



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release

To: Letter to the Editor, St. Petersburg Times, Hernando Edition
From: Sheriff Richard B. Nugent

As Sheriff, I often get accused of things that are not true. Due to my philosophy of taking the high road, I typically let those things simply come and go without making much noise about them. Today's St. Pete Times story titled "Sheriff wants more money for county jail", however, is a completely inaccurate account of the facts and one that I cannot let slide without correcting.

I said that I would run the county jail in fiscal year 2011 for the same amount of money the County allocated for the jail operation in 2010, and that is exactly what I am going to do. I did not ask for any more money than the County allocated for that operation.

Once the County calculated the amount of money they would budget for the jail in 2010 (which is the same amount I have agreed to operate the jail), they then decided to put on paper a \$280,000 "future discount" for an inmate ankle bracelet monitoring program that was never implemented. It wasn't the Sheriff or the Judiciary that failed to implement the program – it was the County. Taking a "future discount" **on paper alone** for a program that doesn't exist is nothing more than fuzzy math.

If I had not agreed to take over the responsibility for the jail operation to bail the County out of the situation they were in with CCA, then someone at the County would be standing in front of the Board of County Commissioners in the next couple of weeks telling them that their "future discount" had caused the County's cost of the jail operation with CCA to go over budget. That "future discount" would have caused the County to run out of money in the jail budget before the end of this fiscal year. It was a train wreck just waiting to happen.

The reason the County Administrator is recommending approval of the Sheriff's jail budget is because he understands that **the "future discount" the County put on paper is completely invalid** and should not be considered part of the jail budget. His staff, including the budget director agrees as well.

It is unfortunate that the newspaper never made any attempt to contact me or my staff to obtain clarification on this issue prior to publishing their story. They are usually better about vetting the information for their articles. The headline of the true story should have read **"Sheriff Plans to Operate Jail for less than CCA"**.

Richard B. Nugent, Sheriff

