

# MISSOURI JAILS

MISSOURI SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

VOL. 05, NO. 01



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# MISSOURI CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM (MO CIT) COUNCIL

MO CIT Council is a network of representatives from each established local CIT council across the state, Community Behavioral Health Liaisons (CBHLs), state agencies and associations, and those with lived experience. The business of the Council is informed by the needs identified by the local CIT Councils. The Council works to address any structural barriers at the state level and advocates for policy and legislative changes that may be necessary to support health and wellness. The Council also provides direction and support on the CIT curriculum, training, expansion, and implementation of the program. The Council hosts an annual CIT Conference. The Missouri Department of Mental Health, in partnership with the Missouri Behavioral Health Council, provides administrative and financial support for the Coordinator and the Council. For more information, visit [missouricit.org](http://missouricit.org).



# CBHL

Community Behavioral Health Liaisons

The CBHL program is part of the Strengthening Behavioral Health Initiative. CBHLs are distributed among community behavioral health organizations across Missouri to form better community partnerships between behavioral health services, law enforcement, jails, and courts.

These linkages save valuable resources (which might otherwise be expended on unnecessary jail and hospital stays) and improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health needs. Missouri has full statewide coverage of CBHLs available to assist.

To learn more about the CBHL program, review the Liason Directory or the CBHL map by county, visit <https://www.mobhc.org/community-behavioral-health-liasons>.

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# Jail News

Noteworthy happenings from across Missouri's correctional facilities, highlighting the efforts of correctional staff, innovative programs, and the stories of individuals navigating life within Missouri jails.



## JACKSON COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

In September, the JCDC recognized 12 associates for years of service and promotion. Pictured here, left to right:

- Sgt. Nurudeen Idris, 10 years
- CCW Rebecca Northup, 30 years
- HR Manager Carmen Hayes, 40 years
- Lt. Jason Turner, promotion to Lieutenant
- CO Nancy Bonilla, 5 years
- Carpenter Don Hale, 10 years
- Capt. Felix Shoga, 15 years

Not pictured:

- CCW Geoffrey Brown, 30 years
- Lt. Latreasia Wilson, 15 years
- MCO Joshua Byars, 10 years
- Asst. Population Control Coordinator Lesley Carpenter, 5 years
- Lt. Povi Adote, promotion to Lieutenant

### Share your news.

Email Nancy Zoellner at  
[nancy@mosheriffs.com](mailto:nancy@mosheriffs.com).

