

## IOWA STATE SHERIFFS' & DEPUTIES' ASSOCIATION



*To Serve and Protect the People of Iowa*

*President:*

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*Secretary:*

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Doug Schull, Dean Yordi and Crystal McIntyre  
Warren County Board of Supervisors  
202 Administration Building  
301 N. Buxton Street  
Indianola, IA 50125

Re: Warren County Jail

Dear Members of the Board:

On June 22, 2016, at the invitation of Sheriff Vos, the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association Jails Committee met with Sheriff Vos and Chief Deputy Randy Spurr, to tour the Warren County Jail. Our Committee's members come from jail facilities all across the State. Members able to attend that day included representatives from Hamilton, Henry, Johnson, Kossuth, Pottawattamie, Sac and Woodbury Counties.

Among the services we provide are assistance in identifying facility issues, and help in finding solutions to those issues. Based upon what we saw, heard and smelled during our tour, we believe there are a number of matters of immediate concern.

Your HVAC system is not working properly; it was very humid in the entire building. In most areas, we noticed fans were running. These fans are not addressing the problem. Ventilation is very poor in the cell blocks, hallways, booking area and office space. The air conditioner did not seem to be working. It certainly was not keeping up with the humidity and is apparently inadequate to maintain a comfortable temperature.

The entire facility smells of mold and sewer gas. In some places, instead of remediating the moldy condition, it has simply been covered with a new wall. We learned that you have 2 or 3 employees being treated for respiratory issues. Based on what we saw, we expect that number to increase.

ISSDA Permanent Mailing Address  
Financial Administrator - Bill Sage, Retired Sheriff, Cass Co.  
P.O. Box 526, Atlantic, Iowa 50022-0526  
Email: thegoldstar@mchsi.com

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Josh Hammen, Deputy, Pocahontas Co. ....	Deputy Board Member	Dawn Disney, Office Deputy, Poweshiek Co. ....	Civilian Board Member

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The plumbing in the jail is leaking. It appears that there is sewage leaking around toilets, and fresh water leaking from sinks and pipes. There is mold growing on pipes, and the sewer smell in the cell blocks is very strong.

There are open electrical boxes and exposed wires in all areas of the jail. There are no fire barriers above the doorways to block smoke and fire. This is an extreme safety issue for inmates and staff.

The public elevator enters directly into the booking lobby. This is the only access for members of the public, attorneys, public visiting, arresting officers, and anyone else needing access to the facility. This is an extreme security issue. There should be a secure separation between the jail and public lobby. At no time should the public have access to the jail.

The hallways adjacent to the cellblocks are very narrow. This is an extreme security issue for officers walking through the hallways to complete their day to day routines, including things like escorting inmates to and from cellblocks.

The outdoor exercise area is on the roof. It can only be used when weather permits. The safety of this area is very questionable.

Several of our Committee members talked to the inmates that were housed in the jail at the time of our visit. You will be pleased to know that they have no issues with Jail Staff. However, their comments tended to confirm our observations. They told us about:

- Poor air quality;
- Sewers backing up into cells; and
- The sewer odor that was apparent to all of us.

Some complained that they have developed respiratory issues since they were incarcerated.

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It does not take a person who has worked in a jail for decades and is knowledge of the Iowa State Jail Standards to recognize the serious health and safety issues staff and inmates encounter in this facility. This jail has obvious issues that can be seen and smelled by anyone walking into the jail or even the courthouse. Chief Judge Gamble's actions in removing his staff and the courts from the Warren County Courthouse should underscore the need to take immediate action for the welfare, health, safety and security of all Sheriff's personnel, jail staff, inmates and members of the public.

We are particularly concerned by what Chief Judge Gamble said in his letter of June 16th, where he wrote that he was told by your maintenance supervisor, the repairs needed in the jail are complete. Chief Judge Gamble disagreed. We do too. In our opinion, the conditions in this facility violate a number of the guidelines set out in Chapter 50, (The Iowa State Jail Standards), OSHA regulations and Fire Marshal guidelines. The conditions in this jail expose Warren County to liability to employees in the Sheriff's Department, as they continue to develop work-related health issues, liability to inmates and detainees, for serious issues related to conditions of confinement, and added, unnecessary expense for the additional staff Sheriff Vos will likely need in order to cope with all of these problems.

The Committee urges you to take immediate action to address these issues in an appropriate fashion. Our members stand ready to offer assistance, if there is any way we can help.

Major John Godar  
President ISSDA

Captain Lynette Phillips  
ISSDA Jails Committee Co-Chair

Sheriff Jay Langenbau  
ISSDA Jails Committee Co-Chair

cc: Brian Vos, Warren County Sheriff

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