

MISSOURI JAILS

MISSOURI SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

VOL. 06, NO. 03

CONCRETE COMMITMENT



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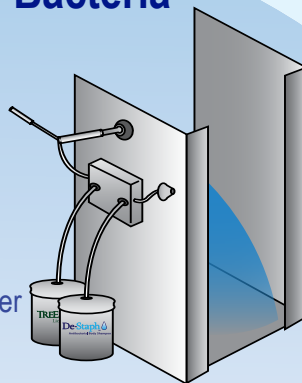


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MISSOURI JAILS

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STAY IN TOUCH

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Jail News

Noteworthy happenings from across Missouri's correctional facilities, highlighting the efforts of correctional staff, innovative programs, and the stories of individuals navigating life within Missouri jails.



ST. CHARLES

1 Earlier this year, the St. Charles County Department of Corrections welcomed the following new graduates of Class of 26-01 to its team (left to right, front): CO Jeremy Franklin, CPO Adam Cole and CO Zion Neal; (back) CO David Smith, CO Jerel Brown, CO Xavier Umphries, CO Anita Kern, CO Joseph DeBoard, CO Matthew Thalhammer.

2 Sgt. Don Van with the St. Charles County Sheriff's Office was presented with the prestigious Meritorious Service Award by American Legion POST 312. Sgt. Van was recognized for quickly capturing an escaped prisoner from the St. Charles County Department of Corrections in 2025. Congratulations Sgt. Van and all the other recipients!



3 Dan Keen, the former director of the St. Charles County Department of Corrections and co-chairman of the Missouri Sheriffs' Association Jail Committee, concluded his tenure after eight years with the county to take a position in New Mexico. In a social media post, he thanked those he worked with, stating, "Your commitment, resilience, and professionalism in one of the most demanding fields of public service never went unnoticed. Together, we navigated challenges, implemented meaningful change, and strengthened a culture centered on safety, accountability, and respect." He thanked county leadership, justice partners, and the community for their trust and collaboration, adding, "The progress we made was not the result of one person, but of a team united by purpose and a shared commitment to doing what is right."

Jeanne Merritt, who was instrumental in organizing the Jail Committee and the resulting jail administrator training conferences, said Keen will be sorely missed for his professionalism, his deep understanding of the correctional system, and his willingness to help whenever needed.

NEWTON COUNTY

Earlier this year, several people were recognized at the Newton County Sheriff's Office 2025 Award Banquet, made possible by donations from Certified Express Inc. and Black Rain Ordnance Inc.



Corporal Brooklyn Walker was named Corrections Officer of the Year. Sheriff Matt Stewart said Walker has been a major influence on not only her team but other team members as well, teaching staff with compassion and using mistakes as a training guide.

"Brooklyn strives to be the best at what she does and expects nothing less from her team. She is a wonderful addition to Newton County Jail and an asset to Newton County in general. Her dedication and bravery are something to follow for all those that admire her and all that she does."



Corrections Officer Doug Henry was named Corrections Officer of the Quarter for the First Quarter of 2026 for actions he took when an inmate experienced a medical condition during the intake process. Sheriff Stewart said CO Henry's professionalism, initiative, and dedication to duty exemplify the high standards expected of members of the Newton County Sheriff's Office, and "His actions demonstrate the level of care, responsibility, and leadership that make him highly deserving of recognition."



FRANKLIN COUNTY

Jail Administrator Captain Scott Duck and his partner Dicky Bower fished the 2026 Anglers In Action Tournament Circuit. They finished in 10th place in the overall season, qualifying them for the Anglers In Action Championship Tournament to be held on Lake Of the Ozarks in November this year. These two were caught during the second event of the year held in March on Table Rock Lake.



CRAWFORD COUNTY

In March, Detention Officer Debbie Link was presented with the Rise Above Award. Sheriff Darin Layman said that "through adversity, Detention Officer Link demonstrated strength, resilience, and unwavering commitment to this office and our community. This award honors not just what was done, but what was overcome."



KANSAS CITY

The Kansas City Department of Community Safety kicked celebrated their first Corrections Employees Week as a department in May.

Director Diana Knapp said that in addition to providing lunches, the city passed a resolution sponsored by Councilman Wes Rogers recognizing National Corrections Employee Week.

“We also issued our first department challenge coin, listing the shared values our employees developed—Selfless Service, Courage, Professionalism, Respect, and Integrity. Staff were recognized for their special contributions.”

