

**SAFETY & JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE:
TWO-YEAR UPDATE
July 25, 2011
Greene County Elections Center
1126 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mo.**

**THE ROUNDTABLE'S CHARGE
Outlined December 2007 by Greene County Commission
and Springfield City Council**

The Safety & Justice Roundtable is charged with developing a comprehensive understanding of the community's criminal justice system through studying the interconnectivity of all departments and offices within that system, identifying and prioritizing needs within the system and recommending solutions to address those needs.

**TOP SEVEN PRIORITIES
Outlined in the Final Report July 22, 2009**

1. Solving Police-Fire Pension Fund shortfall
2. Reducing Jail Population
3. Improving the Family and Juvenile Justice System
4. Combining emergency response agency facilities
5. Enhancing data sharing and interagency communication
6. Increasing staffing throughout system
7. Expanding facilities

SUCSESSES

Priority #1: Solving Police-Fire Pension Fund shortfall

Voters approved a 3/4-cent sales tax for the Police/Fire Pension Fund on Nov. 3, 2009, providing an estimated \$30 million a year for the fund. City Council approved closing the pension system to new-hires on January 11, 2010. In 2010, the pension's funded ratio was up for the first time in a decade and is now funded at nearly 50 percent. Total assets are now above \$187 million, up from a low of \$90 million in 2009. Key growth in the fund is due to a current 11-percent return on investments, combined with new funding provided by tax revenue, city General Fund contributions and employee contributions. The sales tax sunsets in 2015 and will require at least one renewal to fully fund.

Priority #2: Reducing Jail Population

The Greene County Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with other state, county and municipal agencies, had initial success in reducing jail population after the Roundtable report was issued, bringing the average daily population of **538** in 2008 to **493** in 2009 and **492** in 2010.

These efforts helped reduce the jail population:

- Pre-Trial Services
- Warrant officers, who have worked to eliminate warrants which are no longer valid or cannot be prosecuted. Through their efforts, the county's active warrants have been reduced from approximately **18,000** to a current **14,500**.
- Jail Population Control Officer- works with courts on scheduling hearings
- Three judges now hearing felony criminal cases
- Accelerated felony criminal trial docket
- Updated Municipal Prisoner agreement with City of Springfield

However, a variety of known and unknown factors have caused the jail population to dramatically increase in 2011, reaching **593** on July 17. The June 2011 average population was **559**.

Priority #3: Improving Family and Juvenile Justice System

The Greene County Juvenile Office currently has several innovative programs for at-risk youth funded by grants, including:

Juvenile Drug Court/Reclaiming Futures federal grant

- \$1.2 million total, distributed over four years
- Four-year federal grant program designed to reduce drug, alcohol and crime activity among youth offenders.
- Used for Juvenile Drug Court, juvenile evaluations and assessments and gender-specific programs for girls.

Annie E. Casey Foundation- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

- \$10,000/year
- Provides funding and support for detention system reform

Fostering Court Improvement Project Initiative funding and support:

- \$3,000/year
- Funding and support for children in the foster care system.

All of these programs utilize partnerships with several public and private institutions in our community, including Burrell Behavioral Health, CASA, the Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association, universities, school districts, law enforcement and children's homes. In addition to its community partners, the Juvenile Office actively engages nearly 60 volunteers in its various youth programs.

While all other elements of the criminal justice system have reported increased activity in the last three years, new juvenile delinquency cases, surprisingly, have not. The number of youth offenders under court supervision has remained steady at about 200 per year. This is largely due to robust grant funding for at-risk youth programs, which helps reduce the number of second referrals. Seven probation officers supervise these cases.

Priority #4: Combining emergency response agency facilities

The Greene County Public Safety Center is now under construction, with estimated completion in spring 2012. The building will house the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management and the Springfield-Greene County E-911 Center in a secure facility with state-of-the-art technology. Construction is estimated at \$19 million and is funded through 911 sales tax revenue, federal grants and county bonds.

