

Law enforcement to hold public hearing

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

Learn more

What: Public hearing on law enforcement deadly force response plan.

When: 7 p.m. Thursday.

Where: Polk County Courthouse conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas.

DALLAS — Polk County law enforcement officials are holding a public hearing on Thursday to review proposed change to the county's response plan to law enforcement use of deadly physical force.

State law requires each county to have a response plan outlining protocols for investigations, including recommendations on how to decide which agency should investigate deadly force incidents, training and communicating with the public following an incident.

The planning authority consists of Sheriff Mark Garton, District Attorney Aaron Felton, all city police chiefs, an Oregon State Police representative and a member of the public.

Garton said much of the plan is outlined in state statute, but the county planning authority incorporated some of Marion County's plan in its proposed revisions.

"Marion County had this plan, so we looked at theirs and used some of their language, but the core of all the language is right out of statute," he said. "We don't have a lot of leeway in what we can have. It tells us what we have to have."

The most noticeable change is the title, revised from "Law Enforcement of Deadly Physical Force Response Plan" to "Law Enforcement Intentional Use of Deadly Physical Force Response Plan."

Garton said other changes mostly affect wording.

"There's no substantive change," he said.

Those changes include adding a paragraph to the preamble explaining the purpose of the plan. Other revisions include a recommendation that an agency other than the one the in-

involved officer or officers work for investigate incidents. Proposed changes also provide guidelines on how to determine which agency should take the lead on the investigation.

The revised plan outlines when and who should communicate with the public about the incident and investigation: "In order to preserve the integrity of the investigation, the scene supervisor and investigative supervisor shall notify all involved officers to refrain from making public statements about the investigation, until such time as the investigation has concluded and the District Attorney has made a determination regarding the criminal responsibility of all involved persons."

Also included are guidelines for informing the public about the incident, directed through the district attorney's office and the lead investigative agency. The plan directs that a public statement be released as soon as possible including: time and location of the incident; condition of any suspect; nature of the intentional use of deadly physical force; and any other information "the district attorney, lead investigative agency, or the involved officer's agency deems necessary given the particular circumstances of the incident."

Garton said following the public hearing, the next step is to present the plan to all governing bodies in the county for approval.

Retire: Helped improve lives of offenders

Continued from Page 1A

"They look forward to it. I take a group picture and post it on my office door," said Silbernagel, the director of Polk County Community Corrections. "It's a reminder to the POs (probation officers) and myself that this is what we are doing."

Silbernagel has been doing the job in some capacity for 29 years — in the community service, and juvenile or adult supervision programs — and is now the director of all three.

Silbernagel is turning in his badge Friday, making the difficult decision to end a career he's loved and stepping away from his "work family."

"I'm not retiring because I don't like my job anymore. I'm retiring because I've done this long enough, and I'm ready to do something else fun and exciting," Silbernagel said. "It's not going to be easy for me to leave, but it's good. It's good for me. It's good for everybody."

As a freshman at then-Western Oregon State College, Silbernagel wanted a physical education instructor or coach.

"I was a horrible student. Horrible," he recalled last. "I played basketball my freshman year at Western. It was very time-consuming and my grades suffered because of that, and the fact that I was

never a good student. I needed to raise my grade-point average."

He heard of a class called "introduction to criminal justice careers," where students toured and observed various criminal justice institutions and wrote reports about the experience. It was an easy "A" he was told.

More than a GPA booster, the class altered the course of his education and career.

"I thought, this is kind of interesting, so I took more corrections classes," he said. "I changed my major."

After graduation, he briefly worked a part-time job in Marion County before taking the post as the community service coordinator for Polk County in April 1988.

He held the position for just over a year when it was cut from the budget. Silbernagel has seniority over the other three employee whose jobs were eliminated, so he was offered another: Juvenile probation officer.

"I thought, 'Oh lord. I don't want to work with kids.' But I did it. I was young and thought 'I need a job,'" he said. "I loved it. I did it for almost eight years."

He applied for community corrections director without thinking he would get it. He was only 31, but got the job.

"I was the youngest director in the state of Oregon,"

he said.

He's been with the county long enough of have worked in an infamous community corrections building that once stood where Murphy's restaurant is now.

"It was commonly referred to as the 'rat building.' Why? Because there were rats in it, live rats," he said.

That building was demolished, and that isn't the only thing about the job that has changed for the better in 29 years.

When he started, probation officers felt their role was to supervise and punish.

"They needed to lock people up that did wrong," he said. "Over time, the evolution of parole and probation has made a 180-degree turn in that it's not so much that any more. It's rapport building with offenders."

He believes that approach — helping offenders improve their lives holistically — is more beneficial to those the office supervises. POs learn about each person's life, the problems they face, with the goal of helping them not just successfully serve their probation, but change their lives for the better.

