

# The Oldham Era

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## Proposal could dramatically alter district boundaries

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A recommendation to move district boundaries for the next election could lead one magistrate into another official's territory.

Every 10 years, the county is required to appoint a committee to evaluate district boundaries based on Census figures.

According to the Census Bureau, in 2010 the population of Oldham County was 56,186, excluding 4,130 residents incarcerated in La Grange.

In the past, the Census Bureau has counted incarcerated people as residents of the prison location.

But including the prison population within the total population causes problems when dividing the county into magisterial districts.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, districts that include prisons are unjustly given extra representation in the legisla-

ture.

However, the Census Bureau now releases data that identifies prison populations so governments can make their own adjustments for state and local redistricting.

Big changes could be in the works for district boundaries beginning in 2014.

A three-member board is examining population equality for Oldham County Fiscal Court's eight magisterial districts. Board chair Albert Harrison of La Grange presented the group's findings to members of fiscal court on June 21.

Harrison said removing the prison population would greatly decrease the population of District 2 and District 3, represented by Wayne Theiss and Bob Leslie, respectively.

District 2 gains about 3,000 people in population from the prison, and District 3 gains about 1,000.

"Mathematically they greatly distort the voters' influence within those two districts," Harrison said, more in District 2 than in District 3.

Without the prison population, Districts 2 and 3 must be extended to ensure equal representation within five percent of the population of other districts.

Harrison said board

members took into consideration the location of each magistrate's home and are sensitive to decisions that could affect them. However, the board's recommendation to alter district boundaries would leave District 1 Magistrate Brent Likins' home in District 2.

Likins said, "Now they're going way different from what the district has ever looked like before."

"It seems there ought to be some way in the reapportionment that the city magistrates could remain in their district where they've been elected by the people of that district," Theiss said.

Magistrate Steve Greenwell is pleased with the board's recommendation, and the proposed boundaries of his district make more sense.

"Not everybody is going to be happy," Greenwell said.

District lines are required to follow a permanent feature that is identifiable on a map, including roads, railroads, rivers, creeks, etc.

Officials have three years to adjust to new boundaries, as new district lines would go into effect for the 2014 election cycle.

"Really nothing changes for another three years," Harrison said.

Fiscal court has 60 days to adopt or amend the recommendation.

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