Priority #5: Enhanced data sharing and interagency communications

The Springfield Police Department and the Sheriff's Department are both in the process of implementing the same records management system, called Niche. The city's system is now fully installed; the county's system will be functional in 2012. Greene County has a license to use the city's Niche system. Data sharing is now available to both agencies as well as E-911, and actual data conversion begins this summer.

Both agencies continue uploading and accessing information to and from the state record system, MoDEX; however, there are limits to the type of information which may be exchanged on MoDEX.

Springfield Police Chief Paul Williams and Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott are committed to sharing data and actively working to strengthen interagency communication and cooperation. The Chief and Sheriff meet on a regular basis and collaborate on many projects, and their agencies benefit from a greater level of trust.

Williams and Arnott have reached an agreement to share the city's firing range and are seeking other opportunities for collaboration. The Sheriff's Office is also expected to make extensive use of Springfield's Regional Police-Fire Training Facility, set for completion in summer 2012.

Priority #6: Increasing staffing throughout system

Thanks to aggressive pursuance of grants and a bolstering of the Pension fund, Springfield Police and Fire are now nearly fully staffed. The City of Springfield has moved from a hiring freeze to a "hiring frost," meaning new vacancies occurring after March 1 are being filled. In addition, the city's FY2012 budget includes funding for eight previously frozen public safety positions, including three Police Service representatives, a

Fire Marshal, an Assistant Fire Chief — Training, two Animal Control Officers and a municipal court staffer. Springfield Police also added 22 new sworn officers with the July 22, 2011 Police Academy graduation.

Greene County has been operating under a hiring freeze since 2008. Only essential staff vacancies are being filled, with preference given to public safety-sensitive positions in the Sheriff's Patrol, Jail and Juvenile Office. However, the county has not been able to afford many new positions for the Jail, Juvenile Office, Courts and Pre-Trial, as recommended by the Roundtable. Outside of essential public safety staff, vacancies are largely not being filled, and 24 vacant positions were eliminated in the county's 2011 budget.

Priority #7: Expanding facilities

Public Safety Center will be complete in spring 2012.

The city is building a Regional Police-Fire Training Facility, set for completion in summer, 2012. Construction is funded through the city's Level Property Tax. The facility is adjacent to the South District Police-Fire Station. Law enforcement and fire departments across the region will all have access to this facility.

Greene County completed construction of two new courtrooms in the Judicial Courts Facility in July 2009, using former office space.

Greene County also expanded its Archives and Elections Center in 2010, using funds available through the Recorder of Deeds and the County Clerk. This building provides, among other functions, space for court records and juvenile records, freeing up storage space in these office for other uses.

SUCSESSES OUTSIDE OF TOP SEVEN PRIORITIES

Explore use of Grand Juries

At the request of the 31st Circuit Court, a Grand Jury was empanelled in fall 2010 and completed its report May 17, 2011. The Jury issued 13 indictments for felony sex offenses, murder, felony stealing and unlawful merchandising/security offenses, and voted to return a No True Bill in one case.

The Grand Jury was also mandated to conduct a review of county facilities.

The Grand Jury's report highlighted many of the same inadequacies noted by the Roundtable, including:

- Lack of storage space and lack of privacy in Juvenile Office
- Lack of storage space for Circuit Clerk (31st Judicial Circuit)
- Insufficient room for the public in the Springfield Municipal Court building
- Inefficient use of space in Sheriff's evidence rooms and a lack of office work space for deputies.

The report also noted that the Circuit Clerk's Office, Sheriff's Office, Jail and Juvenile Office are in dire need for additional staff.

