all the factors described above, very limited development of new housing units occurs in the county. For example, a September 13, 2010, article in *The Inyo Register* about protracted litigation related to a residential site known as the Whitney Portal Preserve quoted a Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce press release that described the proposed 27-unit development as “the most significant residential development in southern Inyo County for nearly half a century.”⁶

5. Existing Court Facilities

The Superior Court of Inyo County is served by three judicial officers⁷ and currently operates from three facilities in two cities, Bishop and Independence, located 42 miles apart along U.S. Route 395. None of the current court facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the court.

In Bishop, the court operates in 4,339 square feet of leased space in the former Municipal Court located in the City Hall building, a former school. There is only one courtroom in Bishop, and the

⁵ The 2009 Housing Element indicates that there are many other small parcels scattered around the county in developed areas that can accommodate new or additional residential development, but does not report the “realistic capacity” for development of these properties.

⁶ Mike Gervais, “Developer Has Mixed Feelings About Project,” *The Inyo Register* (Sept. 13, 2010), www.inyoregister.com/content/developer-has-mixed-feelings-about-project.

⁷ The court operates with two judges, one part-time AB 1058 commissioner, and assigned judges.

clerk's office is very small and limits the ability of the court to accept filings. The office has two "bank-teller" type of windows to serve customers who walk in and need in-person service. The windows are only large enough to slide payments through and cannot be effectively used to assist customers filing larger documents or those who need assistance in filling out court documents.

Independence is served by three courtrooms, two in the county-owned historic courthouse and one in a leased facility secured by the county to provide an ADA-accessible courtroom. The court occupies approximately 7,402 useable square feet in these two facilities. The County of Inyo occupies the majority of available space in the historic courthouse, which was constructed in 1921 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Designed by William H. Weeks, one of the leading architects on the Pacific Coast at that time, the building is the most symbolic structure in Inyo County and a source of pride for the community.

6. Location of Inyo Legal Services and Justice Partners

The center of Inyo County's legal community is the Bishop area. All law offices are located in the Bishop area. While there are three licensed attorneys who live in the Independence area, none have offices in the Independence area.

The Inyo County District Attorney has two offices, one in leased space across the street from the leased Bishop courthouse and one in the historic courthouse in Independence. The Inyo County Probation Department also has offices in both Bishop and Independence. The Inyo County Child Protective Services Office, whose staff must attend dependency hearings, is located in Bishop.

Currently five contract attorneys provide public defender services in all areas of juvenile and adult indigent legal services. These contract attorneys all have their offices in Bishop.

7. Current Court Services

The court provides a range of services at each existing location in Independence and Bishop, handling general jurisdiction and limited jurisdiction matters, including criminal, civil, family, and juvenile cases. Currently, the court hears and decides cases on a nearly daily basis in both Independence and Bishop. Virtually all in-custody criminal and juvenile proceedings, including arraignments and felony trials, are heard in Independence due to the proximity of the Independence court facilities to the Inyo County Jail and the Inyo County Juvenile Detention Facility.

More jury trials are held in Independence than in Bishop, for reasons explained in section 8.3 below. Typically, only out-of-custody misdemeanor trials estimated to take two days or less are held in Bishop. This practice prevents delay to other court proceedings that would result if a lengthy jury trial were to occupy the sole Bishop courtroom.

The court's historic and consistent practice, due to staff and document storage space limitations in the Bishop facility, has been to require most unlimited civil, family, probate, and juvenile cases to be filed in Independence. Many of these types of cases are filed by self-represented litigants, who need trained staff assistance to file complex court documents. Court staff requires workspace and adequate public counter space to provide proper service to the public.

8. Inyo County Case Filings and Juror Service Statistics

The Superior Court of Inyo County reported total filings of 15,502 in fiscal year 2008–2009.⁸ The court provided the AOC with information on case filings by location for calendar years 2008 and 2009, resulting in a minor discrepancy between total case filings reported on a calendar year and total case filings reported for fiscal year 2008–2009. Most local case filings are traffic infractions and do not result in in-person court appearances; the majority of infractions are typically disposed of by payment of a fine.

8.1 Origination of Case Filings

Historically, the majority of all Inyo County case filings originate in the Bishop area.⁹ As shown below in Table 2, roughly 57 to 58 percent of the court’s total case filings originated in the Bishop area in 2008 and 2009.

For the purpose of this study, the location of a criminal or infraction filing is based on where the incident occurred and is assigned to the closest courthouse. Citations are assigned to the Bishop area if issued north of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area south of Big Pine and to the Independence area if issued south of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area (as presented above in Figure 1). The location of a civil filing is based on where the filing party resides.

TABLE 2
 Superior Court of Inyo County: Case Filings Statistics
 (Calendar Years 2008 and 2009)

	2008		2009	
	Number of Filings	Percent of Total	Number of Filings	Percent of Total
Bishop Area				
Criminal	952		841	
Traffic Infractions	6,942		7,385	
Civil	674		448	
Subtotal	8,568	57%	8,674	58%
Independence Area				
Criminal	431		431	
Traffic Infractions	5,803		5,765	
Civil	115		79	
Subtotal	6,349	43%	6,275	42%
Total	14,917		14,949	

⁸ Admin. Off. of Cts., *2010 Court Statistics Report: Statewide Caseload Trends 1999–2000 Through 2008–2009*, (Judicial Council of California, 2010), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/csr2010.pdf.

⁹ The origin of family law and juvenile law cases cannot be determined from readily available case filings information from the court. In addition, due to the complexities of family law cases, origination would be difficult to determine due to possibility of different and changing residences of each parent and of the children, who may, for example, be living with a grandparent.

As shown in Table 3, when traffic infraction case filings are removed from the total case filings, an even higher percentage of all cases originated in the Bishop area in 2008 and 2009:

TABLE 3
 Superior Court of Inyo County: Non-Traffic Infraction Case Filings Statistics
 (Calendar Years 2008 and 2009)

	2008		2009	
	Number of Filings	Percent of Total	Number of Filings	Percent of Total
Bishop Area				
Criminal	952		841	
Civil	674		448	
Subtotal	1,626	75%	1,289	72%
Independence Area				
Criminal	431		431	
Civil	115		79	
Subtotal	546	25%	510	28%
Total	2,172		1,799	

In summary, even though most cases are filed in Independence, due to lack of sufficient space in Bishop most cases originate in the Bishop area, according to the data presented in this report.

8.2 Criminal Case Filings by Location

Criminal filings have been further profiled for this study because criminal cases often require lengthier bench or jury trials as compared to civil matters, and criminal cases have specific statutory requirements that drive the schedule of judicial proceedings.

The majority of Inyo County criminal filings originated in Bishop in 2008 and 2009, as shown in Table 4:

TABLE 4
 Superior Court of Inyo County: Criminal Case Filings by Location
 (Calendar Years 2008–2009)

	2008		2009	
	Number of Filings	Percent of Total	Number of Filings	Percent of Total
Bishop Area				
Felonies	185		126	
Misdemeanors	320		298	
Traffic	447		417	
Subtotal	952	69%	841	66%
Independence Area				
Felonies	63		84	
Misdemeanors	126		83	
Traffic	242		264	
Subtotal	431	31%	431	34%
Total	1,383	100%	1,272	100%

As shown in Tables 5 and 6 below, the majority of all felony cases, which typically require relatively longer judicial proceedings and are the majority of all jury trials held in the county, originated in the Bishop area in 2008 and 2009.

TABLE 5
 Superior Court of Inyo County: Criminal Case Filings
 Percentage of Felony, Misdemeanor, and Traffic Filings by Location
 (Calendar Year 2008)

	<u>Number of Filings</u>	<u>% of Total Felonies</u>	<u>% of Total Misdemeanors</u>	<u>% of Total Traffic</u>
Bishop Area				
Felonies	185	75%		
Misdemeanors	320		72%	
Traffic	447			65%
Subtotal	952			
Independence Area				
Felonies	63	25%		
Misdemeanors	126		28%	
Traffic	242			35%
Subtotal	431			
Total	1,383			

TABLE 6
 Superior Court of Inyo County: Criminal Case Filings
 Percentage of Felony, Misdemeanor, and Traffic Filings by Location
 (Calendar Year 2009)

		<u>% of Total Felonies</u>	<u>% of Total Misdemeanors</u>	<u>% of Total Traffic</u>
Bishop Area				
Felonies	126	60%		
Misdemeanors	298		78%	
Traffic	417			61%
Subtotal	841			
Independence Area				
Felonies	84	40%		
Misdemeanors	83		22%	
Traffic	264			39%
Subtotal	431			
Total	1,272			

8.3 Jurors Serving in Inyo County

Jury trials in Inyo County are relatively infrequent. As a consequence, jury panels are summoned on an as-needed basis for particular trial days for a scheduled criminal or civil trial. The court summons an approximate average of seven jury panels each month, but most cases settle and the jury trial is vacated.

The court issues a notice of cancellation using the newspaper, radio, a voice message on a call-in number published on its jury summons form, and the court web site. Jurors who do not find out about a cancellation often drive to either Bishop or Independence only to find their service is not required.

On average, prospective jurors are summoned to report to Independence seven to eight times per year and to Bishop two to three times per year. More jury trials are held in Independence than in Bishop for several reasons. First, any jury trial, civil or criminal, estimated to last more than two days must be held in Independence due to the scheduling limitations of the one-courtroom Bishop courthouse. Since jury trials usually take longer than bench trials or other bench proceedings, more jury trials can be accommodated in Independence due to the availability of three courtrooms there. On the other hand, when a jury trial is held in Bishop, the sole courtroom is tied up for several days, preventing any juvenile, family law, and other civil matters from being heard. Second, all criminal trials involving in-custody defendants are held in Independence as the county jail is there. This practice minimizes county sheriff transportation and other security costs. Finally, criminal jury trials involving crimes committed in the Independence area are typically held in Independence irrespective of the defendant's custodial status.

For the period of January 2008 through February 2011 (the period for which statistics are currently available), the majority of the criminal jury trials held in Independence, whether counted nominally or by court days used, involved defendants who were not in custody. In that period, a significant percentage of the total criminal trials held in Independence involved out-of-custody misdemeanor incidents arising from the Bishop area. Also during that period, two civil jury trials were held in Independence, consuming a total of 17 trial days. In the future, if a new courthouse is built in Bishop, some criminal and civil cases now scheduled for jury trial in Independence because of the current Bishop courthouse's scheduling limitations may be tried in Bishop.

Nonetheless, for the other reasons cited above, even if there was an additional courtroom in Bishop, it is likely that a significant percentage, perhaps as much as half or more, of the court's jury trials—and all of those involving in-custody defendants—would be held in Independence.

As shown in Tables 7 and 8 and described below, in FY 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, most jurors required to report to jury duty or serve on a jury trial in either Independence or Bishop lived in the Bishop area. If the court were to have an additional courtroom in Bishop, many jury trials that do not involve in-custody defendants could be held in Bishop, and travel time would be substantially reduced for jurors and parties in those cases.

The court's practice is to summon Independence area residents to jury duty in Independence. In particular, the court does not require jurors living in the extreme southern or southeastern portions of the county to report to jury duty in Bishop. Court statistics presented in Tables 7 and 8 below show that, in the last two fiscal years, only 14 Independence area residents were summoned for jury service to the Bishop courthouse. Given the likelihood that half or more of the court's jury trials would still be held in Independence, the current court practice related to Independence area jurors would continue under either location option discussed in this report.

8.3.1 Jurors Serving Jury Duty in Bishop

In fiscal year 2008–2009, 1,490 residents were served summons for jury service in Bishop. Of these, 99.7 percent (1,486) were residents of the Bishop area, as presented in Table 7, item A-1. A total of 160 jurors were required to

report for service, and all lived in the Bishop area. Eventually 37 jurors served on cases in Bishop, with all but 3 living in Bishop proper.

In fiscal year 2009–2010, 3,214 residents were served summons for jury service in Bishop. Of these, 96.6 percent (3,204) were residents of the Bishop area, as presented in Table 8, item A-1. A total of 150 jurors were required to report for service, and all lived in the Bishop area. Eventually 14 jurors served on cases in Bishop, with all but 2 living in Bishop proper.

8.3.2 Jurors Serving Jury Duty in Independence

In fiscal year 2008–2009, 7,823 residents were served summons for jury service in Independence. Of these, 78 percent (6,141) were residents of the Bishop area, as presented in Table 7, item A-2. A total of 514 jurors were required to report for service; 92 percent (475) lived in the Bishop area. Eventually 166 jurors served on cases in Independence, 94 percent (156) of whom lived in the Bishop area.

In fiscal year 2009–2010, 11,264 residents were served summons for jury service in Independence. Of these, 79 percent (8,895) were residents of the Bishop area, as presented in Table 8, item A-2. A total of 496 jurors were required to report for service in Independence, 94 percent (465) of whom lived in the in Bishop area.

9. Transportation in Inyo County

Nearly all of Inyo County's cities, towns, or settlements are located along U.S. Route 395, the only major highway connecting Lone Pine and Independence to the Bishop area. There is no viable alternate route, and U.S. Route 395 is the road used by Southern California residents to reach the ski areas in Mammoth Lakes.

Harsh weather and weather-related conditions, such as snow, ice, mudslides, lightning-induced wildfires, flash floods, and extremely high winds causing downed trees and power lines, periodically affect U.S. Route 395. These extreme conditions largely result from the geomorphology of the Owens River Valley, situated between two mountain ranges. These inhospitable weather conditions and vehicular accidents periodically cause portions of U.S. Route 395 to close.

Public transportation in Inyo County is quite limited. The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) provides two bus routes, the "Bishop–Lone Pine" route and the "Mammoth–Lancaster CREST" route. The schedules for the ESTA bus routes are provided below in Table 9.

9.1 Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Bus Routes Serving Inyo County

The ESTA Bishop–Lone Pine route's weekday schedule provides three southbound departure options: morning, midday, and evening. The cost of a round trip between Bishop and Independence is \$11.00, or \$49.50 for five round trips.

For potential jurors who live in Bishop and need to report for jury duty in Independence, the ESTA bus leaving Bishop at 7:00 a.m. daily arrives in Independence before jury duty starts at 9:00 a.m. However, the return bus schedule after that is very limited, with only one bus back from Independence all day (5:15 p.m., arriving 6:10 p.m.).

For potential jurors who live in Independence or Lone Pine and need to report for jury duty in Bishop, the ESTA offers two early morning buses, although only one (6:30 a.m., arriving 7:25 a.m.) arrives in Bishop before jury duty begins at 9:00am.

