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Operator: Good day, and welcome to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the call over to Director Phil Keith. Please go ahead, sir.

Phil Keith: Thanks you Travis. Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. I call the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice to order. On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank you for joining us today for this important Commission teleconference meeting. The focus of today's hearing continues to focus on criminal justice issues in the rural and tribal community. And today we will include a focus on geographic issues and challenges for rural law enforcement. At this time I would ask our Executive Director Dean Kueter to conduct a roll call of Commissioners.

Dean Kueter: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And before I call the roll, once again I would like to remind everybody that today's event is open to the press and for any members of the media on the call, if you have questions or you need clarification on anything please contact Kristina Mastropasqua in the Justice Department's Office of Public Affairs.

And with that I will call the roll.

Commissioner Bowdich?

Male: Deputy Bowdich is just about 2 minutes out.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Clemmons?

James Clemmons: Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Evans?

Christopher Evans: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Frazier?

Frederick Frazier: Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Gualtieri? Commissioner Hawkins? Commissioner Lombardo?

Female: Joining momentarily.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner MacDonald?

Erica MacDonald: Good afternoon. Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Moody?

Ashley Moody: I'm here. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Parr?

Nancy Parr: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Price?

Craig Price: Good afternoon. I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Ramsay? Commissioner Rausch?

David Rausch: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Samaniego?

John Samaniego: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Smallwood?

James Smallwood: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Vice-Chair Sullivan?

Katharine Sullivan: Hi everyone. I'm here.

Dean Kueter: And Commissioner Washington?

Phil Keith: Let the record reflect that Director Washington will be joining us shortly.

Dean Kueter: Yes, sir. Mr. Chairman that concludes the roll call.

Phil Keith: Thank you Dean. Any other announcements for today?

Dean Kueter: No, sir. We are good to go.

Phil Keith: Thank you. All Commissioners should have the bios and testimonies for this panel. And as a reminder, we'll be posting all these materials on the Law Enforcement Commission website. Once again we continue to acknowledge everyone's commitment, efforts, and contributions to meet the goals of this historic Commission. On behalf of General Barr, we thank each of you.

As noted on the previous calls we encourage Commissioners to take notes during testimonies of panelists. And we will then open questions for Commissioners after the last witness.

Our first distinguished panelist today is Sheriff Mark Dannels from Cochise County Arizona. Sheriff Dannels has nearly 40 years of demonstrated law enforcement experience and leadership. After serving his country in the United States Army he continued his public service in the Cochise County Sheriff's Office where he rose through the ranks working every facet of law enforcement. Today Sheriff Dannels is serving his second term as Sheriff. He has received numerous awards and recognition for his leadership and achievements including a medal of valor.

Sheriff Dannels hosted a number of us from DOJ a year and half ago to see first hand the challenges of security along our country's southern border and the relentless flow of illegal drugs and humans into our country.

Thank you for joining us today Sheriff Dannels. You're recognized.

Sheriff Mark Dannels: Well, good afternoon everyone and thank you for this opportunity. I'm honored and I'm humbled to address you all today, and I thank you Mr. Keith for that kind introduction. You know, I have served over three decades coming on four decades of working the border here in Cochise County. And Cochise County is the 38th largest landmass county in the country with 6,300 square

miles with an additional 83 miles of international border that is addressed here in our county which I'm going to talk about in just a minute.

Cochise County has been the gateway for human and drug smuggling for decades. I mean it's just a way of life, sad to say, in our county.

Over the last almost 30 years - I want to give a little bit of history to this Commission on what's changed down here on the border. We've always had smuggling but I want to share this with you. Back in the early '90s based on two programs, Operation Gatekeeper and Operation Hold The Line, the Federal government came up with a plan - and I'm going to abbreviate - the plan of the Ps and that is to protect the port of entries on the southwest border and protect the populated areas which are designated Yuma, Arizona; San Diego, California; and El Paso, Texas.

The other - there is 31 southwest border counties. The other 28 rural counties were the by product of that border plan. What that meant was, the plan back in the early '90s was that the deterring areas of the rural southwest border - from mountains to river to desert - would deter the transnational organization from crossing. Unfortunately the TNOs, the transnational organization, the cartels actually exploited those areas and made them their own.

Cochise County is no different from that. We experienced an increase in crime from murders to assaults, to the quality of life being eroded, to a population decline based on real and perceived, when it comes to people didn't want to move here. It was an economic hit on us. I think at one point we were one of the top population decrease counties in the country. It was just not a good thing.

I have less than 100 deputies that work this county being such a large county. Again no economy -- you can't put more deputies on the road so that was a huge challenge for me in a rural county.

We also have Fort Huachuca which is a U.S. Army installation that's here and that's where I served my time in the Army.

So back in 2015 - and I grew my career watching this, watching the Federal government's plan that really changed who we are -- a paradigm shift of how we live especially speaking to the rural parts of Cochise County. How law enforcement was policed. How the citizens lived. You didn't leave your home in fear that it would be burglarized. We have one community that has 75 homes on an average of 50% a year those - 50% of those homes are burglarized every year and it's not by the citizens. It's by the smugglers coming back after drooping their drugs.

So in 2015 Sheriff Dever, my predecessor actually did an amazing job of bringing of this to a national level of attention that we need a secure border. And when I talk today I'm speaking on border security. I'm not talking on immigration. Border security equals public safety, community safety, national security, and the humanitarian. I know there has been comment made that there is no humanitarian issues on our border. That's false. In the three counties out there, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise, we average between 100 up to 200 depending on the year John and Jane Does that we find in our deserts every year that are deceased. That is humanitarian, and of course kids are involved in that.

In 2015 we said enough is enough. We actually in the room with me today is my sergeant, Sergeant Tim Williams who was instrumental in moving this program forward and we came up with some things and I'm just going to share with you.

We needed the Federal government, we needed local, and our governor to have the will to secure the border. We also wanted to remove the politics from border security. Politics has no business in policing. We wanted to change the paradigm from opinions to facts. We wanted to seek a balanced border plan. We also wanted to enhance the relationship at all levels starting with the community,

local, state, and federal. We wanted government inoperability. We all serve the same citizens. Enhance intelligence sharing on all levels.

We really needed to refine the plan of the '90s. Over the last 30 years including to this current time, the current plan has not changed in almost 30 years I just shared with you all. And we also needed to preserve our American traditions, that American way of life. Just because we live on the southwest border in a rural county, we should not be exempt from the way of life Americans are.

So in 2015 thanks to my leadership team, Sergeant Tim Williams, our county attorney, we put some plans in place.

The first thing we did was we had juvenile issues. We had - we started prosecuting juvenile smugglers. The cartels were exploiting juveniles. To give you an example, we had one or two remanded juveniles, between the ages of 14 to 17, the average in our jail - adult jail. We've got three jails in this county. We started this program and the reason we did this, the Federal government had the ability but did not have the will to prosecute juveniles. And I brought that all the way back to D.C. and didn't get anywhere with it. So we actually partner with our Federal agents and say we'll take any juvenile smugglers that you have to make sure there is a consequence. We went from one or two juveniles remanded to 36 a day in our jail. Today we sit at 0 to 1 because the consequences were enacted on that. We still have that program in effect.

We also enacted a virtual program that now stands up to 700 cameras. We are working on 1,000 by year's end. We go all the way to the Texas border in agreement with the New Mexico governor all the way to the California border. All housed on my county. We went where the Federal government did not go and these cameras have been purchased through the State of Arizona and private donations up to, like I said 1,000 cameras. Again, 100% conviction rate at the local level on that.

The consequence is we wiped the cartel since we got cameras deployed, like I said throughout Arizona on the border into New Mexico that we watch them go around our county every day because the consequences are too strong in this county.

The other issue is we did an investigative crimes unit which, besides going after the product we actually go after the illicit money laundering which is thriving for the cartels. We've been very successful on that with over 100 arrests just on the smuggling and seizing their profits. Excuse me.

The reason this has all happened, the reason we went from one of the worst counties on the southwest border back in the '90s that the Federal government labeled us Cocaine Alley, no label any county wants, but very upsetting. All I can say is this, that we initiated this at the local level to change that paradigm, to change the reality, and make this a safer county. The best report cards I get now is the fact that the citizens, our ranchers, our farmers, and those living in the county say this is the best it's been in three decades. And that's a collective complementary effort working with all partners like I described early on.

I'm proud of what we've done down here. I will say this though, we have received besides Stonegarden which is an awesome program. Stonegarden is a very good program. Please if you any influence do not get rid of that program for sheriffs on the southwest border and beyond. I know it works in coastal and also northern border. Stonegarden is a very, very good program.

SCAAP - State Criminal Alien Assistance Program - is not. We get 5 cents to the dollar on that one. It cost my county about 3/4 of a million dollars a year to house illegal criminal aliens with no reimbursement.

So again besides Stonegarden we pretty much receive zero funding from the Federal government. The programs I talked to you about today are all done through local finances and budgets with no

reimbursement. So again our efforts have proven to be worthwhile. We've regionalized that. We'll continue to regionalize that as needed.

And with that I will come to an end and wait for questions and answers. Thank you everyone.

Phil Keith: Thank you Sheriff Dannels for your commitment and service to law enforcement and for your valued testimony here today. Also...

Sheriff Mark Dannels: Thank you Mr. Keith.

Phil Keith: Thank you Sheriff. Also Dean, let's reflect that Commissioner Ramsay has joined us.

Dean Kueter: Yes, sir. Will do.

Phil Keith: Our next distinguished panelist is Mr. Bryan Schroder, the U.S Attorney for Alaska. After a distinguished career in the Coast Guard where he retired as a Captain, U.S. Attorney Schroder has more than 12 years of prosecutorial experience with the Attorney's Office in Alaska and is a staunch advocate for the law enforcement needs of Alaska state, local, and tribal law enforcement. Mr. Schroder has a unique perspective and experience in dealing with tribal challenges in law enforcement in rural communities. Vice-Chair Sullivan and I worked closely with U.S, Attorney Schroder when Attorney General Barr announced a public safety emergency for the state of Alaska and we continue to do so today. Mr. Schroder thank you for joining us today and you are recognized..

Bryan Schroder: Hey. Good afternoon Chairman Keith. Can you hear me? Somebody just got on the line, I wasn't sure.

