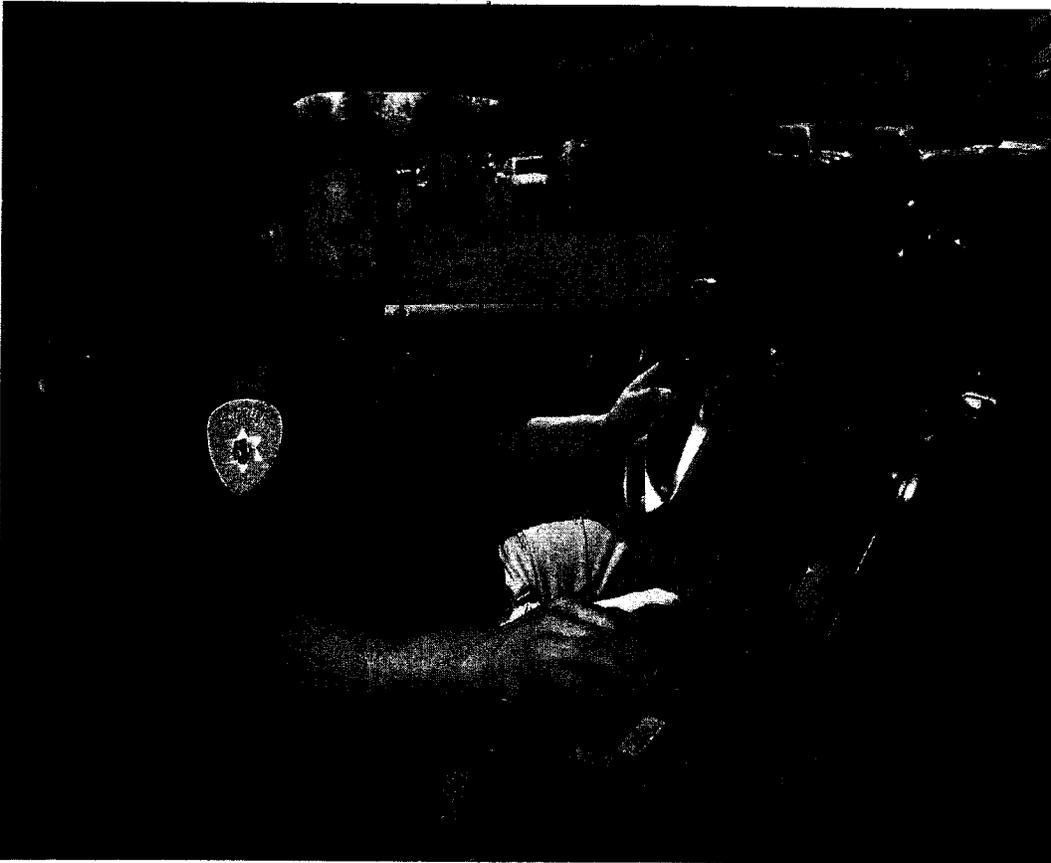


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TOP STORY

## Jail revenue helps sheriff's office buy new equipment

By Whitney Bermes Chronicle Staff Writer Apr 5, 2015



Adrian Sanchez-Gonzalez/Chronicle

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Since the opening of the Gallatin County jail in 2011, revenue from the jail has allowed the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office to use discretionary funds to purchase new equipment and pay for facility operations and jail staff. Since the opening of the Gallatin County jail in 2011, revenue from the jail has allowed the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office to use discretionary funds to purchase new equipment and pay for facility operations and jail staff.

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Exhibit 8

When the Gallatin County jail opened its doors in April 2011, officials didn't quite grasp

how much money the county would get from renting beds to out-of-county inmates.

But when that total reached more than \$1 million in just two years?

"We were shocked," said Gallatin County Commissioner Steve White. "We never expected to get that much."

That first year, revenue from out-of-county inmates was \$152,505.

In 2012, revenues increased by 78 percent to \$271,715.