For residents of Bishop who need to file documents in Independence, using the ESTA bus would require waiting several hours for a return bus. As indicated in section 4, the court accepts only limited filings in Bishop due to space constraints. While the process of filing documents is not lengthy, for Bishop area residents who must rely on public transportation, limited bus service results in a long process for routine document filings.

Public transportation between Bishop and Independence is also provided by the CREST bus route; however, the CREST schedule is even more limited, with no service on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Table 9
Schedules for ESTA Bus Routes Between Independence and Bishop

BISHOP TO INDEPENDENCE (roundtrip)

ESTA "Bishop-Lone Pine" Bus Schedule
Monday through Friday

BISHOP TO LONE PINE SOUTH-BOUND						
Depart					Arrive	
Bishop Kmart	Big Pine Reynolds Rd	Big Pine Main St Shelter	Big Pine Bartel & Newman Rd	Aberdeen Store**	Independence Post Office	Lone Pine Statham Hall
7:00 am	7:15 am	7:17 am	7:20 am	7:40am	7:55 am	8:10 am
1:15 pm	1:30 pm	1:32 pm	1:35 pm	1:55 pm	2:10 pm	2:25 am
6:30 pm	6:45 pm	6:47 pm	6:50 pm	7:10 pm	7:25 pm	7:40 am

** Call stop only must call or reply to schedule a pick-up

INDEPENDENCE TO BISHOP (roundtrip)

ESTA "Bishop-Lone Pine" Bus Schedule
Monday through Friday

LONE PINE TO BISHOP NORTH-BOUND						
Depart						Arrive
Lone Pine Statham Hall	Independence Court House	Aberdeen Store**	Big Pine Bartel & Newman Rd	Big Pine Main St Shelter	Big Pine Reynolds Rd	Bishop Kmart
6:15am	6:30 am	6:45 am	7:00 am	7:02 am	7:05 am	7:25 am
8:30 am	8:45 am	9:00 am	9:15 am	9:17 am	9:20 am	9:40 am
5:00 pm	5:15 pm	5:30 pm	5:45 pm	5:47 pm	5:50 pm	6:10 am

** Call stop only must call or reply to schedule a pick-up

CREST Bus Schedule

Monday - Wednesday - Friday

	Northbound Depart Times	Southbound Depart Times
Mammoth Lakes++ McDonalds	8:05am	7:35pm
Crowley Lake Storefront	8:20am	7:20pm
Tom's Place++ Storefront	8:25am	7:15pm
Bishop - CREST Station 201 S. Warren St.	9:00am Depart	6:45pm
Big Pine Main St. Bus Shelter	9:15am	6:15pm
Aberdeen** Storefront	9:30am	6:10pm
Independence Post Office	9:45am	5:45pm Depart
Lone Pine Statham Hall	10:10am	5:30pm
Olancha** Ranchhouse Cafe	10:30am	5:05pm
Coso Junction** Reststop	10:50am	4:45pm
Pearsonville** Shell	11:05am	4:30pm
Inyo Kern 76 Station	11:30am	4:05pm
Mojave Carls Jr.	12:35pm	3:00pm
Lancaster Metrolink	1:15pm	2:30pm

++ Picked up by Mammoth Express

+++ Picked up by Lone Pine - Bishop Route

** The bus stops by request only

CREST Bus Schedule

Monday - Wednesday - Friday

	Northbound Depart Times	Southbound Depart Times
Lone Pine Statham Hall+++	6:15a.m.	7:40pm
Independence Courthouse+++	6:30am Depart	7:25pm
Aberdeen**+++	6:45am	7:00pm
Big Pine Main St. Shelter+++	7:00am	6:45pm
Bishop CREST Station 201 S. Warren St.	7:30am	6:30pm Depart
Tom's Place**+++	7:30am	5:40pm
Crowley Lake**+++	7:35am	5:35pm
Mammoth McDonalds	8:20am	5:20pm
June Lake Junction**	8:40am	5:00pm
Lee Vining	8:50am Caltrans	4:50pm Chevron
Mono City**	9:00am	4:40pm
Bridgeport General Store	9:20am	4:20pm
Walker**	10:00am	3:35pm
Coleville**	10:10am	3:30pm
Topaz**	10:20am	3:25pm
Topaz Lodge**	10:25am	3:20pm
Gardnerville**	10:50am	2:55pm
Carson City Nugget	11:10am	2:25pm
Reno Airport	12:00pm (arrive)	1:50pm (depart)
Reno Greyhound	12:15pm (arrive)	1:30pm (depart)

++ Picked up by Mammoth Express

+++ Picked up by Lone Pine - Bishop Route

** The bus stops by request only

10. Basis for Criteria Used to Evaluate Location Options for Inyo Project

The two principal options for the location of the Inyo project are evaluated against criteria established by the AOC based on the judicial council-adopted site policy.

10.1 Site Selection Criteria from Site Policy

The site policy outlines many criteria that can be considered when evaluating specific sites for a new courthouse in a geographic area to determine how two or more potential sites compare to one another. The criteria are:

- Size and other physical characteristics, including site configuration, topography, hydrology, subsurface conditions, seismic conditions, availability and capacity of utilities, environmental issues, unique features, and presence of existing structures
- Proximity to various entities and amenities including justice partners, local retail and eating areas, social services, public transportation, and public open space
- Aspects related to achieving long-term sustainability, such as site elevation, solar orientation, re-use potential
- Neighborhood compatibility characteristics, such as proximity to residential areas, local retail areas, government buildings, and industrial areas
- Proximity to public parking and transportation
- Visibility of the site to the public
- Compliance with local comprehensive land use plan
- Support of County and City planning initiatives
- Cost, including site preparation costs involved with bringing utilities to the site, demolishing existing buildings, rerouting underground utilities, relocating tenants, environmental mitigation, need for construction of a road or right-of-way improvements to safely access the site
- Local economic development impact
- Ownership

For the purpose of this report, which is evaluating two general geographic areas for the location of the Inyo project—rather than two or more specific sites—the criteria used to evaluate these options are broader than those listed above. The AOC looked to the site policy’s “Goals and Principles Guiding Site Selection and Acquisition” as a first step in developing criteria for evaluating the two principle geographic areas for location of the Inyo project. These goals and principles are presented in the site policy as follows:

Site Selection and Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities (August 14, 2009)¹⁰

1. Goals and Principles Guiding Site Selection and Acquisition

Successful implementation of the trial and appellate court capital outlay program is grounded in the following goals and principles to be applied to each capital outlay project in the context of selecting a site for a new court facility:

- 1.1 Strive to maximize the efficiency of each dollar appropriated by making timely decisions.
- 1.2 The scope of the project shall not be reduced, which would jeopardize the quality and functionality of the building.
- 1.3 Projects should be sited in areas that are accessible to the public.

¹⁰ View the current policy at www.courts.ca.gov/xbcr/cc/site_selection_acquisition_policy.pdf.

- 1.4 As long as the three goals and principles (stated above) are met, siting a new courthouse should strive to meet historical and local preferences.
- 1.5 The AOC will work in partnership with the court(s) to implement this policy.

10.2 Criteria Used to Evaluate Inyo Project Location Options

Using the above list of goals and principles as a guide, the criteria used to evaluate the two principal geographic areas for location of the Inyo project are as follows:

1. How does this location option provide greater access to court services for Inyo County residents? Does this location option provide expansion of court services needed in Inyo County?
2. Given the prospects for future residential and commercial development in Inyo County, is this location option the best long-term location for the residents of Inyo County?
3. How does this location option provide access to social service agencies that provide assistance to litigants and victims?
4. How convenient is this location option for the majority of Inyo County jurors to serve jury duty?
5. Given the transportation infrastructure in Inyo County, how convenient is it for county residents to get to this location?
6. How does this location option meet local preferences?
7. How does this location option respect history or tradition?

11. Review of Location Options

Each principal location option is first described and then considered in relation to each of the seven criteria presented above. *Of critical importance to the analysis of these options is the court's commitment to providing daily court services to both the Bishop and Independence areas under both scenarios, as described below.*

11.1 Option 1: Locate Inyo Project in Bishop Area

11.1.1 Description of Option 1:

In this option, the Inyo project would be located in the Bishop area, replacing the overcrowded and deficient one-courtroom leased facility. By construction of a new courthouse, court services in Bishop would be expanded commensurate with population size to accommodate additional judicial proceedings, additional jury trials for civil and out-of-custody criminal proceedings, a jury assembly area for potential jurors, document filing, a self-help center for pro per litigants, a children's waiting area for benefit of court users, and adequate space for court staff. Family law services could be expanded to provide the county's population center with needed court support in this growing legal area. The new courthouse would be properly sized for such expanded court services as well as secure for the public and staff.

In Independence, the court would continue to hold all in-custody proceedings and jury trials, as well as other criminal, civil, and family court proceedings for Independence area residents (living south of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area), and to accept document filings. It is likely that half or more of the court's jury trials will continue to be held in Independence for the reasons identified in section 8.3.

11.1.2 Analysis of Option 1:

1. *How does this location option provide greater access to court services for Inyo County residents? Does this location option provide expansion of court services needed in Inyo County?*

Approximately 78% of all Inyo County residents in the Bishop area and most Inyo County residents work in the Bishop area. As presented in section 8 of this report, most court business originates in the Bishop area. Locating the Inyo project in the Bishop area would expand court services where the majority of Inyo County residents live.

2. *Given the prospects for future residential and commercial development in Inyo County, is this location option the best long-term location for the residents of Inyo County?*

Significant future development in Inyo County is constrained due to limited availability of private land for development, physical constraints on specific sites, and the age of the current population. It is likely that the Bishop area will remain the population center of the county for many decades. Constructing the Inyo project in the Bishop area meets the need for additional court services in the Bishop area.

3. *How does this location option provide access to social service agencies that provide assistance to litigants and victims?*

This location option would be ideal for litigants and victims who need access to attorneys, social service agencies, or county justice partners. All of Inyo County's practicing attorneys have offices solely in the Bishop area. All county justice partners and social service agencies are either headquartered in Bishop or have offices there.

4. *How convenient is this location option for the majority of Inyo County jurors to serve jury duty?*

Approximately 78–79 percent of all jurors who serve jury duty in Independence live in the Bishop area, and virtually all jurors who serve jury duty in Bishop live in the Bishop area. If the Inyo project were located in the Bishop area, the court would have adequate space for a second courtroom, allowing more jury trials in Bishop.

If the Inyo project is located in Bishop, the court is committed to continuing to hold jury trials and other judicial proceedings involving in-custody dependents in Independence due to the proximity of the

court facilities to the county jail. Given that the majority of jurors reside in the Bishop area, this option will result in Bishop area residents continuing the current practice of travelling to and from Independence to serve on in-custody jury trials.

5. *Given the transportation infrastructure in Inyo County, how convenient is it for county resident to get to this location?*

One main highway, U.S. Route 395, connects the southern and northern parts of Inyo County. Public transportation is not a convenient way for anyone in Inyo County to attend court in either location. Since most Inyo County residents live in the Bishop area, expanded court services in Bishop would minimize reliance on public transportation and reduce the number of up-to-80-mile round trips for Bishop area residents who must serve jury duty or file court documents in Independence. Having adequate court services in both locations that can meet the demand for case filing and judicial proceedings is paramount to ensuring access to justice for Inyo County residents.

6. *How does this location option meet local preferences?*

Local preferences are mixed. The AOC received 28 comments from Inyo County residents who prefer the Inyo project to be located in Independence. The AOC received 23 comments from Inyo County residents who believe the Inyo project should be located in the Bishop area.

7. *How does this location option respect history or tradition?*

The main location for the Superior Court of Inyo County has historically been Independence, not Bishop. Locating the Inyo project in Bishop is a departure from history and tradition embodied in previous plans—by the county and the state—to replace the historic Independence Courthouse with a new building.

The AOC has received comments from Inyo County residents who prefer the Inyo project to be located in Independence due to the long tradition of having the county seat be home to the county's main courthouse. While location of a courthouse in the county seat is very important to many of those who submitted comments to the AOC, the improvement of the existing historic courthouse—whether for use by the court or the county—does not appear to be very important.

Many of the comments the AOC received are based on the belief that the court will no longer provide judicial proceedings and other court services in Independence if the Inyo project is located in Bishop. The court has committed to maintain a full range of court services in Independence, including continuing to hold all proceedings involving in-custody defendants there because of the court's proximity to the county jail.

11.2 Option 2: Locate Inyo Project in Independence Area

11.2.1 Description of Option 2:

In this option, the Inyo project would be located in the Independence area, replacing space now occupied in the historic courthouse and the leased facility. A new two-courtroom courthouse would provide additional space for all court functions in a modern, safe, and secure facility, with a jury assembly area, a self-help center for pro per litigants, a children's waiting area for the benefit of court users, and sufficient space for court staff. All adult and juvenile in-custody proceedings would be heard in the new courthouse, continuing the current practice of holding in-custody proceedings near the County Jail and the County Juvenile Hall. Similar to Option 1, it is likely that half or more of the court's jury trials will continue to be held in Independence for the reasons identified in section 8.3, requiring most jurors to make an over 80-mile round trip to and from Bishop.

In Bishop, the court would continue to operate in its one-courtroom leased space, which would perpetuate the inadequacy of court services available to Bishop area residents. While the court would continue to provide a range of court services in Bishop, lack of space in the clerk's office would continue to prevent the court from accepting most court documents in Bishop, and having only one courtroom would continue to limit the ability of the court to hold two judicial proceedings at any one time. Only out-of-custody misdemeanor trials estimated to take two days or less would continue to be held in Bishop to prevent the sole Bishop courtroom from being occupied by a lengthy jury trial resulting in a delay to other court proceedings. Bishop area residents in need of self-help and family law services would need to travel more than 40 miles away to Independence, which is not well served by public transportation.

11.2.2 Analysis of Option 2:

1. *How does this location option provide greater access to court services for Inyo County residents? Does this location option provide expansion of court services needed in Inyo County?*

This option would not provide greater access to court services for Inyo County residents. While it corrects the problems with the court facilities now located in the Independence area, this option also maintains the status quo of inadequate services in Bishop. The majority of county residents lives and works in the Bishop area. In addition, most court business originates in the Bishop area. Bishop is where court services need to be expanded.

2. *Given the prospects for future residential and commercial development in Inyo County, is this location option the best long-term location for the residents of Inyo County?*

The county's current development pattern—with Bishop the population and employment center—is likely to remain as such for many decades. The Independence area location option is not the best

long-term option for the majority of Inyo County residents, as constructing the Inyo project in Independence does not serve the anticipated long-term need for more court services in the Bishop area.