The following awards were presented:

- **Leadership:**
Deputy Director Megan Case
- **Correctional Officer of the Year:**
Sgt. Orlando Aguilar
- **Safety:**
Sgt. Trina Young
- **Honorable Mentions:**
Sgt. Princess Harbin and CO Jamal Smith
- **Special Memento:**
Capt. Richard Hummons



JACKSON COUNTY

In March, Jackson County officials held a ribbon-cutting for the newly completed 470,000-square-foot Detention Center at 7000 East U.S. 40. The facility, which cost around \$301 million to build, is capable of housing 1,000 inmates, 200 more than the old detention center on Cherry Street. In May, Sheriff Darryl Forte announced that Deloris Wells would serve as the new director of the Detention Center.



PULASKI COUNTY

On March 16, the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, along with family, friends, and co-workers, said goodbye to Lieutenant Marcus "Rob" Robison. Sheriff Stacy Ball said it was one of the hardest goodbyes many of them had ever made.

"Lt. Rob meant the world to so many people. From his years of service in the United States Military Police Corps to his dedicated time serving in the Pulaski County Jail, Rob gave his life to service. He was a protector, a leader, a brother, and a man who

truly gave everything he had to the people around him," he wrote in a message to the community. "I had the honor of serving in combat with Rob, and later the honor of serving alongside him again as he became my jail administrator here at the sheriff's office. That kind of bond is hard to put into words. It runs deeper than friendship. It is built through hardship, loyalty, trust, and years of standing shoulder to shoulder."

Sheriff Ball said that seeing the number of people who came to the hospital to pay their respects and share stories reminded everyone of how many lives Rob touched

and how deeply he was loved.

"People often say someone gave '100 percent,' and sometimes that can sound cliché. But if you knew Rob, then you know that phrase barely scratches the surface –100 percent is all he knew. Whether he was serving his country, leading in jail, helping a co-worker, helping inmates, or loving his family and friends, Rob never did anything halfway. He was all in, every time," Sheriff Ball said, adding that as an organ donor, in his final moments, Rob continued to serve others, giving life to someone else in need.



JASPER COUNTY

1 In April, the Jasper County Sheriff's Office and members of the public came together to recognize the growth and commitment of Detention Center team members with promotions. Deputies Mendez, Hensley, Ambriz, and Batson were promoted to sergeant. And Deputies Windle, LaDue, Glass, and Bittick were promoted to corporal.

2 Inmates in the Jasper County Jail 120-day Treatment Program periodically do work projects in the county. Last week, treatment participants worked at cleaning up overgrown vegetation, removing debris and filling low spots at Alexander Cemetery, where there are headstones for some of the earlier founders of the community as well as veterans of World War I and World War II. This cemetery is one of more than 80 abandoned cemeteries in Jasper County.





SHELBY COUNTY'S NEW JAIL IS **THE CONCRETE AND STEEL EMBODIMENT OF COMMITMENT**

Historic jails can be interesting places to spend an afternoon pondering the past. But if you are holding 21st-century prisoners in a 19th-century lockup, interesting is no longer the operative word. Just ask Shelby County Sheriff Arron Fredrickson.

This summer, the conditions of Shelby County incarceration will span three different centuries when the new jail opens, and the old jail becomes an historic attraction. Years of struggling to keep detainees secure and staff safe in a deteriorating facility will come to an end for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.

In 1891, the voters of Shelby County approved a \$25,000 bond issue to build a new courthouse. In a time when it was common practice to include a jail in the courthouse, either on the top floor or in the basement, Shelby County chose the basement. Sheriff Fredrickson says the fact that both courthouse and jail were still serving the county in 2026 "speaks to the strength of the original construction and the pride our community has always taken in maintaining public buildings.

Time, however, is a cruel master. A series of remodeling and upgrading projects over the years could not keep up. The plumbing and sewer system began to fail, leading to constant problems, repairs, and new problems.



Heavy rain would turn the jail into a flooded mess, pouring water through the drains, walls, and door thresholds. These events put dispatch-center equipment in danger, filled cells with muddy water, and ran through the offices. Deputies came in off the road to fight the flood, running shop vacs and mops instead of protecting the community, Fredrickson says.

The limitations of space and antiquated cell arrangements did not allow for separating detainees and made it impossible to meet modern standards of classification and isolation. No one had any thought of such things in the days before the

Spanish American War when Missouri was still at the edge of the wild West, incarceration was focused on punishment and, frankly, the public would have seen the shiny new jail in the basement as a huge source of pride compared to counties where one-room stockades with dirt floors and no heat on the courthouse lawn were the standard.

The march of time that changed jail standards also softened the brick-and-mortar of the Shelby County facility, threatening both safety and security. Finally, Fredrickson says, the jail had come to the end of its useful life. Its very extended useful life.

“I truly believe it is our responsibility to house everyone we arrest, or those serving shock time or weekend sentences, with both security and dignity,” Fredrickson says. “Unfortunately, with the limitations of our current facility, that is not always possible.”

