

COLORADO STATE PRISON UTILIZATION STUDY



January 15, 2021

PREFACE

The project team acknowledges the support and guidance provided throughout this project by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). Executive Director Rick Garcia and Chantal Unfug, Director of the Division of Local Government, provided overall direction to the project team. Project Manager Mark Radke and Traci Stoffel, Main Street Specialist, were instrumental in guiding the project team in meeting the statutory requirements for this study. This project could not have been completed on schedule, meeting all requirements without the ongoing support provided by DOLA administrators and staff.

This Document is prepared by CGL Companies, LLC with contributions from RPI Consulting, and JFA & Associates. This document contains the best opinion of the authors at the time of issue. Principal authors include Karl Becker and Brad Sassatelli of CGL; Gabe Preston and Thea Chase of RPI; and Dr. James Austin and Wendy Ware of JFA.

Copyright © 2020 CGL Companies, LLC

This work was created in the performance of work for the State of Colorado, Department of Local Affairs. Any copyright in this work is subject to the Government's Unlimited Rights license as defined in FAR 52-227.14. The reproduction of this work for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. Nongovernmental users may copy and distribute this document in any medium, either commercially or noncommercially, provided that this copyright notice is reproduced in all copies. Nongovernmental users may not use technical measures to obstruct or control the reading or further copying of the copies they make or distribute. Nongovernmental users may not accept compensation of any manner in exchange for copies. All other rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 1 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 13 |
| 2. PRISON CAPACITY OVERVIEW..... | 17 |
| 3. POPULATION ANALYSIS..... | 36 |
| 4. PRISON CAPACITY UTILIZATION..... | 59 |
| 5. FACILITY SUMMARIES..... | 66 |
| 6. CAPACITY USE ANALYSIS..... | 79 |
| 7. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS..... | 90 |
| 8. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION..... | 129 |
| 9. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENT..... | 169 |
| 10. ADVISORY COMMITTEE..... | 170 |
| APPENDIX A: DATA..... | 176 |
| APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS..... | 178 |
| APPENDIX C: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FACILITY CAPITAL NEEDS..... | 181 |
| APPENDIX D: RECORD OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENT..... | 185 |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a review of the amount and type of prison capacity required by the State of Colorado. The study also provides an assessment of the economic impacts of private prisons on communities and potential means for diversifying local economies that are reliant on privately owned prisons for jobs and revenue.

As mandated by Colorado General Assembly House Bill 20-1019 authorizing this study, the project team reviewed current capacity use in each correctional facility in the state prison system and developed new recommended capacity levels as needed, reflecting current management practices, consistent with the Department's definition of operational capacity. The resulting calculations represent the number of beds available for general population housing consistent with facility custody level and in accordance with professional standards and best practices in correctional system management.

Based on current available projections of the state prison population, our analysis indicates that the system's current operational capacity, as recommended in this report, should be maintained at current levels. Despite the current number of vacant beds in the prison system, there is substantial uncertainty in the key factors and policies that drive the inmate population. Recent prison population forecasts in fact show projected growth in the inmate population that suggests current vacant beds will be needed in the next few years. Accordingly, any moves to close facilities are inadvisable at this time.

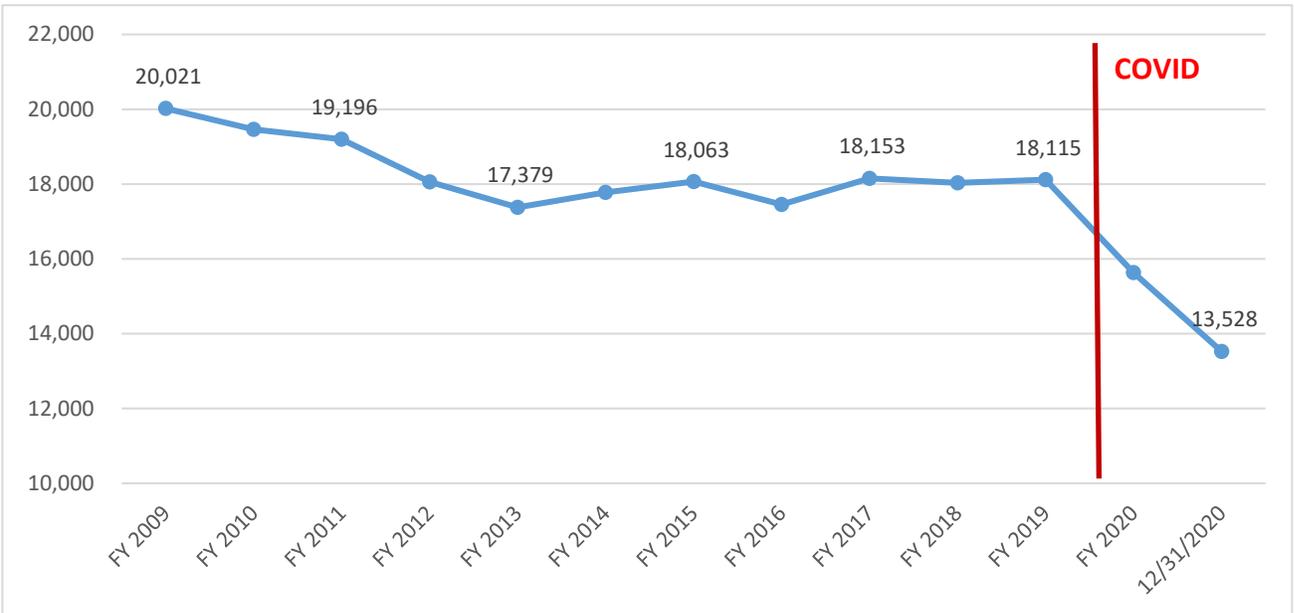
However, if the female population continues to fall, consolidation of the entire female population at Denver Women's Correctional Facility will become a viable alternative. A reduced female population could make the closure of La Vista Correctional Facility feasible.

Inmate Population Trends

After peaking at over 20,000 inmates in FY 2009, the state's prison population fell steadily over the next four years before stabilizing at slightly over 18,000 inmates from FY 2015 – FY 2019. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, admissions to the Department dropped by 50 percent, lowering the prison population to 13,528 inmates by December 31, 2020. This represents the largest sustained reduction in the prison population in the state's history.



Figure 1: Colorado State Prison Population, FY 2009 – November 2020



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections

The majority of this decline can be attributed to the disruption of jury trials, the temporary suspension of DOC's ability to receive and take custody of prisoners, the dramatic reduction in violations (from both parole and probation) being returned to prison, and an increase in discretionary parole releases. It is unclear, given the current state of the pandemic, when operations will return to normal and when the impact of backlogged cases will be recorded.

Prison System Capacity

This analysis documented an operational capacity of 17,644 beds for adults in the state prison system as well as 271 beds at the Youthful Offender System facility. Consistent with accepted definitions of operational capacity, this does not count special use beds which includes 652 restrictive housing beds and 88 medical/infirmarary beds. Additionally, 708 unfunded beds from the recently closed Skyline Correctional Center, the remaining vacant tower at Centennial Correctional Facility, and a 140 bed cellhouse undergoing renovation at the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility are not included in the total operational capacity.



On December 31, 2020 the Department housed 13,528 inmates in adult prisons. With a recommended operational capacity of 17,644 beds, this results in 4,116 vacant beds, or a vacancy rate of 23.3 percent. Nearly 30 percent of these vacant beds are in the Department's five specialty facilities, the Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center, Denver Women's Correctional Facility, La Vista Correctional Facility, Centennial Correctional Facility, and San Carlos Correctional Facility. Population levels in these facilities are more sensitive to prison admissions and have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 policies that have depressed intake into the state prison system.

Level I, minimum security facilities have a 49.0 percent vacancy rate, based on recommended operational capacity, even after the closure of Skyline earlier this year. This reflects both the diversion of low-level offenders away from the prison system as well as the Department's internal policy of minimizing inter-facility movement in order to mitigate the spread of COVID -19. This policy makes it more difficult for inmates to progress to Level I facilities prior to release.

As a group, the Level III facilities, which house a predominantly medium security population, have the fewest vacant beds. The two Level III private correctional facilities have notably low vacancy rates, with a 10.7 percent vacancy rate at Bent County and 15.3 percent at Crowley County.

Future Projections

Given the massive changes in the criminal justice system in 2020 related to COVID-19, reliable, long-term forecasting of the state prison population is problematic at this time. Significant uncertainty regarding key factors affecting the prison population includes:

COVID duration. Despite the imminent release of vaccines to protect the public from COVID-19, there is no consensus on when mitigation efforts will achieve success in eradicating, or at least minimizing, COVID-19 in correctional systems or among the offenders entering prison. The projected duration of the extraordinary policies implemented to control the pandemic in the prison system is unknown. The backlog of inmates sentenced to prison but held in local jails had grown to 1,079 by the end of December 2020.

Justice system policy changes. The state justice system responded to the pandemic with a wide range of policy initiatives and operational changes designed to reduce the number



of inmates held in the state prison system. Although data is limited, many of these changes appear to have had a significant impact in reducing the prison population without corresponding negative effects on public safety. The extent to which the justice system will continue these policy changes versus simply returning to the status quo that existed before the pandemic is unknowable.

Long-term Impact of statutory changes. In 2019, Colorado enacted a number of criminal justice reforms that reduced pressure on the prison population. These included changes in the classification of escapes from community corrections, work release, or intensive parole supervision programs; reclassification of possession-related drug felonies to misdemeanors; and changes to the parole release and revocation process. The impact of these changes was just beginning to be registered in the prison system in the months prior to the pandemic. Their long-term impact is not yet determined.

Crime trends. Colorado experienced a downward trend in violent crime until 2019. Since the onset of the pandemic, anecdotal information indicates that certain types of violent crime such as domestic violence continue to increase, while property and drug crime rates have fallen. Arrests for many classes of crime have declined but it is unclear as to the degree to which this reflects a change in the incidence of these crimes, or a change in law enforcement practices. The future direction of these crime trends and the degree to which they will filter into state prison population trends is unknown.

Sentencing Reform. The Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice Sentencing Task Force has commenced a multi-year project to re-write the state's sentencing system. The Task Force is beginning with a review of misdemeanor sentencing but is expected to issue recommendations for felony sentencing reform within the next 2-3 years. These recommendations will have a significant impact on admissions and length of stay in the state prison system.

While long-term forecasting faces significant challenges in this environment, forecasters can focus on profiling where and how the reductions are being seen, who is being released early, and not admitted. In December 2020, the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) presented a prison population forecast looking at these elements and determined the largest contributing factors to the reduction in the prison population were a reduction in parole violations returns (due to COVID-19 response), reduction in new court commitments (due to COVID-19 response) and an increase discretionary parole releases



(results of Senate Bill 19-143 and COVID-19 response). The forecast indicates that the jurisdictional inmate population will continue to fall through the first six months of 2021, rebounding by the end of the year as the backlog of inmates in county jails, court cases, and trials created by the pandemic is addressed. The system should thereafter return to a pattern of growth, increasing by 3,864 inmates from the end of FY 2020-21 through FY 2026-27. The projection tracks closely with population trends through the last six months of 2020. However, given the degree of uncertainty in the projections, it is critical that policymakers update capacity plans annually as these projections change.

Capacity Management

A comparison of the DCJ projection to the recommended operational capacity for the Department shows that projected growth in the prison system over the next five years will fill the currently vacant beds in the prison system. As noted above however, there is substantial uncertainty regarding a number of key assumptions that underly the population projections.

This level of uncertainty underscores the need for caution in making any significant changes in current prison system capacity. The current DCJ projections represent the best assessment of the future size of the state prison population at this time. Future projections can reduce these uncertainties as data becomes available to support more definitive analysis. However, at this time, the magnitude of uncertainty and current projections indicate current operational capacity should be maintained to address overall system needs over the period covered by the DCJ projections.

The long-term growth in the inmate population projected by DCJ, indicates a long-term need for increased system capacity. The Department currently has 708 unfunded beds in the prison system that could be activated if needed. In addition, closed private correctional facilities in Huerfano County, Burlington, Colorado Springs, and Hudson are available for lease or purchase by the state. These private facilities have 4,218 beds available to accommodate future state prison capacity needs. The combination of unused state and private prison capacity available in the state appears more than sufficient to cover any foreseeable increase in the prison population

If the state prison population does not reverse its recent decline and increase as forecast by DCJ, but instead continues to decrease, the Department could face a need to close currently used capacity. Assuming a continued decline in low-custody offenders



consistent with trends experienced in 2020, the Department could reduce current capacity by closing Level I and II facilities. Because Level V, IV, and III facilities have the ability to house inmates in multiple classification levels, the Department has much greater flexibility in managing capacity utilization in these institutions. In fact, these facilities currently house 55 percent of the minimum custody population.

The three Level I facilities have a recommended operational capacity of 798 beds and have a current vacancy rate of 49 percent. If the low-custody offender population continues to experience a significant decline, and the Level V, IV, and III facilities retain the capacity to efficiently manage inmates in this custody level, then the future viability of the Level I facilities needs to be examined.

An alternative approach to managing population reductions would prioritize preserving the operations of current state facilities and drawing down the contracted population at one or both of the two remaining privately operated facilities to reflect overall system population declines. Although the private facilities have the lowest per capita operating cost in the state prison system, the structure of the state contract with CoreCivic allows the state to save the entire per diem cost for each inmate it reduces from these facilities' populations.

However, like state prisons, private facilities have the same fixed operating costs which do not decline even as the facility's population declines. Because they lose the full per diem revenue for each inmate reduction in the population, reducing the inmate population can rapidly make a private facility unprofitable, and financially not viable. Reducing the population of the private facilities by hundreds of inmates runs the risk of losing these facilities entirely.

The other issue with reducing the inmate count at medium security private facilities is that, based on the state's experience in 2020, the Department's greatest demand for capacity will likely remain in Level III prison beds. Reducing the use of private prison Level III facilities could run counter to that actual capacity needs of the prison system.

Other significant capacity management issues include:

Female capacity needs. The Department's female offender population is dropping faster than the male population, falling by 41 percent this year. Both Denver Women's' and the La Vista female facility have a substantial number of vacant beds. At the end of December



31, 2020, Denver Women's had 312 vacant beds, enough to house the entire La Vista population. If the female population continues to fall, consolidation of the entire female population at Denver Women's will become a viable alternative, enabling the closure or repurposing of La Vista.

While this action would produce substantial cost savings, La Vista does provide a more normative environment that is better aligned for the needs of female offenders, as compared to Denver Women's which has a Level V physical plant and security systems consistent with a close custody population. Should the system female population continue to fall, the Department will need to weigh the relative benefits provided by the rehabilitative environment at La Vista compared to efficiencies offered by consolidating the female population in one facility.

Close custody management. Currently the Department has 1,998 close custody offenders dispersed in eleven facilities. Management of close custody offenders poses significant management challenges and requires more intensive staffing and specialized programming. Consolidating the close custody population into fewer facilities would allow for more efficient use of available resources and the more suitable housing of this population into facilities that were designed for close custody inmates.

Centennial has 612 close custody beds available for relocating close custody offenders from other facilities. This housing can be utilized to house close custody inmate populations currently housed in Sterling, Buena Vista, and Limon. This action would free up capacity for additional, needed medium security housing at these facilities and would also improve operating conditions while reducing staffing needs.

Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility long-term outlook. The Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility (CTCF) is one of the oldest operating prisons in the United States. Given its age, the facility is in good condition and fills several critical functions for state prison system, including the operation of one the state's two prison infirmaries. The facility also provides housing and programs for inmates who are geriatric, mobility or hearing impaired, developmentally disabled, and trans-gender.

The Department has identified over \$113 million in future capital projects for the CTCF. The majority of these projects focus on long-term infrastructure needs. The sheer volume of identified capital needs at the facility raises issues of the benefit of continued, substantial long-term investment. Given the facility's unique medical care mission and



services provided for inmates with special needs, the Department needs to evaluate the future utility of the facility and assess potential alternatives for the delivery of these services.

Economic Impact Analysis – Crowley and Bent County

The project team also conducted a review of the economic impact of the private prisons in Crowley and Bent County upon the local communities.

Revenues for Public Services. The Crowley County Correctional Facility and the Bent County Correctional Facility provide revenues for local governments and other public service providers in each county. Unlike state-owned correctional facilities, privately owned prisons are required to pay commercial property tax, which is used to fund local governments, fire protection, ambulance service, schools, and other public services. As large and intensive facilities, correctional facilities are major customers for water, sewer, electrical and solid waste utilities and they pay a large portion of the revenues to the local government enterprises and organizations that provide public utilities.

The effects of these facilities on public service providers occurs separately in Crowley County and in Bent County according to the unique organizations and revenue structures in each. Crowley County Correctional Facility generated \$2.2 million in revenues for the county and six other public service providers in 2019, which included \$1.4 million in property taxes. Forty-four percent (44%) of countywide property taxes and 42% of school district taxes were paid by Crowley County Correctional Facility. Bent County Correctional Facility generated \$2.6 million in revenue for the county and eight other public service providers in 2019, \$1.1 million of which was property tax. Bent County Correctional Facility paid 18.3% of countywide property taxes and 25% of the Las Animas School District property taxes in 2019. The revenues for public service providers generated by both of these facilities combined in 2019 was \$4.8 million.

Economic Impacts. This analysis shows the economic effects on Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties of the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility during 2018 and 2019. The Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities are economic drivers because they put new money into the economy. Correctional facilities pay for utilities and make some limited retail purchases, but the most significant economic impacts are from the spending of wages and other compensation earned by locals who work at the facilities.



There were a combined 480 filled positions at the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility during 2018-2019, 14 of which were part-time. The company paid just less than \$30 million in compensation each year. Fourteen percent (14%) or 67 workers live in Bent County, bringing in \$4.13 million in annual earnings, which made up 6.3% of all of the labor income earned in Bent County households in 2018. Eighty workers or 16.6% lived in Crowley County, bringing in \$4.9 million in annual earnings, which was 11% of all labor income earned by Crowley County households in 2018. Otero County was home to 141 workers who brought in \$8.7 million in annual earnings, which was 2.6% of all labor income earned by Otero County households in 2018. The remaining 40% of the workforce lived in other counties.

The \$17,742,500 in annual earnings and 288 jobs held by Crowley, Bent, Otero County residents at the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Accounting for RIMS-II multipliers, the 288 jobs and \$17,742,500 in earnings become 333.6 jobs and \$19,460,000 in total economic output. Similarly, \$1,817,200 in annual utility payments by the facilities becomes \$2,097,400 in total output and represents 2.8 full-time equivalent jobs. \$302,800 in retail purchases at local businesses becomes \$371,500 in total output and represents 4.6 full-time equivalent jobs in the retail sector.

The combined total economic output in 2019 within Crowley, Bent, and Otero Counties from the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities was \$25,880,100 which includes \$19,825,200 in earnings and represents 341 full time equivalent jobs.

Business Development and Diversification Strategy: Crowley, Bent & Otero Counties

The Business Development and Diversification Strategy component of this study provides recommendations for diversification of the economies in rural Southeast Colorado, specifically the areas directly impacted by Crowley County Correctional Facility and/or Bent County Correctional Facility.

The Business Development and Diversification Strategy is an opportunity to chart a longer-term plan and near-term actions for economic diversification and growth for Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties. Implementing these strategies and recommendations would be worthwhile and would incrementally make a difference over several years, but these future efforts would not mitigate the significant shocks to employment and income

that would result from the closure or substantial reduction of either or both of the private prisons. To identify opportunities and recommendations, the consultant team used Ecosystem framework that evaluated Policy (business friendliness of Government and Leadership), Finance (the variety of financial capital instruments in the region), Culture (community support for small business and entrepreneurship), Supports (infrastructure and support services for a healthy business sector), Human Capital (education and labor), Markets (customers and business networks). The comprehensive ecosystem review pointed toward four focus areas including:

1) Small Business Incubator at Ft. Lyon (SECO SBI) - Current efforts are underway at Ft. Lyon to start a business incubation program. A former VA hospital and correctional facility, Ft. Lyon is a 500-acre complex with 109 buildings. The primary tenant is the Supportive Residential Community (SRC) run by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH). The partners on the project include Bent County Development Foundation (BCDF), Southeast Colorado Small Business Development Center (SECO SBDC), Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. SECO SBI proposes to combine 2 components - Business Incubation and Workforce Training. The preliminary vision for SECO SBI is workforce related. Some traction and funding in the vocational training component exists with DOLA receiving an EPA Workforce Development Grant for the residential program to develop programming to address asbestos and HAZMAT remediation, as well as wastewater treatment, and other training programs tied to these industries. The recommendations in this report center on conducting a feasibility study which would reduce risk by providing a thorough evaluation of the market for business incubation and developing a business plan that would outline a roadmap for success. Without a feasibility study, it is not possible to estimate the economic impact of this effort.

2) Innovation and Entrepreneurship in K-12 Education –Recommendations focus on innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship programs within the K-12 grade system. Current efforts to support innovation and entrepreneurship need a more organized regional approach that can consolidate and sustain the funding needed to be effective. The programs could be supported by a non-profit that will serve beyond district and BOCES boundaries and funding could come from major foundations such as the Gates Family Foundation. An innovation coordinator would manage the mobile learning lab and develop/manage makerspaces in each district. An entrepreneurship coordinator (EC)

would organize entrepreneurship fairs and coordinate with local businesses for student internships and tours.

3) Cannabis Innovation Center and Testing Laboratory – As the cannabis industry grows so does the potential for innovation technologies to increase productivity and profits. Crowley County legalized recreational grow and manufacturing with unlimited licenses, and currently has 32 recreational marijuana cultivators. One recommended strategy is to recruit a marijuana testing laboratory to serve cultivators, product manufacturers, and industrial hemp industries. A related strategy is to develop a Cannabis Innovation Center. Colorado’s accelerator licensing program, Senate bill 19-224 established a new “license” effective January 2021 that allows co-location and support for cannabis startups and cannabis business accelerator licenses will now be available to social equity applicants. The Cannabis Innovation Center could include business development and acceleration services and a shared innovation facility including a greenhouse, laboratory, manufacturing facilities.

4) Manufacturing Cluster Support – There are over 23 manufacturers in Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties that range from startups to publicly traded companies. To further grow the industry, consultants recommend 1) a manufacturing support program for existing businesses covering topics such as markets, process, pivot opportunities; 2) training programs in ISO certification, lean manufacturing and other topics; and 3) to explore the need/demand for startup, small manufacturing space at La Junta Industrial Park.

Public Comment

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) hosted two public hearings to provide residents of Bent and Crowley Counties and the surrounding communities the opportunity for direct public testimony and input to their County Commissioners and the Colorado Division of Local Government on the impacts of the private/public prisons in our communities. The Crowley County public hearing was held on November 30, 2020 and the Bent County hearing was held on December 1, 2020. Due to public health concerns, both hearings were conducted remotely, using Zoom video meeting technology. Participants were also allowed the opportunity to call in to the hearings.

The Crowley County hearing saw 80 attendees, with 30 citizens offering public testimony, all but one in support of the private prisons. Most testimony described the high quality of



services and operations provided to the state by the Crowley County Correctional Facility as well as the importance of the facility to the local economy.

The Bent County hearing saw 93 attendees, with 33 citizens offering public testimony. Three persons expressed negative views of private prisons generally. The remaining testimony all supported the private prisons, again emphasizing the value to the state provided by these institutions and their critical role in the local economy.

Transcripts of the actual testimony provided in these hearings, as well as written comments received, are included in Appendix D. A link to the recorded testimony is currently available at <https://cdola.colorado.gov/prison-study>.



1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Colorado requires a safe, secure prison system that provides adequate capacity to meet current and future justice system needs in an efficient and effective manner. In August 2020, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs contracted with CGL Companies (CGL) to study the utilization of capacity in the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC).

This study was mandated by the Colorado General Assembly. During the 2020 legislative session the General Assembly enacted House Bill 20-1019 *Concerning Measures to Manage the State Prison Population*. Section 4 of the Act directs the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to “contract with a nationally recognized research and consulting entity to study future prison bed needs in Colorado.” The term “beds” means the housing capacity of the State’s various correctional facilities, public and private, including all the associated services and infrastructure needed in order for those beds to be occupied by inmates.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This project provides support for the Judiciary Committees of the General Assembly in identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing options for the best future use of available public and private inmate beds. The project analysis reviews the amount of prison capacity required by the state as well as the types of prison beds needed. The study also provides an assessment of the economic impacts of prisons on communities and potential means for diversifying local economies that are reliant on privately owned prisons for jobs and revenue.

METHODOLOGY

Assessing the utilization of capacity in a state correctional system requires a sophisticated approach to documenting current capacity resources, review of policies guiding prison utilization, and analysis of correctional system performance. This project also requires a detailed approach to assessment of the economic impacts of correctional facilities on local economies and identification of potential mitigation strategies. The project team used a comprehensive information-gathering and data review process that utilized five primary approaches: document review, stakeholder interviews, economic data analysis, individual facility reviews, and public hearings.

Document review: Capacity needs are essentially driven by the size, characteristics, and growth rate of the state’s prison population. Accordingly, the project team reviewed reports on state prison population characteristics, classification, staffing, cost, capital needs, facility programs, and capacity utilization. We also reviewed Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) reports on prison population projections, community corrections programs, and parole. Appendix A presents a summary of documents reviewed over the course of the study.

Stakeholder Interviews: In order to gain background and context for the review, we conducted interviews with key justice system stakeholders as well as Department of Corrections wardens and program administrators. These interviews focused on internal perspectives of the key prison capacity management issues, their impact on the rest of the justice system, and opportunities to address system needs. Stakeholders interviewed represented public safety experts, victim’s advocates, prosecutors, probation, and community reentry providers. Interview subjects provided invaluable insight into the unique challenges facing the state prison system. Appendix B lists the persons interviewed for this report. All interviews were conducted by teleconference due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Facility Reviews: Members of the project team conducted review sessions with the management team of each current facility in the state prison system. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these reviews were conducted remotely by teleconference. Members of the project team reviewed all of these facilities in person during the 2013 State Prison Utilization Study. These reviews verified available housing, programs, and support facility capacity. Based on this assessment, the project team documented current capacity by the following major prisoner classification groupings:

- General population
- Restricted housing
- Protective custody
- Residential Treatment Programs
- Infirmary
- Holding/intake/classification



The review resulted in a bed census of each facility by classification, security-risk levels, and function. With this data on capacity and current utilization, the study assessed the fit between the current security profile of the population and available system capacity.

Economic Data Analysis: This section of the report examines the economic impact of the privately-operated prisons in Bent and Crowley counties on their respective communities. The analysis examines the impact of these facilities on local government revenue, employment, and other associated economic activity. The privately-owned correctional facilities derive all of their income from outside of the regional economy and are significant economic drivers. Correctional facilities pay for utilities and make some limited retail purchases, but the most significant economic impacts are from the spending of wages and other compensation earned by locals who work at the facilities. This analysis shows the economic effects of the Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities during 2018 and 2019 on Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties. RIMS-II Multipliers were applied to estimate total output which was analyzed separately for Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties and as a single region.

Privately owned prisons are a business and as such they pay property taxes, sales taxes and pay for utilities and various fees for other public services. Using financial audits and budget actuals, this analysis itemizes the revenues generated by the Bent and Crowley County Correctional Facilities during 2018 and 2019 for local governments, special districts, school districts and other public service providers.

Public Hearings. In order to obtain a more detailed understanding of the impact of the private prisons on local economies, the project team conducted two public hearings in Bent and Crowley Counties. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the hearings were conducted online with the option to use a video conferencing facility provided in each county.

Over the course of the study, the project team also provided regular briefings to the Advisory Committee established in support of the project.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

Chapter 2 of this report reviews current prison capacity management in in the state prison system, as well as past trends and policies.

Chapter 3 assesses the characteristics and custody needs of the state inmate population as well as projections for future changes in the prison population.



Chapter 4 provides a detailed assessment of the DOC's capacity utilization by facility, function, custody profile, and spending.

Chapter 5 summarizes our facility assessments and evaluates the utility of each facility relative to overall system needs.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of key prison system capacity management issues.

Chapter 7 examines the impact on local communities of closing private facilities.

Chapter 8 presents a strategy for business diversification for communities with private prisons.

Chapter 9 summarizes the public hearings and community testimony regarding the private prisons.

Chapter 10 presents formal comments on the project by the members of the Advisory Committee.

2. PRISON CAPACITY OVERVIEW

There are a number of different approaches to defining and quantifying prison capacity. In Colorado, the Department of Corrections (DOC) uses “operational capacity” as the basis for establishing the number of beds available in the prison system. As used by the Department, operational capacity is an administrative determination of the maximum number of offenders that a facility can house safely while providing basic services. This approach explicitly factors in the facility mission, housing layout, and the characteristics of the inmates housed in the facility.

Operational capacity is determined by identifying the total number of beds available in a facility, consistent with the mission of the institution, and then subtracting those beds that must be reserved for special purposes. This would include infirmary beds, restricted housing for disciplinary purposes, holding cells, and beds reserved to hold inmates under investigation. These types of prison beds are set aside for the use of inmates that require some type of special treatment or separation from the general inmate population of a facility. Accordingly, they are not available to house general population inmates and do not count toward the operational capacity of a correctional institution.

In accord with this definition, the project team’s approach to documenting operational capacity identifies the total number of beds in each correctional facility, deducts special-purpose beds as identified above, and accounts for management determination of appropriate population density. For example, maximum security capacity is typically one bed per cell, medium security facilities house two inmates per cell, and minimum security facilities often house inmates in multi-bed housing areas. The resulting number of beds available to house the general population of a facility constitutes its operational capacity.

CUSTODY LEVEL

The Department categorizes prison capacity into five different levels, based on the custody classification of the offenders to be housed there. The facility designations generally correspond to increasing levels of security for each classification of offender. Facilities may house offenders classified at or below the custody level designation. This provides institutions with flexibility to house lower-security offenders if necessary, in response to overall system housing needs and recognizes that the design of a number of facilities accommodates different levels of housing unit security.



Facilities with specific designated functions such as system intake or mental health treatment receive a Level V designation. Level V facilities also serve as the primary source of capacity for close custody offenders. Level IV provides housing for both close custody and medium security offenders. Level III facilities may house close custody offenders, but primarily houses medium custody offenders. Level II facilities house only minimum-restricted and minimum security offenders. Level I facilities house only minimum custody offenders.

Table 1 summarizes the custody level criteria for offenders to be housed at each facility and the corresponding facility level designations:

Table 1: DOC Facility Custody Level Designations

| Custody Level | Facilities |
|--|--|
| Level V: Mixed, may house close custody offenders and offenders with lower classification levels, as well as inmates in designated special statuses. Highest level of physical security with double perimeter fencing, razor wire, detection devices and continuous perimeter patrols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado State Penitentiary • Denver Women’s Correctional Facility • Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center • San Carlos Correctional Facility • Sterling Correctional Facility • Centennial Correctional Facility |
| Level IV: Mixed, may house close custody, medium custody, and offenders with lower classification levels. Security features include towers, double perimeter fence with razor wire, and detection devices and continuous perimeter patrols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limon Correctional Facility |
| Level III: Mixed, may house close custody offenders and offenders with lower classification levels. Security features include towers, double perimeter fence with razor wire, and detection devices and continuous perimeter patrols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility • Buena Vista Correctional Complex • Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility • Fremont Correctional Facility • La Vista Correctional Facility • Youthful Offenders System • Bent County Correctional Facility • Crowley County Correctional Facility |
| Level II: Mixed, may house minimum-restricted custody and minimum custody offenders. Security includes single or double perimeter fencing, with periodic perimeter patrols. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrowhead Correctional Center • Buena Vista Minimum Center • Four Mile Correctional Center • Trinidad Correctional Center • Sterling Correctional Facility-East |



| Custody Level | Facilities |
|---|---|
| Level I: May house only minimum custody offenders. These facilities have designated boundaries but do not require perimeter fences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Correctional Center • Delta Correctional Center • Rifle Correctional Center • Skyline Correctional Center • Community Correction Centers |

Source: Department of Corrections Administrative Regulation 600-01, effective July 15, 2019.

In terms of overall system management, the distribution of prison capacity by Level should correspond to the current and projected classification profile of the inmate population, ensuring appropriate levels of security to manage the inmate population and assure efficient allocation of DOC resources. To the extent that system bed capacity by Level does not approximate the distribution of inmates by custody category, the system could experience significant bed vacancies in some institutions, or housing practices that do not comply with classification regulations.

CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

Prison system capacity management must also consider operational issues that may constrain bed utilization. Simple logistics dictate that keeping all beds occupied 100 percent of the time is a practical impossibility, given the ongoing movement of inmates into and out of the system for court dates, medical treatment, and releases. Particularly in older facilities, cells must be temporarily taken out of commission for maintenance on an ongoing basis. Physical plant infrastructure issues can also develop that require taking otherwise available prison beds off-line. Finally, institutional policies on housing specific types of inmates will necessarily limit use of capacity. For example, a facility may have only 30 inmates designated as protective custody to house in a 48-bed protective custody housing unit, and therefore will not be able to fully utilize all of the unit’s capacity. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has dictated that prisons decrease population density and make less intensive use of available capacity in order to better control disease spread throughout the inmate population.

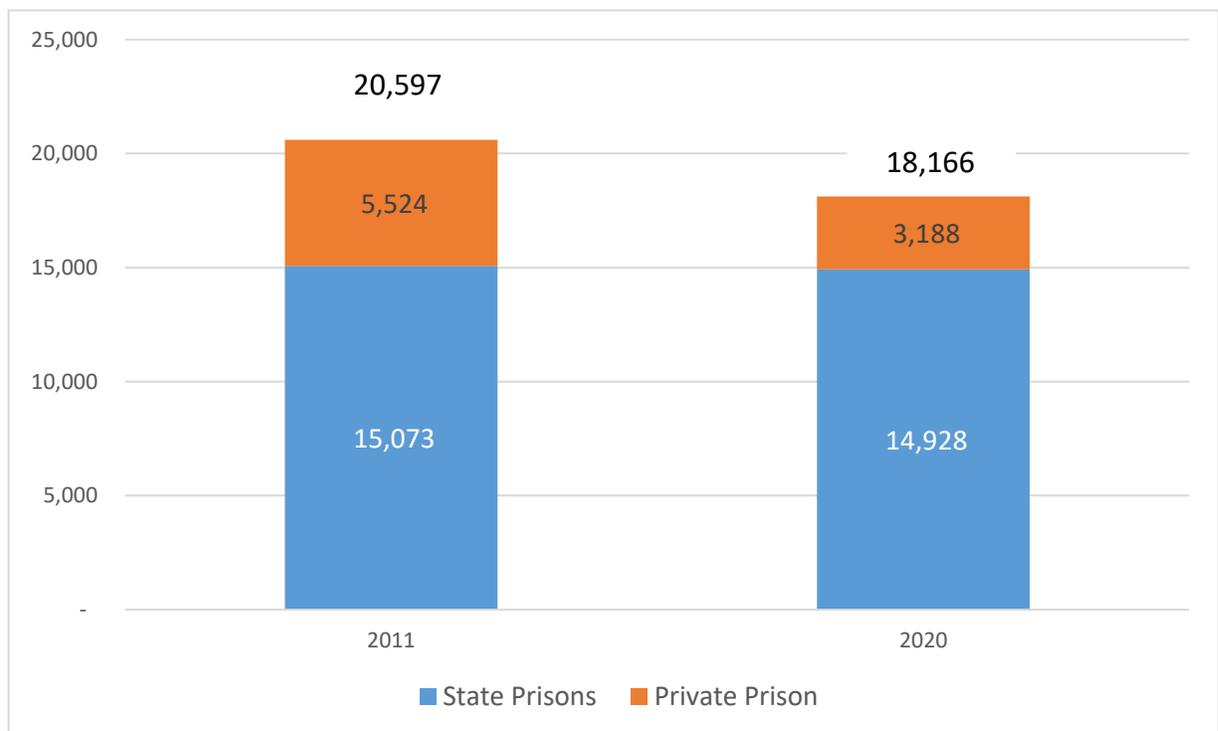
Capacity management then, must account for the complex and dynamic relationship between the number of beds in a facility’s housing unit design, and a variety of administrative, program, and operational factors that place limits on the use of these beds. Ideally, state correctional systems want to maintain a margin of readily available

vacant beds in the range of 2 - 5 percent of systemwide general population capacity. This level of available capacity provides management flexibility to respond to these issues.

HISTORY

Over the last ten years Colorado state prison system operational capacity has declined from 20,597 at the end of FY 2010-11 to 18,116 as of December 31, 2020, a reduction of 12.1 percent. State-operated facility capacity fell from 15,073 to 14,928, a reduction of 1.0 percent, and private prison capacity declined from 5,524 to 3,188, a reduction of 42.3 percent as shown in Figure 2. The reduction in private prison beds utilized by the Department reflects a basic approach of maximizing the use of the state owned facilities and using private contract beds to manage the balance of system housing needs.

Figure 2: DOC Capacity, 2011 - 2020



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

Since FY 2010-11, the Department has closed several state-operated facilities which managed specialized programs, including a boot camp program at Buena Vista, housing for elderly and infirm inmates at the former Fort Lyons Veteran’s Home, and a segregation facility at Centennial. The Centennial facility was partially reopened as a close



custody facility in FY 2019-20. This drop in prison capacity mirrors the long-term reduction in the prison population since FY 2010-11. Table 2 summarizes major changes in system capacity over the past ten years.

Table 2: DOC Capacity Changes, 2011 - 2020

| Fiscal Year | Facility | Beds | Comments |
|-------------|--------------|---------|--|
| 2010-11 | Buena Vista | (100) | Closed boot camp program |
| 2011-12 | Fort Lyon | (500) | Closed facility for elderly/infirm inmates |
| 2012-13 | Centennial | (316) | Closed segregation facility |
| 2016-17 | Kit Carson | (1,562) | Terminated contract |
| 2019-20 | Centennial | 612 | Reopened South Tower |
| 2019-20 | Cheyenne Mt. | (776) | Vendor terminated contract |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

Given that the private prison facilities have all been designated as Level III facilities, the reductions in private prison capacity have produced a 24 percent reduction in the Department’s overall Level III capacity. The reduction in Level III capacity exceeds the entire reduction in capacity experienced by the Department since FY 2010-11.

Table 3: Changes in System Capacity by Custody Level, 2011 – 2020

| | 2011 | 2020 | Change |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Level I | 1,075 | 1,050 | (25) |
| Level II | 1,527 | 1,541 | 14 |
| Level III | 11,371 | 8,620 | (2,751) |
| Level IV | 898 | 930 | 32 |
| Level V | 5,726 | 5,975 | 249 |
| Total | 20,597 | 18,116 | (2,481) |

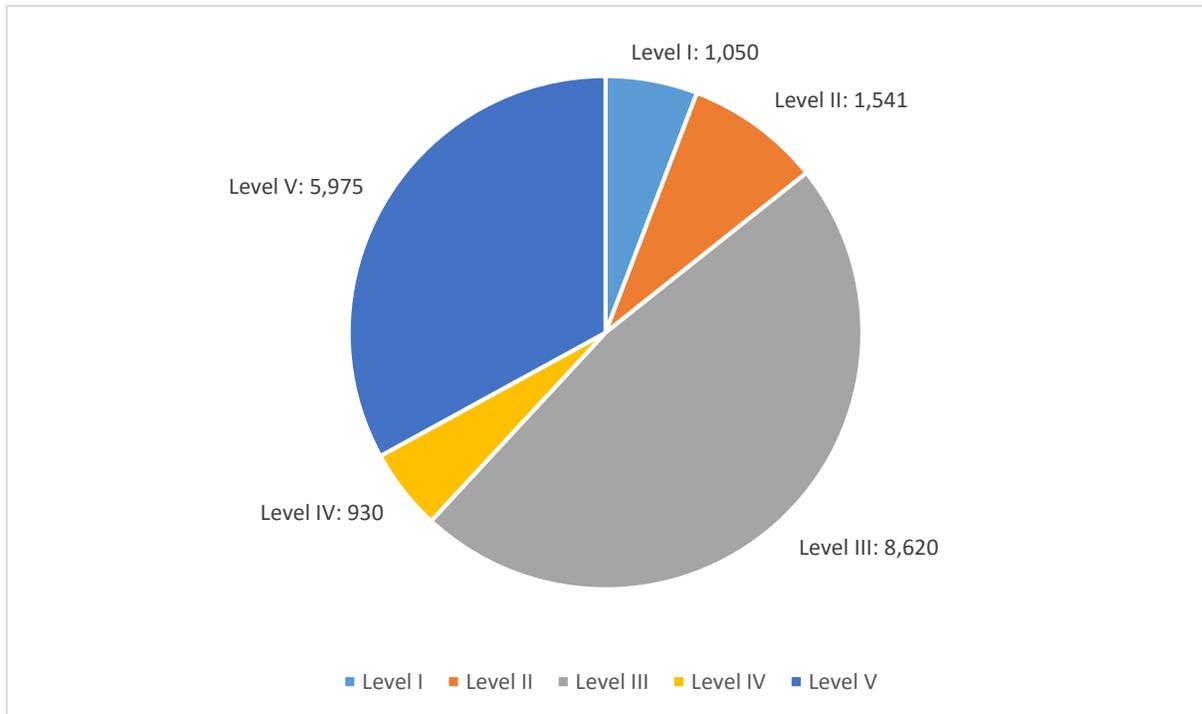
Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

CURRENT CAPACITY PROFILE

As of December 31, 2020, the Department managed 14,928 state prison beds and contracted with private facilities in Bent County and Crowley County for an additional 3,188 beds. As of this date, the state prison population consisted of 13,528 inmates. This represents a prison capacity utilization rate of 74.7 percent, which is the lowest recorded rate of prison capacity use experienced by the Department in its history.

Approximately 80 percent of the Department’s bed capacity is in Level III and Level V facilities. Level I and II facilities which are dedicated to minimum security inmates comprise 14 percent of system capacity. Figure 3 shows the current distribution of operational bed capacity by facility custody level.

Figure 3: DOC Capacity by Facility Custody Level

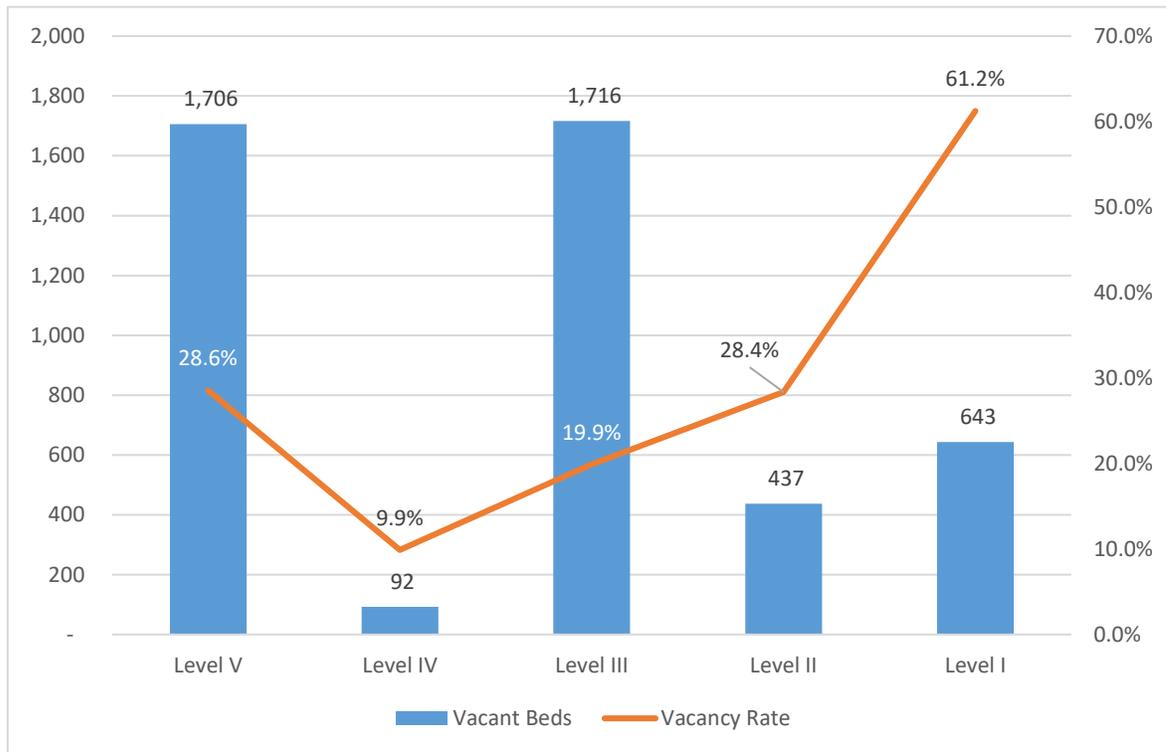


Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

Level V and III facilities have the largest number of vacant beds in the system, which roughly corresponds with their overall share of DOC capacity. State COVID policies designed to reduce the volume of offenders admitted into the Department have driven relatively high vacancy rates in specialized Level V facilities such as the Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center, San Carlos Correctional Facility, and the Denver Women’s Correctional Facility. Due to their specialized missions, these Level V facilities, which contain over 1,800 beds, do not house large numbers of male general population inmates. This diminishes the Department’s flexibility in the use of capacity at these facilities. By contrast, the Department’s one Level IV facility at Limon houses all classifications of male general population inmates and accordingly has the lowest number of vacant beds in the prison system.

