

NEWS RELEASE



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DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT: August 1, 2009 / 12:00 P.M.

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: July 30, 2009 / 4:00 P.M.

NATURE OF STORY: Opening of 84 jail beds

**LOCATION: Lane County Adult Corrections Facility
101 W 5th - Eugene, OR**

DETAILS: The Lane County Jail is set to reopen an 84-bed housing unit on August 1, 2009. The 84-bed unit, which is referred to as the "North Annex," is made up of two direct supervision, medium custody dormitories.

This housing unit was closed in of May of 2008 and remained closed due to lack of funding. It will be re-opened August 1 of this year using re-authorized federal timber payments that Lane County received as a result of efforts in Washington DC by our congressional delegation including Senator Wyden, Congressman DeFazio, and Senator Merkley. The Lane County Board of Commissioners voted in June to use some of these funds to operate the 84-bed housing unit.

Because of a federal consent decree that states that the Lane County Jail may only utilize 93% of the total jail beds available, opening the North Annex represents an overall capacity increase of 78 additional jail beds. All of the expanded capacity will be used for local offenders who are either on "pretrial" status or are serving a sentence of less than one year.

During fiscal year 08/09, 4,565 inmates were released early from the Lane County Jail due to the lack of capacity to hold them. With the opening of the additional beds, it is projected that approximately 700 fewer defendants and offenders will be released early in the next year because of the lack of funded capacity. Since a defendant or offender's risk of being a danger to the community determines who is released because of capacity issues, the August 1 increase in bed capacity will mean that more dangerous offenders will remain in custody.

Although many were released during fiscal year 08/09, it is projected that no Measure 11 offenders, or those that the Oregon Statutes define as "violent," will have to be released due to capacity issues upon the opening of the additional beds. Additionally, Lane County should experience a 70% reduction in capacity/funding based releases of those offenders that the risk assessment tool, used by the Pretrial Services Office, determines to be high risk for being a danger to the community.

The additional beds represent a significant improvement for public safety in Lane County. However, it is projected that there will still be approximately 3,850 capacity based releases in the coming year, at least 200 of which will still be considered to be a high risk for being a danger to the community.

Even though the North Annex will reopen, the jail still has a 72-bed housing unit that will remain closed due to the lack of funds needed to operate it. In addition, the Community Corrections Center (CCC), Lane County's work release center that houses sentenced inmates, will continue to operate only 33 of the 122 beds in the facility. The CCC beds and the 100 bed Forest Work Camp, which was closed during the spring of 2008, will remain closed due to the lack of needed funding.

Prepared by: Captain Doug Hooley