"We here at community corrections and at the juvenile department treat these people as human beings, as

they are, and hold them accountable," he said. "It goes a long way in terms of how much are they going to progress and be successful at what the court has mandated for them to do."

Friday is Silbernagel's retirement party, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. at his office.

He said he will miss his employees, fellow county workers, court judges, attorneys and staff — and the people he's supervised over his career.

"I'm going to miss the celebrations of drug court, or mental health court, or somebody getting their driver's license or coming in and saying they got a job," he said.

In retirement, he won't allow himself too much time to spare. He plans to volunteer, work part-time at Wilco and farm on the side.

"I won't be a couch potato. Retirement is not for me in terms of sitting and letting life pass by," he said.

For Silbernagel — who hasn't called in sick once in his career — the new routine may take some getting used to.

But he walks away thankful for the experience.

"If I had to do it all over again. I wouldn't do anything different, absolutely nothing," he said. "I've been very fortunate that Polk County has given me the opportunity."

Bystander helps save youths from drowning

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — On Thursday, Polk County Fire District No.1 responded to Riverview Park on a report of a possible water rescue with multiple juveniles in the river, Fire Chief Ben Stange in a press release.

When the fire district arrived, three juveniles were on shore next to the river. They had been in the

Willamette River when they were caught by an eddy overpowering them, Stange said.

They called for help multiple times at which point a bystander swam into the river to rescue them. The bystander coached one of the three to swim back to shore, and put the other two on his back and swam them back to shore, Stange said.

One of the juveniles had

been submerged multiple times and was transported to the hospital for evaluation.

The event on Thursday took place in the same location where a boy and his adult brother drowned in 2008, Stange said.

On Friday, a boy went missing while swimming in the Willamette in Salem. One year ago this week, the Monmouth/Independence

community was shaken when a Central High School student, Cody Watson, drowned while swimming in a river in Central Oregon, Stange said in the release.

Fire officials are reminding people to use extreme caution near the water. There are life preservers available for use free of charge at Riverview Park in Independence and at the Independence boat dock.



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2017 Monmouth Area Community Events Calendar

July 1 Monmouth Community Breakfast. 8:30 am – 10:30 am. Monmouth Senior Center. 180 S. Warren St.

July 2 Polk Flea Market 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Polk County's oldest and largest market with 183 tables selling antiques, collectibles, tools, etc. 520 S Pacific Hwy W. Rickreall

July 4 Happy 4th of July from the MBA! See this week's Itemizer-Observer for the 4th of July Guide. Includes all scheduled events for Monmouth.

July 5 Monmouth Music in the Park Concert Series begins with The Shinkle Band. They will be playing folk and country music. Beer & wine garden, food, and activities for the kids. Main Street Park Amphitheater 120 Main Street E. 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

July 6-8 Apple Box Children's Theater is proud to present Arabian Nights by Maren Bradley Anderson. Dress Rehearsal is also open to the public on 7/5 at 7pm. Bring a folding chair or blanket, a picnic basket and enjoy the summer evening. Western Oregon University's Amphitheater (outside of Rice Auditorium) located at Powell, Knox and Warren Streets. 7 pm – 8:30 pm

July 12 Monmouth Music in the Park Concert Series. The Wildwood Allstar Review plays rock & roll. Beer & wine garden, food, and activities for the kids. Main Street Park Amphitheater 120 Main Street E. 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

July 15 Polk County Museum Porch Sale. 9 am – 3 pm. Come support the preservation of local history by scooping up those "must have" treasures. Polk County Museum 560 S. Pacific Highway West, Rickreall

July 19 Monmouth Music in the Park Concert Series. Legendary Oregon band Hillstomp brings an evening of blues to Music In The Park. Beer & wine garden, food, and activities for the kids. Main Street Park Amphitheater 120 Main Street E. 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

July 26 Monmouth Music in the Park Concert Series. Jenny Don't & The Spurs bring an evening of country music to Music In The Park. Beer & wine garden, food, and activities for the kids. Main Street Park Amphitheater 120 Main Street E. 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

Chamber Forum — July 12
Independence Public Library
175 Monmouth Street, Independence
Topic: State Legislative Update
Lunch: \$12.00 boxed lunch from Arena Sports Bar
• Lunch orders must be received by noon 7/11/17.
• Fee incurred unless cancelation received via email to micc@minetfiber.com by noon 7/11/17.

Thirsty Thursday — July 20
Thirsty Thursdays are held the **third Thursday** of each month from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM at member locations. Registration is requested to help the host site properly prepare. Attendees are encouraged to bring a small giveaway (less than \$10) to promote your business or organization. This month July — MaMere's Guest House 212 Knox St., Monmouth.

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Happy 4th of July!

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