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Prisoners home for the holidays

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By Brandon Macz of the Tribune

Annual Barabbas release program reduces population of Asotin County Jail by two



Asotin County Superior Court Judge William Acey bids two jail prisoners a Merry Christmas as he free... Barry Kough / Lewiston Tribune

ASOTIN - Two inmates at the Asotin County Jail were scratched off the naughty list Monday and granted an early release for the holidays.

This is an annual event known as the Barabbas release and is orchestrated by Superior Court Judge William Acey, Prosecutor Benjamin Nichols and jail staff.

Kable L. Gunter, 35, and Shannon D. Tuschoff, 45, had their sentences commuted after they were selected by Capt. Jon Singleton, jail commander, and their cases were reviewed by Nichols and submitted to Acey for final approval.

"We've had some successful and some less than successful candidates," Nichols said of past releases, adding of Gunter, "He has been a model prisoner."

Gunter, of Richland, had been serving a six-month sentence for a possession of methamphetamine conviction and would have had to be released into the custody of Benton County, where he had three warrants for failing to appear in court, Nichols said.

Nichols said he spoke with the Benton County prosecutor and explained Gunter missed his court appearances because he was incarcerated in the Asotin County Jail. The prosecutor "washed" those warrants, but Gunter will still have to appear in court, but at least it will be on his own recognizance.

"He will be able to spend Christmas with his family," Nichols said.

Tuschoff, of Clarkston, was in jail for failing to pay court fees stemming from two prior convictions in 2001 and 2002, and had been set for release on Jan. 6.

"That's not much," Nichols said of the commuted sentence, "but it does mean Ms. Tuschoff will be out on Christmas and be able to spend time with her family."

Gunter said it was his hope to never have to go back to jail.

"I hope you visit the jail again as a visitor," Acey said. "What a great example you have set. We're all proud of you."

Tuschoff expressed her thanks to the jail staff, prosecutor's office and Acey for giving her the chance to be home for the holidays.

"God bless them," she said, wiping tears from her eyes. "I've learned my lesson being there."

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