Springfield Strategic Plan- Public Safety

For the first time ever, Springfield's new community strategic plan (Field Guide 2030) will include a chapter focused on public safety. This chapter was drafted by a combination of citizens and public safety professionals. The Public Safety Chapter, still in draft form at this time, identifies the following seven major goals to be accomplished or initiated over the next five years:

- Identify and maintain awareness of major threats to local public safety, including technology-based threats and large-scale disasters
- Strengthen inter-agency collaboration between local and regional response agencies
- Educate citizens and promote public awareness on public safety measures and practices
- Enhance proactive policies and practices that mitigate against crime and adverse effects of public safety threats
- Strengthen recruitment and retention of well-trained public safety staff to maintain safe and adequate staffing levels
- Provide optimal facilities and equipment (including technology), and promote effective/efficient use of resources
- Identify appropriate local, state, federal, and private revenue sources to support the missions of local public safety agencies

Community-Oriented Policing

Under Police Chief Paul Williams, Springfield Police Department has implemented a department-wide Community-Oriented Policing philosophy, with emphasis on community partnerships, organizational transformation and problem solving.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Springfield Police, Greene County Sheriff, the Prosecuting Attorney, the municipal court and other community leaders working together on a new Justice Mental Health Collaboration Program. The program is designed to provide treatment and support for frequently arrested subjects with mental illness and any accompanying drug or alcohol abuse problems, rather than sending them to jail again and again. The program is funded by a grant awarded to the Greene County Jail.

Out of the program's original 16 participants, three remain in the program, one has been successfully transitioned through the program, two have been removed as not viable for the program, and one is in jail on felony charges. There are currently 17 participants in the program.

Alternative Courts

Greene County Drug Court and DWI Court are consistently recognized as among the top in the country. The Greene County DWI Court has twice been named an Academy Court by the National Drug Court Institute (NDCI), in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). As an Academy Court, Greene County serves as a national model for DWI Courts, and judges and court personnel from all across the country often study and visit Greene County to learn DWI Court best practices.

Greene County has also expanded court-supervision programs to juvenile and family court. Reclaiming Futures provides funding for Juvenile Drug Court.

Greene County Pre-Trial Services

Alia Stowers was named Director of Pre-Trial Services in April, following Bobby Linton's retirement. Stowers has been busy working with Greene County Judges, the Prosecutor's Office and the Sheriff's Office to implement a standardized risk assessment to evaluate eligibility of offenders in the Greene County Jail for pre-trial release. Pre-Trial Services remains an important tool in managing jail population, and typically supervises more than 200 participants who would otherwise be inmates in the jail.

Video conferencing

The Greene County Court began using Video Conferencing internally in 2004. In 2009, the Missouri Department of Corrections established video conferencing with the state's courts. The 31st Circuit is now regularly conducting hearings, via video, with defendants in these facilities.

UNFUNDED NEEDS

Jail overcrowding

The Greene County Jail is now operating in a state of crisis due to population.

Built with a capacity of 485 inmates, and staffed only for 450, the jail has had some success in reducing jail population since the Roundtable report was issued, bringing the average daily population of **538** in 2008 to **492** in 2010.

However, a variety of known and unknown factors have caused the jail population to dramatically increase in 2011, reaching **593** on July 17. The January-June, 2011 average population was **528**, the second highest average in eight years.

Why are there so many people in jail? Population increase is due to a combination of factors, including:

- Rising poverty — 9 percent unemployment, free and reduced lunch rate in Springfield Public Schools at 50.5 percent
- Rising 911 law enforcement calls for service, up 10 percent since 2006, including 26-percent increase in domestic assault calls
- Rising Crimes Against Property, 2005-2010
 - Springfield and Greene County combined, **14-percent increase**
 - In Greene County alone, a 43-percent increase, including:
 - Burglaries up 103 percent
 - Thefts /larceny up 22 percent
 - Robberies up 200 percent
 - Motor Vehicle Theft up 49 percent
- Rising Crimes Against Persons, 2005-2010
 - Springfield and Greene County combined **42-percent increase**
 - In Greene County alone, a 33-percent increase, including:
 - Domestic Assaults up 18 percent
 - Non-Domestic Assaults up 78 percent
 - Rape up 550 percent
- More Springfield Police Officers on the streets
- Only high-level criminals are being detained in the jail. Lower-level offenders are booked and released.
- More dangerous people now on the streets
- Loss of one Jail population control officer — two now doing the work of three.
- Recent changes in Pre-Trial release guidelines
- Municipal Prisoner surge (now reduced)
- Public Defender staffing
- Prosecutor's Office staffing
- Limited number of judges available for trial dates.
- Other possible unknown factors

