

First private prison contract

Firm to operate prison

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — Faced with overcrowding and a burgeoning population of inmates convicted of immigration violations, the Bureau of Prisons is making the unprecedented decision of turning to a private contractor for help.
 The bureau has announced it intends to award a contract to a private Texas-based firm to operate a 400-600 bed federal minimum security camp on a section of a 7,500-acre abandoned Army base in Mineral Wells, a town of 16,700 in north central Texas.
 "It is new for the Bureau of Prisons to contract with a private company for full 24-hour custody services," said Wade Houk, the bureau's assistant director for administration, "although we have contracted for com-

munity treatment centers, also known as halfway houses, and with state and local correctional agencies to hold prisoners.
 "The Bureau of Prisons currently is 24 percent overcrowded. This aspect of contracting for a minimum security operation in Texas is just one more of many steps that the bureau is taking to deal with its overcrowding," he said.
 As of Jan. 3, the federal prison population was 30,241, even though the bureau's 43 facilities were designed to hold 24,399 inmates.
 The bureau, which has other expansion and building programs under way, estimates a population between 34,000 and 35,000 by late 1987.
 Officials say the camp at the former Fort Wolters Army base would house only nonviolent male offenders serving terms of

less than six months — approximately 85 percent of the illegal aliens convicted in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and southern California of repeatedly trying to enter the country.
 "We wouldn't be seriously considering it unless we thought it would be successful," Houk said. "What it portends for the future, I can't really comment on."
 The bureau's decision to consider hiring a private contractor reflects a growing trend for governments to turn to private business to run correctional facilities for them, saving expensive capital outlays.
 Bill Garrison, a regional bureau spokesman in Dallas, told UPI the bureau is authorized to issue a series of one-year

contracts for up to three years — the same amount of time it would take to get a budget appropriation to build a new facility.
 "Right now, with the influx of people being arrested for immigration violations, we need it," he said. "That could change in a few years because of any number of things, including changes in immigration laws."
 "Now they're being put in regular facilities and we have to send some as far away as Terre Haute in Indiana and Leavenworth in Kansas so this would get away from transportation costs," said Garrison.
 "We can do this with a contract much quicker and if things change in three years, we're not stuck with a facility we don't need," he said.

Bureau officials refused to reveal the amount of the winning bid or how many firms were competing for it but said the cost per prisoner will be about the same as at similar bureau facilities in Texas.
 Garrison revealed there were 32 queries for more information when the bureau announced last September it was considering a private contracting situation for a facility in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona or southern California.

Animals

'Urban Animal' roller skaters prowl around Houston at night

United Press International
 HOUSTON — At first glance, the Urban Animals come on like killer punk rock weirdos, rumbling out Houston's petrochemical mist, ghetto-blasters blaring, looking eight-feet tall in their roller skates and black T-shirts bearing the legend "Skate or Die!"

Then you get closer and find you're talking to architects, businessmen, artists and building contractors, and the anxiety starts to drop off rapidly as they explain who they are and where they're coming from.

And after awhile they start making a kind of convoluted sense.

"There are just some people who need to prowl at night," says metal sculptor Scott Prescott, who founded the Urban Animals.

"I just wanted something to do where I didn't have to go to the disco and drink. Besides, I sweat when I dance, and you're not supposed to sweat at a disco."

From that beginning, the Animals evolved into a sort of social club. Well, not a club, really, because there are no dues and all you have to do is show up and start skating. More like a gang, but not quite, since the Animals don't really have a leader.

Numbering about 200, with constant turnover around a core of maybe 25 people, the Urban Animals are almost a subculture, which has in common a first rate knack for coping with the pressures of urban life.

"Rather than fighting the urban experience, they take it for what it is and see what they can do with it," says group anthropologist Karen Ronald, 27.

What they've done is learned to thrive in the urban landscape, rather than sealing themselves up and pretending it's not out there. Their view of the world is three-dimensional. Places are located by latitude, longitude and altitude.

"You don't have to live in the woods to be creative," says Ronald.

