

What is impressive is the breadth of the membership of the organization, their dedication to making our criminal justice system work better, and their willingness to take on

tasks that, if they had been easy, would have already been accomplished. We are so fortunate that the vision of a few more than a decade ago continues today.

— Jay Dixon, Benton County Commissioner

Public Health Services and the Criminal Justice System

An underlying premise of drug courts is that drug possession and use is not simply a law enforcement/criminal justice problem, but a public health problem with deep roots in society. The Benton County Health Department (BCHD) is working closely with the criminal justice system in pilot Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts, and The Partnership Project.

Drug Courts identify individuals in need of early treatment, identify an individual's treatment needs, monitor treatment through the courts and personal accountability, and provide aftercare and follow up services.

The Partnership Project consists of local law enforcement agencies, Oregon State University, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, and local merchants who collaborate on training for underage drinking prevention, implement party dispersal interventions in the community, and develop public awareness campaigns regarding the need to check identification.

The BCHD and criminal justice system also collaborate on health promotion and disease prevention. The Benton County Tobacco Prevention and Control Program has had a longstanding partnership to enforce the County and City tobacco ordinances.

More recently, the Benton County Substance Abuse Prevention Program and the criminal justice system have begun working on methamphetamine prevention, which includes implementation of the Meth Watch program in local businesses to deter theft and excessive sales of over-the-counter materials commonly used to make methamphetamine.

For more information, or to get involved, please call Tobacco Prevention Coordinator Amy Goodall at 766-6213; Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Jessica Kelly at 766-6247; or Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Manager Jim Gouveia, 766-6763.

The full value and vision of the Willamette Criminal Justice Council did not become apparent to me until I left the position of Benton County Sheriff to become the Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections and gained perspective from distance and comparison.

Many Oregon communities strive to coordinate law enforcement services and create safer communities but few, if

any, have matched the WCJC for genuine inclusiveness, commitment to community safety, elected officials' support, and, thankfully, intelligence and perseverance in resolving issues and achieving goals.

The future challenges are complex, difficult, and potentially dangerous, but in the WCJC this community has created a model for success.

— Dave Cook, Former Director, Oregon Department of Corrections

Collaborative Budget Planning Forums



In December 2002, the Willamette Criminal Justice Council (WCJC) held the first of what has become annual work sessions to examine the impact of State and local budget cuts on the local criminal justice system. The group believed that the best way for each agency to manage their resources was to look at their missions as part of a system, and then collectively manage the system to get the highest level of service and efficiency for the public dollar.

The first step was for each agency to present their best estimate of the short and long-term implications of the budget cuts on each agency's service delivery, and describe how the cuts might impact other criminal

justice partners. The goal was to learn about interdependencies and to then work together to minimize negative impacts to the community. The represented disciplines included law enforcement, corrections, parole and probation, the courts, juvenile, and mental health.

Next, four subgroups developed specific recommendations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of that segment of the criminal justice system.

The process has enabled partner agencies to appreciate their interdependence and to recognize the value in working together to prioritize the allocation of limited community resources.

Law Enforcement Restructuring Project

In early 2004, the Corvallis City Council and Benton County Board of Commissioners received a report from former District Attorney Pete Sandrock on the potential for restructuring Benton County law enforcement services. Specifically, the report followed up a 2002 report titled *Law Enforcement Consolidation in Benton County, Oregon: Identification of Issues*. Both reports discussed the potential benefits and challenges of consolidating the Corvallis Police Department and Benton County Sheriff's Office.

Following multiple City Council and Board of Commissioners meetings and a public hearing, the elected officials decided to not consolidate the law enforcement agencies. Rather, they directed the agencies to work collaboratively on eight initiatives to further service partnerships that benefit residents and visitors.

These eight initiatives are currently part of the Corvallis Police Department and Benton County Sheriff's Office work plans:

1. Develop common computer systems
2. Develop common procedures for high-risk

activities, such as vehicle pursuits and use of force

3. Develop an intergovernmental agreement to coordinate patrol responses
4. Synchronize patrol schedules between the two agencies
5. Review Law Enforcement Building modifications, including co-location of functions such as patrol briefings
6. Provide joint training;
7. Pursue joint procurement of supplies and equipment, and equipment servicing
8. Develop a joint Street Crimes Team

The Corvallis Police Department and Benton County Sheriff's Office are making progress on the initiatives, including creation of a joint vehicle fueling and repair servicing agreement that lowers costs for both agencies.

More details will be provided as progress continues. For more information, call the Corvallis Police Department at 766-6901 or the Benton County Sheriff's Office at 766-6858.