Phil Keith: Yes sir, ee can hear you. Thank you

Bryan Schroder: Okay. Great. All right. Good afternoon Chairman Keith, Vice-Chair Sullivan, and all the dedicated professionals, public safety professionals of the committee - the Commission. I'm honored to be with you today to testify about how the geography of Alaska challenges the law enforcement and public safety professionals in our state.

Like most Alaskans, I look for every opportunity to talk about the beauty and wonder of where I live and some of you have been there. I know Vice-Chair Sullivan I have traveled with her. I know Director Washington has been here and many others have as well.

But considering that my fellow panelists are from Arizona, Wyoming, and Minnesota, other, you know, kind of wild and beautiful states, I suspect we're probably all like that. But with that kind of awe-inspiring beauty and open space comes demands on the people who live there. And as I mentioned in my written testimony, Alaska is the largest state. If it was - if cut in half Alaska would be the two largest states.

As an example, the Alaska State Troopers in what's called C-Detachment which I also mentioned in my testimony covers all Western of Alaska -- that orange area on the map that I provided you. That's an area larger than California and they cover that with 60 sworn officers. We sometimes refer to that as the tyranny of distance. And that tyranny is compounded by two other factors.

First is, of course, the weather. Alaska weather is pretty legendary. You can read about it in the journals of Captain Cook or the novels of Jack London. The winters are long and they are hard. In most rural areas below zero weather is just a fact of life.

Second and maybe the most compounding factor is the lack of road access to all of Western Alaska. I suspect most of my counterparts on the panel who are all law enforcement officers and the officers on the Commission could drive where they needed to work. It might take a while but they could

drive there. That's not the case in rural Alaska. Our law enforcement officers, and I'm mostly referring to the Alaska State Troopers, don't have that option. Thus flying in small planes from village to village is a way of life for those troopers.

That brings us back to the weather. You need at least reasonable weather to do that and there is - weather is always a question up here, again especially even in the winter time. The result is that sometimes it can take hours to respond to calls. On rare occasions, it can take days.

Troopers will push the limits that they have to protect the public, but they have to respect the weather and they have to respect the terrain.

Now talking a little bit about filling in the gaps, of course, a logical response to this problem would be to put more officers in the villages. And you might think what about federal agents like those that protect public safety in Indian country in many states and that brings us to another unique aspect of Alaska. Although the majority of the residents in rural Alaska, the rural parts of our state, are Alaska natives there is very little Indian country. There is a number of historical reasons for that which I don't have time to discuss in my 7 minutes.

But the bottom line is there is no broad federal jurisdiction in rural Alaska like you would have in Indian country. The result is that the fundamental crime issues in the rural parts of the state - domestic violence, assault, sexual assaults, are all state crimes requiring officers and prosecutors to bring cases under state law. So hiring and adding officers with just federal authority is not really a very efficient answer to the issues.

Now we have tried - the people of the state have tried to respond to those problems by adding officers. Now the villages in Alaska, the Alaska Native Community through their tribal consortia have worked with the State of Alaska to try and do that. They created positions called Village Public Safety Officers. We refer to them as VPSOs.

VPSOs are kind of a hybrid. They are trained by the Alaska State Troopers and work closely with them but yet they are hired and managed by the Tribal Consortia with grant money provided by the State of Alaska. It's a little -- it's complicated.

However and for a variety of reasons it's become difficult to fill those positions. In large part for the same reasons it's difficult to fill LE positions in this kind of a remote, sometimes harsh environment. And I suspect my other counterparts have some of these issues as well. It's pay, It's housing. It's working conditions.

So hiring VPSOs has been tricky and we're currently down on the number we could have in the state to probably less than half.

Now villages can also hire village police officers or tribal police officers, but that ability for the villages to do that is difficult because of funding which leads me to one kind of last point just kind of the landscape. A current fact of life in Alaska is that we're a state primarily funded by oil revenue. So when oil is \$120 a barrel that revenue is significant. When oil is \$30 to \$35 a barrel like it is now that state budget is quite limited.

So that was the environment -- as Commissioner Keith mentioned, Attorney General Barr came here last year -- and that was kind of the environment he stepped into last May. As I remember, you know, as I said in my statement no one can remember an Attorney General coming to Alaska for any length of time. There have been a few and they tended to be we're a stop-over point for government airplanes flying to the Far East they stop here to fuel. So we've had AGs stop for a few hours and visit the office and then go on their way.

Attorney General Barr spent 4 days in Alaska and visited rural parts of the state including villages of Galena which is about 460 and Napaskiak which is 412. And to give you some flavor -- some of

you might have seen pictures -- but to give you some flavor of Napaskiak. Napaskiak has no roads. There is only wooden boardwalks. There is no cars. Only snow machines in the winter and four-wheelers and boats in the summer.

To say that the AG was touched by what he saw I think would be an understatement. He declared law enforcement emergency as Chairman Keith mentioned. That opened the door to the Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Fund, EFLEA, for about \$6 million. And soon after that other DOJ entities got involved and again the Chairman mentioned the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services helped fund new VPOs and TPOs which many of them are coming on board.

We have 42 million and these were all part of grants that were already in existence but we got about 42 million from the office - the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Violence Against Women for victim services because that's another significant problem. It's not only law enforcement but it's the lack and the kind of spread out nature of victim services in rural parts of the state.

