



**THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
TWELFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
POLK COUNTY**

**NORMAN R. HILL
PRESIDING JUDGE**

**Polk County Courthouse
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Press Release—For immediate release

Polk County Circuit Court takes steps to improve courthouse security in collaboration with county officials and Sheriff's Office

Dallas, OR — Beginning June 1st, visitors to the Polk County Courthouse will notice something has changed: they will now go through security screening before entering.

The new security measures are the result of a collaborative effort by the court, the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) Marshal's Office, the Polk County Sheriff's Office, and county commissioners to improve safety and limit the presence of weapons in the courthouse. The improved security measures will be funded for one year through a grant from the Oregon Judicial Department.

"The courthouse should be a safe place where disputes are resolved calmly and fairly in accordance with the rule of law," said Judge Norman Hill, presiding judge of the Polk County Circuit Court. "Making sure people are safe from violence is an essential step in that process."

Polk County is one of the few remaining courthouses in Oregon without security screening. This important security upgrade dramatically improves safety for Polk County residents accessing the courthouse for jury duty, court appearances, and county business.

A vulnerability assessment conducted by the Oregon Judicial Department Marshal's Office identified the lack of full-time security screening as a significant vulnerability. Judges have reported people in court with guns, knives and other weapons; on one occasion, a domestic dispute erupted in violence in the courthouse hallway, risking the safety of anyone in the vicinity.

The new security screening will include x-ray machines and magnetometers, which are highly effective in detecting weapons, explosives, or other dangerous materials to ensure they do not enter the building. This new method provides a minimally intrusive way of ensuring people visiting the courthouse are not armed, which increases security for everyone.

In addition to the new security screening at the building entrance, the Polk County Sheriff's Office will continue to provide security within the courthouse.