Despite the rising jail population, Springfield and Greene County fall below the national average inmates in jail. The national average is 242 prisoners per 100,000 population. The Springfield-Greene County ratio is 20 percent lower at 192 per 100,000.

There are numerous consequences and possible risks associated with a rising jail population, including:

- Release of lower-level offenders to make room for offenders those who are such a danger to themselves or others that they simply can't be let out into the community. Among those typically booked and released are:
 - Misdemeanors
 - DWI 1st – 4th offences
 - Vehicle break-ins
 - Burglaries
 - Thefts
 - Assaults
 - Drug possessions
 - Lower level sex offenders
 - Forgeries
 - Ex Parte violations
 - Other C and D Felonies
- Dangerous work environment for corrections officers. Typically, one officer supervises as many as 125 inmates, separated only by a line on the floor.
- Dangerous environment for inmates, which can lead to:
 - Fighting
 - Injuries and related medical expenses
 - Lawsuits
- Release of lower-level offenders impacts the jail trustee labor pool, which saves the county money in kitchen, cleaning and laundry expenses.
- Out-of-county housing expenses:
 - Sheriff has started sending prisoners to other county jails whenever the population exceeds 525 (policy currently suspended for 90 days)
 - Out-of-county prisoner housing cost the county nearly \$60,000 from March to June. Estimated total 2011 cost: \$120,000. Greene County did not budget for this expense in 2011.
- Possibility of a federal court order — An incident in the jail or a related lawsuit could result in federal court taking over control of the jail. This has happened in Jackson County, Mo., and Knox County, Tenn. Knox County, among other court orders, was fined \$5,000 a day for exceeding the court-ordered jail population cap. A similar program in Greene County would have massive impact on the county's budget.

Greene County has done everything within its power to manage jail population with the resources now available. The Greene County Jail serves not only the unincorporated

county; it serves the entire community, as well as the state. Eighty percent of the inmates in the jail are arrested in Springfield, and are now awaiting trial on state charges.

Jail staffing

Again, the jail is staffed for 400-450 inmates, and jail population is now consistently over 550. One corrections officer may supervise as many as 125 inmates.

Because the jail operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it is often difficult for corrections officers to schedule much-needed vacation time. There simply aren't enough officers to cover shifts. Likewise, scheduling difficulties arise when officers call in sick. When staffing is short, officers have had to work a 12-hour shift supervising as many as 125 inmates without a break. Meals are taken with inmates and bathroom breaks require the officer to lock down the pod, then move inmates out of one of the cells so the officer can use their toilet.

With one corrections officer supervising as many as 125 inmates, corrections officers are at a high risk for injury. Such an incident would place the Greene County Jail at high risk for a federal court order.

In 2009, the Sheriff assigned three positions to address population control at the jail, managing court dockets to bring inmates to trial faster and working through the county's unserved warrants. However, grants which funded these positions have not been renewed, and now two positions share the workload of three.

State budget cuts also reduced the state's per diem reimbursement for housing state prisoners from \$22 to \$19.58. It costs Greene County about \$46 a day to house each prisoner. The reduction costs the county an additional \$350,000 a year to house state prisoners.

Greene County would gain \$2.3 million annually if the state made the maximum authorized reimbursement of \$37.50 per day. That's enough to fully staff the jail.

Juvenile Office Staffing

While the Greene County Juvenile Office has accomplished much with grants and community outreach, little has changed in staffing levels since the Roundtable report.

