



# SHERIFF DUSTIN D. HEUERMAN

## CHAMPAIGN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

### Champaign County Sheriff Announces Closure of Downtown Jail

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Urbana, IL - Champaign County Sheriff Dustin Heurman announced today closure of the downtown jail in Urbana. The Sheriff secured funding from the Champaign County Board in 2021 to relocate 70 inmates from the downtown jail with the intent of closing the facility because of safety and security concerns, however due to an increase in arrests for violent crime in the county, was unable to close the downtown jail at that time as expected. The Sheriff's renewed effort is fueled by a dilapidated facility aggravated by a critical staffing shortage of correctional officers. Last month, the County Board approved additional funding to house an additional 70 inmates out of county.

The decision to close the downtown jail, one that has been discussed for over fifteen years, will not only increase the safety and security of inmates and staff, but also allow twelve employees, including nine correctional officers, to be moved from the downtown jail to the Satellite jail to help with staffing issues.

"This was a difficult decision to make and one that was not taken lightly," stated Sheriff Heurman. "But the safety and security of the facility and mental health of my staff have to be a top priority." As correctional officers leave, overtime increases, which adversely affects the mental health of staff. That, in turn, causes bigger retention issues and increases safety and security concerns for both inmates and staff.

Sheriff Heurman and his leadership team continue to work on a comprehensive solution to Correctional Center challenges, including a consolidated jail facility slated to be completed in 2024 and innovative ideas to increase recruitment and retention of employees. Those interested in pursuing a rewarding career as a Correctional Officer can find more information at <http://www.co.champaign.il.us/sheriff/applicanttesting.php> or by calling the Sheriff's Office at 217-384-1205.

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