

NEWS

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Supervisors bolster public safety in adoption of final budget

The Board of Supervisors today strengthened its commitment to public safety while granting final approval to the county's 2006-07 budget.

The board voted to create design plans to add four pods to the Adelanto Detention Center at a cost of \$4.6 million to make room for an additional 896 inmates, significantly reducing the number of inmates who have to be released by the Sheriff's Department due to lack of space.

The board also set aside an additional \$1.3 million from the General Fund for County Fire Department staffing. The department plans to use the funding to convert paid-call and limited-term firefighter positions to full-time firefighter positions.

"Public safety is the board's and the public's top priority. Because of the board's conservative spending policies and the county's economic growth, we are able to direct funding to those programs that our residents value the most," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus.

The \$3.3-billion 2006-07 budget unanimously approved by the Board today also includes additional support for the county's stepped-up economic development efforts.

"The competition for quality development in Southern California is fierce," Second District Supervisor Paul Biane said. "That means San Bernardino County has to step up to the plate and aggressively market itself to attract businesses that will create good-paying jobs and generate tax dollars for public services."

The eventual expansion of the Adelanto Detention Center, which was acquired by the county last year, will cost an estimated \$81.4 million to construct and \$17.5 million to operate once it opens in January 2011. It will increase the county's total jail capacity of 5,932 by more than 15 percent, to 6,828.

In addition to Adelanto, the county currently operates jails in San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga, and Glen Helen.