

Substandard County jail must meet new requirements

By CRAIG ROGERS
Battalion Reporter

According to the 1977 Brazos County Jail Inspection Report by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards there are at least 41 areas where the Brazos County Jail does not meet requirements. The 1977 report was the first issued.

The biggest area of concern is the juvenile detention area. Currently there are not enough jail personnel to supervise the area continually. Judge W.T. McDonald, of the 11th District Court, decertified the juvenile detention facility and forced the county to place all juvenile prisoners in other jails. Head Jailer Robert Boyd said the juveniles must be transported to as far away as Cameron, Centerville and Austin. County Judge Dick Holmgreen says this problem has been the number one priority for the jail and says "it is fast approaching the point where it will meet the requirements."

Boyd explained that before the jail was decertified there were five full-time jailers. At night this left only one person on hand to supervise the fourth floor jail, and to process prisoners, which is done on the first floor.

Boyd said he handled up to 32 prisoners in one night. Three new jailers have been authorized by Judge Holmgreen to insure two jailers on duty at all times.

After the three new jailers have been located, the jail plans will be sent before Judge McDonald to try and have the jail recertified for juveniles.

Other problems with the county jail will not be as easy to correct. Problems ranging from increasing lighting, adding shelves and changing the number of cells, Boyd says the problem is a lack of money.

"That's been the main thing, shortage of personnel, and mainly shortage of money," Boyd added. "In the budget next year some of those things will be corrected."

Some things wrong include minor items such as door stops and shelves, but also includes changing the cell dimensions, providing an exercise area and installing an emergency system to open cell doors.

At the last meeting of the County Commissioners' Court Holmgreen said he would appoint a group of citizens to study the county's space problems, including the jail, and report back to him.

Holmgreen said they may even decide the county needs a new jail. Currently the jail is not overcrowded. According to the jail standards report, the jail has a capacity of 89 people. Boyd says that the jail is fully full during special events, such as a rodeo.

Boyd says he has been in some jails with television monitoring systems and much more elaborate facilities. He also added that the county jail is superior to some other facilities.

Holmgreen said that he felt the Brazos County Jail is still superior to other county jails. He said, "When it

was built it was a model for other jails, but the rules change."

Boyd says this is the case with the Brazos jail. He says the Texas Commission on Jail Standards has only been in existence a couple of years. He said they brought in a lot of new rules when they began operation. He said the county is trying to comply with the new standards, but it needs more money, men and public support.

Holmgreen refused to estimate the cost of a new jail or the cost to fix the existing jail. Both Holmgreen and Boyd did agree it would run into the millions of dollars.

Holmgreen said he wanted the county to be able to correct the problem on its own. He said that Dallas County had recently had the same problem, except a federal judge ruled that the county had to build a new jail. Holmgreen said when a federal judge steps in the county is left with no options. It is required to find the money from somewhere and comply.

Rather than face this possibility, Holmgreen says the panel he is appointing will study the matter so that the county can handle the problem itself.

In the report presented to the county commissioners, the grand jury praised the sheriff's department for the work done with limited manpower, but stressed the need for additional money for equipment and personnel.

In order to pay for an additional spending program the report called for a re-evaluation of property taxes. At the Commissioners' Court meeting where the report was heard, Judge Holmgreen praised the jury saying it was the first group he had heard propose a method to collect the additional money needed for increased spending.

The Robertson County Jail was recently forced to make improvements. Robertson County was forced to pay \$250,000 to make improvements in order to keep out of legal trouble.

Standards did not close jails. He said by saying as an advisory body to help the county comply with the laws.

Boyd told of the jail progress saying, "I think we are making good progress. We are in a lot better shape than when I came here two years ago."

Holmgreen agreed saying he was just finding out the extent of the problem and needed input from the community. That is why he chose to appoint the panel of private citizens, to help advise the commissioners on what the public wants them to do.

The jailers think they have a good system, it is just an old jail. One deputy said, "It's like trying to take a 1959 Ford and try to sell it today."

Goldwater: Soviet arms need watching

WASHINGTON — Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., said Monday that U.S. compensation for the loss of listening posts in Iran, used for checking Soviet compliance with a new strategic arms limitation agreement, is not adequate.

In a release from his Capitol Hill office, Goldwater said, "If they (administration officials) are so determined to get SALT 2 approved by the Senate, why can't they please come forward with some ideas that make sense and that will work?"

"I would suggest that the administration start providing more resources as well as the leadership to help our intelligence agencies do the job that is being demanded of them."

Goldwater expressed annoyance that administration plans to equip U2 aircraft with special monitoring equipment was leaked to the media. The stations were used to check on Soviet missile tests.

"Because I feel that the rest of what is being contemplated is still highly classified, I will not reveal it except to say that what is being suggested won't begin to compensate for the Iranian sites."

The administration recently informed the Senate Intelligence Committee, of which Goldwater is a member, on how it proposed to monitor Soviet compliance with SALT, Goldwater said.

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Postal workers and fans search for celebrity tot

United Press International
ELK CITY, Okla. — Kim McFarland is something of a celebrity at age 4, but her fans and the postal service don't know where to find her.

Kim was photographed with President Carter during his visit to Elk City last month, and letters addressed to her have been arriving almost daily from across the nation.

Postal officials said they have been unable to locate the girl's home to deliver the mail.

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