



# SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



**SHERIFF ROBERT B. NORRIS**

**UNDERSHERIFF BRETT A. NELSON**

To: Board of County Commissioners  
From: Sergeant Ryan Miller  
Re: Back Country UTV Engine Replacement  
Date: December 11, 2025

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Commissioners,

This is a request to either use dedicated funds (OHV) or to open the budget for a replacement engine for our 2021 Polaris Ranger UTV.

Historical information-This UTV was purchased for back country patrol and emergency response in 2021 using dedicated Title III funds for about \$23,000. An additional \$25,000 in Title III funds and U.S. Forest Service Co-op funds purchased all the necessary equipment to outfit the UTV. We also received donations of wheels and tires and lighting for this UTV. A set of 2025 Kimpex Snow Tracks were purchased last winter using general fund dollars.

On December 6, 2025, during a rescue of two children stuck on the top of Mica Peak suffering from hypothermia, two deputies deployed in the Ranger and within a mile, the UTV became disabled. The terrain was rough and put a strain on the UTV. This caused the two deputies to abandon the vehicle and start walking on foot up the mountain in snow and ice. A fire UTV picked them up and continued up the mountain, only to stop another mile later due to the snow/ice levels being high and the fire UTV not having tracks. The two deputies and two fire personnel had to hike up the remaining mile or so and 1000 feet of elevation to reach the children.

We had the Polaris Ranger looked at by JTM Motorsports and learned the engine was seized. The cost to fix or replace the engine is about \$8,000 and would take about two weeks. This machine is used for routine patrols in the forest as well as the primary response vehicle for emergencies and lost people. Currently, it is not deployable. We have had three callout requests this week for missing/lost people in the forest area.

The current fund balance for OHV is \$14,000. I am asking the BOCC to either open the budget or use more than half of the available OHV funds to fix the engine and get the machine back into service. The two options for this are attached, although a repair is being requested rather than a new engine.

Professionally,

Ryan A. Miller, Recreation Safety Supervisor