County jail operations and regulations discussed at conference for sheriff's and jail administrators

News

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Jail administrators are described by Livingston County Sheriff as facing a wide variety of challenges while managing Missouriâ□□s county jails that range in inmate capacity from five to 500. Combined, they have a total holding capacity of nearly nine thousand (8,946) inmates.

To provide them, and their sheriffs, with the tools they need to manage their operations effectively, safely, securely, legally and humanely, the Missouri Sheriffsâ□□ Association hosted a three-day conference. Livingston county sheriff Steve Cox said it examined current criminal justice issues, provided training in areas of need and created networking opportunities allowing participants to learn from each other. This was the second statewide training conference for jail administrators and their staff.

Topics included how to comply with the Prison Rape Elimination Act adopted by Congress in an attempt to stop rape and sexual assault in confinement facilities. Another was how to safely conduct inmate property searches. Several issues dealt with human resource management; what the law says about inmatesâ□□ religious rights; and whatâ□□s being done to develop statewide jail standards and a statewide jail record management system. Currently, Missouri has no set standards or guidelines on how county jails must be managed.

Under the sheriffsâ□□ association and jail administratorsâ□□ leadership, a committee was formed to develop a plan that will get the countiesâ□□ jails from where they are; to where they need to be in order to reduce liability, help avoid lawsuits and reduce insurance premiums. Sheriff Cox said the jail management system is going to allow sheriffs to electronically tap into or share information on inmates in real time, something that currently is not possible in many county jails.

More than 100 persons, representing 63 counties across the state, attended the conference. Sheriff Cox is a former member of the sheriffsâ□□ association board of directors. Grundy Countyâ□□s Rodney Herring of Trenton is the third vice president of the board.