The Kittitas County Corrections Center provides jail services to all 11 law enforcement entities within Kittitas County. With the exception of the state agencies, all of the entities contribute to the operational costs of this facility. It has long since been established that the current facility does not adequately meet the needs of the user groups. Though great strides have been taken to minimize the affects of this problem, a long term solution is needed.
1983- Inmates moved into the current facility
Designed for 45 inmates
1990- Operating at full capacity

County jail operating at full capacity

by DAVID GRANT
Staff Writer

The Kittitas County jail is not the Hilton Hotel; but it is close to needing a "no vacancy" sign. That's because the facility has operated at or near its capacity for more than two years.

"It's not a country club. It's a jail. It's not a pleasant experience and it's not intended to be. It's intended as punishment and rehabilitation, often intensely," said Sheriff Bob McBride.

Despite the tough job, the county jail, or Kittitas County Public Safety Building as it's officially known, appeared clean and well-run during a recent tour of the facility by Jail Administrator Ed West.

In a just-released report on 1991 inmate populations at county jails throughout the state, it was determined that the Kittitas County facility, adjacent to the courthouse at North Avenue and Main Street, contained an average daily population (ADP) of 79.9 percent of its capacity for the year.

In 1989 it was at 100 percent of capacity. The statistics were compiled based on a jail capacity of 45 beds, but West said the current inmate population is now 56 beds due to millions of dollars worth of improvements.

"We've probably lost some space that needs jail," West said. "There is no tell-tale sign of overcrowding. But the cells were designed for one person. When you double up, you increase the risk of fights and noncustodial acts."

Prisoners are moved around often in an attempt to avoid personality conflicts and tensions are often grouped according to the seriousness of their crimes. West believes that treating each person with respect and decency is key to a smooth operation.

"We're probably in better shape than most jails," Ed West said. "There's not much difference between sleeping on a mattress or in a cell on a folded frame. But the cells were designed for one person. Double up, you increase the risk of fights and noncustodial acts."

Prisoners are moved around often in an attempt to avoid personality conflicts and tensions are often grouped according to the seriousness of their crimes. West believes that treating each person with respect and decency is key to a smooth operation.

Inmates who make an effort to stay out of mischief are often favorable to stay in jail. There are generally 30 inmates. They are divided into small groups. McBride said the facility is doing well.

"The proverbial jailers" are kept busy. The facility is also used to house 450 inmates a year. The facility is also used to house 450 inmates a year.

The jail is staffed around-the-clock, usually by two officers. There are 15 officers on duty, along with 11 full-time civilian staff. The jail's budget is $900,000. The jail receives $16 a day for each inmate who is held as well as a $13 booking fee.

The average stay for convicted inmates at the jail was 28 days, with sentences starting at ten days. Most of the inmates' sentences were for theft crimes and violation of parole or probation.

The jail's interior walls are made of concrete blocks painted white and blue. The cells are made of concrete blocks painted white and blue. The cells are made of concrete blocks painted white and blue. The cells are made of concrete blocks painted white and blue.

The jail is considered safe and well-run. The inmates are treated with respect and dignity. The jail is considered safe and well-run. The inmates are treated with respect and dignity. The jail is considered safe and well-run. The inmates are treated with respect and dignity.
Actions taken to increase capacity

- 22 Beds in indoor recreation areas
- Additional bunks added to small cells

78 sq. feet for two inmates
Kittitas County Law & Justice Center

- Actions taken to reduce
  - Work release - An average of 12 on work release a year
  - Electronic home monitoring – as many as 21 people at a time, about 20,000 days since it started.
  - An average of 3 on school release a year.
  - Booking restrictions
  - Increased good time for release (up to 30%)
  - Working with judges
  - Drug Court
  - Court Probation
  - Inmate work crews
1995 Citizens passed a 1/10 % sales tax for adult and juvenile detention
1997 Hired Consultant to design and do cost analysis
2000 Needs assessment
2002 Jail options presented to citizens through public meetings
2004 $25 Million Dollar L&J Center failed on the ballot
The State awarded Kittitas County a grant for $500,000.00 to help add jail beds. Adjacent Motels purchased for demolition and future expansion.
2005- Option for less expensive ($14 Million) jail expansion extending across 6th avenue. Failed on the ballot. The problem did not go away.
Recently major repairs done to Corrections facility to stop water related issues and improve operations/working conditions
Inmate population continues to grow
2010
COSTS TO SEND INMATES TO OTHER JAILS IN OUR STATE
TOTAL $397,760.00
Costs continue to go up each year

FERRY COUNTY
$106,110.00

Chelan County
$239,437.50

Sunnyside
$52,212.00
New jail pod to be built inside the courtyard and attached to the present facility. An additional 117 beds. Cost-$6.1 Million
County approves construction bonds

$11.2 million will be put toward four key projects

By MIKE JOHNSTON
senior writer

A nearly $11.2 million bond sale is expected to officially close on Thursday that will fund four Kittitas County government construction projects. County commissioners say not only was the bond sale at a low interest rate, but the 20-year bond payback will come from existing county revenue. The funding will pay for improvements and an addition to the county jail, remodeling the National Guard armory and an upgrade to the Upper County District Court facility.

