



## MAYORS CORNER

### Public Meeting with Jackson County Sheriff

Sheriff Nathan Sickler met with 64 residents of Butte Falls in the park on a Sunday to listen to our concerns and to discuss the challenges faced by his department.

He indicated that the largest concern for law enforcement in Jackson County is inadequate jail facilities. The lack of enough cells creates a revolving door that does not serve as a punishment or deterrent to crime or even an adequate holding place for pre-trial individuals. He is hoping that in the future a new facility can be built to better serve needs. This will most likely come before the voters of the county.

The Sheriff's second concern was staffing. It takes over a year from hiring to get an officer through training and internships and on board in active service. There is not enough staff to adequately cover the large expanse of Jackson County. His concern is for the rural communities such as ours and he has instituted a program of overtime where officers can choose to work their overtime in rural communities. As a result, there is a larger patrol force on the roads.

In listening to the needs of the town, the sheriff offered to send up a team to train interested citizens in setting up a Neighborhood Watch Program. Marc Ellis indicated that there were 5 volunteers already in place to act as block captains.

The Sheriff also indicated that he could investigate engaging the Medford Area Drug and Gang Enforcement (MADGE) team to address the problems associated with the 2 drug houses in town.

In addressing speeding enforcement, the sheriff was unsure if we could do photo enforcement. There are state laws governing the size of a city that can use photo enforcement. He indicated that the roads department would be responsible for installing speed bumps, etc.

The sheriff encouraged citizens to call about theft and any other law enforcement issues. He indicated that an increase in calls would alert the department to issues in the town and would justify an increase in patrols.

**Proposed Marijuana Growing Ordinance** The council held one workgroup meeting to draft a marijuana growing ordinance for the town. The first draft of the ordinance was created in response to concerned citizens who were troubled by the smell of marijuana grows. The original intent was a compromise to protect the rights of growers but housing grows in a building such as a greenhouse to contain smells. However, as the drafting has evolved, there is a difference of opinion among councilors concerning the intent of the ordinance. Several councilors would like no local ordinance and just enforcement of Oregon law and thus no attempt mandated to contain odors. Others are concerned that Schott's field could become a commercial grow (there are no current plans for a commercial grow there) and want to ban commercial grows in the town limits.

This is an evolving discussion. If you have some concerns, please let us at the town hall, or the councilors know your issues. We are here to represent you and need to understand your position. The next workgroup meeting is tentatively set for Sept 5 at 7:00 in the community hall. The public is invited to attend but it is not a public meeting for comment. It is a work session for the council to draft the ordinance.

Respectfully,

Linda Spencer, Mayor, Town of Butte Falls