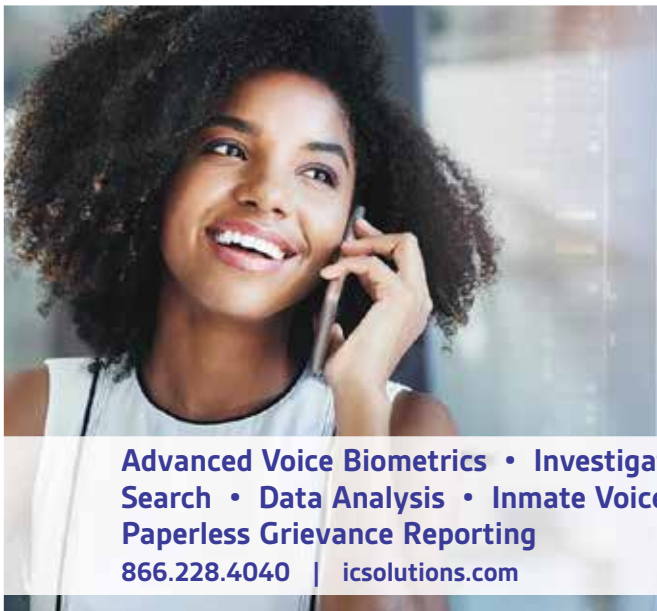


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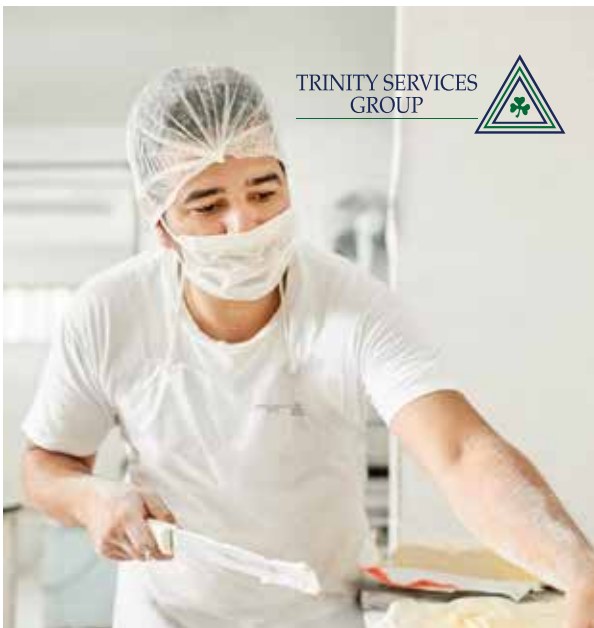
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## VERNON COUNTY

Life Saver Commendations were recently given to members of the Vernon County Sheriff's Office staff. On September 12, 2024, Detention Officers Hinds and Lynn noticed an inmate who was being released fall over unconscious. They immediately rendered aid while calling

for the full-time nurse, Nurse Samantha Francis. Nurse Francis and Deputy Becerra administered life-saving CPR until the Vernon County Ambulance District arrived. The inmate was then transported to a trauma center via air ambulance.

Sheriff Jason Mosher said the actions of Nurse Francis, Deputy Becerra, and Detention Officers Hinds and Lynn saved the life of the male inmate, adding, "We appreciate their dedication and service to the citizens of Vernon County."



## CRAWFORD COUNTY

The Crawford County Sheriff's Office has teamed up with East Central College to offer educational classes to detainees in its detention facility. Detainees can now obtain their GED through the Missouri Department of Education HiSET exam. These new students will be tested on language arts, reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Sheriff Darrin Layman said this will allow for potentially higher-paying employment opportunities and successful reentry into our communities. Jail

Administrator Tammy Peart will spearhead the program and act as a liaison to East Central College staff.

"This is one of many programs that we have incorporated to reduce recidivism and provide detainees with skills and education before they re-enter our community," Sheriff Layman said.



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## ST. CHARLES COUNTY

**1** The St. Charles County Department of Corrections staff grew by three in August. The new cadets are, from left to right, CO Rochelle White (Platoon A), CO Kellie Maddox (Platoon A), and CO Austin Belt (Platoon C). Director Dan Keen said he was pleased to welcome them to the family and the facility.

**2** In September, the team grew again when, left to right, CO Marcus Atkinson (Platoon C) came on board, and they welcomed back CO John Pounds (Platoon B).

**3** Lt. Mike Henderson was named the SCCDC Employee of the Month for August. Director Keen said Lt. Henderson is "an amazing leader and mentor to staff. He is calm but 'means business.' Lt. Henderson is a great listener and maintains a level head. His leadership is inspiring, and he is a positive example for staff to follow. I appreciate his dedication and service."

**4** Here they grow again! In September, the SCCDC added three new warrant clerks to its team. From left to right are Montrea Fields, Mia Turpiano, and Ivy Otterbacher. "We welcome them to our family and we are excited to get to know them as they learn their new role," Director Keen said.

**5** Officer James Schardan was selected as September's Employee of the Month. Director Keen said Officer Schardan goes out of his way for his co-workers. "He comes to work early to help with manpower needs, he takes on extra tasks throughout the day, and he puts the needs of others before his own. He is firm, fair, and consistent and because of that, he is respected by both the staff and the inmate population."

**6** Director Keen recently welcomed five new corrections graduates to the team. Pictured left to right are Corrections Officer Loryn Damico, Certified Peace Officer Ashley Akers, Corrections Officer Marcus Atkinson, Corrections Officer Rochelle White, and Corrections Officer Kellie Maddox.

