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

### JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services<sup>1-2</sup>

The 2012 expiration of federal funding for services resulted in two JO CO proposed levies as a solution. The Exploratory Committee asks the question: : “**Is JO CO providing a minimally adequate level of public safety services?**”

**OGTF Findings Summary: 2009**<sup>3</sup> The following information applicable to the JS&PSS issue is from the Section 13 Summary of Findings, of the *Governor’s Task Force On Federal Forest Payments And County Services* 2009 document (see full report).<sup>3</sup> There are three educational brochures addressing this topic.

### Oregon Governor’s Task Force 2009 Section 13 Summary of Findings

o Oregon’s rural counties and school districts will face a net loss of \$243 million in annual federal safety net payments for federal forest lands as payments under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) phase out over the next four fiscal years.

o These effects of the phase-out of SRS payments will create fiscal crises for 24 hard hit counties as early as the spring of 2011, when they must prepare for the loss of more than half of their current payments in the 2011-12 fiscal year and the cessation of those payments in 2012-13.

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## OGTF’s Sec 13 Summary of Findings

o **This will be the first time that many of Oregon’s federal forest counties will be forced to fend for themselves** since harvests from federal lands were curtailed in the early 1990s and federal safety net payments related to the spotted owl began in Western Oregon counties in 1994.

o Schools’ share of the safety net payments in Oregon amounts to \$32.9 million, or approximately \$60 for every child in the K-12 system. This is enough money to pay for two days of the school year in every school district in the state.

o Counties will bear the brunt of the revenue losses if SRS payments cease. In 24 hard hit counties, proportionate revenue losses will exceed those suffered by the state during the 2001-03 recession.

o The eventual loss of SRS payments will produce unavoidable and dire consequences. **Six county governments may be unable to meet the most elemental needs of public health and safety** within a year or two after these payments terminate. Lane County, the fourth most populous county in Oregon, is among them. Another two counties could fail within the following two to four years.

o The effects of such a loss of revenue would **compromise basic health and safety and local transportation systems** in a majority of Oregon counties and set back economic development not only in rural Oregon but throughout the state.

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## OGTF On Federal Forest Payments (FFP) & CO Services

o **At the county level, there are only two options available** to deal with the near-term loss of SRS payments:

- cut county budgets and services; or,
- increase county revenues from county taxpayers.

o **Most of the hard hit counties have already cut their budgets to bare-bones levels.** Increasing county revenues from county taxpayers is their only remaining option at the local level. But their ability to do so is limited under state law. Property taxes are the mainstay of county services; these taxes are capped under the state constitution and can be raised, only temporarily, by a vote of the people. Many of the affected counties have low property tax rates and unused “tax capacity” that, on paper, could allow temporary tax increases of 100 percent or more within the constitutional limits. But it is difficult – and unprecedented -- to expect a county to impose and absorb tax increases of 100 percent in a short period of time.

**Want more information?** Contact a member of the *Exploratory Committee*.

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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. Oregon Governor’s Task Force. Final Report January 2009. *Governor’s Task Force On Federal Forest Payments And County Services*. Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski. 148 pages. Salem, OR.

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## 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 -

Edited by Mike Walker, Member, Exploratory Committee

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### HNA&HS Officers

Wayne McKy, Chair  
Lis Butowitsch, Treasurer  
Mike Walker, Education Chair



### Exploratory Committee Members

Mike Walker, Chair  
3388B Merlin Road # 195  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526  
541-471-8271  
Email: hugo@jeffnet.org

Wayne McKy, Member  
Karen Rose, Web Master  
Jon Whalen, Member

### *Justice System Exploratory Committee*

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

### Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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

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# OR GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE (OGTF) FINDINGS

## Impacts of No Action Alternative

Brochure III.H.6.1.1 (1 of 3)  
Justice System & Public Safety Services Series

**Very Draft August 14, 2013**

*Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee*