

On June 7, 2011, the National Association of Counties presented the County of Aroostook a national award “Collaborative Criminal Justice and Pretrial Services Program” for 2011. This award recognizes the outstanding efforts of all persons involved in the Criminal Justice and the Pretrial Services programs here in Aroostook County and how well they all work together as a team.

In 2004, the Aroostook County Sheriff’s Office contracted services with Maine Pre-Trial in an effort to alleviate the over-crowding in the County Jail. Maine Pre-Trial provided a service that allows offenders that otherwise would not be able to make bail the opportunity. Maine-Pre Trial, through careful screening of potential clients, agrees to monitor the person for any conduct that would violate that bail conditions set. The success of this program has been instrumental in the County’s ability to keep corrections costs down as MPT has as many as 80 pre trial offenders on there case load. The 80 people that on MPT case load would otherwise would be incarcerated in the County Jail and an expense to The County. On June 7, 2011, the National Association of Counties presented Aroostook County a national award. The award is the “Collaborative Criminal Justice and Pretrial Services Program” for 2011. This award recognizes the outstanding efforts of all persons involved in the Criminal Justice and the Pretrial Services programs here in Aroostook County and how well they all work together as a team.

The criminal justice program involves the County Commissioners, the Sheriff, all Corrections Officers who work at the County Jail, the Jail Administrator, Deputies, Troopers and local police officers from their local jurisdictions all over the County. The District Attorney’s office is also heavily involved in the Criminal Justice side as well as all criminal courts and defense attorneys. The Pretrial Services program is offered through Maine Pretrial Services which is a non-profit agency based in Portland, Maine. The pretrial program has two local offices in Houlton and Caribou. There are two Case Managers employed by Maine Pretrial Services which basically monitors and supervises high risk bail inmates who qualify for the pretrial program. If an inmate qualifies with their program, they are released from jail but under strict conditions of release

which again are monitored and supervised by the Case Managers. The number of released inmates on the pretrial program varies throughout the year. In 2010, the highest number of released inmates in the pretrial program was about 105. The pretrial program is generally busier from spring until fall but that can be very different as well. The total number of days where inmates on the pretrial program who were out of jail was 21,365. Take that number times the cost of incarcerating an inmate per day and you can see the huge savings for Aroostook County.

This is an example of how the two programs work together. When a person is arrested and brought to the County Jail, they will be arraigned in front of a Judge on Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings. Prior to this person being arraigned, the Pretrial Case Manager will screen the inmate and gather background information from them. A tentative bail offer from the District Attorney's office is faxed to the County Jail for the defense attorney to look at along with the initial police report for them to read. The Case Manager will also offer suggestions to the defense attorney as to what possibly would be an appropriate bail which might or might not include Pretrial Services. There are some inmates who routinely come to jail for various offenses and are well know to law enforcement, the Corrections Officers and to Pretrial Services. The defense attorney calls the D.A.'s office trying to negotiate the best bail for their client so that both sides are in agreement before the court proceedings start. When a Judge requests Pretrial Services, the Case Manager then goes through a verification process and then makes a decision as to whether accept or deny the inmate pretrial services. A whole host of criteria must be met in order for an inmate to be accepted into the program. First and foremost is public safety! Other criteria is stable living conditions, ties to the community, whether the person has a job, family, children, etc.. once a decision has been made to accept an inmate into the pretrial program, a contract is drawn up by the Case Manager which is tailored specifically for that person. The now "client" of pretrial must follow ALL conditions of the contract at all times. If there is a violation, the client then can be arrested and put back in jail until they go before a Judge. The Judge can then decide, with the help

of all the previous parties input, as to whether allow the client to bail again or be held in jail without bail until their next scheduled court date.

As you can see there are many different parts to the system. Here in Aroostook County, this award signifies the hard work done by all parties which translates into a safer, healthier, less costly Aroostook County. Congratulations to all parties!!

The criminal justice program involves the County Commissioners, the Sheriff, all Corrections Officers who work at the County Jail, the Jail Administrator, Deputies, Troopers and local police officers from their local jurisdictions all over the County. The District Attorney's office is also heavily involved in the Criminal Justice side as well as all criminal courts and defense attorneys. The Pretrial Services program is offered through Maine Pretrial Services which is a non-profit agency based in Portland, Maine. The pretrial program has two local offices in Houlton and Caribou. There are two Case Managers employed by Maine Pretrial Services which basically monitors and supervises high risk bail inmates who qualify for the pretrial program. If an inmate qualifies with their program, they are released from jail but under strict conditions of release which again are monitored and supervised by the Case Managers. The number of released inmates on the pretrial program varies throughout the year. In 2010, the highest number of released inmates in the pretrial program was about 105. The pretrial program is generally busier from Spring until Fall but that can be very different as well. The total number of days where inmates on the pretrial program who were out of jail was 21,365. Take that number times the cost of incarcerating an inmate per day and you can see the huge savings for Aroostook County.

This is an example of how the two programs work together. When a person is arrested and brought to the County Jail, they will be arraigned in front of a Judge either Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings. Prior to this person being arraigned, the Pretrial Case Manager will screen the inmate and gather background information from them. A tentative bail offer from the District Attorney's office is faxed to the County Jail for the defense attorney to look at along with the initial police report for them to read. The Case Manager will also offer

suggestions to the defense attorney as to what possibly would be an appropriate bail which might or might not include Pretrial Services. There are some inmates who routinely come to jail for various offenses and are well known to law enforcement, the Corrections Officers and to Pretrial Services. The defense attorney calls the D.A.'s office trying to negotiate the best bail for their client so that both sides are in agreement before the court proceedings start. When a Judge requests Pretrial Services, the Case Manager then goes through a verification process and then makes a decision as to whether accept or deny the inmate pretrial services. A whole host of criteria must be met in order for an inmate to be accepted into the program. First and foremost is public safety! Other criteria is stable living conditions, ties to the community, whether the person has a job, family, children, etc.. once a decision has been made to accept an inmate into the pretrial program, a contract is drawn up by the Case Manager which is tailored specifically for that person. The now "client" of pretrial must follow ALL conditions of the contract at all times. If there is a violation, the client then can be arrested and put back in jail until they go before a Judge. The Judge can then decide, with the help of all the previous parties input, as to whether allow the client to bail again or be held in jail without bail until their next scheduled court date.

We, at the Sheriff's Office, have been very pleased with the level of commitment from the staff of Maine Pre-Trial. The costs for running the Corrections Division have been measurably decreased with the good work that they do. This cost savings, along with better offender accountability while on bail, is a winning scenario to us all.

As you can see there are many different parts to the system. Here in Aroostook County, this award signifies the hard work done by all parties which translates into a safer, healthier, less costly Aroostook County. Congratulations to all parties!!