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Sheriff enacts \$5 fee on bonds

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MURFREESBORO — It costs even more to be accused of a crime in Tennessee.

Rutherford County Sheriff Robert Arnold announced he will collect a \$5 fee for each bail bond issued beginning today in accordance with state law. Arnold explained the fee to some 60 bondsmen during a meeting this week at the Rutherford County Adult Detention Center.

"Each charge has its own bail," Arnold said in a press release.

The sheriff hopes the County Commission will allow him to use the funds to pay for more booking deputies and to upgrade the department's computer system.

Lt. Chris Beach, who supervises the booking staff, said if the fee had been implemented Jan. 1, the adult detention center would have billed \$35,000 by July.

"We're projecting \$60,000 to \$70,000 for the calendar year," Beach said.

Beach said the number of suspects booked into the detention center skyrocketed almost 50 percent in the past 10 years but only two new deputies have been hired in booking.

"Some of the people we deal with are the worst of the worst and are frequently under the influence of any and every narcotic you can think of," Beach said. "The more deputies on duty at any given time, the better it is."

Arnold said he wants to get inmates processed out to make bonds as quickly as possible. The sheriff's office will bill bonding companies monthly.

"I'm just following the law," Arnold said.