Sadly, the number of child abuse and neglect cases referred to the Greene County Juvenile Office has taken a sharp increase, jumping from **773** in 2009 to a current **1,010** children — a **33 percent increase** in two years. Greene County, already known for high child abuse and neglect rates, now accounts for more than **1 in 10 cases in the state of Missouri** supervised by the juvenile court. Non-profit agencies working with abuse and neglect also report a rapid increase in referrals.

The increase means each of Greene County's eight Abuse and Neglect Deputy Juvenile Officers now carries a caseload ranging from 111 to 145, as well as conducting intake assessments for new referrals. Greene County desperately needs more Deputy Juvenile Officers.

Fortunately, new juvenile delinquency cases have not increased, and the number of youth offenders under court supervision has remained steady at about 200 per year. This is largely due to robust grant funding for at-risk youth programs, which helps reduce the number of second referrals. Seven probations officers supervise these cases.

State and county budget issues currently make it difficult to fill vacancies within the Juvenile Office staff. Most Juvenile Office employees are actually state employees, as they are throughout Missouri. However, state law (HB 971, 1998) allows the State of Missouri to reimburse Greene County **less than 25 percent** of the cost of Juvenile Office employee salaries, leaving the county to make up more than 75 percent. Juvenile staff funding was further reduced in the state's FY 2011 budget.

Juvenile Office Facilities

Although the 2010 expansion of the Greene County Archives created more storage space, active juvenile case files must still be stored in the Juvenile Office, and the cubicles and halls are still lined with boxes of paperwork.

Two juvenile delinquent treatment programs had to relocate in 2010 due to the termination of a lease on the Mary E. Wilson Home. The Greene County Youth Academy, a residential program for male youth offenders who have been released but cannot reside at home, was forced to relocate inside the county's Juvenile Detention facility — hardly an ideal location for rehabilitating youth offenders. This successful program is fully funded by the state but will soon be discontinued due to lack of space. The Evening Reporting Center, a highly structured after-school youth program designed to keep offenders off the streets while building life skills, has relocated to the former Hogan Land Title building on Boonville, owned by the county.

Greene County has a plan to construct a Family Court Facility between the existing Judicial Courts Facility and the Juvenile Justice Center. The new facility would add courtroom and office space for Juvenile and Family Court functions. No funding has been identified for this project.

Prosecuting Attorney's Office

In 2008, the former Greene County Prosecutor characterized his staffing levels as lean, but sufficient. The Safety and Justice Roundtable recommended maintaining the current level of staffing and funding within the Prosecutor's Office, adding, "However, if cases

begin moving through the courts system at an accelerated rate, the Roundtable acknowledges additional staffing may be needed in the Prosecutor's Office to prevent bottlenecks."

The possibility noted by the Roundtable has now come to fruition.

Current Greene County Prosecutor Dan Patterson recognizes that the jail overcrowding issue is not the root problem, but rather, a visible symptom of the larger problem: insufficient capacity of the criminal justice system to dispose of enough cases. Like his predecessor, Patterson believes that while adequate staffing of the jail should be the county's first priority, the next priority should be adequately funding and staffing the criminal justice system.

Simply put, the only way to solve the jail overcrowding issue is to move criminal cases through the courts system at an accelerated rate. Toward this end, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office has established a full-time warrant unit, implemented a differentiated case management system in the circuit court, and implemented diversion and alternative disposition programs.

However, staffing levels in the Prosecutor's Office have **shrunk 13 percent** since the Roundtable first studied the office. In 2008, the Prosecutor's Office had **75 employees** (29 full-time Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys (APAs), 1 part-time APA, 37 clerical/support staff, 7 investigators, and 1 paralegal). Because of the county's budget situation and hiring freeze, the office shuffled workloads and assignments, the Prosecutor's Office now has a total of **65 employees** (28 full-time APAs, 1 part-time APA, 30 clerical/support staff, 4 investigators and 2 paralegals). The office has shuffled workloads and assignments to cover the vacant and eliminated positions.

