



Kingman County Commission

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Kingman County will not seek conceal carry exemption

The Kingman County Commission has elected not to seek an additional exemption from a Kansas law that allows legal concealed weapons to be carried into public buildings unless adequate security measures are in place.

That decision, made at the commission's Dec. 16 meeting, means anyone with a valid Kansas concealed carry license (CCL) will be allowed to carry a concealed weapon into county-owned buildings starting Jan. 1, 2014.

The 2013 Kansas Legislature enacted two bills that made significant changes to the state's Personal and Family Protection Act. Those changes, which took effect July 1, included the law governing when state or municipal buildings may exclude CCL holders from carrying concealed handguns into their buildings. Previously, a county could ban concealed carry weapons by posting appropriate signage.

The new law allowed local governments to obtain an immediate six-month exemption from the new provisions. Kingman County sought and received that exemption, but it expires Dec. 31, 2013.

Commissioners have discussed the county's options under the law. One option was to seek an additional four-year exemption. But to receive that exemption, the county must have a security plan in place for each building that includes metal detectors and personnel to staff them to ensure all weapons are kept out. County commissioners expressed concern about the cost and effectiveness of that option.

Commission chair John Steffen noted that the safety of county employees and the public remains a top priority. Commissioners discussed and will explore possible additional security measures in county buildings. Specific security plans will be kept confidential.

Sheriff Randy Hill noted the county has an active employee safety committee as well as policies in place to deal with a variety of scenarios, from weather to intruders. Employees receive training and drills are conducted regularly to practice safety measures.

Hill said he would work with the county commission and other staff to continue to monitor safety in all county buildings.

County buildings where concealed weapons will be allowed starting Jan. 1 are the courthouse, noxious weeds department, public works department, health department, K-State research and extension and the Kingman County Activity Center. Concealed weapons will be allowed only in the lobby of the Law Enforcement Center. No weapons will be allowed in secure areas of the LEC, including the jail.

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