

Polk County  
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**Sheriff goes back to 24 hours**

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Sheriff's Office will return to 24-hour patrols on Sunday after a year of hiring to replace deputies lost to budget cuts.

"We've hired 29 people altogether between the jail and patrol," said Sheriff Mark Garton.

The public safety levy voters approved in May 2015 provided for 12 positions in patrol and five in the jail, but Garton said a "slew" of departures left the department with a lot more hiring than anticipated.

"That is all we've been doing, essentially, since last July 1," Garton said. "It's a long process."

The office graduated four officers from the police academy last week, making it possible to switch to two 12-hour shifts per day starting Sunday. Three more officers were sent to the academy last week and a few more will attend later in the year.

"It's like a big chess game trying to put everybody in the right spot to get to where we are to be able to do 24-hour coverage," Garton said. "We've hired good people. We've been fortunate. There's a lot agencies that are having trouble all over the state hiring people and finding good people. We haven't had any issue."

Sunday will be the first time the sheriff's office has had someone on duty 24 hours per day in more than three years.

Patrols were first cut to 20 hours per day in March 2013 due to funding shortages. Hours were subsequently reduced to 10 hours per day.

With hiring and training in full swing since July 2015, 20-hour per day patrols were restored in January.

Deputies in the patrol division say they are eager to see "off hours" disappear soon.

Deputy Jason Ball has been with the sheriff's department for about a year. He said it's been difficult knowing the office hasn't been able to respond to all



Deputies Thomas Hutchinson, left, and Jason Ball prepare for their patrol shift on Friday night.



Polk County sheriff's deputies will be on the road 24 hours per day starting Sunday..

calls that come in, and he is glad that is changing.

"It's a huge benefit, just to be able to provide that service to the community," Ball said. "We still get a lot of calls in those off hours. Every call is important. We want to respond."

Full patrol hours isn't the

only thing returning.

In early July, the Polk Interagency Narcotics Team (POINT) will be reinstated with investigators from the sheriff's office, Dallas, Monmouth, Independence police departments, and eventually Oregon State Police.

Polk Sgt. Mike Holsapple

will supervise the team, which will have officers who are new to working on a drug enforcement team. Holsapple is the only exception.

"He's been running the team for years, so he can get those guys up to speed and do it the right way," Garton said.

He said the team won't have a shortage of work to do, as drug complaints around the county remain high.

"They will hit the ground running," Garton said.

Also in July, the sheriff's office will pair up with Polk County Behavioral Health to provide one of two "mobile crisis" teams patrolling in Polk County.

The teams will consist of an officer and crisis counselor who can respond to calls involving incidents more related to mental health than criminal behavior.

County officials said the hope is to get people in crisis assistance sooner and without having to take them to jail.

Yet another function of the office has been restored recently.

Staff in the Polk County Jail has rebounded to the point where court security has been increased, answering a request of Polk County Circuit Court judges and attorneys.

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**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS**

Stewart resigns from Dallas City Council, leaving vacancy.

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**FALLS CITY**

Falls City works to solve issues of pressure, brittle pipes in new water master plan.

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**INDEPENDENCE**

The old Independence library was rededicated as the home for arts, literature and education on Friday.

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**MONMOUTH**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking access to Monmouth properties to search for unexploded ordnances.

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**SPORTS**

Catch up with Tyrell Williams' progress with the San Diego Chargers.

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**Fire board to seek inside chief options**

By Emily Mentzer

The Independence — The Polk County Fire District No. 1 board of directors decided to seek the next fire chief internally, differing from the external process the board has taken the last two times it has searched for a new leader.

The chief's job description and salary were approved at a special meeting Monday night.

The job description for fire chief had not been updated, nor approved by the board, since 2001. The new list of duties and responsibilities was created through members of the board, a staff of volunteers and a representative from the Special Districts Association of Oregon, as well as Deputy Chief Neal Olson and Fire Chief Al Alcalde.

The Special Districts Association of Oregon is performing the search and running the process on behalf of the board, under a contract for not more than \$2,820, plus expenses not to exceed \$1,000.

Alcalde gave 30-days notice to leave the position on April 25. He agreed to stay on board as chief beyond the 30 days, but July 5 will be his last day.

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**City braces to build streets, sewer at Indy Landing**

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The city of Independence is accepting proposals to design and build streets, and main sewer and water lines on the old Valley Concrete site, now called Independence Landing.

The roughly 20-acre property was acquired by the city in November 2014 from Valley Concrete for \$800,000. The city has spent roughly \$600,000 improving the land for future developers.

The city tentatively agreed to work with Tokola Properties, out of Gresham, as the developer in December 2015, but no deal had been signed yet, said Shawn Irvine, economic development director.

"We're essentially continuing to

ensure that these parcels are shovel ready while we discuss and negotiate with that developer," Irvine said. "Frankly, we hope by continuing to make these parcels shovel ready, we hope that will help with some of these negotiations."

By building basic roads and sewer and water systems, the city is getting the site more "shovel-ready" than it was before, Irvine said.

In the city's last public-private partnership, the development of Riverplace Apartments on Deann Drive, the developer built the streets and connections.

This property is different because of the magnitude, Irvine said.

"We expect this to be two to three times bigger than Riverplace in terms of investment," he said. "The more money being asked to put into

a project, the harder (developers) look at it."

The city will accept proposals until the end of June, with hopes of beginning construction in the fall. Irvine said money to pay for the project will come from the Urban Renewal District fund.

He didn't say how much it would cost because he hasn't received all the bids yet.

"The design services will be over \$100,000," he said. "That's why we're going out for public bid. That's the only real estimate we have right now."

The project will provide one main road to serve the site, including main sewer and water lines, Irvine said.

"We're essentially creating the primary access to city utilities for this

site," Irvine said. "It will be up to the developer if they want to do something else."

The area is part of the enterprise zone, which allows some companies and businesses to apply for three to five years of property tax forgiveness, but Irvine said he doesn't expect businesses in Independence Landing to qualify or take advantage of that zone.

"Even though it's a great site, great community, we're still off the beaten path as far as the development community is concerned," Irvine said.

"That is increased risk," he continued. "The more we can do to decrease risk variables, the better the property looks and the easier it will be to get financing and get a developer to do something there."

**THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK**

<b>wed</b> Want to get more involved in the MI Chamber? Join the new ambassador program with a kick-off party tonight. 6-8 p.m. Free.	<b>thu</b> See what's in season at the Polk County Bounty Market near the Academy Building on Thursday afternoons. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.	<b>fri</b> Bring friends and dinner and enjoy the evening listening to the Dead-Beats at Emerson Vineyard. 6-9 p.m. \$7.50.	<b>sat</b> Need a doctor but don't have insurance? Check out the Polk Community Free Clinic on the fourth Saturday. 7-11 a.m. Free.	<b>sun</b> Today is National Chocolate Pudding Day, so enjoy a cup chilled on the back porch with friends and family.	<b>mon</b> Learn about all things gardening at Dallas Garden Club's monthly meeting at the Evangelical Bible Church. 6:30 p.m. Free.	<b>tue</b> James2 Community Kitchen offers free meals for anyone who is hungry at St. Philip Catholic Church. 4:30 p.m. Free.
Mostly sunny Hi: 74 Lo: 53	Showers Hi: 63 Lo: 49	Partly cloudy Hi: 69 Lo: 49	Sunny Hi: 79 Lo: 54	Sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 54	Sunny Hi: 82 Lo: 53	Sunny Hi: 83 Lo: 53

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