

# CROOKS ...

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Crooks in town often hide and wait for CJ Patrols to clear an area and then come back out, which underscores the need for residents in each neighborhood to install lights and alarms, organize their own watches, and coordinate with the volunteer patrols, according to both Evans and Ambron. As spring turns to summer, several rural neighborhood watches in the Valley - and CJ Patrols - plan to ramp up their efforts. Contact Evans at 541.592.9665 to plug in.

"We're escalating all of our programs, this criminal element that is lashing back is not going to win this battle," Ambron said. "CJ Patrols is amazing and their dedication is off the charts. These volunteers are out there every night."

Meetings are being held to help grow the movement and improve communications between citizens, CJ Patrols and law enforcement officers. "We have a large retired community beginning to mobilize, and more of our young folk are also participating. And, an effort is coming together to discern how the patrol will identify itself to the public as well as to law enforcement, to help avoid confusion," Ambron added.

Daniel supports the neighborhood watches and patrols, but wants everyone to stay safe. "We all need to work together to combat this ever-increasing criminal element. It's long overdue that the sheriff's office is transparent and visible, and we're doing everything we can to rebuild trust in law enforcement. The sheriff's office will continue on with the funds and resources that the citizens will provide. But we're not going to quit, and I mean that down to the last criminal."

# 753 ...

Continued from A-1

Daniel stated, "I need to know what I can do with hard core crimes. I have between one and four deputies available on a daily basis. We can't be everywhere at once."

Public Defender Gary Berlant said, "Our kids are not safe. The Department of Human Services is not able to get law enforcement support to deal with kids in trouble."

County Circuit Judge Lindi Baker said, "Maybe some people don't have the direct experience that I've had and don't understand. From my position I see the rising number of crimes reported in the papers and I think people are becoming desensitized to the violence."

Options for Southern Oregon executive director Karla McCafferty said, "We just purchased a new facility in Cave Junction. We count on the police to provide a social safety net. We work with people with mental health and addiction issues. We need police response because things don't always go the way they're supposed to. It impacts our ability to attract professionals to work for us if they don't feel safe

moving to our community."

The elected officials' response to the question of whether the state will help with funding was negative for a variety of reasons including the idea that state funding for local public safety might conflict with the fact that Josephine is a home rule county.

Wilson said, "As a business person, I would never sign a contract like this, there's too much ambiguity. You'd be telling

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**Mayor Darren Fowler  
Grants Pass**

this community what to pay. The money is not going to come in time," and he added, "Ultimately, every community has to live by the rules of the people and what people are willing to pay for. The last thing we need is to turn into a welfare county. I have faith in the community to solve our own problems."

Baertschiger said, "I have more confidence in our community than in the legislature

to solve this. Maybe we need to turn this around and ask the community what level of service people need and then figure out what each service costs. I'd rather have local officials than state government running this county."

Earlier in the year, County Commissioner Cheryl Walker proposed offering taxpayers a "menu" of levies, with types of services and the cost of each broken out. In the face of public

outry, Heck and Hare voted the idea down.

Last month, Walker drafted a letter to Brown asking that State Law 753 be invoked. The law authorized an agreement between the state and a county to provide funding for 18 months. The public backlash that followed this development may have led Walker to withdraw her bid for re-election.

At the March 30 meeting,

Stark said, "I don't see how [State Law 753] has any path to success. This is a short-term fix. Let's have citizens submit ideas in say, 500 word essays. Then let's go through a series of meetings and evaluate the ideas. You never know, we might come up with something that works."

Wilson added, "This bill doesn't even say who's in charge of enforcing the law."

Grants Pass Mayor Darin Fowler responded to the representatives' negativity by saying, "Regardless of how sloppy the bill was written, if the state will allow it, we need a million to reopen Juvenile Justice. We would need a total of \$5 million just to maintain the current level of service. You don't realize how unequally yoked we are. City residents are already paying \$5 per thousand."

Referring to the end of federal payments, Fowler concluded by saying, "There's a day coming unlike any other. We already see out of state plates and airplanes landing and taking off at night. I don't know how many times I can say this, we're in trouble."

"I would hate to think of this as the new normal," he said. "There's kind of a feeling of lawlessness. Anybody looking at it from the outside would clearly see we are not keeping our citizens safe."

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