



Washington County Sheriff's Office

Media Information

Rob Gordon, Sheriff
215 SW ADAMS, MS 32 Hillsboro, OR 97123

For Immediate Release
December 28, 2007

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Community Sex Offender Notification in the City of Cornelius

Summary of Event:

On Friday, December 28, 2007, the Washington County Sheriff's Office is issuing a Community Sex Offender Notification to residents in the City of Cornelius. The residents live in a neighborhood surrounding the Connell House which is located at 117 North 29th Avenue in Cornelius, Oregon. The notices are being distributed door-to-door by Sheriff's Office personnel.

Community Meeting	
Date:	Thursday, January 3, 2008
Time:	6:00 p.m.
Location:	Washington County Sheriff's Office 215 S.W. Adams Avenue Hillsboro, OR

Details of Event:

The Connell House is a residential treatment facility under the control of the Oregon Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB). The facility is home to a number of residents who have been found guilty "except for insanity" of very serious crimes. Three of those residents are registered sex offenders: Matthew John Shipley, Jerry Allan Farstad, and Harold Austin Aven. A three year old child was the victim in one of these cases. The PSRB determined they were suitable to live in this Cornelius neighborhood on "conditional release" from the Oregon State Hospital.

Recently, the PSRB instructed Connell House management to reinstate a policy of walking these offenders through the neighborhood on a regular basis. These offenders are not wearing restraints. If an offender decides to walk away from the group, staff members will take no action to detain them. These staff members are not armed, and their plan if an offender walks away is to call 9-1-1 and wait for police to respond.

The decisions of the PSRB have been made without giving notice to the residents of this Cornelius community. Law enforcement and citizens stand a much better chance of being able to prevent crime when we know the potentially dangerous people living in our neighborhoods, where they live, and who to contact for additional information in an emergency.

For all these reasons, the Sheriff's Office issued a Community Sex Offender Notification today to approximately 1,300 residents of Cornelius neighborhoods within a one-half mile radius of the Connell House.

To be clear, the Washington County Sheriff's Office will not inappropriately insert itself into

the treatment decisions of PSRB for its clients. However, when those decisions potentially impact community safety, law enforcement and citizens should be involved in the planning process as well.

The Connell House decisions are a local example of state-wide issues that need to be addressed by lawmakers. Essentially, due to a recent policy shift, the PSRB is implementing a plan that transfers forensic clients (those found guilty of a crime, except for insanity) from the State Hospital to group homes in various neighborhoods throughout Oregon. Many of these forensic clients have been convicted of serious and vicious crimes, such as murder, rape, assault, and arson.

Sheriff Rob Gordon joins with all Oregon Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police in expressing extreme concern about the PSRB policy shift. All the Oregon Sheriffs and Police Chiefs formally addressed the issues in a joint message to Governor Kulongoski on December 18, 2007.

Citizens can learn more about these issues at a community meeting with Sheriff Gordon on Thursday, January 3, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County Sheriff's Office Headquarters, 215 S.W. Adams Avenue in Hillsboro.

The best way to obtain more information is via our web site at www.co.washington.or.us/sheriff or to attend the public meeting on Thursday, **January 3, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.**

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[County](#)



[Sheriff](#)



[Sheriff Office
Phone Numbers](#)



[Top
of
Page.](#)