**7** Director Keen had high praise for Administrative Assistant Nancy Forth, who was named October's Employee of the Month. He said "Forth has gone above and beyond to ensure that our department has transitioned smoothly to the new time and attendance system. She had an open mind and positive attitude when the system was implemented. Nancy is knowledgeable, patient with staff, and answers every question asked. I appreciate the job she does."



**INTRODUCES**

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# New Facility Promises to Solve Jail Problems Far Into the Future

When Lawrence County Sheriff DeLay says he is excited to be moving into a new jail, it has the ring of understatement — *and for good reason.*

The secure, state-of-the-art facility will hold more than twice the detainees packed into his current deteriorating, overflowing jail. Easing the old jail liability alone is enough to put a Christmas morning smile on the face of any sheriff.

Since taking office in 2008, Sheriff DeLay, the longest-serving sheriff in Lawrence County, has had the burden of a jail that just didn't make the grade. Built to hold 40 detainees in 1986, and remodeled over time to hold 52 today, the jail has the design nightmares are made of — cells lined up down a narrow, dim corridor. Add to that a building that was never quite right and was wrecked so badly in a riot that Sheriff DeLay had to close it down completely for six months while it was cobbled back together, and you begin to see “excitement” in capital letters.

The new gleaming 120-bunk Lawrence County Law Enforcement Center is a testimony to officials and voters who recognized that the changing face of rural crime requires a response that includes brick and mortar.

In 2017, voters approved a half-cent law enforcement sales tax that funds sheriff's office operations, allowed a vehicle fleet upgrade, and added more deputies and staff. It also allowed the county to look forward and start saving money for a new jail.

Crime, of course, takes no holidays, and even as the new tax was funding sheriff's office improvements, the jail was filling up and overflowing. The cost of housing detainees in other counties became a significant fiscal note. Sheriff DeLay says

A new era for Lawrence County detention: **secure, modern, and built for the future.**

over the last five years, the county spent as much as \$500,000 each year for housing. To reduce that cost, the county increased the number of people allowed to go home on electronic monitoring — as many as 70 on a recent day.

The county commission saw what needed to be done, set money aside to get a jail project rolling, and looked for a site where an appropriately sized facility could be built. The city of Mt. Vernon provided that site, selling the county an 8.5-acre plot for \$1. The voters did their part, approving a 3/8 cent

sales tax in 2021. Over the next 20 years, the tax will service the debt on the \$23 million cost of the new jail. Once the debt is retired, the tax will drop to a quarter-cent and be used for ongoing maintenance and operation of the jail.

Careful planning, a supportive county commission, a sheriff so popular that he has run unopposed in most elections, and a county of 40,000 whose voters recognize that good order is not free have combined to solve Lawrence County's jail problems far into the future.

In the quarter century since Sheriff DeLay was recruited from college to join the sheriff's office, the county jail has always been behind the times. Now that the new facility will



SHERIFF BRAD DELAY

be up to date and even ahead of the curve, he believes the county is ready for whatever comes next.

While the new jail will open with 120 bunks, it is designed for two future expansions of 96 bunks each. It has technology and the kind of security that comes from hiring a design team that was involved in constructing the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

“We were confident they knew something about security,” Sheriff DeLay says.

From front to back, the Lawrence County Law Enforcement Center is at the cutting edge of penal technology. In fact, as detainees go through the doors from the sally port they will be escorted to a feature of the facility so new that it’s the first of its kind to be used in a jail. Detainees will be placed in a space equipped with a down-draft vacuum table to pull contaminants and drug residue from the individual’s clothing. This is huge in a time when fentanyl is ubiquitous in the drug culture and contact with even a small amount can be harmful.

Sheriff DeLay believes the vacuum device will be in jails everywhere in the future. It was developed by Mt. Vernon

company Denray, which has done similar work for the space industry.

The intake area includes a lot that is new in Lawrence County — a drunk tank, padded cells, and a contained holding area where detainees can be classified and placed into the appropriate pod. The pods are overseen by a central control unit that allows one officer to handle operations in the entire cell area. No more dealing with detainees in a hallway with arms reaching through the bars.

