

CONVERTING OTHER FACILITIES INTO PRISONS

**Barbara Krauth
Clyde W Dickerson**

**Library Information Specialists, Inc.
Boulder, Colorado 80302**

May, 1984

INTRODUCTION

Prison overcrowding has reached crisis proportions in many states. Thirty states are now operating prisons under court orders because conditions created by overcrowding have been found to violate the constitutional rights of inmates. The 1983 average daily inmate population in state prisons in this country was 391,597; the rated capacity of institutions was 332,444.¹ Inmate populations were greater than the rated capacities of their institutions in forty states plus the District of Columbia.

Because of overcrowding, Departments of Corrections have had to convert program and administrative space to dormitories, to use temporarily vacant cells of inmates who are in hospitals or segregation to house other inmates, and in many cases, to rely on the ultimately dangerous practice of double or multiple celling.

Public pressure for increased incarceration of offenders is not abating either, and predictions for the future suggest that overcrowding will continue to be a serious problem through at least 1990.²

States have responded to this problem with a variety of approaches. Although new prison bonds have been defeated in a number of states and legislatures have cut or refused to allocate funds for new construction, states continue to press for funds to construct new facilities.

Other approaches to solving the prison overcrowding problem include state efforts to provide alternative forms of punishment that are less expensive than incarceration. Such alternatives include community service sentences and intensive supervision probation programs. States are also granting their governors, parole boards, and departments of corrections new powers to advance the release dates of inmates when prisons reach a certain level of overcrowding.

Despite these other approaches, there is an indisputable need to expand the prison system. Unless there is an unlikely, drastic reduction in the number of convicted felons sentenced to prison, there is little alternative to increasing the number of beds. However, the cost of new prison construction is forbidding, and the public has proven reluctant to support it.

This report presents the experience of several states in converting other types of facilities into prisons. Brief case studies of converting such facilities as mental hospitals, schools, and military bases are presented in Section II of the report. Section III is a listing of states and contact persons that have recently completed or are presently involved in a facility conversion project. The Appendix includes a sample of materials used in the planning process in several states, which provide illustrations both of the complexity of such a process and exemplary approaches to handling it.

As these studies make clear, it is least difficult to convert public facilities already belonging to a branch of state government. In these cases, a simple transfer of property can be arranged, and no funds are exchanged. In taking over privately-owned facilities, such as the Catholic seminary project described below, the property usually must be purchased by the state from the owner. In converting military bases-- in some ways an easy project from an architectural/construction perspective-- the state must follow a complex process and meet certain conditions established by the Federal government. The General Services Administration arranges the transfer of real property from Federal agencies that no longer need the property to Federal agencies that propose a new use for it. In utilizing Department of Defense property, states have been able to draw indirectly on the Federal government's statutory authority to dispose of property for "school, classroom, or other educational purposes." Property is transferred on this basis to the Department of Education, which can then transfer it to the state. Property conveyed in this manner must be maintained for its approved education use for at least 30 years. For an example of this process, see the description of the conversion of the Charleston Air Force Base in Maine. (A more complete discussion of the process of acquiring Federal real property is given in the Appendix.)

Another issue the states need to address when undertaking facility conversion projects is the response of the public to the location of a prison on the proposed site. Although in some instances (see Pendleton, Oregon, for example), the public is relatively eager to have a prison in its community, the response is more often negative. A public education program can often be employed successfully to convince an otherwise skeptical public of the necessity and potential benefits of a conversion project. Since 1970, the President's Economic Adjustment Committee has helped communities adjust to the loss of military bases and "to generate new job opportunities and to alleviate serious social economic problems resulting from the Defense changes."³ Once convinced of the economic benefits of replacing a no longer used facility with a prison, the public usually accepts the idea enthusiastically.

Time and cost savings of conversion projects as opposed to new construction are borne out by the experiences of the states described in the brief case studies.

Contact the NIC Information Center, 1790 30th Street, Boulder, CO 80301 (303)444-1101, for a complete copy of this report. For more information on any aspect of these projects not contained in the NIC Information Center report, including detailed cost data or architectural plans, get in touch with the contact person named for each case study.

II. CASE STUDIES LISTING

State: Maine

Original facility: Charleston Air Force Station

Converted to: Charleston Correctional Facility--Minimum security institution

Date of occupancy: November, 1980

**Special programs: Vocational Education--wood harvesting, building
maintenance, welding**

**Contact person: Jeff Merrial, Director, Charleston Correctional Facility,
Rt. 15, Charleston, ME 04422**

State: Michigan

Original facility: Kincheloe Air Force Base

Converted to: Kinross Correctional Facility--Medium security prison

Date of occupancy: January, 1978

**Special programs: Education--G. E. D., Associate Degree;
Vocational--automechanic, building repairs, food service,
building trades**

**Contact person: Robert Groenleer, Department of Corrections, 3222 So. Logan,
Lansing, MI 48913**

State: Minnesota (Federal Bureau of Prisons)

Original facility: Air Force Base

Converted to: Federal Prison Camp--Minimum security institution

Date of occupancy: December, 1983

**Contact person: Peter M Carlson, Superintendent, P.O. Box 1000, Duluth, MN
55814**

State: Michigan

Original facility: St. Augustine Seminary

Converted to: Michigan Dunes Correctional Facility--Medium security prison

Date of occupancy: 1978

**Contact person: Robert Groenleer, Department of Corrections, 3222 So. Logan,
Lansing, MI 48913**

State: New York

Original Facility: Public School

**Converted to: Lyon Mountain Correctional Facility--Minimum security
institution**

Special programs: Work release center

**Contact person: Francis J. Sheridan, Director of Facility Planning and
Development
Department of Correctional Services
Building No. 2 State Campus
Albany, NY 12226**

State: Ohio
Original facility: Lima State Hospital
Converted to: Medium close security prison
Date of occupancy: April, 1984
Special programs: Education--G. E. D., Postsecondary
Contact person: Paul Goggin, 1050 Freeway Drive, Columbus, OH

State: Oregon
Original facility: Eastern State Mental Hospital
Converted to: Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution--Minimum security prison
Date of occupancy: June, 1985
Special programs: (Proposed) Prison industries -- laundry for other prison units, garment factory, food service for other units.
Contact person: Bob Wright, Superintendent, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, 2500 Westgate, Pendleton, OR 97801

Jurisdiction: Washington, D. C.
Original facility: Alcohol rehabilitation center
Converted to: Medium security prison, 450 beds
Date of Occupancy: January, 1983
Contact Person: Robert J. Delmore, Chief, Office of Planning and Program Analysis, D. C. Department of Corrections, 1923 Vermont Avenue, N. W, Suite N219, Washington, D. C. 20001

**III. STATES REPORTING PROJECTS CONVERTING OTHER FACILITIES
INTO ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

<u>State</u>	<u>Name of Facility</u>	<u>Previous Use</u>	<u>Date of Corrections Occupancy</u>	<u>Correctional Capacity</u>	<u>Facility Security Classification</u>
Alaska	Wildwood Correctional Center	Military Communication Center	09/83	Currently 120 Eventually 186	Medium
Bureau of Prisons	Federal Prison Camp Duluth	Air Force Base	12/83	500	Minimum
California	California Rehab Center (CRC)	Naval Hospital	1961	2,400	Light Medium
Florida	Mental Health	Department of Health & Rehab Services	Phase I 7/84 Phase II 12/84	21 132	All Security Classification
Georgia	Georgia Industrial Institute	Tuberculosis Sanitarium	1951	1,443	Maximum
	Rivers Correctional Institute		1982	580	Close
	Men's Correctional Institute		1978	585	Close
Idaho	Idaho Correctional Institution-Orofino	State Hospital	4/84	Initially 56 Expanded 212	Close- Medium

<u>State</u>	<u>Name of Facility</u>	<u>Previous Use</u>	<u>Date of Corrections Occupancy</u>	<u>Correctional Capacity</u>	<u>Facility Security Classification</u>
Illinois	Logan Correctional Center	Mental Health	1977	850	Medium
	East Moline Correctional Center	Mental Health	1981	440	Minimum
	Dixon Correctional Center	Mental Health	10/83	154	Medium
	Lincoln Pre-Release	Mental Health	1/84	150	Minimum
	Jacksonville Pre-Release	Mental Health	1/84	150	Minimum
Indiana	Westville Correctional Facility	Mental Health Hospital	1976	2,150	Medium
	Rockville Training Facility	Air Force Radar Base	1967	60	Medium
	Branchville Correctional Facility	Job Corps Site	1983	336	Medium
	Henryville Youth Camp	Conservation/Natural Resources Facility	1963	55	
	South Bend Work Release Facility	Church & Church Education Building	1977	100	Minimum
	Indianapolis Men's Work Release Facility	Church Supported, Neighborhood Community Center, Privately Founded	1973	122	Minimum
	Indianapolis Women's Work Release Facility	Unwed Mothers Home & Prenatal Clinic	1978	60	Minimum
	Fort Wayne Work Release Center	Part of Local YMCA	1975	74	Minimum
Atterbury Work Release Facility	Army Training Facility	1982	70	Minimum	

