

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: December 11, 2008

### **SHERIFF TO CHARGE INMATES \$1.25 PER INMATE FOR MEALS**

### **Taxpayers Forking Over Too Much Dough... Inmates Told to Step up to the Plate**

(Phoenix, AZ.) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio says, after the holiday season, he will begin charging inmates \$1.25 for their meals on January 1, 2009. The Sheriff provides two meals a day or approximately 23,000 meals to county inmates.

The Sheriff says the move is in response to county budget woes and will equate to hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

“My office does an outstanding job providing the cheapest inmate meals in the nation,” Sheriff Arpaio says. “But a tough economy has trickled down to us too and we are being forced to look for even more ways to cut costs to the taxpayers.”

In addition to the new charge for food, Arpaio is maintaining his policy on not providing free condiments, which has saved the Office nearly \$250,000 a year.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, if inmates want to enhance the taste their meals, condiment packets containing salt, pepper, mustard, mayonnaise and ketchup will be available for sale at a cost of 40 cents each.

Arpaio, well known throughout the country for maintaining a tough but constitutional jail system, encourages his food factory staff to aggressively seek cheap or free food to feed inmates. That program saves taxpayers millions each year and routinely relies heavily on produce overages from regional farmers and on companies whose products are approaching the “sell by” dates. It’s been one of the primary tools to drive down costs of inmate food preparation.

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Arpaio also uses inmate labor to provide virtually hundreds of thousands of man hours in the food factory. Doing so, he says, avoids having to hire costly outside workers to perform the same duties.

Arpaio says his office will continue, as always, to help local food banks by providing them with food and distribution services they desperately need.

“These are tough times for everyone. Taxpayers cannot be asked to keep forking over more and more money to feed inmates,” Arpaio says. “It’s time for the inmates to step up to the plate.”

Arpaio will take questions regarding this new policy at the Food Factory and media will also be allowed to interview inmates about the policy on Thursday, Dec 11, 2009 at 4PM. The food factory is located east and slightly north of the Lower Buckeye Jail at 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lower Buckeye Road. Please enter using the driveway which takes you north from Lower Buckeye Road and is nearest to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Please contact the on call MRO for entry into the secured facility.

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