

ADDITION TO THE HOUGHTON COUNTY JAIL

FACT SHEET

WHY AN ADDITION

Houghton County currently has capacity for 28 inmates in the jail. The Work Camp at the airport, for non-violent work-release offenders, has an average daily census of 15. This is the lowest number of beds per capita of any county in the U.P. On numerous occasions in the past two years, the sheriff has declared a State of Emergency due to overcrowding, per state law. "Criminals who belong in jail are instead being released," said Albert Koskela, chair of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners. Sheriff Brian McLean said public safety is his main concern. "We need more jail cells. Offenders who belong in jail need to be in jail."

THE PROBLEM

Offenders who are released early due to overcrowding learn that *if you do the crime in Houghton County, you don't necessarily have to serve the time*. In many instances, repeat offenders, who should be incarcerated, are not jailed due to lack of available jail cells. They may be arrested for the same offense multiple times before they ever serve time.

THE PLAN

In 2010, Houghton County citizens voted overwhelmingly AGAINST a \$15 million stand-alone justice center (estimated at \$25 million in today's bidding environment). The county commissioners received the voters' message from the failed measure that citizens want only a basic jail addition. The expanded jail will allow the county to lock up approximately 90 offenders and will allow safe and secure transfer of prisoners to courtrooms. The project will cost \$10.9 million.

THE BALLOT LANGUAGE and COST

Shall the County of Houghton, Michigan, borrow the principal sum of not to exceed Eleven Million Dollars (\$11,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds, in one or more series, payable in not to exceed twenty (20) years from date of issuance of each series, for the purpose of paying the costs of acquiring, constructing, furnishing, and equipping, additions, improvements, and remodeling of the county jail, including site improvements, appurtenances and attachments thereto?

County homeowners will be asked to pay 75 cents per \$1,000 of TAXABLE value for jail expansion. The owner of a \$100,000 home will pay \$37.50 a year or 72 cents per week for increased PUBLIC SAFETY and SECURITY. A secure jail is one of the necessary tools for a healthy and safe community.

PUBLIC MEETINGS TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

WHY an ADDITION to the Existing Jail?

Houghton County is holding a series of public meeting around the county to provide an overview of the proposed project and answer questions from citizens.

The Schedule:

October 12th

7 p.m. at Duncan Township Hall

October 17th

7 p.m. at Lake Linden High School Auditorium

October 24th

7 p.m. at Houghton County Courthouse Circuit Court

October 25th

7 p.m. at Franklin Township Hall