

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



The Headline... Trips and parties paid by jail fund Arizona Republic, August 2nd 2009

The Truth... August 11, 2009

In typical Arizona Republic fashion, Sunday's headline attempted to uncover some sort of a juicy scandal on how the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office utilizes funds to enhance jail operations by using catchy phrases like "trips" and "parties".

The only problem was that after weeks of searching through hundreds of pages of public record requests by Arizona Republic reporters (which took Sheriff's Office employee's hours on end to prepare), they did not have much to go on.

The "parties" that were mentioned, I assume, are referring to the annual awards banquet that the Sheriff's Office holds to honor our dedicated volunteer staff. They donate thousands of hours per year to the jail operations and do so at no cost to tax payers. We feel that the volunteer staff enhances jail operations in a big way, and this is the one opportunity we have to thank them.

As far as "trips", Sheriff's Office staff members do use the Jail Enhancement Fund on occasion to attend out of state training, if similar classes are not available in state. Every other law enforcement agency across the country of comparable size to ours does the same thing.

In fact, the Jail Enhancement Fund guidelines require that agencies use 25% of the fund for that purpose alone. Your paper's attempt to minimize our need for training is only convenient until something goes seriously wrong in the jail. That's when lawyers and media outlets joyfully point their fingers of blame at the lack of training.

This fund was created by the State Legislature in 1982 and was intended to improve the quality of jail operations by gleaning money from criminal offenders, not the tax payers.

It is used at the discretion of sheriff's officials who know something about running jails, not members of the county administration who want control over this money for their own political purposes.

I can answer and justify every claim made by last Sunday's story, but I have the feeling that your readers aren't much interested in that.

Like us, they made their minds up long ago on how good of a job this Sheriff's Office does. They also understand, like we do, the real motivation behind these types of stories.

Director Sheridan has supervised jail functions of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office since 1999. He also served as a Sheriff's deputy since 1979, rising to the rank of Deputy Chief in 1995.

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