<u>State</u>	<u>Name of Facility</u>	<u>Previous Use</u>	<u>Date of Corrections Occupancy</u>	<u>Correctional Capacity</u>	<u>Facility Security Classification</u>
Iowa	Mount Pleasant Medium Security Unit	Mental Health Institute	1977/1984 (2 phases)	144/476	Medium
	Clarinda Treatment Unit	Mental Health Institute	1980	120	Medium
Kansas	Winfield State Hospital	State Hospital	6/84	144	Minimum
	Topeka	State Hospital	6/84	65	Minimum
New York	Altona Correctional Facility	School	4/83 2/84	300	Medium
	Lyon Mountain	School	2/84 9/84	150	Minimum
	Long Island	Psychiatric Facility	12/82	600	Medium
	Ogdensburg	Psychiatric Facility	12/82 7/84	490	Medium
	Watertown	U.S. Air Force Station	6/82 8/84	500	Medium
North Carolina	McCain Hospital	Tuberculosis Sanatorium	1/84	300	Minimum
Oklahoma	James Crabtree Correctional Center	Enid School for the Retarded	7/82	100	Minimum
Pennsylvania	None-not yet completed	State Hospital	9/86	500	Medium
	State Correctional Institution at Cresson	State Hospital	2/86	350-500	Medium
Rhode Island	Minimum Security	Mental Health Building	1980	175	Minimum
	Men's Work Release	Mental Health Building	1981	125	Minimum
	Jonathan Arnold	Mental Health Building	6/84	125	Work Release

<u>State</u>	<u>Name of Facility</u>	<u>Previous Use</u>	<u>Date of Corrections Occupancy</u>	<u>Correctional Capacity</u>	<u>Facility Security Classification</u>
Utah	Lakehills	Motel	1970	50	CCC-Minimum
	Central	Motel	1979	40	CCC-Minimum
	Ogden	Motel	1972	40	CCC-Minimum
	Women CCC	Top of YWCA	1976	21	CCC-Minimum
	Parkview	Nursing Home	1978	31	CCC-Minimum
West Virginia	Huntington Work Release Center	Professional Offices	2/84	18	Minimum
Wisconsin	Dodge Institute	Mental Health Institute	1978	309	Maximum
	Correctional Drug Abuse Treatment Center	Mental Health Institute	1981	125	Minimum
	Wisconsin Resource Center	Mental Health Institute	1982	80	Medium

APPENDIX

The Appendix includes examples of materials actually used in the planning process of projects highlighted in Section II as well as information on how states can obtain Federal real property that might be converted to correctional facilities. The contents of the Appendix are as follows:

- o Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution Update and Site Development Plan
- o State of Oregon Inter-office memo documenting project
- o State of Michigan-- Department of Corrections letter proposing Dunes Conversion Project
- o Dunes Correctional Facility--Summary of Administrative Staff Meeting with Prison Action Committee
- o Program Statement for the Conversion of the St. Augustine Seminary for Use as a Correctional Facility
- o St. Augustine Seminary Fact Sheet
- o Executive Order 12348 of February 25, 1982--Federal Real Property
- o Planning Civilian Reuse of Former Military Bases, President's Economic Adjustment Committee, Office of Economic Adjustment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC: 1978, pp. 1-2.
- o How to Acquire Federal Real Property, General Services Administration, Federal Property Resources Service, Office of Real Property, Washington, DC; Foreword and p. 29.
- o Format for Annual Utilization Report--Federal Property
- o Annual Utilization Report, Charleston Correctional Facility
- o State of Maine--Letter of Intent and Understanding Between Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and The Department of Mental Health and Corrections
- o Lima, Ohio--Construction Timetable
- o New York State Department of Corrections Facility Planning Report--Expansion Planning
- o Case Study: The Conversion of an Air Force Base to a Medium Security Prison--Barry Mintzes
- o Kinross Correctional Facility--Utilization Plan