

On-line survey seeking input on increase in jail beds

(KLZA)-- The Richardson County Sheriff's Department is conducting an on-line survey to find out what the public thinks about adding additional bed space to the law enforcement center.

The current Richardson County Jail houses 24 inmates. The facility was completed in 2016 with projections indicating the County would not need additional bed space until 2030.

Due to an increase in the number of arrests being made, the jail has quickly exceeded the 24 bed capacity. The average population including inmates housed in other facilities is between 25 and 30 inmates per day. The Sheriff's Office alone has averaged 45 arrests per month in 2021 with 52 arrests in August. This figure does not include arrests made by the Falls City Police Department.

With many other jails facing the same overcrowding problems, there are times the closest jail with available beds in two hours away with daily costs per inmate of \$60 - \$80 per day. This also requires overtime hours to transport prisoners back and forth.

Sheriff Rick Hardesty recently discussed the idea of adding additional beds to the jail and his department is asking for the public's opinion on the matter.

If approved, the additional beds would be utilized by local inmates as well as state and federal contract inmates. Federal and state contracts could generated revenue that would help pay for the additional beds.

During a conversation with the head of the Nebraska Jail Standards during a recent Richardson County Commissioners meeting, it was estimated the cost for additional beds would be approximately \$177,000 per bed.

Richardson County currently owes \$2,150,000 on the Law Enforcement Center which will be paid off in eight years.

You can find the link to the survey at the Richardson County Sheriff's Office Facebook page.

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