



Anti-Narcotics Team Adds Tribe Officer to Help in Fight Against Drugs

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The South Coast Interagency Narcotics Team or SCINT has been in danger of being shut down for some time. But now the agency is getting some help to continue operation. SCINT has added a Tribal Officer from the Coquille Police to the drug-fighting team in its continued effort to reduce drug abuse.

"We have a narcotic problem of illegal narcotics coming into our community," said Tribal Police Chief Scott LaFevre. "And we want to make a part, even though we're a four-person department, we worked as a team to help address this issue to do these investigations not just for the Coquille Indian Tribe, but for the community."

The Coquille Tribe views officer transfer as a sacrifice to them, but through a press release, they said that this also demonstrates their perceived importance of SCINT. The officer is bringing along a K9 narcotics dog to help the organization.

"We're challenging other agencies to dig deep and renew their commitment to SCINT," said Brenda Meade, chairwoman of the Coquille Tribe. "The Coquille Tribe only has four officers. If we can commit one-fourth of

our department, I think the bigger departments ought to be able to pitch in as well.?

The officer and K9 will join the SCINT team of two officers and an office manager to the special task force. SCINT investigates drug-related crimes. In order to balance the tribe losing a patrol officer, a Coos County Sheriff's Deputy will patrol the Kilkich reservation area and take on the duties including calls and responding to emergencies.

“We didn't have the ability to put another person at SCINT, but we are able to cover some of his duties,” said Sheriff Craig Zanni.

Zanni believes that this will help keep the SCINT team in operation for now, despite challenges in the past that almost led to it being shut down. Zanni led the team from 2004 up to 2007. He said he has seen the dwindling of funds as grant money from federal and state resources for the program has dried up.

The SCINT becomes necessary now more than ever, because of the current opioid epidemic that is affecting the country. More and more people are dying each year due to opioid-related overdose. This trend is expected to continue for a few more years, according to a recent study.

Director Cal Mitts, part-time with SCINT out of the Coos Bay police department, said that salaries have been the biggest financial issue. The key positions to fund are the director and office manager. North Bend police have decided to pull their officer from SCINT.

Currently, there are no full-time Coos Bay officers in SCINT because the police department is down four positions. According to Mitts, once those are filled and recruits have completed training, they intend to add another officer to SCINT. “What's crippled us as far as funding is that the City of Coos Bay provided local marijuana tax to SCINT, but the county and North Bend did not,” he said.

Mitts also said that close to \$70,000 was earned for SCINT in 2018 from the tax contribution. Later this month, a public work session between law enforcement agencies will discuss the fate of SCINT as well as the funding of said agency.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work. Click the link to see Bakersfield's top rehab placement programs.

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