

OFFICE OF SHERIFF



MARK S. OWEN
SHERIFF

November 19, 2014

Members of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners,

I am writing to provide my endorsement of the Regional Law Enforcement Mutual Aid bi-state legislation that was recently signed into law in the State of Missouri. As the Sheriff of one of the five involved Missouri counties and a member of the Kansas City Regional Homeland Security Committee, I have worked with members of the Kansas City Metro Tactical Officers Association, other sheriffs and the Kansas City Regional Law Enforcement Sub-Committee to make our area legislators understand the importance of a regional bi-state mutual aid measure.

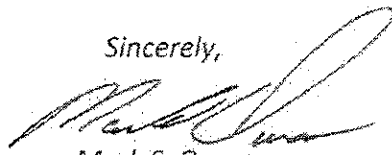
Kansas City Regional Homeland Security grants as well as the State of Kansas Homeland Security grants have put millions of dollars into homeland security law enforcement funding, training and equipment to help protect all of the citizens in our region regardless of which side of the state line they lived on. Our law enforcement communities on both sides of the state line as well as many other regional disciplines have been training together for years to allow for a unified regional response. This unified response is critical to the outcome of a major event. The officers are trained the same, they are familiar with and utilize the same types of equipment and most importantly are able to act within a command structure they understand during a time of crises or event regardless of the location.

Unfortunately, as the current state laws are written law enforcement jurisdiction does not extend across the state line, leaving city, county and state law enforcement officials unable to legally respond to a call for assistance across that line. This is an area that needs to be addressed without any further delay. As an example, my county is adjacent to both Leavenworth and Wyandotte Counties. We work closely with these counties. In the event of an active shooter at Fort Leavenworth or some major event at the Kansas Speedway our assistance and resources would be delayed or possibly unable to respond due to legal jurisdictional concerns. In some cases our deputies may be some of the closest officers available. As the State of Missouri realized and appreciated, in a critical incident where seconds count those in command on the ground need to have the authority to request assistance and the closest agency, which might happen to be on the other side of the state line need to have the authority to respond without delay.

We in Missouri also realized that this is a regional issue specific to our metropolitan area and chose to lobby it amongst each other and our elected officials to keep it from being lost in the haze of other state issues. Rest assured it was properly explained and vetted in our area and was found to be in the true spirit of cooperation with the lives and safety of our citizens as the top priority.

As the Sheriff of Platte County I hope that you will consider this endorsement and letter of support as you make your decision on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark S. Owen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark S. Owen
Sheriff