

Nelson County Sheriff's Department
210 B Ave. West - Suite 102
Lakota, ND 58344

Senator David O'Connell, Chairman
Public Safety and Transportation Committee

June 2, 2010

Chairman O'Connell and Committee Members:

At the last meeting of this committee, January 14, 2010, I spoke to you regarding rural funding (or lack of it) for public safety projects funded by the Department of Emergency Services. At that time, I related six points or goals that I had hoped my presentation would accomplish.

Two of the six points I would like to address here today:

1. Better communications between Regional Coordinators, Advisory Committees and Policy Network Committees.

After my last presentation to you, I had a brief conversation with Greg Wilz, Director of the Department of Emergency Services outside of a committee chamber. Two Nelson County Commissioners and Nelson County Emergency Manager Sharon Young were also present. In that conversation, we discussed work to be done, work in progress and working together. Unfortunately, since that conversation, nothing has changed or been accomplished.

Since my resignation from the advisory committee, no one has been appointed to take my place. As a result, Nelson County has no representation. In addition, with the resignation of Becky Ault, there is no longer a regional coordinator. I spoke with Becky Ault on the telephone prior to her resignation. During the course of the conversation, it became apparent that she didn't seem to understand what I was talking about. When I referred to the original letter, which I had written to Greg Wilz, she told me she had never seen a copy of it nor had she even been briefed about its contents!

2. Committees should have equal representation (i.e. representatives from county government and small cities, not just the 4 major cities).

Under the current structure the Policy Network Committee consists of a member from Fargo/Cass County, Bismarck/Burleigh County, Minot/Ward County and Grand Forks/Grand Forks County. There is still no representation of the rural counties or communities on the Policy Network Committee!

Even though I come here alone today, I can assure you, the members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee, that I am not alone in my concerns.

From the inception of the regional response structure and the forming of committees, there has been a continued decrease in attendance at advisory committee meetings by over 50%! This should alarm those of you on this committee and cause you to ask why this is. I can say with confidence that the reason is the prevailing attitude of potential attendees that, "They just do what they (DES) want anyways."

I sincerely hope these issues can be resolved soon so that the distribution of federal dollars becomes more equitable for all counties and regions within North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Janke". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kelly Janke, Sheriff
Nelson County North Dakota