THE TIME HAD COME FOR A NEW JAIL IN SHELBY COUNTY.

“If the community had not stood behind us and supported the sheriff’s office, (the new jail) would not have been possible,” Sheriff Aaron Fredrickson says. That standing behind took the shape of a sales tax proposal approved by county voters.

“If the community had not stood behind us and supported the sheriff’s office, (the new jail) would not have been possible,”

Shelby County is small, just 500 square miles, with a population of a few more than 6,000. The county simply does not generate enough revenue to fund a jail. The solution was two sales tax hikes. Both had to be accepted by voters for the project to move forward. One half-cent will, over 20 years, pay for the \$7.5 million construction of the new jail, then sunset. The other half-cent will continue in perpetuity to fund ongoing maintenance and operation of the

facility. The sheriff says the new jail “is a testament to what can happen when a community comes together with a shared vision.” By approving the proposals, taxpayers have looked to the future and underwritten that vision.

The sheriff’s road to law enforcement and responsibility for the county jail included a stint working construction, valuable experience when building a jail, and working at a group home for troubled youth, another good preparation for law enforcement. After graduating from the Missouri Sheriff’s Association Academy in 2010, he began serving as a reserve deputy in Shelby County. After a year of being happy as a ‘weekend warrior,’ he was asked by the sheriff to become a full-time deputy.

After years as a road deputy, he was named chief deputy and, in 2021, was elected sheriff. He credits Chief Deputy Bill Hester, whom he succeeded, with lessons that shaped the kind of sheriff he is today. “Two of the most important things he taught me were simple but powerful: always take care of the victims and remember that we often deal with good people on the worst day of their lives. That wisdom still guides how I approach the job every day,” Fredrickson says. “Looking back now, I believe my path reflects the truth found in Proverbs – *‘The heart of the man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.’*”

Now, for the first time in more than a century, a Shelby County sheriff will be moving into a new jail. He will drop his office boxes in a state-of-the-art facility designed for modern incarceration. And the sheriff is quick to point out the safety of his staff. “The most important improvement, in my opinion, is the safety of our staff. Our deputies and jail staff deserve to work in an environment that is not a daily work hazard,” the sheriff says.



THE CONCRETE AND STEEL EMBODIMENT OF COMMITMENT



Along with the new era of safety will come a long list of things that will be better in the new jail. “(In the old jail) when an inmate becomes unruly or presents a serious behavioral issue, we often have no choice but to transport that inmate to another county’s facility,” Fredrickson says. That costs Shelby County \$60 a day, plus the costs of transportation and medical expenses. Now there will be in-house facilities, including a padded cell and space for segregation of problem detainees. Overall, the new facility allows for classification and separation of inmates in an appropriate manner, which is not available in the old jail. While the old jail could hold just 12 male and four female detainees, the new facility will have 38 beds in five open pods, a padded cell, and two holding cells. There will be in-house laundry and kitchen facilities.

As with every jail in Missouri, Shelby County is seeing more and more detainees with mental health struggles that are the underlying cause for ending up in the criminal justice system, the sheriff says. Again, having a designated space to accommodate those detainees adds to staff safety and effective handling of situations.

The move will bring staff and detainees up out of the dark in a windowless basement into pods that will feature skylights, something the sheriff says he personally appreciates. “Studies have shown that access to natural light can help reduce stress and depression,” the sheriff says.

“When people ask about the ‘bells and whistles’ of the new facility, I often say that the real improvement is simply having a jail that functions the way it should. Modern locking systems, secure doors, and a full surveillance system will greatly improve the overall safety and security of the facility,” Fredrickson says.

In a region of rural counties without jails or with overcrowding problems, Shelby County’s new facility will provide relief by housing out-county detainees. The revenue from that housing will help offset the costs of operating and maintaining his jail and thus will benefit the county, Sheriff Fredrickson said. Another spin-off benefit will be the creation of law enforcement jobs in a county that can always use local employment.

Sheriff Fredrickson points to his faith as the bedrock of his life and service. That service includes keeping Shelby County safe, living up to responsibility, and preparing for the future. “As sheriff, my faith reminds me that we are called to serve others and my family reminds me why that service matters,” Fredrickson says. “My goal has always been simple - to lead in a way that honors both, while keeping Shelby County a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.” After years of struggling with a jail far beyond its reasonable lifespan and working to partner with county leaders and the community to responsibly fund and maintain a new facility, the new jail is the concrete and steel embodiment of that commitment and goal.

BY MICHAEL FEEBACK



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In 2023, the Missouri Sheriffs' Association graduated 12 from its first Jail Officer Academy, held at the Pettis County Sheriff's Office in Sedalia.