3. *How does this location option provide access to social service agencies that provide assistance to litigants and victims?*

This location option would not provide good access to social service agencies or county justice partners that assist litigants and victims. With the exception of the Inyo County probation office, which has an office in both Independence and Bishop, these services are located in Bishop.

4. *How convenient is this location option for the majority of Inyo County jurors to serve jury duty?*

It is likely that half or more of the court's jury trials will continue to be held in Independence. This location option would provide a more secure and comfortable experience for jurors. It would also perpetuate the current transportation demand on jurors, nearly all of whom live in the Bishop area.

5. *Given the transportation infrastructure in Inyo County, how convenient is it for county residents to get to this location?*

Independence is centrally located, but not convenient for the majority of county residents who live in the Bishop area. There is only limited public transportation between Bishop and Independence. This location option does not support access to full court services for the majority of Inyo County residents.

6. *How does this location option meet local preferences?*

Local preferences are mixed. The AOC received 28 comments from Inyo County residents who prefer the Inyo project to be located in Independence. The AOC received 23 comments from Inyo County residents who believe the Inyo project should be located in Bishop, to expand court services from one to two courtrooms and provide adequate court services in close proximity to the county's current and anticipated future population center.

7. *How does this location option respect history or tradition?*

Independence is the county seat and historically the main location for the Superior Court. This location option supports this tradition by building a new courthouse in the county seat. Comments the AOC has received from Inyo County residents clearly articulate a conviction that building the Inyo project in Independence is the right thing to do for historical reasons.

12. Recommended Location for Inyo Project and Availability of Funds for Other Improvements

There has been a historical mismatch between where cases originate and court users and jurors live—the Bishop area—and where most of the county’s court space is located—in Independence.

Given that Bishop is the county’s population center, and due to the lack of available funding for another sizable replacement facility for Inyo County in the near-term, ***the recommended location for the Inyo project is the Bishop area.*** Locating the new courthouse in the Bishop area provides more Inyo County residents with enhanced access to court services and redistributes court space where needed to better serve the population.

This recommendation assumes the court will continue to provide daily access to court services and hold in-custody judicial proceedings, including jury trials, in Independence. Having adequate court services in both locations that can meet the demand for judicial proceedings is paramount to providing access to court serves for Inyo County residents.

The County of Inyo and the court have access to funds that can be used to make modest improvements to a court location. These funds are not adequate to provide two courtrooms in Bishop nor to fully renovate the historic courthouse in Independence. These funds may be used, however, to develop a one-courtroom secure facility directly adjacent to the county jail in Independence if the County of Inyo were to provide the state a site for the facility on concessionary terms. The development of this secure courtroom would address the lack of security in the Independence court facilities, a particular issue related to in-custody proceedings. The County of Inyo would benefit from this development, further reducing the costs and risks currently involved with transporting in-custody defendants to either of the court facilities in Independence.

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) appreciates the time interested parties took to submit comments on the December 13, 2010 Draft Report entitled, *Review of Location Options: Inyo County Courthouse, Superior Court of Inyo County* (the draft report). The AOC received electronic responses and letters; all comments are presented below verbatim. Because many of the comments received were similar, the AOC has provided a set of reoccurring comments on the first two pages of this document. The AOC has modified the draft report to address some of these comments and others, where noted below. The final report (the report) is provided as an attachment to the report to the Judicial Council.

A	The AOC recognizes that there may be some future development in the southern part of the county. However, given the reasons outlined in Section 4 of the report, significant future development that would change current land use development patterns is unlikely to occur in Inyo County.	G	The AOC understands that there are residents throughout the county that have differing opinions on this topic and that their opinions may not align with where they currently live. The report, which is attached to Judicial Council report, has been modified in Sections 1 and 11 to indicate that residents throughout the county have expressed concerns about siting the New Inyo County Courthouse in Bishop.
B	The AOC has information that indicates that land costs, and assorted cost to develop land, range widely in both the Bishop area and the Independence area depending on various characteristics including size, specific location, current zoning, and availability of utility infrastructure. Independence area properties identified by commentator # 4 were on average more expensive than on-line listings in Bishop during the same period (1st Quarter 2010).	H	The AOC omitted family law cases from analysis for the reasons stated in footnote 5 of the report. Given most of the county's population lives in the Bishop area, including accurate information on where parties in family law matters live would most likely result in a higher percentage of cases involving residents who live in the Bishop area.
C	The AOC analyzed the possibility of locating the new courthouse on the site adjacent to the county jail. To accommodate the planned new building and parking, a minimum of 1.45 acres is required. The site adjacent to the county jail is 0.80 acres in size.	I	The court has a long, collaborative relationship with the county of Inyo and recognizes that having the county drive in-custody individuals to Bishop from Independence is not reasonable. Consequently, criminal proceedings involving in-custody individuals will continue to be held in Independence, which is the present practice, due to proximity to the county jail. The court's judicial officers will continue to drive to Independence for in-custody criminal proceedings if the Inyo project is located in Bishop.
D	How public projects are funded varies. Construction of the New Inyo County Courthouse is funded exclusively from revenues collected by the state trial courts from court users—fees, penalties and assessments primarily related to criminal and civil case filings. These funds are collected statewide and allocated to projects across the state by the Judicial Council of California. The council has the responsibility for determining how these funds shall be allocated, and also has the authority to resolve controversial site selections for new court facilities funded by these revenues.	J	Based on comments received on the draft report, the AOC has clarified the characteristics of jury trials with the court and modified report Section 8.3. If the Inyo project is built in Bishop, the court will be able to hold more jury trials in Bishop due to having two courtrooms there instead of just one. However, it is likely that half or more of the court's jury trials will continue to be held in Independence for the reasons identified in Section 8.3. All jury trials involving in-custody individuals will continue to be held in Independence due to proximity to the county jail. Due to the concentration of potential jurors in the Bishop area, most jurors will still be required to travel to Independence for jury trials involving in-custody individuals. The court's practice is to summon Independence area residents to jury duty in Independence. In particular, the court does not require jurors living in the extreme southern or southeastern portions of the county to report to jury duty in Bishop. Based on the clarifications provided in report Section 8.3, the AOC has also modified the evaluation of criteria #4 relative to both location options in report Section 11.
E	The court recognizes that for Inyo County residents living in the far southern part of the county, driving distances to Independence are quite lengthy. Consequently, <i>the court is committed to maintaining court services, including judicial proceedings and other court services, in both Independence and Bishop.</i> Independence area residents, including those living in the far southern part of the county, will not be required to drive to Bishop if the New Inyo County Courthouse is located in Bishop. Driving distances for southern Inyo County residents, as well as the court's judicial officers, will not change from current distances. In addition, it is likely that any associated economic activity resulting from court proceedings and other court services, will continue at current levels.	K	Based on the allocation of census tracks presented in Table 1, according to the 2000 U.S. Census approximately 78 percent of Inyo County residents live north of the Poverty Hills/Division Creek area.
F	Siting a new courthouse is an important decision, and where to site a new courthouse typically elicits many points of view. As indicated in AOC response D above, the council has the authority to resolve controversial site selections for new court facilities, including the New Inyo County Courthouse. As part of this process, the AOC prepared the draft report analyzing the two primary location options of Independence and Bishop and posted it for a six week comment period. Due to the importance of this decision, the AOC scheduled a relatively long comment period to ensure people would have adequate time to review the draft report and provide the AOC with written comments. The council will review all comments prior to making a decision on this site selection.		

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
1.	Sandy A. Anderson Independence, CA	D	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to respond.</p> <p>I do not agree with the recommendation of the AOC that the location of the anticipated New Inyo County Courthouse be located in Bishop. There is land available locally in the Independence area. There is even discussion of a solar generating plant being developed by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power just south of the town of Independence, wouldn't it be great if that source of green power could be utilized in the construction of the courthouse? Thank you for the opportunity to voice my comment.</p>	<p>The criteria used to evaluate the location options for the new courthouse, outlined in Section 10.2 of the report, do not include availability of land because land is available in both the Bishop and Independence areas.</p> <p>The AOC is committed to designing courthouses that are energy efficient. The new courthouse will be designed in accordance with the Trial Court Design Standard to a LEED™ Silver equivalent rating.</p>
2.	Selma Calnan, Advocate Member, governing board of Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action Member, Inyo Mono Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council Bishop, CA	D	<p>Instead of favoring the current population of Bishop at the expense of the rest of the county, the new courthouse should stay at the County Seat, the choice in less materialistic times. Inyo was recently demoted from "rural" to "frontier" and we should remember justice is not just one more modern customer service. The suggested move also ignores the potential for growth that remains in the Southern part of the county. We can see the future in such a move by looking at our next-door neighbor, Mono County. Mammoth Lakes is their only incorporated city with plenty of problems and leaving the rest of the county agencies vulnerable to inefficiency or bankruptcy. It also ignores the higher cost of land and the strains on a city government already struggling with traffic congestion and parking.</p>	<p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response B on page 1.</p>
3.	Allen Carrasco Darwin, CA	D	<p>Why should we have to buy land in the City of Bishop to build a new court house when the County has land.</p> <p>Why, as taxpayers can't we vote on how our money is spent? We pay taxes with little question. Why should a few people who have never lived here know what we want or need?</p> <p>I live 115 miles from Bishop and don't drive. No public transportation from where I live, so how can I get to jury duty which is my duty and obligation? I can't. So why can't we vote on how we want to spend 30 million dollars of our money in our County?</p> <p>Why are you in such a hurry to spend this Grant Money without seeing a public point of view, for example, the County has property near Bishop and also in Independence like where the old jail was or are you lining someone's pockets. Let's just put it on a ballot in March or November, or is it that our vote wouldn't count anyway? As the people is our opinion forgotten or doesn't that matter any more? Couldn't you wait to have our say in the matter?</p> <p>If it is Grant Money that you have to use by a certain date then why can't you change the rules?</p> <p>The court house has worked fine in Independence for a long time. If it works don't fix it!</p>	<p>See AOC response C on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response D on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p>
4.	Jenifer Castaneda, Broker Blue Sky Real Estate Lone Pine, CA	D	<p>Page/Paragraph 1/4 Residents from ALL OVER Inyo County expressed their desire to have the courthouse built in Independence. Not just Independence residents.</p>	<p>See AOC response G on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		8/4 The majority of vacant residentially zoned property is located in Southern Inyo County. See http://www.inyoplanning.org/general_plan/graphics/landuse/Diag20.pdf The “2009 Housing Element” did not look at any property south of Lone Pine. The Los Angeles Dep’t of Water & Power is working on a large solar project south of Independence. Coso Geothermal south of Olancho is expanding. Crystal Geysers Water in Olancho is expanding therefore there is huge potential for jobs and growth in Southern Inyo. These facts were not considered in looking at future demographics.	See AOC response A on page 1.
		10/5 57-58% does not justify building the courthouse in the far north end of the county away from the jail.	As presented in Section 8.1, Table 3, when traffic infractions are removed from the case filings statistics, 75percent of all criminal and civil cases originated in the Bishop area in 2008 and 2009. For these same years, 66-69 percent of all criminal cases originated in the Bishop area. See AOC response I on page 1.
		10/5 You admit that this figure does not even include family law cases which are numerous so the figures may not even be accurate.	See AOC response H on page 1.
		18/11 “Cost” Land is much less expensive in Independence than in Bishop.	See AOC response B on page 1.
		19/all Bishop does not meet “historical or local preference”. Prospects for future residential and commercial development are more prevalent in Southern Inyo County. Locating the courthouse centrally in the county rather than the extreme north end is more convenient for all Inyo County residents. Independence meets local preference and respects tradition.	The report indicates that the Bishop location option does not respect history or tradition and that the Independence location does. The comment about growth is addressed by AOC response A on page 1.
		21/1 Most vacant residentially zoned property is located in southern Inyo County NOT the far north end of the county.	See AOC response A on page 1.
		22/#6 The judges and the AOC also received comments from Bishop area residents who prefer to have the courthouse located in Independence.	See AOC response G on page 1.
		25/#7 Building the new courthouse in Independence would have zero effect on the existing historical courthouse. They are unrelated projects.	If the New Inyo County Courthouse was built in Independence, the court would no longer occupy all the space it now occupies in the two facilities in Independence. Operating funds used now to pay utility bills and maintenance costs for the court occupied spaces in the existing courthouse, and all costs associated with leasing the Department 2 space would be used to pay the utility bills and maintenance costs of the New Inyo County Courthouse if built in Independence.

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>26/4 According to “Judicial Branch AB 1473 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan Fiscal Year 2010-2011” Bishop was listed as a “high need” and Independence as a “Critical Need” poor security is the number one driver when evaluating needs. Independence was given the highest rating “5” because of the unsafe conditions that exist. The court suggests that all “in custody” cases will still be heard in Independence; presumably these cases provide a larger security issue. How can the AOC assume that a secure facility can be built in Independence using the nominal amount in the courthouse construction fund when they expect to spend \$32 million on a 2 room facility in Bishop? How can you justify moving money from a “critical need” to a “high need” when that is not allowed by your own Prioritization Methodology for Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects? I would like to suggest you use the courthouse construction funds to expand courtroom facilities in Bishop and build the new facility in Independence. Independence was given the “critical need” rating by the AOC. Independence is where the majority of the residents in all of Inyo County prefer it to be located. Independence is where the jail is located. Independence is centrally located and closer to the area of the most vacant residentially zoned vacant land. Independence is closer to the current on-going and upcoming commercial ventures (DWP solar, Coso’s and Crystal Geysers’ expansions). Independence clearly meets local and historical preference. It is wrong to use a 58% case load origination figure that you admit does not include the numerous family law and juvenile cases as justification to move the project to the extreme north end of the county. It is wrong to address over-crowding before security. I would hope that you would address the security issues with Independence “before” you address inconvenience in Bishop.</p>	<p>In accordance with the Site Selection and Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities, the council is reviewing the location of the New Inyo County Courthouse as a controversial site selection.</p> <p>The council’s action on the site location will address the location of the project. This decision does not move funding from one project to another—only the legislative branch can authorize funding for projects. The decision the judicial branch can make is where the project will be located.</p> <p>Providing a pre-fabricated secure building—for in-custody proceedings—directly adjacent to the county jail can be accomplished before construction of a new courthouse assuming the county and the AOC can agree to terms related to use of county property.</p> <p>See AOC response I on page 1.</p>
5.	Jan Clover Bishop, CA	A	I agree with the decision to locate the new courthouse in the City of Bishop. It is the only sensible decision.	
6.	Cindy Cox	A	I agree that the courthouse should be located in Bishop. The review is clear that this is economically the most prudent decision as well the most logical. Thank You	
7.	Gayle Creasman Orange, CA	D	<p>All of this seems to me to be a total waste of taxpayers money.</p> <p>First off there is really no controversy because the people of Inyo County want the Court House in Independence. It is only the two Judges that want it in Independence because they don’t want to make the forty five minute drive.</p> <p>As soon as Judge Lamb found out that the \$33 million could be spent anywhere in the County he made his mind up to build in Bishop.</p> <p>It doesn’t matter that Bishop is the farthest most city in the County (only 10 miles from County line, look at the map) and what a hardship is would be for the people in the southern or eastern part to drive (much more than forty five minutes).</p> <p>And as far as Bishop being the most populist. If that meant anything the State Capital would definitely not be in Sacramento.</p>	<p>See AOC response D on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>They have all ready spent \$500,000.00 dollars on Environmental Impact Study and haven't even studied Bishop, plus there really isn't property available in Bishop and they already have property in Independence.</p> <p>Then there is the security problem. Transporting prisoners to Bishop would cost a fortune and the security would really be compromised. Then the next thing they would want to build the Jail in Bishop.</p> <p>I know that you have probably made the decision already but your job is to make the BEST decision for the PEOPLE of Inyo County not for two Judges.</p>	<p>The AOC has identified potential sites in both Independence and Bishop. No funds have been spent by the AOC on an environmental impact study for this project. The only consultant fee paid by the AOC was the flat fee of \$3,140.00, paid to Jenifer Castaneda, the AOC's former broker and commentator #4.</p> <p>See AOC response I on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response F page 1.</p>
8.	Peter Cummings Bishop, CA	A	<p>I read the AOC report regarding options for the location of a new Inyo County Courthouse.</p> <p>I attach a copy of the comment form, having checked the box that I agree with the wording and conclusions of the AOC report.</p> <p>I think the AOC did a fine job of discussing the relevant issues and the conclusion is excellent.</p>	
9.	Bruce Dishion City Council Member, City of Bishop Bishop, CA	A	<p>I worked for the City of Bishop Police Department for thirty years. The last six, I was the Chief of Police. I am now a Bishop City council member. I have traveled to Independence for many years for trials some, after no rest from graveyard shifts, and no place to eat or rest while waiting to testify in court. This is expensive for the tax payer and a hardship for the witness. While in Independence the only place to eat is Subway Sandwich. All witnesses, officers, attorneys, and defendants must sit in one room and try to eat lunch. Its terrible. The "silent majority" of people hate receiving summons to jury duty in Independence. Building the new courthouse in Bishop only makes good sense for the safety and comfort to all. Thank you</p>	
10.	Benjamin Downard Bishop, CA	A	<p>I am writing in regards to the currently proposed location of a new courthouse in Inyo County. I am a current resident of Bishop, CA. When deciding to locate the new courthouse in Independence (current courthouse) or Bishop, I would recommend Bishop. These are my following reasons for this recommendation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The greater majority of Inyo County's population lives in the north of the county, near Bishop. 2. Transit service between local communities on US 395, the City of Bishop, and Independence is very limited (2 stops per day). 3. A location of Bishop would serve the greater good, be the most cost effective for most residents (less travel distance), and offer the greatest variety of local businesses to assist the court and all its functions. 	

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
11.	Jennifer A. Duncan Independence, CA	D	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to again express my comments and opinions in relation to the location of the proposed new court facility for Inyo County.</p> <p>As a resident of the Owens Valley for almost 30 years and for one who has heard directly from Judge Stout, that much of the need for a new facility is for lack of storage space, among other relevant needs (i.e. ADA accessibility). Additionally, at the public hearings a majority of the those in attendance of the public it was clear that the favorable site is in Independence. After traveling from Independence to Bishop for work 4 days a week for 18 years I am all too familiar with the logistics between these 2 destinations. CalTrans 4 laning project is complete and has made the travel much safer. Public transportation still is available to those who care not to drive the distance. The lawyers have healthy travel budgets and good salaries which offsets any costs to them. I have been informed that most trials are settled out of court and the criminal cases are best handled in the town of Independence where the jailed defendant's have ready access to the courtroom.</p> <p>The town of Independence is the county seat, home to the county administration and should remain home to the court facility as proposed.</p> <p>I respectfully request that you consider carefully the full impacts of the decision and find that it has always been the spirit of "access" to justice that must prevail.</p>	<p>The time and cost to travel from Bishop to Independence, and back, is substantial and reduces accessibility of court services. Attorneys charge their clients travel time—up to 2.5 to 3 hours for the round trip—and expenses, which increases the overall cost of legal services.</p> <p>The cost of public transportation is not insignificant, as reported in Section 9.1 of the report.</p>
12.	Randall C. Fendon Fendon's Furniture, Mattress & Reupholstery Co. Bishop, California	A	<p>Page 20 Paragraph 11.1.1</p> <p>If the new Court House is to be built in Bishop, I would hope that existing unused commercial space within the City of Bishop could be acquired or leased and repurposed/re-configured such as the CottonWood Plaza property or the old Kmart location on Main Street/US 395. Either of these locations would be good for the Court with lots of potential parking, access to downtown Bishop including lodging and food services for Court employees, jurors, etc. and would also benefit the City of Bishop by bringing the Court and its associated activity to the City of Bishop with the associated economic benefits and it would utilize one of two large commercial parcels which will otherwise be difficult to sell, lease and use for retail/commercial purposes due to size and lack of demand.</p>	<p>The AOC will examine possible site locations—including any available existing buildings—after the Judicial Council determines the location of the project.</p>
13.	Julie Fought, Manager DeLaCour Ranch Lone Pine, CA	D	<p>24/4 If 67% of county resides in Bishop, then the language used "nearly all" is not true. 67% is not "nearly all."</p> <p>ALL ALL I am a Lone Pine resident. The courthouse facilities should remain in the county seat, Independence, California. The southern and southeastern areas of Inyo County are already underserved, have a lower income, and much less access to public transportation and social services than the Bishop area. Do not worsen an already great inequity. Please use your decision making powers to keep the County Seat as the home of Inyo County Courthouse.</p>	<p>The narrative refers to jurors not county residents, and nearly all persons who have reported for jury duty or served as jurors live in the Bishop area, as documented in section 8.3 of the report.</p> <p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>The assumption that Bishop will remain the population center is unfounded. There are two large tracts of private land in the Lone Pine area both permitted for multiple residential lots, Whitney Portal (notated in report) and Lubken Ranch. In addition, the Olancho/Cartago area has a great deal of private developable land. And as LADWP moves ahead with the Solar Ranch project in the south County , there will be an acute need for housing in the south county area.</p> <p>I would also like to note that the report states that any comment on this proposed relocation that was not from Bishop, was from Independence. I know that many comments have been submitted throughout this process from other southern county locations. Please do not narrow the argument to one town against another.</p> <p>I believe that sighting the historical value of the current landmark courthouse is valuable, but I feel that pitting its possible future restoration to “grandeur” against keeping the courthouse in Independence is far too divisive. Independence is the county seat and the courthouse is its gem. If upgrading to a more modern building is needed, so be it. Please honor the county as is, with the county seat as is. Let the people worry about the future of the original courthouse building.</p> <p>Finally, has anyone calculated the long range cost to the tax payers for locating a new facility in Bishop, where property taxes on purchased land will be much higher.</p> <p>In closing, this comment process is completely inappropriate for what your report stated, an “aging population.” This form is difficult to negotiate and the way it is formatted so that a comment has to be tied to a specific page, and paragraph of the report is too constricting. I ignored that part of the form. I surely hope that my comments are not ignored because of it.</p>	<p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response G on page 1.</p> <p>The AOC has modified the report in Section 11.1.2 #7 and 11.2.2. #7 based on this comment.</p> <p>The AOC assumes this comment refers to foregone property taxes, since the state does not pay property taxes. Property tax is based on a property’s purchase price, and is adjusted each year after purchase in accordance with state law and local assessments. As indicated in AOC response B on page 1, property costs range widely in both the Bishop and Independence areas and may not be substantially different.</p> <p>The AOC regrets that the electronic form was difficult to use. In posting the draft report for comment, the AOC indicated that written comments could be sent by mail to San Francisco, and several comments were received through the mail. All electronic comments received to either the OCCM Comments mailbox or the OCCM mailbox, and all hard-copy comments received in San Francisco that were post-marked January 21, 2011 are included in this document.</p>
14.	Jerry Gabriel, Civil Engineer Caltrans (retired) Bishop, CA	A	Thank you for your excellent report on location options for a new Inyo County courthouse. The facts presented clearly support the wisdom of constructing a new courthouse in the Bishop area.	

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
15.	Denise Gillespie Bishop, CA	A	I support the Bishop location for the new court facility for the convenience of the people in northern communities who are called for jury duty. It simply makes financial sense to provide a location in Bishop where the majority of the County population is located. Needs change over time, this is definitely one of those changes that needs to be made.	
16.	Bob Harrington Bishop, CA	A	No comments.	
17.	Mark A. Heckman Bishop, CA	A	<p>I read your report and as a resident of Inyo County I fully support the utilization of State taxpayer funds on a courthouse located within the City of Bishop.</p> <p>Bishop and it's unincorporated areas support ~12,000 County residents from a total population of ~20,000 residents and as identified within your report 78% of the County's residents live north of the Poverty Hills.</p> <p>As a resident of the County, I know for a fact that public participation in the legal process via Jury Duty would greatly improve due to the local proximity of most residents to a newly located courthouse in Bishop. At the moment potential jurors must find a way to travel the 45 miles (and 1 hour) to Independence to attend jury duty and many people within the county either can't make it there or refuse to spend the entire day in Independence.</p> <p>Also, I need to state that any other decision to locate a courthouse outside the City of Bishop needs to account for the travel time of numerous jurors, the subsequent use of fossil fuels used by those jurors traveling to and from Bishop to Independence throughout the jury duty session, the "carbon footprint" of those vehicle trips, and the subsequent traffic impacts to local streets and highways. Additionally, please be aware that Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 32 which requires an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases in California effectively reducing those gases to pre-1990 levels. By situating a new courthouse building in Bishop (where 78% of the County's population resides) the AOC and the Courthouse construction will significantly help California meet the goals as defined by AB 32.</p>	See AOC response D on page 1.
18.	Darla Heil Bishop, CA	A	Please build the new court facility in Bishop, CA, the town with the largest population base in Inyo County.	
19.	James G. Henderson Corp. Director/Supply Chain So. Lake Tahoe, CA	D	<p>Unless I am mistaken the original recommendation made by the state planning commission was that the court house should remain in Independence. Until Judge Lamb made his decision there was no response from Bishop residents or other communities in Inyo County to the contrary.</p> <p>In my opinion this change is based only on the fact that Bishop has a higher population than the rest of the County of Inyo. One could say that more criminals live in Bishop and for that reason it is more "convenient".</p> <p>The County Jail is in Independence therefore prisoners will have to be transported at a substantial cost increase to Inyo County vs. Judges and court employees choosing to live in Bishop and commuting.</p> <p>This to me is the most visible of many steps that will move the County Seat from Independence to Bishop</p>	<p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response I on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
20.	Ben Holgate Independence, CA	D	I believe the decision to build new court facilities in Bishop rather than Independence is a mistake for our county and community. Due to the unusual nature of economic development in Inyo County this choice could destroy any chance Independence has of redeveloping into a viable community. This choice would deny an already blighted community some opportunity for renewal. People will continue to live in Independence, but without the basic needs of a community (a foodstore, restaurant, social services, etc.) Please respect the wishes of the vast majority of Inyo County residents and build a new facility in Independence.	See AOC response E on page 1.
21.	Michael W. and Gloria B. Howell Bishop, CA	A	<p>1/1 The Inyo County court house issue:</p> <p>There are very good reasons to build the new county courthouse in Bishop, CA. In 2010, there were almost 200 children born in Bishop’s local hospital-Northern Inyo, there is some obvious growth in the very north county, the more populated community. Just as Bishop is expanding Northern Inyo Hospital to better serve the needs of our expanding community; it makes sense to do the same with the new county courthouse.</p> <p>Bishop, which is the far north county, is closest to one of the primary employers in the Eastern Sierra corridor-Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. Which is one of the reasons so many families reside in Bishop, CA. The southern most areas of Inyo county do not have the same potential for growth.</p> <p>1/2 Another fact we must keep in mind is that Independence school enrollment is so low, that our local school systems have needed to address the issues of reorganization in the southern county schools. The need for a new courthouse is not in Independence.</p> <p>Mammoth Lakes, CA in Mono County is in the process of building and completing a new courthouse, which is not, the county seat of Mono County. It seems to be that their community is building their new courthouse in the primary area of the most residents. “If you build it, they will come.” Where can government better serve the needs of the “hub” of their/our county, than where most of the people reside. The decision to build outside of the historical county seat, does not take anything away from the value of the historical landmarks.</p> <p>1/3 In my opinion, it is also in the best interest of Inyo County to have AOC assist our communities with the decision making process because of the fact that so many emotions are involved, on behalf of Independence residents. AOC is looking at the “Big Picture” and advocating on behalf of what’s best for the entire County of Inyo. It is not the responsibility of Inyo County residents to support the businesses in Independence. Those of us in Bishop have always had to travel South for court-related matters. There will still be court-related services in Independence for the south county residents. It is more equitable and fair for those of us in the population center of Northern Inyo to have the same options available.</p>	
22.	Gary Johnson Big Pine, CA	D	I have read your document and still find that it does not address the wishes of the people of Inyo county. The citizens of Inyo County have spoken at the meetings that Judge Lamb conducted and at all of these meetings the citizens favored the court be built in Independence. Judge Lamb chose to ignore them and push to put the court in Bishop. The town and county seat of Independence meet all five of the criteria for the court and should therefor be built there. The citizens of Inyo want it built there. You should build it there. You all work for the citizens of California and you should carry out the wishes of the people you work for.	See AOC response F on page 1.