Level I facilities have the largest percentage of vacant beds in the prison system, at 61.2 percent. COVID-related policies have maximized the diversion of lower custody offenders out of the prison system, thus resulting in higher vacancy rates for these facilities. Current limits on movement between facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID have also minimized the normal transfer of inmates to lower custody facilities as they complete program requirements and prepare for release. The fact that these facilities can house only minimum-security inmates, while the other facilities house multiple categories of inmates reduces the Department’s flexibility in making use of these facilities. Figure 4 shows the number of vacant beds and the percentage of vacant beds relative to current capacity by facility custody level.

Figure 4: DOC Vacant Beds by Facility Custody Level



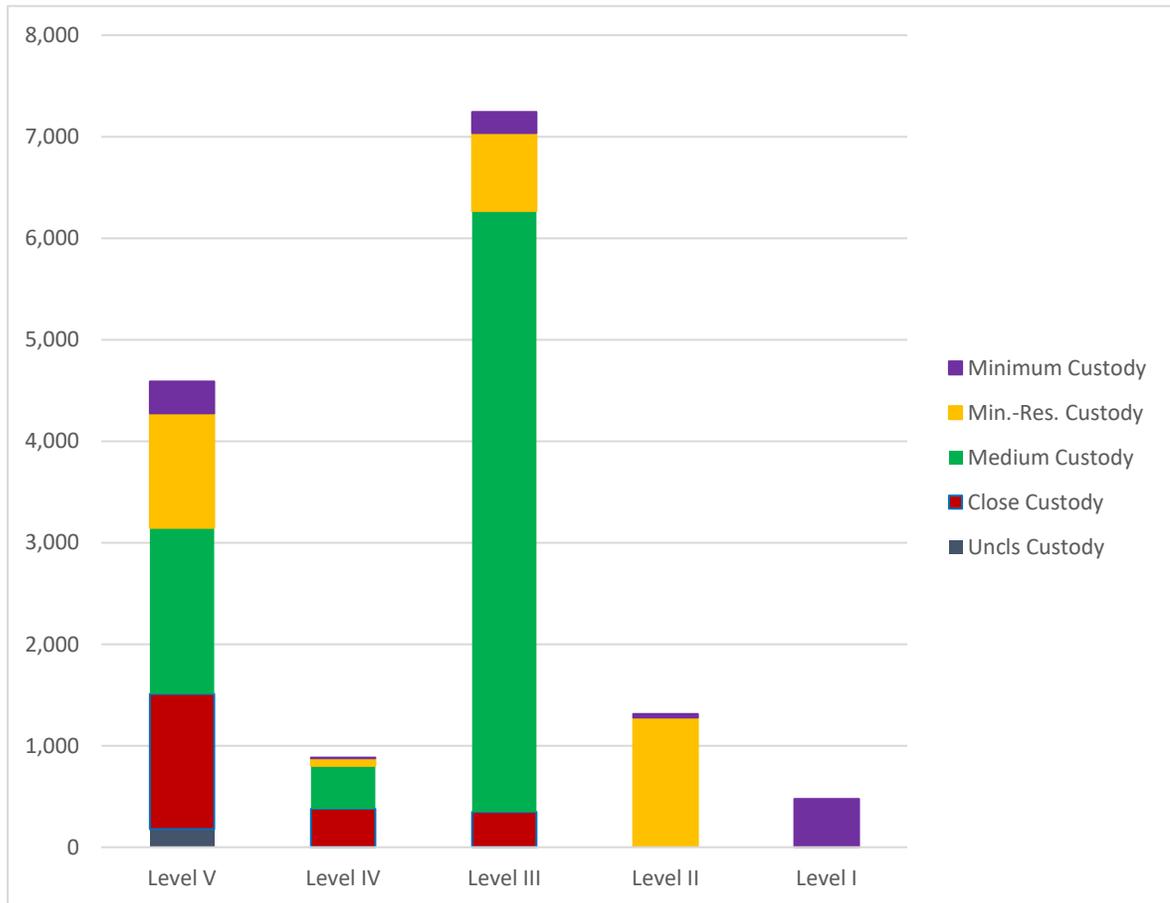
Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

The Department’s housing policies allow facilities in Levels V, IV, III, and II to house offenders in multiple custody classifications. The actual distribution of the population by classification level shows that while Level I and II facilities predominantly house inmates classified as minimum and minimum-restricted custody, other facility categories house a

mix of classification levels. For example, medium, minimum-restricted, and minimum custody inmates make up 67.1 percent of the average daily population of Level V facilities, the Department’s most secure prisons. Level V facilities such as Denver Reception, Denver Women’s, and Sterling are specifically designed to accommodate inmates with different security needs depending upon their classification level.

Similarly, only 41.8 percent of the Department’s minimum and minimum-restricted custody inmates are housed in Level I and II facilities. The majority of these low-custody offenders are housed in Level V and III facilities. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the prison population by classification among the different categories of facilities.

Figure 5: DOC Population by Classification and Facility Custody Level



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports



OPERATING COST

The cost of facility operations is a significant factor in evaluating capacity utilization. Although a number of factors including facility mission, custody level, physical plant design, and program services combine to produce a range of different facility spending profiles, cost does provide a valuable context for comparing similar facilities.

The Department issues an annual report on the daily cost of facility operations, which it provides to the General Assembly. The report presents metrics for daily operating costs per inmate by facility. The daily cost per inmate is calculated by dividing total fiscal year operational expenses for each facility by the average daily inmate population at each facility for that fiscal year. The Department also allocates clinical services costs, administrative expenditures, and the cost of centralized support services across all institutions to provide a fully loaded per diem cost. For the private facilities, the per diem cost is the contract rate paid per inmate, plus clinical service costs, and allocated costs for the Department's Private Prison Monitoring Unit.

The nature of work in correctional facilities is highly labor-intensive. As a result, personnel costs are the primary driver of facility operational expenditures. The Department projects that personal services costs for salary, benefits, and overtime will make up 89.1 percent of its operating costs in FY 2020-21.

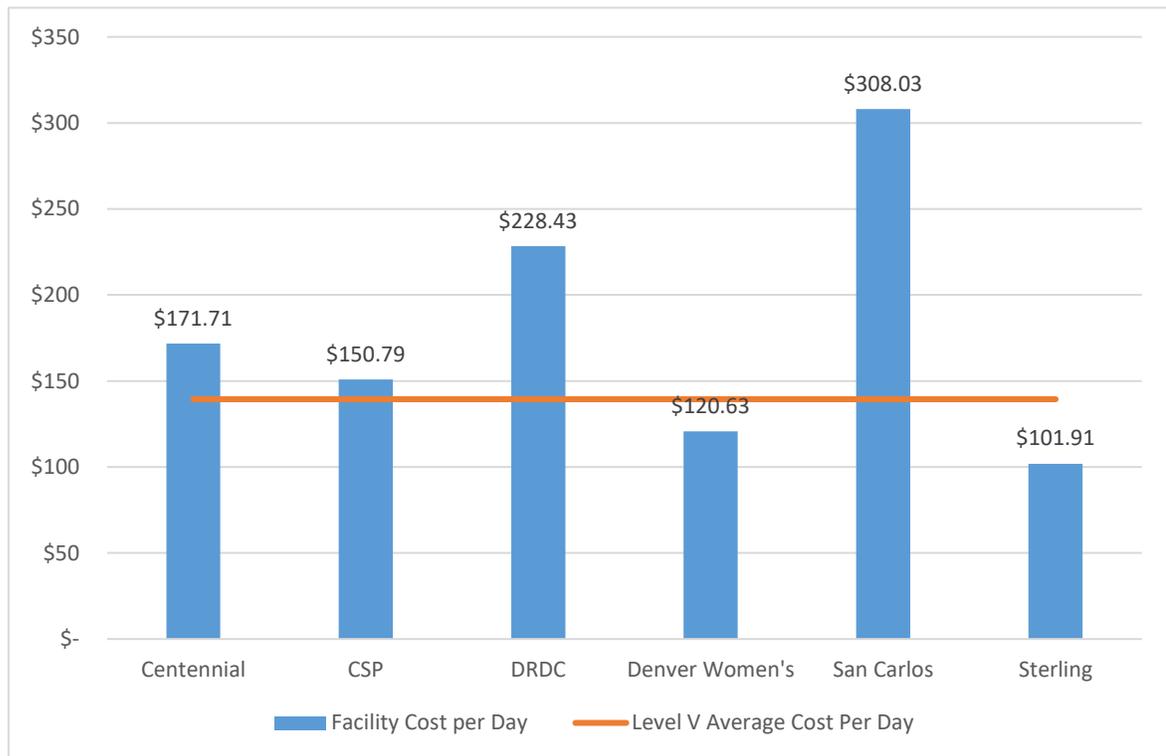
Since the primary determinant of correctional facility operating costs is staffing, factors that drive staffing requirements such as facility design, program offerings, and custody level supervision requirements will in turn drive facility costs. These factors are apparent in the disparity between per capita costs for facilities in different custody levels.

According to spending and population data for FY 2019-20, the average operating cost per inmate per day for an inmate housed in the Department's Level V facilities is \$139.38.¹ Per diem costs at Level V facilities range from a low of \$101.91 per day at Sterling, to a high of \$308.03 at San Carlos. Specialized facility missions and services account for the wide variation in costs among Level V facilities. San Carlos houses inmates with serious mental health needs. Its small size (average daily population of 208 inmates in FY 2019-20) and high level of clinical services results in the highest daily costs in the

¹ This cost represents direct facility operational and clinical service expenditures. It does not include costs for centralized services such as transportation or Department administrative costs.

prison system. The Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center provides intake and assessment services for the entire prison system. The security supervision needs of the close custody populations at Centennial and the Colorado State Penitentiary require more intensive correctional officer staffing to assure adequate security. Figure 6 summarizes the per diem costs of the Department’s Level V facilities.

Figure 6: Level V Facility Daily Cost per Offender, FY 2019-20



Source: Department of Corrections Cost Per Offender by Facility, FY 2019-20

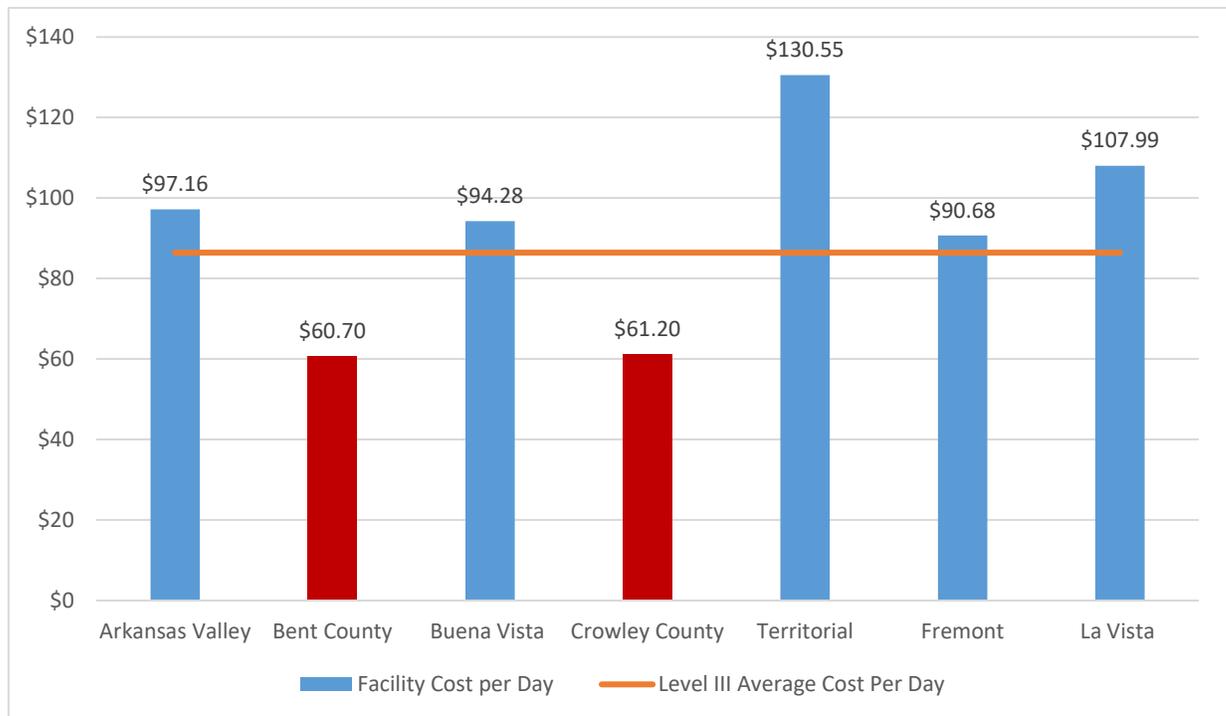
The Department’s one Level IV institution, Limon Correctional Facility, experienced a daily cost of \$110.61 per offender in FY 2019-20.

The Department’s Level III facilities had an average daily cost of \$86.43. This average is somewhat depressed by the two private correctional facilities in Level III, Crowley County and Bent County. These two facilities have per diem operating costs set by contract at \$57.94 for FY 2019-20. Adding in clinical service costs results in per diem costs of \$60.70 for Bent County and \$61.20 for Crowley County. This is approximately a 31 percent below the cost per diem for state-operated Level III facilities.

The higher costs experienced by the state-operated facilities are attributable to several factors. As a rule, private facilities do not house inmates with complex medical or mental health needs. Bent County and Crowley County had an average clinical services per diem cost of \$3.04 in FY 2019-20, as compared to \$27.99 in daily clinical services costs for inmates in state-operated Level III facilities. Also, the starting salary and benefits for correctional officers in state facilities is \$72,142, as compared to \$41,527 for the private facilities. Finally, private facility programs are largely limited to education and vocational programs. The state-operated facilities provide a broader range of programming, including sex offender treatment, therapeutic communities, and cognitive behavioral therapy, all of which drives up their costs.

Figure 7 summarizes the per diem costs of the Department’s Level III facilities, with the private facilities highlighted in red. The high per diem cost at the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility is largely attributable to the fact that it operates the largest medical infirmary in the state prison system.

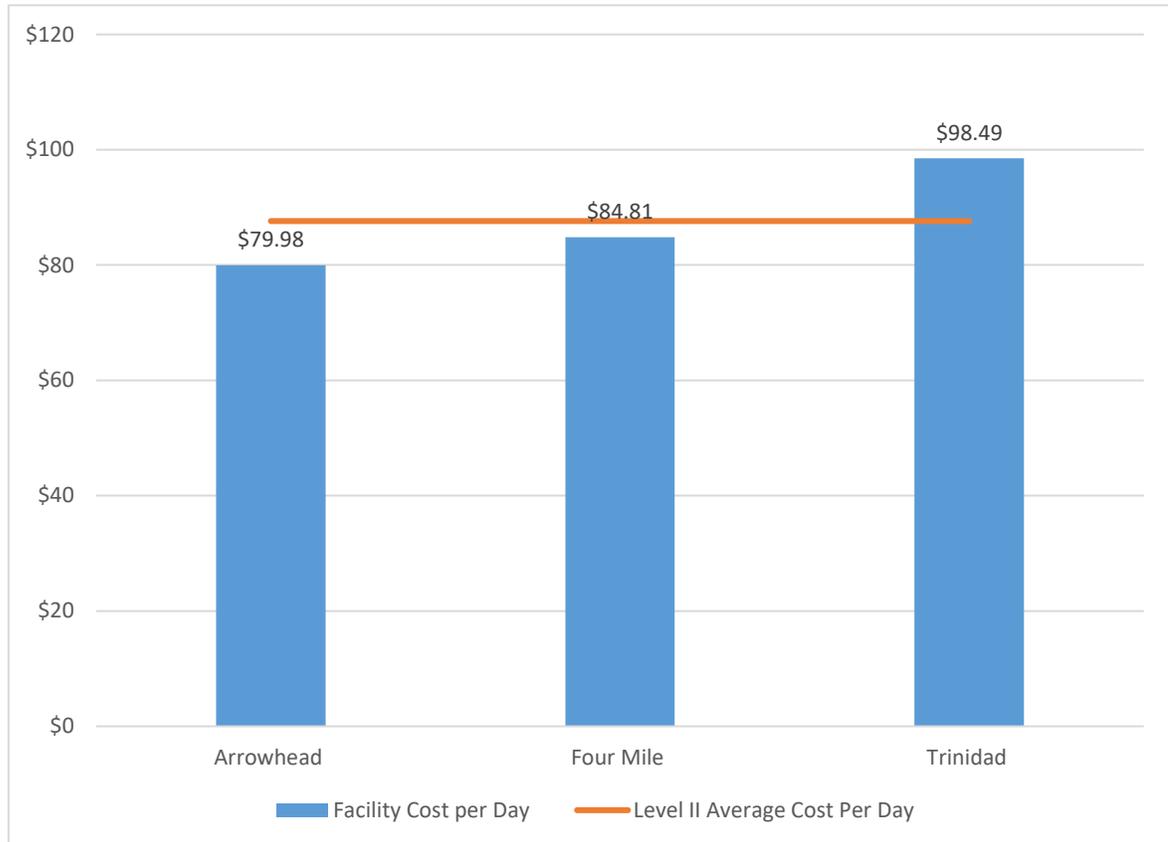
Figure 7: Level III Facility Daily Cost per Offender, FY 2019-20



Source: Department of Corrections Cost Per Offender by Facility, FY 2019-20

Level II facilities experienced an average per diem cost of \$87.63 to house a population of minimum-restricted and minimum security offenders. The lower custody requirements for the offender population at these facilities requires fewer staff and results in lower costs.

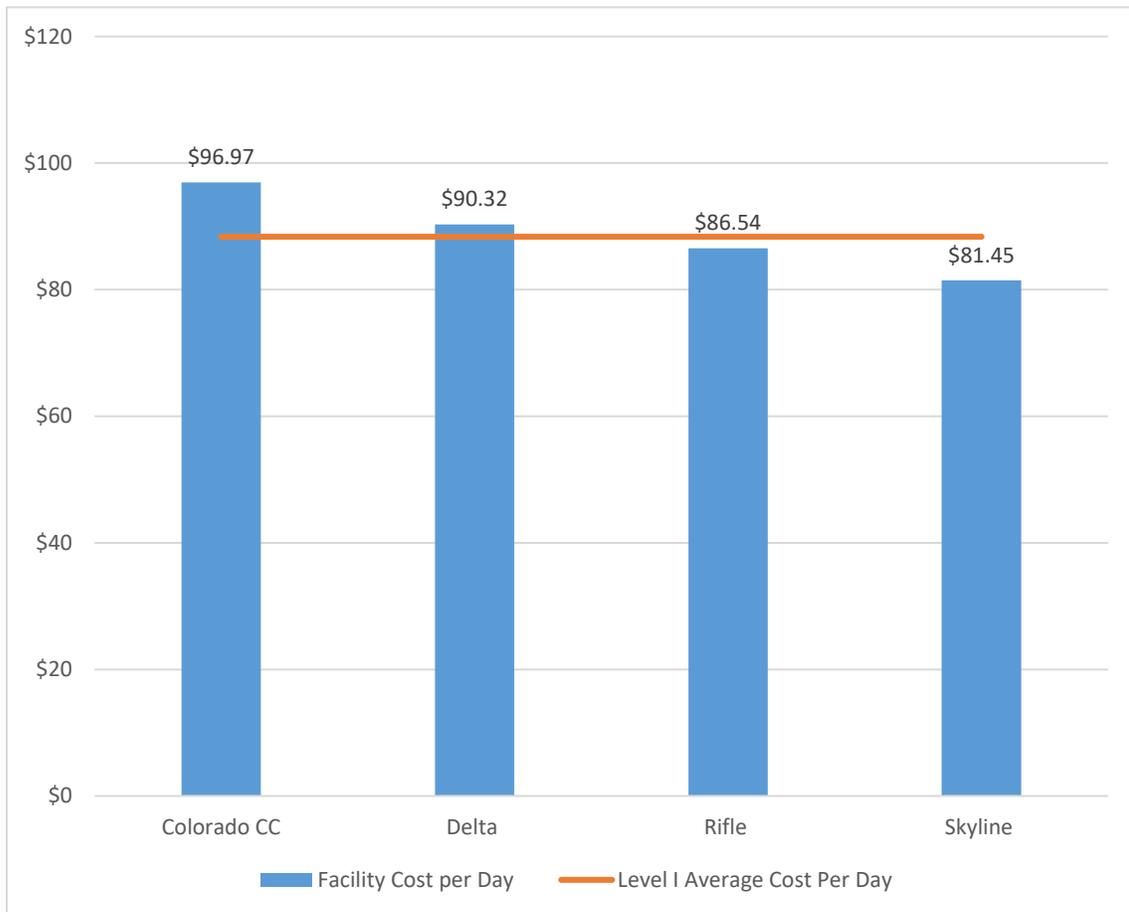
Figure 8: Level II Facility Daily Cost per Offender, FY 2019-20



Source: Department of Corrections Cost Per Offender by Facility, FY 2019-20

Level I facilities house only minimum security offenders and accordingly require fewer correctional officers, lowering per diem costs. These facilities tend to be smaller than the Level II facilities, which limits their efficiencies of scale, and results in an average per diem cost of \$88.36.

Figure 9: Level I Facility Daily Cost per Offender, FY 2019-20



Source: Department of Corrections Cost Per Offender by Facility, FY 2019-20

Finally, the Youthful Offender System facility has a per diem cost \$243.04. This level of cost is attributable to the intensity of the program services offered at the facility, as well as its small size (average daily population of 183 youth in FY 2019-20), which makes it unable to achieve the same economies of scale achieved by larger facilities.

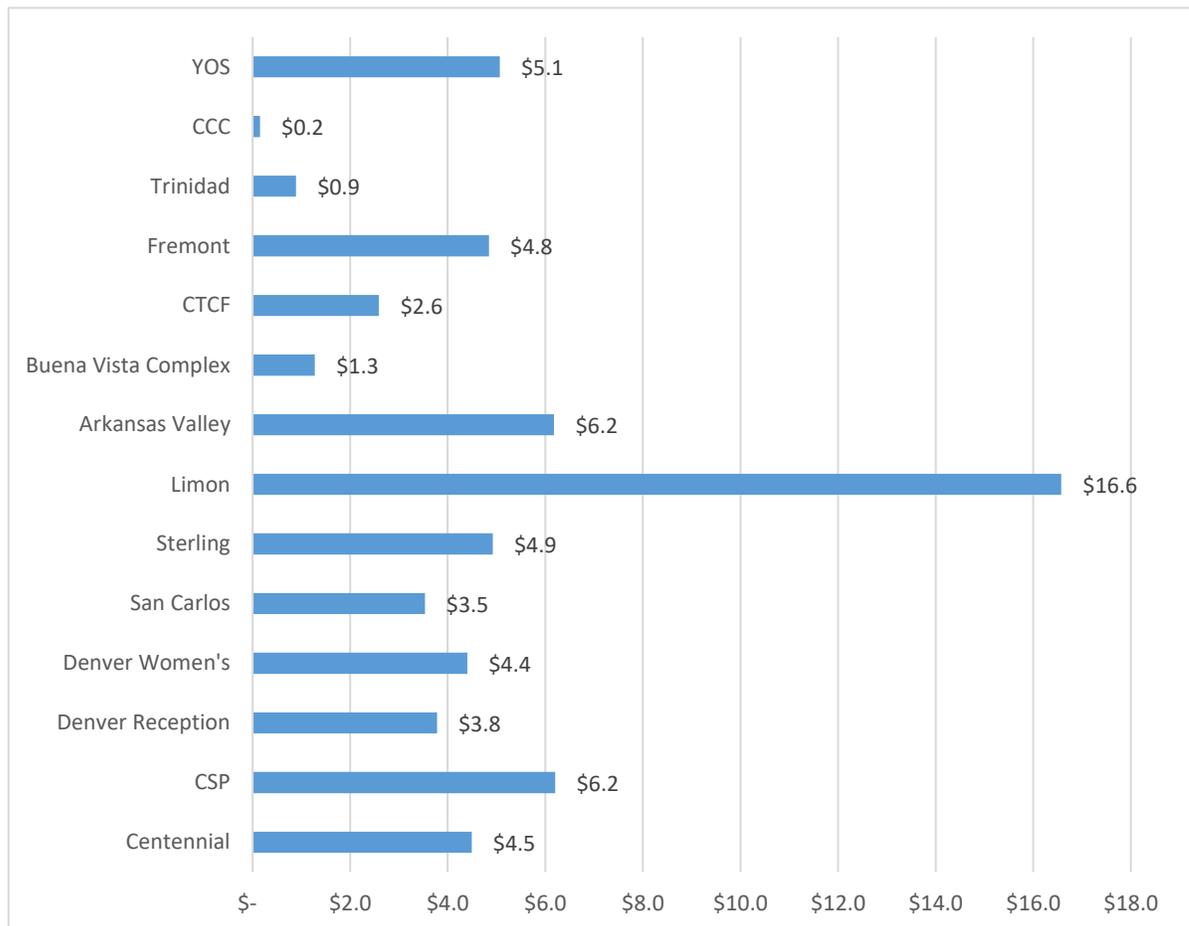
CAPITAL COSTS

Facility capital repair and maintenance costs are a significant cost consideration in evaluating facility use. The average age of the Department’s state-owned facilities is in excess of 40 years, with the Territorial Prison and portions of Buena Vista dating back to the 19th century. Planned prison capacity utilization should consider future capital

investment needs in order to provide a more complete understanding of state financial commitments.

Since FY 2015-16 the Department has invested over \$65 million in major capital construction, capital renewal, and controlled maintenance to its prison facilities.² Spending at Level IV and V facilities accounts for 67 percent of these expenditures. Major projects included cell modification, yard construction, replacement of roofing, fire suppression, alarms, water systems, and modification of cells. Figure 10 summarizes capital project investments by the Department of Corrections over the last nine years.

Figure 10: Capital Spending by Facility, FY 2015-16 – FY 2019-20
(\$ millions)

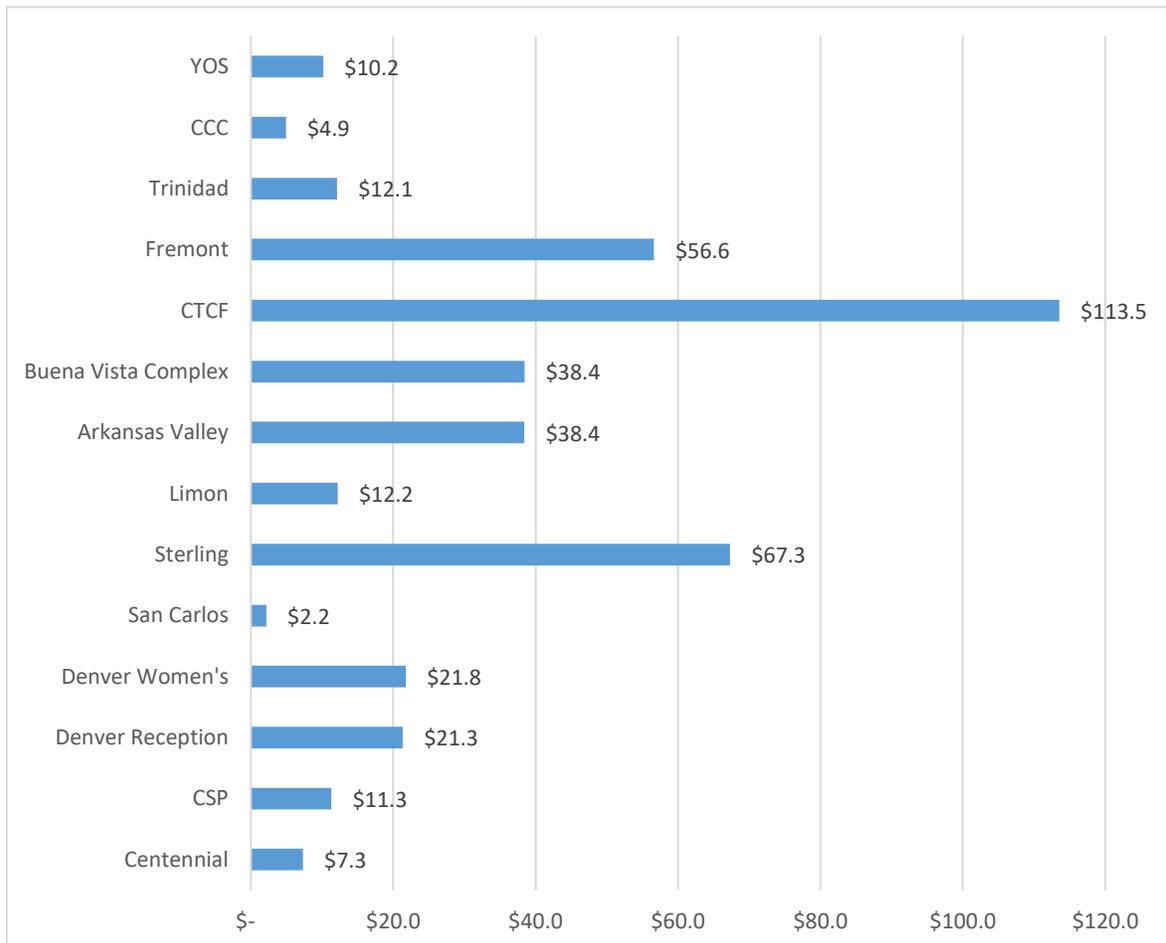


Source: Colorado Department of Corrections, Facility Management Services, November 17, 2020.

² Colorado Department of Corrections, Facility Management Services, November 17, 2020.

Looking forward, the Department has identified a total of \$519 million in capital projects and improvements to existing state facilities. This represents a current appraisal of all potential capital needs at these facilities and is not an actual request for future funding. The magnitude of identified needs, however, does provide an indication of the scale of future capital investment required to maintain operations at state prison facilities. Three facilities (Territorial, Sterling, and Fremont) account for 46 percent of projected capital needs. Figure 11 summarizes the identified cost of potential capital and maintenance projects at state-operated facilities.

Figure 11: Projected Capital Needs by Facility
(\$ millions)



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections, Facility Management Services, November 17, 2020.

The sheer volume of identified capital needs at CTCF, the Department's oldest facility, raises issues of the benefit of continued, substantial long-term investment in a facility

that began operation in 1871. Given the facility’s unique medical care mission and services provided for inmates with special needs, the Department needs to evaluate the future utility of the facility and alternatives for the future delivery of these services.

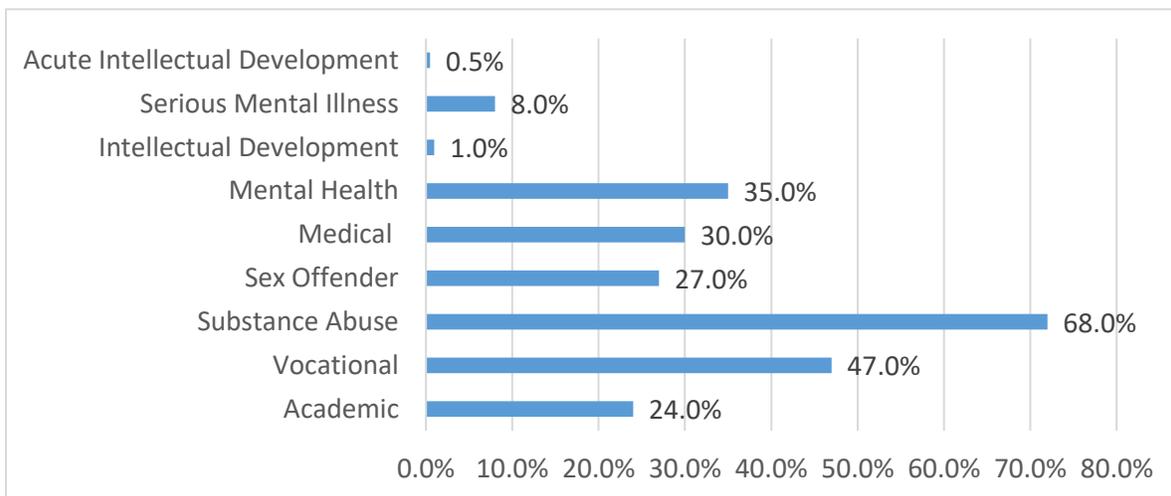
Capital repair and maintenance costs for the two private facilities, Bent County and Crowley County, are the responsibility of the owner, CoreCivic. The Department has no additional responsibility for capital costs at these facilities, other than what may be covered by the current per diem charge established in the state’s contract with CoreCivic. The fact that the state does not incur any capital costs in addition to the operational per diem cost at these facilities increases their cost-efficiency relative to state prisons.

PROGRAMS

The range and availability of programs offered to inmates varies widely among Colorado prisons and provides another metric for comparison of capacity management strategies.

A Department summary of inmate program needs assessments shows that as of June 30, 2020, 68 percent of the offender population have some level of need for substance abuse programs, 43 percent have mental health treatment needs, and 27 percent need sex offender programs. Figure 12 summarizes the Department’s assessment of the inmate population program needs .

Figure 12: Inmate Program Needs, June 30, 2020³



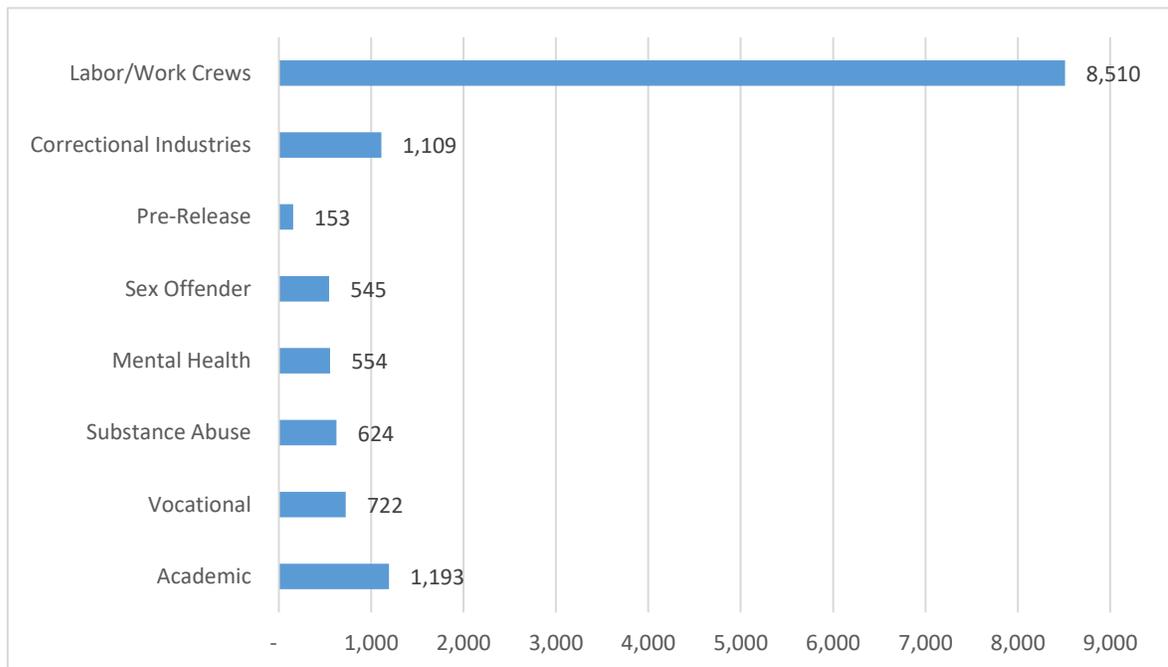
Source: Colorado Department of Corrections, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdoc/departmental-reports-and-statistics>

³ Percentage totals exceed 100 percent because individual inmates may have multiple program needs.

The Department reports 13,410 program or work assignments in state prisons as of July 31, 2020. Because inmates may have multiple assignments, for example working on a maintenance crew as well as participating in a GED program, this number represents a duplicated count and is greater than the actual number of inmates assigned.

Inmate labor and work crews make up 63.5 percent of inmate assignments. Correctional Industry, vocational, and academic programming make up an additional 23.6 percent of program assignments. This program profile is consistent with the longstanding focus of many state correctional systems on work opportunities, education, and vocational training as the primary themes in offender programming. It also reflects the relative difficulty and expense associated with developing mental health, sex offender, and substance abuse treatment programs at the scale of need in the prison system. Figure 13 shows the actual number of inmates assigned to each category of program.

Figure 13: Inmate Program Participation, July 31, 2020⁴



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections, Program Participation by Facility, July 31, 2020

Program participation by facility shows substantial variation consistent with the program mission of each prison. The Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center has a relatively low

⁴ Program totals may include inmates may be enrolled in multiple programs.

number of assignments because inmates may not be assigned until they complete the intake and classification process that takes place at that facility. The Colorado State Penitentiary similarly has relatively few program and work assignments due to security issues with the close custody population housed there. By contrast all inmates at San Carlos are involved in programs, consistent with the facility’s mission in providing mental health treatment.

Level I and II facilities have the highest concentration of program and work assignments relative to their population levels. Conversely, the Level V and IV facilities as a group have the lowest rates of program involvement.

However, among Level III facilities, the two private prisons, Bent County and Crowley County, have a notably lower level of program assignment compared to the state-operated facilities in this category. Bent and Crowley County programs consist of Correctional Industries, GED, reentry, vocational programs, and facility work assignments.

Program availability is largely a function of the per diem rate paid to these facilities, which does not support the operation of programs beyond current levels. The contract between the Department and CoreCivic specifically lists the programs to be offered at these facilities. Because of these limits on programs, Bent and Crowley County often house inmates that have opted out of treatment, or are waiting to receive an assignment for treatment in a state-operated facility.

Table 4 summarizes program and work assignments by facility.

Table 4: Program Assignments by Facility, July 31, 2020⁵

| | Assignments | Facility Population |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Level V Facilities | | |
| Centennial | 469 | 823 |
| CSP | 255 | 685 |
| DRDC | 190 | 466 |
| Denver Women's | 1,038 | 826 |
| San Carlos | 278 | 207 |
| Sterling | 1,687 | 2,061 |

⁵ Assignments may exceed population levels due to inmates assigned to multiple programs or work assignments.



| | Assignments | Facility Population |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <i>subtotal</i> | 3,917 | 5,068 |
| Level IV Facility | | |
| Limon | 697 | 887 |
| <i>subtotal</i> | 697 | 887 |
| Level III Facilities | | |
| Arkansas Valley | 1,052 | 1,023 |
| Bent County | 877 | 1,303 |
| Buena Vista | 975 | 1,067 |
| Territorial | 679 | 698 |
| Crowley County | 1,065 | 1,587 |
| Fremont | 1,693 | 1,451 |
| La Vista | 522 | 393 |
| <i>subtotal</i> | 6,863 | 7,522 |
| Level II Facilities | | |
| Arrowhead | 520 | 384 |
| Four Mile | 371 | 405 |
| Trinidad | 398 | 465 |
| <i>subtotal</i> | 1,289 | 1,254 |
| Level I Facilities | | |
| Colorado Correctional Center | 85 | 74 |
| Delta | 303 | 302 |
| Rifle | 134 | 142 |
| Skyline | 122 | 105 |
| <i>subtotal</i> | 644 | 623 |
| Grand Total | 13,410 | 15,354 |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections, Program Participation by Facility, July 31, 2020

The Department's FY 2019 Education Overview Report indicates that in that fiscal year, 2,560 offenders completed 4,816 vocational certificate programs and 916 High School Equivalency programs.⁶

⁶ Colorado Department of Corrections, *Overview of Educational and Career and Technical Education Report, FY 2019*.

3. POPULATION ANALYSIS

The State of Colorado jurisdictional prison population has seen an overall decrease in the adult population over the last ten years (2009 to 2019), pre-COVID-19, by an annual average of -1.5% per year.⁷ After 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an additional decrease in the adult prison population of 12.8% - a dramatic decline in only one year.

As seen in Table 5, the adult prison population has fluctuated over the 11-year period studied with a ten year high of 23,186 in 2009. A consistent decline occurred through 2016 when the population reached a ten-year low (pre-COVID-19) of 19,619. Since 2016, the adult confined population has fluctuated but remained close to an average of 19,952 up until 2019. Since 2019, the population dropped by over 3,300 inmates due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state efforts to reduce crowding in prison facilities.

Table 5: Department of Corrections EOY Jurisdictional Prison Population

| Fiscal Year | Population | Yearly Percent Change |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 2009 | 23,186 | |
| 2010 | 22,860 | -0.4% |
| 2011 | 22,610 | -1.1% |
| 2012 | 21,037 | -7.0% |
| 2013 | 20,135 | -4.3% |
| 2014 | 20,522 | 1.9% |
| 2015 | 20,623 | 0.5% |
| 2016 | 19,619 | -4.9% |
| 2017 | 20,101 | 2.5% |
| 2018 | 20,136 | 0.2% |
| 2019 | 19,951 | -0.9% |
| 2020 | 17,441 | -12.8% |
| December 2020 | 16,090 | - |

⁷ The “jurisdictional” population includes offenders release in the community to community correctional centers, inmates on supervision status in the community, and sentenced inmates held in county jails pending transfer to a state prison.



| Fiscal Year | Population | Yearly Percent Change |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 10 Year Avg Change (2009-2019) | | -1.4% |
| 5 Year Avg Change (2014-2019) | | -0.5% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

An additional look at admissions to prison over the previous eleven years shows a relatively flat, slightly declining number of admissions to prison through 2019. Closely related to admissions, the length of stay (LOS) in prison has also shown a relatively flat trend over the 11-year period.⁸

It should be noted there has been a substantial decrease in the number of admissions to prison since March 2020 (post-COVID-19). If admissions to prison in FY 2020 were annualized, there would be an almost 50% drop in admissions in a one-year period. The majority of this decline can be attributed to the disruption of jury trials, the temporary suspension of DOC’s ability to receive and take custody of prisoners, and the dramatic reduction in violations (from both parole and probation) being returned to prison. It is unclear, given the current state of the pandemic, when operations will return to normal and when the impact of backlogged cases will be borne by the DOC.

Table 6: Prison System Admissions, Population, and Length of Stay

| Fiscal Year | Admissions | Population | Calculated LOS |
|-------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 2009 | 10,992 | 22,958 | 25.1 |
| 2010 | 10,704 | 22,860 | 25.6 |
| 2011 | 9,935 | 22,610 | 27.3 |
| 2012 | 9,116 | 21,037 | 27.7 |
| 2013 | 9,620 | 20,135 | 25.1 |
| 2014 | 10,269 | 20,522 | 24.0 |
| 2015 | 9,756 | 20,623 | 25.4 |
| 2016 | 8,851 | 19,619 | 26.6 |
| 2017 | 9,162 | 20,101 | 26.3 |
| 2018 | 9,985 | 20,136 | 24.2 |

⁸ LOS calculated using Admissions x LOS-population formula.



| Fiscal Year | Admissions | Population | Calculated LOS |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 2019 | 9,691 | 19,951 | 24.7 |
| 2020* | 1,757 | 17,441 | N/A |
| <i>2020 Annualized</i> | 5,271 | 17,441 | N/A |
| 10 Year Avg Change (2009-2019) | -1.0% | -1.4% | 0.0% |
| 5 Year Avg Change (2014-2019) | -0.9% | -0.5% | 0.7% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

* 2020 data represents July -October 2020

POPULATION PROFILE

Table 7 presents key attributes of the Department’s jurisdictional population for June 30, 2020. Per the overall statistics the majority of the prison population is male (91%), Caucasian (46%), aged 20-39 (54%), and a direct court commitment or probation return (80%). Of note is the level of needs within the DOC population, 68% have an indication of substance abuse needs, 29% with a medical needs issues and 34% with a mental health needs issue. A reported 64% of the population has been sentenced for violent offense and 5% of the population is serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole.

Table 7: Colorado Prison Population Profile

| Attribute | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 799 | 53% | 7,138 | 45% | 7,937 | 46% |
| Hispanic | 472 | 31% | 4,875 | 31% | 5,347 | 31% |
| African American | 154 | 10% | 2,945 | 19% | 3,099 | 18% |
| Native American | 71 | 5% | 573 | 4% | 644 | 4% |
| Asian | 23 | 2% | 201 | 1% | 224 | 1% |
| Other | 1 | 0% | 8 | 0% | 9 | 0% |
| Age Range | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 1 | 0% | 58 | 0% | 59 | 0% |
| 20-29 | 432 | 28% | 3,569 | 23% | 4,001 | 23% |
| 30-39 | 613 | 40% | 5,327 | 34% | 5,940 | 34% |
| 40-49 | 303 | 20% | 3,453 | 22% | 3,756 | 22% |
| 50-59 | 125 | 8% | 2,142 | 14% | 2,267 | 13% |



| Attribute | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 60+ | 46 | 3% | 1,191 | 8% | 1,237 | 7% |
| Status Type | | | | | 0 | |
| New commitments | 1,211 | 80% | 12,564 | 80% | 13,775 | 80% |
| Parole return/new crime | 204 | 13% | 2,099 | 13% | 2,303 | 13% |
| Technical parole violator | 88 | 6% | 781 | 5% | 869 | 5% |
| Other | 17 | 1% | 296 | 2% | 313 | 2% |
| Location | | | | | 0 | |
| Prison | 1,251 | 82% | 14,357 | 91% | 15,608 | 90% |
| Community corrections | 145 | 10% | 662 | 4% | 807 | 5% |
| ISP Inmates | 50 | 3% | 280 | 2% | 330 | 2% |
| Other location | 74 | 5% | 441 | 3% | 515 | 3% |
| Needs Levels | | | | | | |
| Academic | 456 | 30% | 3,529 | 22% | 3,985 | 23% |
| Vocational | 687 | 45% | 6,996 | 44% | 7,683 | 45% |
| Substance Abuse | 1,091 | 72% | 10,724 | 68% | 11,815 | 68% |
| Sex offender | 71 | 5% | 4,523 | 29% | 4,594 | 27% |
| Medical | 635 | 42% | 4,453 | 28% | 5,088 | 29% |
| Mental Health | 1,180 | 78% | 4,667 | 30% | 5,847 | 34% |
| Intellect & Development | 17 | 1% | 149 | 1% | 166 | 1% |
| Serious MH Illness | 290 | 19% | 1,068 | 7% | 1,358 | 8% |
| Acute Intellect & Develop | 2 | 0% | 83 | 1% | 85 | 0% |
| Violent Offense | 630 | 41% | 10,355 | 66% | 10,985 | 64% |
| Foreign Born | 59 | 4% | 1,192 | 8% | 1,251 | 7% |
| Life w/o Parole | 50 | 3% | 736 | 5% | 786 | 5% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

POPULATION FORECAST

Two agencies produce correctional population forecasts for the State of Colorado - the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) and the Legislative Council Staff (LCS). The DCJ utilizes an in-house model that incorporates multiple data sources and simulates the flow of individuals into the system, as well as the movement of those already in the system.

