

❖ The TAX TIMES ❖

Volume 11, Issue No. 1

October, 1995

Many considerations to be made in Jail Construction.

Debate continues on a proposed new jail. Replace this sample text with your own \$23.8 million dollar jail for Brown County. You can either type it in or im-

port it from your word processor. Recently supervisor Frank Bennett of the County Board, Public Safety Committee which is charged with considering this issue and making appropriate recommendations to the full county board and county background -- a layer behind all pages jail Captain Hugh Jansen visited four recently constructed jails in adjoining counties where you can place things you want to appear on every page. To work on the background, press CTRL-M. To return to the page, press CTRL-M again. Once you've switched to the background, you also asked officials what changes they would make if they had the opportunity as if they were on the page. For more information on the background, turn to page 109 in your manual.

Following are excerpts from their report. On your screen, the blue lines beneath the text are layout guides. They help you position text and pictures consistently throughout your publication. For information on how to use them, see page 99 in your manual.

OCONTO COUNTY
Their jail has a capacity of 72 inmates and was completed in 1991. Their design is of linear construction (cells are side by side), with extensive TV monitoring. Laundry is done in-house and meals are contracted from a local restaurant.

They have a very high operating cost of \$200/day/inmate, based largely on current levels of inmate/staffing of about 1 to 1.

Officials said the new jail created many problems, and with hindsight would make some changes. It is spread out over a large area and requires much walking on the part

of jailers. Also, maintenance is a bigger item than anticipated.

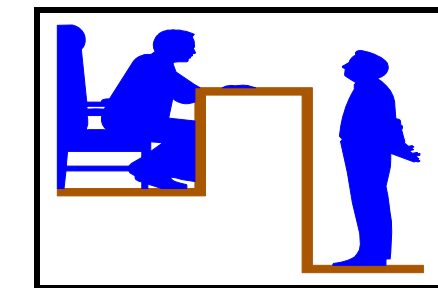
SHAWANO COUNTY
This was the newest facility visited, which opened in August of 1994 at a cost of \$7.5 million. It is a two story building with the secure portion being of podular design. The capacity is 171 inmates with 104 in maximum lockup. Each cell is 70 Sq. Ft. and allows for double occupancy. There is a central control room and TV monitors are used extensively. Laundry and kitchen services are done internally, with meal costs averaging 70 cents per inmate per meal, and they claim their average operational cost per prisoner is \$15.00 per day.

Although officials were satisfied with most features of the new Shawano County jail, they found that storage space was at a premium after construction. The visiting area could be redesigned and zoom lens TV cameras would be useful in certain areas.

and even the elevator is controlled. The operational budget of \$4.85 million is totally covered by 200 state inmates which are housed in the facility.

Discussions with the staff indicated several changes they would have added to the design phase of the jail. For example, they would have included the local fire department in the design to receive their input. They recommended the use of sound absorbing panels in the meeting and counseling rooms. However, when asked what they would do differently, the overwhelming response would be to build out of town, and suggested that they haven't seen all the problems yet with their new jail.

MANITOWOC COUNTY
Their new jail is of podular design, and was opened in February of 1993. The cost of \$10.1 million included remodeling an existing facility and new construction. The capacity of 183 includes 112 in maximum lockup. There are 50 state inmates presently housed in the facility which provide \$900,000 annual income offsetting some of the operating costs.



OUTAGAMIE COUNTY
This jail which can accommodate 500 prisoners is located in a five story building in downtown Appleton. The building also includes courtroom facilities. It was completed in July of 1992 at a cost of \$27 million. It has linear construction and makes extensive use of TV monitoring. There is a central control room where utilities, doors,

When questioned about changes they would make if starting from scratch, the need for more storage space, more maximum security cells, and an outdoor recreation area were mentioned. Consideration should also be given to choosing the best vendor for their computer support.

SUMMARY
It is essential to form a transition team prior to the start of design and continuing through to train people and start up of the new facility. It should take about one month to train people on the operations of

(Continued on next page)

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

a new facility while the jails visited usually allowed only 3 days to 3 weeks. Fire protection, medical facilities, storage and office space are all important items to be

“when asked what they would do differently, the overwhelming response would be to build out of town,”

considered. Easy access from the garage to the booking area is also very important.

