



CUMBERLAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Good afternoon Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, and Cumberland County Commissioners.

This response to recommendations made by the Cumberland County Jail Board of Visitors 2025 Annual Report at the Cumberland County Jail is pursuant to Title 30A, Part 1, Chapter 13: County Jails and Jailers §1651, Examination of Jails; Board of Visitors.

PERIMETER SECURITY:

Jail Administration is exploring cost-effective temporary and permanent safeguards to improve perimeter security of the facility due to the transient challenges of an open campus. These safeguards could include staffing posts such as mobile patrols, physical barriers such as fencing, and additional monitoring capabilities with enhanced video camera coverage.

It has been said that either the City of Portland or the Sheriff (Sheriff Wesley Ridlon) at the time of construction, did not want the current structure to look like a jail or corrections facility. Therefore, there was no fencing put around the campus. However, it is in fact a jail and Corrections facility. In 1992 when the facility was built, substance use disorders, mental health concerns and crime was very low. In a world that is consistently pushing "Homeland Security", there is a need for updated security enhancements.

For instance, in April 2020, we had the father of a sexual assault victim come onto the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office property with a Humvee and commence to ram a vehicle parked in front of the jail picking up the assailant of the sexual assault. The Humvee repeatedly rammed the vehicle and eventually pushed the vehicle up against the pillars in the front of the jail. Eventually, the situation was resolved when Portland PD arrived with an Armored vehicle and blocked the Humvee at gunpoint from moving. The driver was eventually arrested and charged as well.

There have been other occasions when a vehicle entered the Sheriff's Office campus at a high rate of speed and pulled up as if it was going to drive through the double door entry of the jail. Recently,



another individual was seen pushing the bollard placed in front of the entry door of the law enforcement center.

In December 2024, a police chase involving Portland PD entered the campus and the suspect drove around the outer perimeter of the jail at a high rate of speed. We were fortunate that our employees were not outside and potentially struck. The vehicle pursuit left the property and the operator was eventually stopped in another part of Portland.

We need to eventually add some additional security cameras. While a fence surrounding the property is a desire, the cost without grant funding is cost prohibitive to place on Cumberland County taxpayers.

INMATE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES:

Jail Administration is exploring alternative cell-molded furnishings with a ligature-resistant design that reduces offender safety concerns. Ligature resistant furnishings is another future project. What worked in 1992 when the jail was built doesn't necessarily work in 2025. Unfortunately, with the large number of individuals struggling with substance use disorder and/or mental health, the risk of suicide is high. A design for the times 30 +/- years ago doesn't translate into an optimal design today.

The security and mental health staff meet on a weekly basis to discuss and strategize engagement of offenders who have mental health challenges to manage this type of population properly. This practice will continue and be adjusted to best practices.

Our medical provider under the leadership of Health Service Administrator Kyle Manahan has worked with security staff to manage those suffering from mental health issues, behavioral concerns and substance use disorders. Through the teamwork of my staff and Kyle's staff, the number of occasions requiring use of force and/or requiring medical interventions has been reduced dramatically. Our Mental Health Services group has been working with inmates in our Special Housing Unit in an attempt to recognize some common traits that might indicate why various inmates are prone to being sent to the Special Housing Unit, and methods of resolving those traits before they occur.



Kevin J. Joyce, Sheriff
Cumberland County