Food service and laundry will continue to be handled in-house. Currently, kitchen duty is handled by an outside vendor, and jail staff does the laundry. Sheriff DeLay doesn’t use trustees because, he says, “you can’t trust them.” He notes that today’s detainees tend to have less respect for law enforcement and have a harder edge and that the atmosphere in county jails is far different than in the past. However, he says as they settle into the new jail, he may take a look at using detainees for cleaning and other duties.

Currently, the jail division has 21 commissioned and non-commissioned officers. The sheriff says that number will need to grow, but he is unsure by how many. Again, good planning will smooth the way for that growth. The county commission approved his “over-staffing” to bring new jail officers on board and get them trained, certified, and ready to handle the larger jail. Sheriff DeLay expects detainee numbers to grow gradually but has no immediate plans to take out-county or federal detainees. Looking forward, he sees a learning curve of a couple of years to settle into the new, modern world of Lawrence County detention.

BY MICHAEL FEEBACK



J&M PHOTOGRAPHY

# A Lifelong Mission of Service and Safety

His titles and occupations changed, but his assignment of protecting while serving hasn't

When opportunity meets hard work, sometimes things just work out.

After Lt. David Carnagey left the Air Force, where he served as an aerospace ground equipment technician ensuring that planes were ready for flight, he took a job with Federal Protection. He installed security systems, provided ATM solutions, and even built vaults, minimizing clients' security risks at home, at work, and even at the bank. A friend and former co-worker who had previously worked at a correctional facility and was returning called him one day and said that Christian County was hiring, and he thought his friend would like the job.

"It wasn't a career path that I had ever considered, but it looked like something fun to do, so I tried it out, and here I am here," he said with a laugh.

He later moved to the Greene County Jail but left in 2013 to attend the law enforcement academy. After graduating with POST licensing, he returned to Greene County, working in the jail and then transferring to campus security.

Through a church connection, he learned about an opening with the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office and was told to apply. He did, he was hired, and within one year, he was promoted to corporal and then sergeant.

In 2022, construction started on their new jail, and in July of this year, just as the county was preparing for an open house, he was named acting jail administrator when the previous jail administrator retired. On October 31, he was promoted to lieutenant and was officially named jail administrator for the Lawrence County Detention Center, which may well be the most modern jail in Missouri to date.

That promotion presented him with "lots to do."

The brand spanking new state-of-the-art Lawrence County Law Enforcement Center is the exact opposite of the old facility. When detainees begin moving

in before year's end, they will be entering a jail loaded with cutting-edge technology and systems that will be safer and more convenient for staff and safer and more secure for those being held. "It is going to keep our people and detainees safer," Lt. Carnagey says.

That protection starts at the door. If detainees are suspected of being contaminated with harmful residues like fentanyl, they will be directed to enter a new concept machine. It has an area where the detainee can remove their clothing and place them on a down-draft table where they will be swept clean of residue of all kinds. The system, developed by Mt. Vernon manufacturer Denray, vacuums up and contains whatever is on a detainee. At this point, Lawrence County is the only jail in Missouri with this technology.

The new jail systems will be run from touch screens, Lt. Carnagey says, bringing a technology everyone has in their pocket to the detention environment. It'll make everything from opening cell doors to watching the cameras more intuitive and, in the end, safer.

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*"The new facility isn't just about security; it's about giving both officers and detainees a safer, more humane environment that hopefully leads to better outcomes for everyone."*

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Given all the “new” in the new jail, he believes the end of shower day duty will most benefit his officers. Currently, every day except Friday, officers must move detainees two at a time down the long cell-lined hallway to the shower room. Then, they must wait while the allowed 10-minute shower time elapses before escorting them back to their cells to get two more. It’s a duty no one likes, and it takes a huge chunk of paid hours out of the corrections budget.