In the DCJ model, projections are based on three cohorts: new commitments to prison, parole returns to prison and, the prison population currently incarcerated. Estimates of all three cohorts are based on historical data and trends of prison admissions, crime rates, criminal case filings, conviction rates, sentencing practices, probation placements, and probation revocation rates. The three-cohorts are broken down into 70 offender profile and sentence length groups. Information provided in the “Prison Population Projections 2020 (March 2020)” report indicates the forecast methodology is based on each cohort running through a cumulative survival function (also known as cumulative distribution function), assumedly based on historical data input, and adjusted further to reflect recent changes in law or policy that would not be represented in the historical data.

In June 2020 and following the initial correctional population decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCJ issued a revised forecast incorporating the executive orders and other mitigation efforts. An additional update was produced in December 2020 and is presented in Figure 14. Additional assumptions built into this revision include continued court and prison operation disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in a longer assumed rebound of prison admissions and a slower rate of growth expected from FY 2022 through FY 2027. It should be noted the DCJ December 2020 forecast represents a significantly higher forecast in the outer years (from 2022 forward) from the June 2020 DCJ forecast. The corresponding DCJ brief attributes this to a change in assumptions surrounding HB 20-1019 and SB 19-143 (both with a reduced impact).

The LCS forecasting methodology is not explicitly explained in their annual report entitled “Adult Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections”. While some in-depth trends are presented and discussed regarding previous year on year prison population trends, prison admissions trends (by type), recently enacted legislative changes and upcoming facility closures, there is no explanation on how these trends mathematically influence the forecast or how the forecast is calculated. The latest forecast issued by LCS was completed in December 2020. The update includes no detailed documentation on how or what additional assumptions were built into the estimates. Further only, year-end estimates of total populations through 2023 were presented – not disaggregated gender forecasts through 2027. As a result, these estimates cannot be effectively compared to the DCJ forecasts. Our analysis focuses on the DCJ projections which appear more robust and contain more supporting documentation.

Figure 14: LCS & DCJ Inmate Population Forecasts



Source: Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Summer 2020 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections; Legislative Council Staff, Adult Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections, 2019.

The updated DCJ projection takes COVID mitigation initiatives into account and tracks with the actual Department jurisdictional population very well through the last six months of calendar year 2020.



Table 8: DCJ Projection vs. Actual Prison Population

| Quarter | DCJ Projection | Actual | Difference |
|---------|----------------|--------|------------|
| Jun-20 | 17,748 | 17,741 | 7 |
| Sep-20 | 16,691 | 16,673 | 18 |
| Dec-20 | 16,227 | 16,090 | 137 |

Source: Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Summer 2020 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections

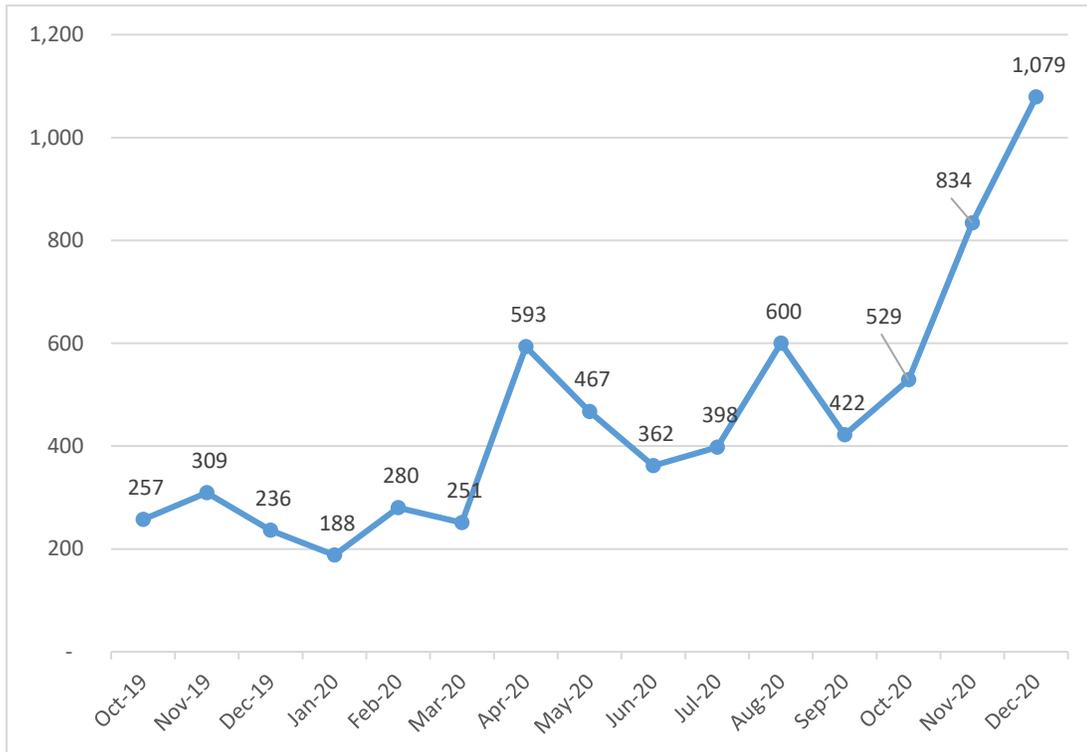
This level of accuracy is noteworthy given the uncertainty and reduction in prison bedspace due to the COVID-19 pandemic makes it extremely difficult to forecast both short- and long-term prison bedspace needs. Since the pandemic began in March 2020, necessary initiatives were enacted including:

- Governor Jared Polis issued Executive Order D 2020 016, suspending certain regulatory statutes concerning criminal justice, for the purpose of reducing the prison population and the parole caseload. This included suspending the Colorado Department of Corrections' duty to receive and take custody of prisoners, providing discretion in the awarding of earned time credits and the identification and referral of those qualifying for special needs parole to the parole board, the suspension of program completion requirements, and the suspension of required subsistence payments from community corrections clients. Portions of this order have been extended.
- On March 16, 2020, the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court ordered the suspension of certain court operations and suspended all jury calls in state courts with the exception of jury calls for criminal trials facing imminent speedy trial deadlines.
- Modifications to court practice and law enforcement activities including modified probation operations, suspension of jury trials, orders of limited court operations, and reduction in execution of both bench and arrest warrants in the City and County of Denver.

The suspension of normal transfers of state-sentenced inmates from county jails to the Department has produced a significant increase in the backlog of offenders held locally, as shown in Figure 15. Since the effective date of the executive order, the jail backlog of

inmates awaiting transfer to the state has increased to 1,079, an increase of 426 percent over the average backlog experienced in the prior six months.

Figure 15: Backlog of State Inmates in County Jails



Source: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population & Capacity Reports

These initial actions plus ongoing mitigation efforts over the summer and into the fall season, drastically changed the course of growth in the Colorado prison population, resulting in a dramatic decline of 1.2% in the final week of March, followed by a 4.9% decrease across April. Since June 2020, the DOC population has declined by 2,107 inmates, a 13.4 percent reduction in 6 months.

While long-term forecasting faces significant challenges, forecasters can focus on profiling where and how the reductions are being seen, who is being released early, and not admitted. The DCJ forecast looks at these elements and determined the largest contributing factors to the reduction in the DOC population were a reduction in parole violations returns (due to COVID-19 response), reduction in new court commitments (due to COVID-19 response) and an increase discretionary parole releases (results of Senate Bill 19-143 and COVID-19 response).

The project team compared the methodology and analysis underlying the DCJ projections with best practices in correctional system forecasting and identified the following strengths in the DCJ forecast:

- ***Inclusion of a variety of Colorado’s criminal justice trend indicators and newly enacted legislation.*** A wide array of data can have both a direct and indirect impact on factors that underpin a correctional system’s long-term projection. These factors can be separated into two major categories – external and internal. *External* factors reflect the interplay of demographic, socio-economic and crime trends that produce arrests, and offenders’ initial entry into the criminal justice process. The DCJ method currently looks at several potential criminal justice indicators for the state of Colorado and incorporates them into the forecasting process. Indicators currently used are annual admissions trends by type, violation returns, sentence lengths and type, release trends and length of stay by type, offenders on supervisions, and recently enacted legislation effecting the prison population. If available, additional indicators such as crime rates, arrest rates, felony filings, guilty dispositions, and performance of previous admissions assumptions should be considered for future inclusion into the forecast process.
- ***Forecast produced by gender.*** Forecasts produced by gender typically are more useful than generic systemwide forecasts. Male and female incarcerated populations usually have different internal and external factors and can sometimes produce dramatically different trends. It is important that these populations be analyzed and forecasted separately to ensure the most accurate forecast is produced. Also, producing forecasts by gender aid in planning decisions as these populations require different and separate housing requirements.
- ***Identification and analysis of individual offender groups.*** Prison populations are made up of various groups of offenders whose releases and length of stay are often complex and could be under a variety of different sentencing laws. Identifying these populations could aid in predicting an offender’s length of stay and assist in prison bedspace planning. More violent offenders with longer criminal histories will typically stay longer and require more services. Further, disaggregating by most serious committing crime and gender can also add to the

refinement in accurately predicting length of stay. While DCJ does provide some differentiation in the admission types and gender of offenders it forecasts, additional differentiation could increase the forecast usefulness in informing policy makers on bedspace requirements. While DCJ does indicate there are 70 distinct model groups per admission type in their methodology, the results of this differentiation are not provided in the resulting forecast. If this were provided in the future, more robust forecasts and analysis could be produced to aid decision makers.

- ***Complex determination and review of admissions assumption.*** DCJ currently constructs its forecast based on two admitting groups, new court commitments/probation revocations and offenders returned from parole. Additionally, a group including all offender currently housed the day the model begins are also built distinctly into the model. Admissions assumptions are often difficult when no logical connections exist between past admissions trends and obvious indicators. DCJ attempts to make these connections when determining their admissions assumption through what appears be a robust method. Tracking and providing accuracy of past admissions assumptions could further this process.
- ***Detailed and regular accuracy reporting.*** Forecasts should be tracked monthly on at least three performance measures, monthly population, admissions, and releases and should be presented to policy makers and reviewed in the annual forecast performance report. Monthly accuracy can indicate when a forecast starts deviating while admissions and releases tracking can provide the answers as to why the forecast is inaccurate. For a state with a system the size of Colorado, a 2% accuracy should be expected on a monthly comparison. Deviations from the 2% rule for more than 3 consecutive months should trigger a review of the forecast and assumptions.

The project team's review also identified several areas for potential improvement in DCJ methodology and analytical approach to forecasting.

- ***No complex report of model methodology.*** The brief provided for the March 2020 annual forecast and the April 2020 interim forecast does a good job of describing the overall trends in total population, admissions and releases data, past policies, and recent legislation and potential future external policy and practice

implications. However, it does not present a detailed description of the actual methodology of the forecast model, only stating that a survival distribution is developed and applied. No specifics are given as to how or at what decision points these distributions are applied. Summary tables describing the admissions assumption, its measures, and the data used to build the survival distributions should be included in the forecast materials. Although there is information indicating over 70 offender profile groups per admission type are used in the forecast model, no information is provided on what these data contain and how they are used. Providing this data will allow the reader and policy makers to compare data year to year and establish trends in some of the more complex data used to build the forecast model.

- ***Addition of seasonality into the forecast model.*** Criminal justice systems, particularly prison systems, can have dramatic shifts in admissions that coincide with seasonal variations. A good forecast methodology will incorporate these variations into their prediction to ensure the most accurate forecast is produced.
- ***Examination and use of statewide demographic projections – particularly the at-risk population.*** Criminologists have long noted that certain segments of the population have higher chances of becoming involved in crime, being arrested, and being incarcerated. This is known as the “at-risk” population, which generally consists of younger males. The high crime rate ages are 15 to 25, while the high adult incarceration rate is between the ages of 18 and 35. When the at-risk population is expected to increase in a jurisdiction, one can also expect some additional pressure on criminal justice resources, all things being equal. Inclusion of the state demographic population forecast, particularly the at-risk population, can provide valuable insight into the future of admissions into the Colorado prison population.
- ***No classification forecasts.*** Most complex simulation models can also allow a user to produce an overlay forecast by classification level disaggregated by gender. Classification level forecasts can be particularly useful to decision makers in determining adequate bedspace planning.
- ***No long-term forecast or accuracy presented.*** DCJ and LCS forecasts are produced for a period of only six years. While five to six years is considered by

most in the field to be the typical, reliable estimate window, a long-term ten-year estimate is often useful, particularly when faced with prison construction and or conversion/renovations.

CLASSIFICATION

The Department has been operating various versions of an objective prison classification system for several decades. Effective use of prison system capacity requires a classification system that accurately assesses inmate risk levels. The current system is based on the well-known and universally accepted National Institute of Corrections (NIC) classification model which has been adopted by most state prison systems.⁹

There are two separate systems in use in the DOC— one for males and one for females. Within each of these systems are initial and reclassification instruments. The former is completed at the time of admission to prison and focuses on the person’s current offense, prior criminal convictions, escape history, prior institutional conduct and a few demographic/social background factors (age, employment history and education).

The reclassification instrument is completed after a set period of incarceration (6 months) and every 12 months thereafter. The reclassification instruments retain some of the initial classification scoring items but inserts new scoring factors that place significant emphasis on the prisoner’s conduct (disciplinary, program, and work conduct) while incarcerated.

All instruments contain the same over-ride factors that are separated into non-discretionary and discretionary factors. The former reflects departmental policies that prohibit the placement of a prisoner into minimum custody. The latter can be imposed at the discretion of the classification unit with oversight by a classification supervisor. In general, the classification system is sound and meets industry standards. However, there are several design issues in the DOC initial and reclassification instruments.

First, the factors used in the female instrument differ significantly from the male instruments for both the initial and reclassification forms. For example, the male initial instrument has 8 scoring items while the female initial classification instrument has 11 factors. Further four of the additional items (LSI-R alcohol/drug score, mental health level

⁹ <https://nicic.gov/prison-classification>



score, needs assessment score, and parole eligibility date) are atypical classification scoring items.

A similar situation exists for the reclassification instruments. The female instrument has 11 scoring items while the male instrument has nine items. Further the parole eligibility date and whether an assault occurred within the past 3 years are not on the female instrument. Lastly, the male instruments have pre-coded over-ride reasons while the female instrument does not.

In 2018, the JFA Institute conducted a re-validation of the female instrument. Its primary recommendation was that the female classification should be replaced with the same criteria used by the male classification system. The only adjustment would be in the custody level scale. To date that new system has not been implemented due to delays in implementing the DOC new data system.

The second major distinction in the Department’s classification instrument as compared to other state systems is the scoring of Minimum Restricted versus the pure Minimum custody levels. The vast majority of states use a three level custody designation scoring scheme (maximum, medium and minimum). It is not unusual to have a minimum-restricted designation that is set by policy restrictions such as time left to serve or specific offense exclusions (e.g., murder, sexual assault).

In order to evaluate the performance of the Department’s classification system the project team examined a snapshot of the current prison population that contained detailed data on each prisoner classified as of September 30, 2020. Of the prisoners in the snapshot, the vast majority (86 percent) have been reclassified using the reclassification instrument which is consistent with the policy of reclassifying all prisoners after 6 months of admission to prison as shown in Table 9. This also means that the majority of prisoner’s classification level is determined by the reclassification instrument.

Table 9: Prison Population Key Attributes-September 30, 2020

| Attribute | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|
| Total Prison Population | 16,882 | 100% |
| Classification Type | | |
| None | 1,031 | 6% |
| Female Initial | 238 | 1% |



| Attribute | Number | Percent |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Male Initial | 1,277 | 8% |
| Female Reclass | 1,099 | 7% |
| Male Reclass | 13,237 | 78% |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 1,422 | 8% |
| Male | 15,460 | 92% |
| Offense | | |
| Total Violent | 11,647 | 69% |
| Murder | 2,650 | 16% |
| Sex offense | 748 | 4% |
| Child abuse | 2,114 | 13% |
| Assault | 2,544 | 15% |
| Robbery | 1,585 | 9% |
| Other violent | 2,006 | 12% |
| Total Non-Violent | 5,179 | 31% |
| Menacing | 537 | 3% |
| Drug trafficking | 961 | 6% |
| Burglary | 1,278 | 8% |
| Theft | 1,007 | 6% |
| Menacing | 537 | 3% |
| Drug trafficking | 961 | 6% |
| Burglary | 1,278 | 8% |
| Theft | 1,007 | 6% |
| Fraud/forgery | 160 | 1% |
| Other property | 429 | 3% |
| Drug possession | 12 | 0% |
| DUI | 355 | 2% |
| Weapon | 169 | 1% |
| Other non-violent | 271 | 2% |
| Unknown/Missing | 56 | 0% |
| Admission Type | | |



| Attribute | Number | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| New commit | 13,665 | 81% |
| Parole return | 2,962 | 18% |
| Other | 255 | 2% |
| LOS to date | | |
| 6 months or less | 2,270 | 13% |
| >6-12 months | 2,547 | 15% |
| >12-24 months | 3,247 | 19% |
| >24-60 months | 3,811 | 23% |
| >60-120 months | 2,310 | 14% |
| >120 months | 2,697 | 16% |
| Average LOS | 60 months | |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

Table 10 summarizes the scored classification levels for the male and female prisoners by the initial and reclassification instruments. Overall, the vast majority (74%) of the prisoners are classified as either minimum-restricted or minimum. Significantly, there are no differences between the female and male populations classified as minimum-restricted or minimum. This is significant as in most prison classification systems, the females have a higher percentage in minimum custody. A major reason for the relatively low percentage of females classified for minimum custody is due to the female classification instruments not using the same criteria as the males.

Table 10: Scored Classification Levels by Initial and Reclassification Levels

| Classification Levels | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Total | 1,337 | 100% | 14,514 | 100% | 15,851 | 100% |
| Initial Classification | | | | | | |
| Close | 10 | 1% | 221 | 2% | 231 | 1% |
| Medium | 59 | 4% | 323 | 2% | 382 | 2% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 156 | 12% | 586 | 4% | 742 | 5% |
| Minimum | 13 | 1% | 147 | 1% | 160 | 1% |
| Reclassification | | | | | | |
| Close | 175 | 13% | 2,371 | 16% | 2,546 | 16% |



| Classification Levels | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Medium | 159 | 12% | 745 | 5% | 904 | 6% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 328 | 25% | 5,487 | 38% | 5,815 | 37% |
| Minimum | 437 | 33% | 4,634 | 32% | 5,071 | 32% |
| Total | | | | | | |
| Close | 185 | 14% | 2,592 | 18% | 2,777 | 18% |
| Medium | 218 | 16% | 1,068 | 7% | 1,286 | 8% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 484 | 36% | 6,073 | 42% | 6,557 | 41% |
| Minimum | 450 | 34% | 4,781 | 33% | 5,231 | 33% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

Table 11 shows the “final” classification levels for the current prison population by gender. These statistics reflect the use of non-discretionary and discretionary over-rides. This shows that a large number of the male prisoners are being over-riden from minimum and minimum-restricted to the medium classification levels. Much of this is being caused by the males who are being classified under the reclassification instrument.

Table 11: Final Classification Levels by Initial and Reclassification Levels

| Classification Levels | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-----------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Total | 1,337 | 100% | 14,464 | 100% | 15,801 | 100% |
| Initial | | | | | | |
| Close | 6 | 0% | 85 | 1% | 91 | 1% |
| Medium | 76 | 6% | 681 | 5% | 757 | 5% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 148 | 11% | 349 | 2% | 497 | 3% |
| Minimum | 8 | 1% | 112 | 1% | 120 | 1% |
| Reclass | | | | | | |
| Close | 69 | 5% | 1,920 | 13% | 1,989 | 13% |
| Medium | 280 | 21% | 7,454 | 51% | 7,734 | 49% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 349 | 26% | 2,868 | 20% | 3,217 | 20% |
| Minimum | 401 | 30% | 995 | 7% | 1,396 | 9% |
| Total | | | | | | |
| Close | 75 | 6% | 2,005 | 14% | 2,080 | 13% |



| Classification Levels | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Medium | 356 | 27% | 8,135 | 56% | 8,491 | 54% |
| Minimum-Restricted | 497 | 37% | 3,217 | 22% | 3,714 | 23% |
| Minimum | 409 | 31% | 1,107 | 8% | 1,516 | 10% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

Table 12 shows the numbers and direction of the over-rides. Here one can see that most of the over-rides are reassigning males who are scored as minimum custody to minimum-restricted or to medium custody. In total these three shifts from scored to final total 6,018 prisoners who are being over-riden to a higher classification level.

Table 12: Male Scored Re-Classification Level vs. Final Re-Classification Level

| Scored Level | Final Level | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| | Minimum | Minimum Restrictive | Medium | Close | Total |
| Minimum | 748 | 980 | 2,864 | 42 | 4,634 |
| Minimum Restrictive | 246 | 1,857 | 3,174 | 210 | 5,487 |
| Medium | 1 | 23 | 618 | 103 | 745 |
| Close | 0 | 8 | 798 | 1,565 | 2,371 |
| Total | 995 | 2,868 | 7,454 | 1,920 | 13,237 |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

The data show that 8 percent of reclassifications result in an override down in custody level and that 56 percent of cases result in an override up in custody level. 64 percent of all reclassified scores are overridden.

To better understand the basis for the overrides, several levels of analysis were completed. First, the project team sampled the scoring factors for the male prisoners under the reclassification instrument as shown in Table 13. In general, these scores show that most of the prisoners are demonstrating positive behavior. Most have no history of violent prison behavior (82%) or any escape history (85%). Most have no recent disciplinary conduct and are either participating in or completed a rehabilitative program and/or have satisfactory prison employment records. Many have either no prior convictions or have been convicted of as non-serious/non-violent crime (57%). The major



negative factor is the high proportion whose prison sentence is for a serious violent crime (64%). For these reasons, most are scoring minimum or minimum restricted custody.

Table 13: Male Reclass Scoring Items

| Factor | Weight | Number | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Total Prisoners | | 13,237 | 100% |
| History of Institutional Violence | | | |
| None | 0 | 10,824 | 82% |
| No serious injury | 3 | 1,041 | 8% |
| Assault with injury | 10 | 1,372 | 10% |
| Severity of Current Convictions | | | |
| Low | 1 | 363 | 3% |
| Low moderate | 2 | 1,556 | 12% |
| Moderate | 3 | 920 | 7% |
| High | 5 | 1,987 | 15% |
| Highest | 7 | 8,411 | 64% |
| Severity of Prior Convictions | | | |
| None/low/low moderate | 0 | 7,499 | 57% |
| Moderate | 1 | 770 | 6% |
| High | 3 | 2,359 | 18% |
| Highest | 4 | 2,609 | 20% |
| Escape History | | | |
| None | 0 | 11,243 | 85% |
| Escape with admin. Action | 3 | 861 | 7% |
| Escape Level II or below | 4 | 1,105 | 8% |
| Escape Level III or above | 6 | 24 | 0% |
| Escape with violence | 10 | 4 | 0% |
| Type of Most Serious Disciplinary | | | |
| None | -1 | 8,773 | 66% |
| Class IIB | 3 | 806 | 6% |
| Class IIA | 5 | 1,744 | 13% |
| Class I | 7 | 1,914 | 14% |
| Frequency of Disciplinary Convictions | | | |



| Factor | Weight | Number | Percent |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| None | -1 | 9,012 | 68% |
| One | 0 | 2,126 | 16% |
| Two | 1 | 966 | 7% |
| Three | 3 | 482 | 4% |
| Four or more | 5 | 651 | 5% |
| Program Participation | | | |
| Noncompliance | 0 | 2,594 | 20% |
| On waitlist or participation | -1 | 8,124 | 61% |
| Completion | -2 | 2,519 | 19% |
| Work Evaluation | | | |
| Maintained satisfactory employment | -2 | 9,154 | 69% |
| Unassigned/seeking | 0 | 2,901 | 22% |
| Unsatisfactory/terminated | 2 | 1,182 | 9% |
| Current Age | | | |
| 27 or younger | 2 | 1,867 | 14% |
| 28-37 | 0 | 4,463 | 34% |
| 38-60 | -1 | 5,908 | 45% |
| 61 or older | -2 | 999 | 8% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

To better understand why so many of the male prisoners are being overridden to higher classification levels, the project team examined the override reasons that were imposed on these male prisoners. Tables 14, 15 and 16 show the results of this analysis. Note that a prisoner can have more than one override applied to them to justify the override reason.

Table 14 shows that for the males who were scored minimum but were over-ridden to minimum-restricted, the primary reasons are the “non-discretionary” reasons of “time to parole eligibility date- PED”, “time to mandatory release date”, “medical care”, or “psychological” restrictions.

Table 14 Male Reclassification, Scored Minimum to Minimum Restrictive Custody

| Override Used | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Total Male Prison Population | 15,460 | 100% |
| Total Male Prisoners with these overrides | 980 | 6% |
| | | |
| Total Overrides Used | 1,099 | 100% |
| Non-Discretionary | 717 | 65% |
| Time to Parole Eligibility Date | 169 | 15% |
| Time to Mandatory Release Date | 246 | 22% |
| Medical | 143 | 13% |
| Psychological | 112 | 10% |
| Sex offender | 31 | 3% |
| Felony detainer | 15 | 1% |
| Prior escape | 1 | 0% |
| Discretionary | 189 | 17% |
| Retain for programs | 170 | 15% |
| Prior record severity | 1 | 0% |
| Recent disruptive behavior | 11 | 1% |
| Pending charges (Mod or greater) | 7 | 1% |
| No reason given | 179 | 16% |
| Override not upward | 14 | 1% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

Table 15 shows that for those scored as minimum to medium custody, the primary reasons also are the “non-discretionary” reasons of “sex offender”, “time to Parole Eligibility Date” and “time to Mandatory Release Date”.

Table 15: Male Reclassification, Scored Minimum to Medium Custody

| Override Used | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Total Male Prison Population | 15,460 | 100% |
| Total Male Prisoners with these overrides | 2,864 | 19% |
| | | |
| Total Overrides Used | 3,907 | 100% |



| Override Used | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Non-Discretionary | 3,616 | 93% |
| Violent crime (6 month Level III) | 1 | 0% |
| Time to Parole Eligibility Date | 1,346 | 34% |
| Time to Mandatory Release Date | 583 | 15% |
| Medical Restriction | 95 | 2% |
| Psychological/MH Restriction | 9 | 0% |
| Sex offender Restriction | 1,528 | 39% |
| Felony detainer | 41 | 1% |
| Prior escape | 13 | 0% |
| Non-discretionary | 108 | 3% |
| RTP assignment | 5 | 0% |
| Retain for programs | 73 | 2% |
| Recent assaultive behavior | 1 | 0% |
| Recent disruptive behavior | 4 | 0% |
| Notoriety of offense | 11 | 0% |
| Pending charges (Mod or greater) | 10 | 0% |
| Program non-compliance | 4 | 0% |
| No reason given | 121 | 3% |
| Override not upward | 62 | 2% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

Table 16 shows that for those who are scored as minimum-restricted to medium custody the same three non-discretionary factors are the most frequently applied factors.

Table 16: Male Reclassification, Scored Minimum-Restricted to Medium Custody

| Override Used | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Total Male Prison Population | 15,460 | 100% |
| Total Male Prisoners with these overrides | 3,174 | 21% |
| | | |
| Total Overrides Used | 4,062 | 100% |
| Non-Discretionary | 3,440 | 85% |
| Violent crime (6 month Level III) | 24 | 1% |



| Override Used | Number | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Time to Parole Eligibility Date | 1,327 | 33% |
| Time to Mandatory Release Date | 500 | 12% |
| Medical Restriction | 90 | 2% |
| Psychological/MH Restriction | 4 | 0% |
| Sex offender Restriction | 1,438 | 35% |
| Felony detainer | 42 | 1% |
| Prior escape | 15 | 0% |
| Discretionary | 265 | 7% |
| RTP assignment | 13 | 0% |
| Retain for programs | 106 | 3% |
| Recent assaultive behavior | 19 | 0% |
| Crime more severe than indicated | 3 | 0% |
| Prior record severity | 1 | 0% |
| Recent disruptive behavior | 115 | 3% |
| Notoriety of offense | 8 | 0% |
| Pending charges (Moderate or greater) | 21 | 1% |
| Program non-compliance | 28 | 1% |
| No reason given | 310 | 8% |
| Override not upward | 47 | 1% |

Source: Colorado Department of Corrections – Departmental Reports and Statistics

In addition to the relatively small percentage of discretionary over-rides that are being used, there is a significant number of prisoners who had their scored classification levels over-ridden to a higher level but for which the over-ride reason is either missing or not appropriate. Department classification policies only require a review by the facility classification committee chairperson. Best practices in other correctional systems indicate that there should be a review by the central classification unit to ensure over-rides are properly recorded and meet DOC policies.

It is also noted that among the discretionary over-rides there is the use of “retain for programs” which is not directly listed in the DOC classification policies. It does allow for someone to have their classification level lowered to facilitate participation in re-entry programs. But this reason is being used to increase the classification level simply because

the program that the prisoner is participating offered is not available at minimum or minimum restricted facilities. While it is not inappropriate to allow these prisoners to be remain at the higher security facility, it is not appropriate to change the classification level for that reason if indeed the prisoner is truly minimum or minimum restricted custody.

Based on this analysis, the project team makes the following recommendations to improve the performance of the Department's classification system:

1. As recommended in 2019, the female classification should be replaced with the same criteria being used by the male classification system. The only adjustment would be in the custody level scale. This will reduce the current level of over-classification of the female population.
2. The male re-classification system needs to be revalidated with an emphasis on adjusting the weights and scale. Specifically, too few prisoners are being scored as medium custody which is contributing to the high number of over-rides from minimum and minimum-restricted to medium custody.
3. The minimum-restricted category needs to be re-evaluated to determine how it should be applied from an operational and security perspective. The preliminary recommendation is to not score prisoners for minimum-restricted and combine them with the minimum custody prisoners. The existing mandatory override reasons that would be used to restrict their assignment to minimum custody would be limited to the sex offender, medical, mental health, and time left to Parole Eligibility Date or Mandatory Release Date restrictions.
4. The "retain for programs" discretionary over-ride reason should be discontinued as it does not reflect a change in custody but rather a need to have the prisoner complete a rehabilitative program.
5. The Department needs to audit and correct all prisoner classifications where the override reason is ether missing or not consistent with the final custody level. In the future, the Department should conduct weekly audits of the prison population to ensure such erroneous use of overrides does not occur. In general, a review of all the over-ride reasons and associated policies should be required.

4. PRISON CAPACITY UTILIZATION

Current Department prison capacity as described earlier uses operational capacity as defined and presented in the Department's Monthly Population and Capacity Report. This definition accounts for housing used for general population inmates in all custody levels, and excludes beds reserved for discipline, investigations, holding, or infirmary services. This approach to defining capacity was recommended in the 2013 Colorado Prison Utilization Study¹⁰ and was subsequently adopted by the Department as the basis for establishing available system prison capacity.

As mandated by the legislation authorizing this study, the project team reviewed current capacity use in each correctional facility in the state prison system, and then compared actual utilization with defined operational capacity. Where indicated, we developed new recommended capacity levels for each facility, reflecting current management practices, consistent with the Department's definition of operational capacity as described above.

For this review, the project team documented the total number of prison beds available at each facility and their current functional use. We then identified designated special purpose beds used to manage specific categories of inmates apart from the general population of the facility. These special purpose beds include capacity used for health care, temporary holding, and inmate discipline. We deducted these special purpose beds from the total institutional bed count to derive the facility's overall operational capacity. We also identified unused or unbudgeted capacity that could potentially be made available for housing in the future if needed.

The resulting capacity calculations represent the number of beds available for general purpose housing consistent with facility custody level and in accordance with professional standards and best practices in correctional system management. Two facilities, Centennial and San Carlos, maintain large Residential Treatment Programs (RTP). Because these programs are central components of their facility mission, the housing dedicated to these programs is considered part of operational capacity.

¹⁰Karl Becker, Ken McGinnis, James Austin, and Mary Fisher, Colorado Prison Utilization Study, CNA, June 2013.



This analysis documented 19,155 total beds in the state prison system for adult offenders and 271 beds at the Youthful Offender System facility. The system has 652 restrictive housing beds, 88 medical/infirmarary beds, and 708 unfunded beds available to address future operational needs. The unfunded beds include the recently closed Skyline facility, the remaining vacant tower at Centennial, and a 140 bed cellhouse undergoing renovation at CTCF.

Adjusting the total available capacity for these and other special use beds results in an adult prison system recommended operational capacity of 17,644 beds. Table 17 summarizes capacity data for each Department facility.

Table 17: Recommended Operational Capacity

| | Total Beds | Residential Treatment Program | Special Use Capacity | | | Unfunded Beds | Recommended Operational Capacity |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | Infirmarary/Medical | Restrictive Housing | Holding/Other | | |
| Level V | | | | | | | |
| Centennial | 1,284 | 240 | | 20 | | 316 | 948 |
| CSP | 770 | | 9 | 31 | 5 | | 725 |
| DRDC | 616 | | 42 | 32 | | | 542 |
| Denver Women's | 1,028 | | | 16 | 28 | | 984 |
| San Carlos | 255 | 255 | | | | | 255 |
| Sterling | 2,584 | | | 192 | | | 2,392 |
| subtotal | 7,221 | 495 | 51 | 291 | 33 | 316 | 5,846 |
| Level IV | | | | | | | |
| Limon | 974 | | | 28 | 10 | | 936 |
| Level III | | | | | | | |
| Arkansas Valley | 1,105 | | | 16 | | | 1,089 |



State Prison Utilization Study
January 2021

| | Total Beds | Residential Treatment Program | Special Use Capacity | | | Unfunded Beds | Recommended Operational Capacity |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | Infirmary/Medical | Restrictive Housing | Holding/Other | | |
| Bent County | 1,427 | | | 78 | | | 1,388 |
| Buena Vista | 1,320 | | | 86 | | | 1,234 |
| CTCF | 985 | | 32 | 24 | | 140 | 789 |
| Crowley County | 1,875 | | 5 | 44 | 2 | | 1,824 |
| Fremont | 1,732 | | | 63 | 18 | | 1,651 |
| La Vista | 575 | | | | 15 | | 560 |
| subtotal | 9,019 | - | 37 | 311 | 35 | 140 | 8,535 |
| Level II | | | | | | | |
| Arrowhead | 512 | | | 4 | | | 508 |
| Four Mile | 525 | | | 4 | | | 521 |
| Trinidad | 504 | | | 4 | | | 500 |
| subtotal | 1,541 | - | - | 12 | - | - | 1,529 |
| Level I | | | | | | | |
| CCC | 150 | | | | 24 | | 126 |
| Delta | 488 | | | 8 | | | 480 |
| Rifle | 194 | | | 2 | | | 192 |
| Skyline | 252 | | | | | 252 | - |
| subtotal | 1,084 | - | - | 10 | | 252 | 798 |
| TOTAL | 19,155 | 495 | 88 | 652 | 78 | 708 | 17,644 |
| YOS | 271 | | | | 15 | | 256 |

The 17,644 beds of prison system operational capacity identified in this review compares with 18,116 beds reported by the Department, a difference of 472 beds. The primary differences in the operational capacity from the recommended number of beds to the Department’s current level include:

- A reduction of 12 beds at Arrowhead resulting from the creation of a Therapeutic community program in two housing units.
- The closure of Skyline should remove that facility’s 252 beds from operational capacity.
- The difference of 140 beds at CTCF reflects the closure of a 140-bed housing unit for renovation and conversion to a sex offender treatment program.
- The recommended reduction of 96 beds at Sterling removes restrictive housing beds from the operational capacity.
- Changes in capacity at Centennial, DRDC, Limon, Fremont, and Crowley reflect updated counts of available beds.

Table 18 summarizes the differences between this analysis and the current Department-defined operational capacity for each facility.

Table 18: Recommended vs. Current Operational Capacity

| | Recommended Operational Capacity | Current Department Operational Capacity | Difference |
|------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Level V | | | |
| Centennial | 948 | 953 | (5) |
| CSP | 725 | 725 | - |
| DRDC | 542 | 570 | (28) |
| Denver Women's | 984 | 984 | - |
| San Carlos | 255 | 255 | - |
| Sterling | 2,392 | 2,488 | (96) |
| subtotal | 5,846 | 5,975 | (129) |
| Level IV | | | |
| Limon | 936 | 930 | 6 |
| Level III | | | |



| | Recommended Operational Capacity | Current Department Operational Capacity | Difference |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Arkansas Valley | 1,089 | 1,089 | - |
| Bent County | 1,388 | 1,388 | - |
| Buena Vista | 1,234 | 1,234 | - |
| CTCF | 789 | 929 | (140) |
| Crowley County | 1,824 | 1,800 | 24 |
| Fremont | 1,651 | 1,620 | 31 |
| La Vista | 560 | 560 | - |
| subtotal | 8,535 | 8,620 | (85) |
| Level II | | | |
| Arrowhead | 508 | 520 | (12) |
| Four Mile | 521 | 521 | - |
| Trinidad | 500 | 500 | - |
| subtotal | 1,529 | 1,541 | (12) |
| Level I | | | |
| CCC | 126 | 126 | - |
| Delta | 480 | 480 | - |
| Rifle | 192 | 192 | - |
| Skyline | - | 252 | (252) |
| subtotal | 798 | 1,050 | (252) |
| TOTAL | 17,644 | 18,116 | (472) |
| YOS | 256 | 256 | - |

On December 31, 2020 the Department housed 13,528 inmates in adult prisons.¹¹ With a recommended operational capacity of 17,644 beds, this results in 4,116 vacant beds, or a vacancy rate of 23.3 percent. Nearly 28.6 percent of these vacant beds are in the Department’s specialty facilities, DRDC, Denver Women’s, La Vista, Centennial, and San Carlos. Population levels in these facilities are more sensitive to prison admissions and

¹¹ Includes 6 adult offenders transferred to YOS, per Senate Bill 15-182.



they have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 policies that have depressed intake into the state prison system.

Level I facilities have a 49.0 percent vacancy rate, even after the closure of Skyline Correctional Facility earlier this year. This reflects both the diversion of low-level offenders away from the prison system as well as the Department’s internal policy of minimizing inter-facility movement in order to mitigate the spread of COVID -19. This policy makes it more difficult for inmates to progress to Level I facilities prior to release.

The Colorado State Penitentiary, the primary facility for close custody inmates has the lowest vacancy rate, as its population has longer lengths of stay and tends to be more stable. As a group, the Level III facilities, which house a predominantly medium security population, have the fewest vacant beds. The two Level III private correctional facilities have notably low vacancy rates, with a 10.7 percent vacancy rate at Bent County and 15.3 percent at Crowley County. This reflects concerns that significant reductions in the population levels at these facilities could endanger their financial viability and put their continued operation at risk.

Table 19: Vacant Beds, December 31, 2020

| | Population 12/31/20 | Recommended Operational Capacity | Vacant Beds | Vacancy Rate |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Level V Facilities | | | | |
| Centennial | 540 | 948 | 408 | 43.0% |
| CSP | 689 | 725 | 36 | 5.0% |
| DRDC | 438 | 542 | 104 | 19.2% |
| Denver Women's | 672 | 984 | 312 | 31.7% |
| San Carlos | 199 | 255 | 56 | 22.0% |
| Sterling | 1,731 | 2,392 | 661 | 27.6% |
| subtotal | 4,269 | 5,846 | 1,577 | 27.0% |
| Level IV Facility | | | | |
| Limon | 838 | 936 | 98 | 10.5% |
| Level III Facilities | | | | |
| Arkansas Valley | 990 | 1,089 | 99 | 9.1% |
| Bent County | 1,239 | 1,388 | 149 | 10.7% |
| Buena Vista | 928 | 1,234 | 306 | 24.8% |
| CTCF | 673 | 789 | 116 | 14.7% |



| | Population 12/31/20 | Recommended Operational Capacity | Vacant Beds | Vacancy Rate |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Crowley County | 1,545 | 1,824 | 279 | 15.3% |
| Fremont | 1,265 | 1,651 | 386 | 23.4% |
| La Vista | 264 | 560 | 296 | 52.9% |
| subtotal | 6,904 | 8,535 | 1,631 | 19.1% |
| Level II Facilities | | | | |
| Arrowhead | 371 | 508 | 137 | 27.0% |
| Four Mile | 383 | 521 | 138 | 26.5% |
| Trinidad | 350 | 500 | 150 | 30.0% |
| subtotal | 1,104 | 1,529 | 425 | 27.8% |
| Level I Facilities | | | | |
| CCC | 81 | 126 | 45 | 35.7% |
| Delta | 211 | 480 | 269 | 56.0% |
| Rifle | 115 | 192 | 77 | 40.1% |
| Skyline | - | - | - | 0.0% |
| subtotal | 407 | 798 | 391 | 49.0% |
| TOTAL | 13,522 | 17,644 | 4,122 | 23.4% |



5. FACILITY SUMMARIES

With the assistance of the Department of Corrections, the project team compiled data metrics on each facility in the Colorado state prison system, detailing key aspects of facility operations, programs, and physical plant. The team supplemented this information with interviews with command staff that focused on capacity management and facility issues. The following section of the report provides a summary of this information.

LEVEL V FACILITIES

| Centennial Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 948 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 886 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$185.86* |
| Total Staff FTE | 415 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Substance Abuse Outpatient • RTP • Sex Offender • Pre-Release |

*Annualizes Centennial South FY 2019-20 costs, which opened on March 10, 2020.

Located in the DOC’s Cañon City complex, Centennial Correctional Facility (CCF) contains two distinct units, CCF North and CCF South, both designed to manage a close custody population within the prison system.

CCF North, the older of the two units, opened in 1980. The institution has an operational capacity of 336 beds, all of which are single-celled. The facility supports the DOC’s residential treatment program (RTP) for offenders with mental illness as well as a residential sex offender treatment program.

CCF South is a relatively new facility, which was partially opened in September 2010 when one of its three towers (Tower I) was put into operation. The facility consists of three 316-bed, multi-story towers, each subdivided into two housing units. The facility was closed from 2013-2019, but recently received legislative approval to open two towers in March 2020. The unit has a current operational capacity of 612 beds and a restricted housing unit of 20 beds. CCF South is designed to house close custody inmates. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility has also assumed the following responsibilities:



- Jail Backlog Population. Every inmate admitted to state prison from county jails goes to CCF South for COVID testing and quarantine for a minimum of 14 days before transfer to the DRDC for formal intake assessment and processing.
- Transportation Hub. CCF South serves as a transportation hub for inmates being moved long distances, requiring short-term housing.

CCF has a mixed population. As of June 30, 2020, approximately 44 percent of the population was unclassified pending transfer to DRDC for assessment. Medium security offenders assigned to the RTP make up 24 percent of the population. Close custody offenders make up 21 percent of the total facility population.

| Colorado State Penitentiary | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 725 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 699 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$164.94 |
| Total Staff FTE | 362 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Pre-Release |

The Colorado State Penitentiary (CSP) opened in 1993 to serve as the state’s primary facility for housing close custody offenders. The facility features advanced security systems, appropriate for the management and control of offenders assessed as potentially violent and dangerous and houses the state’s execution chamber. As of the June 30, 2020, 81 percent of the facility population was composed of close custody inmates. The small cadre of medium and minimum-restricted inmates at the facility provide support services and work assignments.

| Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 768 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 450 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$242.58 |
| Total Staff FTE | 276 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication-Assisted Treatment • Sex Offender • Academic |

The Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center (DRDC) opened in 1991 and is the primary facility for admitting males and females from county jails into the state correctional



system, as well as parolees who have violated the terms of their parole. The security classification for DRDC is Level V, due to the unknown mix of incoming offenders, who must be screened for risk and program needs.

All admitted offenders progress through a series of diagnostic reviews to determine a classification level. This classification level is then used by Department staff to make an appropriate facility placement. Intake to out-placement can take as little as 7 days or as long as 30 days or more depending on the need for diagnostic testing, preparation of Offender file and bed space available in permanent facilities. While at DRDC, offenders also receive medical, dental, program service needs, and mental health assessments.

The facility also houses a small cadre of permanently assigned offenders to provide support services and labor. In addition, the facility maintains a 36-bed infirmary, a dialysis unit, and a Special Management Nursing Unit for offenders with long-term medical care needs. The facility also supports a Transportation Unit to provide short-term housing for offenders appearing court, or in transit to other facilities.

