



Josephine County Board of Commissioners

Simon G. Hare, Chair • Lily N. Morgan, Vice Chair • Daniel E. DeYoung, Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Josephine County Serves Notice to the State of Oregon on Prosecutorial Services

Grants Pass, OR – The Josephine County Board of Commissioners has sent a letter to Governor Kate Brown, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, and Joint Committee on Ways and Means Co-Chairs Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Nancy Nathanson, notifying them that as of July 1, 2017, the state will be solely responsible for funding prosecutions in the county.

The County is acting at this time because:

- The Federal government has significantly reduced timber payments in recent years, and the Secure Rural Schools Act has ended;
- The County's fiscal year will conclude on June 30, 2017, and the revenue outlook for the following fiscal year prevents the County from continuing to fund state prosecutions;
- The Board of County Commissioners must prioritize its own core law enforcement services (Jail, Sheriff's patrol, Juvenile Justice) above those of the state, and;
- The 2017 legislature is in session and needs to include this item in its budget and make any requisite statutory adjustments.

The District Attorney (DA) is a state official who is responsible for prosecuting state crimes. The state pays the salary and benefits of the elected District Attorney, but the state no longer pays for the DA's deputies or staff. In Josephine County the DA employs nine deputies and 13 support personnel who are funded by the county (with the exception of four grant-funded victim advocates).

"The state has been failing to provide a complete law enforcement system," said Commissioner Lily Morgan. "The state needs to fund the Deputy District Attorneys and support staff who prosecute its cases."

Commissioner Simon Hare said, "We're at a critical point where we're not able to cover our core government functions. Criminal Justice and the DA's Office are core functions of the state government, not the county's."

Commissioner Dan DeYoung said, "A lot of counties look at us and ask how we survive on so little revenue. The answer is that when we cannot afford to keep doing things the old way, we adapt and move forward."

This decision is not meant to reflect negatively on the performance of the District Attorney, his deputies or his staff.

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