



KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Sheriff responds to law enforcement funding grants announcement

Port Orchard, Wash. -- The announcement came as a shock and a disappointment, or rather "As an unpleasant surprise," as Sheriff Steve Boyer put it, after a public release was made this morning naming those law enforcement agencies that are to be recipients of grants funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office was not on the list of law enforcement agencies within the state slated to receive funding, despite its relatively high ranking in the final standings. For that matter, no Washington State sheriff's agency appeared on the list of grant recipients.

The joint announcement, made by The White House and the Department of Justice, advised that \$1 billion in grant monies are to be made available to fund hiring / re-hiring of more than 4,500 law enforcement officers. The news release indicated that 1,046 law enforcement agencies were selected, representative of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands and Guam.

The list names city police departments and tribal law enforcement agencies locally, including Bremerton, Gig Harbor, Port Orchard and Shelton Police Departments.

"I have to seriously question the selection criteria," stated Sheriff Boyer. "This was vetted as a competitive process based on community and agency needs, coupled with performance."

"The decision makers in this endeavor, in my opinion, appear to be clueless," Sheriff Boyer added. "Not a single Washington State sheriff received so much as a dime out of this process when county governments are recognized as being in worse financial shape."

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office is the second lowest staffed sheriff's agency in the state at .71 of one officer per 1,000 residents in the county. The accepted standard in law enforcement is two officers per 1,000 residents, although most county sheriff's agencies have always operated under this ratio, due to county government funding restraints.

“This is a people business. The county has hard working deputies and detectives out in the field providing service to its residents,” said the sheriff. “Evolving technology is very useful and helps us daily, but it doesn’t solve crime. Investigators do that. It doesn’t enforce the law or maintain the peace, or respond in times of emergency. Patrol deputies do that.”

“We are acutely aware of the current financial crisis and have worked diligently over the past two years cutting and trimming our budget, to meet fiscal restraints, to the point that we are shortly going to be in the running as the lowest staffed sheriff’s agency... anywhere,” continued Sheriff Boyer. “County residents need to know that the level of service that they expect, in which we have taken pride in providing, will be severely curtailed.”

“I will be calling on all Washington State sheriffs to meet, face-to-face, to research and seek out alternative funding for county sheriff’s agencies, and to address this issue with our state’s elected representatives to the U. S. Congress,” the sheriff said.

“Additionally, I will call on the board of county commissioners, in hopes that we can work together to fulfill the core responsibility of government: To protect and promote the safety, health and welfare of our citizens in an efficient, accessible and effective manner.”

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