



Media Alert

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BENNY N. NAPOLEON
Sheriff

For immediate release

Napoleon to stop deficit spending for jail overtime

(Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013) -- To avoid deficit spending, Wayne County Sheriff Benny N. Napoleon today announced that effective October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year, jail deputies will not be scheduled to work overtime once the budgeted overtime allotment is depleted. Overtime funding most likely will run out before the end of the year, leaving at least nine months without overtime pay.

The Sheriff's Office, which spent more than \$17 million in overtime at the three county jails last year, has been allocated \$3.6 million for overtime in the 2013-14 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, 2014.

The jail population and staffing ratios in the three county jails are established through a Wayne County Circuit Court consent order, supervised by Presiding Judge Timothy Kenny. The sheriff does not control the intake or release of inmates.

Sheriff Napoleon has repeatedly proposed hiring deputies to reduce overtime, staff fatigue and county liability. Deputy Sheriffs' Association/POAM union officials, who represent the deputies, also have advocated for hiring, citing health and safety concerns of their members. Overworked deputies routinely are required to work in excess of 40 hours a week, with some working 56 hours of overtime.

During a budget hearing in August, Napoleon proposed hiring 150 deputies. The starting pay of a deputy is currently about \$28,000. Such hiring would have saved the county nearly \$8 million by replacing hourly overtime costs with lower straight-time pay.

The County Commission, however, only approved 38 new positions for the 2013-14 fiscal year, which will not significantly reduce the overtime deficit, Napoleon said.

"For years, the county has engaged in fantasy budgeting," Napoleon said. "We have been funded for approximately 1,800 inmates a day but the real number is closer to 2,800, including those on tether. The incarceration of the additional inmates is approved by the court.

“Without adequate staffing at the jails, we must backfill on overtime costing taxpayers millions of dollars. Since the county won’t hire deputies, we can either continue to deficit spend or simply stop paying overtime when we run out of money.”

Napoleon said the jails will not have funding to staff at court-ordered levels when overtime funding is gone. The county currently budgets for approximately 1,800 inmates; the jail population today in the three Wayne County jails is 2,297. Another 500 people are on tether today.

Wayne County has historically underfunded overtime for jail deputies. In 2002, the jail was allocated about \$2 million for overtime while actual overtime pay exceeded \$10 million. The trend of underfunding has continued, causing operating costs to exceed the budget by millions of dollars each year thereafter.

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To schedule an interview with Sheriff Napoleon, contact Dennis Niemiec at 313-434-7395.