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Safety & Justice Roundtable requests funding priorities, cost analysis

The Safety & Justice Roundtable requested a list of funding priorities and a cost analysis to address insufficiencies in the community's public safety and criminal justice system today during the Roundtable's Two-Year Update meeting.

The Roundtable convened for the first time since August 2010 to hear an update on its recommendations for improving the public safety and criminal justice system. The Roundtable detailed these recommendations two years ago in its Final Report, which followed 18 months of study of the system.

During today's meeting, Greene County Administrator Tim Smith and Springfield City Manager Greg Burris outlined progress made in the last two years on the Roundtable's recommendations, including funding the Police-Fire Pension, improved inter-agency communications and an initial reduction in jail population. Smith and Burris also identified emerging trends, including rising crime rates, rising felony case filings and a 33-percent increase in child abuse and neglect cases, and detailed how these trends exacerbate issues identified in the original Roundtable report, including a reversal on progress in managing the jail population.

The two-year report concluded it could easily cost an additional $20-25 million a year to bring the community's public safety and criminal justice system up to regional standards.

Safety & Justice Roundtable co-chairs Robert Spence and Jean Twitty asked for a priority list and an itemized cost analysis of providing additional staff and facilities for the Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office, Juvenile Office and other unfunded needs. The Roundtable will reconvene Monday, August 8, to review the requested list. Details will be announced.

The Safety & Justice Roundtable Final Report and the Two-Year Update may be found on the Greene County homepage, www.greenecountymo.org.

For more information, call Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

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