PREPARED TO PROTECT

MSA EQUIPS CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS WITH NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Training is critical for corrections officers to ensure safety and security for both inmates and staff, to manage inmate behavior through conflict de-escalation, and to limit liability, no matter what size jail they work in.

Training also builds confidence, encourages a “team” attitude, reduces staff burnout, and ensures compliance with ever-evolving legal standards and safety protocols.

The Missouri Sheriffs' Association offers legal-based, Missouri corrections-specific training that staff need, and the MSA takes that training to jail facilities around the state. In June, a 48-hour program will be presented in Kansas City to corrections officers who will be working at the city's soon-to-be-completed municipal detention center.

MSA's training is well-researched, in-depth, and thorough, and its standards are strict. Attendees must meet defined standards to participate, attend 100 percent of classes, and pass a

comprehensive electronic exam with a minimum score of 80 percent to obtain a certificate of completion.

48-HOUR JAIL OFFICER ACADEMY (POST# 24790) COURSE OVERVIEW

The course is designed to prepare the participant for working in a jail or detention center. It focuses on developing knowledge and skills to better equip an individual to maintain the safety and security of a facility, ensuring that the needs of incarcerated individuals are met humanely and legally. It is a must for individuals just beginning a career in a jail and a friendly refresher for those who have been working in one for some time.

The curriculum includes:

- Working in Corrections
- Health & Safety Issues
- Legal Issues Intake
- Booking & Release
- Daily Operations of a Jail Officer
- Controlling Resistive & Manipulative Behavior

• Use-of-Force in Jails

For a contracted agency, the cost, which includes manuals, study material, and CLEE credit, is \$430; for a non-contracted agency, the cost is \$530.

Those who successfully complete the program will earn 46 POST CLEE Credits:

- 5 Hours Interpersonal Perspectives
- 1 Hour Implicit Bias
- 4 Hours De-Escalation
- 14 Hours Legal Studies
- 22 Hours Technical Studies

A follow-up 40-Hour program is in the research & development stage, but not yet off the drawing board.

The MSA also recently developed a five-day, 40-hour Operations of a Direct Supervision Facility program.

Because officers are placed directly within the inmate population without physical barriers, they may face higher risks of physical confrontations or being outnumbered in volatile situations, particularly if officers are not well-trained or if inmate-to-officer ratios are too high. Working

in this environment demands strong leadership, communication, and adaptability, all of which are emphasized throughout this training.

This course, recently presented to the Jackson County Detention Center staff, bridges the gap between theory and practice, addressing the unique challenges corrections staff will face in direct supervision environments. However, this course is not just about understanding policy and procedure—it is about developing the confidence, decision-making skills, and situational awareness needed to manage inmate populations safely and effectively, while also teaching the practical application.

MSA's training is well-researched, in-depth, and thorough, and its standards are strict.

Topics include recognizing, interpreting, and responding to inmate behavior, maintaining officer presence and situational awareness, effective communication, conflict resolution, and de-escalation techniques. Participants will also learn how to prevent inmate manipulation and maintain professional boundaries, and how to manage inmate populations

while ensuring officer and facility safety.

But wait – there's more!

The MSA offers several other classes geared toward jail staff and jail operations:

- Objective Inmate Classification
- Security Threat Groups
- Legal Considerations for Jail Staff
- Dealing with Aggressive Behavior
- Reducing the Risk in the Correctional Environment
- Competencies of the Correctional Leader
- Leadership Without the Title
- Leadership Development, Motivation, and Retention of Jail Staff
- Qualities and Skill Building for Jails Supervisors
- Breaking the Communication Wall
- Legal Aspects and Performance of Cell Extraction for Jail Officers
- Correctional Report Writing & Courtroom Testimony

By providing staff training, sheriffs are not only investing in their employees' professional development but also in the success of their facility and the well-being of those in their custody.

For more information on these courses or any others offered by the MSA, contact Jeanne Merritt at 573-529-6900 or by email at jeanne@mosherriffs.com.

BY NANCY ZOELLNER



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STRENGTHENING POST-RELEASE OUTCOMES

Cape Girardeau County Sheriff Ruth Ann Dickerson and Jail Administrator Richard Rushin are focused on programs that enhance public safety by addressing the underlying needs of individuals in custody. Through targeted initiatives, their goal is to better prepare those individuals for successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and responsibly manage long-term costs to the community.

Two recent examples of this approach include partnerships and programs designed to improve access to healthcare and strengthen post-release outcomes.

We recently partnered with Missouri Appleseed to support efforts to improve access to healthcare for incarcerated individuals. As part of this initiative, Missouri Appleseed is conducting focus groups at our facility to better understand the challenges inmates face regarding Medicaid coverage and access to care.

This program focuses on identifying eligible individuals for Medicaid and helping ensure continuity of care upon release. While Medicaid cannot be used for services provided within the jail, it can be utilized when an individual is outside the facility for more than 24 hours, helping offset certain medical costs.

Programs like this have shown measurable impact. In other states, similar in-jail Medicaid screening efforts have resulted in significant cost savings, with North Carolina reporting more than \$10 million saved in the first year alone. Research also shows that individuals

who leave custody with health coverage are more likely to access needed care, rely less on emergency services, and experience better long-term outcomes.

More importantly, assisting individuals with Medicaid enrollment before release helps connect them to mental health services, ongoing medical care, and other critical resources. These efforts support healthier outcomes, reduce strain on emergency services, and contribute to lower reoffending rates.

Through this partnership, the Sheriff's Office is working to enhance reentry success while remaining mindful of long-term costs and the overall community impact. This is part of our continued commitment to public safety through proactive and responsible programming.

The LEAP Program (Linking Employment Activities Pre-release) is designed to support individuals during incarceration and prepare them for a successful transition back into the community.

While incarcerated, participants engage in a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) curriculum that focuses on personal empowerment, practical skill-building, and developing control over one's future. Rather than emphasizing punishment alone, the program works to reshape thought patterns that often contribute to criminal behavior.

CBI helps participants recognize and change the thinking patterns that can lead to legal trouble, ultimately reducing recidivism by encouraging better decision-making and long-term

behavioral change.

Upon release, LEAP continues to support participants by connecting them with community resources, assisting with employment opportunities, and addressing individual needs to promote stability and success.

Currently, the program is working with eight male and eight female participants in two separate groups at the Cape Girardeau County Jail. Both groups have recently completed Module 2 of the curriculum.

The original LEAP initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, established 20 pilot sites across the country, with active implementation and evaluation spanning from 2015 through roughly 2018. While these specific 2015/2016 grants concluded, the model influenced subsequent reentry funding. In January 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor announced over \$25 million in new funding for similar pre-release training and employment services.

While the program is still in its early stages, feedback has been positive. Participants have been engaged and receptive to the material, and staff have noticed a generally improved attitude, especially in terms of participation and willingness to engage.

We will continue to monitor progress as the program moves forward, but early signs are encouraging.

*BY SERGEANT CODY WINDBIGLER,
CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S
OFFICE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER*

ABOVE: Several inmates volunteered to be part of a focus group tasked with identifying the healthcare challenges faced upon release.



Certificates were recently presented to inmates who successfully completed Module Two of the LEAP program.

INMATE BOREDOM, OVERCROWDING, STRESS- ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR JAIL STAFF



Unless a loved one has gotten in trouble with the law, most people have no idea what goes on inside county jails.

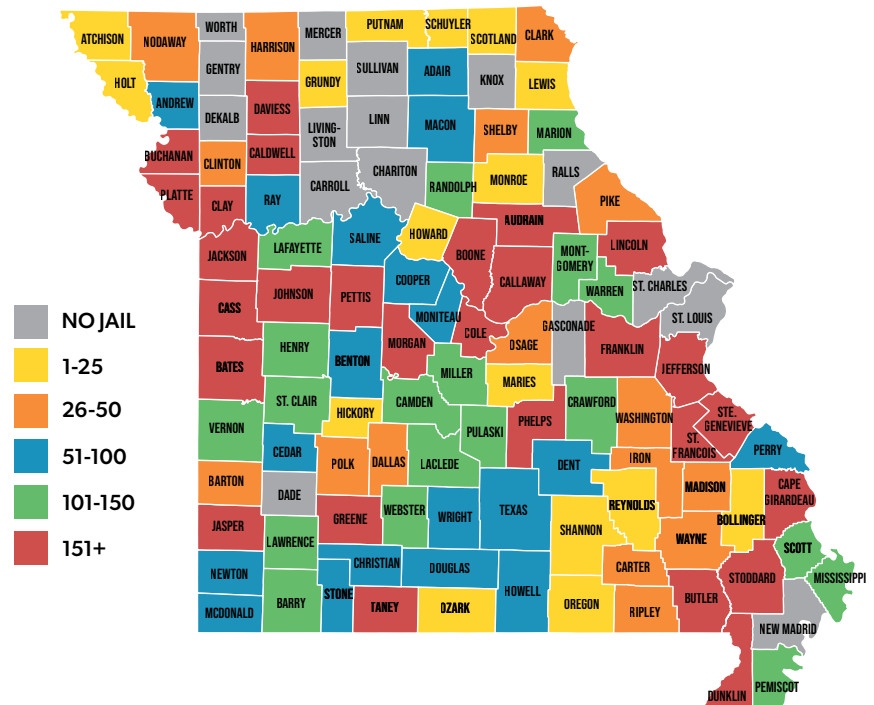
Most of those being housed there have not yet been sentenced. They are there awaiting their day in court, and either can't make bail, or a judge has determined they pose a danger to the community, or they are a flight risk and should be held until trial.