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
23.	Denise Jones Veda's Hair Villa Lone Pine, CA	D	<p>Page/Paragraph</p> <p>1/4 Residents from the entire county want to keep the courthouse in Independence.</p> <p>8/4 Much of the vacant residentially zoned property is located in So. Inyo County. South county has the land space.</p> <p>18/11 The price of land is much less expensive in Independence than in Bishop plus the space is more available.</p> <p>19/all Placing the Courthouse in Bishop does not meet the "historical or local preference". The location of the Courthouse should remain centrally located within the county rather than at the north end. It is more accessible to all Inyo County residents that way.</p> <p>21/1 Most of the vacant land is located in southern Inyo County.</p> <p>22/6 Even some Bishop area residents during the time of comments expressed a desire to keep the courthouse in Independence</p> <p>26/4 It was stated that "The Judicial Branch AB 1473 Five-Year Infrastructure Plan Fiscal Year 2010-2011" Bishop was a "high need" and Independence was a "CRITICAL NEED" with "poor security" stated as the reason when needs were considered. Independence was given the highest rating, NOT Bishop. The court suggests that all "in custody" cases will still be heard in Independence: presumably these cases will provide a larger security issue. How can the AOC assume that a secure facility can be built in Independence using the lesser amount of monies in the construction funds and then spend 32 million on a 2 room facility in Bishop? There is no justification in moving the money from the "critical need" to a "high need" when it is not allowed by the AOC's <i>Prioritization Methodology for Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects</i>?</p> <p>Independence is extremely dependent on the courthouse business for its survival.</p>	These comments are very similar to those submitted by Commentator #4. Please refer to AOC responses to Commentator #4.
24.	Milton Jones	D	No Bishop. Yes Independence.	
25.	Nona Jones Bishop, CA	D	<p>I live in Bishop. Why on earth did you get to make the decision to build a \$30 million courthouse here?! This is not the county seat – Independence is. Are you not considering the distance people in Southern Inyo County have to drive for a court appearance? I truly think you've made a very bad mistake. Think it over and build in Independence where it should be.</p> <p>A very concerned citizen.</p> <p>P.S. You are in San Francisco, how can you make a decision about a courthouse that is not even in your area!?!?</p>	See AOC responses E and F, on page 1.

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
26.	Eileen Kalkoske Bishop, CA	D	<p>I drove to Inyo County Courthouse at Independence for a number of years – as Personnel in the Administrative Office – its a pleasant drive from Bishop – about 45 minutes.</p> <p>I am pleading also – to leave the new construction of a courthouse at Independence – centrally located to all of Inyo County. Our 2 judges Brian Lam & Dean Stout – live here in Bishop – so of course they want it built in the Bishop area. But – Independence still remains the center of the County – the perfect place for a courthouse – and it serves all people of the County.</p> <p>Thank you for a good judgment!</p>	See AOC response E on page 1.
27.	Matt Kingsley Lone Pine, CA	D	<p>The process of determining the location for the new court house has been the most wasteful undertaking I have witnessed in Inyo County...</p> <p>Clearly a majority of citizens felt that the courthouse should be located in Independence. That fact was verified in the 6-7 public meeting held by our local judges and the AOC. Both Judges and everyone else attending these meetings agreed that the overwhelming input from the public was to locate the courthouse in the traditional location of Independence our county seat.</p> <p>Clearly the purpose of these meetings was to see if there was anyone out there who really wanted the courthouse moved to Bishop. When that process did not produce a group or even individuals who supported the move, then that effort was deemed unreliable and a new process was initiated. The new process excludes public input as important and leaves the decision up to someone or some group in Sacramento. The courthouse is being built with public funds from our taxes... why would we be excluded from the decision making process???</p> <p>Simply put... Independence is the County Seat of Inyo County. Most citizens agree that any inconvenience caused by maintaining Independence as our county seat is well worth our effort. Our County Seat, Our Courthouse, Our Tax money, Our Choice...</p>	<p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response D on page 1.</p>
28.	Janet Kornberg Palo Alto, CA	D	<p>I think the decision to build a new courthouse in Bishop is questionable. I do like that some services will continue to be offered in Independence, but it also seems to me that if there is inadequate bus service to get jurors from Bishop to Independence, there is equally inadequate bus service to get jurors from Independence, or even much further south, up to Bishop at the far north end of Inyo County. The big beneficiaries here are court officials and employees living in Bishop who have a shorter commute. I do not think that this is adequate reason to abandon the historic courthouse, located in the county seat, in the more geographic center of Inyo county, in Independence.</p>	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response J on page 1.</p>
29.	Kathy Lammiman Bishop, CA	A	26 Finally, a rational recommendation. Thank you.	

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
30.	Jane McDonald Independence, CA	D	<p>Based on surveys, letters to the editor, and participation in several rounds of meetings about the proposed location of the courthouse, the overwhelming majority of the residents of Inyo County believe the new courthouse should be constructed in Independence, our county seat. The AOC and our local judges have an obligation to listen to this county and what we want. Beyond that, the AOC has circumvented its own decisionmaking processes in order to rig this process. Original funding was secured BASED ON the site being Independence</p> <p>We are losing faith in our judicial system here. You still have time to do the right thing and listen to the people of Inyo County.</p>	See AOC response F on page 1.
31.	Maureen McVicker Legal Processing Clerk Big Pine, CA	A	<p>Page/Paragraph</p> <p>10/7 I am a court employee and I witness firsthand the difficulty that people have with having to come to Independence to file certain types of paperwork (i.e. family law) instead of in Bishop where they live.</p> <p>13/8.3 People having to drive from Bishop to Independence for jury duty is one of the main complaints I here from prospective jurors and my friends in the community. They don't mind serving – but have a problem driving from Bishop, especially for a lengthy trial.</p> <p>16/9.1 Transportation is a big problem for traveling to Independence. The bus arrives at 7:55 a.m. and doesn't return to Bishop until 5:15 p.m. This is very bad if people have a morning appearance and have completed it and can't go home. Also the people who have a 1:00 pm appearance have to wait in Independence all morning (and there is not much to do in Independence). Also the cost is not cheap – especially on people with limited income. I live in Big Pine and drive 26 miles to work in Independence and will continue to do so, even if the main courthouse is in Bishop.</p> <p>10.1 In my own humble opinion – having the courthouse in Bishop will not damage the economy in Independence. The court employees will continue to work in Independence at the court annex (if main courthouse is built in Bishop). Plus whatever space that is vacated by the court employees in the courthouse can be filled up with other County employees – maybe some who currently work in Bishop. I believe the County rents extra office space in Bishop – so they would be able to vacate some office space. So in the end – this would bring more employees to Independence!!</p> <p>18/10.1 Regarding eating facilities: there is just a couple of choices in Independence – so jurors may eat there the first day – but they tend to bring their lunches the remainder of the trial. I know people comment about the employees not helping the eating establishment in Independence if the main courthouse is built in Bishop. There are only so many Subways that 10 court employees can eat. We tend to bring our lunches anyway.</p>	See AOC response J on page 1.

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>20/11.1.2 Again, in my opinion as a court employee and a county resident and NOT as someone speaking for the court – I think having the main courthouse in Bishop would be the best idea. So many more people and lawyers and related services are located there. And I feel we could better serve that part of the county by being a full-service courthouse with adequate storage room. We would still be able to serve the Southern county too with a full service court and a courthouse will ample storage room for our files and ADA access, which is needed. It is very hard for older people to climb the stairs. And better security is needed.</p> <p>23/11.2 I feel the smaller annex type courthouse should be located in Independence next to the jail. This would make for easier transport of people in-custody. The historic courthouse would still be utilized by the County. I don't think people realize that only a handful of court employees actually work in the courthouse. They think the entire building is full of court staff.</p> <p>24/2. Independence just doesn't seem to have any more room to grow. So a larger court facility doesn't seem necessary. We currently have a full service court and will continue to do so. Again – some of my neighbors/friends/other county employees do not seem to understand this.</p> <p>26/12 I totally agree that the main courthouse should be located in Bishop. This would be the best for both Bishop and Independence.</p> <p>NOTE: These are my personal opinions as a County residence who happens to be a court employee. I am not making any opinions for the "Court".</p>	
32.	Daniel Miller Jr., Owner DM/7H Miller Ranch Independence, CA	D	<p>Please disregard my 1st email I sent to your the other day. I did not have a form and now I do. Please accept this comment form as my official comment. Thank you. Daniel J Miller Jr.</p> <p>Page/Paragraph</p> <p>4/2 Censes Tract 5 – Group 1 has been identified as being in the Bishop area. Some of these persons reside as close or closer to Independence than that of Bishop and should be moved to the Independence Area.</p> <p>7/3 Did you include all who work on the Reservations, in areas south of Lone Pine, and the Death Valley area? Manzanar? If not, then this will change your figures.</p> <p>8/4 Your information listed is being selective to meet the target of your agenda of moving the Inyo project to Bishop. There is more property south of Lone Pine, South East Inyo County near Pahrump than there is in the Bishop Area. All rural property that can be developed do not have access to a water system or a sewer system. This is not a major obstacle to growth. Pretty much all new building outside of a town or city limit is done with the owner having to drill a domestic well and install a septic system. Therefore all available rural property should be counted as potential development sites. Did you include Lubkin Ranch subdivision proposal? Did you include property near Pahrump? This area was used as a major population center of the future in the arguments against Yucca Mountain. Why is it not used as a future population center for this project.</p>	<p>Revised comments were received and are presented below in center column.</p> <p>4/2: Census Tract 5-Group 1 ends at the very southern end of Big Pine. Every resident who lives in this census tract lives closer to Bishop than Independence.</p> <p>7/3: The AOC relied on the "Eastern Sierra Housing Needs Assessment" report, as cited in the report, for the graphs on page 7.</p> <p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p>

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Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p>10/7 Locating the Inyo Project in Bishop does not address the safety issues of the Courts in Independence and all in custody cases will still be heard in Independence. Security and safety is the #1 priority of the project and it's funding.</p> <p>10/8.1 You fail to mention how many traffic tickets are written to Southern California Residences who are traveling through the area. All of these that need court can be heard in the Independence Courts. This would be closer to their residences and free up court time in Bishop. The filing could still be done in Bishop and the paper work transported to Independence by courier. Your information is a shell game with numbers. Move the filings to Independence regardless of the traffic location citation if the subjects live south of Big Pine.</p> <p>12/ You are misleading the public. How many of these felonies, misdemeanors are for non Inyo County Residences or Residences of other communities other than Bishop? If most of these felonies, misdemeanors belong to non Bishop area residences then the numbers you site have no meaning. Again, if most of these persons live south of Independence then hold the court in Independence.</p> <p>21/4 Misleading. How many non in custody jury cases have been heard. If there is more in custody jury trials then Bishop area jurors will still have to travel to Independence. Also, some of the Bishop area residents actually live as close to, or closer to Independence than Bishop in travel.</p> <p>21/11 There is more available land located South and South East of Independence than there is in the Bishop area.</p> <p>22/6 There have been many Bishop area residences that have showed their support for the Independence Location. You fail to mention this.</p> <p>22/7 Again, you fail to mention the support from the Bishop area residences for the Independence location.</p> <p>23/11.2.1 You mention that residences of Big Pine and south to Division Creek have to travel 80 miles round trip. In fact, some of these persons would travel farther by going to Bishop.</p> <p>24/1 Money saved by purchasing the land in Independence over Bishop land could be used to add another court room in vacant space in the current building that houses the Bishop Court. You do not address how 2 Judges are going to occupy the current 3 court rooms in Independence and the 2 court rooms in Bishop if this project is located to Bishop.</p> <p>24/4 Misleading. Again, not all Bishop area residents are traveling 80+ miles round trip to Independence.</p>	<p>The safety issues related to hearing in-custody cases in Independence can be accomplished by constructing a pre-fabricated building directly adjacent to the county jail.</p> <p>Because most traffic infractions do not result in a court appearance, Table 3 in section 8.1 of the report omits all traffic infractions. Table 3 shows that 72-75% of all non-traffic cases filings in 2008 and 2009 originated in the Bishop area.</p> <p>12/ Court records indicate the residence of the defendant and the report accurately reflects those records.</p> <p>21/4 See AOC response J on page 1.</p> <p>21/11 See AOC response A on page 1.</p> <p>226/ and 22/7 See AOC response G on page 1.</p> <p>23/11.2.1 Residents of Big Pine would travel approximately 50 miles round trip to Independence and approximately 30 miles round trip to Bishop.</p> <p>24/1 Currently two judges, and the equivalent another nearly full-time judicial officer use four courtrooms now. With two courtrooms in Bishop, there would not be a need for all three existing courtrooms in Independence.</p> <p>24/ 4 Residents of Big Pine would travel approximately 50 miles round trip to Independence and approximately 30 miles round trip to Bishop.</p>

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>25/5 Residences could continue to file at Bishop location. Filings can be transported to Independence as needed.</p> <p>26/12 If you have 2 court rooms in Bishop, who would hear cases in Independence court rooms? Could all of this be a reason to get more Judges appointed or elected? Remember, Security and history of location is #1 priority, and convenience is not a requisite.</p>	<p>25/5. AOC revised section 11.2.2.5 based on this comment.</p> <p>26/12 See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>Not all three courtrooms in Independence will be needed if there are two courtrooms in Bishop.</p>
33.	Lorena Miller Independence, CA	D	<p>I wish to offer a point in the discussion of the location of the new Inyo courthouse.</p> <p>The number along the left side of the page refers to section in the “Site Selection & Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities”.</p> <p>5.3 “Site near the Jail Facility” indicate Independence.</p> <p>Of any point this is the one that disqualifies Bishop as a location. Judges and committees may chose to ignore their own policy but it is clear they do so for their own benefit.</p> <p>Add the fact that Inyo County owns property adjacent to the jail so there would be no cost of acquisition. This location is within a mile of downtown and would be plainly in view from the highway 395.</p> <p>As for population growth, Bishop is not surrounded by private land but is subject to the same restrictions in growth as Independence or any other community surround by land owned by Los Angeles’ Department of Water and Power.</p> <p>The fact that the historic courthouse is outmoded in its electrical facilities is not a disputed point. It does not provide the basic security that is needed by both the staff and the public. Parking for the historic courthouse is inadequate. Both heating and cooling the building is difficult so the building is only comfortable in the spring and fall;</p> <p>The original decision to build the new courthouse in Independence was based on pressing need. The decision to build in Bishop is capricious and without good reason.</p>	<p>The list of “Criteria Used to Evaluate Inyo Project Location Options” was guided by the goals and principles of site selection and acquisition. This comment refers to the Site Policy’s Section 5 entitled “Evaluation and Selection of Site Types.”</p> <p>See AOC response C on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p>
34.	Tom Noland Lone Pine, CA	D	<p>Keep the main court in Independence. Save the state of California money by doing the least amount possible,- on security only. Independence is more central to people in Inyo County. Your draft put the line at Poverty Hills. People in Big Pine need drive only a few more miles to get to Independence than if they went to Bishop. (your comment form does’nt work on this computer).</p> <p>Independence not Bishop.</p>	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p>
35.	Patrick J. O’Neil Bishop, CA	A	<p>Excellent document, the numbers justify that the new court house should be built in Bishop.</p>	

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
36.	James Parker Bishop, CA	A	<p>Comments to the AOC concerning a future Inyo County Courthouse in Bishop:</p> <p>I seem to receive a jury summons every six to twelve months lately.</p> <p>I reside just north of the City of Bishop.</p> <p>I strongly believe that it is more important to locate a new courthouse in Bishop, and thereby reduce the number of trips up and down Highway 395 for the majority of Inyo jurors, than it is to preserve the historical/economic structure of the town of Independence. Every year Inyo County residents die in highway fatalities on Highway 395, therefore any change that would reduce the number of trips on the highway by thousands per year strikes me as a significant life-saving measure. Even though I enjoy the town of Independence, I would prefer to enjoy a “reduced” town for years to come, rather than spend those years dead.</p>	
37.	Dave Patterson Bishop, CA	A	<p>28/12 You have it right. Do it in Bishop. Similar circumstances to Mono County in Mammoth Lakes. Provide services where the people are.</p>	
38.	Larry K. Peckham Independence, CA	D	<p>It is ludicrous to have the courthouse in Bishop. We have the land, better location etc. If you want to destroy a town then move it to Bishop.</p>	See AOC response E on page 1.
39.	Kristen Peterson Independence, CA	D	<p>As a long time resident of Independence, I’m upset over the courthouse dispute. When the county went for the grant to build a new courthouse the plan was to keep it here in the County Seat. When it comes down to politics nothing is what it should be.</p> <p>Taking the courthouse out of the County Seat has more cons than pros. The only pro any employee can say is, shorter drive therefore less gas money spent. Independence has so much history within law enforcement and the judicial system. The Judges and court employees are the ones who win, no consideration for the civilians. Not everyone who goes to court is a criminal; there are many civil and family law cases.</p> <p>The grant was specifically to build a new courthouse in Independence not Bishop. We have the land with easy access to build and its affordable. The property is more expensive in Bishop, plus don’t see how they’ll find a convenient location.</p> <p>The County Seat is where the courthouse should stay. Don’t change the historical value of Inyo County.</p>	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response B on page 1.</p>
40.	Ed Pittman Bishop, CA	A	<p>(Pages 1-26) It always saddens me to see my friends and neighbors shaking their verbal fists at each other, often with limited information or analysis, regarding a public issue.</p> <p>My interest in the decision regarding the New Inyo County Courthouse Project is that it be made based on a thorough analysis. What is the most cost effective way to provide this essential government service in the long term? Congratulations, your analysis and recommendation meet this standard. That said, some comment.</p> <p>No court services will be taken away from the residents of the Independence area.</p> <p>Money remains available for a facility dedicated to in-custody cases in Independence.</p> <p>The possibility of historic renovation and preservation of the current County Courthouse is not diminished. That task is up to us.</p>	

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>I would have liked two additional analyses, making what is already clear in your report substantially more obvious. 1. How many miles would be driven annually by public users and court staff for each location? Fuel consumed and greenhouse gas emissions are important considerations for many Inyo residents. 2. What is the difference in hours lost in transportation time between the two locations?</p> <p>Inyo-Mono transit has a dial-a-ride service in the Bishop area that enables area residents to conveniently meet their needs, including jury duty, if they are in need of public transportation.</p> <p>The argument has been made that population growth in South Inyo is more likely than in North Inyo. A hypothetical – lets double the population of Inyo county, with 80% of the growth going south, 20% of the growth going north. That is what it would take to balance the considerations in your report. First, it won't happen. Second, if it were imminent, many if not most residents of Inyo would be horrified at the environmental considerations and would do all they could to stop it. Third, if it did, there would clearly be another courthouse project to support the needs of that population.</p> <p>I write as a trained analyst, working for several years on alternative office locations for the federal land management agencies, including in Bishop. While I am sympathetic to the concerns of my Independence friends for economic development in their community, that is only one of your several criteria, and is clearly not compelling in this project.</p> <p>After reading your report, I believe local accusations of stupidity and arrogance on your part are unfounded.</p> <p>Unless this comment period turns up major sins of omission in the analysis, I support your recommendation and wish you well in the provision of the new court facility.</p>	
41.	Jack Pound Independence, CA	D	<p><u>January 10, 2011</u></p> <p>What I lament most about the proposed decision to build a new \$30M courthouse in Bishop, for Inyo County, is the loss of local control of the judiciary. With the State take-over of the courts, and your proposed decision to build a new courthouse in Bishop, Inyo County no longer has any say over its own local judicial system.</p> <p>Is it any wonder the State is \$28B in debt? You have spent us right into the poor-house. Not only do you want to spend \$30M for a new courthouse in Bishop, that only lawyers want, but you pay two local Superior Court judges more than the Governor. How is this sustainable?</p> <p>If Governor Brown is serious about returning power back to cities and counties and reducing a huge State deficit, he should start by returning the courts back to local county control. We don't need a new \$30M courthouse in Bishop. Let us decide locally where to improve our court and listen from someone other than a lawyer, what the People want.</p> <p>If government is for the People and by the People, the State of California should see value in local decision-making and local justice. The People have ultimate power, not the State nor the courts, and government should follow the will of the People, for all politics begin locally with ourselves.</p>	<p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response D on page 1.</p>

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Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p><u>January 18, 2011</u></p> <p>I looked this up on Google maps: it's 232 miles from Bishop to Tecopa, with an average driving time of 4 hours and 17 minutes.</p> <p>Inyo County is a large county spread over 10,000 square miles of land, encompassing Death Valley National Park and the Eastern Sierra Inyo National Forest.</p> <p>Our county seat is Independence, 42 miles south of Bishop, so the drive for potential jurors living in far Southern Inyo is reduced by 45 minutes or so.</p> <p>Here's my point. No matter where you build a new courthouse, Bishop or Independence, there is a commute factor we need to address. There is also a potential juror service compensation issue.</p> <p>First the commute. Back in the 1920s, when our current courthouse in Independence was being planned and built, the decision-makers had not a clue we could record court proceedings via digital cameras, and be able to televise and transmit those images and sounds thousands of miles within seconds in the year 2011. Cell phones? And what were they thinking of putting the courtroom on the 2nd floor, accessible by 4 flights of stairs?</p> <p>They didn't think about installing an elevator to climb those stairs, or installing high-speed digital cable, so the court could be wired and recorded. I don't think they envisioned what the 21st century would look like at all.</p> <p>I'm 60 years old, and I certainly didn't see the capabilities of computers, until I saw a company advertising a brave new world on the Super Bowl, smashing the glass ceiling of our imagination in 1984. And who out there remembers the browser wars of the 90s, fighting for a portal to the World Wide Web, or looking for a pay phone.</p> <p>The past decade has seen great strides in the digital revolution. We now have the capability to be globally connected, via computer and cable, and can traverse the globe in seconds at the press of a button. We can easily audio and video-record any court proceeding - anywhere, and transmit to anyone with a computer and internet.</p> <p>I see this accessibility to modern technology, and Inyo County's ringside position on the digital superhighway, as a way for us to peer into the future and see a solution to long drive commutes and unpaid jury duty.</p> <p>There are no guarantees, but my crystal ball sees the digital revolution as taking us places we could only dream, just a few short years ago. In planning for the future, I encourage embracing the audio/video computer technology, all easily available today, and turning the current Superior courtroom in Independence into a 21st century broadcast, recording studio, capable of connecting all potential jurors within Inyo County, via computer and television, to any judicial proceeding.</p>	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p>

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	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>Which leads me to the juror issue. Let's face it, asking anyone to drive over 3 hours one-way to sit as a potential juror is asking a lot. If you set up all proceedings to be broadcast from Independence, TV screens and recording equipment could also be set up in Bishop and Tecopa and every community center in between, for people to gather and participate in jury selection and/or jury duty.</p> <p>It could also be televised on a court TV channel and website, and any interested citizen could view the proceedings, without having to commute at all, in the comfort of their own home. They call it tele-commuting and video conferencing, and it could be an answer to our dependence on burning fossil fuel for lengthy commutes and time spent in a car that isn't monetarily compensated, creating financial hardship for those of us who work to live.</p> <p>Eliminating juror commutes altogether is looking to the future and viewing a way to reduce the tremendous costs of trials and helping to address court security concerns. Spending a few million dollars on our current courthouse in Independence, will upgrade infrastructure to hard-wire us on the leading edge of the 21st century and beyond.</p> <p>Who really knows what the future will look like, but I suspect Lady Justice might see the digital revolution as an answer to some of those pesky issues of long commutes and unpaid civic service, creating financial hardship. She may be blind-folded, but she "sees" the equality and balance of the playing field a digital future offers, and appears to nod approvingly.</p>	See AOC response J on page 1.
42.	Von Riesen Independence CA	D	<p>I am writing this because I am concerned for the welfare of the Town of Independence. We are small and the County seat and taking away any thing is a major impact to the community and the residents of the town. Let me list a few points that I believe has or will happen if the court is moved to Bishop</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If an election was held on were the court should be built, the majority of the people would support, that it should be in Independence. How do I know this , I was raised in the Owens Valley and everyone that I have talked to and that is many, feel the same as I do. The location of the building should be built were the people want it not were a court staff would like it. 2. The impact of moving the court to Bishop means nothing to Bishop as far a local business are concerned, but would take away business from Independence that it cannot afford to lose. The economy is bad now and a loss of any kind would not be good. 3. Transportation of people in custody would be costly, since the jail is in Independence. Judge Lamb says that this will not be the case, but I will bet that is not the truth and the burden will be put on the tax payer and the sheriff department. 4. Future development and increased population is going to only happen in the southern part of the county, the only private land left that is not in the hands of the City of Los Angeles is south of Independence. So twenty years from now what will be the case, a court in Bishop and the population in the south? That could and will probably happen if the housing market ever returns. 	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response I on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>5. As a tax payer I do not want to pay for a 30 million dollar building for the rest of my life, no matter where it is built. It is hard to believe that this kind of money is available when the state of the State and the whole Nation is bankrupt. People do not have jobs and or food and there is all this money that is earmarked for a court that we do not need or want to maintain. The court system needs improvement but not with a 30 million dollar building. The buildings they have now could be fixed up to make it workable and save this money for a better use.</p> <p>6. Last November there was an election that I hope everyone in the State took notice. The general public is feed up with government and the over spending that is going on every day. The two Judges that have supported this most likely putting their jobs at risk. I for one am tired of the elected officials that represent me and you, but only represent themselves and a few of their picked supporters. The last election removed many that had the same agenda. The case here is not the location of the court, it is that these two Judges and their staff live in Bishop Do not what to drive 42 miles to work. I wonder if these folks thought of this when they took the job,</p> <p>7. I wondered at the first meeting that was held on this subject in Independence, the court staff wanted public input, but stated that after a short period of time the comments received would be destroyed and not sent on to the AOC, does that sound a little odd, or does the AOC want to hear what the public has to say.</p> <p>8. Last year it was a done deal that the court would be built in Independence until Judge Lamb found out that it could be built elsewhere, how interesting that is.</p> <p>9. The AOC needs to look into the impact that this court will have on Inyo County and the people that live in these small towns. You put the court room at the north end of the county the burden on people serving as jurors that live in the south will be many miles of driving. Judge Lamb again stated that jurors will be picked out of the north for the court in the north. I think that goes against picking a jury that will be diversified and give that defendant a fair trial. I do that know the law, but that might be a good question to ask.</p> <p>10. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and do the people of Inyo County a favor and make a judgment that is good for the whole county and not the court staff and the judges that man the court system. The future of development in the County need to be looked at the placement of the court system is important.</p>	<p>See AOC response D on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response J on page 1.</p>
43.	Susanne M. Rizo, Esq. Bishop, CA	A	<p>I am FULLY IN SUPPORT OF locating the new courthouse facility in BISHOP California.</p> <p>I am an attorney and my experience has been that the Bishop area sorely needs a facility for its court purposes. Please continue to support building a facility in BISHOP. The population base of Inyo County is located in Bishop and a facility in this area will better serve a majority of the county's population.</p>	
44.	Charlotte Rodrigues Bishop, CA	A	No comments.	