The new jail has showers in each cell. A system made by Willoughby Industries will allow them to program the showers to provide the same 10-minute shower time per inmate in both the two-person and four-person cells, freeing up time spent on shower duty. That same technology allows them to shut down the water with a swipe of the screen if inmates decide to participate in the ever-popular pastime of jamming the shower drain or clogging the toilet to cause a flood.

Lt. Carnagey currently has a staff of 15 in the old jail, where nine is a full crew and fewer than five have managed. The county commission agreed to staff up ahead of the new jail opening to make for a smoother transition when they move the current 60 to 70 detainees, including those housed elsewhere, to the new facility and begin the settling-in process. Lt. Carnagey is realistic about how the average daily population curve will go, stating, “If you build it, they will come.”

As the job gets bigger, he will be guided by his belief that while safety and security are his primary concerns, if he can do anything to reduce recidivism, he will. The county’s detainee tablet program will be a part of that. The tablets, which have books and other materials on them, are set up so that detainees must work through learning programs to earn privileges like movies. He hopes that in the future, classroom space built into the new jail can be used for GED or other programs.

“Some of these people have never had a checking account or even had one in their homes,” Lt. Carnagey says. “If we can provide them with training opportunities to help them straighten their lives out, re-enter the community, and avoid coming back, I’m for it.”

In an approach that is becoming widely accepted, Lt. Carnagey promotes de-escalation in corrections officer training, stating, “I’d like to find a way to get things under control in a way that promotes better behavior in the future. Sometimes, if we can figure out what the problem is ahead of time, we can find a fix. I would rather talk for an hour than fight for five seconds.”

Inevitably, as the excitement passes and the responsibility of a big county jail settles in, Lt. Carnagey will appreciate the kind of balance he will have in his life. He lives with his family, away from the bright lights, on his Lawrence County property. Between his children and horses in the pasture, there is no shortage of work to be done, but not so much that he can, at times, be found in an Ozark stream with a fly rod in hand.

BY MICHAEL FEEBACK



Lawrence County Jail Administrator Lt. David Carnagey



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# REDUCING CONFLICTS, GENERATING REVENUE

**Most jail officials will agree — e-cigarettes and well-stocked commissaries can help keep the peace.**

In 2011, soon after being elected jailer of the 700-bed Laurel County, Kentucky Jail, Jamie Mosley realized his facility was experiencing a tremendous problem with tobacco contraband. While looking for a way to combat the issue and also generate revenue to fund reentry programs and vocational training, the former NASCAR driver used his engineering knowledge to invent the CrossBar Electronic Cigarette.

“It’s safe and specifically designed to be used by inmates in jails and prisons,” Mosley said. “It’s barcoded and serialized, so you can scan it, issue it out, and check it back in. It’s designed with a lot of safety features from the perspective of a jail administrator — someone who knows the challenges that we face within the environment that we work in every day.”

The electronic cigarette, which provides an additional layer of security with tamper-obvious tape on both ends, is compliant with FDA’s mandates governing the regulation of electronic nicotine delivery systems. Both their establishment and their products are registered with the FDA, as required. CrossBar even received a UL 8139 Certification on the battery. Visit [smokecrossbar.com](http://smokecrossbar.com) for more information.

Mosley said the product is now in more than 30 states.

They’ve also added nicotine pouches to their product line as another nicotine alternative to smoking. “The pouches contain a nicotine granulate that the user puts between their lip and gum, but unlike tobacco products, it is spitless,” he said. “We produce our products in a plant in London, Kentucky, with a team of about 10 people, so nothing comes from China.”

In fact, all of CrossBar’s executives are current or retired law enforcement and correctional professionals. Greg Crockett, his executive vice president and the representative who attends Missouri Sheriffs’ Association training conferences as a vendor, spent 20 years as a Kentucky State Trooper.

“We met in 1996 when we started working together for the Kentucky State Police,” Mosley said. “When I started CrossBar, he was nearing the point of being able to retire, and I asked him to run the compa-

ny. The rest, as they say, is history.”

A couple of years ago, he realized he needed to diversify and started another company — Jail Breaker.