The DRDC has a significant number of unclassified inmates pending their completion of the intake process. Over 50% of the classified population at the facility is in medium custody, consistent with the overall population profile of the state prison system.

| Denver Women’s Correctional Facility | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,436 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 822 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$134.78 |
| Total Staff FTE | 338 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Mental Health • Sex Offender • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Denver Women’s Correctional Facility (DWCF) opened in 1998 and serves as the Department’s primary facility for housing female offenders. The facility assesses new admissions to the Department for classification and houses offenders in each custody level. The facility operates a warehouse that supports all facilities in the Denver area as



well as a canteen that serves ten other institutions. At the end of FY 2019-20, DWCF’s population was composed of 36 percent in minimum-restricted custody, 28 percent in medium custody, 21 percent in minimum custody, and 12 percent in close custody. The facility is notable for the range of program services available, including a family visiting program for inmates with children.

| San Carlos Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 255 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 210 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$322.18 |
| Total Staff FTE | 179 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Treatment Program • Sex Offender • Academic |

San Carlos Correctional Facility (SCCF) is a specialty facility that provides intensive treatment for mentally ill and developmentally disabled offenders, as well as inmates with dementia. SCCF is located on the campus of the Colorado Mental Health Institute – Pueblo and opened in 1995. Treatment services are provided in a highly secure, controlled environment. All SCCF residents participate in treatment programs. SCCF serves a very specific, high priority function in the state prison system, with facilities that appear to effectively support its mission.

| Sterling Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 2,392 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 2,117 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$116.06 |
| Total Staff FTE | 766 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Pre-Release • Sex Offender • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |



Sterling Correctional Facility (SCF), located in the northeastern corner of Colorado, is the Department’s largest facility. Opening in 1998, SCF was designed to house and program all levels of offenders from close to minimum custody. The facility is divided into 19 housing units in three primary housing areas. SCF has extensive security systems, consistent with its Level V designation. Over 75 percent of the population has a medium or minimum-restricted custody status, with most of the remaining population in close custody. At the end of FY 2019-20 the facility housed 427 close custody offenders, the second largest close custody population in the Department after CSP. The subdivision of the facility into different operating sectors and the abundance of program space at the facility provide the Department with great flexibility in managing capacity utilization.

LEVEL IV FACILITIES

| Limon Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 936 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 901 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$124.76 |
| Total Staff FTE | 303 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Limon Correctional Facility (LCF) is the Department’s only Level IV institution. The facility is located approximately 90 miles southeast of Denver. LCF opened in 1991 as a Level V facility for close custody inmates and has a corresponding level of security and management control systems. The custody level designation was subsequently lowered to Level IV and the facility population is now roughly 44 percent close custody, with the majority of the population in medium custody status. The facility has ample program space and could support a larger medium and minimum-restricted population.

LEVEL III FACILITIES

| Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,089 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 1,022 |



| Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$111.31 |
| Total Staff FTE | 275 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Mental Health • Sex Offender • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility (AVCF), located approximately 50 miles east of Pueblo, opened in 1987 and was the Department’s first new major facility built outside the Canon City area. AVCF was originally designed as a 500-bed, single bunked, minimum-security prison. However, increasing population pressures in the prison system resulted in a change in design to add more secure beds and additional capacity. The facility now houses multiple custody levels of offenders and has a secure perimeter. However, as most cells do not have plumbing or secure doors, the facility cannot be locked down, and may not be appropriate for higher risk offenders that may require cell confinement.

Arkansas Valley manages one of the Department’s two protective custody units. The facility also supports a large sex offender treatment program. The extensive array of programs offered are somewhat constrained by lack of program space, reflecting the fact that the facility was originally designed to support half the number of inmates currently housed at AVCF.

| Bent County Correctional Facility | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,388 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 1,240 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$66.61 |
| Total Staff FTE | 248 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Release • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Mental Health • Academic • Vocational |



| Bent County Correctional Facility | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional Industries |

The Bent County Correctional Facility (BCCF), located 85 miles east of Pueblo, was built by Bent County and opened in 1993 as the first private correctional facility in the Colorado. CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) purchased the facility from the County in October 1996 and currently owns and operates the prison. The facility has security systems and physical plant features consistent with contemporary medium security institutions. Facility programs, per the terms of the CoreCivic contract with the Department, include education, vocational, mental health, substance abuse, and reentry programs. The facility’s operating cost per diem, in common with Crowley County, is the lowest in the Department.

| Buena Vista Correctional Complex | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,234 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 1,113 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$108.43 |
| Total Staff FTE | 319.5 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Mental Health • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Buena Vista Correctional Complex (BVCC) is unique in that it comprises two institutions----a Level III highly secure facility for close custody and medium security offenders with buildings that date back to 1892, and a newer Level II institution for minimum-restricted and minimum security inmates. The facility is located about 94 miles west of Colorado Springs. As the largest facility in this part of the state, BVCC provides operational support and services for the Rifle and Delta correctional facilities.

BVCC has a diverse population. As of June 2020, 55 percent of the population was medium security, 29 percent minimum-restricted or minimum, and 16 percent in close custody. The facility also manages a protective custody unit for high risk offenders. BVCC



has a robust set of programs to address offender treatment needs and an extensive Correctional Industry program.

| Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility | |
|--|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 805 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 685 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$144.70 |
| Total Staff FTE | 285 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Sex Offender • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

Located in Cañon City, the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility is the oldest correctional institution in Colorado, opening in 1871. The institution has been extensively remodeled and renovated to assure continued safe and secure operations.

The facility has a unique mission in housing special needs offenders. CTCF maintains the largest medical infirmary in the state prison system and provides programs and services for geriatric inmates, offenders with limited mobility, hearing impaired, transgender, developmentally disabled, and offenders at high risk for COVID-19. The facility is also renovating a housing unit to provide sex offender treatment. The institutional population is largely medium security.

| Crowley County Correctional Facility | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,824 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 1,602 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$67.11 |
| Total Staff FTE | 298 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |



The Crowley County Correctional Facility (CCCF) was built by Crowley County and opened in 1998. CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) has operated the CCCF since its opening and purchased the facility in 2003. The facility has the largest capacity of any Level III facility in the state. It provides a level of security and programs consistent with its Level III designation and houses a largely medium security population. Programs offered, per the terms of the CoreCivic contract with the Department, include education, vocational, mental health, substance abuse, and reentry programs. The facility’s operating cost per diem, in common with the Bent County Correctional Facility, is the lowest in the Department.

| Fremont Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 1,620 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 1,488 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$104.82 |
| Total Staff FTE | 393 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Mental Health • Sex Offender • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Fremont Correctional Facility (FCF), located in the Cañon City correctional complex, opened in 1957. The facility was combined with the Shadow Mountain Correctional Facility in 1991, resulting in its current configuration. The facility currently houses close custody offenders in addition to medium security inmates. FCF offers a robust set of program services, including large sex offender, therapeutic community, and correctional industry programs.

| La Vista Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 560 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 425 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$122.14 |
| Total Staff FTE | 174 |



| La Vista Correctional Facility | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Mental Health • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The La Vista Correctional Facility (LVCF) houses medium, minimum-restricted, and minimum security female offenders. Like San Carlos, the facility is located on the campus of the Colorado Mental Health Institute – Pueblo. The facility provides the only housing for female inmates outside of the Denver Women’s Correctional Facility. The facility houses inmates admitted to state prison from county jails for COVID testing and quarantine prior to transfer to the DWCF for formal intake assessment and processing. La Vista also provides laundry service and work crews for San Carlos.

LEVEL II FACILITIES

| Arrowhead Correctional Center | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 508 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 428 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$94.13 |
| Total Staff FTE | 115 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Therapeutic Community • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

The Arrowhead Correctional Center (ACC) opened in 1989 and is located in Cañon City correctional complex. ACC, in conjunction with Four Mile Correctional Center and the now closed Skyline Correctional Center, makes up the Cañon Minimum Centers complex. The facility has a secure perimeter and houses a largely minimum-restricted population. ACC has extensive therapeutic community and correctional industry programs, in addition to standard education and vocational programs.



| Four Mile Correctional Center | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 521 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 417 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$98.96 |
| Total Staff FTE | 118 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

Four Mile Correctional Center (FMCC) with Arrowhead Correctional Center and the now closed Skyline Correctional Center, is part of the Cañon Minimum Centers complex. The facility opened as a modular unit in 1983, moving to a permanent facility with expanded capacity in 1999. The facility houses a minimum-restricted population and places a strong emphasis on work assignments, with an extensive set of correctional industry programs.

| Trinidad Correctional Facility | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 500 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 414 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$112.64 |
| Total Staff FTE | 150 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Mental Health • Pre-Release • Academic • Vocational • Correctional Industries |

Trinidad Correctional Facility (TCF) is located 84 miles south of Pueblo, near the New Mexico border. The facility opened in 2001 with 500 beds and was originally planned for expansion to a multi-custody level facility with a layout similar to Sterling Correctional Facility. As a result of construction delays and changes in Department capacity needs, these expansion plans were never implemented, leaving the facility as a Level II institution for minimum-restricted inmates. Security and program services are consistent with other Level II facilities.

LEVEL I FACILITIES



| Colorado Correctional Center | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 126 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 89 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$111.12 |
| Total Staff FTE | 36 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Correctional Industries |

The Colorado Correctional Center (CCC), located near Denver, provides housing for minimum security offenders in a former National Guard rifle range and training facility. The facility has a total of 150 beds but reserves a 24 -bed housing unit for a parolee intensive treatment program, leaving an operational capacity of 126 beds for DOC inmates. The facility was originally constructed in 1903 and was transferred to the Department in 1969. The physical plant is aging, but repair work is complicated by the facility’s designation as an historical site. Offenders at CCC provide housekeeping services to the Colorado State Police Training Academy, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Military Affairs.

| Delta Correctional Center | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 480 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 324 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$104.47 |
| Total Staff FTE | 120 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic |

The Delta Correctional Center (DCC) is the largest of the Department’s three Level I facilities for minimum security inmates. Located approximately 41 miles southeast of Grand Junction, the original facility was constructed in 1963 with additional buildings opened in 1990 to bring the facility to its current capacity. All inmates at this facility have job or program assignments, with many assigned to community work crews. Security systems and programs services are consistent with the mission of the facility and the custody level of the population.

| Rifle Correctional Center | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 192 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 165 |



| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$100.69 |
| Total Staff FTE | 51 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Correctional Industries |

Rifle Correctional Center (RCC) opened in 1979 and underwent substantial renovation in 1996. The facility is approximately 63 miles northeast of Grand Junction, near Rifle Gap Reservoir, making it the most remote facility in the state correctional system in terms of transportation access. Inmates from the recently closed Skyline Correctional Center were relocated to Rifle. All inmates are assigned to a work, pre-release or an educational program. The facility manages the unique State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT) program which provides firefighting services to the community.

YOUTHFUL OFFENDER SYSTEM

| Youthful Offender System | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Recommended Operational Capacity | 256 |
| FY 2019-20 EOY Population | 172 |
| FY 2019-20 Total Per Diem Cost | \$257.19 |
| Total Staff FTE | 177 |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Vocational • Mental Health • Substance Abuse Outpatient • Sex Offender • Correctional Industries |

The Youthful Offender System (YOS) is a coed facility that provides a sentencing option for violent youthful offenders who would normally be sentenced to the adult prison system. Youth assigned to YOS receive an adult sentence that is suspended pending successful completion of a sentence and assigned programs in YOS.

The facility and program were originally established in 1993 on the campus of the Colorado Mental Health Institute-Pueblo in the current La Vista Correctional Facility. The program moved to its current facilities in 2006. Recent capital projects include the completion of a new gymnasium and multi-purpose facility. The facility serves a predominantly male population, averaging 8-12 female residents.



6. CAPACITY USE MANAGEMENT

The substantial drop in the state's offender population in 2020 has profoundly altered the outlook for management of prison capacity utilization. At the beginning of 2020 the Department had 17,777 inmates and 539 unused beds in the entire prison system, for a vacancy rate of 3.7 percent. By the end of December 2020, the population had fallen to 13,528 and the number of vacant beds in the system, based on the Department's definition of operational capacity had grown to 4,594, a vacancy rate of 25.3 percent¹². The number of empty beds in the system creates issues for potential prison capacity needs and the type of capacity required by the system going forward.

VACANT BEDS

Looking at the gross number of vacant beds relative to the Department's currently defined operational capacity overstates the current surplus of prison beds. First, as noted in the Chapter 4 of this report, our analysis indicates that Department facilities have a recommended operational capacity of 17,644, a reduction of 472 beds from the Department's defined operational capacity level.

Our analysis of recommended operational capacity and current vacant beds includes the capacity available at the two prison operating under private management, Bent County and Crowley County. While this capacity is available to the Department, assuming funding to support the number of inmates to be housed there, beds not used are not truly "vacant" in that the Department only pays for beds actually used to house an inmate. A vacant bed at these facilities has no impact on Department capacity management or expenditures.

Moreover, it is impossible to literally use all prison capacity on an ongoing basis. Operational issues such as physical plant maintenance and the need for available cells to accommodate fluctuations in the prison population as well as the continual movement of inmates within and between facilities dictates that systems need to maintain a minimum number of vacant beds for management purposes. To this end, most correctional systems set a goal of keeping a minimum of 2 percent of operational capacity vacant as a

¹² Colorado Department of Corrections, Monthly Population and Capacity Report, December 31, 2020.

recognized best practice. Based on the recommended facility operational capacity levels, this results in keeping 362 general population beds vacant at any given time.

A large amount of remaining vacant capacity is in the Department's special use facilities, the DRDC which manages intake for the entire prison system, and the Centennial and San Marcos facilities, which manage large residential treatment programs. While population levels in these facilities may be temporarily depressed in response to the COVID pandemic, the programs and services provided in these facilities are of high value to the Department and need to be preserved to address future system needs. The Centennial and San Carlos facilities are central to the Department's strategy for treating the growing number of offenders suffering from mental illness. The DRDC is temporarily experiencing low population levels due to the slowdown in admissions to the state prison system but provides critical services as the system's intake facility. Because of their unique missions, beds in these facilities are not truly available for general population housing and should be excluded from an analysis of capacity vacancies.

Evaluating the current number of vacant beds in the prison system also needs to consider the large jail backlog population that is awaiting admission to the state prison system. The backlog as of the end of December 2020 was 1,079 sentenced offenders. The jail backlog Nov 2019 to March 2020 during normal prison system operations averaged 254 inmates. This suggests that nearly 825 vacant beds will be filled by inmates currently held in county jails once the pandemic subsides.

Finally, the current bed vacancies in the prison system play an important role in the Department's approach to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the prison system. The reduced inmate population has enabled the Department to lower population density levels throughout the state prison system. About 20 percent of current prison system capacity is in single cells, with the majority of the population housed in either double-bunked or multiple occupancy rooms. Lower facility population levels have enabled the Department to increase the number of inmates in single cells. Increased vacant beds does not necessarily mean empty cells, it more often reflects one inmate housed in a cell that could house two offenders. Reducing crowding in this manner makes a limited form of social distancing possible, potentially slowing the spread of infectious diseases in the prison population.



CAPACITY USE SCENARIOS

The DCJ prison population projections indicate continued decline through FY 2021 and significant growth in the male population through 2027 as the state justice system returns to normal operations and works down the current backlog of court cases and trials. The female inmate population, however, will show slower growth, consistent with trends in admissions that predate the pandemic-related drop in population. Based on current data, the DCJ projection appears reasonable and is consistent with the experience of other states

Comparing these projections with available capacity, adjusted for the factors described earlier in this chapter shows that the male jurisdictional population will exceed recommended operational system capacity by 1,266 inmates by the end of FY 2027. The female jurisdictional population will exceed recommended operational system capacity by 226 inmates during the same timeframe.

Table 20: Projected Jurisdictional Population & Capacity

| | Projected FY 2021 EOY Population | FY 2027 Projected | Recommended Operational Capacity | FY 2027 Capacity Shortfall |
|--------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Male | 14,035 | 17,366 | 16,100 | (1,266) |
| Female | 1,237 | 1,770 | 1,544 | (226) |
| Total | 15,272 | 19,136 | 17,644 | (1,492) |

These projections indicate the jurisdictional population of inmates assigned to the Department of Corrections will begin to grow rapidly beginning in FY 2022 and will exceed the recommended operational capacity of the Department by the end of FY 2024. As noted earlier however, there is substantial uncertainty regarding a number of key assumptions that underly these projections. These uncertainties include:

- **Long-term impact of recent justice system policy changes.** The state justice system responded to the pandemic with a wide range of policy initiatives and operational changes designed to reduce the number of inmates held in the state prison system. Although data is limited, many of these changes appear to have had a significant impact in reducing the prison population without corresponding negative effects on public safety. The extent to which the justice system will

continue these policy changes versus simply returning to the status quo that existed before the pandemic is unknowable.

- **Long-term Impact of statutory changes.** In 2019, Colorado enacted a number of criminal justice reforms that reduced pressure on the prison population. These included changes in the classification of escapes from community corrections, work release, or intensive parole supervision programs; reclassification of possession-related drug felonies to misdemeanors; and changes to the parole release and revocation process. The impact of these changes was just beginning to be registered in the prison system in the months prior to the pandemic. Their long-term impact is as of yet not determined.
- **Crime trends.** Colorado experienced a downward trend in violent crime until 2019. Since the onset of the pandemic, anecdotal information indicates that certain types of violent crime such as domestic violence continue to increase, while property and drug crime rates have fallen. Arrests for many classes of crime have declined but it is unclear as to the degree to which this reflects a change in the incidence of these crimes, or a change in law enforcement practices. The future direction of these crime trends and the degree to which they will filter into state prison population trends is unknown.
- **Sentencing Reform.** The Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice Sentencing Task Force has commenced a multi-year project to re-write the state's sentencing system. The Task Force is beginning with a review of misdemeanor sentencing but is expected to issue recommendations for felony sentencing reform within the next 2-3 years. These recommendations will have a significant impact on admissions and length of stay in the state prison system.

This level of uncertainty underscores the need for caution in making any significant changes in current prison system capacity. The current DCJ projections represent the best assessment of the future size of the state prison population at this time. Future projections will address these uncertainties as data becomes available to support more definitive analysis. However, at this time, the magnitude of uncertainty and the growth indicated in the current DCJ projections indicate current operational capacity should be maintained to address overall system needs over the next five years.



If the state's prison population were to experience even greater, sustained growth after control of the pandemic has been established, exceeding the levels projected by DCJ, the state would be required to review available sources of increased system capacity, both in state facilities and through potential acquisition or lease of private facilities.

The Department currently has 708 unfunded beds in the prison system that could be activated if needed. Centennial has a vacant tower that could be opened, providing 316 Level V beds. According to the Department, opening this tower would require approximately \$360,000 in startup costs, with projected annual operating costs of \$9,700,000 for additional staff and support costs. The recently closed Skyline Correctional Center has 252 Level I beds available. Based on 2019-20 expenditures, activating Skyline would create \$7,496,902 in additional operating costs for the Department. Finally, the CTCF has a 140-bed housing unit, currently closed for renovation. The staff required to manage the facility are already in place at the facility, so there are no additional costs associated with reopening the unit as long as it serves the same purpose that it did prior to the pandemic.

There are also a number of private correctional facilities, either closed or currently under contract to the state that could provide potential capacity to the Department:

- **Huerfano County Correctional Facility.** Located south of Pueblo, this CoreCivic facility closed in 2009 and has 750 Level III beds available. The facility would require some capital renovation to upgrade to security-grade plumbing fixtures and doors. CoreCivic's valuation of the facility is based on a replacement cost of \$100,000 per bed, resulting in a facility cost for purchase of \$75,000,000. The facility could also be made available to the State on a lease basis at an estimated \$6,500 - \$8,000 annual cost per bed, depending upon the terms of the lease. Assuming the midpoint of this range (\$7,250), the annual lease cost for the facility would be \$5,437,000 available for either lease or sale to the state. If acquired by the state under either a purchase or lease scenario, we assume the Department would operate the facility with staffing patterns and program services comparable to other state-operated Level III facilities. In the FY 2019-20, Level III state facilities had an average daily direct operating cost of \$101.40 per inmate. Applying this operating cost rate to the number of beds available at Huerfano results in a projected annual operating cost of \$27,777,263 for the facility.

- **Kit Carson Correctional Facility.** This CoreCivic facility is located in Burlington and has 1,488 Level III beds available. The facility closed in 2016 and is reportedly in excellent condition. Using CoreCivic's purchase and lease assumptions (\$100,000 per bed for purchase and \$7,250 per bed for lease), the facility could be purchased for \$148,000,000 or leased for an annual cost of \$10,788,000. Assuming an operating cost per bed equivalent to the average direct per diem cost for state-operated Level III facilities, the projected annual operating cost would be \$55,110,089.
- **Cheyenne Mountain Correctional Center.** The facility, located in Colorado Springs, was formerly operated as a Level III reentry facility by GEO Corporation and has 730 beds. The facility closed in early 2020 and is being maintained by GEO. The company indicates they would entertain a sale of the facility for \$36 - \$40 million, depending upon terms, or a lease of the facility for an estimated annual cost of \$3 - \$4 million. Assuming an operating cost per bed equivalent to the average direct per diem cost for state-operated Level III facilities, the projected annual operating cost would be \$27,036,536.
- **Hudson Correctional Facility.** This facility, located 33 miles northeast of Denver, closed in 2013 after its contract for housing inmates from Alaska expired. The facility has 1,250 beds and features a large infirmary. GEO maintained the facility through 2018. The owners want to sell the facility and would be receptive to discussions with the State "at a price approaching a contribution "or far below the current asking price of \$25,000,000. A lease of the facility to the state is technically possible, but the owners strongly prefer conveyance of the facility to the state and appear highly motivated to convey the facility on a very favorable terms to the state. . Assuming an operating cost per bed equivalent to the average direct per diem cost for state-operated Level III facilities, the projected annual operating cost for the facility would be \$49,295,438.

In total, these facilities have 4,926 beds available for use by the state. This represents 28 percent of the Department's current recommended operational capacity and would clearly be sufficient to cover any foreseeable increase in the prison population. Table 22 summarizes this potentially available capacity.



Table 21: Department of Corrections Available Capacity

| | Beds |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Centennial | 316 |
| Skyline | 252 |
| CTCF | 140 |
| Huerfano | 750 |
| Kit Carson | 1,488 |
| Cheyenne Mountain | 730 |
| Hudson | 1,250 |
| TOTAL | 4,926 |

Finally, the State could also entertain purchase or lease of the Bent and Crowley County facilities currently operated for the Department by CoreCivic. Using CoreCivic pricing assumptions, Bent County could be purchased for \$138,000,000 or leased for \$10,063,000 on an annual basis. Crowley County could be purchased for \$182,400,000 or leased for \$13,224,000 on an annual basis. The projected annual operating costs for these facilities, assuming operations and programs consistent with other Department Level III facilities would be \$51,406,454 for Bent County and \$67,554,302 for Crowley County. Table 22 summarizes this potentially available capacity.

Table 22: Department of Corrections Available Capacity & Cost

| | Operational Capacity | Purchase Price/Startup Costs | Annual Lease Cost | Annual Operating Cost |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Centennial | 316 | \$360,000 | NA | \$9,700,000 |
| Skyline | 252 | NA | NA | \$7,496,902 |
| CTCF | 140 | NA | NA | \$0 |
| Huerfano | 750 | \$75,000,000 | \$5,437,500 | \$27,777,263 |
| Kit Carson | 1,488 | \$148,800,000 | \$10,788,000 | \$55,110,089 |
| Bent County | 1,388 | \$138,800,000 | \$10,063,000 | \$51,406,454 |
| Crowley County | 1,824 | \$182,400,000 | \$13,224,000 | \$67,554,302 |
| Cheyenne Mountain | 730 | \$38,000,000 | \$3,800,000 | \$27,036,536 |
| Hudson | 1,250 | \$25,000,000* | NA | \$46,295,438 |

*Owner indicates this price could be discounted substantially.

If the state prison population does not increase as forecast by DCJ, but instead continues to decrease, the Department could face a need to close currently used capacity. Assuming a continued decline in low-custody offenders consistent with trends in 2020, the Department could reduce current capacity in Level I and II facilities. Because Level V, IV, and III facilities have the ability to house inmates in multiple classification levels, the Department has much greater flexibility in managing capacity utilization in these institutions. Moreover, many of these institutions have significant housing dedicated to minimum-restricted and minimum security offenders.

At the end of December 2020, Level V, IV, and III facilities housed 55 percent of the minimum custody population. By contrast, the Level I facilities only house minimum security offenders. The three Level I facilities have a recommended operational capacity of 798 beds and have a current vacancy rate of 49 percent. If the low-custody offender population continues to experience a significant decline, and the Level V, IV, and III facilities retain the capacity to efficiently manage inmates in this custody level, then the future viability of the Level I facilities needs to be examined.

An alternative approach to managing population reductions would prioritize preserving the operations of current state facilities and draw down the contracted population at one or both of the two remaining privately operated facilities to reflect overall system population declines. Although the private facilities have the lowest per capita operating cost in the state prison system, the structure of the state contract with CoreCivic allows the state to achieve the full savings of reduced per diem costs as it reduces population levels at these facilities. Reductions in population levels at state facilities have a marginal impact on state costs as the costs of staffing, utilities, and administration are largely fixed regardless of changes in population levels, absent the closure of large housing units. The per diem rates for private facilities by contrast, fully allocate all direct, variable, and overhead costs, so that reductions in population levels can produce substantial savings for the state.

However, there is a limit to the savings that can be achieved by lowering population levels in the private facilities. Like state prisons, private facilities have the same fixed operating costs which do not decline even as the facility's population is reduced. Because they lose the fully allocated cost of operations on each marginal change in the inmate population, reductions in the inmate population can rapidly make a private facility unprofitable, and

financially not viable. Reducing the population of the private facilities by hundreds of inmates runs the risk of losing these facilities entirely, as their operation becomes financially unviable for the vendor.

The other issue with reducing the inmate count at medium security private facilities is that, based on the state's experience in 2020, a future drop in the prison population will likely be concentrated among lower custody offenders. The Department's greatest demand for capacity will likely remain Level III prison beds. Reducing the use of private prison capacity could run counter to that actual capacity needs of the prison system.

CLOSE CUSTODY CAPACITY

Currently the Department has 1,919 close custody offenders dispersed in eleven facilities. Management of close custody offenders poses significance management challenges and requires more intensive staffing and specialized programming. Consolidating the close custody population into fewer facilities that were designed for this population would allow for more efficient use of DOC resources.

Centennial's South Unit has 612 close custody beds available for relocation of close custody offenders from other facilities. This housing can be utilized for the transfer of the following close custody capacity in other facilities:

- Sterling Correctional Facility – 300 beds
- Buena Vista Correctional Complex – 140 beds
- Limon Correctional Facility – 156 beds

These actions would free up capacity for additional medium security housing at these facilities. Sterling and Buena Vista would no longer have any close custody general population housing. Limon would continue to manage two units of 315 close custody beds. These actions would also improve operating conditions in these facilities as well as reduce staffing needs.

COLORADO TERRITORIAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility is one of the oldest operating prisons in the United States. The Department has invested over \$6 million in capital repair projects in the facility since FY 2012-13. Given its age, the facility is in good condition and fills several critical functions for the state prison system, including the operation of one the state's two prison infirmaries, and provides medical clinics, radiology, dental, and vision care

services for the entire Cañon Complex. CTCF also has housing and programs for inmates who are geriatric, mobility or hearing impaired, developmentally disabled, and transgender.

The Department has identified over \$113 million in future capital projects for the CTCF. The majority of these projects address long-term infrastructure needs that must be addressed at some point. The sheer volume of identified capital needs at CTCF, the Department's oldest facility, raises issues of the benefit of continued, substantial long-term investment in a facility that began operation in 1871. Given the facility's unique medical care mission and services provided for inmates with special needs, the Department needs to evaluate the future utility of the facility and alternatives for the future delivery of these services.

To that end the Department needs to consider potential alternatives for the eventual replacement of the facility and evaluate how it would replace the programs and functions offered by CTCF. Currently there is no immediate replacement facility or facilities that could permit the closing of CTCF that would improve efficiency, effectiveness, and result in a cost savings.

FEMALE CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

The Department's female offender population is dropping faster than the male population. Since December 31, 2019, the population has decreased from 1,591 to 940 inmates, a reduction of 41 percent. The decline in the number of minimum-restricted and minimum security females accounts for the majority of this reduction. This in all likelihood understates the drop in the low custody level female population due to the over-classification of females described earlier in this report.

This report recommends an operational capacity of 1,544 beds for female offenders in two facilities, the Denver Women's Correctional Facility (984 beds) and the La Vista Correctional Facility (560 beds). As of December 31, 2020, the DWCF had 312 vacant beds, enough to house the entire La Vista population. If the female population does not grow as projected by DCJ, but continues to fall, consolidation of the entire female population at DWCF will become a viable alternative, enabling the closure of La Vista.

While this action would produce substantial cost savings, La Vista does provide a softer, more normative environment for female offenders, as compared to DWCF which has a



Level V physical plant and security systems consistent with a close custody population. Should the system female population continue to fall, the Department will need to weigh the relative benefits provided by the rehabilitative environment at La Vista compared to efficiencies offered by consolidating the female population at DWCF.



7. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

This section of the report examines the economic impact of the privately-operated prisons in Bent and Crowley counties on their respective communities. The analysis examines the impact of these facilities on local government revenue, employment, and other associated economic activity.

KEY FINDINGS

Revenues for Public Services. The Crowley County Correctional Facility and the Bent County Correctional Facility provide revenues for local governments and other public service providers in each county. Unlike state-owned correctional facilities, privately owned prisons are required to pay commercial property tax, which is used to fund local governments, fire protection, ambulance service, schools, and other public services. As large and intensive facilities, correctional facilities are major customers for water, sewer, electrical and solid waste utilities and they pay a large portion of the revenues to the local government enterprises and organizations that provide public utilities.

The effects of these facilities on public service providers occurs separately in Crowley County and in Bent County according to the unique organizations and revenue structures in each. Crowley County Correctional Facility generated \$2.2 million in revenues for the county and six other public service providers in 2019, which included \$1.4 million in property taxes. Forty-four percent (44%) of countywide property taxes and 42% of school district taxes were paid by Crowley County Correctional Facility. Bent County Correctional Facility generated \$2.6 million in revenue for the county and eight other public service providers in 2019, \$1.1 million of which was property tax. Bent County Correctional Facility paid 18.3% of countywide property taxes and 25% of the Las Animas School District property taxes in 2019. The revenues for public service providers generated by both of these facilities combined in 2019 was \$4.8 million.

Economic Impacts. This analysis shows the economic effects on Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties of the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility during 2018 and 2019. The Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities are economic drivers because they put new money into the economy. Correctional facilities pay for utilities and make some limited retail purchases, but the most significant economic



impacts are from the spending of wages and other compensation earned by locals who work at the facilities.

There were a combined 480 jobs (filled positions) at the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility during 2018-2019, 14 of which were part-time jobs. The company paid just less than \$30 million in compensation each year. Fourteen percent (14%) or 67 workers lived in Bent County, bringing in \$4.13 million in annual earnings, which made up 6.3% of all of the labor income earned in Bent County households in 2018. Eighty workers or 16.6% lived in Crowley County, bringing in \$4.9 million in annual earnings, which was 11% of all labor income earned by Crowley County households in 2018. Otero County was home to 141 workers who brought in \$8.7 million in earnings each year, which was 2.6% of all labor income earned by Otero County households in 2018. The remaining 40% of the workforce lived in other counties.

The \$17,742,500 in annual earnings and 288 jobs held by Crowley, Bent, Otero County residents at the Bent County Correctional Facility and the Crowley County Correctional Facility generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Accounting for multipliers, the 288 jobs and \$17,742,500 in earnings become 333.6 jobs and \$19,460,000 in total economic output. Similarly, \$1,817,200 in annual utility payments by the facilities becomes \$2,097,400 in total output and represents 2.8 full-time equivalent jobs. \$302,800 in retail purchases at local businesses becomes \$371,500 in total output and represents 4.6 full-time equivalent jobs.

The combined total economic output in 2019 within Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties from the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities was \$25,880,100 which includes \$19,825,200 in earnings and represents 341 full time equivalent jobs.

REVENUES FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

Privately owned correctional facilities are subject to property tax like other businesses and as large and intensive facilities, they are high use customers for local utilities. The effects of these facilities on public service providers occurs separately in Crowley County and in Bent County according to the unique organizations and revenue structures in each. Crowley County Correctional Facility (CCCF) generated \$2.2 million in revenues for public service providers in 2019 and Bent County Correctional Facility generated \$2.6 million in revenues. Crowley County Correctional Facility paid \$1.4 million in property taxes and Bent County Correctional Facility paid \$1.1 million in property taxes toward public



services. In what appears to be a typical year, the combined revenues for both of these facilities together is \$4.8 million. By documenting two years of impacts, this analysis provides the basis for further evaluating impacts on public service providers of potential changes to the operations or ownership of these correctional facilities.

CCCF Revenues for Local Governments and Other Public Service Providers

In 2019, the Crowley County Correctional Facility generated \$1,417,434 in property taxes and \$732,858 in other revenues such as sales tax and fees for service for a total of \$2,150,292 in revenues for the county government and other public services providers. The \$861,474 in property taxes for Crowley County government were 44% of all county government property tax revenues and the \$463,979 in property tax for the school district made up 42% of all property tax revenues for the district.

Table 23: Crowley County Correctional Facility Revenues Summary 2019

| | Property Tax | Other Revenue | Total Revenue |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| County General Fund | \$626,939 | | \$626,939 |
| County EMS/Fire Protection | \$30,549 | | \$30,549 |
| County Road and Bridge | \$137,691 | | \$137,691 |
| County Human Services | \$66,295 | | \$66,295 |
| County Ambulance | | \$40,497 | \$40,497 |
| School District | \$463,979 | | \$463,979 |
| Town of Ordway | | \$5,910 | \$5,910 |
| Water Association | | \$289,232 | \$289,232 |
| Water Conservancy Districts | \$91,981 | | \$91,981 |
| Black Hills Energy | | \$397,219 | \$397,219 |
| Total | \$1,417,434 | \$732,858 | \$2,150,292 |

Source: “Crowley County financial statements”, rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020;

The CCCF is a privately owned commercial property that is required to pay property taxes each year based on its assessed value. According to the Crowley County Assessor, the assessed value in 2017 of the Crowley County Correctional Facility was \$20,002,784 and the assessed value in 2018 was \$19,984,676. Property taxes are conveyed to the county



based on the prior year’s assessed value. The correctional facility generated 44% of property tax revenues for county government in 2019.

Crowley County General Fund covers several of the county’s core services including public safety which includes the sheriff, jail, coroner and school resource office, general government such as the treasurer, assessor, clerk, board of county commissioners, and building department; public health; and various auxiliary services.

Table 24: Crowley County General Fund Revenue 2018-2019

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| General Fund Property Tax from CCCF | \$592,325 | \$626,939 |
| Crowley County Correctional Facility Sales Tax | \$13,136 | \$15,551 |
| Crowley County Correctional Facility Fees | \$66,902 | \$66,000 |
| Total General Fund Revenue from CCCF | \$672,363 | \$708,490 |
| Total General Fund Revenue | \$3,341,714 | \$3,494,861 |
| % of General Fund Revenue from CCCF | 20% | 20% |

Source: “Crowley County financial statements”, rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020; “Survey of local businesses’ direct retail sales to Crowley County Correctional Facility”, Crowley County, 2020.

General fund revenues were \$3.34 million in 2018 and \$3.49 million in 2019, and \$1.45 million of these revenues were property taxes from the general fund 30.581 mill levy. Several other revenues feed into the general fund including sales taxes, marijuana taxes, interest earnings, and various fees for service. The Crowley County Correctional Facility is by far the most significant contributor to the general fund, generating \$626,939 in property taxes, \$15,551 in sales tax and \$66,000 in fees in 2019. The Crowley County Correctional Facility generated 20% of general fund revenues in 2018 and 2019.

Crowley County EMS/Fire Fund revenues were \$104,346 in 2018 and \$91,566 in 2019. Property taxes from the 1.5 EMS/Fire mill levy generated \$70,153 in 2018 and \$69,486 in 2019, nearly three-quarters of the total annual revenues. Property taxes collected from the Crowley County Correctional Facility generated 28.4% of all EMS/Fire Protection fund revenues in 2018 and 33.4% of all revenues in 2019.



Table 25: Crowley County EMS/Fire Revenue 2018-2019

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| EMS/Fire Property Tax from CCCF | \$29,677 | \$30,549 |
| Total EMS/Fire Revenue | \$104,346 | \$91,566 |
| % of EMS/Fire Fund Revenue from CCCF | 28.4% | 33.4% |

Source: "Crowley County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020;

The Crowley County Ambulance Fund revenues consist primarily of charges billed to patients for ambulance services and various grants awarded to the county.

Table 26: Crowley County Ambulance Revenue

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Charges for Service | \$195,775 | \$250,725 |
| Other Revenue | \$11,525 | \$4,865 |
| Total Revenue | \$207,300 | \$255,590 |
| CCCF Revenue | \$23,267 | \$40,497 |
| % of Total Revenue | 12% | 16% |

Sources: "Crowley County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020; Crowley County staff

Correctional facility medical transports are an important source of revenue for the ambulance fund. According to an analysis by Crowley County Staff, 12-16% of ambulance revenues are paid by Crowley County Correctional Facility and an additional 13% to 26% of ambulance fees are paid by State of Colorado for Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility medical transports.

The Crowley County Road and Bridge Fund is solely responsible for maintenance and improvements to the county road infrastructure. State disbursements of the Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) and a countywide property tax (6.75 mills) fund the road and bridge department. HUTF revenue is a statewide gasoline tax that is disbursed by formula. Property taxes collected from Crowley County Correctional Facility generated 11% of road and bridge fund revenues in 2018-2019.



Table 27: Crowley County Road and Bridge Revenue 2018-2019

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Property Tax from CCCF | \$133,692 | \$137,691 |
| Total Rd. and Bridge Fund Revenue | \$1,200,150 | \$1,303,255 |
| % of Rd. and Bridge Fund Revenue from CCCF | 11% | 11% |

Sources: "Crowley County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020;

State disbursements for specific programs are most of the funding for Crowley County Human Services. The state requires the county to provide local revenues in order to access human services programs and local revenues must cover essential administration. To this end, there is a countywide 3.25 mill levy that yielded just over \$150k per year during 2018-2019. The property taxes collected from CCCF in 2018-2019 were just under 5% of the total human services fund revenues.

Table 28: Crowley County Human Services Revenue 2018

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Property Tax from CCCF | \$64,444 | \$66,295 |
| Total Human Services Revenue | \$1,318,815 | \$1,398,354 |
| % of Human Services Revenue from CCCF | 4.9% | 4.7% |

Sources: "Crowley County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020;

Public Utility Providers in Crowley County

Crowley County Water Association is a user fee funded non-profit organization that provides water to Crowley County Correctional Facility, Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility and 330 residential customers. The association made significant infrastructure investments to serve the CCCF. Thirty-six percent (36%) of revenues are user fees paid by CCCF. One-third of revenues are from the Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility and the remainder come from the residential customers.



Table 29: Crowley County Water Association Revenues

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| CCCF Revenue | \$262,253 | \$289,232 |
| All Revenue | \$737,731 | \$796,801 |
| % of Crowley County Water Association Revenues | 36% | 36% |

Sources: Crowley County Water Association

Electricity and natural gas throughout Crowley County are provided by Black Hills Energy. According to information from CoreCivic, the CCCF paid \$263,810 for natural gas and \$133,409 for electricity during 2019, for a total of \$397,219.

Crowley County School District

The school district is funded according to the Colorado School Finance Act that sets funding levels on a per pupil basis for each of the 178 school districts in the state. Like other districts, Crowley County School District is required to contribute its “local share” of the annual funding, which is met by a 16.449 mill levy on properties within the district. The state sets the funding levels each year, so the local share property tax revenues do not ultimately affect the total funding.

Table 30: Crowley County School District Property Tax (Assessment Year 2019)

| Assessed Value | "Local Share" Property Tax Revenue | "Local Share" Mill Levy |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| \$49,209,885 | \$809,453 | 0.016449 |
| Assessed Value | "Override" Property Tax Revenue | "Override" Mill Levy |
| \$49,209,885 | \$295,259 | 0.006 |

Sources: Crowley County Assessor; “Crowley County School District financial statements” 2019, Dixon, Waller & Co., Inc.

CCCF generates 42% of school district property tax revenue because it comprises 42% of the assessed valuation. The Crowley County School District voters passed a mill levy override in 2017, which is in addition to and separate from per pupil state funding specifically for teacher salaries, technology, materials and other program expenses. This override revenue provides funding over and above the formulaic state allocated funding. The CCCF added just over \$124,000 to the override mill levy revenues. This funding is



unique to the district and is over and above the per pupil funding allocated by the State of Colorado.

Town of Ordway

Town of Ordway contains several businesses who make direct sales to CCCF on an annual basis. According to a survey of local businesses’ direct retail sales to CCCF (Crowley County in 2020), annual sales by Ordway businesses to CCCF during 2017-2019 were \$295,520. The town’s 2% sales tax yields about \$5,900 annually on sales to the correctional facility, which is just under 4% of the town’s sales tax collections.

Table 31: Town of Ordway Sales Tax Collections

| | Budgeted Annual Collections 2018-2019 | Average Annual Sales Tax Revenue from CCCF 2017-2019 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| General Fund Sales Tax | \$75,000 | \$2,955 |
| Street Fund Sales Tax | \$80,000 | \$2,955 |
| Total | \$155,000 | \$5,910 |

Sources: Town of Ordway 2020 Budget; “Survey of local businesses’ direct retail sales to Crowley County Correctional Facility”, Crowley County, 2020;

Crowley County Special Districts

Two water conservancy special districts encompass Crowley County and collect property tax in the county. These districts strive to keep existing water rights intact in Southeast Colorado, develop and work on long term, large scale water planning and investments such as water supply, storage, and electrical power.

Table 32: Crowley County School District Property Tax Revenues

| | Southeast Colorado Water Conservancy District | Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District |
|--|---|--|
| Mill Levy | 0.000902 | 0.001503 |
| 2019 Crowley County Property Tax Revenue | \$35,963 | \$56,018 |
| CCCF Revenue | \$18,844 | \$31,400 |
| % Property Tax Revenue from CCCF | 52% | 56% |

Source: Crowley County Assessor.



The water conservancies rely on property taxes from the multiple counties they span in order to support the cost of managing and supporting their enterprise funds. The CCCF provides over half of the local property tax contributions to the water conservancy districts.

BCCF REVENUES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS

In 2019, the BCCF generated \$1,059,375 in property taxes and \$1,539,212 in other revenues such as sales tax and fees for service for a total of \$2,598,588 in revenues for the county government and other public services providers. The correctional facility generated just over one million dollars in revenue for the county government, about half of which was property tax. The \$503,166 in property taxes for Bent County government were 18.3% of all county government property tax revenues and the \$313,360 in property tax for the school district made up 25% of all property tax revenues for the district.

Table 33: BCCF Revenues Summary 2019

| | Property Tax | Other Revenue | Total Revenue |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| County General Fund | \$395,044 | | \$395,044 |
| Social Services | \$49,921 | | \$49,921 |
| Road and Bridge | \$45,332 | | \$45,332 |
| Retirement | \$12,870 | | \$12,870 |
| Sales Tax Fund | | \$1,349 | \$1,349 |
| County Correctional Facility Fund | | \$511,000 | \$511,000 |
| School District | \$313,360 | | \$313,360 |
| Fire and Ambulance | \$123,726 | \$117,949 | \$241,675 |
| Las Animas Utility Funds | | \$908,914 | \$908,914 |
| Special Districts | \$119,123 | | \$119,123 |
| Total | \$1,059,375 | \$1,539,212 | \$2,598,588 |

Sources: “Bent County financial statements”, rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020, Bent County Assessor

Bent County Government

Bent County General Fund covers the county’s public safety services such as the county sheriff, jail, school resource officer, and dispatch; general government such as the treasurer, assessor, clerk, board of county commissioners, and building department; and

various programs/facilities such as senior center, community center, economic development, weed control, extension services, county fair and animal control.

Table 34: Bent County General Fund Revenue 2018-2019

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| General Fund Property Tax from BCCF | \$384,530 | \$395,044 |
| Total General Fund Revenue | \$4,241,881 | \$4,139,954 |
| % of General Fund Revenue from BCCF | 9% | 10% |

Sources: "Bent County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020, Bent County Assessor

General fund revenues were \$4.14 million in 2019, and \$2.16 million of these revenues were property taxes from the general fund 23.873 mill levy. The BCCF is a significant contributor to the general fund, generating \$395,044 in property taxes in 2019, which was 18.3% of general fund property tax revenue and 10% of all general fund revenues.

The Bent County Road and Bridge Fund is solely responsible for maintenance and improvements to the county road infrastructure. State disbursements and a county property tax (2.82 mills) fund the road and bridge department. Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) revenue is a statewide gasoline tax that is disbursed by formula, and revenues can fluctuate. Property tax provides 14% of road and bridge revenue, and the remainder comes from HUTF and other state allocations such as vehicle registration fee revenues. BCCF generated 18% of road and bridge property tax revenues in 2019-2020 and about 2.5% of total revenues.

Table 35: Bent County Road and Bridge Fund Revenue 2018-2019

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Property Tax from BCCF | \$46,166 | \$45,332 |
| Total Rd. and Bridge Fund Revenue | \$1,754,919 | \$1,843,330 |
| % of Rd. and Bridge Revenue from BCCF | 2.6% | 2.5% |

Sources: "Bent County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020; Bent County Assessor

State disbursements for specific programs are most of the funding for Bent County Social Services. The state requires the county to provide local revenues in order to access social services programs and local revenues must cover essential administration. To this end, there is a countywide 3.103 mill levy that yielded just over \$270k per year during 2018-



2019. The \$47,515 in property taxes collected from BCCF in 2019 were 18.3% of property tax revenues for the fund.

The Employee Retirement Fund provides match for county employee retirement contributions. The \$12,249 in property taxes collected from BCCF in 2019 were 18.3% of property tax revenues for the fund.