Patterson needs to restore lost staff and to add new staff to keep up with current and rising caseloads, to adequately staff the criminal divisions of the court, and to accelerate the movement of criminal cases through the courts system. Felony case filings are **up 14 percent** this year compared to the same period last year. The Greene County Circuit Court also has recently **increased its criminal case capacity by 33 percent** by moving a third judge to the criminal docket, with no corresponding increase in the prosecuting attorney's staff. Rising crime rates in Springfield and Greene County will result in more cases referred to the prosecutor.

Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys routinely exceed 40 hours a week with no comp time or overtime, especially during jury trial preparation and jury trial. Many have accrued the maximum number of vacation hours, because the workload prevents these dedicated APAs from feeling comfortable taking time off. Patterson says that though in recent years the office has successfully managed the caseload and related stress, eventually both will affect the quality of APAs' work, the level of APA morale, APA turnover, and, ultimately, success in holding offenders accountable and restoring victims. Because of the case load and the number of days each attorney spends in court on routine matters in nine criminal court divisions, Patterson's assistants lack time to prepare cases and to

bring them to disposition at an accelerated pace, resulting in the following negative effects on Greene County and its residents:

- Delayed justice for victims of crime
- Increased number of days suspects await trial in jail
- Lost witnesses needed for testimony
- Faded memories compromising testimony
- Compromised public safety and quality of life

31st Circuit Judicial Courts- Additional Judges and Court Commissioners

Two judges' positions were added to the 31st Circuit in 2009: a Family Court Commissioner and a rotating associate civil court position.

The 31st Circuits fourth Family Court Commissioner was assigned by the court to the domestic docket, resulting in an immediate reduction in length of time from case filing to trial in Family Court, from an average of 12-15 months to 9-12 months.

In 2009, the Office of the Missouri Supreme Court approved creation of the 31st Circuit, Division 25, a new associate civil court staffed by a roster of rotating visiting judges as part of the statewide Judicial Partnership Program. Associate Civil and Small Claims cases heard in Div. 25 have allowed other judges to hear more felony criminal cases and large civil cases, which has contributed to the overall reduction in felony criminal **cases awaiting trial** from **1,907** in FY 2009 to **1,671** in FY 2010. In FY 2011, however, the number of cases awaiting trial increased to **1719**.

Unfortunately, support staff for Div. 25 was cut from the state's budget in 2010. Limited funding is available for this position from a special court fund, but this is not a long-term solution. Without a court clerk, Div. 25 cannot function.

Greene County's 31st Circuit still has one of the highest caseload-to-judge ratios in the state. In view of the state's financial situation, Greene County does not expect funding for additional judges or staff in the foreseeable future.

31st Circuit Judicial Courts- Additional Courtroom space

Greene County completed construction of two new courtrooms in the Judicial Courts Facility in July 2009, from space formerly used for offices. Unless other offices are vacated, there is no additional space from which courtrooms may be developed within the Judicial Court Facility.

Greene County has a plan to construct a Family Court Facility between the existing Judicial Courts Facility and the Juvenile Justice Center. The new facility would add courtroom and office space for Juvenile and Family Court functions, and provide a home

to a Unified Family Court program. Though this proposal is consistently among Greene County's top legislative priorities, no state funding has been identified, and given the state's financial situation, no funding is expected in the foreseeable future.

31st Circuit Judicial Courts- Expedite guilty pleas

Courts are making an effort to expedite likely guilty pleas by scheduling multiple cases for trial on the same day. Many inmates, reluctant to follow through on a trial, decide to plea guilty when their trial is scheduled, thereby eliminating the need for a lengthy jury trial. For those who plea not guilty, judges are sharing the workload when trial schedules overlap.