What was probably less obvious, but I think is just as vital, was that the AG gave us momentum. We've used this momentum to bring together the village and tribal groups, Alaska Native groups as well as the state to try to work together on the problem. We formed a group what we called RAAVEN, with two As, R-A-A-V-E-N. The Rural Alaska Anti-Violence Enforcement Network and that name and acronym was selected for a reason. The raven is a very strong cultural icon in the State of Alaska.

And we've expanded our federal efforts certainly. The Marshals service, DEA, ATF, FBI, have all expanded their work in rural Alaska, both enforcement work and significant community outreach work which is important because one of the things that we've been trying to do in the last, you know, certainly in the period after the AG came was to try to understand the needs of rural Alaskans. To do that you've got to get out there and you've got to listen.

The Attorney General also provided three additional prosecutors to my office and grants for the State of Alaska to hire two additional prosecutors. Together we've been working with the law enforcement folks, state law, local law enforcement, and state prosecutors to try to – in the rural areas -- to try to identify more cases that we can prosecute federally - appropriate cases we can prosecute federally.

However, at the end of the day that has not solved the fundamental problem of the tyranny of distance that the public safety officers on the ground in rural Alaska villages, there just aren't enough.

And so that kind of leads me I guess to the recommend - my recommendation and the biggest thing I have learned in the last year is that none of us - the tribes and villages, the states, certainly the Feds, none of us can do this alone. It's going to take a coordinated and cooperative effort to bring public safety to rural Alaska in a way that we want to see it and that's what we're striving to do. But it's a very tough nut to crack.

So my recommendation to the Commission is to promote continued Federal government support across agencies -- not just DOJ but across agencies for public safety in rural Alaska. We have some momentum and we need that momentum to continue. Certainly that's likely to be financial support but again to me the most important aspect is continued commitment of the federal agencies to work with the Alaska Native Community and the State of Alaska to find a solution.

So again thanks to the Commission. Thanks to Chairman Keith and Vice-Chair Sullivan. And that's my statement.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Mr. Schroder, for your valued testimony here today and for your leadership to law enforcement for our great country.

Our next distinguished panelist is Sheriff Danny Glick from Laramie County, Wyoming. Sheriff Glick started his law enforcement career in 1981 and has served the citizens of Laramie County for nearly four decades. Sheriff Glick is an accomplished leader in law enforcement especially on issues important to rural state sheriffs including drug trafficking and immigration. The Sheriff serves as the President of the Wyoming Sheriff's Association, the Western Sheriff's Association, and the National Sheriff's Association.

Sheriff Glick thank you for joining us today and you're recognized.

Danny Glick: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I want to really thank for the opportunity to speak here today. It's a little hectic around here as I explained to you Mr. Chairman but let me go on with this. Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity and honor of speaking with you today. My name is Danny Glick. I'm the sherriff of Laramie County, Cheyenne, Wyoming. And as stated I'm in my 39th year, my fifth term as sheriff.

Just a little background on the Laramie County Sheriff's Office. We are full service agency in that we handle patrol, adult detention, juvenile detention, crisis center duties, all for Laramie County.

We employ about 200 people and again I want to apologize for what you have in front of you. The brevity and tardiness of my subject matter submission were - we're right in the middle of handling a homicide and aggravated assault on a peace officer. And if you know anything about rural law enforcement, you understand that when an emergency happens we're all on deck and working.

Please let me say this, I can't speak for all rural agencies. There is no one-size-fits-all even in my own state. But what I will do is attempt to give you a cross-section view of our life in rural law enforcement especially here in the West. I can say that during my travels as president of NSA and the Western States Sheriff Association I had the unique experience of visiting with many state

associations and learned common issues but those were unique or specific to either a state or a specific county.

Now I'm going to speak fast. I may stumble a little bit as I have to solve all of the world's problems or at least present them to you so you can in seven minutes.

My discussion today centers on partnerships and the benefit that that brings to rural law enforcement. Partnerships are a true and necessary force multiplier in rural law enforcement. I break this down into four categories: local, state, regional, and national partnerships.

First, let me say, no agency has enough people to handle every challenge that comes up today. In today's law enforcement we are all struggling to hire qualified candidates as we've heard from all of us so far that have spoken here today.

When I look at local partnerships I look at either developing contracts or entering into MOUs with sister agencies and that includes police departments, and we have a joint SWAT team, EOD teams, canine teams, mounted units here with our local police department. And then you have the State Division of Criminal Investigation who runs a state crime lab and they are responsible to us, the agency administrators in the State of Wyoming, to not only process crime scenes but also in many cases investigate crimes and/or testify in court for all of these agencies that they represent. And of course they also are involved in narcotics work.

Also what I include in one of our local partnerships is the highway patrol and our federal agencies and I want just to take a moment here and I want to brag about Wyoming. All these agencies that I have just mentioned are a team here. We all understand that we don't have enough people and the way for us to win in many of these situations we handle is to become a team and although we - our badge may be different, our uniform may be different color, we all come to and work towards a common goal for the betterment of the people we serve.

Also within that local partnership I add my commissioners and that might sound weird but here in Wyoming my commissioners handle my budgets.

And with that, as was mentioned by Mr. Schroder oil and gas and coal fund much of our budgets in the State of Wyoming. And as you might imagine with the shutdown and the price of oil right now down I think I saw today it's about \$32 we are looking at a 20% reduction across the board in our budgets due to the COVID issue.