“One of our first products was our Jail Breaker potato chips. We initially launched it into the correction system through our same distribution channels that we used for our nicotine products, and we saw the same results. After being released, former inmates would call us wanting to know where they could buy our potato chips,” Mosley said.

Although the chips were initially only available in correctional facilities, they began offering them to retailers, and, as expected, sales took off. They are now sold in 13 states — including Missouri — and their retail sales greatly outweigh their correctional sales.

They currently offer three different sizes — a 1.5-ounce bag, typically used for vending machines, a 3-ounce bag, which is their most popular size, and then, at the request of some of their grocery store partners, they’ve created an 8-ounce family size. Mosley said the easiest way to find a retailer is to use the Product Locator on their website [jailbreakerchips.com](http://jailbreakerchips.com). At the end of October, no retail locations were listed in Missouri, but he said they are in the process of uploading 1,000 new locations into the program, which should be done by the first part of 2025. Jails that want to get more information should fill out the contact form on the website.

Mosley said he and Crockett had quite a time developing the chips and coming up with something that was delicious but different. “We tried a lot of flavors, sprinkling them on plain potato chips, but none of them really wowed us — none of them made us think, ‘Man that’s outstanding!’ We wanted something that was multidimensional with more than just a single flavor profile, so we compounded about three different flavors and blended them together, playing with the percentages until we found one we liked. That’s what you taste now when you open a bag of Jailbreaker potato chips.”

Their Cell Boss blend, offering a “spicy, sweet and a little heat potato chip,” promises a “flavor so good it should be illegal.” Mosley said he loves watching the reactions of those who taste the chips for the first time.

“It’s been a great experience. Our marketing is unique. If you look at our bag and compare it to everybody else’s — we’re different, and I think that makes us stand out. But the most important element and what deserves most credit is that it’s just a very good potato chip.”

BY NANCY ZOELLNER



Jamie Mosley, Owner



Greg Crockett





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# SHERIFF ACHIEVES SUCCESS

## *in more ways than one*

**W**hen Camden County deputies pick up wandering dogs, cows, horses, pigs, goats — and even the occasional ostrich — they'll have a place to safely keep them until they can be returned to their owners. That's because Sheriff Tony Helms, with support from his staff and commissioners, was able to carry out the vision he shared with former Sheriff John Page to build an animal control facility.

However, it was a long time in the making.

In 2000, Sheriff Page, who served from 1993 to 2008, took \$40,000 from his discretionary fee fund to purchase the ground. Because that nearly drained the fund dry, there wasn't much left to make improvements. Over the years, they turned the lower level of the property, formerly a quarry, into a safe shooting range — but that didn't solve the animal problem — and it was a problem. Deputies respond to more than 2,000 animal calls a year — several involving farm animals in the road at night when it is difficult to track down the owners.

On top of that, when deputies made arrests or worked injury accidents where a dog was in the vehicle, they sometimes had to finish their shift with Fido in the backseat because there was nowhere to take him.

Sheriff Helms said that's why, since taking office in 2017, his goal had been to find a solution. After deciding to build a holding facility on the range property, Lt. Henry VanDonsel, the Camden County Detention Facility supervisor, offered to head up the project. He had worked with his dad, former Lake Ozark Alderman Jeff VanDonsel, on numerous building projects and was confident he could get the job done.

Commissioners also got on board, turning over \$150,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to construct the facility. Working with that budget, Lt. VanDonsel began searching the internet, looking at other facilities to develop a design that would meet their needs. To keep costs down, he talked to select inmates about volunteering with the construction process — and everyone he asked jumped at the chance.

