



Spokane County Sheriff's Office

Ozzie D. Knezovich, Sheriff



"In partnership with the community - Dedicated to your safety"

July 28, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2008, Spokane County merged its corrections department with the Sheriff's Office jail division. Neither group was particularly happy with this merge. Over the past 30 years, the two departments were at odds with each other and competed for resources and equal pay. Needless to say, the employees from the top down of the newly formed Detention Services were distant, untrusting of each other, and were carrying a lot of baggage.

When I was asked to command Detention Services, I recognized early on that in order to successfully consolidate these two groups, I couldn't do it alone. I had met Libby a few years ago in a Washington State sponsored class. After explaining my dilemma to Libby, I put together my goals and shared them with her.

My Vision – What do I want it to look like?

High morale, highly trained and skilled employees, using the latest technology.

Opportunities are available to grow, develop and advance. Environment where the Lt's mentored the Sgt's to take their positions. And the Sgt's mentored the deputies to take theirs. Employees are dedicated to the organization and not themselves.

Performance standards are set in advanced. Poor performance is addressed fairly and consistently. Good performance is recognized and rewarded.

Equipment and supplies are available and in good working condition. Employees are given the best tools and latest technology they need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.

Processes are completed consistently, yet employees are searching for better ways to do business.

All employees are part of a team where they can partner for success. Employees are empowered to make decisions and motivated to solve problems. They have a sense of ownership in the organization and the direction it's headed.

For me to be successful, I knew I had to work from the top down, and like most law enforcement and corrections agencies, I had to have someone who wouldn't back down or worse, run out on me crying. Giving cops "touchy feely" training would be my worst mistake. Libby quickly won over the employees with her knowledge and sense of humor. She was able to stand her ground, but more important was her ability to recognize a teaching moment and run with it. She is well respected and continues to be sought after by staff.

What's amazing is over the past few months of training and applying the tools, there is a noticeable difference in attitudes and morale of the Managers and Supervisors. While initially there was skepticism, everyone has committed to creating a positive, productive work environment. Since the entire leadership team went to training together, we can easily recognize when we're about to be "Wagnered", and while we may joke about it, we are serious about changing our culture.

Respectfully,



1/5/22

Captain John McGrath
Detention Services Commander