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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TN Litter Grant Keeps Work Crews Busy

PUTNAM COUNTY, TN – The Putnam County Sheriff's Office was recently awarded a Tennessee Litter Grant that is providing the funds necessary to keep local inmates busy and clean up state roads in Putnam County, thus ensuring the safety of our roadways for motorists and mowing crews.

“We are pleased to have obtained this grant and are looking at other programs like it that would be in the best interest of Putnam County,” said Sheriff Eddie Farris. “Work Crew Programs have been proven to help reduce the number of incidents in the jail and ease overcrowding. Of course, it takes manpower to administer these programs and right now we are very limited in the number of employees we have to assign to these types of duties.”

According to the Department of Justice and other national law enforcement organizations, the Putnam County Jail should have a ratio of 1 deputy per 14-17 inmates. Putnam County Jail currently has 1 deputy per 45 inmates. According to a letter of finding from Jim Hart of the County Technical Advisory Service (CTAS) in November 2013, Putnam County Jail was down 4 deputies per shift or a total of 16 deputies. And, that was when the jail averaged 239 inmates. Today, it averages 308.

The \$57,281 grant from the State of Tennessee Department of Transportation is an annual contract that provides funding for one Corrections Deputy plus all expenses associated with the program, such as uniforms for the inmates, safety vests, garbage bags, pinch style trash pick up tools, proper signage, and even sunscreen, bug repellent and coolers with ice blocks.

Since the program started in mid-April, work crews comprised of 8-10 inmates and 1 corrections deputy have been working Monday through Friday and have picked up approximately 21,000 pounds of trash. The scope of the contract includes litter removal from the entire right-of-way, including the shoulders, of all state roads in Putnam County, such as I-40, SR 111, SR 136 and Hwy 70. It does not include picking up trash that is in the travel lanes of these roadways.

“We are always looking for ways to help improve our community and keep it safe,” said Sheriff Farris. “This is just one more way that we can do that.”

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