There are occasions when a defendant who is in the custody of the Missouri Department of Corrections is brought to Greene County for a hearing on a pending charge(s). Occasionally new charges may have been filed. The Court inquires if the defendant desires to dispose of the pending and additional charges prior to being returned to DOC. If the defendant desires to resolve the charges, the court will refer the case to the Public Defender and set the case for a resolution/guilty plea within seven days. These cases are often resolved within two weeks.

Missouri State Public Defender's Office, District 31

The Missouri State Public Defender remains woefully under funded and understaffed, particularly 31st District Public Defender's Office, which serves Greene, Christian and Taney Counties.

In 2010, the Missouri State Public Defender announced the 31st District Office would begin limiting the number of cases it accepts each month. Greene County judges have responded with court orders for the Public Defender's Office to accept cases.

A test case is now before the Missouri Supreme Court, and it is unclear at this time what the implications of this court decision will be. Regardless, staffing levels at the Public Defender's Office continue to impact the Jail population, case management within the Prosecutor's Office, and the speed of which cases can be brought to trial in the courts.

Public Defenders often meet their clients for the first time at court hearings, and have had limited time to prepare for the case. Although there is no quantitative data, lack of preparation leads to increased requests for continuances, which contributes to delayed trial dates, with corresponding jail days for offenders.

During 2009, the Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association recruited attorneys to take on about 100 pro bono cases that would otherwise await representation through the Public Defender. However, this program ended Dec. 31, 2009. Other measures designed to limit

the number of cases referred to the 31st District Public Defender's Office have failed to significantly reduce this office's caseload.

Increased Public Defender funding remains among Greene County's top state legislative priorities, but has received little attention from the Missouri General Assembly.

Municipal Court

Facility needs that existed two years have not changed. The May 17, 2011 Greene County grand jury report stated the following about this issue: "We noted that this building was inadequate for the amount of daily traffic. . . . We recommend a new, larger facility be found or built to accommodate the needs of the municipal court."

Staffing levels at the municipal court are close to the fully allotted amount, but remain largely unchanged from two years ago, due to the city hiring freeze.

Springfield Police Department

With the July 22 graduation of 22 police academy recruits, Springfield Police is now staffed with 320 sworn officers, nearly the city's authorized strength of 326 sworn officers. Current staffing brings Springfield slightly above the nationally recognized minimum standard of 2 officers per 1,000 residents. The department's long-term goal is to reach a regional average of 2.2 officers per 1,000, which would increase sworn officers to 352.

The department is also authorized for 81 non-sworn personnel, minus three frozen position, for a total of 78. Current actual strength is at 70. SPD is in the process of hiring to fill the other eight positions. The established ratio of sworn to non-sworn staff is 4-1. If the sworn staff is increased to 352 in the future, SPD would need a total of 87 authorized non-sworn staff.

The city is in need of funding for lifecycle replacement of police vehicles, and is currently working on a plan to address this need.

Springfield Fire Department

The Springfield Fire Department is at nearly full authorized strength, though even one or two vacancies have a great impact because authorized staffing levels are currently lean. Authorized staffing would need to increase when a new fire station is built in northwest Springfield.

The city is also in need of a funding source for lifecycle replacement of fire response vehicles. The city is currently working on a plan to address this need.

Greene County Sheriff's Office Uniform and Investigations divisions

Staffing in the Greene County Sheriff's Uniform and Investigations divisions has not kept pace with Greene County's population growth.

In the last decade, a time of significant growth in county population, only 5 uniformed deputy positions have been added. With 37 uniformed officer patrolling the streets, the Sheriff's Office falls below national and regional averages:

National average:	2.5 officers per 1,000 residents
Midwest/Plains average	2.4 officers per 1,000 residents
Greene County (unincorporated):	1.25 officers per 1,000 residents
Nationally-recognized minimum	2 officers per 1,000 residents

The county's Investigations Division is similarly understaffed, with 19 investigative deputies — no increase since 2000. This division and operates with the highest number of cases per investigator (173 cases) and lowest percentage of cases cleared (26 percent) among comparable agencies in Missouri (Jefferson County, Clay County, St Charles County) and Kansas (Sedgwick County, Shawnee County.)