"We don't have an inmate worker program per se," said Jail Administrator Capt. Brian Vinson. "We have two kitchen inmate workers, one laundry inmate worker, one nighttime inmate worker, and one housing inmate worker. For regular maintenance like mowing and weed eating we pull from this group as needed if they are available from their daily

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*"We heard that a couple of the guys had actually started working in construction," the sheriff said. "So we got our building, and we changed lives. Now that's what I call success."*

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Former Sheriff John Page (center), who 20 years ago conceived the idea of building a facility to hold straying animals, and current Sheriff Tony Helms (right), who shared his vision and had the support needed to see it through, welcomed guests at an open house held to show off the new Camden County Animal Control Facility. Chief Deputy Col. Jim Brashear (left) was instrumental in getting the mission accomplished under budget.

duties. For larger projects and when we cannot spare current inmate workers, we pull from general population and try to find inmates with experience pertaining to the job at hand — construction, drywall, plumbing, electrical, painting, etc. — or they are trained by Lt. VanDonsel, who has extensive knowledge of all aspects of construction as well as equipment repair and maintenance."

Capt. Vinson said all inmate workers are volunteers and they all must go through a screening process where their charges, criminal history and facility history are considered. "To be eligible, no inmate worker can have any rule violations or lock-downs for the past 30 days and they all must be approved by an officer with the rank of sergeant or higher. In addition inmate workers are allowed to work on county projects only."

Making this project even more affordable, Chief Deputy Col. Jim Brashear was able to acquire — at no charge — all the heavy equipment needed to clear the land and handle the site preparation. Finally, the plan that was years in the making was coming together.

Construction actually started with a training building alongside the range. Lt. VanDonsel handled all the site and foundation work. With help from the inmate volunteers as well as staffers, Sgt. Kendra Duncan, Cpl. Brandon Monnig, Cpl. Philip Tryon, a few deputies and corrections officers, and Capt. Vinson, who kept things in the jail running smoothly, the team built an 30-by-40 insulated, heated, and cooled Morgan building. The sheriff's office hosts a Missouri Sheriffs' Association Training Academy each year, and some of those classes, as well

as others, are held there.

Once that building was completed, they moved up the hill to the site chosen for the animal facility. Lt. VanDonsel again handled the site preparation. Then, he and his crew of volunteers laid lines for the plumbing. After the concrete work was done, they started building from the ground up. The finished product includes eight large indoor/outdoor pens, a dozen cages for small animals, a restroom, an office/check-in area, a workroom outfitted with, among other things, a washer and dryer, and a drive-through bay where deputies can clean out their vehicles if — or when — animals make messes.

But they didn't stop there. Sheriff Helms said because access to the facility will be limited, they built a fully enclosed, covered pen where animals can be left until a supervisor is available to move them indoors. To take care of the larger animals found roaming, Lt. VanDonsel and his crew ran 500 feet of waterline to a fenced livestock area with a corral. They also welded panels together to create a livestock trailer to haul the wanderers.

Sheriff Helms said after the last nail was hammered, they had \$182.25 left in the building fund. It helped that not all, but a lot of the concrete, was donated and that the only "labor costs" incurred were lunches purchased for the staff and inmates on the job at a cost of \$4,038.83. "So breaking it down, the labor costs for 2,552 man-hours of work cost us \$1.58 per hour. However, because we get \$45 per day from the state to house inmates until they go to trial, it really didn't cost us anything."

The property was recently appraised by Rick Bryant of Bryant Auction Services LLC, who wrote that after reviewing several somewhat similar properties, they concluded that the land would have a projected value of \$650,000 to \$700,000. "Fair listing for this property would be \$729,000. This is inclusive of the animal control building that, if parceled off with 5 acres, would be \$250,000, listing for \$269,000. There is possibility of increased value with the addition on the rifle/distance shooting range and other property improvements. We also feel this property may increase in value as it gets more difficult to find this type acreage."

As good as that news was, they saw another long-term benefit brought about by the project. Sheriff Helms said because Lt. VanDonsel took the time to teach the inmates how to correctly finish concrete, hang and mud sheetrock, install plumbing, and wire the building for electric, they now have marketable skills that are in high demand. That was evidenced when one of the inmates got a good-paying job with a large construction company upon his release.

"We heard that a couple of the guys had actually started working in construction," the sheriff said. "So we got our building, and we changed lives. Now that's what I call success."

