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Reporter: [Joe Nelson](#)[Email](#)

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## 'Evidence Based Decision Making' keeping offenders out of Eau Claire Co. Jail

EAU CLAIRE, Wisc. (WEAU) - A man who falsely reported a mugging Thursday was not arrested as a result of a growing program in the county, keeping low level offenders out of jail.

Eau Claire County law enforcement has reevaluated how they treat offenders by using Evidence Based Decision Making, a collaborative effort to reduce the chances of repeat crimes.

"If we just continue having that proverbial rotating door, that's just insane. You get nowhere and you waste a lot of the tax payer's money," Eau Claire County Sheriff Ron Cramer said. "We've addressed all areas of the criminal justice system from the arrests, the sentencing, to the incarceration, all the way through probation."



By expanding programs to treat behaviors, the county is one of three across the country to receive a national grant in Jan., and is examined as a model for law enforcement, Cramer said.

The county has spent up to \$900 thousand on the programs, but decreasing crime and lowering inmate numbers make up for some of those costs, Cramer said.

"It's like 'Child Rearing 101,' What is (the problem) and what action can change the person's mind? ... Lack of education ... mental health issues, there's a bunch of underlying things that each person is trying to deal with separately, so we're trying to identify that to see if we can reduce their time in jail," he said.

Cramer said he has seen positive changes but that it's hard to pinpoint why, and that keeping low level offenders out of jail benefits both sides.

"County wide, our law enforcement, we're trying to keep that low risk person from sitting in jail with our local drug dealer, putting people together like that is probably not a good connection. ... Each one of these people are human beings out there, and if we can keep them out of the criminal justice system, off welfare, get them productive again, that's a great thing for our community."

Sheriff Cramer said the new jail, scheduled to open in Aug. will also help treat behavioral issues, with more classroom space to get people the help they need.

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