

WENATCHEE WORLD

Court of Appeals sides with Douglas County

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EAST WENATCHEE — The state Court of Appeals on Tuesday sided with Douglas County in its dispute with East Wenatchee over juvenile facility costs.

East Wenatchee in October 2008 sued the county for its refusal to pay for temporarily housing juveniles at the Chelan County Juvenile Center in Wenatchee.

Douglas County has designated Martin Hall in Medicine Lake as its juvenile detention facility since 1996, and pays housing costs when East Wenatchee sends juveniles to that facility.

That center is 158 miles away from East Wenatchee, and the city's police chief, Randy Harrison, said in 2008 that it's unrealistic to have one of his officers take seven hours out of his day to drive a juvenile to a facility near Spokane when there's a facility available just across the river.

Phil Jans, director of the Wenatchee center, said today that East Wenatchee is billed quarterly. The bill for the last quarter in 2009 came to \$3,190, while the amount for the first quarter of this year totaled \$1,080.

"So we're not talking huge amounts here," Jans said.

A Grant County Superior Court judge in 2009 ruled Douglas County has no financial responsibility if East Wenatchee police officers take juveniles to the Wenatchee facility.

East Wenatchee filed its unsuccessful appeal in October 2009.

Mayor Steve Lacy is out of town this week, and City Attorney Devin Poulson did not return phone calls requesting comment on the court's decision.

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