

County adopts cop agreement

By Dan Hammes

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Benewah County adopted a cross-deputization agreement with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Monday. Because it is changed from what the tribal council approved last month, the council will have to vote on whether to accept the new agreement.

County prosecutor Doug Payne, who helped negotiate and draft the document, said there are no significant changes in the proposal adopted Monday and expects the tribe will approve the agreement.

Marc Stewart, spokesman for the tribe, had not seen the agreement Monday afternoon and could not comment.

The vote Monday may end a long-running, and sometimes contentious, disagreement between the county and tribe over deputization.

The tribe said the agreement was necessary for public safety because county deputies could not always respond quickly to emergencies in the WestSide. Sheriff Bob Kirts disputes the tribe's claims. A compromise was reached after the tribe introduced legislation that would have mandated deputization.

Mr. Payne said the compromise is a good one.

Two issues were important to the county, he said. First, non-tribal members will not be cited into tribal court without their consent and all police officers will be accountable to an elected official.

Under the agreement, tribal officers will be deputized at the discretion of the sheriff. The tribe has the same discretion whether to deputize county officers to enforce tribal laws. The sheriff and tribal authorities can revoke deputization of an individual officer at any time.

The agreement will be reviewed annually. Either party can end the contract with proper notification.