

2016 Year in Review

From a public safety perspective, we find ourselves in a changing and challenging time. As we enter 2017, we find California to have undergone a "sea change" in the area of criminal law: in 2011 AB109 was enacted shifting traditional state prison responsibilities to our counties; in 2014 Proposition 47 converted many traditional felonies – primarily involving drug and theft offenses - to misdemeanors; this past year saw Proposition 57 pass allowing for the potential early release of many felons convicted of serious crimes. At a local level we continue to wrestle with methamphetamine and prescription drug crimes as well as recognizing the relatively new (to our area) inclusion of heroin as a drug of choice.

Despite these challenges we are exceptionally fortunate to have a dedicated and highly competent law enforcement community. In particular, the daily efforts of Sheriff Greg Hagwood and CHP Commanders Sarah Richards (Quincy area) and Joe Micheletti (Susanville area) and their staffs are crucial in maintaining a safe and just Plumas County. While some larger counties have seemingly given up on enforcing many quality of life laws, Plumas County continues to hold the line. We continue to investigate and prosecute property and substance abuse crimes in an effort to maintain the level of safety and security Plumas County has come to expect. To this end, we have also recognized the necessity to address lower level crimes, particularly substance abuse, with a "whole person" approach in an effort to break the cycle of addiction and help individuals avoid reoffending and, instead, become productive members of our community. Effectively responding to, and addressing, these monumental changes in California's Criminal Law would be impossible without the effective leadership of our criminal justice partners. Judges Ira Kaufman and Janet Hilde have played a pivotal role in creating a blueprint to respond to these changes while the recent hire of Behavioral Health Director Bob Brunson has created a real sense of optimism in the delivery of necessary services.

I am particularly proud of the efforts of the District Attorney's Office. Deputy District Attorneys Joel McComb and Kelly Styger have done an exceptional job in working hard to assure justice is served in each case they handle. Our front office staff of Kelly Wilkinson, Arin Meisenheimer, and Julie Tanaka have served as the engine allowing our office to meet the high level of service that is rightly demanded. Fiscal Officer Sheri Johns has served not just the DA's office, but our entire law enforcement community, at the highest level truly allowing us to best allocate our limited resources in serving the greater good. Our investigations unit saw the retirement of Supervisor Jeff Wilkinson, ending a long and dedicated career to Plumas County. Investigations Specialist Jessica Beatley has been promoted to the supervisor position – a move wholly deserved after her exceptional efforts in many high profile Plumas County cases during the last ten years. Tanah Braswell joined our staff this year on a part-time basis and has worked effectively to meet our goal of maintaining the important and necessary contact with victims of crime so they can be apprised of the status of their case and its results. During the summer we were also delighted to be joined by recent Quincy High School graduates Daniel Haygood and Abby Edwards in our internship program with each

demonstrating a keen intellect and promising legal future while providing support to our office in an important and complicated case.

In navigating the changing landscape with minimal resources, it is crucial we effectively work to lower the recidivism rate and address the underlying factors giving rise to an individual's criminality – particularly with regard to the lower level crimes involving substance abuse or mental health issues. To this end 2016 saw truly exceptional work from the Community Justice Services (formerly Alternative Sentencing) team of Lori Beatley, Samantha Rick, and Marisha Hermann as led by Stephanie Tanaka. Stephanie's group initially served as the liason between county resources and the criminal justice system. As gaps were identified Stephanie and her group repeatedly stepped up to meet ever-changing needs – including directing an evolving community justice court, a vibrant day reporting center, outstanding vocational programs as well as a pretrial release program crucial to the health of Plumas County and our efforts to secure funding for a new jail.

As we move forward into what appears to be an exciting and challenging 2017, I am particularly grateful for the tremendous support of our community in making Plumas County a safe and just place to live, work and play.