Over the past decade, jails have also become de facto mental health providers, holding individuals who are waiting for mental health evaluations to determine if they are fit for trial, or waiting for services and treatment that could enable them to stand trial. They have not yet been convicted of the crime that brought about their arrest.

To provide an inside look at what goes on in county jails, the Missouri Sheriffs' Association sent a survey to several jail administrators and sheriffs across the state, asking about some of the challenges they face. Everyone responding to our survey reported holding at least one person waiting for a mental health evaluation or a bed in a mental health facility.

Henry County Jail Administrator Captain Jacque Watson said they are seeing a trend where public defenders are sending more inmates "down the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) path to the point that the jail is

JAIL BED CAPACITIES IN MISSOURI COUNTIES



swamped with people needing mental health services who are languishing because DMH is swamped with the additional workload."

She said they've had many others who have been judged fit to stand trial, and although they are uncooperative, they are completely in charge of their facilities. "Poor decision-making and bad attitude is not a mental health

disorder; it's behavior-related. We often try to furlough inmates needing mental health services to appropriate care, only to have them get evicted from their bed at a facility for acting out or causing too much trouble. Bottom line, there are not enough secure beds in mental health facilities that are capable of handling these patients, so they become inmates again - indefinitely. They can't go to prison, and



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there's no place to send them that isn't detrimental."

Capt. Watson said one inmate returned from DMH had done "a complete 180 from when he left the jail. He's medication compliant and in all-around great condition, but we learned from DMH that the Public Defender's Office lawyer asked for him to be repeatedly re-evaluated month after month for seven extra months. They declared him competent every single time until the judge stepped in and said, 'Send him back!'"

Taney County, which employs 42 corrections officers to oversee an average daily population of 163, is holding eight committals and three ordered for mental exams. Buchanan County, with

Many times, jail staff has to deal with people that have mental health issues, such as being off their meds

a staff of 40 overseeing an average daily population of 180 to 185, is holding seven inmates who have been found incompetent, some from as far back as 2024. Two others are in the process of mental health evaluation.

St. Clair Jail Admin Capt. Peggy Snodgrass, who is in charge of a 138-bed jail that's usually close to being full, said those detainees can add a significant strain on their system - and the 42 people who work there.

"Many times, jail staff has to deal with people that have mental health issues, such as being off their meds. They yell, scream, cuss, are non-compliant, smear feces and food, etc. This is all on top of the safety and security concerns that staff deals with every day," she said. "It can be very stressful, and for the average person that just wants a job, it's more than they can - or are willing to - handle for the low pay that small counties can manage. This leads to fast burnout and a lot of turnover in staff, which reduces consistency and stability, and causes constant training of new people."

Some of the small rural counties start their corrections officers at just over Missouri's minimum wage of \$15 per hour.

Of the 19 jail administrators who responded to the survey, 15 reported being short-staffed.

Newton County Lt. Michael Hayes said they've been understaffed since 2019, which is particularly problematic since the corrections officers in his 82-bed facility have other duties, including transporting inmates, providing court security, and providing meal services.

Henry County's jail staff of 21 also handles light to medium maintenance; they perform all transport work, including civilian 96-hour transports and

municipal court transports, they oversee video court, and they handle special assignments - all while dealing with an average daily population of 100 to 110 inmates.

Fortunately, technology has made the job a little easier.

Montgomery County Jail Administrator Captain Eric E. Foree said Sheriff Craig Allison has kept their 100-bed jail up to date with the latest technologies - and that has helped in several ways.

The jail recently implemented GUARD1, a digital, RFID-based program that replaces paper logs. Staff members use the handheld devices to scan detainees' ID cards when escorting them to outdoor recreation or the law library, and when they are conducting counts and passing out meals, "and it's all logged while the officer is standing in the housing unit as the detail is performed, saving time and ensuring records are complete and accurate," he explained, adding that from a management perspective, the program allows supervisors to run reports on facility activities to confirm tasks are completed, and it provides evidence-based documentation.

Capt. Foree said they've also added housing kiosks and tablets through Encartele, allowing detainees to listen to music paid for by the detainees, access books for leisure reading and educational purposes, and stay connected with friends and family by phone, video visitation, and email/text messages. In May, corrections officers were issued body-worn cameras to supplement the Encartele kiosk and tablet systems as well as the GUARD1 System. "These programs and resources have helped in many ways. They've saved time, and they've helped with inmate aggression and idle time, giving them something to do other than just watching TV in the day room."

