Clackamas County Sheriff's Office

At right: Sheriff Roberts in the Clackamas County Jail control room.

The Sheriff's Office is working with its community partners to reduce the number of people returning to jail — or even going to jail in the first place.

Above: The crowd at the Feb. 16 Grand Opening of the Transition Center — a new, all-in-one location providing crucial services to people leaving jail or prison and to those at risk of returning.

Message from Sheriff Roberts: How is our community safer?

And how do we keep people OUT of jail?

Dear citizens:

I'm proud of so many things the Sheriff's Office has accomplished since we passed our first **five-year operations levy** in 2006. That levy originally funded 31 Corrections deputies necessary to open 84 jail beds, as well as 21 Patrol deputies and an expanded enforcement program to combat drug abuse, property crimes, identity theft, child abuse and child neglect.

This allowed us to make system-wide changes that have dramatically improved the safety of our community.

We've added staff to significantly enhance our efforts in fighting drug crime, domestic violence, and crimes against children. We've brought professionals together at conferences devoted to the critical work we do in the fields of child abuse and search and rescue. We've enhanced our mental-health outreach by partnering with Clackamas County Health, Housing and Human Services Behavioral Health Division. We've strengthened our community partnerships with initiatives including the Neighborhood Livability Project, which addresses the impact of nuisance houses. We take better care of our employees serving in the military. We earned accreditation through the Oregon Accreditation Alliance. And we're helping lead a statewide effort to make schools safer through our participation in the Oregon Task Force on School Safety.

Thanks to our combined efforts, from 2006-15 Clackamas County experienced a 20.7% decline in reported Type I crimes (including arson, aggravated assault, burglary, attempted murder, murder, rape, robbery, theft and stolen vehicles). And all reported crimes per 1,000 people in Clackamas County dropped from 68.3 in 2005 to 52.9 in 2015.

Our communities are measurably safer.

Some of our most significant achievements involve the Clackamas County Jail — both in improving services there and in keeping people from *returning* to jail once they're released.

Improving our Jail

By passing a five-year public-safety levy in 2006, we were able to hire staff and re-open 84 jail beds that had been closed due to lack of funding for personnel. In 2011, the levy was renewed for an additional five years — and we've made several facility modifications to meet jail standards and improve efficiencies that created an additional 31 beds. All of this reduced the number of inmates we were forced to release early due to lack of bed space. In 2004, we force-released 79.4 inmates a week due to lack of beds; today, that number is down to 47.78 inmates a week.

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Reducing Recidivism

Increasing the number of beds is just one part of the equation. We're still forced to release some inmates to create jail space for the worst offenders, and we can't increase that jail space indefinitely. This means we find ourselves faced with a challenge:

How do we reduce the number of people returning to jail — or even going to jail in the first place — so we can save our jail space for the worst offenders?

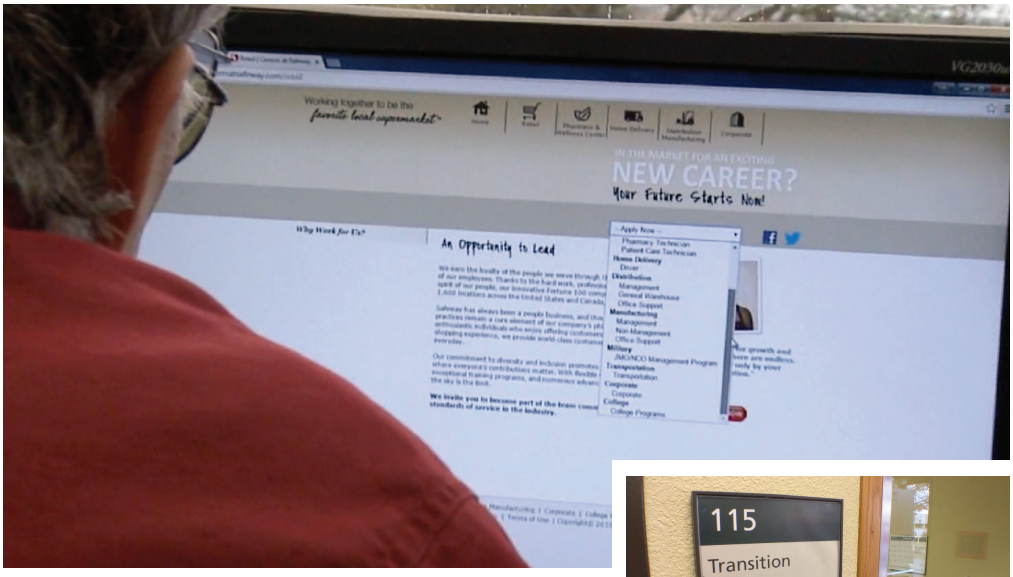
Our Community Corrections Division and several community and agency partners are taking on that challenge — on several fronts — with new programs that positively impact lives.

