

FED BED DEAL DEAD

Lane sheriff cites cost in terminating inmate housing agreement

The Lane County sheriff has canceled a jail beds deal with the U.S. Marshals Service, citing costs that outweigh payments, as well as a duty to the citizens of Lane County.

The Marshals Service is responsible for housing and transporting federal prisoners. The marshals rent bed space from jails around the state, including Lane Adult Corrections, to house prisoners awaiting trial in federal court or transport to a federal prison.

Sheriff Byron Trapp notified the Marshals Service, District of Oregon, on Oct. 6, signaling the beginning of a 120-day grace period before the complete end of the agreement. The contract is slated to end Feb. 3, 2018.

District Court Judge Ann Aiken responded to the notification Oct. 12 with an email asking Trapp why the agreement had been terminated. He replied with a letter, written Oct. 13 and obtained by *Eugene Weekly*.

"I have an obligation first and foremost to the welfare and public safety of the citizens of Lane County. In recent years, Lane County citizens have made it clear: County jail capacity is important to the community," Trapp wrote.

The letter went on to say that the cost of maintaining jail beds for the Marshals Service is \$145 per bed per day, but the service only pays the county \$117.57 per bed per day. Thus, Trapp argues, Lane County is subsidizing the Marshals Service at the cost of local taxpayers.

When asked to comment on the change, the sheriff cited a recent jail levy in Springfield as motivation to move those 50 jail beds over from the federal government for county purposes. "I think adding these 50 beds will reduce our

capacity-based release rate," he says, noting that thanks to the levy, the county can now afford to fund those beds on its own.

In the letter Trapp also cites Lane County's own jail levy, saying that it allowed the jail to increase the number of jail beds for local offenders, and that the sheriff's office intends to "continue the number of jail beds used for local offenders."

The Lane County jail levy costs voters \$0.55 per \$1,000 of assessed value on a home. So for a home at the 2016 median of value of \$175,679, the annual tax payment is about \$96.62.

"My perspective is that removing the Marshal [Service] inmates from our jail has an immediate impact on our jail population," Trapp says.

He points out that thanks to the taxpayer levy, the jail doesn't need more outside funding. "I'm not going to give away more local jail beds because I don't have a need for more external revenues and the people of Lane County have said they want to restore jail capacity," he tells *EW*.

"Since the levy we have not released the very violent offenders, Measure 11 offenders," Trapp says. He adds that the 50 additional jail beds will help reduce the number of early releases, which will decrease the number of offenders failing to show up for court and perhaps have an impact on recidivism.

"There's a lot of strains on the system that go away or get substantially reduced when jail capacity increases," Trapp says.

The Marshals Service declined to say whether it had an-

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— SHERIFF BYRON TRAPP



other contract set up to replace the one with Lane County. The Marshals Service mostly uses Lane County jail beds to house inmates headed for the federal courthouse.

Trapp says there is no animosity between his office and the local Marshals Service, instead citing problems negotiating contracts with the Washington, D.C., office for the end to the contract.

"I fully expect that our relationship will continue strong," the sheriff says of the local Marshals Service district office. ■

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