They also handle all the contracts, if you will, which contains the grants like our COPS grants and our school resource officer grants. And school safety is one of the most challenging issues in Wyoming today. And I just have a question for those of you sitting here today, how many have you when you talk about school safety discuss mountain lions in bus stops with your kids as they are standing in those streets. And I don't make light of it but that is truthfully a school safety issue that we have in rural law enforcement.

When I reviewed the membership of the Commission which I was very honored as I looked at it, I saw a fellow Sheriff there and that's Sheriff Gaultieri. I don't need to speak much about school safety when you have him as a member. If you ever listen to his presentation on the Marjory Stoneman Douglas incident, it left you with your jaw clenched, tears in your eyes, and a lump in your throat. Those incidents happened in the past. They will happen again in the future. And depending on how we work together and create these partnerships that I'm talking about today, will define those outcomes.

And then I look at one of the major partnerships in law enforcement in the rural setting and especially here in the West and that's our community. You know, when we look at the COVID issue right now our communities have come together because of the lack of the PPE equipment that we needed and actually handmade and delivered to our agencies much of what we needed. Or, took

it out of their own stockpiles to share with us. In most settings in the rural area, our communities are one of our major supporters.

Our next area is state partnerships. You know, in most rural West our geographic distance between cities can be over 100 miles and Wyoming is no different. My county is about 2,900 square miles in area. Our largest is almost 11,000. So, you can see what happens.

And in some instances here in Wyoming, law enforcement officers will actually have to leave the county and/or the state due to geographic barriers, mountain ranges, to get to a call for service in a timely manner. And that's where the MOUs come in where we have contacted other states and/or agencies to standby on these situations that we get a call to until we can get there or potentially even handle the call.

Agency size and our ability to respond to calls and our ability to handle out-of-the-ordinary calls make the MOUs that I described almost mandatory. If you think about population density here in Wyoming, we're about six people per square mile. New York City, they're 27,000 per square mile. I want to present you with an issue that shows what we in rural law enforcement have to deal with sometimes.

I've got a sheriff just up north of me a little bit who handled a call where he came into contact with a juvenile and they didn't have the services in their small community to handle that issue and house that juvenile until proper placement could take place. He literally ended up reaching out to community members, renting a motel room, and having a local resident come and sit on that juvenile and be the guardian until arrangements could be made later.

One of the entities that we look to in our state is WASCOP, Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police. You know, they've taken a leadership role in providing funding and training for all

of our local agencies within the state. And due to many of the budgetary constraints and manpower issues, they sponsor sheriffs and chiefs to be able to attend meetings and/or receive training.

The standards and/or requirements you are mandated to attain aren't based on your agency size. We all have the same requirements and standards. Our training academy is state run and right now with the COVID as you might imagine, they're shut down like just about everything else is.

And we're kind of in turmoil around here because we had - many of us - had trainees in that academy and now they are not able to go into the streets. They're not able to complete their training. And it's really affected us.

But one of the regional partnerships I look at is the Western State Sheriffs. Created in the 1990s, I think there were nine states back then. There are 17 states as partners - 16 states as partners right now. And what that is made up of is many of the rural western sheriffs. One thing you have to understand about our geographic makeup is most of the western states are between 40 and 70% public lands.

Some of those counties are actually 80% public lands and we depend on federal funding such as PILT and SRS, secure rural schools, to help with the funding for our offices. And when that land is not used, i.e. in the forestry products, those budgets of those sheriffs are harmed irreparably in some cases.

We've also through our regional partnerships worked with forest service and BLM and this is really a good story for us. We've come to understandings about sharing resources and also responsibilities and developed MOUs between those entities and local sheriff's offices for assistance.

We've also started working with tribal issues which has been a long time problem here in the West through the Western States Sheriff's Association. And if you don't know about DAPL in North Dakota, that dealt with pipeline protests up there.

And we had outside influences that literally called thousands of people to a small county, Morton County, in North Dakota and overwhelmed the sheriff's ability to handle not only that protest but also his local calls for service where his people were actually in some cases assaulted by those protesters.

And then one of the most recent ones in South Dakota during this COVID incident, we've got tribal members up there stopping traffic on state and federal highways and we're trying to work with them to come to a consensus and an understanding that they can't do that.

So, the Western State Sheriffs has provided our issues, carried our issues to the NSA. Been a lobbying group as you heard Sheriff Dannels talk about. He's been back to D.C. and testified as has Sheriff Gaultieri and many others on all of these issues that I just presented.

And my last category in those four categories is the national partnership and that's with the National Sheriffs Association. And as I just mentioned, they're our avenue to the Hill and many of the federal agencies back in D.C.

And without them and that representation and/or setting up the meetings so that we can get sheriffs there to present our issues, we would be in dire straits. In fact, we would be where we were 15 years ago. So, we had an issue with grants sometime back that has come to a great conclusion for us.

Sheriffs weren't getting a lot of the grants that were coming out of the Federal government and through the combined efforts those grants are now available to sheriffs and rural law enforcement.

And speaking of grants, if I were able to create a discussion point which I am today thanks to you, it's my belief that those grants for sheriffs should be divided between large and small agencies. And I can't believe rural chiefs wouldn't agree.

