

The County General Fund provides only a fraction of the revenue required to run the jail. The sheriff relies on a combination of general fund dollars, additional funds from an operating levy approved by voters in 2014, and approximately \$1.6 million dollars per year in revenue generated by providing beds to the U.S. Marshal's Service for the purpose of providing bed space to its prisoners, in accordance with state law. Without all of these revenue sources contributing to the jail's cost of operations, the jail would be forced to cease operation and use the small general fund money that was left to find a few beds outside the County to house a few prisoners.

Oregon law requires sheriffs to accept federal prisoners in the local jail facilities. ORS 169.530 states:

The sheriff shall receive and keep in the county local correctional facility every prisoner who is committed thereto under civil or criminal process issued by a court of the United States, until the prisoner is discharged according to the laws thereof, as if the prisoner had been committed under process issued by the authority of this state. The prisoner shall receive all sums payable by the United States for the use of the facility, and remit such sums to the county treasurer not later than the first day of the month succeeding their receipt. A sheriff or jailer to whose custody such prisoner is committed is answerable for the safekeeping of the prisoner in the courts of the United States, according to the laws thereof. .

We are fortunate that to have the addition of federal prisoners, which provides needed revenue to run the facility. The revenue from providing this resource to the federal government drives down the cost of jail operation for local taxpayers. A study has shown that the current prisoner level adds \$9 per night per federal inmate to the cost of operating the jail. The federal government reimburses us at the rate of \$80 per night per inmate, making the renting of beds to the federal government very cost effective, and insuring that taxpayers do not have to come up with an additional \$1.4 million for jail operations if the US Marshal's Service was not housing its prisoners here.

Jail Funding Issues

Thursday, 26 September 2013 10:28 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 October 2016 12:28

Since passage of the levy in 2014, we have been able to bring the staffing of the jail more fully in line with what we have been needing to run a safe and secure facility for both our staff and the inmates housed herein. It has been since spring 2015 that we have ceased force-releasing inmates based on our ability to hold them, and that we have now reached our goal to be able to house up to 100 local inmates, if that were necessary. We have been averaging about 70-75 local inmates for months, with **NO FORCED RELEASES!** This is a very encouraging development that is having a positive impact on crime in Columbia County!