

From the Sheriff's Desk . . .

by Jeff Dickerson,
Columbia County Sheriff



Public Safety in This Economy

Everywhere you look in Oregon and around the nation, public safety is taking huge budget hits in service levels as sheriffs and police chiefs grapple with shrinking revenues and rising costs. Local, state and national governments are scratching for spare dollars and citizens are overwhelmed with a weak economy and have an

intolerance of new taxes to pay for services.

It is in this environment that public safety leaders are tasked with providing the services that help keep our communities safe and secure from the ravages of lawlessness, and seek to promote peaceful communities where we live.

Sheriffs are uniquely positioned in the public safety community by virtue of the wide variety of peace conservation services they are authorized and mandated to perform according to our state Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes. Sheriffs are mandated in our Constitution to serve as the "ministerial officer of the court," providing whatever services the courts demand in order to execute the rule of law in our society. In addition to this constitutional mandate, the sher-

iff is singled out in state law as the "chief executive officer of the peace" in each county, with the duty to:

- Arrest those who break the peace and commit them to prison
- Defend the county from lawlessness
- Serve civil justice processes at the direction of the courts
- Execute warrants
- Oversee county jail operations according to legal standards
- Oversee all search and rescue operations in the county
- Manage the concealed handgun license program

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