By the 2013 fiscal year, out-of-county jail inmates brought in more than \$1 million. And last year was a record year with room-and-board inmates bringing in \$2,018,235.

Through February of this year, jail revenue is just over \$773,800 and is expected to be between \$1.5-1.8 million by the end of the fiscal year in June.

And while a majority of those funds are put aside to help fund future expansion plans for the jail, a portion is given to the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office. And Sheriff Brian Gootkin said those funds have helped his office catch up with important purchases.

In one word, Gootkin explained the importance of the jail revenue.

"Huge," he said. "There is no way that we would be in the place we are today with vehicles and equipment without that revenue source."

Without that money, "I can say with confidence we would get a small fraction of what we've been able to get," Gootkin said.

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Gallatin County contracts with a number of counties and agencies to house out-of-county inmates in the Bozeman jail.

Carbon, Dawson, Fallon, Hill, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Park, Sheridan and Sweet Grass

counties pay the detention center \$65 a day to house their inmates.

The U.S. Marshals Service pays \$67 for federal inmates. And the Montana Department of Corrections pays \$98.47 for state inmates.

That money is split a couple of different ways. The first \$358,000 that comes in is used for jail operations, paying for things like meals, clothing and a mental health worker inside of the jail, among other things.

Once that initial amount is surpassed, 65 percent of any additional revenue is put aside for capital needs of the current jail and for future expansion.

The remaining 35 percent is used to pay the increased costs of additional inmates and used at the sheriff's office's discretion, with the County Commission's approval.

So what has the sheriff spent his portion of the money on and how does he prioritize what to purchase?

"It's not easy," Gootkin said. "We know this (funding) is not going to be forever."

The goal of the sheriff's portion of jail revenue has been capital replacements, Gootkin said, with the top priority being replacing the aging fleet of patrol vehicles and weapons.

"We're just trying to get caught up on the technology and the equipment," Gootkin said.

And it's important to both the sheriff and commissioners that the sheriff's money is not used for ongoing operations but rather for one-time purchases, Gootkin said.

"We never wanted to count on that money to do the things we do on a day-to-day basis," Gootkin said.

Jail funds have been used to buy 12 new vehicles – Ford Interceptor SUVs that are replacing Ford Crown Victoria patrol cars.

The SUVs are slowly being worked into the sheriff's office's fleet. The patrol division received two in September 2014 and one in January. Detectives received three vehicles in July 2014. Administration got one in March and will get four more this month. And the jail is expected to get one in May for transporting inmates.

Last year, the sheriff's office spent \$62,000 to buy 48 Colt M1911 pistols to replace aging firearms.

Lt. Ryan Stratman said prior to this purchase, the office only had 17 pistols that were either department owned or surplus weapons from the Pentagon's 1033 program, which has provided local law enforcement agencies with surplus military supplies since it was authorized by Congress in 1991.

Stratman said the remaining 36 deputies were carrying personally owned pistols while on duty.

The same story went for the sheriff's office's rifles. This year, the department purchased 52 rifles from the Colt 901 series, which are .308-caliber, semiautomatic weapons that include a 20-round magazine and rails for attachments.

The new rifles, which cost about \$81,154, replaced used M-14s that the sheriff's office obtained in 1993, also through the federal government's 1033 program.

Just like with the pistols, before buying the new rifles, deputies were carrying their own rifles.

Stratman said now the office has reliable weapons that allow for consistent training among deputies.

"This has been a great addition," Stratman said.

Other purchases include \$29,000 for 28 automatic external defibrillators to be placed in patrol vehicles, \$130,000 for a computer server in the Law and Justice Center, and \$12,600 for new ballistic vests for deputies and replacement panels for Special Response Team vests.

There was an agreement to not use jail money to pay for new positions within the department. But there is one exception.

After a bit of debate, commissioners approved spending \$173,977 to fund a re-entry coordinator who works in the jail.

The program, called Fresh Start, provides intensive case management for local inmates to help keep them from re-offending. Coordinator Tiffani Pimley helps inmates, once out of the jail, connect to a number of local services. She tracks their progress and makes sure they are keeping up with important appointments.