We're enhancing our mental-health interventions — both before and after incarceration. The number of inmates suffering from mental illness and other forms of mental health crisis has risen significantly at the jail in recent years — as many as a third of our inmates at any given time. And first responders — including our deputies — are often the first line of contact with individuals who need mental-health assistance.

To that end, we've increased our training and partnerships by working to connect people with services that will keep them out of jail to begin with.

We've increased our **Crisis Intervention Training,** which teaches our deputies how to better serve and more constructively interact with people with mental illness in the field and in our Jail.

We've also formed a critical alliance with the Clackamas County Health, Housing and Human Services' Behavioral Health Division — forming a **Behavioral Health Unit** (BHU) comprising three full-time mental-health professionals. These BHU professionals are available to the Sheriff's Office Patrol Division seven days a week — providing follow-up and community outreach to individuals who've had contact with law enforcement and may be in need of mental-health services. They are also available to respond to mental-health crises on-scene when requested by deputies. A BHU intervention can prevent unnecessary emergency-room visits and incarcerations by providing an on-scene risk assessment — followed by help connecting to services.



The Transition Center helps people just out of jail with employment and housing assistance, mentoring, mental-health and substance abuse assessments, hygiene, and health care.

This focus on services instead of incarceration is changing lives — and keeping beds available for people who *should* be in jail.

We're also providing services to former inmates that will keep them from returning to jail. This includes the dedicated efforts of our Community Corrections Division and its parole and probation officers. They work with community partners including **Bridges to Change** to spend weeks, months and years providing services to people on post-prison supervision — helping them rebuild their lives, put their criminal behavior in the past and become productive members of our community.

One major Community Corrections success story is our **Corrections Substance Abuse Program (CSAP)**, which provides intensive substance-abuse treatment and cognitive-behavioral treatment to high-risk parole and probation clients. The treatment program lasts at least a full year — six months in-house, followed by six months in a clean-and-sober living environment such as **Oxford House**. The program has scored highly in outside reviews, and testimonials from clients confirm that CSAP doesn't just change lives, it *saves* lives.

We also just launched a facility that's the first of its kind in Oregon — and a major step forward in reducing our jail population.

The **Clackamas County Transition Center** — located in our former South Station in Oregon City — is a new, all-in-one location providing crucial services to people leaving jail or prison and to those at risk of returning. Someone can literally walk out of our jail upon release, cross the parking lot, and enter the Transition Center to get access to services including employment and housing assistance, mentoring, mental-health and substance abuse assessments, hygiene, and even health-care enrollment.

As I said during the Transition Center's grand opening in February: We have a population at our jail where many people are struggling with mental illness. If you just send them back out into the community without connecting them with the services that can help them, they can often end up right back in jail. The goal of the Transition Center is to break that pattern and change people's lives.

These initiatives are all happening because of your support, and I want to **thank you** for helping us improve our jail and the services that surround it. **Together, we are making a difference.**

Sheriff Craig Roberts