

Josephine (JO) County (CO) Justice System (JS) & Public Safety Services (PSS)

JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services¹⁻⁴

The 2012 expiration of federal funding for services resulted in two JO CO proposed levies as a solution. They both failed. **“Is JO CO providing a minimally adequate level of public safety services?”**

SECURING OUR SAFETY (SOS)⁵⁻⁶ SOS is a non-profit that formed in 2012. <http://securingoursafety.org/>

Selected FAQs of SOS’s 43 JO CO JS&PSS issue questions.⁷ SOS and its volunteer members are trying to collect answers to any questions that come their way regarding funding proposals or questions. The following are selected questions and answers.

FAQ 25. I am paying .58 cents per assessed \$1,000 on my property. Isn’t that enough for the Criminal Justice System? Isn’t it too much? Absent any federal timber payment support, in 2013 after JO CO paid for all State mandated services only about 32 cents of the 58 cent permanent rate was available to go to the Criminal Justice System. **We would not presume to judge what is too much**, but the levy that voters turned down in May of 2012 would have added another \$1.99 and even with that addition, JO CO would still have had a total property tax rate less than the average of OR counties. It would have restored much of the services JO CO had in recent years, but would not have provided enough for the level of services in Criminal Justice Programs that our CO residents desire according to the many surveys SOS has collected from CO residents.

1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HNA&HS). July 9, 2013. *Justice System Exploratory Committee*. Hugo, OR.
2. HNA&HS. July 24, 2013. *Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society’s Mission*. Hugo, OR.
3. HNA&HS. July 9, 2013. *All Voters & Votes Are Legitimate*. Hugo, OR.

Community Response After Sheriff Had To Cut Services

FAQ 28. I often see Rural Metro Fire and other Fire Departments respond inside the Grants Pass City limits with the GPDPS Fire Department. Do county residents, outside the Grants Pass City limits pay for that? If so, how is that fair? All municipal fire departments and fire districts in Josephine and Jackson County are part of a two-county Mutual Aid Agreement. That agreement has been in place since the 1970’s and mirrors the method used by fire departments across the country to more efficiently serve their communities. Mutual aid provides a depth of resources needed when unusually large events occur, or in the case of multiple events at the same time which exceed the capability of local resources. In the past 10 years, the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety Fire/Rescue Division has responded as far away as Ashland for major



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emergencies. Likewise, several times during that same period, Medford and Ashland fire trucks and firefighters responded to the City of Grants Pass for assistance. All of this occurs without any exchange of money based upon the reciprocating nature of mutual aid. Rural Metro FD is part of that two county agreement and as such, Grants Pass DPS and Rural Metro frequently respond to each other’s jurisdiction when the type of call dictates, or in the event a quicker response has the likelihood of saving lives and property (Source: GPDPS Chief Joe Henner). No county funds from any source go to any fire department or district. (Source: JO CO Commissioner Cheryl Walker).

4. HNA&HS. July 24, 2013. *Government Needs Support*. Hugo, OR.
5. Securing Our Safety. Downloaded July 29, 2013. *Home Page of SOS*, <http://securingoursafety.org/>. Grants Pass, OR.

Securing Our Safety (SOS): Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ 35. While you say I am only paying .58 per (\$1,000) assessed property value, aren’t I also paying taxes for Rogue Community College and other services other than the Criminal Justice System? Every property owner in JO CO pays .58 per \$1,000 of assessed value to JO CO Government. In addition there are also taxing districts with different rates, and not all residents of JO CO are in all the districts. For example everyone in JO CO pays into the Rogue Community College District, but only people living within the boundaries of the Three Rivers School District will pay taxes to that district. Likewise only people living within the boundaries of the Illinois Valley Fire District will pay taxes to that District. JO CO government does not operate these other districts as they are legally formed entities and have their own boards of directors to operate the district (Source: JO CO Commissioner Cheryl Walker).

37. If I live in Grants Pass, why should I be concerned about having rural deputies? The City of Grants Pass is not an island unto itself. The Criminal Justice System, although not tangible or always visible, it is always present. It is what a community depends upon for fair and equal treatment of its citizens. As a citizen of the United States of America, we are unique in that while under one umbrella of Justice, which includes the United States Constitution and its’ stead: “We the People, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ...”; we locally have the right and responsibility of self-government, whereas we are supposed to govern and protect our own. The United States is a Union formed of thousands and thousands of communities governing and protecting their own with profound overlapping. We rely on each other to be responsible for our own community and by each community doing their part, we can all live in peace and prosper side-by-side.

6. SOS. Downloaded July 29, 2013. *SOS Teams*. <http://securingoursafety.org/the-can-do-list/>. Grants Pass, OR.
7. SOS. Downloaded September 5, 2013. *Frequently Asked Questions*. <http://securingoursafety.org/question-box-faq/>. Grants Pass, OR.

Exploratory Committee's Mission

Mission An independent Justice System and Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee (*Exploratory Committee*) to investigate the JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) issue was formed under the leadership of the Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society (HNA&HS).

Big picture ideas for the exploratory effort include the following.

1. Identifying the JS&PSS issue.
2. Identifying the JS&PSS sub-issues for research and analysis.
3. Identifying a range in level of services
4. Identifying a range of cost for services.
5. Identifying revenues for services.

The ultimate goal is an adequate justice system and public safety services. Is it possible to have a higher level of service for a lower cost? The purpose of the *Exploratory Committee* is to gather information adequate enough to understand the JS&PSS issues. This includes educational outreach efforts.

The *Exploratory Committee's* purpose is limited to investigating and researching the JS&PSS issues. It will not make evaluations of right or wrong, nor make recommendations on how to vote.

The contents of this brochure are expressions of the opinions and beliefs of those that contribute based on their thoughts and experiences. Hopefully, their efforts will assist the public toward informed decision-making.

- Donations Are Not Tax Deductible -

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Justice System Exploratory Committee

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/justicesystemexploratorycommittee.htm>

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

SELECTED FAQs OF SOS's 43 FAQs

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Justice System & Public Safety Services Series



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Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee