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News Release

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Sewer Pipe Break Temporarily Affects Some Jail Operations

Pueblo, CO: A corroded sewer line that recently collapsed and spewed sewage into areas of the aging Pueblo County Jail is much larger than originally anticipated, requiring some operations in the tower building to be re-located and other areas to be closed temporarily while repairs are being made. It is unknown how long it will take to complete the project.

The jail's property section, which is responsible for transporting, housing and releasing inmates, has been temporarily re-located, a holding cell in the intake area has been closed and the public restrooms are out of service as a contractor works to repair more than 60-feet of the corroded cast-iron sewer pipe. Initially, the broken pipe was estimated to be about 20-feet in length but as crews began replacing the line last week, they discovered significantly more of the rusted pipe was cracked and leaking sewage due to corrosion.

"This is another of casualty of an old building with outdated infrastructure," said Pueblo County Sheriff Kirk M. Taylor. "This pipe is the original that was put in when this building was constructed 40 years ago. It's no surprise contractors are finding more of the pipe is cracked than originally anticipated."

The location and length of the break and the time needed to make the repairs forced the Pueblo County Sheriff's Office to temporarily close the property section, which daily has from 75 to 100 inmates pass through it as they process in and out of jail. The temporary closure means that individuals who are changing in and out of jail-issued clothing must do so in a location farther from the intake area, creating a more time consuming and cumbersome operation. Although it's a more time-intensive process, the re-location has not affected release times or the wait time for inmates to be housed.

The storage of inmate clothing and supplies also had to be re-located and is operating out of the detention briefing room. Briefings are being held in an administrative area. Additionally, one of the six intake holding cells that is temporarily shuttered resulting in less space available to hold individuals as they are processed in or out of the facility, leading to more crowded conditions in the other holding cells.

"Our property section is critical component to our jail operations," said Sheriff Taylor. "To have this function temporarily displaced has created an inconvenience for our staff and those

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incarcerated in our jail. I commend our employees for modifying the day-to-day operations to work around this issue without compromising the safety and security of our staff and the inmates.”

The corroded pipe was discovered after sewage was found seeping into the basement area of the building and a strong stench permeated the facility. Initially it was believed the leak was coming from a clog in the toilet in an intake cell. However, after contractor crews cleared the line, the leak persisted. Further examination determined the pipe was so corroded it collapsed causing the sewage to seep out and into the building.

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