"That means we are looking at no new taxes to accomplish these projects," said Commissioner Paul Jewell. "We are, obviously, pleased we can take advantage of the current market conditions. We're very fortunate." See Construction, Page A8

Paul Jewell

On top of funding the four projects, a remaining $750,000 debt from the 2001 restoration and renovation of fairground buildings was rolled into the bond sale, lowering the debt's interest rate and saving the county more than $55,000.

"It was a great opportunity to accomplish some pretty important projects that the county has needed to focus on for a long time," said Commissioner Alan Crankovich. "And right now we have the revenue to cover the payments, without having to ask for new taxes.

The bonds are formally called limited tax general obligation and refunding bonds.

Low interest rate

Judy Pless, the county's budget and finance manager, said commissioners took action on Sept. 22 in a special meeting to award the municipal bond sale to Robert W. Blair & Co.

The four projects

- Repairs to the county jail — $1.3 million (pay back the county's capital improvement fund made up of real estate excise tax revenue). Repairs are now under way.
- Design, engineering and construction of an addition to the county jail that will go in the courthouse courtyard — $6.1 million.
- Remodeling the National Guard armory for county government/public use — $1.5 million.
- Purchase of land and construction, or purchase of a building and remodeling of a new Upper County District Court facility — $1.5 million. (Real estate negotiations are now under way on a possible Upper County location for the court building.)

Funding streams for bonds

- Savings from the county not renting Upper County Court space in Cle Elum at $103,000 a year.
- Savings from not sending jail inmates to other, regional facilities, estimated at nearly $580,000 a year.
- Lodging tax revenue to pay for the armory building upgrade.

- A portion of the one-tenth of 1 percent sales tax for jail and juvenile detention-related costs going to operational costs for the new jail pod.
- Real estate excise taxes.

Cle Elum cooperation

Kittitas County commissioners and the Cle Elum City Council have entered into a memorandum of agreement calling on the two governments to work together on the Upper County District Court facility that also may be a new location for Cle Elum city services.

Past considerations for this cooperation has included the possibility of a combined facility for the court and the city's police department and/or city hall.

County secures $11M bond with interest rate lowest seen in decades

by Jim Fossett

ELLENSBURG — Government officials say the county seat is rocking with excitement. On Wednesday, Sept. 22, Robert W. Blair & Company, a firm with a broad portfolio of clients in Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Washington, won the bid to underwrite Kittitas County for an $11,000,000 bond, at a 3.1-percent interest rate, the lowest rate seen in five decades, according to an advisor at Seattle's Wedbush Morgan Securities.

"We're very happy," said Kittitas County Commissioner Alan Crankovich. "With the funds, we're going to relocate the Upper County District Court, finish repairs at the county jail and expand it into the courthouse. We're going to renovate the armory, near the fairgrounds in Ellensburg. The military recently vacated the armory and signed it over to us. We'll use the building to house the Noxious Weeds office, the search and rescue and the WSDOT office."
Location proposed for expansion to existing facility.
Inner courtyard of Courthouse complex
Artist’s rendition of inside the facility
Walkway between Jail and Assessor’s

View from Courthouse hallway
Diagram of side view and overhead of new facility inside the courtyard
Inside is safe and efficient

(Typical two tier jail pod)
Typical jail cells
Benefits of jail expansion
118 additional beds for our use
Eliminates the cost to send inmates away
Increased attorney visitation areas
Video visitation from inside and outside the facility
Increased inmate program space
Better classification/separation of inmates
More efficient to operate
How will it be funded?

Financing

Jail Repairs- $1,300,000.00
Jail Expansion- $6,100,000.00
Armory Project- $1,500,000.00
Upper District Court- $1,500,000.00

Bonds leveraged from
Savings from not renting a building for UKC
Savings from not sending inmates elsewhere
Lodging tax for the Armory project
Existing 1/10 1% revenues
Existing Real Estate Excise tax

NO NEW TAXES
QUESTIONS? Contact the Sheriff’s Office  962-7525

Space for Kittitas County inmates for many years to come
Thanks for supporting public safety in Kittitas County