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**ESCAMBIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**David Morgan, Sheriff**

August 21, 2014

Mr. Jack Brown  
County Administrator  
Escambia County  
221 Palafox Place  
Pensacola, FL 32502

RE: Law Enforcement Training Campus

Dear Mr. Brown:

In an interview with the INWeekly that was published on 08/20/2014, Commissioner Gene Valentino is quoted as saying:

"Why can't the training for deputies be a profit center? Why can't it continuing education in the same facility be of profit center? Why can't it be a wing or one of those campus extension buildings, 200-300 yards off to the side of the jail? Close enough proximity but removed.

That kind of campus feel. Then train these guys to a standard, so that law enforcement training in this community becomes a hallmark, a standard of pride, rather than a standard of embarrassment. You're shifting the image of the training within the community which implies our local officers are trained better."

This statement reveals a complete lack of understanding of law enforcement training and the process by which the Sheriff's Office actually trains our deputies. Commissioner Valentino's comments also disparage the level of training of our Deputies who may be called upon at any moment to risk life and limb in service to the community.

I am hoping that there is not a prevailing thought amongst the Commission that a law enforcement campus could be a profit center. Law enforcement training is mostly done by the individual agencies and occasionally by outside experts or by product vendors. The latter two will normally give tuition-free spaces in the training class to the host agency. Law enforcement agencies don't make a profit off of each other. We help each other to keep the costs down for the taxpayers. When we start charging other agencies, they will start charging us. We have a Regional Criminal Justice Training Council that handles all training needs and priorities which includes all local agencies and academies. To our knowledge, that council has not even been considered, let alone consulted, as to the need for such a facility. We know the ECSO has not been consulted as to the need of such a training facility.



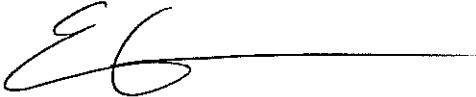
Commissioner Valentino implies that by building a multi-million dollar facility, somehow the training will be better. Who is going to instruct the officers on this fanciful campus other than the same underpaid, professional, experienced, and skilled officers, professors, and other professionals we currently have training our local law enforcement at ECSO, PPD, and George Stone Law Enforcement Academy (run by the Escambia School District)? Building a multi-million dollar school doesn't improve education unless you expend the resources to attract and retain the best teachers. The contradiction for Commissioner Valentino is that if you have the best teachers they don't need a multi-million dollar school to be successful. Some of the most important things we train in are ethics, supervision, and personal interaction skills. Law enforcement training is more mundane than what is portrayed by Hollywood. Well over half of our training is accomplished in classrooms.

ECSO meets or exceeds all training requirements set forth by the State of Florida. We train more often and to higher standards than is required by Florida Statute, the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, and the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. I guess their required levels are worse than "embarrassing" since we train more than they set as a standard? Agencies from all across Florida, and for some classes -- the nation, send their officers to ECSO for either our home grown classes or contracted top end instructors. Most departments are envious of our current training facilities.

Let me state in no uncertain terms, so the taxpayers, and the BOCC understand. **The ECSO does not want, nor does it need a new training facility. It would be a waste of taxpayer dollars.** We have a 3 year old training building that meets our needs, coupled with a fully functioning range with a new range building that cost several hundred thousand dollars. We have also partnered with the military to use their airfields for our high speed driving training. Many other local business and non-profits have allowed us to do active shooter training on their properties. This is all done at zero cost and allows our officers to train in a variety of situations and locations. This year, the State Attorney's Office volunteered to teach some of our classes at no cost to our agency.

The major training problem we do have is that we have to spend so much time doing introductory training because our turnover rate is so high. If ECSO's training is "an embarrassment" when it exceeds state standards and averages, then certainly our pay, which is \$3,000 below state average, is more of an embarrassment. **We are losing our seasoned, trained officers, that the taxpayers have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on each, to government agencies and private business that pay more.** Couple that with the fact that the County pays their own employees more through overtime pay and holiday pay but does not compensate deputies in the same way. If we want better training and lower crime rates then the Commission should invest in human capital to attract and retain the best officers, not buildings that we don't want or need.

Sincerely,



Eric Haines, Chief Deputy  
Escambia County, FL

Cc: Commissioner Wilson Robertson, District 1  
Commissioner Gene Valentino, District 2  
Commissioner Lumon May, District 3 (Chairman)  
Commissioner Grover Robinson, IV, District 4  
Commissioner Steven Barry, District 5 (Vice Chairman)  
Ms. Alison Rogers, County Attorney