The majority of the jails around the state also offer educational, counseling, and ministry opportunities to help end the cycle of recidivism and provide hope for a better future. Missouri Jails magazine has shared stories about several of those programs. Visit www.mosheriffs.com, scroll down the page to "Magazines," and click on the link to learn more, or join the Missouri Sheriffs' Association to have the magazines sent to your address.

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

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RISK MITIGATION IN JAIL HEALTH CARE



The 8th Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees that incarcerated individuals are housed free from cruel and unusual punishment. Missouri sheriffs formally accept the responsibility to uphold constitutional rights as part of their oath of office. Landmark federal litigation continues to shape how the 8th Amendment is interpreted regarding access to healthcare in jails. Although sheriffs are seldom licensed healthcare professionals, they are usually named as a responsible party in civil lawsuits when an incarcerated individual or their family believes that adequate healthcare was not provided in the jail.

Sheriffs are tasked with ensuring that a medical program that provides access to care for serious health issues is in place for those housed in their jails. This responsibility can be met through a self-operated program, partnerships with community agencies and providers, or by contracting with a comprehensive medical vendor. Since no single approach fits every facility, each option presents its own unique advantages and challenges. In my experience, the two most frequent sources of liability in civil healthcare cases filed against the jail are the same, no matter what type of healthcare program is in place. Those liabilities stem from compliance with policies and procedures and training for the staff.

As a legal nurse consultant and expert witness conducting documentation reviews in preparation for a court proceeding, I rarely find correctional officers who deliberately disregard healthcare policies. More often, these so-called “violations” arise from three recurring issues.

1. The healthcare P&Ps are not specific to what the jail actually does or does not do.
2. Correctional staff are untrained and unaware of the healthcare P&Ps, which are often in conflict with security procedures.
3. The healthcare P&Ps are rigid and do not allow for or provide an alternate strategy for when an unplanned security event affects routine healthcare operations.

Regardless of the type of medical program in place, it is essential that healthcare policies and procedures are tailored to the unique needs of each jail, align with security protocols, and are carefully worded to avoid common pitfalls. In self-operated facilities, nurses or providers often write these policies, but while they excel in daily patient care, they may lack experience with civil litigation or policy writing specific to the jail setting. Community agencies and providers are usually unfamiliar with the jail setting and

struggle to navigate the healthcare delivery in harmony with security regulations, which are key factors in the healthcare P&Ps. Comprehensive medical vendor P&Ps are generated at a corporate level. With contracts requiring site-specific customization, the site nurses are often tasked with this responsibility.

Correctional officers are often the first to encounter individuals experiencing medical emergencies and are uniquely positioned to recognize early warning signs that could prevent these situations from escalating. In the event of civil litigation, it will be alleged that correctional officers were aware of and intentionally chose to ignore a serious health issue. The sheriff will face an allegation of failure to train. Insufficient healthcare training clearly creates a lose-lose situation for all involved, including the patient. It is imperative that correctional officers in facilities of all sizes, and health staff coverage, be routinely trained to recognize and respond to healthcare issues commonly found in the jail setting. This training should occur at least annually and must be consistent with the policies and procedures of both the security and healthcare operational procedures.

The financial and operational challenges posed by health-related lawsuits in jails continue to grow each year. County sheriffs, as the leading authorities in both their official and individual capacities, must take proactive and ongoing steps to safeguard themselves and their teams.

Although it may not be possible to eliminate healthcare litigation entirely, partnering with an experienced healthcare risk mitigator can lower the likelihood and impact of such claims. These professionals tailor healthcare policies to align with jail operations, identify areas of potential liability in policy wording, and ensure training programs reflect current best practices and emerging risks. They also oversee contracts with external agencies and vendors for compliance, assist with the proposal process, and conduct thorough audits and on-site observations. With an exclusive focus on protecting the county, sheriffs, and their staff, risk mitigators play a vital role in minimizing exposure to unnecessary lawsuits.

BY DEB ASH, RN, MSN, MBA, LNC, CCHP-RN



*References

1. Missouri Revised Statutes § 57.070 (2023). Certificate, bond, and oath to be recorded. <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=57.070> [revisor.mo.gov]



HONORING EXCELLENCE IN CORRECTIONS

MSA TRAINING IS CRITICAL TO SAFE, SECURE AND SOUND JAIL OPERATIONS

Enhancing safety, improving leadership, delivering better medical and mental health care, and providing better peer support were just a few of the topics covered during this year's Jail Administrators' Conference & Expo. Feedback provided by the 100-plus attendees confirmed that the teaching was well received and greatly appreciated. But it wasn't all work and no play. Jail Training Coordinator Jeanne Merritt

also included an evening of BBQ, music, cornhole and fun. The Missouri Sheriffs' Association conference also provided an opportunity to celebrate the tireless work of jail professionals and honor those who demonstrated excellence and dedication.

