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## Public Defender Raises Private Dollars to Fund I.T.; Taxpayers Save Through New Partnerships



Attorneys in Clay County get a live look inside the jail where a client would sit for a remote meeting with his/her attorney; IT Director for the Public Defender, Joe Frasier is depicted in the smaller frame as though he would be talking to the detained client.

**Green Cove Springs, FL (7/20/2011):** Calling it a “public-private partnership,” Public Defender Matt Shirk is enlisting private criminal defense attorneys in Clay County to subscribe to PDJVS or Public Defender Jail Video System. For \$150 per month, criminal practitioners can gain face-to-face access to their clients in the Clay County Jail in Green Cove Springs through secure, live, streaming video to their personal computers. The funding generated from subscribers is directed to Clay County’s obligation to support Information Technology for the Public Defender. If used to capacity, Clay County will generate an extra \$36,000/year from subscribers.

“Without cooperation from Clerk of the Court Jimmy Jett who has agreed to manage the incoming funds and Sheriff Rick Beseler who has allowed for the installation of our PDJVS units in the jail, this would not be possible,” explained Mr. Shirk. “This is a true example of an intergovernmental arrangement that will directly benefit the taxpayers of Clay County. Our newly created ability to partner with private attorneys, give them something they want and generate revenue will translate to real tax-dollar savings.”

Attorneys in the Clay County Office of the Public Defender have saved countless hours since they began using PDJVS four months ago. It minimizes trips to the jail to visit clients on routine matters for Assistant Public Defenders who now can simply access their clients at their desktop computers using secured video conferencing technology. The Clay County Sheriff applauds the public safety attribute of the new technology indicating that less foot traffic in the jail equals a more secure facility. (A proprietary system that performs the same function of PDJVS has been used by the P.D. Office in Duval County for five years).

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the Public Defender Office conducted a live demonstration of the system at Orange Park Town Hall to members of the private Bar in Clay County. Mr. Shirk suggested that while there are presently ten vacancies to fill with users of the system, his office is working with County officials to immediately expand PDJVS to accommodate additional private attorney users of PDJVS. Since that event, several of the vacancies have already filled.

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