

# Superior Court: Court officers work to reduce jail numbers

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SOUTH BEND — The Pacific County Superior Court has operated daily to address cases as needed, and the Pacific County Prosecutor's Office is doing its part to protect the community while reducing jail inmate numbers, Prosecutor Mark McClain said last week.

"Unlike other counties who have managed this crisis by letting offenders out of jail, we have taken this time to work with defense attorneys to resolve cases, and nearly daily have moved inmates out of our jail where offenders have taken responsibility for their crimes. Some who have pleaded guilty received somewhat shorter sentences when they would otherwise be close to release, while more serious offenders are being sentenced to a state prison term," McClain said in a press release.

Brendan Taylor Hull, 20, of Raymond was sentenced to a year in prison for second and third degree assault, domestic violence.

"Mr. Hull's case is a great example of where we worked with the crime-victim, the defense attorney, and the court, and reached an agreement that was both supported by the victim, held Mr. Hull accountable with a strike offense and a year in prison, while conceding just a couple of months in prison," McClain said.

Hull's standard range sentence, or the sentence fixed by the legislature, was 15-20 months. "Mr. Hull will also be on supervision for 18 months upon his release from prison and be required to complete treatment while in prison," McClain said.

Christopher Wayne Cox, 29, of Ocean Park was sentenced to 45 days for second degree burglary on a "First Time Offender Waiver, a program designed for those with no felony history to ensure they receive drug treatment and supervision by the Department of Corrections," McClain said.

Luis Alberto Ruiz, 39, of South Bend, was sentenced to a year in prison for bail jumping, "in this case it was not for missing a court hearing, but instead for failing to report to jail to serve a previously ordered sentence," McClain said.

Ruiz received a year in prison rather than 15 months which was likely, according to McClain, to move him from jail to prison "in an effort to reduce the overall population in the jail. Concessions like these promote public safety while protecting our jail population and the public."

The Pacific County Prosecutor's Office will continue to monitor efforts like this to help keep covid-19 out of the jail population, the prosecutor said. Law enforcement and prosecution will continue throughout this emergency in order to protect the community, he said, while urging residents to "please abide by the stay-at-home order to help us continue to help you."

### **Additional case outcomes**

Austin James Robertson, 24, of Seaview, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to a year in prison, followed by 12 months of community custody.

Michael Ray Livingston, 54, of Raymond, had his Drug Court participation revoked and was sentenced to 3 months (low end of the standard sentence range) in custody, rather than the 9 months the prosecutor's office had earlier agreed to, in order to address covid-19. Livingston had completed 6 months of intensive treatment, but was unsuccessful in completing the program and was revoked.

Angela Marie Husted, 54, of Ocean Park, was sentenced to a year in prison followed by 12 months of community custody for possession of methamphetamine.

Derrick Brett Gill, 48, of Chinook, was sentenced to a month in jail for criminal impersonation (he used his brother's identity when arrested for DUI), and DUI. He will be on probation for 60 months for the DUI. There is no probation for criminal impersonation.