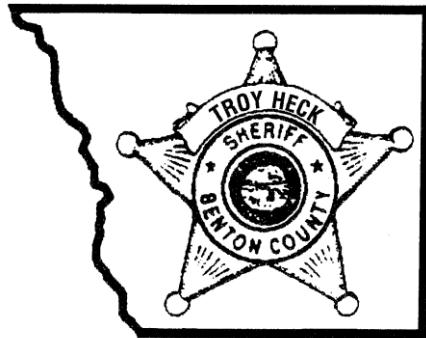


BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Troy Heck, Sheriff
Neal Jacobson, Chief Deputy

PRESS RELEASE

DATE: 07-23-20

AUTHORITY OF SHERIFF TROY HECK

The Benton County Board of Commissioners will hold a public comment period regarding the Benton County Sheriff's Office use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) on August 4th, 2020 during the regular board meeting.

During the 2020 regular legislative session, the legislature created Minnesota Statute 626.19. This statute, which takes effect August 1st, 2020, requires the Benton County Board to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to the Benton County Sheriff's Office purchase or use of a UAV. The Benton County Sheriff's Office purchased two UAVs for law enforcement use in January of 2020, prior to the enactment of this law. These UAVs have been used on several occasions since their purchase in law enforcement missions and in service to other county departments. Select Benton County deputies have completed training on the operational and legal requirements related to the usage of these UAVs. The Benton County Sheriff's Office is in the process of updating its UAV policy to reflect the new requirements of MN Statute 626.19. UAVs are a critical tool for law enforcement in search and rescue operations, in locating wanted persons, in documenting crime scenes, and in discovering and monitoring threats to public safety.

Individuals wishing to comment on the use of UAVs by the Benton County Sheriff's Office may appear at the regular meeting of the Benton County Board on August 4th, 2020. The meeting begins at 9:00 am. Comments may also be sent via email to sheriff.inbox@co.benton.mn.us or via US mail to the Benton County Sheriff's Office, Attn: Public Comments, PO Box 159, Foley, MN 56329.

Troy Heck

Benton County Sheriff