Creativity is the most visible thing about the Animals. Even before you see them, you

see where they've been. And that by itself forces the mainstream to confront some basic questions about itself.
 Take Prescott's sculpture, "Viking Funeral," in which he took a junked car, carefully

and those who like team efforts, like the weekly skate hockey games and jousting tournaments.

"The girls are mostly white collar jobs," she says. "The guys tend to be in blue collar work, artists driving nails. The girls don't mind being laughed at, so they jump right in. But the guys feel like they're under more pressure, so usually go off by themselves and practice."

Moving as they do in packs, the Animals invariably attract the notice of the law. Nobody in the Animals seems to know why.

"That's just the South," Morrison says. "You really have to kiss ass. The guys have a hard time doing it."

Architect Annie Buford called one arrest for skating on the street. She said she was in a lighted crossing at the time.
 "I looked like prep city, did not look like a killer punk skater," she says. "I said, 'How else am I supposed to get across the street?' and this really got off."

"He took me downtown, and they took my glasses — like I'm supposed to kill myself for jay-walking. Or jay skating. And they took my skates and put me in the tank with all the drunks in my school. I thought, 'My God, I'm going to get leprosy or something.'"

Aside from the threat of arrest, being an Animal means a certain disdain for the constant danger of bizarre injury. Secretary Mary Hooper recalled a night she and Prescott were skating a concrete incline and she hit a mass of broken glass at the bottom.

"I said I was all right, but Scotty was like, white, and she looked down and I'm in the puddle of blood," she says. "I said, 'I think I better sit down. Scotty wouldn't go out with me for a month because he was afraid people would think he'd hit me.'"

For all of that, the Animals remain citizens. Prescott says they've broken up a couple of purse snatchings and muggings, and for the last two years they've skated the Galveston marathon, raising money for the American Heart Association.

wrapped it around a tree at the edge of a city park, filled it with beer cans, and laid out a dummy on top to make a prime commentary on drunk driving.

"People kept seeing it and thinking it was a real wreck," Prescott says. "Finally the city put out a sign saying 'This is Art.' First time I ever saw the government define art."

The Animals are also an athletic lot, constantly working out on the pavement. They've got the downtown parking garages marked off with ratings on the sidewalks, giving degree of difficulty and number of security guards.

The basic sport is taking the elevator up to the top floor and then spiraling down, picking up speed along the way, like shooting the rapids, looping around the guards and rolling off into the night.

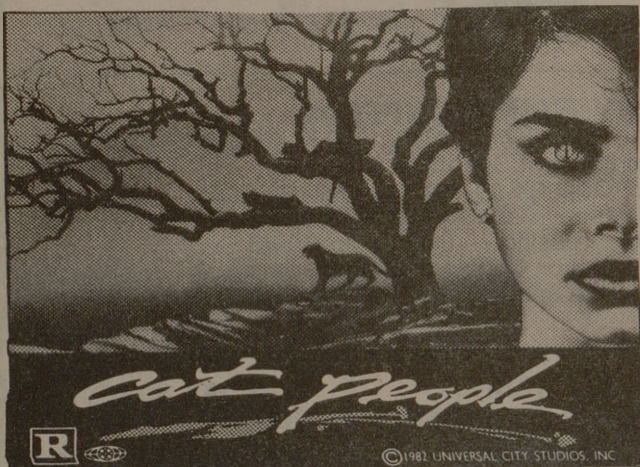
"The guards are afraid you're going to get hurt and sue them," said commercial artist Penny Morrison. "So they try to tackle you. And hurt you."

"The first night I went skating, I had half a pint of vodka and I didn't know how to stop. I used light poles, fire hydrants. I got a double knee injury. Nobody ever gets drunk and tries to skate."

Morrison says the Animals are broken down roughly by those who like solitary sports,

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Mexico oil exports to increase

United Press International
 MEXICO CITY — Mexico will increase its crude oil exports to Spain from 160,000 to 180,000 barrels a day in 1984, Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil firm announced Wednesday.

The increased sales, which will give Mexico an additional \$540,000 a day, were announced during the signing of a technology exchange agreement between the Mexican Petroleum Institute and the national Hydrocarbon Institute of Spain.

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