



# SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY

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UNDERSHERIFF TRAVIS CHANEY

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## KOOTENAI COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT MEDIA RELEASE

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The Kootenai County Jail recently installed a new inmate telephone and visitation system on October 7. The phone system was installed by Telmate, a provider of inmate communication systems.

With the new phone system, the Jail also received a new visitation system and currency kiosk system, all at no cost to the County. The new internet based visitation system replaced an antiquated system which was in desperate need of replacement.

Idaho Jail Standards require each inmate, except those restricted as a result of disciplinary action, to have 1 hour of visitation each week. In the past, the Jail provided inmates with two (2) one half hour visits each week. The new technology allows visitors to schedule their visitation with inmates utilizing the Internet, a customer service number, or a kiosk in the lobby. This saves staff time previously used for scheduling visits and will allow us to expand daily visiting times from six (6) sessions to sixteen (16). With exception of the two – one half hour visits provided at no cost each week, the inmates, or their loved ones, are charged .25 per minute for the extra visits.

The cell block visitation monitors are also used, through touch screen technology, for inmates to make purchases through the inmate commissary (a type of 'store' for inmates). Inmates with money, who are not restricted, may purchase items such as: hygiene items, socks, mail supplies, over the counter care items, playing cards, and limited candy and food items. The process of ordering commissary was previously conducted through written forms and entered 'by hand' by a commissary clerk. Now, the data entry portion will be completed electronically, saving more staff time.

The visiting system has been in use for approximately 2 weeks now, and is currently limited to visiting and commissary ordering; although potential uses of the web-based system can be greatly expanded. As we become more experienced with the system, we anticipate utilizing it for providing various services to inmates. A specific service we are currently considering is the addition of a law library program. Other services we may consider are structured educational programs geared for self-improvement.

The currency kiosk accepts cash and credit/debit cards from visitors in the lobby that can be credited to an inmate's account. Money can also be placed on an inmate's account through the Internet or Telmate's customer service telephone number. These are the only means to place funds on an inmate's account. This service saves staff time previously spent writing receipts for currency and completing data entry into the inmate accounts for funds received, as well as saving time spent completing daily banking duties.

As is the industry standard for inmate telephone service providers, the telephone, the currency kiosk, and the visiting monitors are utilized at a cost to the inmate and their loved ones (with exception to the first two visits and specific telephone calls). By contract, revenues generated through telephone calls and visits are shared by Telmate (the service provider), and Kootenai County. Kootenai County will receive 50% of those revenues. Some of those revenues are dedicated to be used to purchase inmate care items such as uniforms, mattresses and other housing supplies.

The community is encouraged to review the Kootenai County Sheriff's website at: [www.kcsheriff.com](http://www.kcsheriff.com) for further information about the Jail.

Fees associated with use of the telephone system, the currency kiosks, and the visiting stations are available through Telmate's customer service department at: 866-516-0115 or through their website at: [www.telmate.com](http://www.telmate.com).

Prepared by Capt. Kim Edmondson for Sheriff Rocky Watson