

NEWS

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Supervisors approve team to track sex offenders

SAN BERNARDINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today approved a proposal by First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt to fund a Sheriff's sex-offender tracking team. Mitzelfelt's plan, co-sponsored by Sheriff Gary Penrod, provides supplemental Sheriff's staff to support multi-agency efforts to locate, monitor, and investigate sex offenders in San Bernardino County.

"Now that the State of California has begun enforcing Jessica's Law, putting thousands of sex offenders on the move, we need to ensure that we are prepared to keep track of the increased number of sex offenders who may come our way," said Supervisor Mitzelfelt. "I'm especially concerned that we may see more sex offenders in our rural areas, where it's perceived to be easier to find housing outside of restricted areas."

Supervisor Mitzelfelt represents much of San Bernardino County's rural and desert communities.

"Today's action by the Board of Supervisors will go a long way toward ensuring that law enforcement knows the whereabouts of people who could pose a serious threat to public safety," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Paul Biane. "The board will continue to work closely with the Sheriff to provide the tools needed to protect our children and our communities."

Mitzelfelt's proposal will add two new staff members to the Sheriff's Crimes Against Children unit. The positions being requested include one Sheriff's Special Program Coordinator and one Detective. The Program Coordinator will work directly with personnel from the Sheriff's Department, Probation Department and the District Attorney's Office to initiate, organize and coordinate efforts to track sex offenders. The detective will track and investigate sex offenders, including those who are already in the county as well as offenders who may relocate to the county. The cost of the new positions, including equipment and vehicles, is expected to be approximately \$270,000.

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"This is a huge help for us," said Sheriff Gary Penrod, who thanked Supervisor Mitzelfelt for his leadership on the issue.

"The Department of Corrections releases hundreds of sex offenders from prison each month and we also need to be able to keep track of where they are," added Mitzelfelt. "Sheriff Penrod has been doing an effective job of keeping track of sex offenders and with these additional resources, he'll be able to continue building San Bernardino County's reputation as a county sex offenders will want to avoid."