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Warrant sweep planned in October

Snohomish County is tired of being stood up when it comes to people missing their court dates. Officials are doing something about it by sending a message to people with outstanding warrants that if they don't take care of their warrant, our legal system will.

Several local law enforcement agencies, including the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Washington State Patrol, will conduct the county's first warrant sweep this month. Officers, troopers and deputies will be tracking down people with outstanding warrants, arresting them and booking them into jail.

"The purpose of this project is to send a message to our community that a date with the court is not a suggestion; it's a directive," said Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney Janice Ellis. "If you fail to arrive for your appointment we are going to go looking for you and bring you to jail so you won't miss your next opportunity to speak with a judge."

Court officials estimate there are approximately 10,000 outstanding district court warrants and about 3,000 superior court warrants. Law enforcement officials are not saying exactly when they'll conduct the sweep this month. They anticipate holding a warrant sweep quarterly to emphasize the point, similar to a DUI emphasis patrol.

But nobody needs to wait for an officer's knock on their door. Snohomish County's official Web site features an Outstanding Warrant Inquiry application allowing people to search for and view all outstanding misdemeanor warrants. For more information visit the following link: www.snoco.org/warrants.

People also have the option of calling Snohomish County District Court at 425-388-3331 (then press 5).

"No one will have any excuses for missing their court date now," Ellis said.

The warrant sweep is the result of several county departments working together on the issue, including the Prosecutor's Office, the Office of Public Defense, County Corrections, District Court, Superior Court, the Sheriff's Office, the County Council and the Department of Information Services.

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