

From the Office of the Sheriff:

I hope you enjoyed Labor Day and its activities as we say good-bye to another summer and hello to another school year. For Dodge County departments, this time of the year means budget time. The Chief Deputy has already submitted our first draft of the 2010 budget. This year's process seemed more streamlined and practical as we work the budget under first-year County Administrator Jim Mielke. The guidance was favorable - submit a budget that reflects no levy increases over 2009, leaving aside the 2010 wage and benefits increase.

A realistic goal and one we were able to meet. Our draft actually reflects a reduction in spending of approx. \$200k than 2009. Our hope is that this frugal budgeting will minimize additional cuts that may be required as the budget process moves forward. We have accepted a few risks in 2010 as we have the past few years. They include not funding key positions that would make the department more efficient but unaffordable. Our 2010 budget will maintain unfilled vacancies in our Criminal Investigation Division and possibly our Communications and Detention Center. Though these vacancies negatively impact our ability to do business, they do not put public safety at risk. Everyone is going through tough times and we are not exempt. As families, school districts, and businesses struggle, government has an obligation to do its part as well.

The Sheriff's Dept. will continue to be a responsible county department in the eyes of the taxpayer. This will be the seventh budget under my administration, six of which we have returned tax dollars back to the general fund. These excess revenues and unspent tax dollars have exceeded \$3.5 million. Though it is too early to see where we will close 2009, we surely will not out spend the resources provided by the county board.

On another front, I have concluded my first course here at the National War College. The course was titled Introduction to Strategy. The curriculum provided me food for thought on how we do things in Dodge County. Not that we do things wrong, but looking at the ways and means of doing things better. For example, when setting the course for the Sheriff's Dept., do we talk to the other county departments on how our efforts may impact them? Do we, unintentionally, develop and execute programs that are beneficial to us at the Sheriff's Dept. but may be detrimental to other county departments? We may not have engaged in those discussions in the past, but that soon will change.

The course wrapped up with an in-depth discussion and strategy development in regards to the illegal drug trade and the migration of cocaine, heroin, and meth into the United States from Mexico. A panel discussion included representation from senior managers from the State Dept., the Mexican government, Washington D.C. think tanks, and independent experts. I was able to share my experiences with our local drug trade as well as our experience housing hundreds of federal detainees. I was able to grab critical insight into the challenges we have and how we can help.

Next I will start two elective courses. They include a course on non-lethal weapons (tazers, bean bags) and another on media relations. Both of these will fit very well into my law enforcement management responsibilities and I look forward to learning new innovations and tools of the trade for future use. I keep track of my days via coffee filters, 281 more to go. I appreciate all your supportive emails and thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us

