

YAKIMA COUNTY JAIL TO SLASH ABOUT 34 STAFF



About 34 workers face an impending layoff as Yakima County Jail in Washington announced a plan to slash its workforce before the year ends. The cuts will affect 29 corrections officers, five clerical employees and four office workers- all slated for layoff effective January 31, 2010.

Ed Campbell, Corrections Director, said that the cuts are due to a big loss of rental beds at Yakima County Jail. Campbell explained that Yakima County jail has had contracts with communities on the west side to house their inmates for several years now. However, the King County consortium's agreement with several west side communities to rent space at the Yakima County jail has ended, triggering the layoff. "The expiration of the contract meant several of those communities will no longer be using our jail, dropping the inmate population by as much as 20% or 180 inmates." Campbell added: "Jail officials learned this week that they are losing about 200 inmates from King County housed here under contracts worth roughly \$6 million. A new 800-bed jail in Des Moines, WA has been able to underbid Yakima County, taking those contracts."

The county is now looking for replacement renters for the open jail space. In the meantime, the county will allot about \$7 million to start upgrades at the jail.

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