

Zapped by budget cuts that have given a swiss-cheese appearance to his patrol schedule, Sheriff Jeff Dickerson has announced one bright spot: An enhanced marine patrol schedule that will put an extra deputy on the Columbia River during the summer months.

"We are excited to be able to access money from the Oregon State Marine Board to add a seasonal deputy on the water," the sheriff said. "Columbia County has the largest share of the Columbia River of any county in Oregon, and for the first time in many years, we will have more than just two sworn deputies out there."

Marine Board money funds 80 percent of the three deputies and the cost to put them in boats on county waterways. The sheriff is committed to building a bigger presence in the water as the summer months roll into the fall.

Waterways patrolled by the deputies will include the Multnomah Channel and the Columbia River within Columbia County. Their focus will be on safety and the deterrence and detection of violations that threaten boating safety. There are opportunities for volunteers (both sworn reserves and non-sworn volunteers) to assist the sheriff's office with its mission on the water. Those interested in volunteering in partnership with the sheriff can call volunteer coordinator Richard Egemo at (503) 366-4615