

Jail Commander Retiring After 22 Years of Service

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Jim Carpenter came to the Sheriff's Office to serve in Corrections in 1989 after a career as a small-businessman in Scappoose. On Thursday, his 22-year career with the Sheriff's Office will officially come to an end, although the retiring captain will still be available to help occasionally, said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson.

"Jim Carpenter has been a shining star for the Sheriff's Office for many years," the Sheriff said, "and he was instrumental in making my transition to the Sheriff's Office in 2009 a fairly easy one.

"His experience in corrections, his knowledge of our facility and its operations, and his interest in people helped make him an outstanding resource for five sheriffs from 1989 to now. He will be missed by this administration as he takes this next step that he and his wife, Kelly so richly deserve."

Sheriff Dickerson named Jim Carpenter as his jail commander in 2009 after a regional search for candidates. Due to budget cuts at the Sheriff's Office, no new hires will be made to fill the jail commander position. Undersheriff Andrew Moyer will now take on the role as Jail Commander.

Captain Carpenter began his career with the Sheriff's Office under Sheriff Bruce Oester. He started as a part-time deputy after working for many years in muffler repairs. He owned Jim's Muffler and More in Scappoose and was very active in the Scappoose City Club before Sheriff Oester hired him.

In 1990, Carpenter became a full-time deputy in the Corrections Division, and in 1997, Sheriff Phil Derby promoted him to sergeant. Carpenter oversaw the planning and construction of the new jail facility in 1999 after the old jail became unusable. Carpenter spent an equal amount of time (11 years) in both facilities. He said that when the Sheriff's Office moved from the old facility at the courthouse, they had nearly twice the number of inmates as they had authorized beds.

"The old jail had a capacity of 38 beds," he said, "but when we moved to the present facility in

2000, we moved with 75 inmates."

Prior to the move, Carpenter was instrumental in beginning the Sheriff's work crew to help ease jail overcrowding at the old jail. Afterward, Sheriff Derby put Carpenter over jail programs where he became well known for his ability to work with inmates and the community in finding jobs for inmates to help keep them out of jail.

Sheriff Derby later promoted him to administrative First Sergeant, where Carpenter expanded his services to the Sheriff on both the Corrections and Enforcement side of the house. Sheriff Dickerson later promoted him to captain and made him the Jail Commander in 2009.

Though he is retiring from the Sheriff's Office, the sheriff says he still expects Carpenter to remain active in the community, where in recent years he has organized the "Cop Walk for Life", benefitting the American Cancer Society and other philanthropic events. He was instrumental years ago (as a member of the Scappoose City Club) in securing the property from the state and designing the Welcome to Scappoose sign and totem pole. He and his wife, Kelly also were the driving force behind the development of the Scappoose Sauerkraut Festival.

"Jim Carpenter has been a mainstay for Columbia County for many years," Sheriff Dickerson said. "Sheriff Oester, Sheriff Derby and I all recognized him for his talents and connection to the community, and now he will have even more time to devote to his favorite causes. He will be greatly missed."