

Grand Jury Report

November - December 2014

Serving on the Grand Jury has been a privilege and a civic responsibility that we readily accepted and have taken very seriously. During the two months, we have heard up close and personal details of crime we usually only read about. The cases involved everything from failing to properly use automobile lights to child abuse. Some cases were difficult to hear. Knowing that officers are watchful and expedient in seeing the cases reach a positive conclusion is a consolation to us. We commend them for their service to our community.

Mike Kem, Christian County's Clerk, reported on the November 2014 election and expressed a need for poll workers in coming elections. Interested parties may contact his office to apply and schedule training. He also stated concerns regarding some employers who were not allowing excused time from work to vote. In these cases, the absentee ballot is not appropriate. Reasons for the absentee ballot include: absence on election day, incapacity or confinement due to illness or physical disability, religious belief or practice, or persons in federal service, their spouses and dependents. We were dismayed to know that there is no penalty for the employer who denies this important privilege/right. Our Grand Jury believes that this is in need of further discussion between the employers and those who could encourage them to give their employees time to vote. Otherwise, there were no other significant problems or concerns involving the November 2014 election.

Many of the cases presented involved failure to pay child support. This is a real dilemma. Putting the perpetrator in jail prevents the earning of money to pay the support. However, oftentimes, the person has no employment, skills or desire to obtain a job. This predicament may go hand in hand with the abuse of food stamps and Medicaid. If families aren't getting money from a non-custodial parent, they may resort to selling these items for cash.

The drug problem is ever present. We encountered many repeat offender cases. Often, these escalated to robbery, theft, use of firearms and physical abuse. Drug use often begins at an early age. We recognize the positive influence that several of our local organizations, such as the Challenge Houses and Boys and Girls Club, have on our young people. We thank them for their work. We must all be alert to report suspicious activity and willing to help prevent crime when appropriate. Working together, perhaps we would be able to connect the dots and apprehend

several people who purchase from major dealers outside our community in order to sell drugs to buyers/users within our community.

Our thanks to Judge John Atkins, Lynn Pryor, Tara Bozell, Michael Cotthoff and each of the police officers, detectives, troopers and investigators working to keep our community a safe place to live. Everyone presenting cases was courteous, very well informed and conducted themselves in a most professional manner. We especially appreciate the men and women who sometimes put themselves in harm's way to protect the people of Christian County.

We appreciate this opportunity to serve our community. It has been a most interesting and informative experience.

Date

Foreperson