

Brown Co Commission Discusses Concealed Carry

(KNZA)--The Brown County Commission is considering how to comply with a new state law that allows permit holders to carry handguns in public buildings.

County Attorney Kevin Hill, Sheriff John Merchant and District Judge Jim Patton met with the commission Monday to discuss the matter.

The new law took effect July 1st of this year, but the commission sought a six-month exemption. The law requires local governments to allow concealed weapons in public buildings unless they have an adequate plan for security at the buildings.

According to a recent opinion from Attorney General Derek Schmidt, Hill said you can't designate a single floor at the courthouse as exempt. However, he says the chief judge of a judicial district may prohibit the carrying of concealed handguns into courtrooms or ancillary courtrooms provided other means of security are employed.

Hill says the concern is not with law abiding concealed carry permit holders. He pointed out that there have been a number of security breaches on the third floor of the courthouse where the courtrooms are located.

Judge Patton, who serves as chief judge of the 22nd Judicial District, urged the commission, on behalf of the court system, to provide adequate security measures at the courthouse. However, commissioner Warren Ploeger voiced concerns about the cost, which could include the hiring of security personnel and purchase of walk-through security devices.

The commission made no decisions.

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