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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Sheriff Blanton to Recommend District 1 Tax Cut**

Sheriff Larry Blanton of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office will recommend to the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners and to the Deschutes County Budget Committee a tax reduction of 3 cents for District 1. The Sheriff will make this recommendation on May 18<sup>th</sup> in his budget presentation to the budget committee. This temporary reduction would take District 1 from 95 cents to 92 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value for FY2010/11.

For more than 20 years the citizens of Deschutes County have supported the Sheriff's Office by funding public safety when they were asked to approve operational levies.

"In 2006, when we asked the citizens of Deschutes County to vote to form two taxing districts, we said permanent funding would allow us to keep our well-trained and qualified staff. We would end high personnel turn-over and prevent the added expense of re-training; allowing us to implement long range strategic plans to keep costs down, and, allow us to develop programs and staff to provide a level of professional services that citizens expect from the Sheriff's Office," stated Sheriff Blanton. "We are delivering on our promise to the citizens of being responsible for every tax penny we are given. We are proud to reduce the burden on tax payers," Sheriff Blanton added.

In 2006 the initial tax rate for District 1 was set to fund the reopening and remodeling of the Work Center. The Work Center is a 90 bed facility for low-risk male inmates. Knowing the additional expenses of remodeling and staffing the Work Center were necessary, the rate for District 1 was set at 95 cents. "Today the Work Center remodel is completed. And we have the needed staff for the Work Center operations," said Sheriff Blanton.

Since passage of the taxing districts, the Sheriff's Office has not asked for a tax increase. District 1 property owners currently pay \$.95 per \$1,000 of assessed value. District 2 property owners currently pay \$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Tax District 1 is a countywide district that provides common public safety services mandated by State Law such as the jail, search and rescue, and civil process service to all

citizens of Deschutes County. District 1 has a maximum rate of \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed value, currently at 95 cents.

Tax District 2 includes all areas in Deschutes County outside the cities of Bend, Redmond, and Sisters, as well as, Sunriver and Black Butte Service Districts. Funding from this district provides services such as Sheriff's patrols, major crime team detectives, traffic control, animal control, etc. District 2 has a maximum rate of \$1.55 per \$1,000 of assessed value, currently at \$1.40.

The new taxing districts became effective July 1, 2007. Since then we have provided to the citizens the following new or enhanced programs:

### **Patrol Division**

- » We have **decreased** response time to calls in the county by 8%.

Area	2007	2008	2009
South County	0:13:08	0:12:34	0:11:54
Bend Rural & East County	0:15:10	0:14:33	0:14:00
North County	0:14:33	0:14:45	0:12:59
West County	0:13:04	0:12:05	0:12:20
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>0:13:59</b>	<b>0:13:29</b>	<b>0:12:48</b>

Source: Deschutes County 9-1-1 Service District

- » Started free personal document shredding to help prevent identity theft.
- » Offer a prescription medication disposal program.

### **Corrections Division**

- » Reopened the Work Center that provides 90 beds for low-risk, male inmates.
- » Inmate work crews.
- » Implemented a Motivational Class for inmates.
- » Implemented drug and alcohol programs for inmates.
- » Expanded the hours of coverage for medical and mental health staff
- » Replaced the jail's control panel

### **Search & Rescue**

- » Project Lifesaver - a rapid response system to locate people who wander due to Alzheimer's, Autism, Down syndrome, dementia and other related disorders.
- » Mountain Rescue
- » Fire Evacuation Team
- » Swiftwater Rescue Team

### **Community Programs**

- » New web site to keep citizens up to date ([www.sheriff.deschutes.org](http://www.sheriff.deschutes.org))
- » Expanded Citizens' Academy (from 8 weeks to 10 weeks)
- » Animal rescue farm (opened September 2009)

Depending on economic conditions in FY2012/13, this temporary tax cut for District 1 may need to be set back to the current rate of 95 cents. “You have our commitment that we will continue to do everything possible to keep taxes down. As your Sheriff, I am proud of the men and women of the Sheriff’s Office and their commitment to use every penny wisely,” stated Sheriff Blanton.