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MEDIA RELEASE

Arapahoe County Detentions Facility Increases Inmate Capacity While Focusing On Efficient Public Safety

Today Arapahoe County Sheriff, Grayson Robinson, announced the completion of a unique jail expansion project which adds 272 jail beds to the existing structure of the Arapahoe County Detentions Facility, at a very minimal cost to the taxpayers of Arapahoe County. In order to address continuing crowding conditions within the limited space of the existing detentions facility, the Sheriff's Office implemented a housing strategy that utilized fiberglass sleds and/or mattresses on the floor of certain cells for the purpose of providing sleeping areas for inmates. The removal of the original double bunks and the installation of new triple bunk units will eliminate the practice of inmates sleeping on the floor, while ensuring that the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office remains in full compliance with detentions facility accreditation standards. The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office has earned accreditation status through five independent public safety accreditation commissions. The American Corrections Association (ACA) and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC).

In 2006, concerns related to the potential for future crowding of the Arapahoe County Detentions Facility caused Sheriff Robinson to request technical assistance from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to conduct a research project to better define the potential for crowding of the Sheriff's Office Detentions Facility, better understand the consequences of crowding, and explore a variety of solutions to the crowding problems. The Sheriff's Office also established the Arapahoe County Justice Coordinating Committee, a working group comprised of citizens and representatives of local government, to evaluate the situation and provide direction into the responsibility of resolving future crowding of the detentions facility. The NIC report documented the concerns related to jail crowding and provided a great deal of data that continues to be the foundation of the work of the Arapahoe County Justice Coordinating Committee. The NIC report also stated that jail crowding is the product of the diverse and complex elements of the criminal justice system and the public safety expectations of the community, and that meaningful solutions to the challenges of jail crowding can only be accomplished through the cooperative efforts resulting from the dedicated work of meaningful community/government partnership. The work



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of the Arapahoe County Justice Coordinating Committee has always focused on public safety, effective jail management, the availability of appropriate court space and good stewardship of the taxpayer's dollars.

In addition to providing cost effective inmate bed space, the Sheriff's Office has implemented a variety of well-considered internal initiatives and modifications to the local criminal justice system for the purpose of reducing the impacts of jail crowding. The following are examples of innovative approaches being used to solve the jail crowding issues facing the Arapahoe County Detentions Facility:

1. Implementation of a new Trustee Good Time calculation based on legislation that was proposed by the Colorado Criminal and Juvenile Justice Commission, which became law in July, 2009. The statute modified the calculation of good time (days subtracted from one's sentence) an inmate could earn from a calendar month basis to a 30 day basis beginning on the first day of an individual's incarceration. Implementation of the statute has allowed the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office to avoid approximately \$500,000 in inmate housing costs.
2. The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office has implemented an Alien Inmate Trustee Program, which provided alien inmates with the opportunity to earn good time by performing meaningful tasks within the wall of the detentions facility. Performance of the meaningful tasks allows alien inmates to receive credit for work performed inside the jail facility, thereby reducing lengths of stay on sentences they must serve in the county jail prior to being transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation processing. The work performed inside the jail by alien inmate trustees, saves Arapahoe County staff time and money for general cleaning and maintenance duties.
3. The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, in coordination with the Arapahoe County Judicial Services Division, has implemented a Court Date Notification Program, which contacts individuals by telephone to remind them of the time and place for upcoming scheduled court appearances. This program has been extremely successful in reducing the number of "Failures to Appear" (a term used for persons who do not appear before a judge when they are scheduled for a hearing), which in turn reduces the number of bench warrants issued, requiring the arrest of those who fail to comply with mandatory court appearances. The staffing for the Court Notification Program has been funded through a variety of grant opportunities.
4. Implementation of the ADMIT program that provides selected sentenced inmates, diagnosed with mental health challenges, the option to serve their sentence by participating in treatment and counseling, under the supervision of the Aurora Mental Health Center, rather than being incarcerated at the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Detentions Facility.
5. The newly implemented Arapahoe County Mental Health Court identifies appropriate pre-adjudicated inmates who would be better served by receiving treatment from qualified mental healthcare providers rather than remain in the jail environment.

Although the positive measures outlined above have provided short-term bed space, the challenges associated with increasing jail population numbers will require the implementation of well-considered and informed decisions related to future jail housing, inmate food service and inmate laundry services.

Sheriff Robinson stated "The responsibility of resolving the existing and future jail crowding situation must be accomplished through a well-considered process that clearly defines the challenges associated with jail crowding, explores options for meaningful problem solving, establishes meaningful priorities, identifies appropriate funding mechanisms, and implements resolution measures in a timely, effective, efficient a fiscally responsible manner." Robinson further commented that "The Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with the Arapahoe County Justice Coordinating Committee are committed to resolving jail crowding through a deliberate and well-considered process, focused on maintaining public safety while being responsible stewards of Arapahoe County taxpayer's dollars."

Photographs on next page.



Picture of Former Sled Strategy for Overcrowded Conditions



Picture of New Triple Bunk Unit Solution for Overcrowded Conditions

For further information please contact Sheriff Grayson Robinson at 720-874-4165.

END