This summary in the *“TAX TIMES”* does not cover the difference between sworn officers or paid correctional employees staffing these jails. The report indicates various combinations being used however, with mixed results and reaction from jail officials. This is definitely an issue which will probably have to be addressed quite thoroughly in the planning stage of any new jail as it would be a consideration in the initial layout and be a major, major item in the ongoing costs of operation.

CONCLUSIONS

Although it isn't clear how the people responsible for planning and promoting a new jail for Brown County came up with the \$23.8 million dollar estimate, it does appear that our neighbors in the surrounding counties did give some consideration to their taxpaying constituency, based on existing conditions and need when these structures were constructed. The table at the bottom of the page compares cost and other statistical figures as provided for the four jails included in this report plus estimates for the proposed Brown County Jail.

Other considerations and conclusions:

#1 - It is absolutely essential that all parties who would ever be involved with the operation of a new jail be given an opportunity to give input in the planning stage. This would include personnel staffing the present facility. Any features considered essential should obviously be included, but items deemed frivolous or not being cost-effective should be eliminated. In each of the four jails visited, there were items that would have been done differently if given the opportunity.

#2 - Functional operation and security should be given top consideration, keeping in mind that this is a jail and not a country club. However, state mandates and the safety of the inmates will still be an important factor.

#3 - Consideration of ongoing costs of operation is probably more important than the initial cost of construction. What size security staff will be required, and should they be sworn officers or paid guards? Is it necessary to provide laundry, meals, medical services, etc., in-house or could construction and staffing costs be saved by contracting these out over a period of time? Realistic and accurate figures should be made prior to construction because once a new jail is built, it will be virtually impossible to make changes.

#4 - Let's keep the taxpayer who has to pay the bill for keeping our criminals locked up in mind. There are a lot of other pressing needs and demands for our tax dollars, and quite frankly, this is still just another item no matter what. It would seem that rather than starting out with \$23.8 million and justifying that amount, we could start with something less and try to plan accordingly.

* * * * *

Have We Forgotten Something?

At the time this is written, the states transportation budget bill was still being debated in Madison.

It seems to be boiling down to the conclusion that everything will be OK as long as the price of gas can be increased.

This also seems to be blackmail. Raising the gas tax in Wisconsin is turning out to be an annual event. Raising any tax in our state only enhances our already dubious reputation as living in one of the highest taxed states in the country, by whatever standard is used.

We are in no position to criticize the Dept. of Transportation as we have an excellent system of well maintained highways. It's just that they cost too much.

Their proposed 2-year budget of \$3.2 BILLION, really makes the addition of any increased gasoline taxes appear rather insignificant. Like any new tax revenues it will probably encourage more spending, where the proper approach would be to examine and re-prioritize all costs and projects with the taxpayers in mind. * * * * *

“It is difficult to make our material condition better by the best laws, but it is easy enough to ruin it by bad laws”
... Theodore Roosevelt

Brewers Stadium: Let the Taxpayers Decide.

As this is written, the State Senate had not voted on the highly publicized package intended to finance a new stadium for the Milwaukee Brewers.

From the surface it would appear that passage of package would not have any effect on the residents of this part of the state except to pay a little more when they visit Milwaukee, perhaps to watch a Brewers game.

However, it also sets a dangerous precedent by allowing new taxes to be established almost at will in any prescribed taxing district for whatever purposes can be promoted.

In the event that the promoters of this plan are able to buttonhole enough senators to vote "Yes" on this scheme, it would seem appropriate that the people living in the counties directly effected by the new taxes imposed should be given the opportunity to give their approval with a special referendum. If these voters truly believe it's as good of an investment as the "polls" and high profile lobbyists are leading us to believe, it should have no trouble passing, and support for the new stadium should be universal.

The referendum cost would be minimal compared to the amount already spent lobbying representatives from throughout the state in Madison, and what it is going to cost those residents in the future.