BY NANCY ZOELLNER



Camden County Detention Facility Supervisor Lt. Henry VanDonsel, who acted as architect, general contractor, foreman, and laborer on the project, explains the system he designed to keep the kennels clean.



Inmates who volunteered for the job helped with construction on every phase of the project.



The finished product isn't fancy — but it will allow the sheriff's office to safely house animals until they can be returned to their owners.

# Medicaid Enrollment Brings Health Access to Missouri Jails

New program connects inmates with healthcare, supporting successful transitions and reducing recidivism

**P**erry County Jail, much like all other pre-trial detention facilities throughout Missouri and the country, has seen an increase in special needs populations. More individuals are being detained with serious mental illness and substance use concerns, which in turn create additional overall health needs. Many jails have a difficult time providing the medical care most inmates require due to financial strain and provider shortages.

The Perry County Jail has implemented a Jail Re-entry Program and has on staff a re-entry coordinator and certified peer support specialist to work with inmates and engage them in treatment options. One of these options is implementing a Medicaid Enrollment project, with the help of the Missouri Appleseed’s Medicaid in Missouri Jails project. Perry County is one of eight other Missouri jails currently participating — Ste. Genevieve, Cape Girardeau, Buchanan, Montgomery, St. Louis, and Boone counties. The program started in 2022 with the pilot project site in St. Louis County.

The enrollment process is very simple, and the potential benefits to both the agency and individual are great. By enrolling individuals in Medicaid while incarcerated, their coverage may begin immediately upon release, minimizing the gap in mental health, substance use and overall health care treatment. This in turn will help reduce recidivism and increase overall individual and community wellbeing.

Meta Schlimpert, the Perry County Jail re-entry coordinator, facilitated the Medicaid Enrollment program. Schlimpert provided an



Meta Schlimpert, Perry County Jail Re-entry Coordinator, and Sheriff Jason Klaus collaborate on the jail’s Medicaid Enrollment Program, which helps incarcerated individuals access healthcare and support services before release.

example of an individual who first met with the peer specialist and was interested in Medicaid enrollment.

“My first interaction with this client was to sign her up for Medicaid,” Schlimpert said. “She was very excited that she was able to sign up while still incarcerated. After submitting her application, I was able to ask her about her other needs upon release. We were able to provide her with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application along with Goodwill vouchers for clothing and additional peer support from our peer specialist.”

This client was also receiving treatment for substance use disorders. In the meantime, this client was approved for release to complete drug court, Schlimpert said, adding, “This client left our facility with more resources and support which was made possible by our initial interaction to fill out the Medicaid application.”

There are more benefits to the Medicaid Enrollment program.



“Meeting with clients to enroll them in Medicaid has been an opportunity for me to introduce myself, assess their needs, and begin to build trust and rapport with them,” Schlimpert said. “With most clients, there have been additional meetings and resources provided after applying for Medicaid. The applications take as little as 10 minutes, and the rewards seen from the process stretch well beyond health insurance upon release.”

Even though Perry County only recently implemented the Medicaid Enrollment program in their jail, they feel it’s a beneficial service. Sheriff Jason Klaus said the program has shown itself to be a “low risk, high reward opportunity, for that individual and the community.”

The Missouri Appleseed project provides free training, ongoing consultation, and free tablets and hotspots (as supplies last) to assist jails in beginning their own jail-based Medicaid enrollment programs. Contact Mary Quandt (mquandt@appleseednetwork.org) for more information.

BY PERRY COUNTY SHERIFF JASON KLAUS AND REENTRY COORDINATOR META SCHLIMPERT



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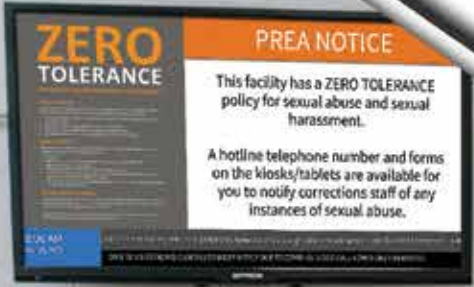


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