

Outfitter MOU Update to TPWC Task Force 8.1.16

Outfitter MOU Funding Commitments for Law Enforcement

- To date, outfitters have provided \$39,200 for contract law enforcement under Local Government Code Chapter 351.061, and \$8150 in funding to the county for sheriff's office vehicles deployed with officers.
- Totals reflect 2015 funding of \$29,925 for contract law enforcement and \$5,550 for sheriff deputy vehicles, and 2016 funding of \$9,275 for contract deputies and \$2,650 for sheriff vehicle payments to the county.
- Estimates for staffing patterns, funding, and approach to law enforcement deployment have continued to be refined, and were lower than projected in 2015 due to flooding in the area.
- The sheriff's office call and complaint log, as well as informal feedback, indicate current deployment levels have helped provide a more effective law enforcement presence in the area.
- Despite assurances as a matter of law and approach, there continue to be concerns from residents that contract law enforcement officers are not appropriately overseen or managed by the county.
- Concerns expressed by area residents indicate additional benefits to the public's trust in law enforcement if a more structured approach could be implemented to ensure that county officials are engaged in more oversight and management of law enforcement.
- Utilizing the County MOU approach to direct funds committed by the outfitters to the county would provide additional assurance that county officials are appropriately overseeing those employed to address the county's constitutional requirement to enforce state laws.
- Outfitters remain committed to working with county officials to implement approaches to deployment that provide for greater transparency and accountability, and more active management oversight of law officers deployed to enforce existing laws along the river.
- The proposed County MOU being considered by the Caldwell County Commissioners Court would provide these additional assurances and would increase public trust and ensure greater transparency and accountability, and more effective results.

Key Policy Recommendation Relating to Law Enforcement Deployment

Regardless of the solutions pursued by policy makers, all research and efforts to date indicate that any successful effort must deploy law enforcement in a way that ensures active engagement and appropriate enforcement of state law. Whether this is done through the proposed County MOU or some kind of special district created by the Legislature, any effective solution will require more active employer training, management, and oversight to make sure officers deployed are willing, able, and trained to enforce the law based on the physical conditions of the area in question.

This issue and the effort to find realistic solutions would benefit from additional discussion about how the county can ensure all law enforcement officers deployed in the area have appropriate uniforms and equipment, and that they are managed and overseen by local elected officials in a manner that ensures all funds committed and expended for law enforcement are deployed effectively to achieve intended results