Table 36: BCCF Revenues for Other Funds, 2019

| | BCCF Revenue | % of Property Tax Revenue | % of Total Fund Revenue |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Social Services | \$49,921 | 18.3% | 1.5% |
| Employee Retirement | \$12,870 | 18.3% | 9% |
| Correctional Facility Fund | \$511,000 | N.A. | 100% |
| Sales Tax | \$1,349 | N.A. | 0.4% |

Sources: "Bent County financial statements", rfarmer llc, 2019 and 2020, Bent County Assessor

BCCF pays \$511k in fees per year for the Correctional Facility Fund, which is used for special projects, capital improvements, cash match for grants and other public purposes. Most county government expenditures are mandated or partially mandated, but the Correctional Facility Fund offers flexibility from year to year. The 1% Sales Tax Fund also allows some flexibility in funding a variety of local projects and organizations such as the recreation league, early learning center and TV Tower. According to Core Civic administrative staff, retail purchases in Bent County were just over \$325k in 2019, yielding \$1,349 in sales tax revenue.

City of Las Animas Utility Providers

Although BCCF lies outside of the City of Las Animas municipal boundary, the city serves the correctional facility with utilities including water, sewer, trash and electric.



Table 37: City of Las Animas Utilities Revenues, 2018-2019

| All Revenues | 2018 | 2019 |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Water | \$802,606 | \$784,426 |
| Sewer | \$480,095 | \$476,500 |
| Trash | \$558,643 | \$575,780 |
| Power and Light | \$4,130,261 | \$3,905,787 |
| Total City Utilities | \$5,971,605 | \$5,742,493 |
| BCCF Payments | | |
| Water | \$196,063 | \$202,749 |
| Sewer | \$97,380 | \$97,682 |
| Trash | \$29,709 | \$31,638 |
| Power and Light | \$664,985 | \$576,844 |
| Total City Utilities | \$988,138 | \$908,914 |

Sources: City of Las Animas; “City of Las Animas financial statements”, Dixon, Waller & Co., 2019 and 2020

BCCF paid nearly \$1 million in utilities in 2018 and \$909k in 2019. Twenty-five percent (25%) of total revenues for the water utility fund are paid by the correctional facility, 20% of sewer revenues, 15% of electrical revenues and 5% of trash utility revenues are paid by the correctional facility.

Las Animas – Bent County Fire Protection District

The Las Animas Bent County Fire Protection District provides property tax revenue and oversight to two operations, the volunteer Las Animas Fire Department and the paid/volunteer Bent County Ambulance Service. In 2019, the Las Animas Fire Department received \$186,125 via its 3.6 mill property tax and Bent County Ambulance Service received \$180,995 via a 3.5 mill property tax. An additional \$16,286 from a .315 mill property tax went toward volunteer fire fighter pensions. The Las Animas Fire Department received \$57,857 in property taxes from the BCCF in 2019 and Bent County Ambulance Service received \$56,250 in property taxes from the correctional facility.



Table 38: Las Animas Bent County Fire Protection District Revenues 2019

| | 2019 Fire Department Revenue | 2019 Ambulance Service Revenue | 2019 Fire Pension Revenue |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Revenue | \$194,400 | \$479,094 | \$30,943 |
| BCCF Property Tax Revenue | \$57,857 | \$56,250 | \$9,619 |
| BCCF Ambulance Fee Revenue | | \$117,949 | |
| % Revenue from BCCF | 29.8% | 36.4% | 31.1% |

Sources: Las Animas Bent County Fire Protection District 2020 Budget;

Fees charged to ambulance patients are a major source of revenue for Bent County Ambulance Service. On average, 24 medical transports to/from the BCCF per year bring in about \$120k per year. In 2019 BCCF property taxes and fees generated 29.8% of fire department revenues and 36.4% of ambulance service revenues.

Las Animas School District

The school district is funded according to state law which sets funding levels on a per pupil basis for each school districts. Like other districts, Las Animas School District is required to contribute its “local share” of the annual funding, which is met by a 19.498 mill property tax that yielded \$1,273,921 given the assessed value during 2019. BCCF provided \$313,360 (25%) of the local share property tax. School funding formulas dictate that local share property tax revenues affect the amount of funding the state must provide, but do not ultimately affect the school district’s total funding.

Special Districts – Bent County

Two water conservancy special districts encompass Bent County and collect property tax. These districts strive to keep existing water rights in-tact, develop and work on long term, large scale water planning and investments such as water supply, storage, and electrical power. The Arkansas Conservancy maintains the levee along the river through Las Animas, and must meet Army Corps of Engineers inspection standards. The water conservancies rely on property taxes from the multiple counties they span to support the cost of managing and supporting their enterprise funds. The BCCF provides over one-third of the Bent County property tax contributions to the water conservancy districts.

Table 39: BCCF Property Tax Revenues to Special Districts

| | Mill Levy | Bent County Property Tax Revenue | Bent County Correctional Facility Revenue | % Property Tax Revenue from Correctional Facility |
|--|-----------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Southeast Colorado Water Conservancy District | 0.000902 | \$55,895 | \$14,496 | 26% |
| Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District | 0.001503 | \$83,760 | \$24,155 | 29% |
| Las Animas Bent County Library | 0.0015 | \$98,004 | \$24,107 | 25% |
| Las Animas-Bent County Cemetery | 0.003 | \$217,352 | \$48,214 | 22% |
| Arkansas Conservancy District (special assessment) | N/A | \$29,515 | \$8,150 | 28% |

Sources: “Abstract of assessments” 2019, Bent County Assessor; “Application for exemption from audit” 2019, Arkansas River Conservancy District; Bent County Treasurer tax collection records, 2020

Five special districts yielded \$485k in property taxes based on the 2019 Abstract of assessments, 24.6% were from Bent County Correctional Facility. Smaller budgets for the library and cemetery districts mean they are more vulnerable to fluctuations in property tax revenues. If there were a significant decrease in revenue, voters in each of the districts would need to approve a tax increase or a reduction in level of service would result.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

The Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities derive all of their income from outside of the regional economy. They are economic drivers because they put new money into the economy. Correctional facilities pay for utilities and make some limited retail purchases, but the most significant economic impacts are from the spending of wages and other compensation earned by locals who work at the facilities. This analysis shows the economic effects of the Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities during 2018 and 2019 on Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties. By documenting the impacts of these two years of



operations, this analysis provides the basis for further evaluating economic effects of proposed changes to the operations or ownership of these two correctional facilities.

Following this summary of combined economic effects are separate summaries for Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties. Each county summary begins with an overview of past economic trends and a comparison to the state as a whole. The economic effects of the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities arise from resident worker earnings and correctional facility spending in each county. RIMS-II Multipliers by the Bureau of Economic Analysis for Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties, combined as a region, show the total effect on the regional economy.

There were over 480 filled positions at the Bent and Crowley County Correctional facilities during 2018-2019, and the company paid just less than \$30 million in compensation each year. Sixty percent (60%) of the workforce at the two facilities lives in Otero, Bent or Crowley Counties, meaning there are 288 resident held jobs and over \$17.7 million in compensation paid to residents of the three county region.

Table 40: Filled Positions and Total Compensation Paid – Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bent and CCCF Filled Positions | 485 | 481 |
| Total Compensation Paid | \$27,796,342 | \$29,632,415 |

Source: CoreCivic

The \$17,742,500 in annual earnings and 288 jobs held by Crowley, Bent, Otero County residents at the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Accounting for RIM-II multipliers, the 288 jobs and \$17,742,500 in earnings become 333.6 jobs and \$19,460,000 in total economic output.

Table 41: Economic Impact of Crowley, Bent, Otero Counties Resident Held Jobs/Earnings at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities

| | Regional Resident Earnings Analysis |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Crowley, Bent, Otero County Resident Earnings | \$17,742,500 |
| Crowley, Bent, Otero County Resident Jobs | 288 |



| Regional Resident Earnings Analysis | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Output Multipliers | 0.3195 |
| Earnings Multipliers | 0.0968 |
| Jobs per \$Million Earnings | 2.5699 |
| Output from Spending of Earnings | \$5,668,700 |
| Earnings from Spending of Earnings | \$1,717,500 |
| Jobs from Spending of Earnings | 45.6 |
| Total Output | \$23,411,200 |
| Total Earnings | \$19,460,000 |
| Total Jobs | 333.6 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; "RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties", Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

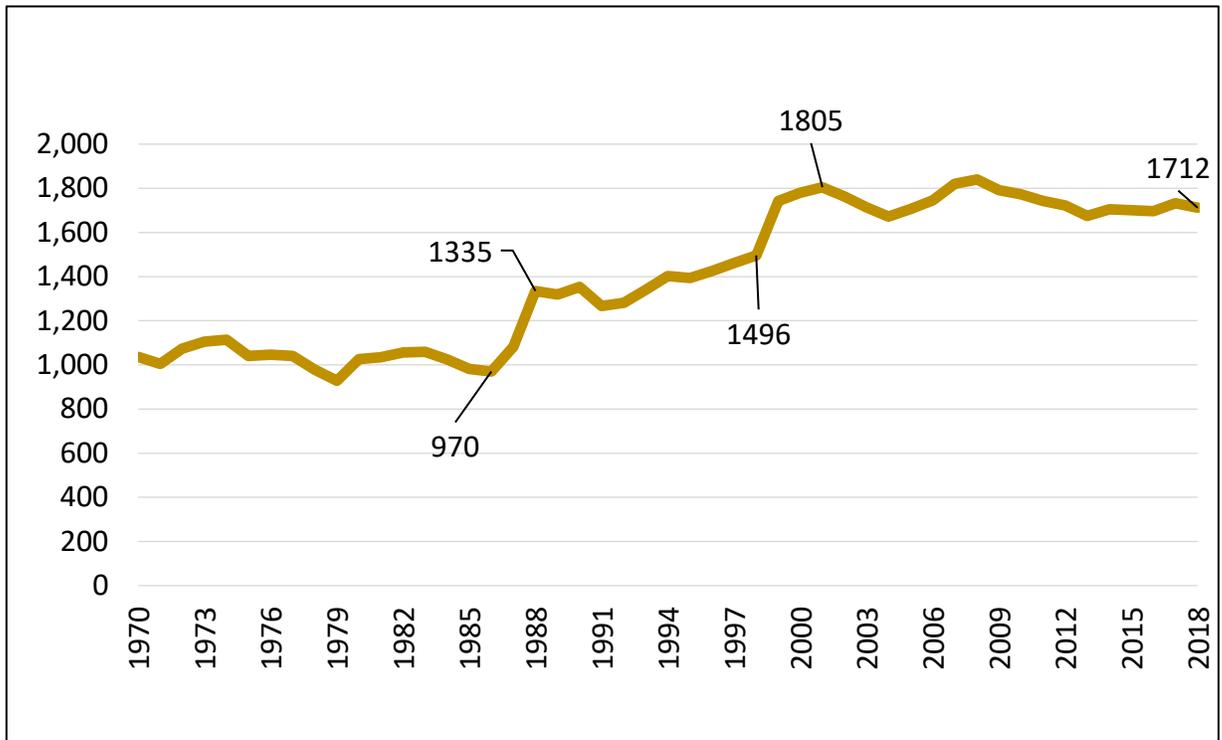
RIMS-II Multipliers show that the \$1,817,200 in annual utility payments by the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities becomes \$2,097,400 in total output and represents 2.8 full-time equivalent jobs. Similarly, \$302,800 in retail purchases at local businesses becomes \$371,500 in total output and represents 4.6 full-time equivalent jobs in the retail sector.

The combined total output in 2019 from the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities including output from earnings, utilities and retail sales was \$25,800,100 which includes \$19,825,200 in earnings and represents 341 full time equivalent jobs.

Economic Effects – Crowley County

Employment in Crowley County has remained mostly flat/fluctuating since the 1970s except for growth periods corresponding with the opening of the Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility (1987) and CCCF (1998).

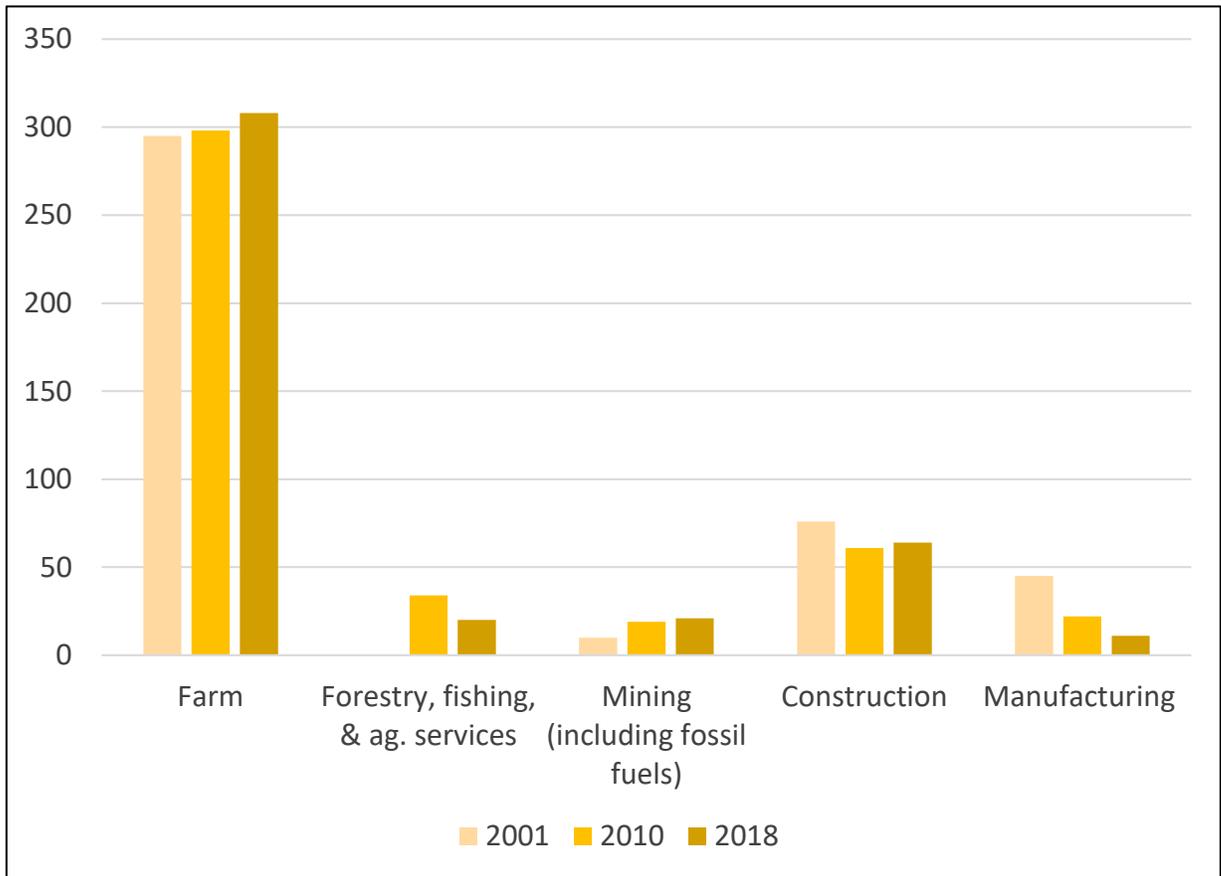
Figure 15: Employment Trends, Crowley County (Includes Proprietors)



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Jobs have been flat or in decline in all nearly all sectors since 2001. Among non-services sectors, the farm sector has been stable, in part due to the Ordway Feedyard.

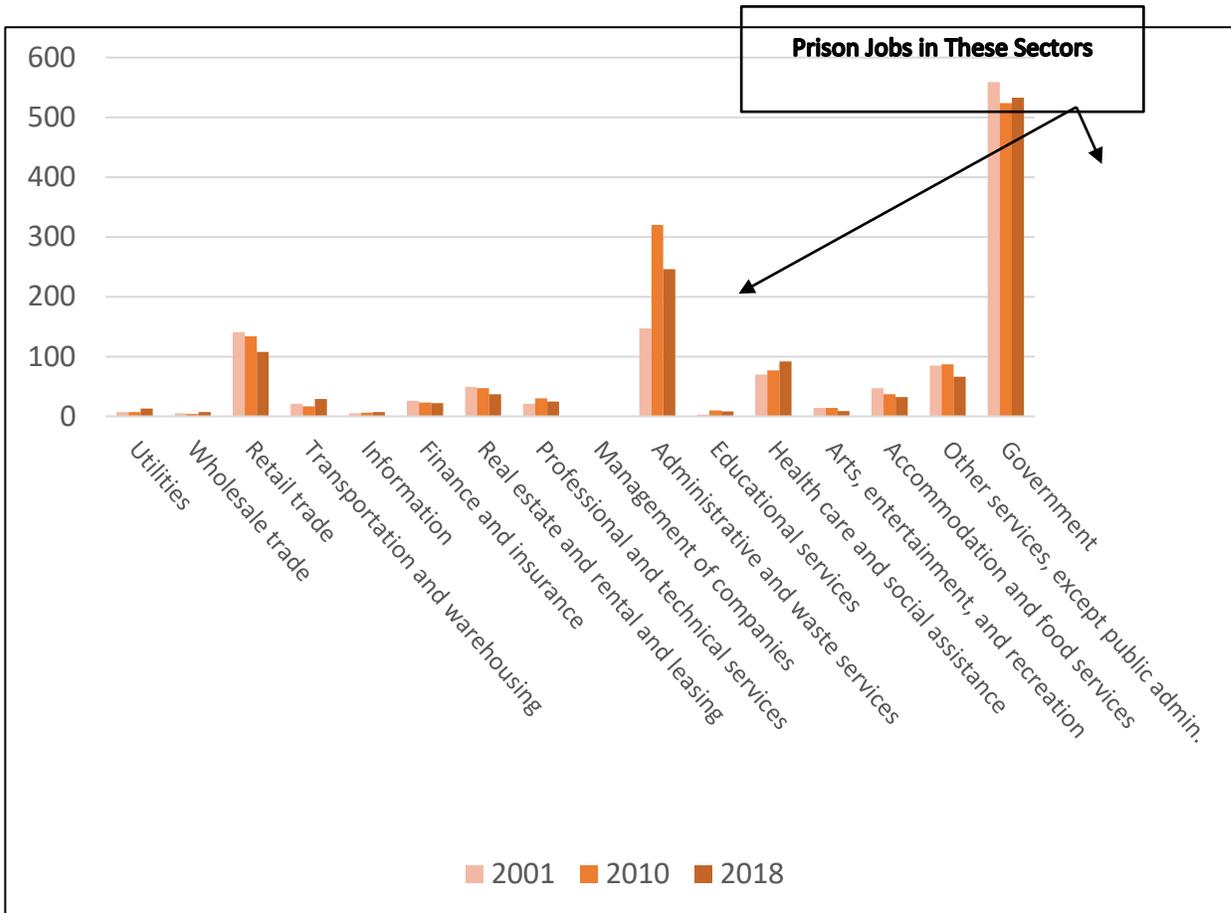
Figure 16: Jobs in Non-Services Sectors, Crowley County



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Emsi Data”, custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

The other major sectors are “government”, which includes jobs at the state-owned Arkansas Correctional Facility and “administrative and waste services” which includes jobs at the privately owned Crowley County Correctional Facility.

Figure 17: Jobs in Services Sectors, Crowley County

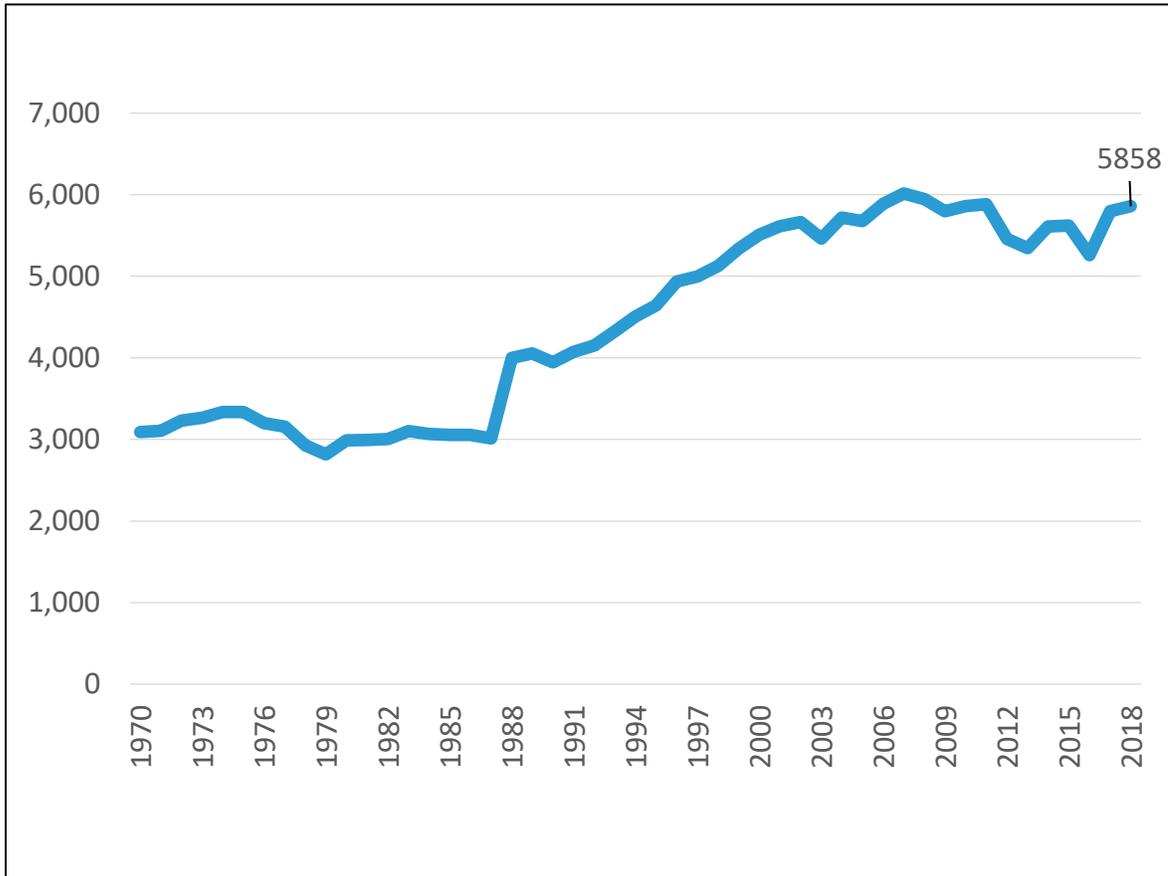


Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Emsi Data”, custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

Effects of BCCF and CCF on the Crowley County Economy

The population trend mirrors the employment trends with a flat/fluctuating population since 2000. Population counts and estimates include incarcerated people, which contributed to the growth in 1987 when Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility opened.

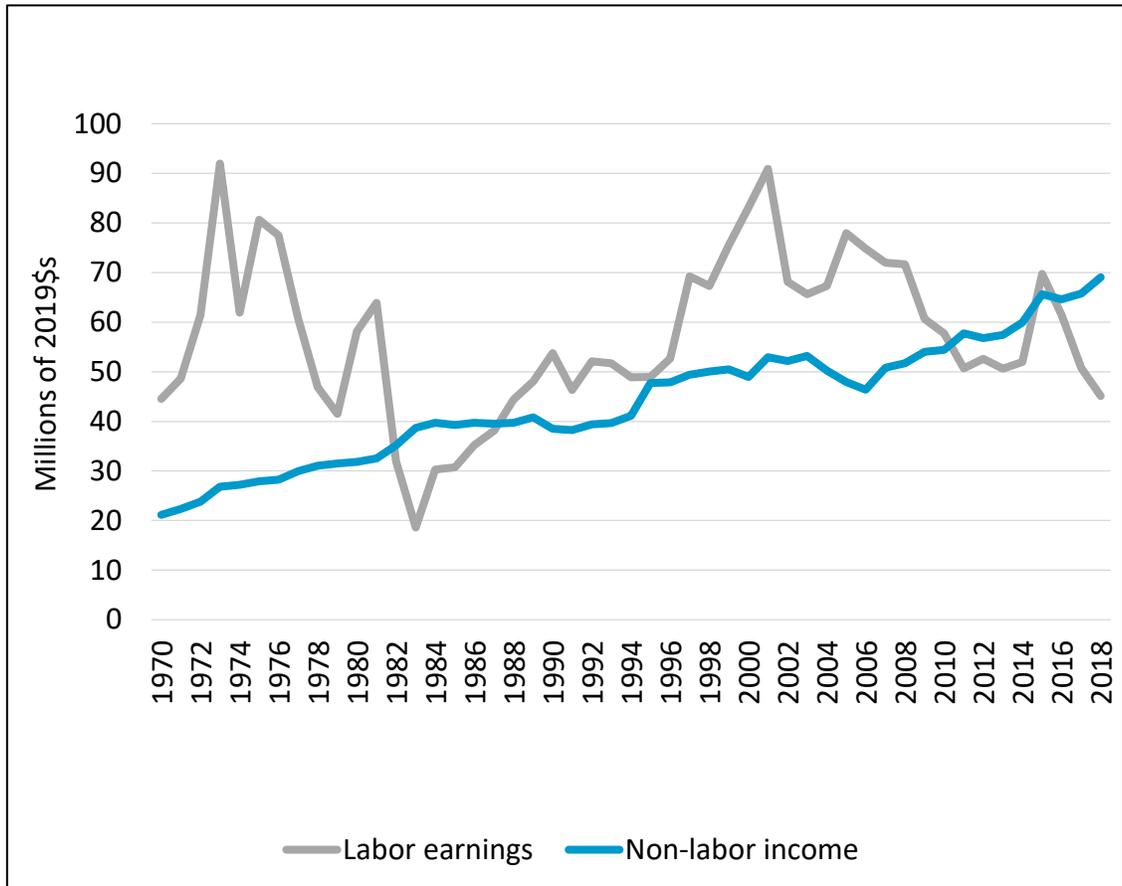
Figure 18: Population Trends, Crowley County (Includes Incarcerated Population)



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Inflation adjusted income has been flat/fluctuating since 2002. Non-labor income exceeded labor earnings from jobs beginning in 2016 and by 2018, non-labor income made up 60% of total personal income in the county. 57% of non-labor income was Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare and other income maintenance. The instability of the job market is evident in the wide fluctuation in labor earnings.

Figure 19: Components of Personal Income, Crowley County, 2019 Dollars



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020

Crowley County economic indicators have lagged behind Colorado as a whole by a wide margin over the past two decades. Crowley County employment, personal income, and earnings have all declined as they grew in Colorado. The 2019 poverty rate in the county was over four times that of the state, and the labor force participation rate is considerably lower.

Table 42: Comparison of Indicators in Crowley County and State of Colorado

| | Crowley County | Colorado |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Population, % change, 2000-2018 | 6.3% | 31.6% |
| Employment, % change, 2000-2018 | -3.8% | 32.4% |
| Personal Income, % change, 2000-2018 | -13.6% | 54.3% |



| | Crowley County | Colorado |
|--|----------------|----------|
| Average Earnings per Job, % change, 2000-2018 | -27.4% | 5.1% |
| Per Capita Income, % change, 2000-2018 | -18.7% | 17.2% |
| Avg. Earnings per Job, 2018 | \$39,864 | \$62,726 |
| Per Capita Income, 2018 | \$19,485 | \$59,509 |
| Labor Force Participation 16 yrs. & older 2018 | 44.8% | 68.5% |
| % of Persons in Poverty 2019 | 40% | 9.3% |

Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Quick Facts” US Census, 2020

There were 253 filled positions at the CCCF during 2018-2019 and total salaries, wages, insurance and benefits increased from \$15.1 million in 2018 to \$16.4 million in 2019. The total compensation per job including wages, insurance and benefits increased from \$59,700/yr. in 2018 to \$64,800 in 2019. The average earnings per job in Crowley County of \$39,864 in 2018 was about two-thirds of the average compensation per job at the Crowley County Correctional Facility.

Table 43: CCCF Jobs, Wages and Benefits

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| CCCF Filled Positions | 253 | 253 |
| Salaries & Wages | \$12,712,243 | \$13,678,189 |
| Insurance & Benefits | \$2,395,762 | \$2,724,496 |
| Total | \$15,108,005 | \$16,402,685 |
| Total Compensation per Job | \$59,700 | \$64,800 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020

A report provided to the consulting team by CoreCivic shows that 481 workers at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities live in 22 counties across the state, with the most workers living in Southeast Colorado including Crowley, Otero, Bent, and Pueblo Counties. Crowley County is home to 16.6% of the combined workforce at both facilities, meaning there are 80 Crowley County resident held jobs at either of the facilities.

Given the average compensation per job (\$61,606), 80 jobs held by Crowley County residents brought in an estimated \$4,928,500 in personal income to county households. The total labor earnings for the entire county were \$45.1 million, meaning that about one



in ten dollars of labor income in the entire county are earned at the Crowley County Correctional Facility.

Table 44: Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities - Where Workforce Lives

| | % Workforce Residing in County |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bent County | 14.00% |
| Crowley County | 16.60% |
| Otero County | 29.40% |
| Pueblo County | 21.40% |
| Other | 18.60% |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020

Multipliers occur because correctional facilities receive all of their income from outside of region. Any expenditures or employee earnings in the region is new money into the economy. The \$4.9 million in annual earnings and 80 jobs held by Crowley County residents at the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Analysts used a RIMS-II Multipliers report generated by Bureau of Economic Analysis customized for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties to estimate the total output of resident earnings.

Table 45: Economic Impact of Crowley County Resident Held Jobs and Earnings at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities

| | 2019 County Resident Earnings Analysis |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Crowley County Resident Earnings | \$4,928,500 |
| Crowley County Resident Held Jobs | 80 |
| Total Output Multipliers | |
| | 0.3195 |
| Earnings Multipliers | |
| | 0.0968 |
| Jobs per \$Million Earnings | |
| | 2.5699 |
| Output from Spending of Earnings | \$1,574,700 |
| Earnings from Spending of Earnings | \$477,100 |
| Jobs from Spending of Earnings | 12.7 |



| 2019 County Resident Earnings Analysis | |
|--|--------------------|
| Total Output | \$6,503,200 |
| Total Earnings | \$5,405,600 |
| Total Jobs | 92.7 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; “RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties”, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

RIMS-II Multipliers show that the household spending resulting from the \$4,928,500 in Crowley County resident earnings at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities generated an additional \$1,574,700 in total economic output. This output includes 12.7 additional jobs and \$477,100 in additional earnings. Accounting for multipliers, the 80 jobs and \$4.9 million in earnings become 92 jobs and \$6.5 million in total economic output.

The CCCF pays businesses operating in the county for its utility services and makes local retail purchases. These purchases result in multipliers because they put new money into the economy. The RIMS-II report by Bureau of Economic Analysis for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties include multipliers for specific industries including utilities and retail.

Table 46: Economic Impact of CCCF Purchases

| 2019 | Utilities | Retail | Total |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Purchases in Crowley County | \$791,700 | \$295,500 | \$1,087,200 |
| Total Output Multipliers | 1.1542 | 1.227 | |
| Earnings Multipliers | 0.1308 | 0.4227 | |
| Jobs per \$Million Sales | 1.5708 | 15.2537 | |
| Total Output from in Crowley County | \$913,800 | \$362,600 | \$1,276,400 |
| Earnings from Crowley County Purchases | \$103,600 | \$124,900 | \$228,500 |
| Total Jobs | 1.2 | 4.5 | 5.7 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; “Survey of local businesses’ direct retail sales to Crowley County Correctional Facility”, Crowley County, 2020; “RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties”, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

RIMS-II Multipliers show that the \$791,700 in annual utility payments becomes \$913,800 in total output and represents 1.2 full-time equivalent jobs in the utilities sector.

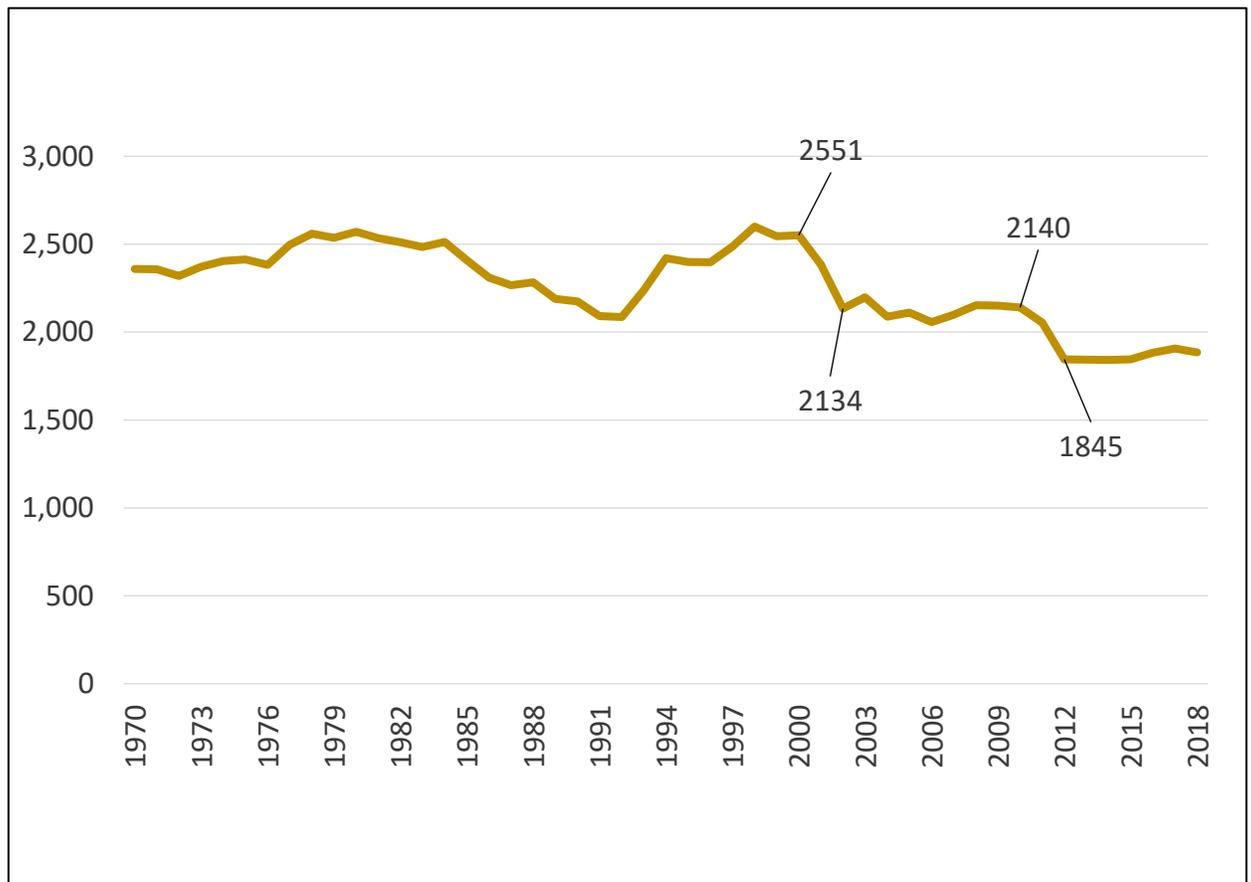
Similarly, \$295,500 in annual retail purchases at local businesses becomes \$362,600 in total output and represents 4.5 full-time equivalent jobs in the retail sector.

The combined total output from the spending of earnings from the CCCF and the purchases made by the facility was \$7,779,600, which includes \$5,634,100 in earnings and represents 98 full time equivalent jobs.

Economic Effects – Bent County

The 2012 decommissioning of the Fort Lyon Correctional Facility is evident in employment and population trends. The 2001 closure of Fort Lyon Veteran’s Hospital was accompanied by sharp drop in the number of jobs in Bent County. In neither case did jobs begin to grow after these declines and jobs and population have both remained flat since 2012.

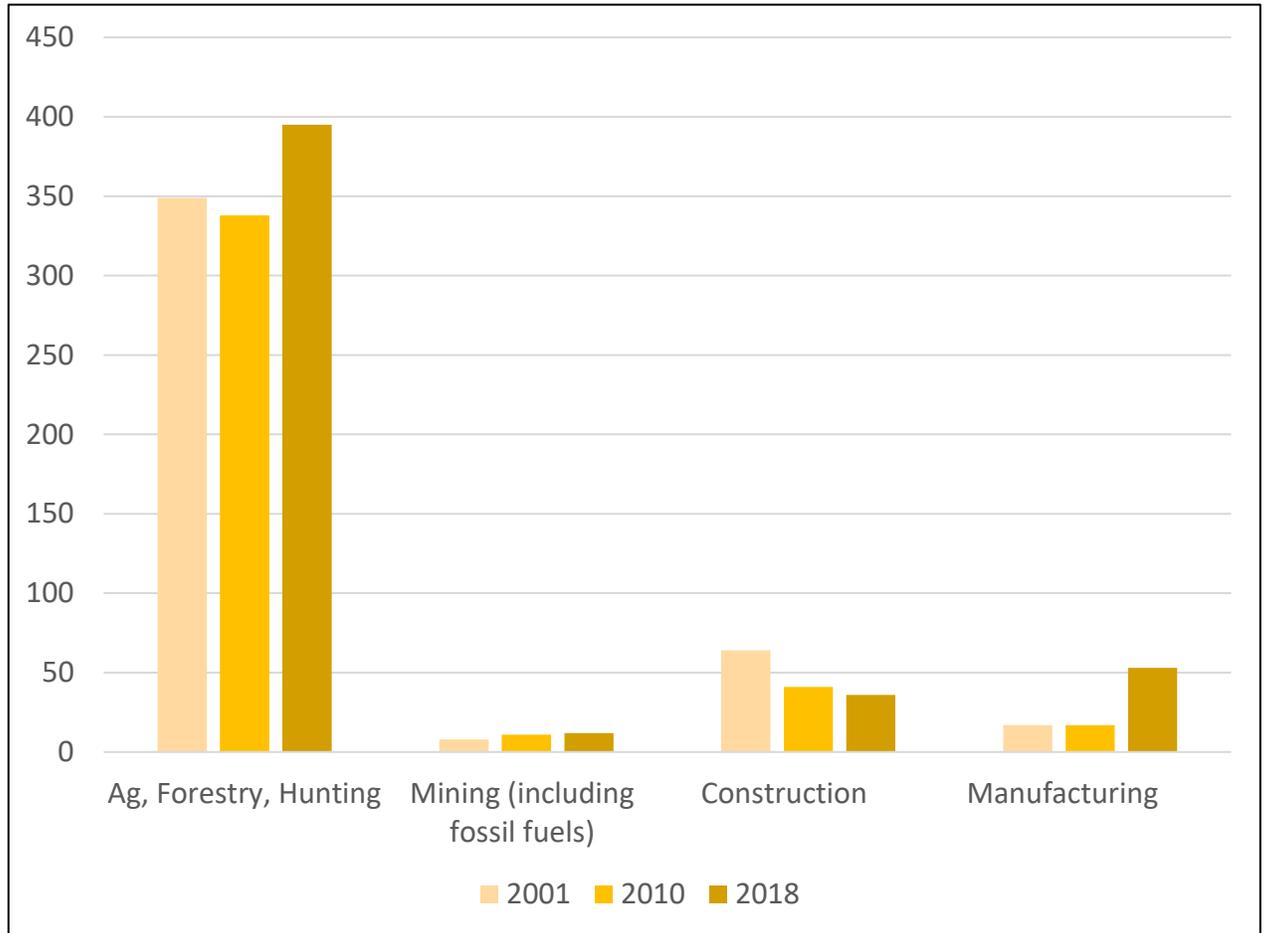
Figure 20: Employment Trends, Bent County (Includes Proprietors)



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020

Jobs have been flat or in decline in all nearly all sectors since 2001. Agriculture has been one of the largest employers and has exhibited stability over the past two decades.

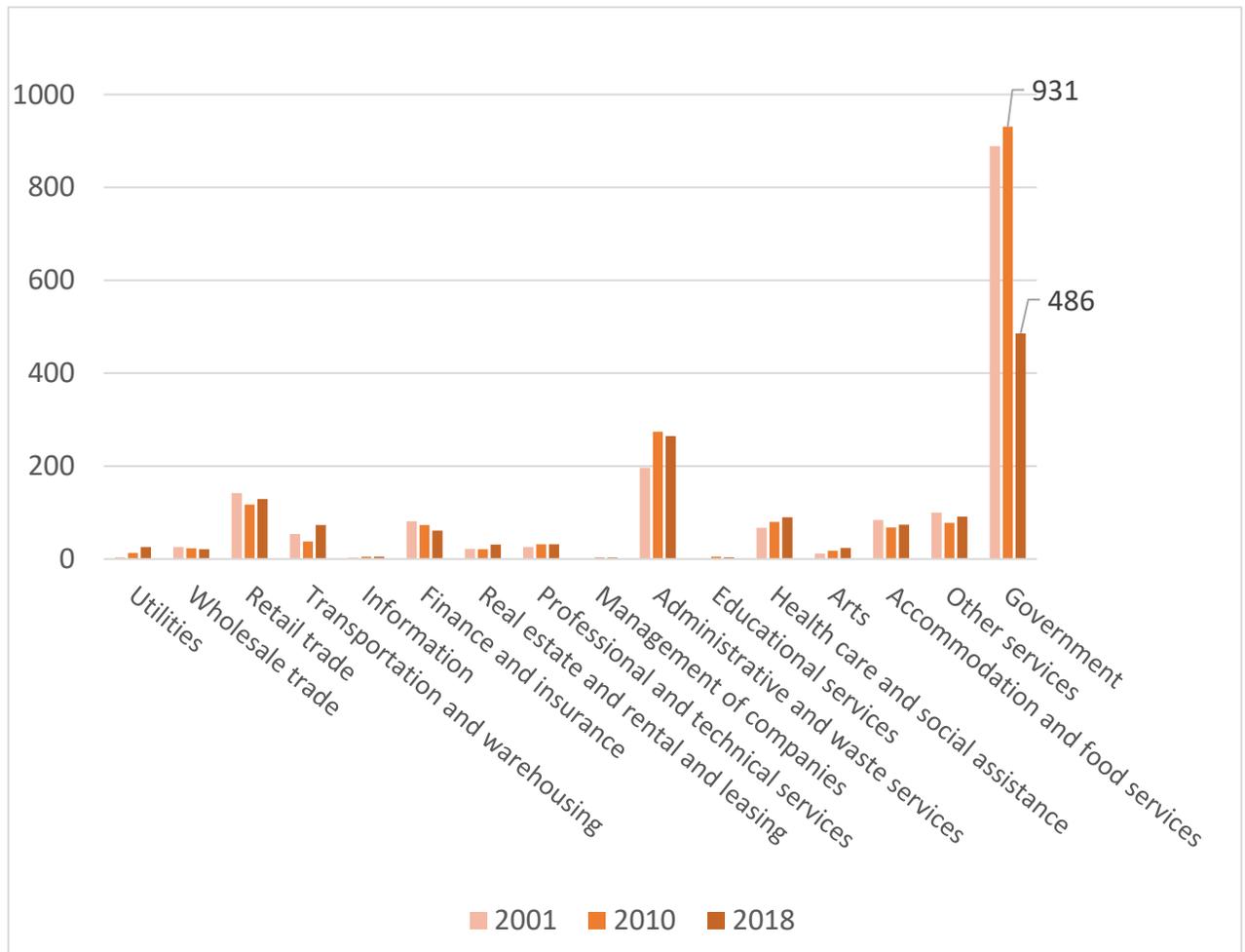
Figure 21: Jobs in Non-Services Sectors, Bent County



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Emsi Data”, custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

The largest employment sector is “government”, which included jobs at Ft. Lyon when it was a veterans hospital and after 2001 when it was a correctional facility. The decommissioning of the Ft. Lyons Correctional Facility is evident in the drop in government jobs between 2010 and 2018. The “administrative and waste services” sector which includes jobs at the privately owned BCCF is another sector that has exhibited stability.

