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STANLEY SNIFF

# SHERIFF

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**PRESS RELEASE:** **SHERIFF MULLING MASSIVE LAYOFFS FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR TO BALANCE CEO-PROPOSED BUDGET**

**Agency:** Sheriff's Administration  
**Station Area:** Countywide  
**Written Date:** May 13, 2011 **Time:**  
**Reporting Officer:** Corporal Courtney Donowho, Public Information Officer

**Details:**

Sheriff's Administration has been planning a variety of scenarios in order to deal with very deep budget cuts for the next fiscal year starting this July. On April 4th, the Sheriff addressed the Board of Supervisors after the previous week's budget hearings and outlined that Sheriff's operations across the county would be "cratered" if the CEO's recommended budget for the Sheriff was approved by the Board in mid-June before the start of the next fiscal year.

The CEO's office recommended cuts that ranged between \$40-60 million to the Sheriff's Department's needed net county cost funding next year. Contract city and other contracted services will be unaffected by these cuts as they do not involve net county costs (NCC). NCC supports unincorporated patrol efforts across the county that directly impact roughly 450,000 in population and the department's county jail system that is made up of five separate facilities, and currently has capacity for 3,900 inmates. The jail system serves all of the criminal justice agencies in the county and annually books 60,000 adults for offenses ranging from vandalism to murder for every community and police department within Riverside County.

Current patrol staffing levels in the unincorporated areas of the county two years ago stood at 1.2/1000 population but was reduced to 1.0/1000 population in an effort to reduce costs at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, to help the County through the current economic challenges. Jail capacity and jail staffing was increased by Board of Supervisors direction during 2010 due to persistent jail overcrowding exacerbated by the County's unmatched population growth over the last decade and a permanent federal court order for early inmate release due to overcrowding.

During the discussion with the Board of Supervisors on March 29th and April 4th, Sheriff Sniff outlined the stark ramifications of the CEO's proposed budget target but pledged that the Sheriff's Department would follow Board direction on the budget, just as it had done in the past. He indicated on April 4th, that if the funding was simply not available, that deep cuts – though not recommended – would be made to bring NCC needs into alignment with Board guidance on funding priorities within the county government.

After April 4th, the Sheriff directed executive staff to begin modeling budget cuts to operations for next fiscal year based upon the CEO's proposed budget and exploring a number of different alternatives in order to meet those severe funding cuts to emergency 24/7 operations. The Sheriff indicated "These cuts are extremely deep and have severe ramifications for communities all across the county, but the Sheriff's Department is determined to be a partner with the Board in dealing with our County's fiscal challenges. But our operations are massive, far-ranging in impact and the complexity far different for front-line uniformed emergency public safety personnel working 24/7, than for other non-emergency county government operations working on 4 day workweeks."

Due to the size of the budget cut if approved by the Board of Supervisors in June, over 500 fulltime staff will be laid off after July 1st, and nearly 800 notices will be required due to the complexity of the layoff process, including seniority, bumping rights, reclassification, transfers to need assignments and notification sequences. The first wave of layoffs will involve 100 deputy sheriffs and correctional deputies that will end their duties on July 13th.

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Earlier this week, formal notification of the start of that process was made to the County HR Director and to the labor organization representing those staff members. Individual notifications to the affected employees will begin the week of May 16th so that every employee has as much notice as possible.

Movements to accomplish these employee reductions will cause a great deal of turbulence throughout the Sheriff's Department as the workforce shrinks in order to meet the proposed budget. The department is concerned about the disruption of the police-community partnerships created over many years of effort in community oriented policing, but hopes that the residents of Riverside County will understand that it is inevitable that public services will be disrupted by the sheer magnitude of the reduction in staff.

The Sheriff's Department estimates that the budget cuts, if approved as proposed by the CEO, will force unincorporated patrol levels down to .75/1000 (increasing response times, and removing community policing efforts going to minimum staffing), end the department's efforts on the gang and sexual predator task forces, close half of the county-wide drug teams that deal with dispensaries, reduce patrol aviation service hours, and close and mothball several Sheriff's patrol stations. In addition, to meet the proposed budget cuts, another 800 jail beds will be closed at the recently expanded Larry Smith Correctional Facility (LSCF), forcing many local law enforcement agencies to book their inmates into the Riverside or Indio jail facilities. At that point, Riverside County's jail system will have been reduced from 4,200 to 3,100 beds, one-half the capacity of neighboring San Bernardino County; that county recently broke ground on additional jail space to relieve overcrowding.

Sheriff Sniff made the following statement. "We will await the decision of the Board on what funding they ultimately approve next year for our department, and we will vigorously execute their decision as part of the County team. We will professionally make the best of whatever outcome occurs, but we all understand that the budget reflects the public's priority on how their taxpayer dollars are allocated and spent."

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