

TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

Outline of Need: Cumberland County Sheriff James Pruitt is a rare breed of public servant. His character and devotion is not necessarily revealed by the numerous challenges he has overcome as Sheriff, but in how he has selflessly overcome those challenges. No, he is not just your average public servant working to serve others to secure a paycheck week after week. On the contrary, this is a man of noble principal who has devoted his career to the fulfillment of his duty to serve the public even if that duty required he do so without a paycheck.

After taking office in 1990, Sheriff Pruitt realized that fiscal budget restraints would inhibit his job as Sheriff and after working for three months without a paycheck; he considered resigning from the position. However, his commitment to serve his community overcame his initial urge to resign and he decided to face his challenges persistently and with great honor. His budget has been exceedingly small over his career and his office is currently operating on only 10% of the property taxes collected each year and other services provided to the community as the County budget provides no funding.

How Rural Development Helped: The past two fiscal years have been particularly challenging for the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Pruitt had three deputies and three police cars, however only one of those cars was functional, and this car had been selflessly purchased by Sheriff Pruitt, with his own personal funds. Sheriff Pruitt became desperate for financial assistance and began searching for a way to provide adequate transportation for his deputies as well as himself. After a brief discussion with a Sheriff from an adjoining county, he discovered that funding may be possible through a Community Facilities Grant program administered by USDA Rural Development.

An application was prepared and submitted to USDA Rural Development requesting a Community Facilities Grant in the amount of \$27,000.00. The grant was approved by USDA Rural Development and matching funds in the form of a loan subsequently were provided by the Kentucky League of Counties. On June 28, 2006, Sheriff Pruitt's dedication to his community and his unwavering resiliency paid off when his office purchased two new police cruisers. However, this still left the Sheriff driving his own personal vehicle for official duties.

In September 2007, the Sheriff again contacted Rural Development for assistance—this time for a new Sheriff's cruiser. April 9, 2008, Rural Development advanced a \$13,930 grant, to be used, along with \$11,700 in funds from a local bank, to purchase the Sheriff's cruiser.

The Results: His office is now able to fulfill its duty of providing security and protection as well as law enforcement for the citizens and taxpayers of rural Cumberland County. Sheriff Pruitt states that he is very appreciative of Rural Development and this experience has reinforced his courage to tackle any upcoming challenges his office may face head-on in order to fulfill his elected duty as Cumberland County Sheriff.

It is obvious that the citizens of Cumberland County realize how fortunate they are to have James Pruitt as their Sheriff. He continues to be elected term-after-term and continues to serve his community selflessly and honorably.