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at county jail up income for sheriff

FORT WORTH (AP) — A jail commissary that netted Tarrant County Sheriff Don Carpenter several thousand dollars last year is under increasing attack from officials unhappy with the idea of Carpenter benefiting personally.

Since buying the commissary from outgoing Sheriff Lon Evans for \$10,000 on Jan. 1, 1985, Carpenter has spent most of the profits to improve his department and throw Christmas barbecues for em-

The commissary should turn a \$76,000 profit in 1987, Carpenter told the *Dallas Times Herald* in a recent interview. Carpenter said he plans to spend most of the money to upgrade the department and provide extra benefits to employees and to keep about \$9,000 for himself.

Over the past 24 years, the Texas attorney general's office has issued four opinions that stipulated that jail commissaries be subject to periodic audits and that any earnings be directed solely "for the benefit, educa-tion and welfare of jail inmates."

He has chosen to ignore those

opinions, Carpenter acknowledged.

"Know what an opinion is? Just that, an opinion," Carpenter said. Carpenter contends that the attorney general opinions have been wrong, that the commissary does not have to be publicly audited and that the profits do not have to be used to benefit the inmates.

Tarrant County Commissioner

Bob Hampton has vowed to fight to have the commissary placed under

public control and to have the operation audited regularly.

"My concern is not with Don Car-penter,"- Hampton said. "It's with the principle of the matter." He estimated the commissary in the Tarrant County Jail grosses \$1 million a

year.
"Those are public funds," he said.
"They do not belong to any one per-

Carpenter's commissary — which sells toiletries, cigarettes, snacks, stationery and stamps — is the only one among the state's six largest urban counties to be privately held and operated, the Times Herald reported.

All but Carpenter's devote the bulk of the profits from their jail commissaries to the purchase of television sets, recreation equipment, emergency aid and other benefits

for inmates, the newspaper added.
Carpenter estimates that about \$2,000 a year in commissary profits are spent for inmates. He says they don't deserve any extra benefits. He said he will fight any attempt to shift

the commissary into public control.
"I could by law stick (the profits) all in my hip pocket, but I don't,'
Carpenter told the newspaper.

Over the past two years, Carpenter says, profits from the commissary have gone to refurbish run-down portions of the sheriff's office, to build a property room for holding evidence, to buy equipment such as radios, to throw a Christmas barbecue for his staff and to provide extra benefits for employees.

Leftover funds, he said, have been

reported on his personal income tax

stronger with a helmet," Wingrove

"They've proven helmets will save lives," he said. "I have no doubt we'll

save lives if the law is passed."
Texas Sen. Ted Lyon, D-Rock-

wall, is the sponsor of a bill that would once again require Texas mo-torcycle riders to wear helmets.

helmets, but it was repealed in 1977

Texas once had a law requiring

The 1977 legislation was spon-

sored by former State Rep. John Hoestenbach of Odessa, who says he

pushed the repeal because of overwhelming requests from motorcycle riders. "They felt like it was their choice," he said.

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mandatory helmet law for motorcycle riders

ODESSA (AP) — All motorcyclists should be required to wear a helmet because motorcycles are much more likely to be involved in accidents than automobiles, a West Texas policeman said.

Motorcycle riders are vulnerable to a variety of potentially fatal road hazards, like oil slicks and abandoned car parts, that normally pose few problems for a four-wheeled ve-hicle, said Jim Wingrove, a corporal in the Odessa Police Department.

Wingrove said he should know. In 18 years of patrolling Odessa streets on a motorcycle, he suffered two

life-threatening accidents.
"If I had not had a helmet, in both cases, I'd be dead," he said. As it is, he can walk now only with

"If you ride far enough . . . and

long enough, you're going to go down in an accident," he said. All riders eventually "taste the asphalt," he added.

When a rider does crash, "your chances of survival are a great deal said

The law presently requires all motorcycle riders younger than 18 to wear a helmet, and gives the choice to those older than 18.

A recent study by the Texas Department of Health showed that an unhelmeted rider is two to three times as likely to suffer a head injury as someone wearing a helmet, Lyon

10-year Dallas battle ends in awards to deputy sheriffs

DALLAS (AP) — A civil rights suit finally ended after 10 years of haggling but the battle ended up costing Dallas County taxpayers possibly more than four times what it would have taken to settle the complaint a decade ago.

County officials have issued checks totaling \$106,707 in back-pay awards — one posthumously — to 13 current and former sheriff's deputies who filed the federal civil suit alleging that they were either fired or demoted by former Sheriff Carl Thomas because of their political af-

Unofficial estimates by plaintiff and defense attorneys set the county's total cost of the legal battle, including the final award, between \$350,000 and \$470,000.

Legal costs mounted steadily from 1977 until March 30 of this year, when county commissioners ordered that the legal ordeal end and the

deputies be paid.

The suit, which asked for just less than \$100,000 in pay plus interest for the deputies, accused Thomas of committing civil rights violations against deputies. The plaintiffs sought damages from the county.

County spokesmen and key plaintiff Benny Barrett received a backpay award of only \$301.07.

But Barrett actually is walking away from the suit with \$11,000 in his pocket, thanks to his fellow plaintiffs, who Thursday signed over 10 percent of their checks as a show of appreciation for Barrett's leadership

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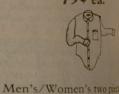
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