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Sheriff Chris Blair being sworn in.

Upon taking office in January of 2013, Sheriff Blair assembled a 70-member committee comprised of individuals from outside the Agency to perform a thorough analysis of the state of the Sheriff's Office. That review uncovered several issues, such as a lack of competitive salaries, out-dated equipment and a notable deficiency in the number of Patrol Deputies and Corrections Officers. His first budget sought to begin addressing these issues following years of Agency decay due to continuous budget cuts that shaved \$8 million and 166 crucial jobs from the Sheriff's Office since 2007.

Sheriff Blair met with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss these deficiencies, including a \$4.5 million deficit in the MSTU budget carried over from the previous budget. Sheriff Blair stated "I cannot, in good faith, allow my deputies and corrections officers to continue placing their lives on the line each day without doing everything in my power to ensure that they have the resources needed to effectively protect this community and each other." Initially, the County Commission, in the recently-released Budget Review Committee Recommendations, sought to cut several million dollars from the Sheriff's Office current year budget – an act which would have resulted in the potential elimination of several hundred jobs at the Sheriff's Office as recommended by the Budget Review Committee.

Sheriff Blair met with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss



Swearing in of Deputies.

These job eliminations would be in addition to the 166 employees lost since 2007. A budget compromise was agreed upon that enabled the Marion County Sheriff's Office to remain whole from the current fiscal year and, through belt-tightening that has occurred during the first 8 months in office, Sheriff Blair was able to meet several pressing goals for the coming year.



Specifically, Sheriff Blair reduced the top-heaviness of the Sheriff's Office and replaced administrative positions with "boots on the ground". Since taking office, 13 supervisory positions have been eliminated through retirement or otherwise and those positions were filled with new Deputies. The Sheriff's goal is to place 20 new Deputies on the road and 20 new Corrections Officers in the jail. While the Sheriff's Office will still be more than 200 Deputies below the state average, this is a beginning in the process of bringing this Agency to an appropriate staffing level to allow it to better protect both the community and our fellow Deputies. Additionally, with

Sheriff Chris Blair, 2013

year-end money, Sheriff Blair was able to use savings that were realized since taking office to purchase approximately 40 new patrol vehicles to begin replacing a segment of our aging fleet. Finally, using savings realized during the prior fiscal year, Sheriff

Blair was able to reduce unfunded liability within the Agency by buying back some of the compensatory time that had been earned by our employees, in lieu of overtime, during the recessionary years.

“In summary, in eight short months we have come a long way in beginning to address the deficiencies which existed at this Agency, and we are looking to a brighter future.”

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Chris Blair, Sheriff

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