



Idaho Sheriffs' Association

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March 19, 2019

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The Honorable Representative Thomas Dayley
Judiciary and Rules Committee Chair
State Capitol 700 W Jefferson
Boise ID 83720

Subject: Report on the daily cost of inmate incarceration

Dear Representative Dayley,

As you may know, Idaho Code 20-237a requires the germane committees of the legislature to review the daily cost for housing state inmates in county jails every three years. Pursuant to this statute the Idaho Sheriffs' Association (ISA) first reported to the Senate and House Judiciary and Rules Committees in 2001.

Sheriffs have a close working relationship with the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC). County inmates are often in transition to becoming state inmates and there is a continual flow of inmates from jails to IDOC and to a lesser degree from IDOC to county jails. Inmate movement can sometimes be complicated and costs associated with housing inmates is always a work in progress, however the day after an order committing the inmate to IDOC is received from the judge the prisoner's cost is charged to the state.

The Idaho Sheriffs' Association performs many functions that the IRS has designated as "lessening the burden of government". Some of these activities include annually inspecting Idaho jails for compliance to Idaho Jail Standards, managing the statewide VINE (victim notification) program, managing the statewide sex offender registration (Offender Watch) program, training sheriffs, staff and detention officers and coordinating with the DEA to distribute funds used to eradicate outdoor marijuana grows.

The ISA initially developed minimum jail standards in 1978. There are currently 328 recommended and mandatory jail standards reflecting best practices, statute and case law. Out of 44 counties, 36 have operational jails, 6 have closed, and one county only has a holding facility that can hold a person no longer than 4 hours. Cassia and Minidoka have consolidated their jails into one facility. Approximately 4,200 inmates are being held in county jails as of March, 2019.

The daily fee for housing a state prisoner was \$35 until 1998 at which time it was increased to \$40. At the same time the legislature required that hence forth the legislature would review the cost of housing state prisoners in county jails every 3 years. The next increase occurred in 2018 when the housing fee increased to \$55 for the first 7 days, and \$75 thereafter.

As of the earlier part of this month there were 633 state inmates in county jails. Another 336 state inmates were in county jails that were not yet eligible for transfer for various reasons including additional pending charges, jurisdictional review, appeals or court ordered hearings. The cost for housing these 336 inmates is not charged to the state.

The average daily cost per inmate, based on our latest survey of jails, is \$86.55. We employ an automated cost analysis document developed by the Ada County Sheriff's Office. It's a fill-in document with categories such as salaries, benefits, inmate food and medical expenses, maintenance, training, inmate transport, equipment, human resource, supplies and numerous other categories. Inmate days served is added and the program calculates the entries and arrives at an inmate cost per day. These are averaged using a formula that accounts for volume.

To provide perspective, Ada is \$88.16 per day, Nez Perce is \$103.41 per day, Elmore is \$65.55 per day and Bonneville is \$75.73 per day. Cost fluctuations are due to the size of the jail and economies of scale, the extent of jail programming for inmates, salaries and benefits, and staffing levels.

Hopefully, this report has provided some insight into inmate daily costs. If you have any questions please contact me or the Association's executive director Vaughn Killeen.

Sincerely,



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Bonneville County Sheriff
Idaho Jails Standards Chair
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Cc: House Judiciary and Rules Committee
ISA Board of Directors
Vaughn Killeen