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
45.	Gail Shults	A	<p>I am an Inyo Court Employee who works in Independence and I agree with your recommendation. I am the Judicial Asst. in charge on summoning, paying, etc. all of the jurors in our County. The majority of our jury pool comes from Bishop and in my personal opinion, it creates a hardship to many of our jurors. As you know, they are not reimbursed for any gas or lost work time on the first day of service. That means that they have paid for gas for a 90 mile round trip visit to the courthouse, whereas, if they were able to serve in Bishop, they would have not only have a much smaller commute, but they would also have the convenience of returning to work if they are excused. The Bishop Courthouse is so small that there is not enough room for a good sized jury pool, or even for the staff to handle the day to day operations there. The clerks are always rotating their seating situations there to try and accommodate the court's needs for the day. Clerks are sometimes rotated from Independence and have to play musical chairs to find a workspace. I happen to be one of these clerks, and it is very uncomfortable trying to find a place to sit for the day.</p>	
46.	Vickie Taton Bishop, CA	D	<p>8/1 LADWP is putting 24 parcels up for auction with the largest in Lone Pine and others located in Independence, Big Pine zoned for residential</p> <p>8/4 There is no assurance that the ability to build residential units in Bishop matches the future need for housing. Currently many of the employees of Coso Operating Company live in Ridgecrest. Where is there consideration of the housing need in southern Inyo?</p> <p>8/5 With the Digital 395 broadband project and the current interest and planning for renewals, the demographics may shift suddenly. Once broadband internet access is available the companies and entrepreneurs attracted by the eastern Sierra's outdoor amenities need not be restricted to current job concentrations.</p> <p>9/1 Again, this is very likely to change with the establishment of the entrepreneurial opportunities opening up with the Digital 395 broadband project.</p> <p>10/5 If the origin of family law and juvenile cases cannot be established has that been factored in to this percentage?</p> <p>16/6 In essence there is one bus available to each group to get to morning jury duty by nine am.</p> <p>17/1 The southbound bus for jurors reporting to Bishop from Independence gets the jurors home much later than the Bishop northbound from Independence.</p> <p>20/5 If and when there is growth in Inyo County it will most likely NOT be in Bishop, which is essentially built out</p> <p>21/5 When the population grows in Inyo County it will most likely be where the larger employers are located and locating – Olancho, near future solar, wind and geothermal facilities, not Bishop.</p>	<p>8/1, 4 and 5; 9/1, 20/5, 21/5, 24/3 See AOC response A on page 1.</p> <p>10/5 See AOC response H on page 1.</p> <p>16/6 and 17/1 The AOC agrees there is very limited public transportation between Bishop and Independence.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>23/1 While a nice sentiment, once the AOC has pulled the economic rug out from under Independence how long will the county be able to maintain that historic structure – and for what purpose?</p> <p>24/3 This is opinion. As one involved in a comprehensive economic assessment of the region there are multiple opportunities for growth outside the city of Bishop with the prospect of broadband internet and the current interest and study of renewable energy.</p>	23/1 AOC has modified report Section 11.1.2 #7 and 11.2.2.#7 based on this comment.
47.	Beverly Vander Wall	D	Please, Please, Please don't take our County Courthouse to the north end of Inyo County.	See AOC response E on page 1.
48.	Dean Vander Wall	D	<p>I have owned and operated Lone Pine Drug in Southern Inyo County since 1968. We have a very unique county with 18,000 residents spread over great distances. To further polarize the county by building the new courthouse in Bishop will be a disservice to our county community. It will also serve a death sentence to the town of Independence. I STRONGLY disagree with your decision to further divide our county. I feel our citizens should decide our future by way of the Democratic Process rather than a decree from "above"</p> <p>Please reconsider an allow the vote decide.</p>	See AOC response E on page 1.
49.	Heather Willis Inyo County Superior Court Clerk III	A	<p>I apologize for this comment not being in the format you provided. I had difficulties trying to send it.</p> <p>I agree with the AOC's decision to place the new Courthouse in Bishop.</p> <p>Let us not forget that Inyo County's Court users are the silent majority. Not the shop owners or those stating their opinions from an economical stand point. Our Court users are often the ones looking for transportation to Court, holding down two jobs and struggling to make daycare arrangements to attend their court hearing. You won't find their attendance at public meetings or in a written letter. The function of the Court is not to provide economic stability but is to provide Court services to the majority of the population. Independence already provides all Court services to the community....Bishop does not. Given that Bishop holds the majority of our county's population it makes the most sense to place the new Courthouse in Bishop. One has to wonder how many of those voicing such strong opinions actually use or need Court services.</p>	
50.	Harvey and Nancy Willis Bishop, CA	D	<p>Page/Paragraph</p> <p>1/1.0 The majority of Bishop residents want the main courthouse to stay in Independence. We live in Bishop, and don't mind the occasional drive to Independence. It is a pretty drive and outing. The present judges live in Bishop so they don't want to commute to Independence for work. This is what prompted the move of the courthouse to Bishop. It is the same reason why in the late 1970's the LA DWP moved its headquarters from Independence to Bishop because their managers lived in Bishop. This nearly killed Independence as a town. If the main courthouse is moved to Bishop, then Independence will exist no longer except for the Inyo County Recorder's Office. The 5 remaining businesses will close if this move is allowed to happen. The Proposed to Bishop Plan does not adequately study nor address what happens if Pahrump, NV spills over into Inyo County seeing that the two areas are located in the same geographical valley.</p>	<p>See AOC response E on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response A on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p>2/ Report prepared to the wishes of the Inyo County judges. (2) Methodology of study report skewed in favor of Bishop. (3) Fund use facts skewed in favor of Bishop location.</p> <p>8/4.0 There is no land available in the Bishop Area with the exception of where the Inyo County maintenance yard is located on South Main St. in Bishop. If new main courthouse was located there, where would the county maintenance yard be moved to? DWP would have to make land available and why should it? If DWP gave up land in Bishop, it would be given as part of the Inyo Water Agreement and the local citizens would not be for that move.</p> <p>17/10.0 Information based upon biased opinions of the staff report researchers. It is heavily skewed toward Bishop. Only alternative for Inyo County residents is to vote the two judges out of office for pushing this move to Bishop. The new main courthouse might get built in Bishop, but if they are no longer in office, they want get to use it.</p> <p>20/1.1.2.1 It wouldn't if the population base shifts to southeastern Inyo County east of Shoshone where Pahrump, NV can and will spill over into Inyo County in the same geographical valley.</p> <p>20/1.1.2.2 No, See answer above.</p> <p>21/1.1.1.2.4 (refers to #3) Not true. Many court defendants hire out of area attorneys, and not all cases involve Social Service Department of the county. Again, the report is biased in favor of Bishop.</p> <p>21/11.1.2.4 These statements miss the point because while the majority of country residents live in the northern part of Inyo County, it doesn't address the residents of the southern and southeast parts of the country that have to already drive 100 to 200 miles one way to court which is presently in Independence. Moving it further away from their homes would add an additional 90 miles round trip per day to their court duties. The court systems should treat all jury members as equal, but now southern and southeast have to drive and pay much greater expenses (gas, food and motel cost) than residents in Bishop who drive an occasional 2 to days round trip to Independence for jury duty. We are close enough to Independence to not have to stay overnight and not have to pay motel costs. We actually enjoy the drive and outing. DWP who is a major employer in the county along with the Crystal Geyer Bottling company at Olancho have all or most of their employees in the southern part of the county as does the Geo Thermal Plant at Coso which is also a major employer in the country. We think that the 2010 Census figures will show a different population trend moving more toward the southern end of the County than the figures that the researchers of this report used of the last Census information.</p>	<p>8/4.0 The AOC's preliminary reviews of property one year ago revealed six potential sites in Bishop. None of those sites was a county maintenance yard. Of those six sites, five were owned by The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). LADWP's broker advised that these parcels were available for purchase. The sixth site is privately-owned. In the last year additional sites may have come on the market more recently.</p> <p>20/1.1.2.1 and 2 See AOC response A on page 1.</p> <p>21/1.1.1.2.3 Only a small percentage of cases involve an attorney who lives outside of Mono or Inyo counties.</p> <p>21/11.1.2.4 See AOC response J on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p>21/22/11.1.2.5 This report makes it sound like most of the county live in Bishop. Many of the county residents live in the northern end of the Owens Valley which is not Bishop proper. A lot of people who work in Bishop actually live in Mono County so why are the population figures for Bishop skewed in favor of Bishop? If you take the populations of Big Pine, Aberdeen, Ft. Independence, Independence, Lone Pine, Pergene, Cartago, Olancho, Sage Flats, Coso and Homewood Canyon; and add them together they would equal or exceed the population of the City of Bishop. I am not including the southeastern areas of Death Valley, Shoshone, and Tecopa. This report also makes it seem that the Inyo County residents spend most of their life in the courts of Inyo County. It is a fact that 90 – 95% of all court cases in the county are cancelled due to plea bargaining. So an occasional trip to Independence maybe once every two to three years is not a hardship. MY wife and I are retired in Bishop, so we get called more often than those who work, and we only get called about once every 3 years, and most of those calls get cancelled or we don't get chosen for actual jury duty. I was on a case in 2009 which was I first one in 30 years, and it lasted only 3 days.</p> <p>22/11.1.2.6 The selection by Judge Lamb to choose Bishop as the main location for the Inyo County Court came as a shock to most county residents. There have been many Letters to the Editor in the local Inyo Register newspaper in favor of keeping the main courthouse in Independence. Many of these letters from the Bishop area are in favor of keeping the main courthouse in Independence. We are sure that if this courthouse gets built in Bishop rather than staying in Independence, both Judge Lamb and Judge Stout will be back in private practice after the next election cycle for them comes up. Most everyone in the northern part of Inyo County support those who live in the southern and southeast parts of the county. Although large In geographic area, we are a close knit bunch as far as our people are concerned - all 18,000 of us. We are a rural and laid back County, and we don't like outsiders telling us how to live or run our County.</p> <p>22/11.1.2.7 The AOC should not have the final say so as to where the residents of Inyo County want its main courthouse. They want it to stay in Independence. The majority of the residents in the northern part of Inyo County want it to stay in Independence. We are natives to this County and Valley, and we don't much appreciate an outsider like Judge Lamb messing with what has worked here quite well for over two centuries. At one time the town of Keeler which I failed to mention in one of the paragraphs above had over 20,000 residents, and at one time, it was being considered as the state capital. Just because there is not much private land here doesn't mean that a large mining claim on BLM land could not open up, and the country population center could move almost south almost overnight. That has happened twice in Nevada in the last 20 years at the Round Mountain Gold Mine, and at the new gold mine at Eureka. Towns sprung up there in a matter of just two or three years. There is a large uranium reserve in southern Inyo County, and if nuclear power plants start being built again as they must for energy, southern Inyo county could double in population in just one or two short years. Most of the private land in the Owens Valley part of Inyo County along the 395 corridor is in the southern end of the Valley. The famous Lubken Ranch just south of Lone Pine is up for sale now, and that land could easily accommodate 2,000 new homes, and probably will when the economy gets moving again.</p>	<p>21/22/11.1.2.5 See AOC response K on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response F and G, on page 1.</p> <p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p>24/11.2.2.1 The main courthouse in Independence should remain in Independence, and be built on already laid aside DWP land near the Main Inyo County Jail and Probation Dept. Detention Center in Independence. This is more centrally located for all Inyo County residents of which half live in the southern and southeastern portions of the county. Half of the county's population center doesn't live in Bishop as this report proposes. This courthouse could be built for about \$10 million if a large clear-span metal building was used with ginger boarding on the exterior which would make for a pleasing exterior look within the Western look of the Valley, and the town of Independence. We don't need some architect who wants to make a statement about his great design capabilities nor a County official who wants to see his great name as a marquee on the building front. This should be a practical building with other incidental office space incorporated into the interior design of the building that could accommodate other County functions closely associated with the court.</p> <p>24/11.2.2.2 By leaving Independence as the center of the county judicial system, it makes it more central for all of the county residents, and not just for the conveniences of the judges, attorneys, and potential jurors who live in Bishop. A lot of attorneys come from out of the area and not just from Bishop. Potential jurors aren't actual jurors if never summons less a lone even chosen once in their life time for jury duty. The majority of residents in Bishop have never been on a jury here in the county so why is so much fuss being given to them being the central issue of Inyo County court location for the main courthouse? As we stated above, 90% to 95% of the trials get cancelled anyway so this whole main courthouse location selection process has been a big bunch of to do about nothing!</p> <p>24/11.2.2.3 This reports makes it sound as if the court only hears cases regarding people who use the County Social Services system. Not true at all. The Social Services Dept. is headquartered in Independence, and duplicates most if not all of the facilities that are located in Bishop. The AOC argument here doesn't hold water.</p> <p>24/11.2.2.4/5 Independence is the best location for all county jurors because it is centrally located geographically in the county. This location doesn't present a hardship on Bishop area residents because it is only 42 miles one way, and it is all divided highway as compared to the narrow cow-path roads that come out of the southeastern part of the county where potential jurors have to drive over 200 miles one way just to get to Independence less a lone to Bishop. The mute point here is that most of the jury trials are cancelled anyway so we are talking about only a few people who actually travel from Bishop to Independence for a court case. At best it is a one day ordeal maybe every three years and maybe a few days more if actually selected to be on a jury.</p>	<p>24/11.2.2.1 See AOC response K on page 1.</p> <p>The <i>Trial Court Design Standards</i>, adopted by the Judicial Council in 2006, require the AOC to construct courthouses with a 50-year life span.</p> <p>24/11.2.2.2 See AOC response J on page 1.</p> <p>24/11.2.2.3 Access to social service agencies is one of seven criteria established by the AOC to evaluate the loation options.</p> <p>24/11.2.2.4/5 See AOC response J on page 1.</p>

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

	Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
			<p>25/11.2.2.6 Moving the main courthouse from Independence is definitely against the wishes of Inyo County residents, and especially those of us who live in the Bishop area. This AOC report has been so biased in favor of Bishop that even the analysis of the Independence proposal has commentary in favor of Bishop as being the new main courthouse location. What is the old adage? Liars figure, and figures lie! That is the case here in this report. I think we will find that if the new main courthouse gets built in Bishop, that after the next judgeship elections, Judge Lamb and Judge Stout will both be looking for jobs in the private sector! This will lose big time.</p> <p>25/11.2.2.7 The judges' move of the county main courthouse from Independence to Bishop definitely goes against the rural living style of this county's residents, and against the wishes of both its taxpayers and its electorate.</p>	<p>See AOC response F on page 1.</p> <p>The analysis of each location option is based on the criteria outlined in the report.</p>
51.	Cedrik Zemitis Bishop, CA	A	<p>I support the recommendation in the December 13, 2010 document to build the new court facility to Bishop. I've talked to many friends and co-workers and they also support the current plan.</p> <p>The only criteria where Independence scores higher than Bishop is in the historical location category and that's not enough to justify locating the new facility in Independence.</p> <p>I've followed the discussion in the local newspapers and websites and the reasons I've read to keep the new facility in Independence do not justify changing the recommendation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independence as a town will shrivel up and die without the new facility. <p>Well, it hasn't exactly bloomed with the current facility. Why would a new facility change the current community trajectory? Should a community with about 600 people (or about 3% of the county population) drive a \$30 million decision? No.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The businesses will shrivel up and die without the new facility. <p>They haven't exactly thrived with the current facility. Do jurors and others with court business fill up at the Chevron? I doubt it. Do they eat at the Still Life Cafe? No, it takes too long. There are so few services for court users that the judges recommend jurors bring their own lunch instead of eating out! Yes, Subway may lose some business, but should a single small business be the determining factor in a \$30 million decision? No.</p>	

Comments Summary: Location of the New Inyo County Courthouse

Commentator	Position	Comments	AOC Responses
		<p>3. Southern Inyo residents will have a longer trip to court.</p> <p>Yes they will. But residents from Tecopa, Shoshone, Darwin and other distant communities currently have to stay overnight to make a 9 am court date in Independence. Or more likely, they justifiably claim hardship and rarely serve as jurors. If the main court is in Bishop they will still have to stay overnight. Residents from Olancho, Cartago, Lone Pine, Keeler, etc. would have to get up ~45 minutes earlier but they could still reasonably make a 9 am court date in Bishop.</p> <p>You would know better, but it seems like the majority of court users are closer to Bishop than Independence. Also, I believe more court employees live in the Bishop area than Independence. Employees who live in Big Pine, Wilkerson, Mustang Mesa, etc. will have a much easier commute to Bishop.</p> <p>Taken in total, having the new court facility in Bishop would reduce total vehicle miles traveled for court users and employees. This will increase safety for the traveling public and will reduce air pollution.</p> <p>Please locate the new court facility in Bishop.</p>	<p>As indicated above, the AOC has modified Section 8.3 of the report to indicate that most jury trials involve in-custody individuals and therefore will continue to be held in Independence due to proximity to the county jail.</p>

	Agreement	Agree with Modifications	Do Not Agree	Total Respondents
Totals	23		28	51

Newspaper Articles: Court Commitment to Maintaining Court Services in Independence

Highlighted excerpt from the following article: “He [Judge Lamb] also stated that there have been suggestions that, if a new court facility is built in Bishop, Independence court facilities would be closed. He said that, too, is false. ‘You would still be able to file and have cases heard in Independence,’ Lamb said.” --Hon. Brian J. Lamb, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, County of Inyo, page A-1, *The Inyo Register*, Weekend Edition, August 21-22, 2010.