The 2009 study also shows Greene County offers the lowest salaries among comparable agencies in Missouri and Kansas. Sheriff's deputies make a lower average salary than any other municipality in Greene County, and trained officers often leave to county to accept better paying positions nearby.

Staffing levels affect officer response time and the availability of back-up. Staffing limits investigators' availability to clear cases. A major incident, such as the April 2011 Willingham murders, absorbs nearly all the department's resources.

When the Safety & Justice Roundtable conducted its review of the Sheriff's Office in 2008, Jail staffing needs were emphasized over other divisions. However, the Uniformed and Investigations division were, indeed, understaffed at the time and continue to be a critical concern for Greene County.

SUMMARY

The 2009 Safety & Justice Roundtable Report Executive Summary states, “Our public safety and criminal justice system is overburdened and underfunded.” Actually, the system is overwhelmed. As noted in this report, Springfield and Greene County have implemented every recommendation from the Roundtable they can with current resources. Greene County, in particular, has reached the limit of what current funding and staffing can accomplish.

Property crimes and crimes against persons continue to increase, and while officers are able to respond to emergency calls, follow-up and investigation often lags behind. Additional officers on the streets help with initial emergency response, but increases the burden on the rest of the criminal justice system, which does not have enough judges, prosecutors and public defenders to quickly move cases through the system.

The problem is best illustrated by the Greene County Jail, which consistently operates well above capacity with inmates facing trial on felony charges. Offenders charged with lower level crimes like burglary, assault and drug possession must be released in order to house all the alleged murders, child abusers, rapists and others who are such a danger to themselves or others that they simply cannot be let out into the community. Released offenders are free to commit more break-ins, thefts and assaults, or engage in more drug activity. This is an unpleasant fact of life in Springfield and Greene County every day.

Greene County and Springfield’s collective efforts resulted in a reduction in jail population in 2009 and 2010. But this year it is on the rise again. Based on available funding, the jail has run out of options.

Jail population soared to over 580 prisoners in June. Many shifts have only one corrections officer guarding as many as 125 inmates. The county cannot continue exposing its officers to this high-risk environment. While the county is engaged in efforts to provide services to reduce jail population through a pre-trial release program, this does not address the underlying problem of an understaffed criminal justice and juvenile justice system.

Child abuse is on the rise. Over the past three years, the Greene County Juvenile Offices has experienced a 33-percent increase in child abuse and neglect cases. One in ten children under court supervision for abuse or neglect in Missouri live in Greene County. In order to stem the rise child abuse and neglect, our community must have a strong Family and Juvenile Court System. Greene County lacks sufficient staff and resources to keep up with current caseloads.

The State of Missouri continues to mandate programs at the county level, yet does not necessarily provide funding for these programs. The state has cut its budget every year since the Roundtable began its work, leaving Greene County to shoulder an increasing

burden of expenses within the jail, Juvenile Office and courts. The state budget also impacts the availability of judges, Public Defenders and Circuit Clerk staff, who are all state employees. We simply cannot rely on the state to restore or enhancing funding at the local level.

We estimate it could take as much as an additional **\$20 to \$25 million per year** to operate its public safety and criminal justice system at regional and national norms. We acknowledge that, in these tough economic times, this annual amount is more than it could ask from its residents. Yet, we know doing nothing is not an option.

Springfield and Greene County are a great place to live and raise a family, to work and run a business, to invest and retire. Our community has faith in our law enforcement officers to protect our homes and businesses. We trust our prosecutors and our courts to insure justice is served. We struggle to understand how so many children suffer abuse and neglect, and we rely on juvenile officers and courts to bring them to safety.

In 2009, the Roundtable noted, “Our community must decide which is more important: low taxes or adequate public safety.”

The time for that decision is now. Without additional investment, the level of safety and justice our community expects and deserves cannot be maintained.