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## State Attorney General issues decision in deputy shooting incident

**Port Orchard, Wash.** – Kitsap County Sheriff Steve Boyer has been informed, by the Office of the Attorney General of Washington, of the outcome of a case review regarding the investigation into a shooting incident involving a Kitsap County sheriff's deputy last summer.

The recommendation of the Attorney General is that the Attorney General's Office decline to file criminal charges against Deputy Tiffany Dobbins, stemming from her involvement in the discharge of her duty weapon on June 22, 2006, in Navy Yard City, Bremerton.

The recommendation to decline filing of criminal charges was issued by Ms. Lana Weinmann, Chief Criminal Prosecutor and Assistant Attorney General, on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

"This incident and the subsequent investigation have been emotionally draining for the deputy involved and this agency," said Sheriff Boyer. "I am very pleased with the thoroughness of the review and I concur with the decision of the Attorney General. The overall factual question to be answered was whether the deputy acted with criminal culpability. The review shows, clearly, that it was a mistake; the deputy had no intent to shoot the victim with a firearm."

The Attorney General's review of the case was requested by the Kitsap County Prosecutor, following completion of the shooting investigation by detectives of the Washington State Patrol. The review request was received by the Attorney General's Office on Aug. 23, 2006.

Deputy Dobbins is currently on administrative assignment within the agency. An internal affairs administrative review of the incident will follow because the incident involved the use of lethal force.

A synopsis of the shooting incident follows.

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## Synopsis of incident

Shortly before noon on June 22, 2006, Deputy Dobbins was dispatched to a vacant lot on National Avenue South in Navy Yard City, Bremerton, regarding a report of a man in a tree wearing only athletic shoes and shorts. This individual, later identified as William A. Jones, age 32, had been in the tree for approximately five hours prior to Deputy Dobbins' arrival.

Sheriff's deputies were called by a neighboring business owner who expressed concerns for the safety of Jones given his odd behavior. Jones was reportedly up to 25 feet high in the tree and was talking to himself as if he believed that there were other people in the tree with him.

After arrival on-scene, Deputy Dobbins requested back-up assistance and additional sheriff's deputies responded. The deputies then moved closer to the tree to speak with Jones.

Jones told deputies that he had escaped from some Bremerton police officers who wanted to arrest him for probation violation. Jones had a leather belt wrapped around a tree limb and around his neck. Jones appeared to be delusional. Jones told the deputies that there were other people in the tree wearing camouflage that were waiting to tranquilize him (he was alone in the tree).

A sheriff's negotiator arrived at the scene around 12:30 p.m. Jones next made statements about wanting to be a sniper and he referred to "green people" hiding in the tree. Jones asked the negotiator several times if he would be arrested and the negotiator advised him that he would not be arrested. Throughout the contact, Jones climbed about the tree, refastening the belt around his neck at each stop. His legs trembled when he wasn't climbing the tree.

Additional sheriff's personnel and the fire department arrived at the vacant lot. A discussion was held with the sheriff's negotiator about the use of a Taser should the opportunity present itself. The negotiator continued to try and convince Jones to come out of the tree.

At one point, Jones removed the belt and moved down to a lower branch to accept a cigarette lighter from the negotiator. Seizing this opportunity, the negotiator deployed a Taser with the probes striking Jones in the chest. Although the Taser did operate as designed, Jones pulled the probes out and attempted to climb back up the tree.

The negotiator then verbally requested that Deputy Dobbins deploy her Taser on Jones. Deputy Dobbins was equipped with a Taser and wore it on her duty belt in a gun-like holster provided by the Taser manufacturer.

In response to the negotiator's request Deputy Dobbins drew her duty sidearm from her belt, instead of the Taser, and fired a single round striking Jones in the leg. Jones climbed down out of the tree and was immediately treated by medical personnel.

As of June 22, 2006, Deputy Dobbins had used the Taser on nine previous occasions; the most recent incident occurring on July 31, 2005. She qualified initially with the Taser on Feb. 22, 2002 and re-qualified with the Taser periodically as stipulated by agency training requirements. At the time of the incident Deputy Dobbins had served with the Sheriff's Office for five years and four months.

**End of synopsis**