

SHERIFF'S OFFICE – UNIFIED POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Dear Colleagues,

In October of 2009 I requested assistance from the University of Utah Center for Public Policy and Administration in conducting the first ever comprehensive employee survey of the nearly 1500 employees of the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office and the Unified Police Department of Greater Salt Lake. The survey has concluded, responses have been reviewed and reports compiled. The results will be now provided to every employee of these organizations for review, comment and most importantly action.

Surveys in general, and government surveys specifically have the unfortunate burden of being viewed as ineffectual. Survey participants often view time spent responding as an exercise in futility. "What difference does this make", "nothing will change" are common refrain. Individuals can not be blamed for these statements as all too often they are validated when the survey is not read, placed in a filing cabinet and forgotten. I can assure you this will not be the case with this survey.

I didn't commission this survey at one of the most challenging moments in Sheriff's Office History to simply file it away, I asked for it because I believe you can not travel any path if you don't know where the trail begins. How can we as an organization know if we are truly affecting significant change, better or worse, if we don't first take the time to understand where we are today?

This survey is, in my opinion, extremely valuable, it provides for the first time ever, a snap shot of one of the largest and most complex public safety agencies in the State of Utah. It allows us to look inside and expose areas of strength which can be supported and expanded as well as areas of weakness which can, through our collective efforts, be converted to strengths.

The survey clearly demonstrates that employees are frustrated; they have been dispirited by the impacts of a historic recession, a health care system which seeks greater and greater contributions while yielding less and less services, and a disintegrating retirement system that many counted on not only for themselves but also as a carrot to lure high quality individuals into public safety service in the future. All of these issue and more have been heaped upon employees over the course of a few short years. And yet the survey suggests there is much hope as well. The survey results, rather remarkably demonstrate that regardless, or perhaps even in spite of, repeated blows to their morale, the vast majority of employees, 89% in fact, are still able to agree or strongly agree with the statement "the work I do is important," and 81% indicate they agree or strongly agree with the statement "I like the work I do".

Yes this survey provides both a starting place and a critical opportunity. All of us should take the time to assimilate the very important information contained in the statistics, and act upon them. Facts without action are useless, but information that indicates direction can and often does provide the basis for sustained and positive growth.

I and the rest of your Administration within the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office and Unified Police Department of Greater Salt Lake will be moving quickly in the future to improve these agencies, using your feedback and the recommendations contained in this survey report. I invite and encourage you to participate in this process. Thank you once again for taking the time to respond to this historic and important survey.

Respectfully,

James M. "Jim" Winder