* * * * *

"If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion."
.....George Bernard Shaw

BCTA Dues Notices: "In The Mail"

Just like your magazines, the BCTA uses a cyclical system of mailing annual dues renewal notices. In other words, your re

Continued

newal is due on the month you originally joined the organization.

As advocates of fiscal responsibility, we point with pride to the fact we haven't increased our dues from the time we organized in 1985. \$25.00 for a corporate or business membership, \$20.00 for a family, and only \$12.00 for an individual which amounts to only \$1.00 per month

We recently sent dues notices for the 1995-96 fiscal year to those members applicable, and it is encouraging that such a large number of already responded with their renewals. Many of you have been members of the BCTA since we started and it is gratifying to receive your continued support.

You also have the option of subscribing to the Public Expenditure Survey bulletin, "WISCONSIN ISSUES", for an additional \$10.00 to your dues. The PES is a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization analyzing state and local fiscal affairs, and making its findings available to taxpayer groups, public officials and the media. As most of you are aware, they have been most helpful and supportive of the BCTA.

The Brown County Taxpayers Association operates on a rather slim budget, depending solely on the support of our members. We hope you agree that your membership is a good investment in protecting your tax dollars. Two thirds of our budget is used for printing and mailing our monthly "TAX TIMES" and membership promotion. The balance goes to supplies, telephone answering service, educational materials, etc. All work is done on a volunteer basis, and it is cumbersome to mail extra statements, etc.

Please call me at 336-6410 if there is any question regarding your membership, the BCTA, the Public Expenditure Survey, or if you want me to send information to someone who may be interested in joining the Brown County Taxpayers Association.

Jim Frink, Treasurer

"The only thing that is generally raised on city land is taxes."
.....Charles Dudley Warner

ANNUAL MEETING NOTES

The Brown County Taxpayer Association held it's 10th annual meeting on Thursday, Sept. 21, 1995 at the Day's Inn.

President Tom Sladek reported on BCTA activities during the past year, and listed some of the challenges facing taxpayers during the coming years.

The speaker was Gene Kussart, Executive Assistant to Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Joe Lekan. He explained the Thompson Administration's new welfare system known as W-2: Wisconsin Works.

Mr. Kussart explained that the goal of W-2 is to have full-time, self-supporting jobs for all Wisconsin welfare recipients who are able to work. The new system is to be administered by the counties, who may use their existing staffs, band together in regional units, or hire private contractors. Performance-based contracts will be used.

Teen-age parents may live with their parents, in group homes, or in foster care. W-2 will not be a ticket to independent living for teenage parents.

Robert Jonas, Patrick Moynihan, and Wayne Vander Putten were elected to three-year terms as BCTA directors for the first time. John Beckman, James Dertbique, James Frink and David Nelson were re-elected to three-year terms as BCTA directors.

Officers elected to serve one-year terms are as follows:

- President.....Tom Sladek
- 1st Vice-President.....Robert Miller
- 2nd Vice-President.....Ray Krusic
- Treasurer.....James Frink
- Secretarial.....David Nelson

David Nelson, Secretary

* * * * *

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, Oct. 19, 1995

12:00 Noon - DAY'S INN

Call 469-7373 for reservations

All members and Guests Welcome

BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

BCTA Meeting Schedule

Thursday - October 19, 1995 - DAYS INN - Downtown - 12:00 Noon,
Monthly business meeting, Program to be announced.

Thursday - November 16, 1995 - DAYS INN - Downtown - 12:00 Noon,
Monthly business meeting, Program to be announced.

Thursday - December 21, 1995 - DAYS INN - Downtown - 12:00 Noon,
Monthly business meeting, Program to be announced.

Cost \$6.00 per meeting, payable at door. Call 469-7373 for reservations. (Leave Message)

All members of the Brown County Taxpayers Association and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our monthly meetings.

The TAX TIMES

**BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 684
GREEN BAY, WI 54305-0684**

BULK RATE U. S. Postage PAID Green Bay, WI Permit No. 255

Inside This Issue

Report on new jails in surrounding counties.
Comments on proposed Transportation Budget.
Suggest letting voters decide on tax for stadium.
BCTA Dues statements.
1995 Annual Meeting Report.