Since beginning the program last fall, Pimley reported recently that she has five former inmates she's working with outside of the jail and that she has talked to more than 50 while they were still incarcerated.

Gootkin was willing to fund the position using jail revenue. However, he said he made it clear from the get-go that it was temporary funding – two years and, after that, the program would have to find alternate funding to continue.

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For Commissioner White, the most important part of the funding is the 65 percent that gets set aside for future expansion.

Through the end of the second quarter of this fiscal year, the county has \$2.03 million banked for future expansion. Gallatin County Finance Director Ed Blackman said they estimate that pot of money will be \$2.4 million by the end of June.

"Our intention is to do the responsible thing," White said.

But the small portion that has gone to the sheriff's office has allowed the county to make purchases that would have otherwise come from county taxpayers, White said.

Even if the county didn't have these jail funds, the expenses would still be there and the need to replace equipment would still exist, White said.

"Do you take it out of jail money or do you take it out of the pocket of the taxpayer?" White said. "We could have either shorted departments and services, or we could have bumped up taxes a little bit."

Commissioner Don Seifert echoed White, saying jail money is preferable to taking it from the county's general fund.

"I think it's a good way to handle that (funding)," Seifert said. "It's been a valuable tool for operating the detention center and planning for the future."

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Soon, the sheriff's office's portion of jail revenue will be a little smaller as the county will start banking 75 percent of the room-and-board inmate fees for future expansion, an expansion Gootkin said is already starting to be planned.

But so far, Gootkin said everyone in the county has benefited from the purchases the sheriff's office has made.

"It has enhanced their safety," Gootkin said.

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## Whitney Bermes

Whitney Bermes covers cops and courts for the Chronicle.



Department of Corrections - Historic County Jail Hold Rates				
	Bed Cap	2012 Rate	FY 2015 Rate	FY 2016 Rate
Anaconda		\$65.00	\$76.55	\$69.00
Beaverhead	14	\$65.00	\$67.00	\$67.00
Big Horn		\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Broadwater	42	\$63.00	\$65.95	\$65.95
Butte/Silver Bow	79	\$59.26	\$88.36	\$69.00
Cascade		\$59.44	\$66.76	\$66.76
Chouteau		\$52.00	\$52.00	\$52.00
Custer		\$50.45	\$50.45	\$50.45
Dawson		\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Fallon	10	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Fergus		\$57.00	\$57.00	\$57.00
Flathead	87	\$50.00	\$84.47	\$69.00
Gallatin	160	\$67.67	\$98.47	\$69.00
Glacier		\$50.00	\$50.00	\$60.03
Granite		\$40.00	\$52.92	\$54.02
Hill		\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Jefferson	21	\$43.00	\$75.04	\$69.00
Lake		\$75.54	\$75.54	\$69.00
Lewis & Clark	58	\$63.85	\$92.18	\$69.00
Lincoln		\$63.76	\$63.76	\$63.76
Madison		\$65.00	\$65.00	\$0.00
Meagher		\$35.00	\$72.29	\$69.00
Mineral		\$62.31	\$62.31	\$62.31
Missoula		\$60.00	\$88.73	\$69.00
Musselshell	15	\$60.00	\$70.61	\$69.00
Park	20	\$80.62	\$80.62	\$69.00
Phillips		\$84.23	\$84.23	\$69.00
Pondera		\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Powder River		\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Powell		\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Ravalli		\$50.96	\$50.96	\$50.96
Richland		\$58.17	\$58.17	\$58.17
Roosevelt		\$46.00	\$46.00	\$46.00
Rosebud		\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Sanders	29	\$51.40	\$55.57	\$55.57
Sheridan		\$86.01	\$86.01	\$69.00
Toole		\$65.34	\$65.34	\$65.34
Valley		\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Wheatland		\$43.88	\$65.00	\$65.00
Yellowstone	286	\$58.04	\$76.94	\$69.00