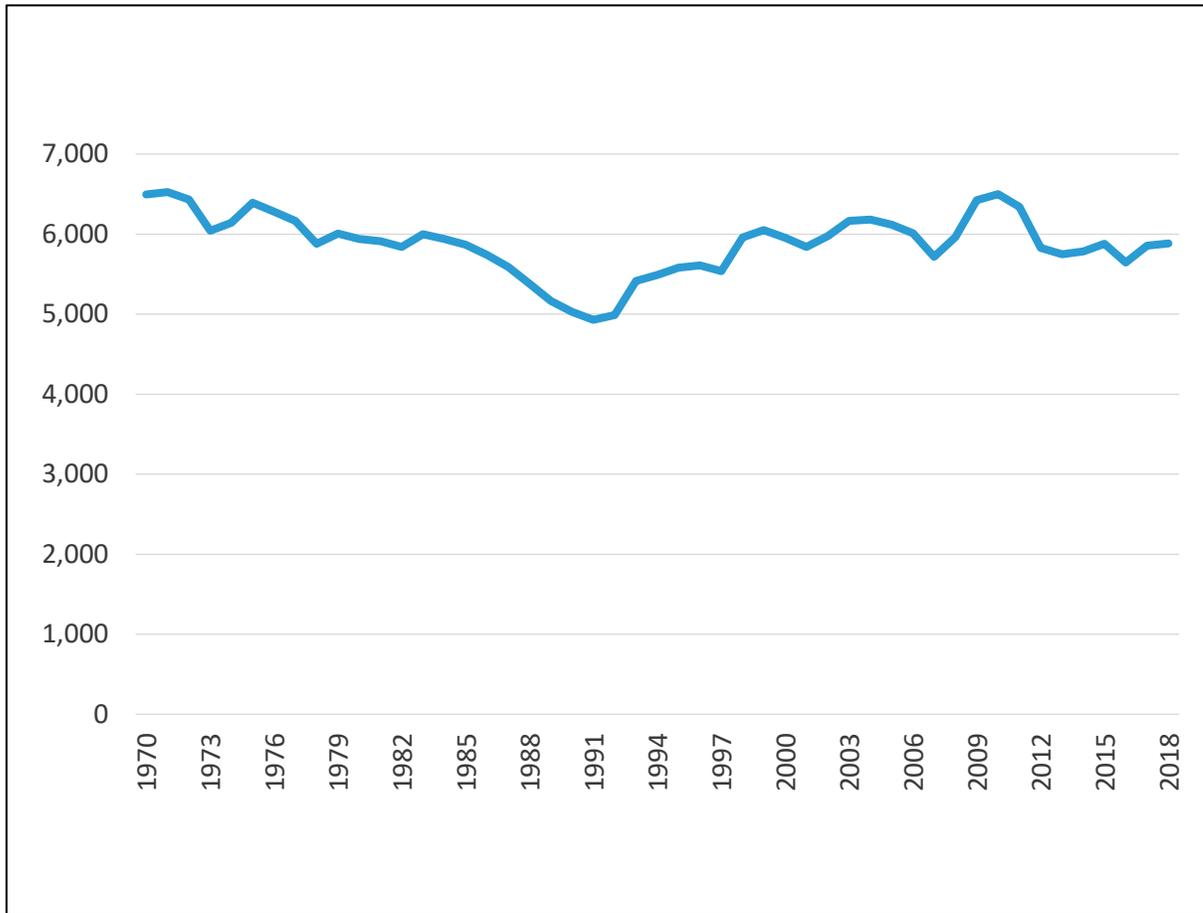
Figure 22: Jobs in Services Sectors, Bent County



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020; "Emsi Data", custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

For the most part, the population has hovered around 6,000 for the past several decades. Population counts and estimates include incarcerated people.

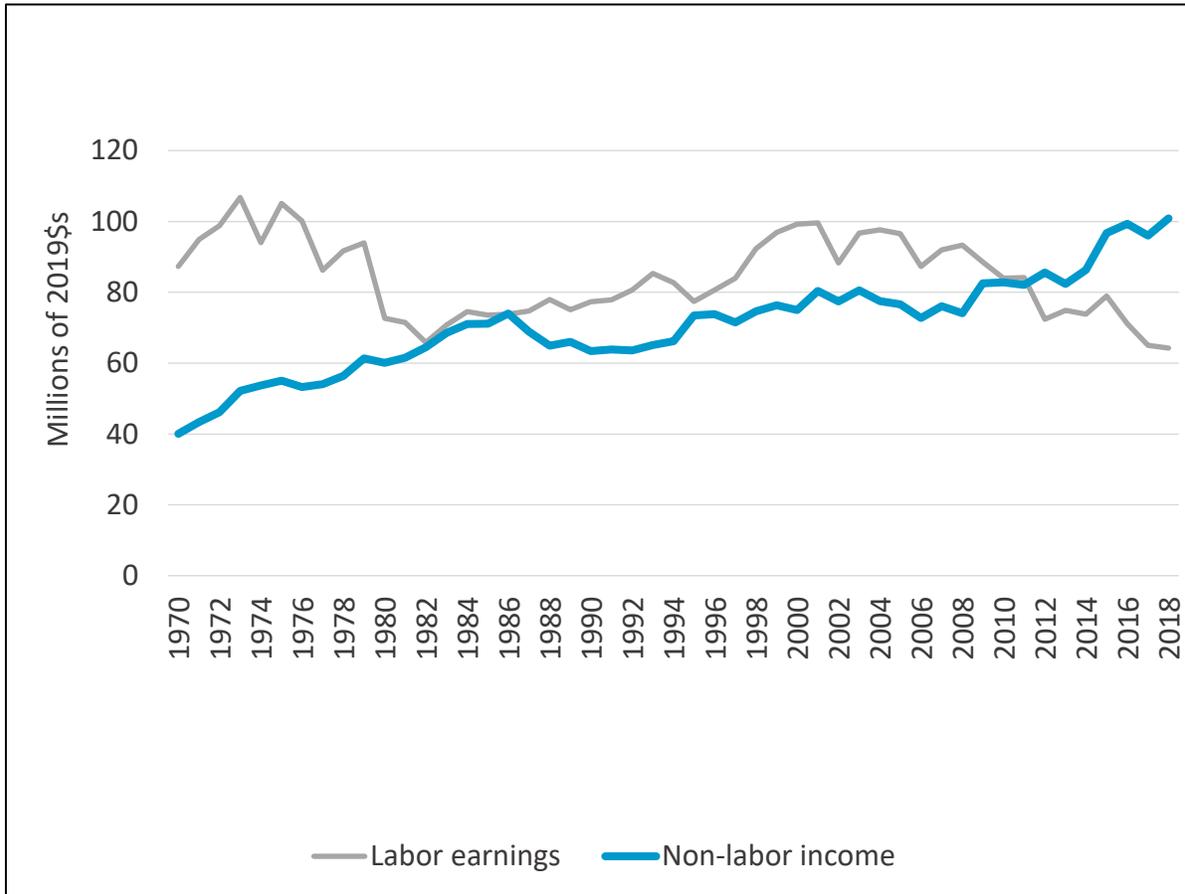
Figure 23: Population Trends, Bent County (Includes Incarcerated Population)



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Inflation adjusted income has been flat/fluctuating since 2000. Non-labor income exceeded labor earnings from jobs beginning in 2011 and by 2018, non-labor income made up 61% of total personal income in the county. 31% of non-labor income was Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare and other income maintenance.

Figure 24: Components of Personal Income, Bent County, 2019 Dollars



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020

Bent County economic indicators have lagged behind Colorado as a whole by a wide margin over the past two decades. Bent County employment, personal income, and earnings have all declined as they grew in Colorado. The 2019 poverty rate in the county was nearly four times that of the state.

Table 47: Comparison of Indicators in Bent County and State of Colorado
(Inflation Adjusted)

| | Bent County | Colorado |
|---|-------------|----------|
| Population, % change, 2000-2018 | -1.2% | 31.6% |
| Employment, % change, 2000-2018 | -26.1% | 32.4% |
| Personal Income, % change, 2000-2018 | -5.2% | 54.3% |
| Average Earnings per Job, % change, 2000-2018 | -10.5% | 5.1% |



| | Bent County | Colorado |
|--|-------------|----------|
| Per Capita Income, % change, 2000-2018 | -4.0% | 17.2% |
| Avg. Earnings per Job, 2018 | \$38,716 | \$62,726 |
| Per Capita Income, 2018 | \$28,070 | \$59,509 |
| Labor Force Participation 16 yrs. & older 2018 | 54.4% | 68.5% |
| % of Persons in Poverty 2019 | 34.4% | 9.3% |

Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Quick Facts” US Census, 2020

There were 228 filled positions at the BCCF during 2019 and total salaries, wages, insurance and benefits were \$10.9 million. The total compensation per job including wages, insurance and benefits increased from \$54,691/yr in 2018 to \$58,025 in 2019. The average earnings per job in Bent County of \$32,716 in 2018 is considerably less than the average compensation per job at the Bent County Correctional facility.

Table 48: BCCF Jobs, Wages and Benefits

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| CCCF Filled Positions | 232 | 228 |
| Salaries & Wages | \$10,493,175 | \$10,919,261 |
| Insurance & Benefits | \$2,195,162 | \$2,310,469 |
| Total | \$12,688,337 | \$13,229,730 |
| Total Compensation per Job | \$54,691 | \$58,025 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020

A report provided to the consulting team by CoreCivic shows that the 481 workers at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities live in 22 counties across the state, with the most workers living in Southeast Colorado including Crowley, Otero, Bent, and Pueblo Counties. Bent County is home to 14% of the combined workforce at both facilities, meaning there are 67 Bent County resident held jobs at either of the facilities.

Given that the average compensation per job in 2019 was \$61,606, the 67 jobs held by Bent County residents brought in and estimated \$4,127,600 in personal income to county households. The total labor earnings for the entire county were \$64.2 million, meaning that the two correctional facilities generate one dollar out of every fifteen dollars in labor income in the county.



Table 49: Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities - Where Workforce Lives

| | % Workforce Residing in County |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Bent County | 14.00% |
| Crowley County | 16.60% |
| Otero County | 29.40% |
| Pueblo County | 21.40% |
| Other | 18.60% |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020

Multipliers occur because correctional facilities receive all of their income from outside of region. Any expenditures or employee earnings in the region is new money into the economy. The \$4.13 million in annual earnings and 67 jobs held by Bent County residents at the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Analysts used a RIMS-II Multipliers report generated by Bureau of Economic Analysis customized for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties to estimate the total output of resident earnings.

Table 50: Economic Impact of Bent County Resident Held Jobs and Earnings at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities

| | 2019 County Resident Earnings Analysis |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Bent County Resident Earnings | \$4,127,600 |
| Bent County Resident Jobs | 67 |
| Total Output Multipliers | 0.3195 |
| Earnings Multipliers | 0.0968 |
| Jobs per \$Million Earnings | 2.5699 |
| Output from Spending of Earnings | \$1,318,800 |
| Earnings from Spending of Earnings | \$399,600 |
| Jobs from Spending of Earnings | 10.6 |
| Total Output | \$5,446,400 |
| Total Earnings | \$4,527,200 |
| Total Jobs | 77.6 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; "RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties", Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020



RIMS-II Multipliers show that the household spending resulting from the \$4,127,600 in employee earnings at the Bent and Crowley County Correctional Facilities generated an additional \$1,318,800 in total economic output. This output includes 10.6 additional jobs and \$399,600 in additional earnings. Accounting for multipliers, the 67 jobs and \$4.13 million in earnings become 77.6 jobs and \$5.45 million in total economic output.

The BCCF pays City of Las Animas enterprise funds and businesses operating in the county for its utility services and makes local retail purchases. These purchases result in multipliers because they put new money into the economy. The RIMS-II report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties include multipliers for specific industries including utilities and retail.

Table 51: Economic Impact of BCCF Purchases

| 2019 | Utilities | Retail | Total |
|---|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Purchases in Bent County | \$1,025,500 | \$7,300 | \$1,032,800 |
| Total Output Multipliers | 1.1542 | 1.227 | |
| Earnings Multipliers | 0.1308 | 0.4227 | |
| Jobs per \$Million Sales | 1.5708 | 15.2537 | |
| Total Output from in Bent County | \$1,183,600 | \$9,000 | \$1,192,600 |
| Earnings from Purchases in Bent County | \$134,100 | \$3,100 | \$137,200 |
| Total Jobs | 1.6 | 0.1 | 1.7 |

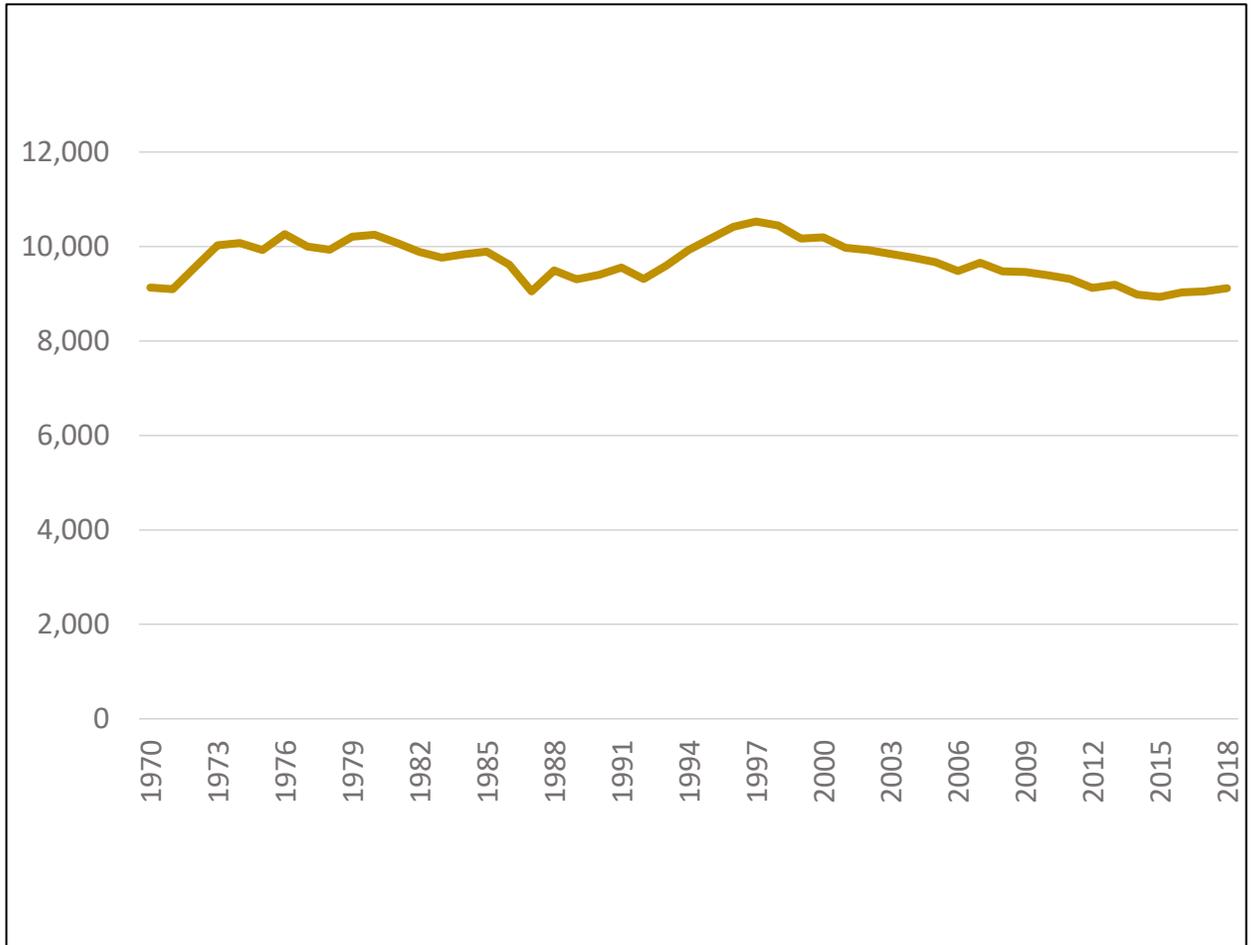
Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; "Survey of local businesses' direct retail sales to Crowley County Correctional Facility", Crowley County, 2020; "RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties", Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

RIMS-II Multipliers show that the \$1,025,500 in annual utility payments becomes \$1,183,600 in total output and represents 1.6 full-time equivalent jobs. The combined total output was \$6,639,000 which includes \$4,664,400 in earnings and represents 79 full time equivalent jobs.

Economic Effects – Otero County Analysis

The number of jobs in Otero County peaked in 1997 and slowly declined through 2015. Jobs grew modestly between 2015-2018 in part due to the manufacturing sector, which is an encouraging sign after two decades of job loss.

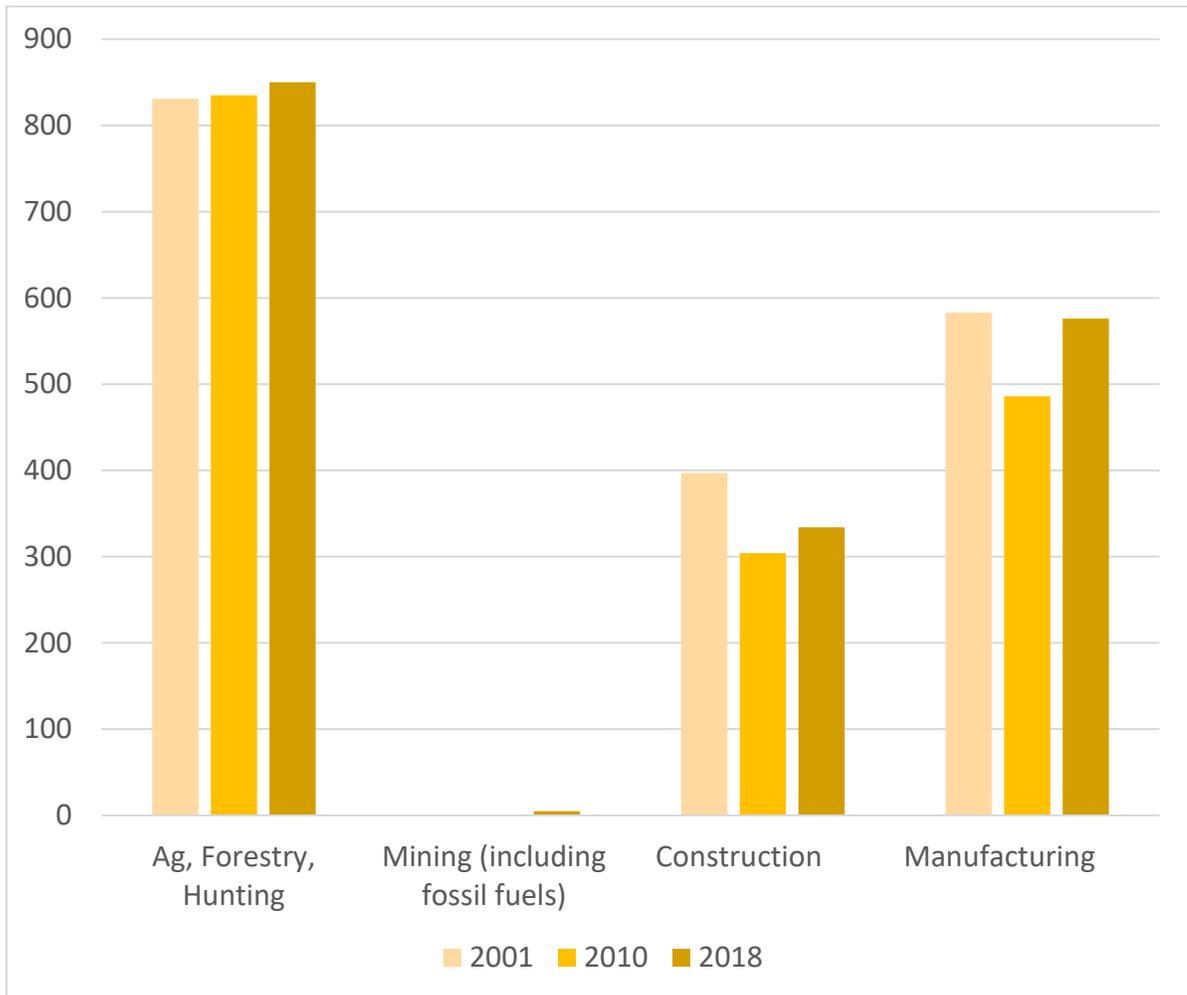
Figure 25: Population Trends, Otero County



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Otero County is unique in Southeast Colorado due to its strong manufacturing sector, which has exhibited growth since 2010. Agriculture has been one of the largest employers and has exhibited stability over the past two decades.

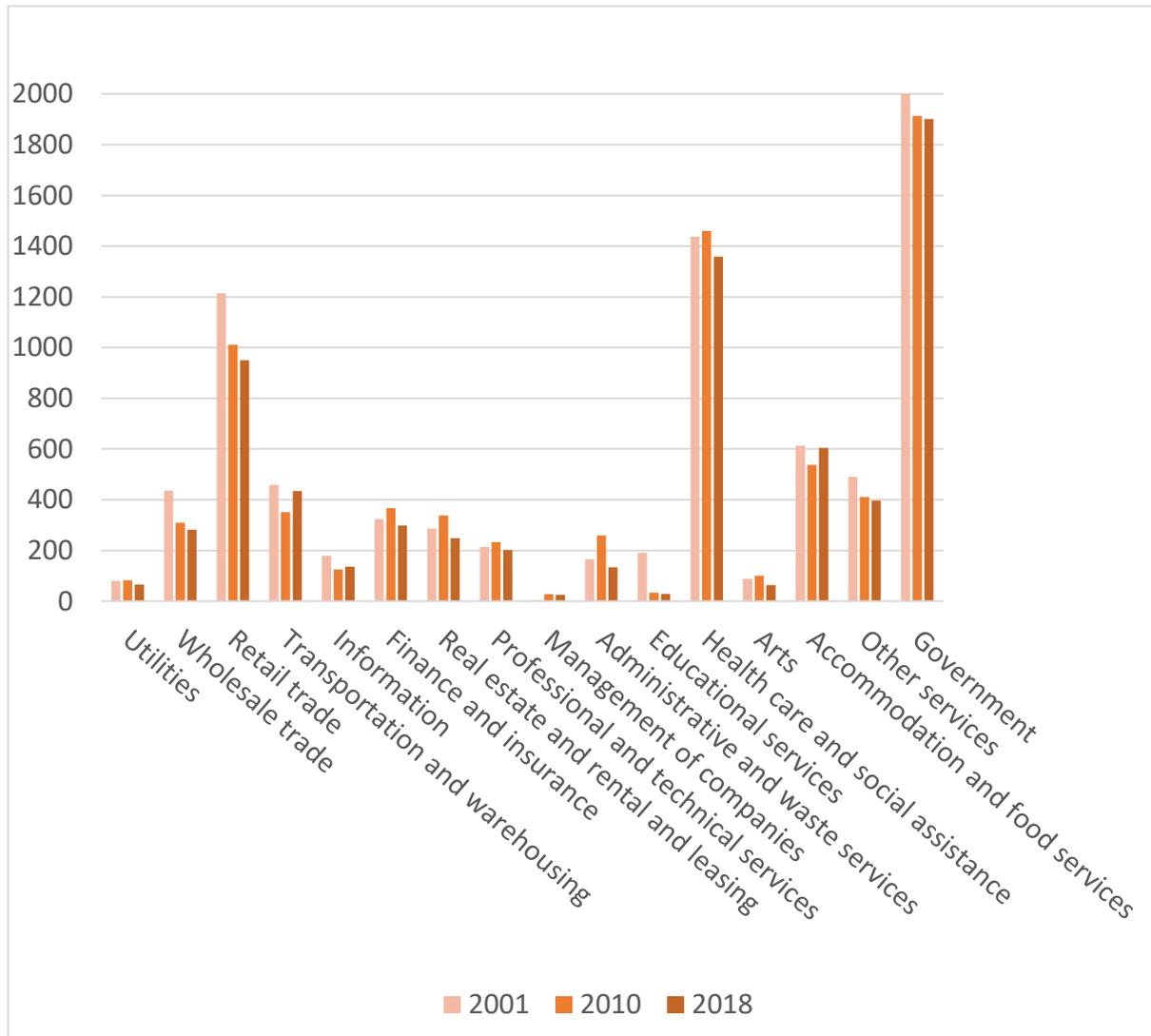
Figure 26: Jobs in Non-Services Sectors, Otero County



Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Emsi Data”, custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

The largest employment sector is “government” followed by “health care and social assistance” and “retail trade” although all three of these major sectors have declined slightly over the past couple of decades. The “accommodations and food services” sector has proven to be stable since 2000. The solid position of these services sectors is indicative of La Junta’s role as regional center of public services and commerce in Southeast Colorado.

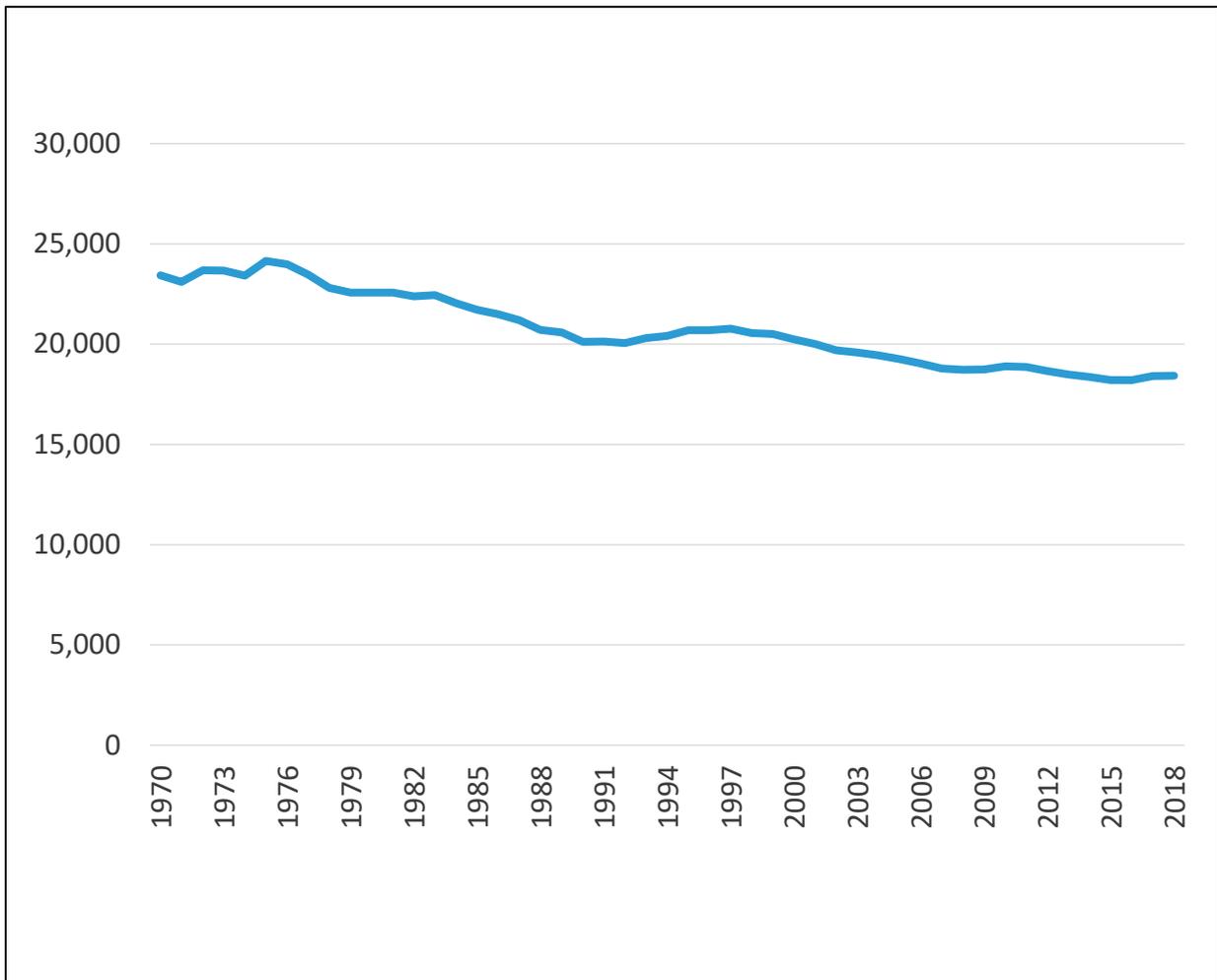
Figure 27: Jobs in Services Sectors, Otero County



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020; "Emsi Data", custom report by Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2020

The population of Otero County has been in slow decline since the late 1990s, mirroring the slow decline in the number of jobs. During periods of job growth, such as the early to mid-1990s, the population remained mostly flat or grew very slightly, but during downturns the population declined and did not subsequently recover.

Figure 28: Population Trends, Otero County



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Inflation adjusted income has been flat/fluctuating since 2000. Non-labor income exceeded labor earnings beginning in 2015 and by 2018 non-labor income made up 54% of total personal income in the county. 56% of non-labor income was Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare and other income maintenance. The ebb and flow of the job market is evident in the wide fluctuation in labor earnings.

Figure 29: Components of Personal Income, Otero County, 2019 Dollars



Sources: "Economic Profile System", Headwaters Economics, 2020

Otero County economic indicators have lagged behind Colorado as a whole over the past two decades. Otero County jobs declined but personal income increased and so did per capita income and earnings per job. The 2019 poverty rate in the county was over double that of the state as a whole, although the labor force participation rate was near that of the state as a whole.

Table 52: Comparison of Indicators in Otero County and State of Colorado

| | Otero County | Colorado |
|--|--------------|----------|
| Population, % change, 2000-2018 | -8.9% | 31.6% |
| Employment, % change, 2000-2018 | -10.6% | 32.4% |
| Personal Income, % change, 2000-2018 | 2.8% | 54.3% |
| Average Earnings per Job, % change, 2000-2018 | 3.9% | 5.1% |
| Per Capita Income, % change, 2000-2018 | 12.9% | 17.2% |
| Avg. Earnings per Job, 2018 | \$41,288 | \$62,726 |
| Per Capita Income, 2018 | \$38,877 | \$59,509 |
| Labor Force Participation 16 yrs. & older 2018 | 59.91% | 68.5% |
| % of Persons in Poverty 2019 | 24.2% | 9.3% |

Sources: “Economic Profile System”, Headwaters Economics, 2020; “Quick Facts” US Census, 2020

A report provided to the consulting team by CoreCivic shows that 481 workers at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities live in 22 counties across the state, with the most workers living in Southeast Colorado including Crowley, Otero, Bent, and Pueblo Counties. Otero County is home to 29.4% of the combined workforce at both facilities, meaning there are 141 Otero County resident held jobs at either of the facilities.

Given that the average compensation per job in 2019 was \$61,606, the 141 jobs held by Otero County residents brought in and estimated \$8,686,425 in personal income to Otero County households.

Table 53: Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities - Where Workforce Lives

| | % Workforce Residing in County |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Bent County | 14.00% |
| Crowley County | 16.60% |
| Otero County | 29.40% |
| Pueblo County | 21.40% |
| Other | 18.60% |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020

Multipliers occur because correctional facilities receive all of their income from outside of region. Any expenditures or employee earnings in the region is new money into the

economy. The \$8,686,425 in annual earnings and 141 jobs held by Otero County residents at the Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities generate additional jobs and earnings due to the household spending of these earnings. Analysts used a RIMS-II Multipliers report generated by Bureau of Economic Analysis customized for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties to estimate the total output of resident earnings.

Table 54: Economic Impact of Otero County Resident Held Jobs and Earnings at Crowley and Bent County Correctional Facilities

| | 2019 County Resident Earnings Analysis |
|---|--|
| Otero County Resident Earnings | \$8,686,425 |
| Otero County Resident Held Jobs | 141 |
| Total Output Multipliers | |
| Total Output Multipliers | 0.3195 |
| Earnings Multipliers | 0.0968 |
| Jobs per \$Million Earnings | 2.5699 |
| Output from Spending of Earnings | |
| Output from Spending of Earnings | \$2,775,300 |
| Earnings from Spending of Earnings | \$840,800 |
| Jobs from Spending of Earnings | 22.3 |
| Total Output | |
| Total Output | \$11,461,725 |
| Total Earnings | |
| Total Earnings | \$9,527,225 |
| Total Jobs | |
| Total Jobs | 163.3 |

Sources: CoreCivic, 2020; "RIMS-II Multipliers for Crowley, Otero and Bent Counties", Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

RIMS-II Multipliers show that the household spending resulting from the \$8,686,425 in employee earnings at the correctional facilities generated an additional \$2,775,300 in total economic output. This output includes 22.3 additional jobs and \$840,800 in additional earnings. Accounting for multipliers, the 141 jobs and \$8,686,425 in earnings become 163.3 jobs and \$11,461,725 in total economic output.

8. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY

This section of the study is designated to provide recommendations for diversification of the economies in rural Southeast Colorado, specifically the areas directly impacted by the privately-owned Bent County Correctional Facility and Crowley County Correctional Facility. For the purposes of this evaluation and subsequent recommendations, the direct impact area includes Crowley, Bent and Otero counties, however, the six counties including Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers Counties are acting functionally as an economic region and therefore are considered.

The Business Development and Diversification Strategy is an opportunity to chart a longer-term strategy for economic diversification and growth for each affected county while also identifying near term actions and early successes. The Business Development and Diversification Strategy is intended as a stand-alone strategic plan that will be useful whatever the future may be for private prisons.

Nothing in these recommendations can immediately mitigate significant shocks, with over 480 jobs (filled positions) at CCCF and BCCF combined in 2018-2019. Both the timeline and transferability of employment that may result from the closure or substantial reduction of either or both of the private prisons present a monumental challenge for economic stability. Transition planning and adequate long-term investment will incrementally make a difference over several years. But such efforts would not lessen the tangible impacts of reduced employment and revenues for public services. Furthermore, communities engage in strategies successfully from a position of strength.

An Ecosystem framework was used to map current conditions and as a launching point for recommendations. This summary first covers the “small business and entrepreneur ecosystem recommendations” and then a summary of “focus areas” that arose from the ecosystem assessment: 1) Small Business Incubator at Ft. Lyon (SECO SBI), 2) Innovation and Entrepreneurship in K-12 Education, 3) Cannabis Innovation Center and Testing Laboratory and 4) Manufacturing Cluster Support.

METHODOLOGY

The project team used a comprehensive information-gathering and data review process that utilized the following approaches;

- Review of secondary data - existing strategic plans and economic studies

- Collection of primary data - interviews and focus groups
- Feedback on preliminary strategies
- Research on trends and examples
- Recommendations

INTERVIEW THEMES

One-on-one interviews and focus groups were conducted over a 4-month period with individuals and organizational representatives invested in the economic diversity of the region (listed in Appendix B). The purpose of the interviews was to gain knowledge on the economic development opportunities and challenges. Interviewees were both local and key partners involved with regional efforts. The following is a summary of the themes from these interviews as provided by people working in these communities.

- Prison jobs and overall impacts to community cannot be replaced by economic diversification strategies
- Cities and towns focus on urban renewal and Main Street programs
 - History and historical buildings
 - Vibrant Arts community
 - Parks are an asset
- “We do prisons well”
- Communities willing to embrace challenging industries - hog farm, prisons, cannabis
- Economic Development needs to start from current position
- Previous disruptions - Ft. Lyon
- Extensive grant writing takes place
- Funding opportunities should allow for more flexibility to allow for creativity
 - Regional strategies are necessary
 - Dictated by size and efficiency
 - Trade area is 6-county with 60-70k population

- Infrastructure projects are needed
 - Broadband
 - Transmission lines
 - Power capacity - serious issue in Crowley county needing immediate solutions
- Need for business succession planning
- Sale of water rights has limited impact on economic development options
- Tourism is opportunity
 - Canyons & Plains 7-county tourism brand
 - John Martin Reservoir in Bent, CO is second largest in the state and managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
 - Pedal the Plains bike ride
 - Hometown plays
 - Festivals & events
 - Tarantula migration
 - Dinosaur remains
 - birdwatching
- Housing development needed
 - multi-generational housing opportunity
 - Ordway developments
 - Real estate prices increasing rapidly
- Otero county and La Junta on upswing
- More opportunity to take advantage of prison procurement
- Alternative energy opportunity - State investment, Methane capture from feedlot
- Void in workforce training - lots of things going on, no glue

- Location neutral opportunity (no determined location for the job. It can be done anywhere)
- Boomerang phenomenon– people returning to where they grew up
- Significant Hispanic population and cultural influence
- One of last regions in the state with available land
- 6-county economic developers meet weekly
- Opportunity for City, County and elected officials to work together
- Government is very involved in economic development
- Plenty of money to lend
- Risk taking out of necessity not necessarily inclined to start something
- Need professional services, such as accountants and attorneys
- Quality of life and friendly people are draw
- Opportunity to proactively communicate open for business and success stories through traditional media. Limited by capacity to provide/write stories.
- Rocky mountain rail opportunity
- Opportunity to link with larger population centers in region - Pueblo

EDUCATION INTERVIEW THEMES

- Concern for brain drain
- Youth responsive to hands on education
- No collar worker training opportunity
- Many creative and strong programs exist
 - Tiger Trades
 - SWINK Robotics
 - Santa Fe Path to Prosperity programs
 - Future Farmers of America (FFA)
 - Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

- E-club coffee shop
- Internships and apprenticeships work!
- Need mechanics, robotics, welding, nursing, CNA programs
- 80% free and reduced lunch
- Resilient and hardworking
- Schools need cash and capacity
- Most districts have Tech teacher
- Teacher recruitment and retention is huge issue
- Need more capacity, not more grants!
- Somewhat of a turf war between PCC and OJC
- Crowley has applied to be part of Santa Fe Trails BOCES - barrier to have 2 BOCES
- Certificate, concurrent enrollment and credit opportunities are priority
- Student numbers are volatile and react to any downsizing
- Also impacted by COVID and remote learning
- Social determinants of health impact student success
- Grants are not sustainable
- Movement toward multi-district approaches - ex SW Colorado

CANNABIS INTERVIEW THEMES

- Opportunity
- State Interest, “OEDIT cares”
- Passed 2B mark in taxes
- CSU Pueblo has Cannabis Institute explore partnership
- Grow industry maturing which is pushing operations to be smarter in operations - improve margins - and use of technology (sensors, robotics, IoT, water tech)
- Hemp needs processing capability for there to be markets for plants

- Trends toward more testing needed in hemp and marijuana grow and production
- Trained workforce is an issue, could benefit from Greenhouse Operations certificate or degree programs
- Attractiveness of Crowley County - unlimited licenses and welcoming government

SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR INTERVIEW THEMES

- Move Regional SBDC to Ft. Lyon
- Nonprofit being developed to manage the SBI, BCDF is current host
- Using the Business Incubator Center in Grand Junction as model and for technical assistance
- Targets are agriculture and manufacturing
- Holding off on commercial kitchen for now - one being constructed in La Junta, see the results of this
- Goal to have sustainable businesses after 5 years
- Considering anchor tenants but concerned about undercutting private market
- Grand opening slated for fall 2021
- Ft. Lyon site is currently underutilized
- Buildings are old and have asbestos and other Brownfields issues
- Opportunity to utilize vocational training for the SRC population to redevelop buildings, can prison populations be engaged as well?
- SRC capacity 247 beds. Innovative approach where residents are hired to maintain the services and infrastructure.
- Start with vocational training for SRC clients
- Considering programming for prison population
- Applied for EDA STEM education grant
- EPA workforce training program secured 200k
- DOLA master planning for Ft. Lyon

- On historic registry
- 2 story adobes are oldest in state
- Housing stock can be renovated
- SBI – workforce and vocational training and incubation space for emerging companies
- Solar fields
- Apple orchard
- Theatre renovation
- Health clinic
- Housing rehabilitation including historical adobe structures
- SBI could be too broad, need to leverage assets and create something unique
- Concern over location being out of the way - will people really go there?
- Needs to be a long-term commitment and plan
- “Free” buildings not always free or enough
- Include SRC as target market for business startups maybe prisoners as well
- Challenges - capital funding, Ft. Lyon perception and partnerships (Prison, SRC)

MANUFACTURING INTERVIEW THEMES

- Volume and diversity
- Need for certificate programs
- Industrial Park incentives are outstanding
- Per capita #1 in manufacturing
- Connection to youth
- Opportunity for existing business growth and startups
- Prepare workforce for opportunity in advanced manufacturing
- Manufacturing group locally has been active, and not, at different times - needs to be valuable

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section organizes review and recommendations around elements of the ecosystem to support small business and entrepreneurship for the three counties. While this is intended to be a thorough evaluation, the objective is to pull out relevant areas for recommendations, consequently there will be elements overlooked. This framework was developed by Daniel Isenberg at Babson College, and provides an excellent tool to map current conditions of the ecosystem to support business and dive deeper into areas where communities can proactively impact the attractiveness of the region for business startup and growth. More extensive recommendations on four focus areas follows this comprehensive overview.

POLICY

The Policy section describes efforts by Government and Leadership to clear the pathway for business to operate successfully. It includes proactive programs to provide incentives as well as leadership influence on business friendliness.

Economic development budgets - counties, towns and regional

Crowley, Bent and Otero Counties and the Cities of La Junta and Rocky Ford all invest resources in economic development efforts and contribute to designated staff positions.

Support and programming

Southeast Colorado SBDC - <https://southeastcosbdc.org/>

Small Business Accelerator Program - funded by USDA.

Incentive programs

Colorado Enterprise Zone - all three counties are included in “Enhanced Enterprise Zones” which offers additional tax credits for qualified activities,

<https://choosecolorado.com/doing-business/incentives-financing/ez/>.

Opportunity Zone - all of Crowley and Bent counties and La Junta and surrounding area, are part of OZ which is a federal tax incentive for investors to invest in low-income urban and rural communities through the favorable treatment of reinvested capital gains and forgiveness of tax on new capital gains.

Rural Jump Start program, <https://choosecolorado.com/doing-business/incentives-financing/rural-jump-start-program/>. All three counties are qualified with Otero County being the only county that has formed a zone and is approved by the State.

Industrial Park in La Junta

- Otero County granted zoning and building inspection control to the City of La Junta
- City of La Junta provides build to suit and rent credits connected to job creation and retention
- Focused on “base jobs”
- Currently 3 companies qualify and have 10-year contracts - DeBourgh Manufacturing Co. ~100 jobs, Lewis Bolt & Nut Co. ~ 275 jobs and Oliver Mfg. Co. ~40 jobs

Commercial property-assessed clean energy (CPACE) is a financing structure in which building owners borrow money for energy efficiency, renewable energy, or other projects and make repayments via an assessment on their property tax bill.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic development budgets - map, coordinate, prioritize and build efficiencies

With two regional organizations, three counties and at least two towns funding economic development efforts there is a lot of activity. Efforts are somewhat coordinated but there appears to be overlap of projects and not a clear prioritization driven from elected officials. The region could benefit from prioritization and focus. Investing scarce resources collectively on bigger projects like infrastructure, workforce and education will increase the likelihood of measurable outcomes.

Incentive programs - secure options and fully utilize available incentives

Fully utilize the programs available through federal and state resources and publicize them through all channels available - websites, social media and traditional media. These programs are challenging to fully understand and communicate benefits to businesses. They are coordinated by the regional ED organizations, but it is critical for each county and city/town to have enough of an understanding to fully utilize the benefits. Examples of opportunities utilized by other communities throughout Colorado include Enterprise

Zone renovation tax credits for downtown revitalization, Enterprise Zone contribution tax credits to build major initiatives around education, business support and infrastructure and Opportunity Zone for housing development. Local incentives can be built to compliment other resources and target priorities.

Leadership involvement with prioritization, coordination and advocacy

Investment in economic diversification has been underway for decades. Elected officials provide leadership and can drive priorities, coordination and advocacy for business throughout government. Programs and focus should be established first then funding sources should be identified and pursued. Utilize a collective dashboard to measure progress. Consider applying for the rural recovery roadmap to assist with this effort.

FINANCE

Having a robust offering of a variety of financial capital instruments in the region as well as technical assistance to guide and help secure funding for businesses is a key factor for regional economies.

Banks - There are a variety of Banks serving the region. Indications are that there is adequate capital to lend to qualified businesses.

Business Loan Funds - Southeastern Colorado Economic Development (SECED) provides alternative public sector loan programs with funding for gap loans, micro-loans and facade improvements. Funds are also distributed through Otero County Economic Development.

State-wide CDFIs - funding is available from statewide and regional CDFI's such as Colorado Lending Source.

Greater Colorado Venture Fund is a Venture Capital fund with capital provided by the State Venture Capital Authority to be deployed in rural areas of the state. They provide traditional equity investment and revenue share products for growth companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider adding other financial options

Idea stage, business plan and pitch **competitions** are a great way to excite the entrepreneurial community. Small awards go a long way. For example, the Greater Colorado Pitch Series offered in 2020 through the Greater Colorado Venture Fund.

Flexible finance programs funded through quasi-public sources have been used to support growth of targeted industries. An example is a purchase order line of credit pre-approved for small manufacturers to help with cashflow needed to fulfill orders.

Connect to regional angel groups and statewide venture capital

Ultimately as ecosystems evolve, organizing angel investors and connecting with regional funds and angel groups will benefit growth orientated businesses in the region. Pueblo and Colorado Springs have burgeoning activity.

CULTURE

A culture that supports and celebrates small business and entrepreneurship is self-perpetuating. It is characterized by visible successes and encouragement of risk taking and innovation.

Success Stories

Several entrepreneurs and small businesses have been “called out” in several interviews. They include;

- Jessie Klein - PPE and Makerspace
- Fairway Restaurant at Industrial Park
- DeBourgh Manufacturing
- Innovative H2O
- Dean Hiatt, Cannabis industry and developer

Initiatives

Initiatives are currently taking place that bring attention to local small businesses including;

- <https://www.smalltownproject.org/> Rocky Ford
- <http://www.secostrong.org/> 6-county region

Several Makerspaces are in development in the schools and in La Junta. These facilities and programming encourage innovation and risk taking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tell Success Stories – Utilization of traditional and social media is fragmented, and organizational capacity to share and write stories is an issue. A coordinated approach through the Economic Development personnel and organizations is recommended.

Innovation & Entrepreneurship K-12 - See focus areas section for full discussion of this recommendation.

SUPPORTS

The Support section describes the infrastructure and support services needed to support a healthy business sector.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Broadband is an issue - Colorado Southeast Region Broadband Strategic Plan was developed for SEBREA in 2017.

Power - transmission lines and capacity have been noted as issues to be addressed

Housing – supply, diversity and affordability of housing are issues throughout the 3 counties

NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

Several regional economic development organizations support the region.

[Southeast Colorado Business Retention Expansion and Attraction \(SEBREA\)](#) supports regional local economic development organizations and local governments in Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties. SEBREA provides a foundation for sustaining and expanding the economic growth in southeast Colorado utilizing the strength of partnerships and resources to thrive in today's business environment regionally, nationally and globally.

[Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development, Inc. \(SECED\)](#) provides incentives and develops promotional activities that market and advertise the advantages of locating a business in the Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers Counties. SECED employs multiple programs to create a positive identity, encourage retention and expansion of our existing businesses by promoting redevelopment, attraction of new businesses, the expansion of the region's tourism industry.

The Southeast Colorado Small Business Development Center (SECO SBDC) - The Southeast Colorado Small Business Development Center offers business consulting and training that maximizes the economic potential of entrepreneurs. SECO SBDC offers free guidance and counseling in all aspects of funding and developing small business by helping clients write comprehensive business plans, conduct financial forecasts, strategize marketing tactics, apply for funding, and improve operations.

COWORKING

Coworking is an infrastructure element that supports entrepreneurs and remote workers. The only active coworking space is in Las Animas. The La Junta CORE Center included coworking and was conceived in 2018 to support downtown revitalization but is now rented to Hospice. Coworking was also attempted in Bent and Crowley counties but buildings were also converted to other usage.

MAKERSPACES- a collaborative workspace inside a school, library or separate public/private facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high tech to no tech tools. These spaces are open to kids, adults, and entrepreneurs and have a variety of maker equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, cnc machines, soldering irons and even sewing machines.

The Klein Makerspace in La Junta is under development, <https://kleinmakerspace.com/>

TigerTrades has an active Makerspace program and Manzanola is developing a Makerspace as part of a BEST grant building renovation.

Main Street Program - La Junta is a Main Street “Candidate Community”

Tourism – Colorado Tourism Office, helps fund strategic marketing for the Canyon & Plains 7-county region

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fund implementation of recommendations in Broadband study - could be additional funding available through 2020 special legislative session and Governor's priorities.

Enhance programs and events for small businesses and entrepreneurs - Although all events are being conducted virtually at this time, communities throughout Colorado have had success in bringing together entrepreneurs and small businesses to celebrate success, network and participate in workshops. This is the time for creativity! Ecosystem events,

associations and competitions should be supported. Startup Colorado (SUCO) has started an initiative around regional collaboration and is a turnkey way to get businesses engaged.

Give coworking another try - Coworking projects are most successful when they are private sector projects. The public can assist in the startup through subsidies and incentives and by promoting and using them.

Work directly with electrical utilities to increase capacity - Continue to communicate with local electrical power companies and help them gain the confidence to invest in additional capacity.

Manufacturing Cluster Support - See "focus areas" section for full discussion of this recommendation.

Cannabis Innovation Center - See "focus areas" section for full discussion of this recommendation.

HUMAN CAPITAL

The Human Capital section looks at education and labor.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

There are 3 community colleges - LaMar Community College, Pueblo Community College (PCC) and Otero Junior College (OJC) serving the region and eight school districts. There is a state Workforce Development office in La Junta.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In the interviews and focus groups, workforce development was mentioned as a leading concern. It appears that there is no one entity that is looking out after this opportunity. The school districts through Pathways to Prosperity and other like initiatives are investing in career readiness. DOLA has received funding for vocational training at the Ft. Lyon campus. Customized workforce training for manufacturers - Colorado First program has rotated between OJC and PCC.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

The School districts offer programs through the Pathways to Prosperity (SFT BOCES) and E-Clubs. SECO SBDC is the primary provider of entrepreneurship training for post high school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a comprehensive workforce development plan - See recommendations in "focus areas" - SBI, K-12 and Manufacturing.

MARKETS

The Markets section includes early customers and networks.

EARLY ADOPTERS

The presence of customers that are willing to try new products and services contributes to the ability of local businesses to try new things. This ties to the Culture section and relate to infrastructure. Programs like the shop local initiative mentioned above help to bring awareness to what local companies have to offer and provide easy access to purchase those products. Buyers are more willing than ever to purchase online, and local companies and support organizations have made a big push to help local companies put their products and services online.

LEAKAGE

Rural areas, especially those in proximity to major markets experience significant retail leakage, which was mentioned as an issue in the interviews. Retail leakage means that residents are spending more on retail products than local businesses capture. Retail sales leakage suggests that there is unmet demand in the trade area and that the community could capture additional sales.

NETWORKS

As mentioned above, there are several clusters existing and emerging which have existing and developing networks. There is not an entrepreneurial network evident.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Explore retail strategies like shared storefronts and utilizing Enterprise Zone tax credits and facade renovation loans for urban renewal programs - active Main Street programs are in place for La Junta and Rocky Ford.

Maintain a "crowd sourced" commercial building inventory.

Continue and expand on efforts to bring attention to what is available locally and the opportunity to support startups.

Facilitate ongoing manufacturing networks to promote collaboration. Encourage manufacturing companies to register through <https://www.manufacturedge.com/manufacturers-connect/>.

Cannabis Innovation Center – See “focus areas” section for full discussion of this recommendation.

FOCUS AREAS

The Small Business and Entrepreneur Ecosystem Recommendations pointed toward four focus areas: 1) Small Business Incubator at Ft. Lyon (SECO SBI), 2) Innovation and Entrepreneurship in K-12 Education, 3) Cannabis Innovation Center and Testing Laboratory and 4) Manufacturing Cluster Support. These are presented with introduction on the topic, background locally, recommendations, expected outcomes and comments on funding and timeline.

SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR AT FT. LYON (SECO SBI)

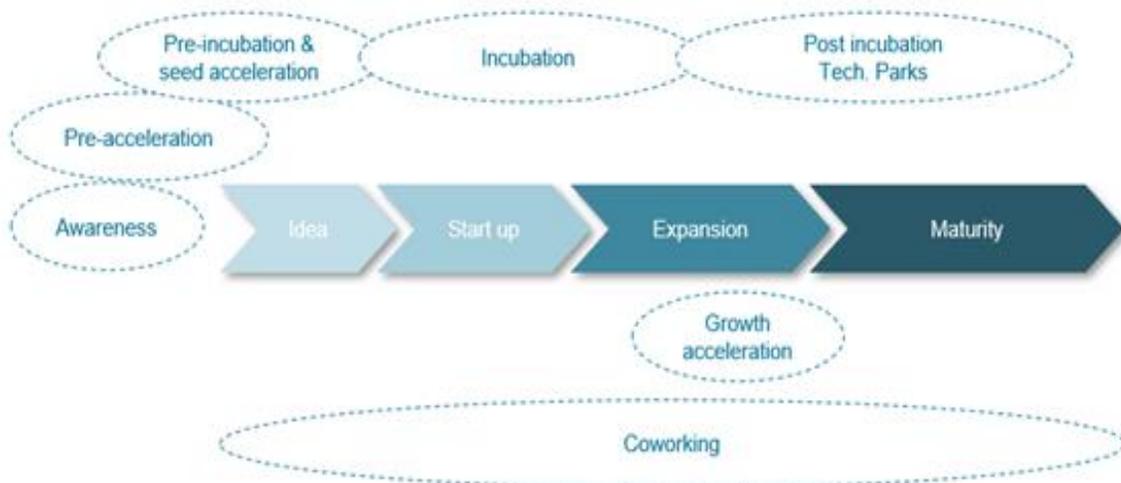
Business incubation is a business support process that accelerates the successful development of start-up and fledgling companies by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services such as management guidance, technical assistance and consulting. Incubators usually also provide clients access to rental space with flexible leases, shared basic business services and equipment, technology support services and assistance in obtaining the financing necessary for company growth.

A business incubator’s purpose is to produce successful firms that will leave the program financially viable and freestanding. These incubator graduates have the potential to create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, commercialize new technologies, and strengthen local and national economies. Incubator best practices include;

- Responsive to market need
- Mission driven
- Sustainable business model
- Selective client intake
- Graduation policies
- Value to clients and stakeholders

- Sound management and leadership
- Quantifiable outcomes

The number of Business Incubators in North America is in excess of 1400, the vast majority of which are facility-based programs although virtual programs often supplement facility-based programs and act as feeders and establish critical mass. Incubation like platforms continue to evolve as displayed in the following diagram in terms of the stages in the growth of a company they serve, from idea to maturity.



BACKGROUND

Current efforts are underway at Ft. Lyon to start a business incubation program. A former VA hospital and correctional facility, Ft. Lyon is a 500-acre complex with 109 buildings. The primary tenant is the Supportive Residential Community (SRC) run by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH). The partners on the project include BCDF, SECO SBDC, Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (SRC). The group plans to establish a non-profit that will manage the program. SECO Small Business Incubator is planning on incorporating the following elements in the model;

- Coworking space
- Southeast Colorado Makerspace (SECO Makerspace)
- SECO SBDC

- Business Incubator
- Workforce and Vocational Training
- SECO Small Business and Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program

The preliminary vision for SBI is workforce related. Some traction and funding in the vocational training component exists with DOLA receiving an EPA Workforce Development Grant for the residential program to develop programming to address asbestos and HAZMAT remediation, as well as wastewater treatment, and other training programs tied to these industries.

Ft. Lyon is owned by the state of Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA). DOLA manages the facility through an IGA with DPA. Funding to manage the site is granted through the Legislature allocating ~5M annually through the general fund. The use of the site and funds are narrowly granted to support the Residential Recovery program (SRC). There are no provisions for increased funding overtime or additional missions. Relevant site elements for SBI include:

- 500+ acres with 109 buildings located on the Arkansas River
- Owned by the State of Colorado
- Existing budget maintains infrastructure, grounds and buildings
- Centrally located in 6-county region
- Public transit to campus
- Strong SRC program
- Two buildings involved to start the SBI one is manufacturing building and makerspace and the other one is admin, training and white-collar offices.
- 7-10 buildings available for build out
- Initial cost estimate for renovation of Building 508 - administration, office and training is 812.5K for 7792 sq. ft including site work

The SBDC has been working with about 25 companies right now looking for space. The planning committee is also looking at an anchor tenant strategy and considering developing a shared use commercial kitchen.

RECOMMENDATION – CONDUCT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Conduct feasibility study and develop business plan for SECO SBI.

SECO SBI proposes to combine 2 components - Business Incubation and Workforce Training. A feasibility study would reduce risk by providing a thorough evaluation of the opportunity and a business plan would set a roadmap for success. Incubator feasibility studies should include the following:

- Assess the market including entrepreneurial pool, current economic landscape and trends of the region and for any targeted industries
- Determine stakeholder buy-in identifying program champions and community support
- Devise business assistance plan through inventory of existing resources and discovery of unmet needs
- Explore Real Estate – need, availability, suitability and costs
- Examine financial feasibility - start-up and operational
- Evaluate sources of funds for start-up and on-going support

Feasibility studies and business plans must identify the market an incubator will serve and prove its financial viability. The following is a general discussion regarding SBI feasibility.

Market Need

- Intended to draw from the region – what is the demand?
- Establish industry segments, anchor tenants, value proposition
- Consideration of tie to SRC program - will the residents be a target market for the SBI?
- Consideration of ties to the Prisons in Bent and Crowley counties - will they be target markets for the SBI?
- Consideration of tie to the youth entrepreneurship programming at the schools and possible home for a Youth Incubator?

Mission

The feasibility process provides valuable background information in the formation of the

mission and goals of the Business Incubation effort. Being a mission-driven Incubator is a best practice in the field and is widely believed to be a key to achieving success.

The Mission Statement;

- Guides the incubation program’s activities and development
- Defines the program’s fundamental role in community
- Serves as an “elevator pitch” for the program

The mission needs to be realistic and attainable. Goals then are established for the specific purposes, which the program is founded on, and lay the foundation for an operational plan. Mission for the SBI is best solidified after a feasibility analysis is done and areas like market need are addressed. Business incubators use their mission, program goals and objectives to derive selection and recruitment strategies. This also drives services offered and graduation policies. Inclusion of the SRC, Prison or Youth populations will dramatically impact the mission.

Stakeholders and Governance

Stakeholders are interviewed during the feasibility process and drive the mission. Governance is a direct outcome of this process as it is crafted to best achieve success. The appropriate relationship is determined through consideration of which model best facilitates achievement of the short and long-term goals of the project. Governance Boards or Advisory Committees are then established to ensure legal and programmatic requirements are fulfilled and actively participate in marketing and public relations.

Facilities

Business Incubation has its roots in facility models, however over the past 15 years virtual programs have gained momentum. Traditional Incubator space is intended to be move-in ready, flexible space leased on a short-term basis at or below market rents. Specialty incubation programs can accommodate a variety of facility uses including wet and dry laboratories, food processing and industrial.

It is critical to maintain enough incubator clients to create a critical mass within an Incubator program - best practices dictates 25-30 minimum. There is a benefit to locating these companies in proximity to each other, however not required. Current models generally accommodate both a facility and virtual or affiliate component. Clients will

have different space requirements so space should be designed and utilized in response to demand. The “build it and they will come” model has a high failure rate, especially in rural areas.

Business Assistance Programming

SBDC co-location is best practice in the industry and jump starts the funnel feeder and programming for Incubator clients, however business incubation requires a more intensive relationship than SBDCs have with their clients. Trained business developers skilled in milestone-based guidance are a requirement as well as extensive networks, mentors and funding relationships. Regular incubator client meetings with informational speakers and brainstorming sessions and individual coaching and mentor meetings should be provided directly by Incubator management. It is critical to evaluate and supplement the services already available in the community. Management should connect clients to existing services through a process resulting in successful graduation.

Financial Model and Funding

Incubators should plan to be financially self-sustainable within three years. Start-up funding generally includes enough to support operations during this ramp up period. Keys to self-sustainability include; establish multiple revenue streams, control costs and obtain reliable sponsorship. The average annual incubation program revenue was \$540,041, while the median was \$292,000. Average incubation programs expenses were \$516,610, and the median was \$300,000.

Establishing the appropriate pricing strategy should be done by looking at comparable space in the community, costs, perceived value-added and what the client can bear. It is common to offer space and services at below market to start and increase rates each year until graduation when clients are paying market rates. This provides some relief in overhead expenses during the critical start-up phase and is an attractive perk for companies considering locating in the Incubator.

During the conceptual and planning phases of a Business Incubator, it is important to intentionally build the pipeline for future tenants. This can include special programming geared to anticipated target markets. It provides the opportunity to test what is perceived to be the opportunity and validate the target market and their needs for facility and support services. Starting with a virtual program is recommended consideration.

Feasibility studies determine appropriate pricing models as well as sources for both start-up and operational funding. Incubators should count on needing annual grants and subsidies. Sustainable subsidies for operations are generally locally sourced through government and the private sector. Start-up funding involving renovation or construction is best sourced through federal and state programs and generally requires local match. The Economic Development Administration of the US Department of Commerce is the #1 funding source for business incubators in the US. Other agencies such as USDA can also be accessed based on the mission and demographics of the region. State of Colorado sources include Community Development Block grant and Energy Impact funds through DOLA.

Feasibility studies generally cost between \$50-\$100k depending on the complexity and deliverables. Funding for a feasibility study is most likely from the state with local match.

1. Develop plan for workforce piece first

SRC is driving the success of grants for workforce and vocational training. The opportunities however are relevant for the greater region. Workforce and vocational training are splintered throughout many agencies, educational institutions and economic development programs. It is recommended that the SBI planning committee work with the partners - OJC, PCC, School districts, BOCES, Manufacturers and other key employers, government and economic development to convene and develop a comprehensive plan for workforce and vocational training for the region. A comprehensive plan can establish priorities, timelines, programs and implementation. DOLA and EDA have planning grants and resources that can assist in this effort.

2. Guide renovation and operational budgets from demonstrated needs

3. Build pipeline and virtual programming

OUTCOMES

Business Incubators are effective tools for economic development if done correctly and can be expected to produce results. The most common results include company formation, job creation, regional GDP growth, capital raised and industry sector development.

TIMELINE

Work on the feasibility study should be addressed before decisions are made on the renovation of building 508 since facility requirements are determined through the market need and mission of the project. A Workforce and Vocational training convening and subsequent plan would immediately benefit the many disjointed efforts throughout the region and make them all stronger prospects for effective implementation and funding.

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN K-12 EDUCATION

After interviews with School District Superintendents, teachers, County Commissioners and community leaders several themes were found surrounding education. Many people mentioned the challenges brought on by the changes to concurrent enrollment requirements made by the Department of Education in 2015. Others shared the struggles programs have when operating grant to grant. Recruiting and retaining teachers especially in STEM fields is an ongoing challenge and one that is receiving dedicated attention by Colorado Rural Education Collaborative and Generation Schools Network.

Concerns around social capital and upward mobility constraints were also expressed. Brain drain, quality STEM education and teachers, and students' ability to be competitive and workforce ready at graduation were all topics of discussion as well. Several interviewees mentioned the good work Jennifer Nesselhuf has done as the SFTBOCES Pathway to Prosperity Coordinator for the past 7 years.

Recommendations focus on innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship programs within the K-12th grade system. Below you'll find an overview of existing resources and programming followed by our recommendations to either amplify these programs and/or create new ones. This is all completed with the southeast region of Colorado's youth and future economy in mind.

EXISTING STAKEHOLDERS

SANTE FE TRAIL BOCES - SFTBOCES covers six districts Cheraw, East Otero, Las Animas, Rocky Ford, Swink and Wiley. BOCES exist to provide educational services to school districts that find it advantageous and cost-effective to cooperate with other districts.

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY - SFTBOCES and its 6 member districts have come together to leverage resources and form partnerships to combat challenges by designing a

college/career readiness pathway, called “Pathway to Prosperity,” for their students grades 5-12. Programs include:

- Entrepreneurship Fairs & Camps
- Manufacturing Tours
- Career Cabs
- Internships
- Work Based Learning Projects called Real World Problem Scenario

COLORADO RURAL COLLABORATIVE - The Colorado Rural Education Collaborative is made up of school districts and their supporting boards of cooperative education services (BOCES).

GENERATION SCHOOLS NETWORK - Generation Schools Network co-creates healthy school ecosystems by partnering with educators, students, families and communities to elevate the education experience. Key areas of focus are graduation completion gap; poverty gap in math and reading; opportunity gap; workforce readiness and college attainment gap.

OGALLALA COMMONS - Ogallala Commons, Inc., provides education and leadership to build vibrant communities in the Great Plains region. Simply put, Ogallala Commons helps communities “to do together what no one community can do alone.”

BACKGROUND

According to The Bell Policy Center’s Guide to Economic Mobility southeastern Colorado’s population is shrinking, many the communities are categorized as distressed and upward economic mobility is severely low. Baca, Bent, Crowley, Las Animas, Otero and Prowers counties each have net migration losses ranging from 3 to 10 percent.

Bell Policy Center’s Cate Blackford shared that economic mobility challenges are systemic and multi-faceted. Shrinking public investment, technological advancement impacting job markets, demographic patterns and wage stagnation have presented many challenges for folks in the area.

Several programs currently exist in Bent, Crowley and Otero counties focused on leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship within the K-12 school system. Some are



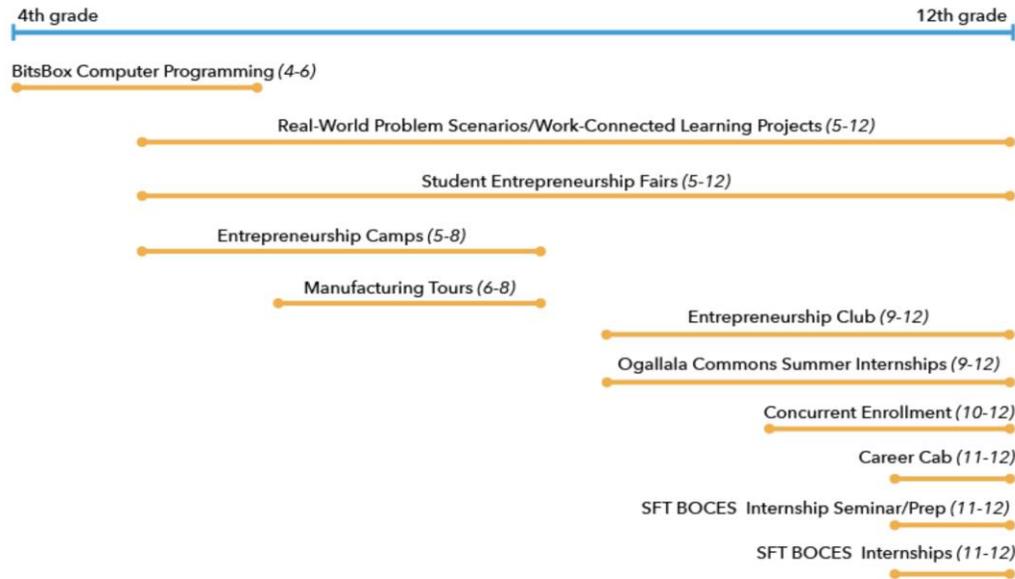
available across districts and some are district specific.

Pathways to Prosperity - In 2019, three districts placed students in an internship and all six engaged in Real-World Problem Scenarios. The Real-World Problem Scenarios had 350 students participate with the help of 14 teachers.

Other 2019 program outcomes include:

- 11 internships through Santé Fe Trail BOCES
- 81 Community Members Engaged
- 18 manufacturing tours
 - 854 students participated
- 300 students attended an entrepreneurship fair
 - Over 150 business ideas were presented
 - Over \$12,000 awarded in prize money to students

The following is the complete list of programming managed through Pathways to Prosperity. It should be noted that most of these efforts are managed by 1 full time employee. This employee's salary is paid for through grant funding that is not long-term.



Tiger Trades Academy - Tiger Trades Academy is an alternative school in the La Junta School District. Emphasis is placed on core academics, classes including English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Economics. TTA also offers the W.O.R.K (Workforce Opportunity Resource Kids) program focused on vocational skills such as customer service, plumbing, electrical, grounds keeping, custodial/maintenance, bookkeeping, and office skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal: Equip students with the skills and knowledge to thrive in nontraditional careers. This can be done through integrating unique hands on innovation learning, such as; access to makerspaces, 3D printing, and apprenticeships with problem-solving entrepreneurship experiential experience. We recommend establishing additional regional innovation and entrepreneurship staff and infrastructure improvements.

Recommendation: Build out innovation and entrepreneurship focus within K-12

Funding for 2 dedicated regional people to work with students and companies: A program budget of \$150,000 would allow for 2 full time employees, program materials, transportation, and a digital badging/certification program for innovation projects.

The innovation coordinator (IC) would be responsible for managing the mobile learning lab and makerspace buildouts in each district. As well as, training teachers and administrators on the capabilities and best practices for both the mobile lab and makerspaces. The IC would also operate the mobile learning lab across the 3 counties and lead sessions with students. Effort for project completion to be credited towards high school graduation through either digital badging or certificates would also fall within this role.

The entrepreneurship coordinator (EC) would be responsible for organizing entrepreneurship fairs and coordination of partnerships with local businesses for tours and internship opportunities. The EC would also serve as a liaison to a possible youth incubator at Ft Lyon SECO SBI (or other location). The EC would support the IC in the day-to-day operations of the mobile learning lab.

Both roles would work in partnership with existing complementary roles within SFTBOCES Pathways to Prosperity program to build out the capacity for the region's innovation and entrepreneurship efforts.

Potential funding sources include the Gates Family Foundation, RISE Grant and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. All have focus areas within education and specific for rural areas. The Gates Family Foundation has already supported a similar effort in southwestern Colorado through their successful application process for the RISE Grant. They have expressed interest in doing similar work to assist the southeast region of Colorado.

Infrastructure

Makerspace creation will call for approximately \$10,000 per district of funding to cover infrastructure improvements to existing building or classroom and materials needed to get the makerspace up and running. Each district should have their own makerspace. Necessary components of a makerspace include; accessibility for all students; flexible working area with moveable and modular furniture; easy access to electrical power

outlets to plug in equipment; rubbish and recycling bins; basic tools, 3D printer, computers, and adequate storage. A mobile learning lab built by the community and local businesses could be completed for \$50,000-\$75,000. This one lab would rotate time between schools and across districts.

Consider an alternative structure for a nonprofit to provide regional solutions.

The Gates Family Foundation partnered with Trendlines to work with Fort Lewis College, Pueblo Community College Southwest and five regional school districts to apply for RISE Grant funds with a newly formed nonprofit to act as the fiscal agent for the grant dollars. The Gates Family Foundation has expressed interest in working with organizations in the southeast to facilitate regional solutions. Programs should drive structure and sustainability is a huge issue.

Sustained funding for Recruitment and Retention Effort for Rural Teachers

Santa Fe Trail BOCES and its six districts, Otero Junior College (OJC), Generation Schools Network (GSN), and Battelle for Kids (BFK) partnered together as an effort of the Colorado Rural Education Collaborative (CREC) in 2015 to address the critical need for teacher credentialing to support concurrent enrollment in southeastern Colorado and to retain teachers in the profession. The program almost doubled concurrent enrollment and contributed significantly to teacher retention however, funding was one-time for 2-year program. Sustainable funding is critical to maintain and grow the outcomes demonstrated.

Sustained funding for SFTBOCES Pathways to Prosperity programs and program coordinator.

OUTCOMES

Outside the classroom learning opportunities.

Increase the number of apprenticeships available for students. Make those apprenticeships count towards graduation requirements. Integrate technology and 3D printing into the curriculum, even if projects must sometimes be completed outside of class.



Movement out of the distressed community range.

Decrease in poverty levels across all 3 counties, increase in median household income and decrease in the number of adults not working.

Decrease Brain Drain.

An increase in post-graduation job opportunities, career readiness and awareness of local opportunities for youth to prevent them from leaving the area to look for career opportunities.

Mindset Shift.

Making changes to these institutional constructs will be challenging. With more opportunities, better articulation of outcomes, and expanded community and industry involvement children in southeast Colorado will be better set up for a life of success. Sustained impact can come from nontraditional approaches. Administrators at the district level and teachers both need to be bought in for this to work.

CANNABIS INNOVATION CENTER & TESTING LABORATORY

Since the legalization of recreational use marijuana in Colorado in 2014, the marijuana industry has exploded across the state. Over a billion dollars in state tax revenue has been generated from the industry in just the first 5 years of legalization. The marijuana industry is expected to have a 14% growth in the next 6 years.

Crowley County legalized recreational grow and manufacturing with unlimited licenses, and currently has 32 recreational marijuana cultivators while Otero and Bent County have restricted activity with recreational licenses in specific towns. Rocky Ford, Ordway, and most recently Las Animas have all opened the doors to recreational retail marijuana. The legalization in these areas was no easy task, but people have an overwhelming support for marijuana tax revenues. Ordway in Crowley County with a population of 1,000 people is reported as having the third-highest poverty rate in the country.

Hemp is grown in Otero County with 35 cultivators, Bent 8 and Crowley 7. There is one hemp manufacturer in Bent County. The Hemp industry has suffered recently from overproduction of crops and inadequate processing capability.

As the cannabis industry grows so does the competition and therefore the potential for innovation technologies to increase the production potential in a profitable and

sustainable way. This industry requires innovations in mass market potential and improved yields which includes a variety of agriculture-based technologies that can apply to a multitude of industries.

Definitions

Industrial Hemp. A hemp product is a finished product containing hemp that is a cosmetic, food, food additive, or herb; for human use or consumption; contains any part of the hemp plant, including naturally occurring cannabinoids, compounds, concentrates, extracts, isolates, resins, or derivatives; and contains a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of no more than three-tenths of one percent.

Retail Marijuana means all parts of the plant of the genus cannabis whether growing or not, the seeds thereof, the resin extracted from any part of the plant, and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant, its seeds, or its resin, including marijuana concentrate that is cultivated, manufactured, distributed, or sold by a licensed Retail Marijuana Establishment. “Retail Marijuana” does not include industrial hemp, nor does it include fiber produced from stalks, oil, or cake made from the seeds of the plant, sterilized seed of the plant which is incapable of germination, or the weight of any other ingredient combined with marijuana to prepare topical or oral administrations, food, drink, or other product.

Retail Marijuana Cultivation Facility means an entity licensed to cultivate, prepare, and package Retail Marijuana and sell Retail Marijuana Retail Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers.

Retail Marijuana Products Manufacturing Facility means an entity licensed to purchase Retail Marijuana; manufacture, prepare, and package Retail Marijuana Product; and sell Retail Marijuana and Retail Marijuana Product to other Retail Marijuana Products Manufacturing Facilities and to Retail Marijuana Stores, but not to consumers.

Retail Marijuana Store means an entity licensed to purchase Retail Marijuana from a Retail Marijuana Cultivation Facility and to purchase Retail Marijuana Product from a Retail Marijuana Products Manufacturing Facility and to sell Retail Marijuana and Retail Marijuana Product to consumers.

Retail Marijuana Testing Facility means a public or private laboratory licensed and certified, or approved by the Division, to conduct research and analyze Retail Marijuana,



Retail Marijuana Products and Retail Marijuana Concentrate for contaminants and potency.

Accelerator-Endorsed Licensee means a retail marijuana cultivation facility licensee or retail marijuana products manufacturer licensee who has, pursuant to rule, been endorsed to host and offer technical and capital support to an accelerator licensee operating on its premises.

Accelerator Licensee means a person who has resided in a census tract designated by the office of economic development and international trade as an opportunity zone for five of the ten years prior to application and has not been the beneficial owner of a license issued pursuant to this article 10.

Accelerator Cultivator means a person qualified for an accelerator license, licensed to cultivate on the premises of a retail marijuana cultivation facility licensee and distribute retail marijuana to retail marijuana products manufacturers and retail marijuana stores.

Accelerator Manufacturer means a person qualified for an accelerator license, licensed to manufacture and distribute retail marijuana concentrates and retail marijuana products on the premises of an accelerator-endorsed manufacturing licensee.

Regulatory Bodies

Licensing

Marijuana Enforcement Division (MED) – The Marijuana Enforcement Division is a branch of the Department of Revenue and oversees all marijuana licensing in Colorado.

Hemp

Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) – Regulatory role limited to the cultivation of industrial hemp and does not regulate the sale or distribution.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) – Regulatory authority over-processing and processed hemp material and products intended for human consumption.

Market Research

Figure 30: Colorado Retail and Medical Marijuana Facilities in Colorado by Region

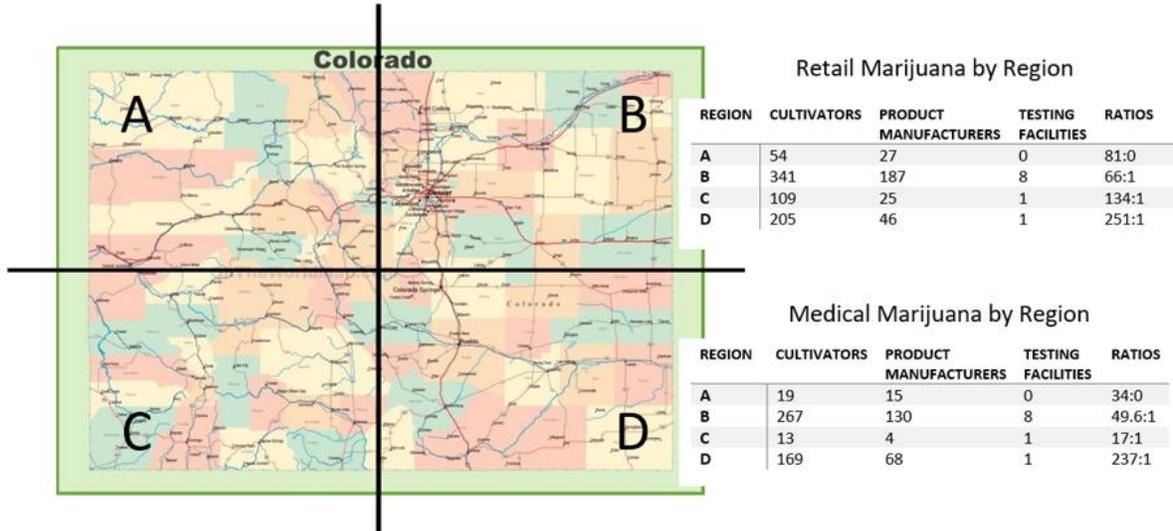


Figure 31: Southeastern Colorado’s MED Licenses by County

Retail Marijuana Cultivators and Product Manufacturers

Organized by County in the Southeastern Region of Colorado

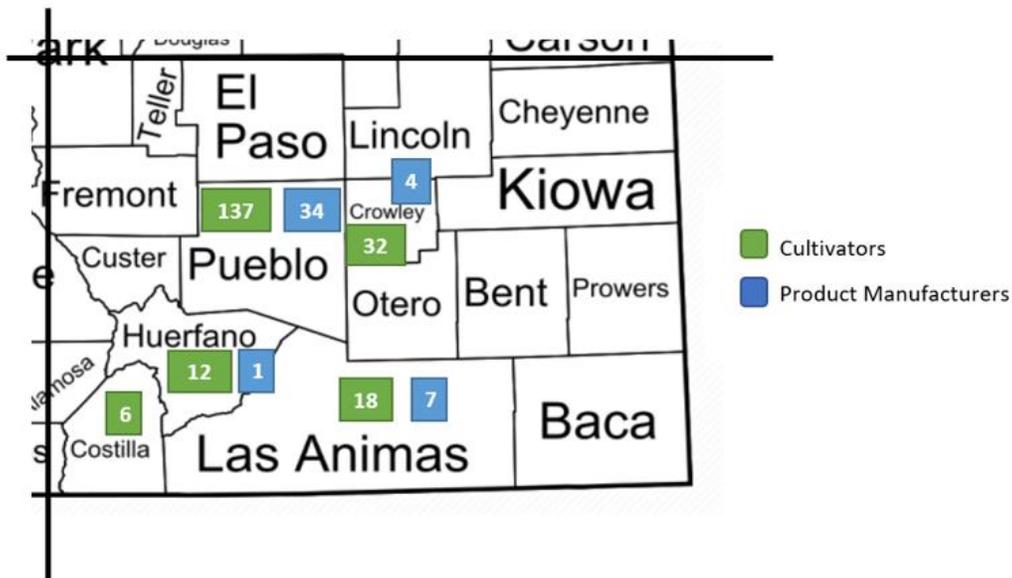
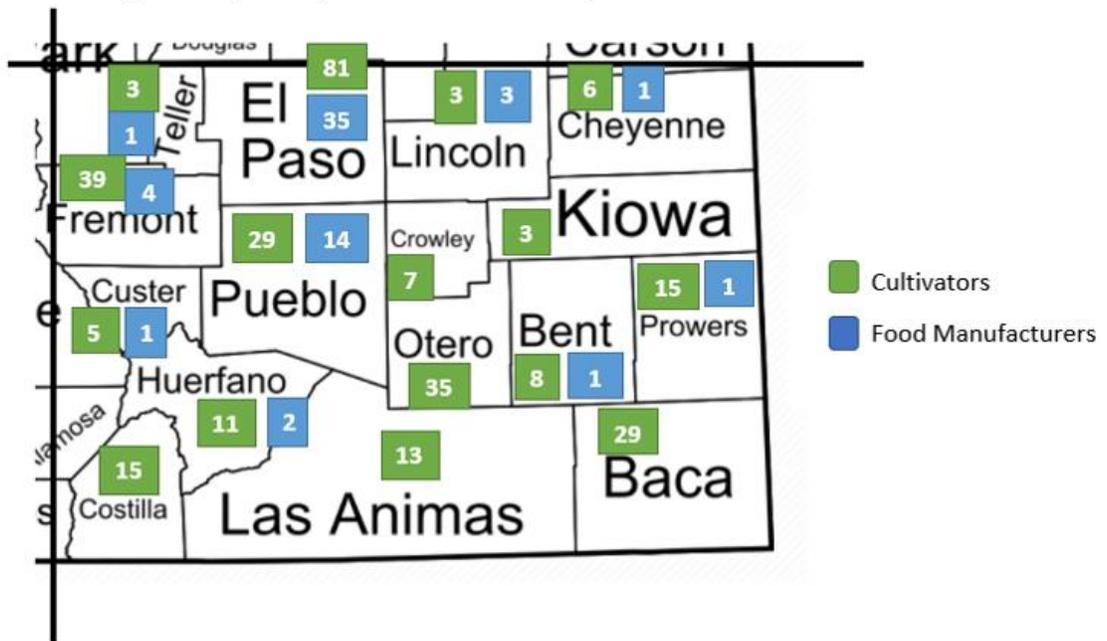


Figure 32: Industrial Hemp Production in Southeastern Colorado

Approved Hemp Cultivators and Hemp Food Manufacturers

Organized by County in the Southeastern Region of Colorado



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECRUIT TESTING LABORATORY

Currently there are only 11 retail marijuana testing facilities in Colorado servicing 711 retail marijuana cultivators and 286 retail marijuana product manufacturers. These facilities are mainly concentrated in the Denver region, but specifically looking at the Southeastern region of Colorado, there are 374 retail cultivations and 114 product manufacturers with only 1 testing facility located in Pueblo. Gobi Analytical Laboratories LLC started in Denver and has since opened a lab in Pueblo providing limiting testing. Their testing excludes pesticides, mycotoxins, and heavy metals which are all required for cultivators in the state of Colorado. The need for more regionally located testing facilities in Southeastern Colorado is apparent and can provide a variety of benefits for the industry including closer customer and lab interactions and lowered transportation costs.

Marijuana testing facilities are an important and necessary step in both the cultivation and manufacturing processes before the product is ready for sale. Testing facilities assure the product is safe for human consumption by testing for harmful microbes, residual solvents, and the presence of fertilizers. Testing facilities are also responsible for potency testing to provide customers with relevant product information.

Testing Requirements

Cultivators. Colorado requires both medical and retail marijuana to be tested for microbes including salmonella, e. coli, mold, and yeast.

Product Manufacturers. Marijuana infused product incorporates a solvent-based concentrate, must be tested for residual solvents including butanes, heptane, benzene, toluene, hexanes, xylenes, and other solvents not permitted under Rule R 605.

Infused products such as edibles also require homogeneity tests to ensure regulated doses of equal potency.

Cultivators and Product Manufacturers. Flower grown by cultivators and some manufactured products require heavy metals testing including arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury.

All marijuana products require potency testing which includes levels of THC, THCA, CBD, CBDA, and CBDN.

Industrial Hemp. There are currently no specific rules or statutes that exist in requiring hemp facilities to test for heavy metals, pesticides, residual solvents or microbials. However, it is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure their products contain 0.3% THC total (THCA + THC Delta 9) or less.

No required testing other than potency exists at this time, but Colorado hemp cannabinoid-based product manufacturers, extractors and/or processors are encouraged to test for heavy metals, residual solvents, pesticides, microbial and shelf stability.

Logistics

Startup costs are often higher for testing companies compared to other cannabis businesses; however operational costs are much lower making it easier to turn a profit. Testing facility equipment alone will cost approximately **\$700,000** depending on productivity. **Additional costs** include but are not limited to **buildings, licensing, or the**

infrastructure, materials, and wages for chemists and laboratory technicians needed to operate equipment.

Build Prospectus:

Consider standard public sector incentives for economic development - land, land development fee waivers, utility infrastructure, property tax abatement, enterprise zone, opportunity zone, etc. Build prospectus and float to potential partners - first tier are existing labs in the state. Work with OEDIT to maximize offering.

Outcomes:

Transportation costs are lower

Better customer - laboratory interaction

Faster turnaround

Supports healthy growth of industry

CANNABIS INNOVATION CENTER (CIC)

There are many obstacles for small businesses to succeed in the marijuana business. The high cost of starting marijuana businesses, maintaining expensive licensing, and complying with a heavily regulated market makes for a very difficult environment for small startup businesses to thrive.

Policy makers and agencies are demonstrating support for startup and existing cannabis businesses and recognition of the economic benefits and opportunities that this industry provides evidenced by legislation and funds allocated to OEDIT for support of businesses in the industry.

As the industry matures, use of technology and innovation are increasing. The Innovation Center can be a place for development, testing and training for the Cannabis industry.

BACKGROUND

Many people expect to make a fortune in this new industry, but reality shows many factors stand in the way of this misconceived dream. Cannabis businesses carry unmatched regulatory and tax burdens and they have no access to traditional banking services. Markets are volatile and regulations change frequently which makes for a very difficult environment for small startup businesses to thrive. The costs to start are

extremely high. For example, an indoor warehouse 7,700 sq. ft. for about 1,000 plants with estimated yield of 350 lbs. 4 harvests a year would cost approximately \$830k.

Colorado's accelerator licensing program, Senate bill 19-224 established a new "license" that allows co-location and support for startups. An amendment pairs low-income entrepreneurs with existing cannabis businesses and, under the new law, effective January 1, 2021, accelerator licenses will now be available to social equity applicants. The Social Equity Program provides reductions in application or license fees in hopes to make the industry more accessible to low-income applicants.

As the Cannabis Industry grows in Colorado, so does the need for cannabis innovation technologies. Examples of marijuana driven technologies include; DNA Sequencing, POS and applications, LED, Nanoencapsulation, CO2 Enrichment and innovations in electricity storage.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Business Development

Establish an SBDC like statewide service to provide technical assistance to people interested in starting or growing cultivation and manufacturing businesses in the Cannabis industry, including;

- Mentoring from industry experts
- Regulatory expertise
- Marketing, production, financial and business model consultation

Acceleration Services

Conduct periodic competitive Accelerator cohorts that provide intensive guidance and business development activities to focus attention on high potential, high growth technology opportunities.

Innovation Center

Construct a facility-based innovation center program to support development, testing and training for the Cannabis industry to include;

- Greenhouse operations for training
- Development and Testing laboratory for new products and innovations

- Shared manufacturing facilities

Examples of Similar Programs:

My Green Network is the first Shared Spaces facility in Southern California. They advertise as minimizing startup costs and “eliminating the burden of property management, licensing, sourcing, distribution, formulation, compliance, and more”. They are equipped with 5 commercial kitchens and 3 “hybrid stations” and market to all businesses from startups to enterprises.

Canopy Boulder began operation in 2014 and has invested in over 115 companies. They invest only in ancillary and hemp/CBD products and services and avoid anything THC related. Canopy Boulder accepts businesses in seed and growth stage, and offer entrepreneurs mentorship, capital, community, brand recognition, and rapid growth. Offers: 13-week, full-time, in person program located in Boulder, \$20,000 investment for a 6-9.5% common equity, and access to an extensive network of advisors, mentors, industry leaders, and investors.

OUTCOMES

New business creation

Growth businesses

Technology Innovation

Jobs creation

Contribution to regional and state GDP

Investment

TIMELINE

Start working with OEDIT now on proposal for CIC

Facility planning

MANUFACTURING CLUSTER SUPPORT

Southeast Colorado is home to a diverse manufacturing industry. There are over 23 manufacturers in the three counties, Otero, Bent and Crowley. They range from startups to locations for publicly traded companies. Manufacturing works well in the region with



low costs for land and labor and a business-friendly environment. State resources to support the industry include Manufacturers Edge, Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Association and Advanced Industries focus for OEDIT.

BACKGROUND

| Company | Physical City | Physical County | Employees | Year Established |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|
| A & S Construction Co. | La Junta | Otero | 14 | |
| Ark-Valley Memorial Co., Inc. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 4 | 1964 |
| Coffee Holding Co., Inc. | La Junta | Otero | 20 | 2004 |
| DeBourgh Manufacturing Co. | La Junta | Otero | 100 | 1909 |
| Durango Brewing Company | La Junta | Otero | 15 | 1990 |
| Falcon Industries, Inc. | La Junta | Otero | 5 | 1981 |
| GateHouse Media Colorado Holdings | La Junta | Otero | 30 | 1897 |
| Innovative Water Technologies, Inc. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 10 | 2007 |
| Jensen's Blue Ribbon Processing | Fowler | Otero | 10 | 1924 |
| La Junta Mill & Elevator Co. | La Junta | Otero | 10 | 1887 |
| La Junta Printing Co., Inc. | La Junta | Otero | 2 | 1973 |
| Lewis Bolt & Nut Co. | La Junta | Otero | 275 | 1927 |
| Manzanola Feeds | Manzanola | Otero | 7 | 1985 |
| Mountain & Prairie Candle Co. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 6 | 1992 |
| Muth Welding Service | Rocky Ford | Otero | 12 | 1971 |
| Oliver Mfg. Co. | La Junta | Otero | 40 | 1930 |
| Ordway New Era | Ordway | Crowley | 2 | 2002 |
| Rocky Ford Growers Co-Op Assoc. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 5 | 1930 |
| Rocky Ford Publishing Co., Inc. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 7 | 1954 |
| Rusler Implement Co. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 13 | 1960 |
| The Sign Shop Inc. | La Junta | Otero | 3 | 1983 |
| Valcrete, Inc. | Rocky Ford | Otero | 6 | 2010 |
| Wallace Oil Co., Inc. | La Junta | Otero | 25 | 1962 |



RECOMMENDATION: GROW MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Manufacturing support program for existing business.

Work with Manufacturers Edge to offer 50 question Assessment to identify gaps and fully understand opportunities. This is available at no cost to Colorado Manufacturers. Consider adding capacity to evaluate underutilized and identify opportunities.

Training Programs in ISO, Lean and other common topics.

Project examples:

- ISO certification Grand Junction - When Hamilton Sundstrand closed its operations in Grand Junction it left behind an economic shock along with highly trained unemployed talent. The Economic Partners worked with Manufacturers Edge and obtained funding from the City of Grand Junction and OEDIT to certify 4 companies in ISO which provided those companies to bid on contracts and work with partners they would not have previously had access to.
- The Warehouse - Ft. Collins <https://www.warehouseinnovation.com/>

Individualized programs for manufacturers on strategy, markets, process, finance and pivot opportunities.

Explore need for small manufacturing spaces to support emerging companies

Costs: \$25k to add on to the assessment project. Training \$2500/day. Individual program costs are shared with companies and are case-by-case. A facility would be a longer-term project that warrants further investigation.

Funding

Colorado First (Skill Advance grant), Small Manufacturer Advantage grant and the Advanced Industries Infrastructure grant – which could be utilized for a comprehensive project incorporating Innovation & Entrepreneurship in K-12 Education, workforce development and the Cannabis Innovation Center.

