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Sheriff Lockhart's statement

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In an effort to be as transparent as possible, I felt obligated to respond to some concerns that have been brought to my



Sheriff Sid Lockhart

attention. I do hate the fact that we have to spend money on the county detention facility, but there are conditions that have to be addressed and corrected.

First, I would like to point out that our Board of Education is primarily funded by the State of Alabama and only a small portion of their budget comes from county funding. However, the Chambers County Detention Facility is solely funded by the county.

By law, the Sheriff of each county is responsible for the operations of the detention facility and is held accountable by state and federal courts. The Chambers County Detention Facility was originally constructed in the 1950s and an addition was opened in 1991 which is currently in use. The current capacity is 135 inmates (16 females and 119 males). At times, the population is under capacity and at other times, has been over 200.

We currently have one block for all females regardless of their charge so segregation of violent offenders is impossible. The kitchen is designed to feed 30 inmates per meal but serves over 400 meals each day. Due to the State of Alabama reducing funding to mental health institutions in 2012, treatment beds available to inmates have been reduced by 64%. On average, we house 11 emotionally disturbed inmates per day.

Over the last four years, I have been working with the county commission to address issues with the detention facility concerning the rise in population and maintenance issues. Currently, the detention facility is in need of major renovations to maintain standards dictated by state and federal law, and case law. Over the past 11 years, we have successfully defended approximately 50 lawsuits regarding the conditions at the detention facility, most of which were frivolous.

At this time, it is necessary to do the necessary renovations which includes building an addition to house the increased female population and nonviolent offenders, and to modernize the entire facility for security reasons.

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