

The Daviess-DeKalb County Regional Jail is the first of its kind in Missouri. The concept of a number of counties joining together to establish a jail had been discussed amongst half a dozen counties in the area over the past 10 years. While Missouri statutes allowed for a regional jail, it provided no way to pay its expenses. In 2000 legislation was passed during the Governor Holden's administration allowing for a ½ cent sales tax to be voted by the jail district.

In May of 2005 the Daviess and DeKalb County Commissions voted to form the jail district. The district is governed by the two counties Presiding Commissioner and Sheriffs. In November, 2005 the ½ cent sales tax was passed by the district. Collection on that sales tax began in April of 2006.

The sales tax is solely used to retire the bond debt. In 2007, about \$785,000 in revenue is expected from the sales tax. That money will be used to pay the principle and interest on the bond and allows for buildup of funds. If all goes well, the bond should be retired in seven years.

On February 15, 2005 the district purchased Midwest Security Housing, a private facility, which had been in Pattonsburg, MO about four years. The facility with everything included to operate, including vehicles along with 10 acres, was purchased for \$3.5 million.

The jail is a self-sustaining entity; it pays its own bills. Daviess and DeKalb counties house prisoners for free; other counties pay the bills. Seventeen counties and cities send prisoners to the jail. The main ones the jail holds prisoners for are Polk County, IA; Wyandott County, KS; and the city of Excelsior Springs, MO. The prisoners are housed by the counties at a cost of about \$28 for men and \$30 for women per day.

The operating budget for the jail is a little over \$2.2 million and is administrated by the jail administrator, a budget director, and the Office Support staff. The jail employs 60 men and women, and has a payroll for 2007 of approximately \$1 million.

There are about 225 prisoners in the main building. An annex building holds about 76 prisoners. After prisoners enter the jail they are photographed and their information is put into a data base. Recently the jail spent \$8000 on a new computer system and updates to the booking program. It is not unusual for there to be 50 to 60 prisoners ready to be booked at one time.

Prisoners check in their personal property and are issued “oranges” or prison wear. They are assigned to “tanks” where there are between 20 to 60 prisoners. There is a shower and restroom in each tank. They have a TV with satellite programming, VCR, and DVD players. They are kept in their tanks for 24 hours a day except for the time they are allowed outside in the fenced yard for recreation. They are also allowed to go to the recreation yard to smoke 4 or 5 times daily because the facility recently went smoke free. There is also a trustee dorm, a medical wing, and a suicide/detox tank with no bunks or toilets where prisoners are kept under observation.

The jail has a commissary that is stocked with items the prisoners can buy. They order pop, candy, coffee, tobacco products, and food items from a menu-type form. Prisoners who are indigent are provided the basic necessities, like toothbrushes and soap. They are also allotted articles for outside communications, such as paper and stamped envelopes, as required by law under due process. Sales from the commissary average around \$20,000 a month.

The jail has a staff nurse on duty daily, and a local doctor serves as the medical director. Serious medical problems are sent to the hospital after the county of their origin has been notified, as it is the county's responsibility to pay for medical expenses. The Administrator is responsible for assuring that the prisoner's trip to the emergency room is warranted and the illness is not being faked.

The kitchen is overseen by a dietary manager and staffed by trustees. Three hot meals are served daily at a cost of \$1.50 per prisoner per day. In 2006 food costs was \$172,000 to feed the prisoners, and is projected to be \$197,000 for 2007. There is no dining hall at the jail; inmates are served in the tanks. Prisoners form lines to get their trays, return to their bunk area to eat, then the trays are collected. This helps control movement inside the jail.

Visiting hours are Wednesday through Sunday. Special visits can be set up, for instance for clergy or lawyers or family that can't make it during regular visiting hours.

Since becoming county owned the jail has instituted stricter guidelines for maintaining security. With as many as 300 inmates to control, safety and security is the main focus. There are 36 cameras located in the tanks, and around the facility, plus one on top of the building and in the recreation area. A head count is taken every 30 minutes by staff and the number is radioed to the control room to make sure the numbers match up. Multiple keys are necessary to get anywhere within the jail to provide greater security.

The jail uses 16 transportation vehicles to pick up prisoners and take them to court. They make a run to Polk County, IA six days a week and Wyandott County, KS nightly. The jail maintains a full-service maintenance shop on the grounds. With the jail's proximity to Interstate 35, the Missouri State Highway Patrol also uses the lift and tire machine at the shop to do searches. The jail district also provides extradition services for other counties.

In 2006 Daviess County saved \$185,000 and DeKalb saved about \$280,000 in prisoner costs. The jail generated just shy of \$2 million in 2006 and is projected to generate \$2.2 million in 2007.