

Sheriff says doughnuts expensive, Supervisors don't care

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There is an inescapable certainty in human history when it comes to reading the future path of a government that fails to understand that it cannot cost more than the population it governs can afford. Del Norte County has long passed that threshold and has begun the downward spiral of a failing government.

Signs of this downward spiral are clearly evident when the most critical service that a government can offer is the ability to provide for the safety and security of its people and it is no longer to be found.

The County Board of Supervisors has been made aware that vital services have been less than satisfactory for decades. In particular, the prime source of safety and protection has degraded to the point that a single deputy patrols a County the size of Rhode Island during nearly every shift.

Response time can easily exceed an hour or more, long after an intervention would be critical. As county government continues to ignore this growing problem by focusing on holding hands with needy directors in the remaining parts of local government, the sheriff finds himself suspended over a growing gulf of indifference.

For the past nine months, the Sheriff has made it clear that his department can no longer function as it is meant to unless it receives support from the County's Board of Supervisors. Thus far, that support has yet to

appear.

Dwindling staff and a growing number of vacancies make it impossible for the Sheriff to attend in a timely fashion local emergencies and 911 calls. At a recent event that occurred during the Fourth of July fireworks, the County narrowly escaped a horrific tragedy and near loss of a three-year-old child. The sheriff's department clearly lacked the manpower to prevent illegal fireworks activity on South Beach.

Any additional regulations and bans will not change that dynamic. Only providing the sheriff with necessary manpower salted with a few experienced officers will halt the continuing downward trajectory. That will take money.

Instead of heeding the Sheriff's repeated warnings, the Board continues to sit on its hands and make noises about a compensation study, five months in the future. The time to act is NOW!