

Sheriff Joe Smith  
Costilla County Sheriff Office  
103 Gasper Street  
San Luis, CO 81152



**San Luis, Colorado** — On March 30, 2026, I officially took the oath of office to serve as the Sheriff of Costilla County. I am stepping into this role with a clear-eyed understanding of the challenges we face and a singular mission: to restore the integrity of this office while ensuring the safety of every resident in our county.

We cannot ignore the circumstances that led to this transition. The criminal charges filed against my predecessor and fellow deputies have shaken the foundation of public trust. The charges in the indictments are just allegations. All defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty.

I want to speak directly to concerns regarding our operational stability. Let me be remarkably clear: At no point has there been, or will there be, a failure to serve. While we finalize the formal paperwork and Interagency Agreements for long-term partnerships, we have already secured the immediate boots-on-the-ground support necessary to keep this county safe.

I did not take this position to maintain the status quo. I am initiating a "Day One" plan to stabilize our operations and ensure that the Costilla Sheriff's Office is held to the highest possible standard:

- **Open-Door Policy:** Establishing new channels for community feedback to ensure that your voice is heard as we restructure our priorities.
- **Restoring Accountability:** Reviewing internal affairs protocols to ensure that misconduct is identified, addressed, and corrected without exception.
- **Supporting Our Personnel:** Providing the dedicated men and women of this agency—who have continued to serve honorably during this period of uncertainty—with the leadership and resources they deserve.
- **Finalizing Partnerships:** My office is moving with urgency to formalize our interagency agreements to ensure long-term, seamless cooperation with our state and local partners.

The actions previously seen do not represent the values and integrity of law enforcement. My top priority is to restore the integrity of this office and keeping every resident safe. I want to thank you all for your patience, understanding and cooperation during this time.

**Respectfully,**

**Sheriff Joe Smith, Costilla County**