Our needs are the same as every other large agency. And specifically COPS grants money, as in my case, they are the only means that I have to increase my ability to hire people.

And then we've started to work with NACo, the National Association of Counties, for recognition of our issues that they can carry forward because they lobby in D.C. too. So, I think we've really improved our representation in how we've been able to present our issues and get the right people to hear them as in today.

So, in closing, I want to thank you for your dedication and time to this Commission and allowing me to speak to you today and give you a snapshot of the issues we face in rural law enforcement. Please don't take what I've said as a complaint. It is really just a way of life for us in rural law enforcement especially here in the West.

Many of the issues I've presented here today have improved over time merely by the associations we have fostered and grown. We have a voice today that we've never had before as evidenced by me, a small, rural, Western sheriff being able to speak to you and ask for your representation with this Commission going forward.

You know, in the packet I received one of the recommendations. It was not only an issue but also a solution and best practice to be successful. Still today, there are issues that can't be solved in rural law enforcement due to the lack of manning, equipment, budget, or the ability to access those items to benefit the services we provide to the people we serve.

There are many rural law enforcement agencies that just shrug their shoulders and do what they can with what they have because that's the only choice we have. Do more with less is still a common statement in law enforcement.

And I think one of those situations that I've talked about is, what have we learned from COVID? Were we prepared? Are we still prepared? I think not. I think when we sit down and review what has taken place, we will find that we were ill prepared and that we have to make changes for we have to work with our federal partners to either stockpile or have more access to the PPE because our deputies, our agencies, were on call all the time. Many of the workforces were able to go home and work from home and/or were laid off. And of course, law enforcement is not.

You know, we're not looking for someone to tell us how to do our jobs. We know how to do that. We want people that are making decisions that affect how we do in rural law enforcement and law enforcement across the board to give us a seat at the table and hear from us before you make those decision that will affect us into the future and give us a chance to either voice our concern or support. One size fits all won't work for all of us due to our limited resources.

We're looking for partners, partners that understand if we ask for something we need it. We're not trying to build a stockpile and I have to hesitate here for a moment and just refer back to COVID. I may want to build a stockpile after this.

But really, we're looking for a partnership for those rural law enforcement agencies to improve on the resources so we can better serve those who we have sworn an oath to protect. Those people who granted me the greatest gifts they could share. Their trust. Their support. And their vote.

Again, I want to thank you Commissioners for being that voice going forward. Mr. Chairman, that's my presentation.

Phil Keith: Thank you Sheriff Glick for your valued testimony and certainly for your service and leadership to law enforcement. Our next distinguished panelist today is Sheriff Kelly Lake from Carlton County, Minnesota.

Sheriff Lake is in her fourth term as sheriff after starting her career with the Carlton County Sheriff's Office as a correctional officer.

She has served in many capacities including working as a program instructor as well as a field training officer and currently serves on a variety of Boards including the Carlton County Children and Family Services Collaborative Board.

Sheriff Lake has served as President of the Minnesota Sheriff's Association. Sheriff Lake, thank you for joining us today. You're recognized. Sheriff Lake.

Kelly Lake: Thank you so much. I do appreciate this opportunity. Are you able to hear me alright now?

Phil Keith: Yes ma'am

(Kelly Lake: Okay, thank you. I do appreciate, Commission members, this opportunity to address you regarding rural and tribal law enforcement in your working group and some of the geographic issues that we in law enforcement in rural communities face.

While we in Minnesota certainly are not as rural as some of our Alaska counterparts have pointed out, we certainly have very similar issues and challenges that we face. Small rural agencies are

expected to perform the same core functions as our larger metropolitan counterparts such as crime investigation and prevention and traffic control or jail operations.

And while there are unique challenges in this, our rural landscape also comes with inherent opportunities that we have. So, one of the big opportunities that we do have in our communities is, we are able to build lasting partnerships with not only our partner law enforcement agencies surrounding us regionally but also with non-governmental agencies such as our school districts and some of our mental health partners.

So, those partnerships have been very beneficial and I think serves the community as a whole very well. Part of our rural landscape, it lends itself to a natural community policing in some ways because our officers all live here. We work here. We socialize here. You know, we are amongst our community members which is very beneficial as well because we have a shared understanding and a very large investment in our communities.

Some of the challenges - while our county in Carlton here is fairly small in comparison to some, we're just over 900 square miles. Our largest county in Minnesota is over 7,000 square miles. And part of our counties here, there's a checkerboard of reservations, tribal lands, throughout Minnesota as well.

So, I hope to be able to provide a little bit of insight in under seven minutes here in some of the areas and challenges we have in staff recruitment and retention just like I'm hearing from our other distinguished panelists and some other areas. Obviously a lack of funding is always a challenge for all law enforcement but particularly for us in rural areas where we have such a limited tax base.

Our budgets almost rely solely and exclusively on levy dollars to fund our government operations so that does become challenging when we're faced with, you know, budget crises in our areas.

So, as I heard also, recruitment and retention of officers is a growing problem nationwide and that is no different here in Minnesota. As we know, part of that is due to the salary. We can't offer that type of salary that some of the larger agencies can, but we also know that is not the sole reason why officers stay at agencies.

There's other factors such as the training we can provide and the equipment and the support in general from our agencies. Which leads me to another factor that we struggle with in rural agencies is, being able to provide our officers with the training that they need to be able to do their job in our communities.

Training can be very cost prohibitive and while we will get occasionally opportunities for free or reduced training, that isn't always the issue. The issue more so is having the capacity to allow our staff the time to do it because we need them here on the front lines taking our calls and responding at meeting our staffing minimums.

So sometimes that is, you know, the cost we may need to factor in as far as overtime costs and things to backfill for shifts. So, being able to provide that training. In 2019 our Commissioner of Public Safety in Minnesota and our Attorney General commissioned a working group on police involved deadly force encounters. And one of their recommendations out of the 28 recommendation they brought forward was that the legislature should be expanding law enforcement training and funding and ensure consistent implementation statewide including across rural and smaller agencies.

So, that has also been identified here in Minnesota as a significant issue as far as the disparity between what the larger metro agencies have and what rural has available to us. Another area that we have seen, which has garnered a lot of attention is mental health both for our officers, our staff, as well as our citizens. But the things that we have available in rural areas in terms of officer

wellness for both mental and physical health is lacking compared to our counterparts in more metropolitan areas and more populated areas.

And we know that officer wellness is critical to the retention of our officers and so that they're able to perform their jobs and maintain quality services in our communities. Our staff is our greatest resource. We know that. I don't think anybody here would argue with that. And so being able to ensure that they're healthy and afforded the same resources. We owe it to them. We owe it to our citizens that we serve.

So, in thinking about this and in talking with fellow sheriffs in Minnesota, potentially funding for shared regional assets could assist rural agencies and provide them resources for training as well as resources to meet the mental health needs and physical needs of our officers. Obviously, I'm not going to touch too much on this but the response times to emergencies, you know, can well exceed over an hour.

And I heard it here earlier today, sometimes that's days if we're in remote wilderness areas for search and rescue. Our officers need to be equipped to handle those cases on their own and oftentimes they are going in there on their own.

There's extended wait times for backup on critical high risk calls which leaves our officers and our victims vulnerable and our citizens. So, specialized rescue equipment for example. And funding for technology to assist in some of these rural areas such as drones and thermal imaging and remotely operated vehicles.

Things like that would be beneficial and very helpful to our response. But what is also, sometimes often lacking is in these, sometimes there are grants available but sometimes lacking in those is money for training or ongoing maintenance and replacement costs for this equipment.

One of the other things I had touched on earlier was the mental health of our officers and our citizens and how that has really come to the forefront the last several years. And what we're seeing here and I'm sure nationwide is a lack of mental health beds and facilities to be able to bring people in crisis.

And so that has been, you know, in Minnesota here, you know, we can drive - sometimes for a person in crisis we may have to have our deputies -- take them out of commission for, you know, 10, 12 hour shifts just to find a hospital bed for one person that is in crisis because of our lack of beds.

That also become evident in our jail. When we have the mental health issues for incarcerated individuals is trying to accommodate their needs. One of the beneficial partnerships that we have established here in Carlton County to help alleviate some of that is we have a partnership with our local Public Health and Human Services, our law enforcement, and one of our community mental health providers.

And we have used, the last couple of years, tele-mental health in our jails which it gets quick time access to mental health providers. It's a safer opportunity. We do not have to transport our inmates out of our jail. And the providers are able to see more individuals at a time.

So, that has been a very beneficial partnership that I know that some other sheriffs around the state have been looking at similar models as well. Again, sometimes with smaller, rural agencies, what hampers that is the lack of technical expertise that they may have in their agencies when they're very small agencies.

Lack of funding for the equipment to be able to provide that. And then, of course, one thing that we see is the internet access. And I think that's been highlighted with COVID when we're all trying to work from home more. And our children are trying to be schooled from home.

And our lack of high-speed internet has really hampered a lot of those issues. So, I believe that some funding for consistent high-speed internet would be helpful and help alleviate some of those technical issues that we encounter in those areas.

Rural schools, you know, we have them scattered out and they're very geographically isolated. Again, school safety becomes an issue. Most schools cannot afford to budget for a dedicated school resource officer.

And as far as for law enforcement agencies - that's sometimes one of the first areas that is cut is the preventative measures is what it's looked at sometimes. Because we're just trying to staff to the minimums to be able to make our calls for service, let alone what some might consider the extra services such as a school resource officer

But we know those are critical in the safety of our youth and highlighted by some of the tragedies that we've seen where there has not been quick access for law enforcement to be able to respond to some of the school issues that we have seen.

So, as I mentioned, you know, we're grateful for some of the grant opportunities that we have had. I know that it was mentioned, the Stonegarden Grant Program which has been very beneficial. That in fact was opened up more widely.

Recently we were able to in Carlton County. I'm not a border county but I'm considered a tier two county now in the Stonegarden Grant Program which we were able to take opportunity to be able to apply for and receive some of that grant funding.

And I know that our northern border sheriffs utilize that Stonegarden Grant Program and it has been very beneficial for them to be able to garner some equipment and some enforcement along our northern border that they wouldn't otherwise be able to do without that.

One of the things that we encounter sometimes in small agencies with the grant opportunities that are - again we appreciate - however sometimes we lack the technical resources or the staff resources to be able to complete some of the very lengthy grant applications.

So, I think some technical assistance to complete some of these grant applications would be helpful as well as some assistance in gathering statistical information in the grant applications would be helpful for some of the smaller, rural agencies that are unable to do that. Because when we heard it from some of the sheriffs on the panel here in our smaller agencies, when emergencies happen, you know, we can't afford to not be on the front line, right, in taking calls for service even.

And so having the extra staff to do anything else sometimes becomes problematic. Jails, again, we all know that it is imperative that we maintain our jails and our lockups to provide for public safety.

We have encountered some funding that you know is available oftentimes for programming within our jails. But for the actual structure of the jails in Minnesota, you know, we do not have that. The funding for that typically falls straight to the local taxpayers. And again with the limited tax bases it's a very limited proposal to be able to build these new facilities.

I did touch on the internet access. Again that is a problem I'm sure for many agencies and inconsistent high speed internet network for us.

Going back a little bit to the grants but also for our operations, in order to implement effective evidence-based practices, it's imperative for agencies to collect data to respond to the particular needs of the areas that they serve.

And oftentimes for smaller agencies the lack of funding, technical resources and the manpower to keep up with these data collections makes that problematic. It would be helpful to have some sort of a template and tools developed that aids departments in managing this data collection and analysis.

And funding to go along with purchasing that which oftentimes is software and hardware that is associated with it.

So in Minnesota, I mentioned that our relationship with our tribal governments briefly .But we do have a Minnesota State statute actually that allows for tribal police departments in Minnesota to enforce state criminal law. And part of that statute, there's also a provision that a cooperative agreement would exist between the agencies which has worked very well in most cases in Minnesota for the past, I want to say for the past 30 years, 28 years.

And so we rely on each other again in rural agencies, rural landscapes, rural Minnesota. That is what you do. You rely on your partners surrounding you at all levels - municipal, county, state, federal, tribal.

And I am happy to say I can count in many instances over my career in which the collaboration and cooperation in investigations, information sharing, and training opportunities between our agencies here in Minnesota have achieved great results and benefited us as a whole in Minnesota.

And we're very fortunate that we do have this collaboration that we fall back on and the communication that works so well. Again, these are just some of the - highlighted in 6.5 minutes some of the issues that we face here in rural areas. And I don't think that is unique to any place else in the country.

And we take a lot of pride in being able to serve our communities. And I also - I want to thank the Commission again for this opportunity to be able to highlight some of the challenges and the opportunities that we face in our rural areas. We're blessed to be able to serve our communities.

And I think it was said earlier, we know how to do it. It's just sometimes we lack the resources to be able to do it as well as we would like to. So, I do appreciate the opportunity, as I can speak for the rest of the 86 sheriffs in Minnesota, we also appreciate the opportunity to be able to address the Commission and make our voices heard in Minnesota as far as some of our issues that we're facing. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you for your service, Sheriff Lake, and your leadership and valued testimony you've provided today. Dean, let the record reflect that Commissioner Hawkins has been with us for a while. I failed to notify you earlier.

Dean Kueter: Yes, sir. Will do.

Phil Keith: Commissioners, we're now open for questions for the witnesses. Commissioners with a question, please state your name prior to your question, and direct the question to a specific panelist or the entire panel. Just as a reminder, to the Commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. Thank you and we'll now entertain questions from the Commissioners for our panelists. Commissioners with questions for our panelists.

Hearing no further questions, let me close by thanking our panelists once again for your time and most valuable testimony. On behalf of the Attorney General and his leadership team of Rachel Bissex and Jeff Favitta and all of these Commissioners, Your contributions provided today are most sincerely appreciated and will assist the Commission in their deliberations and work. Also please

check the President's Commission page for additional updates and documents and information on the main Justice website. They'll update it regularly as information is made available.

Our last meeting this week for the Commissioners is tomorrow afternoon. We'll go back to 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time as a starting time where we will continue to focus on criminal justice issues and challenges in Indian country. We want to thank again the FBI for the use of their teleconference network and support as well as the federal program staff supporting the work of the Commission. Are there any questions or comments from Commissioners?

Craig Price: Hey, Director Keith, this is Craig Price real quick.

Phil Keith: Yes, Commissioner. You're recognized.

Craig Price: Hey, I just want to take a quick opportunity to thank all of our presenters today and having been involved in many of these Commission calls. I know you don't get feedback if you don't get many questions from the group and I think that's just a reflection of how well you've covered the issues that you are facing and presented with in each of your jurisdictions. And certainly being from South Dakota, I echo many of those thoughts and experience those things as well. So, I'd just like to thank each of you for your time today and appreciate all that you provided. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Commissioner Price.

Katharine Sullivan: Chairman Keith, this is Katie Sullivan.

Phil Keith: Yes, ma'am. You're recognized.

Katharine Sullivan: Hi. I just want a second, what Commissioner Price has said. You've given me so much to think about and I know our fellow Commissioners as well, there's so much there. And so, thank you all very much for your testimony.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Commissioner. Other Commissioners requesting for comments? If there's no further business before us today, the President's Commission is adjourned. Thank you Commissioners again for your continued dedication and commitment.

(Group): Thank you.

Male: Thanks Phil.

(Group): Thanks Phil.

Operator: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. This concludes today's teleconference. You may now disconnect.