

**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA**

Sheriff
Al St. Lawrence

Undersheriff
Donald E. Anderson

Jail Administrator
Colonel McArthur Holmes



Enforcement Administrator
Major Thomas L. Smoak

Enforcement Operations Administrator
Major Terry L. Enoch

Asst. Jail Administrators
Major Howard L. Harn
Major John T. Wilcher

NEWS ADVISORY

From: Sheriff Al St Lawrence
Contact: Lt. Thomas Tillman
Date: August 7, 2009

Jail Population Highest Ever

The official daily inmate count at the Chatham County jail this morning was 1872, or 372 inmates over our capacity even with the temporary housing unit. Sheriff St Lawrence is concerned for the safety and security of not only the facility but also for safety of the officers as well as the inmates.

Currently, we have 283 inmates that are listed as Post Conviction and are awaiting transportation to a state facility. Of that total, 112 are 30 + days Post Conviction. Jail Administrator, Col. McArthur Holmes called state officials to see if they could take some of these state inmates. He was advised that the state's only diagnostic facility was closed today due to the state furlough program. Col. Holmes even offered to have our staff transport these inmates to the diagnostic center at our own expense but was told they couldn't take any inmates due to the furlough.

The high count is especially alarming since we usually process at least 130 arrestees on an average weekend, with at 45 of those unable to post bond or even be granted bond. It is quite possible that our count will exceed 1900 inmates by Monday morning.

"This is not just a Chatham County problem but a statewide problem as well", says Sheriff St Lawrence. He goes on to say that while he sympathizes with the state's situation, "there is no reason that the state cannot get these inmates that are 30+ days post conviction".

It should be noted that it costs Chatham County taxpayers \$50 a day to house an inmate at the Jail. We only receive \$20 from the state once they are post conviction. This means that the Chatham County taxpayers are funding the state at a rate of \$8,490 a day at the current figure of 283 inmates post conviction.

Sheriff St Lawrence and Jail officials are trying everything they can to get the state to give our facility some relief from the overcrowding.

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