



For Immediate Release:

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Joint Press Release: Washington State Patrol, District 8 (700) & Kitsap County Sheriff's Office (125)

Joint-agency force to conduct 'Warrant Emphasis'

Kitsap County, Wash. -- It's early in the morning... much earlier than normal for anyone to be knocking on your door. What's up with that?

Did you conveniently 'forget' all about that 'promise to appear' in court when you signed that criminal citation last year?

If so, then there's an extremely high probability that the knocking on your door is not from an assembly of smiling faces with balloons, flowers and a gigantic check for \$1 million. Instead, you may find yourself facing determined-looking cops with a warrant of arrest and a set of handcuffs. Now do you remember that citation?

Deputies and corrections officers from the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, together with troopers from District 8, Washington State Patrol, will begin serving outstanding arrest warrants anytime after 6:00 a.m. tomorrow (Friday, May 28). Offenders with outstanding warrants will be taken into custody and transported to the Kitsap County Jail, to await their appearance before a judge.

Known as Warrant Emphasis, but commonly referred to as 'Warrant Fest,' the purpose of this joint-agency action is to reduce the number of outstanding warrants of arrest -- more than 6,400 (felony & misdemeanor) -- that are currently on the books in Kitsap County.

There have been 13 previous warrant emphasis actions held throughout Kitsap, North Mason and Jefferson Counties since December 2001. Since then, 480 arrests have been made, which cleared 901 outstanding warrants, for a total of \$3,060,149 in bail.

Warrant emphasis arrests were temporarily curtailed during portions of construction of the Kitsap County Jail expansion project last year. That project is now complete, and the jail is open for business. “This is not a ‘book & release action,’ as many repeat offenders have come to expect,” said Sheriff Steve Boyer. “This will be arrest and hold. And we will hold for as long as it takes.”

It should be noted that, although the warrant emphasis does not kick-off until tomorrow morning, any arrest on an outstanding Kitsap County warrant will be held for court starting at 7:00 p.m. tonight. “I would like to have a group waiting to see a judge at 8:30 a.m.,” said Corrections Chief Larry Bertholf, “prior to the day’s intake from the warrant emphasis action.”

Many warrant offenders have already been contacted by telephone to encourage them to handle their outstanding warrants by turning themselves in.

Want to avoid a lengthy stay in jail while awaiting a court appearance? Don’t wait for the knock on the door. If you know that there’s an outstanding warrant of arrest in your name, a voluntary surrender is the answer. Walk-ins at the jail are welcome!

- WSP / KCSO -