

The County General Fund provides only a fraction of the revenue required to run the jail. For years, the sheriff has reduced the services supporting law enforcement, search and rescue, civil process services, records, concealed handgun licensing and other services in order keep the jail in business. Still, even with those cuts to services, the county has relied on rentals of county jail beds to outside agencies to keep the jail afloat.

Since 2011, cuts in the number of jail beds available for local use had been required to balance the budget. Local beds went from 150 in 2011 to 65. This past year, local beds were cut again, down to 25. However, with the passage of the funding Levy in May of 2014, the jail has been averaging closer to 50 local inmates per day, even without a significant increase in jail staffing.

Since passage of the levy in May, and the subsequent tax collection in November, the sheriff's office has been steadily recruiting new members and temporary hires to keep the jail going. It takes time to hire the right people for this job, and staff has pored through scores of resumes and conducted many background investigations. Thus far, two new full-time jail staff have been hired and have begun training.

Training takes time and the energy of our short-staffed jail. Only a few can be trained at a time. As these are trained, we hope to have additional deputies hired and in the pipeline to begin their own hands-on training. While we can make no guarantees as to when the jail will be completely staffed, we do know that, for now, funding is no longer the problem. But it will take time to replace all the experience and staffing levels that have been lost over the last few years.