At an awards luncheon, Pettis County Jail Administrator Capt. Skyler Viebrock was named Jail Administrator of the Year. In his nomination, Sheriff Brad Anders wrote that Capt. Viebrock reflected "a forward-thinking approach grounded in consistency, staff safety, fiscal responsibility, and operational efficiency." He said Capt. Viebrock is deeply committed to training and professional development within the law enforcement community,

and that under his leadership, "the jail has experienced measurable improvements in operational structure, accountability, and staff development. He fosters a culture of professionalism, clear communication, and ownership at every level of the organization. His ability to translate policy into consistent daily practice has strengthened both supervisory effectiveness and line-staff confidence."

"Above all, Captain Viebrock leads with integrity. He holds himself and others to high professional standards, addresses challenges directly, and makes decisions grounded in fairness, policy, and the long-term success of the organization. His career progression, leadership roles, and dedication to service exemplify the values and professionalism this award is intended to recognize. For his sustained commitment to excellence, his impact on jail operations across multiple counties, and his dedication to the profession of corrections and law enforcement, Captain Skyler Viebrock is exceptionally deserving of the Missouri Sheriffs' Association Jail Administrator of the Year Award."

Feedback provided by the 100-plus attendees confirmed that the teaching was well received and greatly appreciated.

Peyton Triplett was presented with the Jail Officer of the Year award. In his nomination, Johnson County Capt. Jason Shackles wrote that CO Triplett represents the pinnacle of professionalism, dedication, and leadership in the field of corrections. "A 'great asset' is often defined by consistency, and he defines this daily. Peyton is consistently the first to arrive and the last



◀ Pettis County Jail Administrator Capt. Skyler Viebrock (right) was named Jail Administrator of the Year. The award was presented by Sheriff Brad Anders.



◀ Peyton Triplett (left) was presented with the Jail Officer of the Year award by Johnson County Capt. Jason Shackles.

to leave on his rotations, demonstrating a 'lead from the front' mentality that is rare and invaluable. This level of commitment ensures that our facility operates smoothly and safely, often bridging the gap during the most demanding shifts without hesitation."

Capt. Shackles stated that the CO also possesses a unique ability to empower peers, continually mentoring officers to improve their skills

and confidence; foster collaboration by always stepping in to help where needed, regardless of whether the task falls under his official duties; drive Improvement, never settling for the status quo, but instead, constantly seeking innovative ways to improve agency workflows and inmate management. "In a high-risk environment like ours, the attitude of a supervisor dictates the morale of the entire unit. Peyton's proactive nature and desire to improve others around him has created a ripple effect of excellence across each shift he has been on," he wrote, adding that CO Triplett doesn't just manage personnel, "he builds better officers. Peyton Triplett is the embodiment of what this award represents: a selfless professional who elevates the agency through hard work, a spirit of service, and an unwavering pursuit of excellence."

Stoddard County Jail Administrator Dan Seger was presented with the Achievement of Excellence Award, created to recognize the professionalism and dedication shown toward the job, passion for the jail operation and understanding of the importance of training, building morale as well as maintaining good communication with all the colleges in the law enforcement community.

"It was a hard decision because I coordinate all the jail training and all of our trainers do a great job, but Dan has done more training in that area than has ever been done. He's not only presenting the training, but he's also recruiting. He calls counties all around him to encourage them to send their officers to training," Merritt said. "I have also been



◀ This year's Achievement of Excellence Award, chosen by Jail Training Coordinator Jeanne Merritt, went to Stoddard County Jail Administrator Dan Seger.



very impressed with how he submits his class information to the MSA, which allows us to get the certificates sent to the attendees. He has used the word 'excellence' so many times that when it was time to pick someone for this award, he immediately came to mind. Thank you Dan, for a job well done."

Fourteen-year-old Weston Holan, the son of Platte County Jail Administrator Micah Holan, was recognized for creating a design that was chosen for the jail administrator T-shirt. Proceeds from the shirt sales will go into the MSA Sheriff's Employees Scholarship Fund.

Special recognition was also given to Crawford County Jail Administrator Lt. Tammy Peart; Cape Girardeau County Jail Administrator Rich Rushin; Jason Shackles and Capt. Mike Hanes with the Johnson County Sheriff's Office; and Gina Kaufman with the MSA, who were all instrumental in making this year's conference a success. Cooper County Sheriff Chris Class, who stepped down from the Jail Committee, was thanked for serving as chair of that group for the past four years.

BY NANCY ZOELLNER



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