Court Executive Officer Tammy Grimm addresses about a dozen Big Pine residents Thursday during a public meeting regarding placement of a new court facility. Residents were able to speak candidly with court staff about their ideas and concerns in regards to the proposed project. Photo by Charles James

Judges hear residents' cases for court site

Meetings offer chance for public to weigh in on location of \$33 million facility

By Mike Gervais
Register Staff

Residents continue to resist the idea of building a new court facility in Bishop as opposed to Independence, as local judges continue meeting with community members to discuss the pros and cons of both prospects.

Superior Court Judges Brian Lamb and Dean Stout, along with representatives from the Administrative Offices of the Courts, met with residents in Independence, Bishop and Big Pine this week to gather input on where the \$33 million courthouse should be built.

There are additional meetings scheduled in Lone Pine and Cartago next week.

Majority opinion so far favors the county seat over

Inyo's population center, Bishop — where Lamb announced earlier this year he wanted to build the court facility because current space leased from the City of Bishop is not meeting the public's needs.

Lamb reiterated his feelings on the subject Thursday night in Big Pine, noting that if the new facility is built in Independence instead, the court has no plan for addressing the problems with court facilities in Bishop.

Initially, the plan was to use the \$33 million state bond money to build on a piece of property adjacent to Inyo County Jail in Independence.

Lamb's announcement not only caught residents off guard, but was met with widespread protest, particularly from Independence residents and business owners, and even residents from as far away as Tecopa.

With assurances that a site decision had not been made and resident sentiment would be considered before one is, the Superior Court then embarked on an effort to gather public comment.

This week's meetings



Brian Lamb



Dean Stout

opened with Court Executive Officer Tammy Grimm vowing that each resident's opinion on the project will be taken into consideration.

“We absolutely have not made a decision,” Grimm said Thursday night in Big Pine. “We are really torn, this is a difficult decision.”

Lamb kicked off the meeting by answering several frequently asked questions.

He said some residents have been under the impression that the courts can split the \$33 million bond between the two communities and construct a new court facility in

both Bishop and Independence. He said that is not possible, as the bond funding was awarded to Inyo for one project, not two.

He also said that there have been suggestions that, if a new court facility is built in Bishop, Independence court facilities would be closed. He said that, too, is false.

“You would still be able to file and have cases heard in Independence,” Lamb said.

He also said that the current court facility in Bishop has limited means, and residents are unable to handle
See SITE, page A-5

Highlighted excerpt from the following article: "He said that in-custody criminal cases would continue to be heard in Independence, which means the Inyo County Sheriff's Department would not have any additional costs for transporting prisoners to Bishop. If the facility is built in Bishop, 'no services or court types will be taken away from either location,'" Lamb said. —Hon. Brian J. Lamb, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, County of Inyo, page A-5, The Inyo Register, Weekend Edition, August 21-22, 2010.

SITE

Continued from front page
some court matters there,
such as divorce filings.

Lamb also said that it is imperative to utilize the \$33 million funds as soon as possible, as the current facilities in both Bishop and Independence lack adequate space for storage of court documents, staff and computers. He also said that there is no space in either facility for lawyers to meet confidentially with clients.

With all that apparent, Lamb said the next step is to figure out where the new court facility will be best suited.

He said that most of the cases the Superior Court hears come from the northern part of the county, north of the Tiemahs Reservoir.

If the new court facility is constructed in Bishop, it would be a full-service court that would allow residents in Bishop and Big Pine to have their cases heard without traveling to Independence.

He said that in-custody criminal cases would continue to be heard in Independence, which means the Inyo County Sheriff's Department would not have any additional costs for transporting prisoners to Bishop.

If the facility is built in Bishop, "no services or court types will be taken away from either location," Lamb said.

Lamb also said that if the facility is constructed in Bishop, the courts would use \$2.2 million in a Courthouse Construction Fund to either build a smaller court facility in Independence or retrofit the historic courthouse for continued use.

"I have a strong preference for seeing if we can stay in the historic courthouse, because it's a tremendous facility," Lamb said.

The problem with that scenario is that the courts do not know how much money would be needed to remodel the Independence facility. It would cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 to do a historic preservation study on the Independence courthouse.

Lamb said if the \$33 million facility is built in Independence, the courts do not have a plan for how to solve space and service

problems at the Bishop facility.

The \$2.2 million in court construction funds would be available for improvements to the site, but Lamb said that is not enough money to purchase a piece of land and build a new facility.

The \$2.2 million is adequate for a new facility in Independence, he said, because the county has a piece of property that could be used to build the courthouse on, saving money on land acquisitions.

More than one resident has asked the judges if the courts could work with Inyo County to manage space constraints.

It was suggested that the courts build the new \$33 million facility in Independence, vacate the court offices in the historic courthouse, which is technically owned by Inyo County and utilized by the courts under a long-standing Memorandum of Understanding.

If the courts vacated offices in the historic courthouse, one resident wondered Thursday whether the following scenario could be feasible:

County staff now working out of offices in Bishop City Hall, where Bishop's courthouse is located, could be relocated to the historic courthouse in Independence. The county would then no longer have to lease that office space in Bishop from the City of Bishop. The resident indicated that, in terms of savings for the county and resolving space issues for the court, the solution sounded like a win-win.

Judge Stout said that the courts had not looked too deeply into that idea because the court offices in the historic courthouse in Independence are minimal, and probably would not meet the needs of the county.

Fourth District Supervisor Marty Fortney, who was in attendance, indicated that the county would be interested in making that move if it were feasible, but neither the county nor the court has explored that option in depth.

Big Pine resident Charles James said he was concerned about the informal nature of the court facility project

meetings, as residents are able to comment anonymously, and there is no formal record of what suggestions and comments had been made.

Lamb said there is no way for residents to go on an official record, because the meetings are designed to be informal.

When asked if he had received more comments and recommendations from residents in favor of building in Independence or in Bishop, Lamb said he has not been counting the comments in favor of either location.

When asked if it seemed, without an official count, if those commenting favored one community over the other, Lamb said he is not concerned about the volume of comments he is receiving, but the quality of the feedback.

Judge Stout, however, readily admitted that the majority of those who are speaking up about the issue seemed to be in favor of building in Independence.

"There are many arguments that can be made regarding the new courthouse location ...

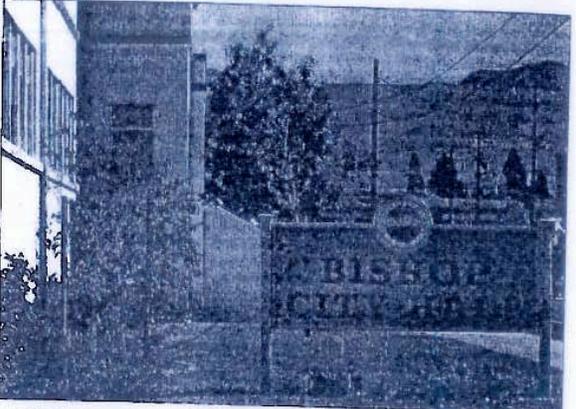
Independence being the county seat, Independence being centrally located, people in Tecopa having too far to drive, Independence being dependent financially on the courthouse, etc., etc.," Independence resident Jennifer Castaneda said in an e-mail following the Independence meeting on Tuesday. "The AOC has 'Site Selection and Acquisition Guidelines.' They have five points to follow as guidelines for selecting a site. Independence meets all of those requirements. One of the guidelines is 'the site selection should strive to meet historical and local preferences.'"

Castaneda said Independence meets those guidelines, while Bishop does not. "It goes without saying that Bishop does not meet historical preferences but also it stands to point out that the local preference is Independence. Local being the entire county," she said.

The Judges will hold a meeting in Tecopa on Sunday, and another in Lone Pine on Monday. Both will begin at 7 p.m.



Inyo County's judges are taking input from residents regarding a \$33 million courthouse construction project to see if community members would rather have the new facility built in Independence, replacing the historic courthouse (above), or in Bishop, replacing the court facilities in Bishop City Hall. File photos

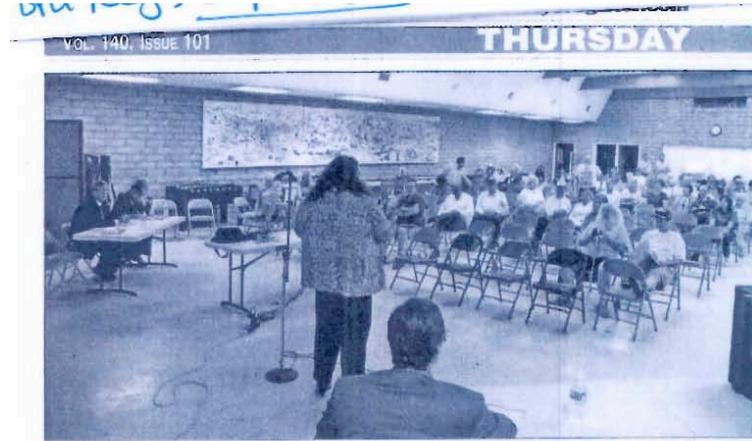


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Highlighted excerpt from the following article: "Lamb has said that, if a new facility is built in Bishop, the Independence facility would continue operating as a full-service courthouse, and would not lack any services." Lamb also said if the new facility is built in Bishop, all, or at least most, in-custody criminal trials would continue being held in Independence to avoid the added costs of transporting prisoners to Bishop. --Hon. Brian J. Lamb, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, County of Inyo, page A-1 (front page). *The Inyo Register*, front page, August 26, 2010, page A-1.



Executive Officer of the Court Tammy Grimm addresses a crowd in Lone Pine Monday as Judges Dean Stout (l) and Brian Lamb (foreground) look on. Following a presentation by Lamb, the judges met with residents in small groups to take questions and hear concerns about the project. Photo by Charles James

Lone Pine gets its day in Court's spotlight

Frustration again voiced at fifth of five public meetings on facility site location

By Mike Gervais
Register Staff

Residents continue to voice concerns that their opinions are not being heard by local judges as the court system prepares to construct a new facility in either Independence or Bishop.

At a meeting Monday evening in Lone Pine, many attendees told Presiding Judge Brian Lamb that they felt his presentation about the court facility project was biased, and leaned towards building the facility in Bishop even though a vast majority of those in attendance said they would prefer to have it built closer to their community.

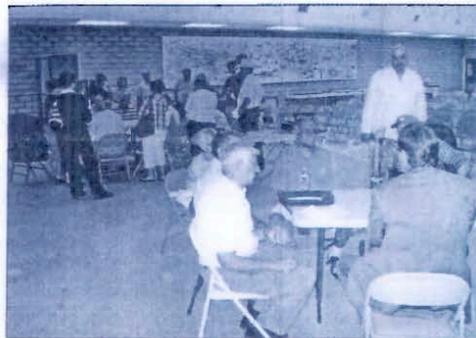
Residents have said that constructing a new \$33 million, bond-funded court facility in Bishop rather than Independence would put an unnecessary burden on Southern Inyo residents who may be required to travel from the southern reaches of the county to Bishop.

Lamb has said that, if a new facility is built in Bishop, the Independence facility would continue operating as a full-service courthouse, and would not lack any services.

Lamb also said if the new facility is built in Bishop, all, or at least most, in-custody criminal trials would continue being held in Independence to avoid the added costs of transporting prisoners to Bishop.

At Monday's meeting, one resident brought up the possibility of a catastrophic natural disaster.

She said if a new facility is constructed in Bishop, and an earthquake rocks Independence, there is a chance that the



Judge Brian Lamb (foreground) and Judge Dean Stout meet with Lone Pine residents Monday. Many residents said they felt Judge Lamb has already made up his mind about where the new court facility will be constructed, saying his presentation about the project was biased in favor of Bishop. Photo by Mike Gervais

historic Independence Courthouse, which does not meet state seismic standards, could collapse, which would mean that all prisoners in Independence would have to be transported to Bishop for court dates in the new facility, which would be built to seismic standards.

Another resident asked that if that scenario did indeed play out, how long it would take for the county to decide to build a jail facility in Bishop, near the new courthouse, to avoid costly prisoner transports.

Lamb said that was a valid concern and that he would consider it as he prepares to make a recommendation to the Administrative Offices of the Courts, which will make the final decision on site selection for the new bond-funded facility after hearing Lamb's recommendation.

Fifth District Supervisor Richard Cervantes told Lamb that residents of Inyo County supported the construction of a multi-million dollar jail facility in Independence because that is where the main office of the courts was located at the time.

Cervantes said Lamb would be doing a disservice to the whole county if he recommends building the new facility in Bishop.

"The communities of Inyo get more and more neglected as you get further and further from the concentrated source of power in Bishop," Cervantes said. "Right now Independence is a ghost town" and building the new court facility in Independence could help revitalize the community.

Lone Pine resident Gene Mathern
See COURT, page A-5

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Continued from front page
said he would like to see a new court facility constructed in Independence because the current facility there does not have ADA access, which prevents many handicapped or elderly residents from accessing the court.
"I can't get to the third floor," Mathern said. "I can't even get in to see the judge if I wanted to."

Lamb said that he has been aware of the access issues at the historic courthouse, and, regardless of the location of the \$33 million facility, he said those problems will have to be remedied.

Lamb pointed out that Inyo County and the courts have a Court Construction Fund with approximately \$2.5 million that can be used for improvements to the existing courthouses, or to build a smaller modular facility in Independence if the bond-funded facility is built in Bishop.

Lamb said that the \$2.5 million is probably not enough to build a new facility in Bishop, due to the cost of land.
He said that money would be adequate to fund a new facility in Independence

because Inyo County has a piece of property adjacent to the jail that is available and suitable for a new facility.

Lamb also said, if the new facility is built in Bishop, he is interested in making improvements to the historic courthouse in Independence and keeping it in use rather than building a new facility.

One resident at Monday's meeting said that it is unlikely that the historic facility can be made ADA accessible with \$2.5 million, let alone be improved to meet seismic standards or expanded to meet the needs of the court.

Lamb said he does not know how much it would cost to improve the historic courthouse. He said a historic preservation study would cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

Bishop City Councilmember Bruce Dishion has said that he is in favor of building the new \$33 million facility in Bishop because it would not only expand services in the county's population center, but would also free up space in City Hall, where the current court is located, allowing the Bishop Police Department and Volunteer Fire Department to expand their office space.

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