

County asks for help, comments on Senator's web site to support jail expansion

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Public Support May be Considered in Senator's Federal Appropriations Funding Decisions

BEND, Ore. -- Deschutes County Commissioners are requesting Federal appropriations support to expand the Deschutes County Jail and are asking for your help. The Commissioners are asking County residents to make comments of support for jail expansion on Senator Ron Wyden's website. According to a recent media release, the Senator will consider public support to help him make appropriations funding decisions for the year 2010.

Deschutes County Commissioners ask residents to fill out comment form on Senator's web site in support of jail expansion.

Because the Deschutes County Jail has reached capacity, inmates are routinely released before serving their full sentences. This practice compromises the public safety system in the County and directly places the public at risk. The expansion would increase the number of beds to 564 (including 90 beds in a remodeled work center) at a cost of \$46 million. Jail expansion documents will be complete in June, making construction the next step in the process.

At this time, the County does not have money to pay for jail expansion construction. However, Deschutes County already has funding available (through the permanent tax rate of the recently approved special law enforcement district) to fund the operation of the jail when it is expanded.

"Appropriation dollars would significantly help with jail expansion construction costs, improving public safety for residents and adding new job opportunities that have already been approved by the voters," said

Sheriff Larry Blanton.

Online steps to give your online support of the Deschutes County Jail expansion:

1. Please visit Senator Ron Wyden's site at <http://wyden.senate.gov/issues/appropriations/webform.cfm>
2. On the Appropriations Feedback page, please fill out the Views form with comments of support for Deschutes County Jail expansion funding
3. Suggested comments residents could make on the Senator's website could be, "I support full appropriation funding for the expansion of the Deschutes County Jail located in Bend, Oregon. The project will improve public safety to citizens of the County and, once constructed, jail operation funds are already provided through a recently approved taxing district."

NEW JOBS CREATED: The County estimates the jail expansion construction project will create approximately 100 full-time positions for carpenters, ironworkers, concrete workers, masons, electricians, plumbers, glaziers, roofers, HVAC specialists, security specialists, painters, flooring installers, and landscapers. The expansion will lead to the creation of approximately 25 new family wage jobs for corrections deputies and support staff.

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office appreciates you taking the time to provide feedback to Senator Ron Wyden. "By commenting online, Oregonians can help play an important role in ensuring the most deserving requests are selected to compete for funding by the Senate Appropriations Committee," said Senator Wyden's Chief of Staff, Josh Kardon in a recent notice.

For more information about making online comments to Senator Ron Wyden's website or about the Deschutes County Jail expansion project, please call the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office at 388-6655.

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