Outcomes: Jobs, Sales.

CONCLUSION

Economic Diversification has long been a goal for the region. The region has made progress through attracting and growing its manufacturing sector, welcoming the



cannabis industry, operating private prisons, residential communities and revitalizing downtowns, however, it remains the most economically challenged area of the state.

The recommendations contained in the Economic Diversification Strategies section of this report encourage the region to act strategically to exploit opportunities and focus on building a future for the youth. Do less but do it better by prioritizing larger projects such as infrastructure, workforce development and the Cannabis Innovation Center.

Each of the recommendations can lead to new jobs. The Business Incubator, Testing Laboratory and Cannabis Innovation Center are the best opportunities for job growth. The amount of job growth resulting from these recommendations would be best estimated through feasibility studies and business plans. For example, attraction of a cannabis testing laboratory may yield 4-7 jobs within 1-2 years, a fully operational business incubator aims to support growth companies which can create 3-5 jobs in 5 years. However, estimating number of companies, type and number of jobs would require a feasibility study. These economic development efforts are long term strategies and employment gains can be derived through long term commitments to well-planned regional efforts.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) hosted two public hearings to provide residents of Bent and Crowley Counties and the surrounding communities the opportunity for direct public testimony and input to their County Commissioners and the Colorado Division of Local Government on the impacts of the private/public prisons in our communities. The Crowley County public hearing was held on November 30, 2020 and the Bent County hearing was held on December 1, 2020. Due to public health concerns, both hearings were conducted remotely, using Zoom video meeting technology. Participants were also allowed the opportunity to call in to the hearings.

The Crowley County hearing saw 80 attendees, with 30 citizens offering public testimony, all but one in support of the private prisons. Most testimony described the high quality of services and operations provided to the state by the Crowley County Correctional Facility as well as the importance of the facility to the local economy.

The Bent County hearing saw 93 attendees, with 33 citizens offering public testimony. Three persons expressed negative views of private prisons generally. The remaining testimony all supported the private prisons, again emphasizing the value to the state provided by these institutions and their critical role in the local economy.

Transcripts of the actual testimony provided in these hearings is attached in Appendix D.



10. ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENTS

HB 20-1019, the statute directing the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to conduct this prison utilization study, further directed the department to “convene an advisory committee that contains three representatives of local governments, of which at least two must be county commissioners, selected by the executive director, from each county that has a private prison, to consult with the entity during the study.”

On April 23, 2020, DOLA Executive Director Rick Garcia appointed Bent County Commissioner Kim MacDonnell, Crowley County Commissioner Blaine Arbuthnot, and La Junta City Manager Rick Klein to serve as the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee met biweekly with the study consultants and DOLA staff members throughout the study period. Committee meetings were open to the public. Due to the COVID 19 virus pandemic all meetings were conducted virtually via Google Meet.

Advisory Committee members were a key link between the study authors and community members in Bent, Crowley, and Otero counties. They obtained statistical information, set up meetings with business and community leaders, and facilitated virtual public hearings for DOLA and the study consultants. Equally important, they kept local community members informed throughout the process.

Advisory Committee members submitted the following comments for this report:

Kim MacDonnell, Bent County Commissioner, Member, HB20-1019 Advisory Committee

I would like to thank you for the appointment to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Prison Utilization Study and for providing the opportunity for Public Hearing. The Hearings in both Bent and Crowley Counties had good participation, even though they were required to be conducted virtually due to COVID restrictions. In Bent County, nearly 100 citizens appeared in a Zoom format with many more viewing on YouTube. Numerous others have also submitted written comments which are incorporated into the Study.



As this Legislature considers actions based on the findings of this Study, we would urge you to note that the removal of the Bent County Correctional Facility would be devastating to our community and on all Southeastern Colorado. This is particularly true now when all Colorado's communities are reeling from the impacts of COVID-19. I am hopeful that the legislative process will be thoughtful and considerate of the efforts put forth by prior administrations and Bent County in this public-private partnership.

The partnership between the state, our counties, and the private sector began almost 30 years ago, when Colorado experienced budget challenges and lacked funds to manage a growing prison population. These challenges resulted in hundreds of Colorado offenders being sent out of state, disrupting their families further. The State created and fostered opportunities to provide in-State correctional beds, benefiting the State, offenders, and local communities.

On August 14, 1991, the Bent County Commissioners adopted Resolution 5-91 that authorized the execution, delivery, and issuance of \$15,000,000 in financing for the construction of the Bent County Correctional Facility. This action was taken after many months of negotiation and conversation with Governor Romer's administration, Frank Gunter, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Corrections and the Colorado Joint Budget Committee. The opening of the facility in 1993 addressed the then current backlog of CDOC inmates in county jails as well as return to Colorado the Colorado inmates housed in out-of-state facilities. In addition to the \$15,000,000 investment, Bent County provided approximately 60 acres of land for the project.

Later, Bent County partnered with a private company that offered operational expertise. This public-private partnership continues to provide staff, prison facilities, and inmate training programs to the State of Colorado freeing up hundreds of millions of dollars for Pre-K-12, Higher Education, Human Services programs and other priorities. For more than 27 years, we have worked with both Democratic and Republican governors and their respective DOC executive directors to provide excellent services. In 1997 to meet the growth and expansion of the Bent County Correctional Facility, the City of Las Animas constructed a new \$3,700,000 water treatment plant. The project increased the capacity of the system and drastically increased the water quality output of the plant.

There are some who suggest that rural communities should not have relied on prisons for economic development. In this case, it was the County that stepped up to meet the



State's need. Our local leaders have worked tirelessly over the years to retain and support industry in our County. We constantly seek ways to diversify our economy and to provide opportunities for our young people to thrive without having to leave the community and their families behind. The reality of rural economic development includes embracing industries that may not be welcomed in other localities.

Finally, HB20-1019 provides that the Study must include, "An analysis of the economic and other impacts that potential prison closure would have on local governments and the wider community and recommendations on strategies to diversify the local economy." The Study makes it clear that the economic and societal impacts for Southeast Colorado will be devastating. Our small, rural county lacks the resources to recover from such a loss. The consultants acknowledge that the recommendations, while offering a means to strengthen the local economy, do not offer any hope that the loss of the Bent County Correctional Facility could be made up or our community made whole. A closure of the facility would have immediate, negative impacts and the economic diversification strategies themselves would require resources that will be unavailable to the County with reduced a tax base.

Bent County Commissioners request that as you make decisions up in Denver, you recognize those will have real, lasting impacts on the families that live and work in Southeastern Colorado.

Blaine Arbuthnot, Crowley County Commissioner, Member, HB20-1019 Advisory Committee

I would like to thank the Colorado Department of Local Affairs for the appointment to serve on the Advisory Council for this study. From the first meeting Mark Radtke and Traci Stoffel were outstanding guiding the committee through the process and accommodated the council's suggestions.

The consultants, Gabe Preston with RPI, and Karl Becker with CGL Companies were professional and thorough in collecting the data for their input to the study, as directed by HB 20-1019. They were open to advice, and direction presented to them.

The public in person hearings were not held due to the COVID-19 conditions in both Crowley and Bent Counties. The only option available was to have a virtual meeting using

Zoom and You tube as the platforms. While not ideal, both counties had 70-100 participates join the zoom platform and a larger amount has viewed the meetings through you tube. This format excluded a large segment of people in the counties due to the lack of internet or knowledge of the technologies required to participate. With the help of Gabe Preston and Rick Ritter, the Crowley-Otero Health Director, the meetings went fairly smooth. Everyone that requested to speak was given three minutes to provide their comments.

Local comments were constant about the fear and devastation that closing or selling, to the state, either prison would have on the counties. With the potential loss of up to fifty percent of the counties total property tax, includes school district, the concern of the local governments ability to provide the basic services were voiced. Leaders of the local school districts concerns centered on the loss of property tax and student loss due to people moving out of the area in search of jobs. These school districts already struggle with budget shortages. With the school district new 27 mill levy leveling requirement, the funds paid by the private prisons are critical for their survival. The business leaders concerns reflected the same views as the county and school districts. The loss of direct revenue and the loss of population could cause businesses to close, along with hinder the ability of the counties to attract new industry. The utility provider's revenues range up to thirty-three percent of annual income. The loss of the prisons would require increases to the remaining customers in their service areas. Any action by the state to either buy or close these prisons in Crowley or Bent County would create a downward spiral, leading to the destruction of vital services provided within the counties.

Colorado's prison bed needs remain elusive. With the need to distance offenders due to COVID-19, changes in sentencing laws, state population growth and post COVID-19 behavior are all factors that will determine the bed needs currently and in the future. Another factor affecting the prediction is the growing number of offenders, currently 824, waiting in city and county jails to be transferred to Department of Corrections. Predictions of a slight decrease until 2022 and then a steady increase going forward would be opportunistic. History shows that personal behavior always disappoints the forecasters.

In conclusion, no single industry closure in the Metro Counties would have the dramatic result that closure of either prison would have in Crowley and Bent Counties. The ability

of Crowley and Bent Counties to attract an industry that would replace the prisons does not exist. Limitations of the infrastructures such as no major highways, lack of power in the grid, limited available workforce, and housing are deterrents that large businesses require to invest in areas.

Rick Klein, La Junta City Manager, Member, HB20-1019 Advisory Committee

Thank you for appointing me to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Colorado State Prison Utilization Study as required by HB20-1019. Thank you for providing the \$250,000 to complete this vital study to obtain this information during these difficult financial and COVID times. I believe the study was executed properly by the consultants, Gabe Preston with RPI, along with Karl Becker with CGL. As well as Mark Radtke and Traci Stoffel from the DOLA did a great job making sure the appropriate findings were performed correctly for the State to rely on.

I learned a lot about the prisons from this study and together with my 39 years of local knowledge from my jobs with Otero County during the 80's and City of La Junta since the 90's. This is what I saw.

Back in the late 80's when the private prisons were built out on the eastern plains; the legislature did it to lower the costs of housing prisoners, for economic development and partnerships. It was right, it worked, the study showed me that private prisons are cost effective and are great partners with the communities that they are in. The integration of these two facilities in Bent and Crowley Counties has helped them as well as Otero & Pueblo Counties totaling 80% of their employees in the four Counties. The people who work there go back into their respective communities and volunteer for their school boards and fire departments as well as other organizations. It appears that programming is problematic throughout the system due to availability in certain prisons due to limitations in the private contractor's contracts.

I agree that the closure of the two prisons in Bent and Crowley would have a devastating impact on the property tax base for the two counties and associated services that the Counties provide to their residents. This would also have a ripple effect throughout Southeast Colorado including Pueblo and Otero Counties as well.



Economic Development is something that the Counties in the Southeastern Colorado should continue to pursue to attempt to diversify their counties but limiting infrastructure factors such as water and power must be considered as the state evaluates their decisions. The “town halls” that were mandated under the bill were conducted virtually - potentially limiting the ability of residents to attend which I would believe show more support of these facilities.

In light of the uncertainty presently with the backlog of prisoners in County facilities, the courts backlog of cases not being able to be processed due to COVID, I agree that there should not be a reduction in prison beds for a minimum of 5 years to see what happens.

Thank you helping our great State of Colorado,



APPENDIX A: DATA SOURCES

Colorado Department of Corrections, Annual Report Concerning the Status of Private Contract Prisons, 2020.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Correctional Officer Staffing Levels Annual Report, 2020.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Cost per Offender by Facility, FY 2019-20.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Facility Management Services, Construction Project Prioritization, October 2020.

Colorado Department of Corrections, FY 2019 Statistical Report.

Colorado Department of Corrections, HB 14-1355 Annual Report: Department Reentry Initiatives, FY 2019.

Colorado Department of Corrections, July 2019 Facility Information.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Long Range Financial Plan, FY 2019.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Monthly Population and Capacity Reports, 2009 – 2020.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Offenders with Mental Illness in Centennial Correctional Facility Residential Treatment Program.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Overview of Educational and Career and Technical Education Report, Fiscal Year 2019.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Performance Plan, FY 2020-2021.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Program Participation by Facility, July 31, 2020.

Colorado Department of Corrections, Summary of Facilities Costs Annual and Monthly FY2020-21

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Summer 2020 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections, June 2020.

Colorado Legislative Council Staff, Adult Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections.



Colorado Office of State Budget and Planning, 2013 Colorado Prison Utilization Study.



APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS

Kirk Banghart, Chief Facilitator, Colorado Rural Education Collaborative Generation Schools Network

Danelle Berg, Coordinator, Otero County Economic Development

Siobhan Burtlow, Warden, Fremont Correctional Facility

Maureen Cain, Director of Legislative Policy and External Communications, Colorado State Public Defender

Eddie Caley, Warden, Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility

Wendy Loloff Cooper, CEO, Generation Schools Network

Karl Dakin, CEO Dakin Capital

Scott Dauffenbach, Manager PPMU, Colorado Department of Corrections

Christie Donner, Executive Director, Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Kim English, Research Director, Office of Research and Statistics, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

Andrea Evans, Regional Manager, CoreCivic

Frances Falk, Senior Area Manager - Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota, GEO Reentry Services

Lance Gatlin, Operations Manager, Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility

Sammie George, Executive Director, Bent County Development Foundation

Elsie Goines, Superintendent, Las Animas School District

Barry Goodrich, Warden, Crowley County correctional Facility

Aaron Greco, Legislative Liaison, Colorado Department of Corrections

Jessica Green, Operations Associate, Generation Schools Network

Sterling Harris, Chief Deputy director, COVA

Patsy Hartley, Warden San Carlos Correctional Facility, Trinidad Correctional Facility

Dean Hiatt, Developer



Kristen Hilkey, Chair, Colorado State Parole Board

Leslie Hylton, Director of Government Affairs, OEDIT

Terry Jacques, Warden, Limon Correctional Facility

Chuck Jones, Capital Quest

Kelly Kissell, Manager, Office for Victims Programs, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

Tom Kirk, Teacher, Tiger Trades Academy

Alison Lauge, Senior Director of Dev. & Partnerships, Generation Schools Network

Jason Lengerich, Warden, Buena vista Correctional Complex

Mickie Lewis, Regional Director, Small Business Development Center, La Junta

Dave Lisac, Associate Warden, Colorado State Penitentiary

William Little, Warden, Colorado State Penitentiary

Jeff Long, Warden, Sterling Correctional Facility

Ryan Long, Warden Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center, Denver Women's Correctional Facility, Colorado Correctional Center

Bobby Mayes, Administrative Services Manager, Offender Services, Colorado Department of Corrections

Kristy Meyer-Vincke, Budget Manager, Colorado Department of Corrections

Lance Miklich, Warden, Canon Minimum Center

Tom Monaco, Rural Opportunity Representative, Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade

Jennifer Nesselhuf, Project Coordinator, Santa Fe Trail BOCES

Cynthia Nieb, Director, Economic Development & Urban Renewal, City of La Junta

Cindy Nowak, Regional Director, Manufacturers Edge

Richard Persons, Warden, Youthful Offender System, La Vista Correctional Facility

Sean Pruitt, Warden, Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility



Tom Raines, Executive Director, Colorado District Attorney's Council

Jerry Roark, Warden, Bent County Correctional Facility

Katie Ruske, Manager, Office of Community Corrections, Division of Criminal Justice,
Department of Public Safety

Terry Scanlon, Legislative Liaison, Colorado Judicial Branch

Mary Seawell, Senior Vice President of Education, Gates Family Foundation

Kermit Synder, Superintendent, Rocky Ford School District

Glen Tapia, Director, Division of Probation Services, Colorado Judicial Branch

Joe Thome, Director, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety

Greg Thompson, Security and Compliance Manager, Colorado Governor's Office of
Information Technology

Travis Traini, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Corrections

Tom Werlich, Warden, Rifle Correctional Center, Delta Correctional Center

Nancy Westfall, Superintendent, Manzanola School District

Cassy Westmoreland, OHI Program Manager, Office of Homeless Initiatives (OHI), DOLA

Debra Wilcox, Owner, The 3D Printing Store

Matthew Winden, Warden, Centennial Correctional Facility

John Wittwer, OC Regional Coordinator, Ogallala Commons



APPENDIX C: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS CAPITAL PROJECTS, FY 12/13 – FY 20/21

| Project Type | FY | Facility | Project | Funding | Project Completion |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Capital Construction | FY 13 14 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF Wastewater Pre-Treatment Plant | \$1,448,260 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 13 15 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF Roof Replacement Phase 1 of 2 | \$1,906,910 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 13 16 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF Critical Electrical System Replacement - Phase 1 of 3 | \$1,277,931 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 13 17 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF & FCF Perimeter Security Improvements Phase 3 of 4 | \$922,152 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 14 15 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF Upgrade Electric Systems Phase 2 of 3 | \$803,704 | June 2017 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 14 16 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF & FCF Perimeter Security Improvements - Phase 4 of 4 | \$750,388 | June 2017 |
| Capital Renewal | FY 18 19 | Arkansas Valley | AVCF Replace Fire Alarm | \$2,543,505 | June 2021 |
| | | | subtotal | \$9,652,850 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 12 13 | Buena Vista | BVCC Perimeter Security Repair & Replacement Phase 1 of 2 | \$930,831 | June 2015 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 13 14 | Buena Vista | BVCC Perimeter Security Repair & Replacement Phase 2 of 2 | \$864,325 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 17 18 | Buena Vista | BVCC Critical Security Improvements to Segregation Units | \$689,782 | June 2020 |
| | | | subtotal | \$2,484,938 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 16 17 | Centennial | CCF-N Improve Fire Suppression System | \$782,647 | June 2019 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 17 18 | Centennial | CCF-N Living Unit Roof Replacement | \$1,210,188 | June 2020 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 20 21 | Centennial | CCF-N Fire Suppression System - Phase 2 or 2 | \$1,363,635 | June 2023 |
| | | | subtotal | \$3,356,470 | |
| Capital Construction | FY 15 16 | CSP | CSP Close Custody Outdoor Recreation Yards | \$4,780,979 | June 2018 |



State Prison Utilization Study
January 2021

| Project Type | FY | Facility | Project | Funding | Project Completion |
|------------------------|----------|----------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 15 17 | CSP | CSP Replace Fire Alarm System | \$1,341,403 | June 2018 |
| | | | subtotal | \$6,122,382 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 12 13 | CTCF | CTCF Critical Improvements to Cellhouse 1 - Phase 2 of 2 | \$429,855 | June 2015 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 12 14 | CTCF | CTCF Generator Replacement | \$1,441,992 | June 2015 |
| Capital Construction | FY 13 14 | CTCF | CTCF Wastewater Pre-Treatment Plant & Manholes | \$1,648,885 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 14 15 | CTCF | CTCF Boiler De-aeration Surge Tank Replacement | \$262,275 | June 2017 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 18 19 | CTCF | CTCF Critical Kitchen Floor Repair | \$1,288,651 | June 2021 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | CTCF | CTCF Replace Infirmary Roof | \$1,038,141 | June 2022 |
| | | | subtotal | \$6,109,799 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 18 19 | DRDC | DRDC Primary Electric, Generator ATS & Docking Station Replacement | \$1,526,998 | June 2021 |
| | | | subtotal | \$1,526,998 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 16 17 | Denver Women's | DRDC & DWCF Improve Perimeter Security | \$1,870,550 | June 2019 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Denver Women's | DRDC & DWCF Perimeter Security Improvements - Phase 2 | \$1,205,969 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Denver Women's | DWCF Electronic Door Security System Replacement | \$1,998,638 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 20 21 | Denver Women's | DWCF Fire Smoke Damper Repair & Replacement | \$1,415,825 | June 2023 |
| | | | subtotal | \$6,490,982 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 12 13 | Fremont | FCF Door Controls Replacement | \$527,905 | June 2015 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Fremont | FCF Accessibility Improvements - Phase 1 of 5 | \$1,978,510 | June 2022 |



State Prison Utilization Study
January 2021

| Project Type | FY | Facility | Project | Funding | Project Completion |
|------------------------|----------|------------|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Controlled Maintenance | SB17-267 | Fremont | FCF Boiler and Combustion Controls | \$862,045 | September 2021 |
| Controlled Maintenance | SB17-267 | Fremont | Freezer Cooler Equipment Repair and Replacement | \$1,261,561 | September 2021 |
| | | | subtotal | \$4,630,021 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 14 15 | La Vista | LVCF Chiller Replacement | \$757,283 | June 2017 |
| | | | subtotal | \$757,283 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 16 17 | Limon | LCF Fire Alarm System & Improve Fire Suppression | \$798,180 | June 2019 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 16 17 | Limon | LCF Cell Modification | \$1,547,348 | June 2019 |
| Capital Renewal | FY 17 18 | Limon | LCF Hot Water & Chilled Water Loop Replacement | \$4,488,518 | June 2020 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Limon | LCF Fire Suppression & Alarm System Replacement - Phase 2 | \$1,092,787 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | SB17-267 | Limon | LCF Roof Replacements - Phases 1 thru 3 | \$4,849,133 | September 2021 |
| | | | subtotal | \$12,775,966 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 13 14 | San Carlos | SCCF Upgrade Electrical Security Systems | \$725,745 | June 2016 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 17 18 | San Carlos | SCCF Chiller Replacement - Phase 1 of 2 | \$785,718 | June 2020 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | San Carlos | SCCF Replace Fire Alarm System | \$1,180,268 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | SB17-267 | San Carlos | SCCF Chiller Replacement - Phase 2 of 2 | \$670,932 | September 2021 |
| | | | subtotal | \$3,362,663 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 14 15 | Sterling | SCF Roof Replacement Phase 1 of 2 | \$984,386 | June 2017 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 18 19 | Sterling | SCF Fire Alarm Repair & Replacement - Phase 1 of 2 | \$718,887 | June 2021 |



State Prison Utilization Study
January 2021

| Project Type | FY | Facility | Project | Funding | Project Completion |
|------------------------|----------|----------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Sterling | SCF Replace Fire Alarm System Phase 2 of 2 | \$998,336 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 19 20 | Sterling | SCF Deaeration Tank | \$1,457,417 | June 2022 |
| Controlled Maintenance | SB17-267 | Sterling | SCF Critical Roof Replacement - Phase 2 of 2 | \$785,718 | September 2021 |
| | | | <i>subtotal</i> | \$4,944,744 | |
| Controlled Maintenance | FY 17 18 | Trinidad | TCF New Chiller and New HVAC Controls Replacements | \$889,900 | June 2020 |
| | | | <i>subtotal</i> | \$889,900 | |
| Capital Construction | FY 14 15 | YOS | YOS Multi-Use Support Building | \$4,897,755 | June 1017 |
| | | | <i>subtotal</i> | \$4,897,755 | |
| | | | TOTAL | \$68,002,751 | |

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Written Comments Submitted Online, by Mail, and by Email

Cynthia Nieb, Otero County

Closing these two prisons is a big mistake because you will impact the lives of thousands of people by decreasing property and sales tax in Bent, Crowley, and Otero counties. The quality of peoples' lives will decline drastically as will our businesses, retail stores, restaurants, schools, and arts. Please don't gut punch us and ruin countless lives.

Amanda M Clerkin, Work in Otero

Both Prisons Bent and Crowley have been significant contributors to the community and a large employer to our rural counties. They remain an important community partner for the Nursing and Allied health professions at Otero Junior College. They are an active partner in providing clinical sites and resources for these students. We value their contribution to our community and hope that they will continue to stay open so that our community can have jobs and resources for their residents but also so our Health professions at OJC will be able to continue to grow.

Nancy Aschermann, Otero County

To close either of these prisons would be devastating to the job market in our area. I can't quote the percentage of local job they occupy, but it is high. To take that many jobs out of a metro area would not be allowed.

Cayle Hines, Otero County

The blow to the economy and the number of people out of jobs closing those 2 prisons would be devastating to the counties and the state. Those 2 prisons employ hundreds of people in the communities down here and they would have to commute or get lower than avg pay jobs or 2 jobs just to survive. The

governor and the legislators need to understand the impact it will have on southeastern Colorado.

Kristin Carpenter, Otero County

Our already financially fragile community would be absolutely be obliterated if one of the largest employers for the region were removed and that's even without a pandemic in full swing.

Hundreds of families rely on jobs at the prisons in Crowley and Bent Counties to feed their families with limited other jobs available.

PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OUR PRISONS. Livelihoods are at stake.

Michelle Griego, Otero County

Closing local prisons will be detrimental to our community. Unfortunately, in this day and age, prisons are needed now more than ever. The crime rate continues to rise and closing these facilities will only worsen the overcrowding and inability to house inmates in other facilities. In addition, our community is rural, and jobs are hard to find. Closing these facilities will be devastating to our economy and many people will be unemployed and have to move elsewhere for employment to support themselves and their families. Our communities will continue to deteriorate, and this will directly affect our children's education as well as healthcare and overall economy as funding to this part of the state will be cut due to the decrease in the census. I urge you to keep our prisons open not only for the safety of our communities but for the future of our communities as well as our children.

Donna Starck, Weld

I was born and raised in Otero County, and currently work for Otero County. The prison system is a huge contributor to the economy in SE Colorado and would devastate the already weakened economy should you decide to close the prisons in Crowley and Bent County.

urge you to consider the families and communities that would be negatively impacted by such decisions.

Brooke Matthew, Otero County

The closing of the prison's would be detrimental to our local area. The prisons are in the top 3-5 businesses in the county for employment and are a main supplier of revenue for both Crowley and Bent counties. The County budgets are very tight any way. The Arkansas Valley is tight on funding anyway and the closing of the prisons would kill the little bit of economy in these communities. This would even affect the schools.

Rick Wallner, Otero County

The private prisons located in Olney Springs and Las Animas provide much needed employment for Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties. They are major economic drivers for the area, which has been hit hard by the pandemic-driven economic slowdown. The closure of these prisons would be devastating to the local economy. This negative economic impact needs to be given considerable weight when considering any decision to close these prisons. If the state were to obtain these prisons, it would likewise be important to maintain their current rates of employment and pay in order to prevent any negative economic impacts to the community.

Twila Taylor, Bent County

These private prisons provide jobs in the community and support other industry too. In Las Animas, it is a huge economic driver for the community. It would decimate the town and the county to lose this private prison. If closures happen, you'll see other business shut down too. Keep them private! Keep them open!



Chandra Ochoa, Otero County

Las Animas and Olney Springs Prisons are vital to this area.

Charles Hicks, Otero County

You need to leave the prisons as they are. Do you even understand that closing them will cause undue hardships on areas that are already depressed?

Bette McFarren, Otero County

I understand the existence of the private prisons is necessary for the economic survival of Crowley and Bent Counties. A large percentage of their population is employed by the prisons. I am concerned with oversight on the treatment of prisoners and opportunities for occupational training, as well as health and safety of both the prisoners and the prison employees. What are the working conditions like?

Becky Sporrer, Pueblo

My address is Fowler, which is in Otero County, but I physically live in Pueblo County. The prisons in Bent and Crowley counties are vital to the economy for the Arkansas Valley. The prisons provide countless job, which are desperately needed in our area. With these jobs people are able to stay local, shop local and support small business. If the prisons are shut down, the jobs will dry up, people will have to move out of the area and more small towns will become nonexistent. It is vital for our area that the prisons remain open and continue to help the local economy.

Sam Jones, Crowley County

In already severely economically depressed areas, it does not seem beneficial to the citizens and communities in Southeast Colorado to close prisons. Many in the area depend on this employment to sustain their families. Please consider the

economic impact of any closures.

Nicole Mayfield, Bent County

Las Animas is a lovely community. It has already been hit hard with the VA hospital closing. I don't think we could take another loss of employment options leaving the area. Where are the people here supposed to work and how are they going to take care of their families if the jobs keep being taken away. We really are a hidden gem that needs preserved. Please don't take the prison away.

Jeremiah Stoker, Otero County

The private prisons provide mostly all of the income for Bent and Crowley County. The Bent County Correctional facility employs people from Bent, Otero, Crowley and Prowers County. The Crowley County correctional facility employs people from Crowley, Otero, Pueblo, and Bent County.

Closing the private facilities would not only cripple the small disadvantaged counties, but put hundreds of people out of work in an area that doesn't have many opportunities

Melinda Carter, Crowley County

Closing the private prison would be devastating to our community. The property taxes help fund our school amongst other things. The prison employs a lot of people in the community. If the prison closes, families will have to move out of the area to find jobs to provide for their families. That means less people doing business in our counties. We depend on the funding the prison brings us.

Elissa, Crowley County

I work at the Olney Springs prison if they get shutdown I will be out of a job. My daughter and I will suffer. I will probably lose my house I bought 6 years ago my car will probably be gone I will have no transportation. I will not be able to pay

my bills; I will not be able to provide for my daughter and I will have to apply for welfare which I have never been on my entire life. There are not very many options to work in the valley. I have worked there for 16years. So many staff members will lose a lot and their families will suffer .

Pam Arbuthnot, Crowley County

From a financial standpoint why is the state even considering closing the most efficient form of housing inmates when the state's budget does not allow for enough money to fund programs like education?

The private prisons are newer and maintained to a higher standard than the state prisons. At what point should the General Assembly be held accountable for the state's money. It is their fiduciary responsibility to manage the assets of the state, not use our tax dollars to push their personal agendas.

Belinda Kurtz, Crowley County

Keep our prisons open!

Rich Vaughan, Crowley County

Why pay private prisons, when the state has a 18.5% vacancy rate, and furloughing state employees? Even if the prisons close, the property tax dollars remain due to the facility being maintained while empty. They are a low paying rip off to the state, who have gotten their claws into the county commissioners.

Britany chamberlain, Crowley County

Closing the prison would harm this community, kill jobs and livelihood.

Dovevanna King, Crowley County

We really need the prisons for our economy and our schools for tax base. Employment

Gerald Barber, Crowley County

The economy and well-being of southeastern Colorado is dependent upon these prisons.

Jessica, Crowley County

Private prisons treat inmates in an entirely different manner than a state run facility. The conditions and the demeanor (from the Guards) in which prisoners are treated are in humane. They will never get rid of the private prisons because of the shareholders. Most shareholders for private prisons are judges, the same judges that sentence these inmates to unimaginable -amounts of time. While this study is taking place, prisoners are treated like trash. For example, the breakout at Crowley county correctional facility of COVID. The prisoners were allowed one shower in 3 weeks. The privately owned prisons are a significant problem. And the staff members are entitled/encouraged but management to treat these prisoners horribly!

Jesse Howells, Crowley County

I have been employed at Crowley County Correctional Facility for 14 years. It has provided me a way to provide a good living for my family, health insurance and retirement. There really are not many options for good employment in the Arkansas Valley. If CCCF were to close I would be forced to move from the community that has been my home for over 40 years, the place I raised my children and where my parents are buried. In closing CCCF it would cripple an already poor community economically to a point of not being fixed. If the plan is to close private prisons, what is the answer for our community economically? Do the small rural communities not matter to the metropolitan areas? Are the rural communities not as important? Are their residents not as important as the people in metropolitan areas? Is small town America not important to the

bureaucrats?

Linda Owen, Crowley County

Legislators feel that private businesses should not be profiting off of people's lives. With that communist mindset, when does the State of Colorado plan on taking over hospitals, doctor clinics, and dentist offices?

With private prisons operating at nearly half the cost of state facilities, how do legislators justify the extra spending for the same result?

Stephanie Meyer, Crowley County

1. What would the county do if it loses the tax that the prison pays?
2. How many jobs would the county lose?
3. What immediate plan could replace the loss of taxes?
4. The school could lose 30-50 students. Would the school be able to operate with the new 27 mill leveling program the state passed?

M. Wilson, Pueblo

The state should be in favor of saving taxpayers money using private prisons and allocate the savings towards programs that serve the law abiding citizens.

Mickayela Chaney, Bent County

If you were close Bent County prison it would drastically change the whole fate of Bent County. Many families rely on the income from the prison to feed their families. When parents are unable to find a job, they will move. And when families move away more kids will leave the school and less and less kids will attend the Las Animas School District hurting them by needing kids to keep their grants that they receive. Lots of the older generation live in Las Animas that work at the prison by forcing them to close the older generation will move away also.

Having no older generation and no newer generation the town of Las Animas shall die away. Crime already terrifies the streets of Las Animas by closing they will shorten the sentences of criminals and they will be on our streets again. Las Animas is known for its drugs the only businesses left will be the weed stores which is not a good sign. With crime on the rise and drugs running rampant through the streets it becomes more dangerous for the people left in Las Animas. Not only for the citizens of Las Animas but for the officers that help keep the peace within Las Animas. What will the town do when there are no officers willing to help protect? This town will go to anarchy and nothing but violence.

Jenise Trotter, Otero County

I work for the Santa Fe Trail BOCES as an SLP servicing children in the public schools in Bent County. This closure would put an extreme hardship on the school system to lose so much funding from taxes and student counts which in turn would affect jobs in the school system and other businesses. For a county that already struggles financially, this would have far reaching negative effects for all of southeast Colorado.

Christine Nevland, Bent County

Many years ago, Fort Lyon VAMC was closed in an effort by the VA to save money. Jobs were lost, and many who continued their careers moved away. I see this happening again. The prisons are our largest employers in the valley. Loss of jobs, tax revenue, would be devastating. This will hurt businesses, the school, and every aspect of our town as many former employees will need to move for their jobs. The impact will be devastating to many. If the state needs to fill their prisons, they might look at the sentencing or lack thereof being administered by the court system.

Jacob Hernandez, Crowley County

What could possibly replace the private prison? It would take decades if even

then it is possible. This study should be about, are the private prisons doing a good job and if not what could we do to improve them.

Where would the state find the dollars to end private prisons? It would have to come from health care, education, transportation programs. This appears to be someone's personal agenda, using our tax money to promote their agenda. NOT RIGHT by any standards!

Jim Brittain, Bent County

During my 25 years working at 5 of the State Prisons, I saw increases and decreases of inmate populations. For example, there was a time when corrections officials had discussions on what to do with the closed Maximum Security Prison in Canon City. A few years later when I was the Warden at that Facility, residential trailers were brought in and set up in the recreation yard to ease inmate overcrowding. When I come to Las Animas to open BCCF, state prisons were over-crowded then.

Las Animas needed the prison then for the jobs, payroll and taxes that help the city and they need it still. The State needs it for its available beds as it is much cheaper to pay a Per Diem than to build more prison beds. PLEASE DON'T CLOSE OUR PRISON!!!

Bryan Simmons, Bent County

As a bank loan officer in Bent County, I have seen firsthand how many businesses struggled due to the reduction of jobs as the result of the State Prison closure at Fort Lyon in 2011. Multiple small businesses throughout the Arkansas Valley were impacted significantly. Although these numbers may not seem dramatic to front-range communities basking in the over-abundance of growth along the I-25 corridor, these numbers were devastating to small communities struggling to keep afloat. Every job is important, and every business is valued in Southeast Colorado.

My employer, The First National Bank of Las Animas, has an office located in each

of the communities that will be impacted by the proposed closures. These include Ordway, Las Animas, Fowler, Rocky Ford and La Junta. Core Civic employees are a meaningful part of our customer base. Their paychecks are deposited with us and we provide them with loans and other services. Our organization as well as other locally owned community banks will suffer as a result of the contemplated actions.

In my position as Chairman of the Bent County Economic Development Foundation I am painfully aware of how difficult it is to recruit new employers to our communities. The initial construction and opening of the Bent County Facility were a direct result of a coordinated efforts between the Foundation and the Bent County Commissioners to provide employment opportunities in our region as well as to assist the State of Colorado with prison population issues. At the time, this was endorsed by the State and Bent County was encouraged to engage in this activity. Unfortunately, we have now come full circle. To replace this enterprise within these communities will be an overwhelming if not impossible task. It is likely that the funding that the Economic Development Foundation receives from Bent County will be reduced due to an expected significant decline in property tax and other revenues. I have no doubt that this will further hamper our business development efforts.

I was a Las Animas school board member when the Fort Lyon facility was closed. I was afforded the opportunity to sit across the table to discuss our concerns with Governor Hickenlooper and DOC Director Clements. Their decision to close was made, in part, on flawed data and information. The impacts were overwhelming as families left our schools. Staff reductions had to occur as our census and related funding declined. This was a further unintended consequence of the closure which we can expect to be duplicated in the proposed scenario.

I currently serve as the Secretary / Treasurer for the Arkansas River Conservancy District. Our primary purpose is the maintenance and management of the levy that protects the City of Las Animas and adjacent areas from flooding by the Arkansas River. The private prison provides for 25% of our meager operating revenues. Should we not be able to fund maintenance projects and, as a result, the Army Corps of Engineers decertify the levy, FEMA flood protections would



be eliminated. This would in turn require anyone obtaining a bank loan on improved property in Las Animas to purchase flood insurance. The costs of this to the community would be staggering.

I understand that a driving factor behind the legislation is the concern that it is not “moral” for private institutions to profit from the incarceration of criminals. I would suggest that the State does not exist in a bubble regarding this and that the DOC is also reliant on vendors, contractors and suppliers in the public sector that provide their services for profit. I am not sure how the proponents of the closure can reasonably reconcile this point.

Core Civic has been an excellent neighbor, partner and contributor in our communities. They provide sponsorships to local activities such as the schools, recreational organizations and civic groups. All while providing much needed jobs and a cost-effective solution to housing inmates for the State.

We are fighting battles on other fronts as well. Cities, investors and developers have their eyes on Arkansas River water that irrigates farm ground in the lower Arkansas Valley. They are making a major play on buying and moving water to the front range to support the dramatic growth that is being seen there. Farming is a major economic driver in both Crowley and Bent Counties. This has been and will continue to be detrimental to our communities.

We ask you to be wary of the impacts that these decisions have on the rural areas that are also a part of the great State of Colorado. We cannot take many more blows and remain viable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bryan Simmons

Chief Credit Officer, First National Bank of Las Animas Chair, Bent County Development Foundation

Secretary / Treasurer, Arkansas River Conservancy District

Isabelle Stone, Bent County

We need 220 persons working at the correctional facility. I cannot afford

increased property taxes and other taxes. I am on a very fixed income. We need the correctional facilities available. Las Animas has a very high crime rate. Since moving here, we have had to call the police 4 times, with not avail. There are too many pot heads looking for quick cash for their habit. The police force is already pushed to its limit.

Please do not decrease funding for schools. That is our next generation.

Please do not increase out utilities, we barely pay them now. We are near the poverty level in this town. Thank you for reading this.

Nancy Bennett, Otero County

I think the two prisons in SE Colorado should remain open because they are a very important source of jobs and income for our communities. This is a desperately poor part of the great state of Colorado. A very large amount of our tax dollars is sucked from our area to support the heavily populated parts of the state. Without the jobs provided by the prisons, there will be a lot less tax dollars at the disposal of the legislature and the big cities. I also would like to see the state take over the prisons here so there is more oversight of the facilities and inmates. I feel the state ultimately holds the responsibility for inmates housed in Colorado, even though private contractors are used. So, why add a middleman to that equation? At this time, I feel state owned and managed prisons are the best way to go. And the prisons that are already built should be the ones utilized.

Sandra Enriquez Salas, Bent County

Closing the prison is a bad idea. This is a good source of income for the community and it residents. I feel this would kill the town more than it already is. There will be more crim and drugs. This is something we do not want to happen there is already drug and other crime don't add to this. This is a wrong choice.

Senator Larry Crowder, Alamosa

It has been determined that with the rising population of Colorado that the prison population will indeed grow also. For the purpose of public safety, we need to maintain these private prisons to have adequate beds for our prison population. Private prisons actually save money for the taxpayer as they provide services to the state cheaper than public prison. State owned facilities do not pay property taxes and to say that for profit private prison is somewhat against our moral fabric is simply inaccurate. State owned prisons also have budgets to work within that is taxpayer funded, so to imply that providing private prison are somehow wrong for society is nonsense. To place the consequences of a possible bed shortage over public safety for the purpose of some misguided notion that private prison is wrong is both irresponsible and very short sighted.

Donna Siefkas, Bent County

Our county understands the hardships associated with the loss of major businesses. We lost the VA Hospital and that devastated our community. We lost jobs, but we also lost families. Families had to move away leaving our community with empty houses, decreasing the membership of our churches, taking away the leadership of our community, and leaving us lost and devastated. As years passed, we saw an increase in poverty, crime, and our schools are seeing a lower level of education. (AP classes and advanced placement programs are gone.)

At one point in our history, the state opened a prison for elderly and ill prisoners. That provided some jobs for our community, but eventually the state decided that it would be more economical to have the facility closer to the front range. Once again we were left with nothing.

We are a part of Colorado. We pay taxes. However, we continue to lose our jobs and our major resource (water) to other areas of the state.

The impact of losing the private prison that is established in our community includes not only the loss of jobs (approximately 220), and loss of property taxes, but once again we will lose families not only in our own community but in neighboring counties as well. Our earlier losses of major businesses have left us

with a much lower average level of education of our population, so we are providing jobs for some of the other communities. Which also sees us having more people in need of social services, our churches struggling to help meet the needs of our community, and more houses and local businesses empty and deteriorating. Residential property values decrease and most of our young adults leave to find jobs in other communities. Many would like to live close to family, but there aren't good paying jobs available for them.

Just thinking about the possibility of losing our private prison makes me tired. Tired because I know that we will be struggling again. Once again good people that work hard and provide the best that they can for families are going to be cheated out of having jobs and a quality lifestyle. We want to have opportunities for economic development and improvements for our area of the state. The Colorado legislature should provide economic opportunities for the whole state.

Kathleen Tomlin, Bent County

We would like to support the efforts of retaining the prison in Las Animas and Bent County. Not only is it important to provide really good jobs and revenue to the City and County, but the trickledown effect is vital to the survival for this area. The Bent County Historical Society, a small non-profit, relies on County and City assistance to survive. We do everything we can to improve our operations with grants whenever possible. We only have three part-time employees at the Museum and seasonal employees at Boggsville, and the rest of the labor is provided by volunteers. We would not be able to maintain these facilities and provide the cultural heritage aspect without our local government help. If we lose the Prison, we may lose our non-profit business and other businesses in the area. We have been hit hard in the last few years and we are fighting for our survival. Please retain this prison!

Bob Stwalley, Bent County

As President of the Arkansas River Conservancy District (ARCD), I have deep concerns regarding the proposal to close private prisons as being advocated by

Gov. Polis and various state legislators. Local impact to special districts in Bent County would be substantial.

The sole purpose of the ARCD is to manage and maintain the nine-mile flood levee which protects the City of Las Animas and the immediate surrounding area (portions of Bent County). Each property within the flood levee district is assessed an annual maintenance fee which is used to maintain such levee.

Currently, the Core Civic facility (Bent County Prison) contributors approx. 25% of our total annual assessment fees. Accordingly, closure of the facility and later sale of the property to the State of Colorado (as alluded to by some at the state level) would severely reduce our annual revenues and therefore our ability to maintain the flood levee at its current level. The ARCD would most likely be forced to ration out available funds for needed maintenance projects as opposed to the current practice of addressing all needs. Our flood levee is over 40 yrs.-old and annual maintenance costs continue to increase. I find it somewhat confusing as to why the State would even consider the closing of private prisons at this time. Core Civic has been an excellent partner with the State, providing a much needed service at a most economical cost. In these days of challenging economic conditions both at the state and county levels, why eliminate an asset that has proven to have worked well and replace it with such a costly alternative? This proposal is a no-win for all concerned and certainly would be a step backwards. Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Stwalley /President Arkansas River Conservancy District Las Animas, Colorado

Diane Baublits, Bent County

The Bent County Correctional Facility has been a vital part of the economy of not only Las Animas, but the surrounding communities. As a former teacher, it was my privilege to teach classes at the facility. The staff has become a part of the community and has played an active part in community projects. It would be a tragedy to see it closed or taken over by the state.



Bill Baublits, Otero County

I am against the state closure of the Bent County Correctional Facility. it will cause great job loss affecting many families in Las Animas and the valley.

Kenneth & Donna Dodson, Bent County

Dear People

We need this Private Prison that is in Las Animas, CO. There is a need to have this prison for jobs, tax reasons, the impact on the schools and the increases in the utilities. We used to have Ft Lyon as a VA facility and now it is a homeless shelter and brings in NO income. At least the prison brings in tax money and income to Bent County.

Comparing the cost per prisoner in a private prison facility to a state run facility, you will find that the private prison will run \$20. - \$30. per day cheaper than a state run prison.

One last thought, if you are not on the front range, you are limited in getting government businesses. This is a private business and it needs to stay in Las Animas!! It helps Bent County financially.

Nanette Thomas, Otero County

Thank you for this time. I have grown up in this area and have lived here all my life.

I am an employed by Bent County correctional Facility as a Case Manager, I have been employed here for the last 21 years. This Prison in Bent County has brought in good paying job opportunities in a rural community. There is not a lot available in the smaller community's and closing one like Bent and Crowley would not only hurt the employees but also the community as a whole.

Kelly Awad, Bent County

With the closing of the meeting on Tuesday, I started a petition where people can have their voices heard virtually! It is addressed straight to Governor Polis, who is

a great guy, and will listen to them! I just bought property within view of the prison and I don't my property losing value, or for my utilities to go up. Las Animas has so little and without you, we may just perish. If people contact you concerning the meeting or closing, maybe you could direct them to the petition!

Thanks,

Kelly Awad <http://chng.it/pstzcFdttb>

Harrell Ridley, Bent County

First of all, I would like to thank the Bent County Commissioners for hosting this meeting. Additionally, I, Harrell Ridley, would like to personally thank each of the men and women that work at the Bent County Correctional Facility, without each of you the success of this facility would have never been possible for the last 24 years of operation. This facility has been a large spoke and wheel not only for Bent County but for Southeast Colorado as well. Prior to entering office in 1988 as a County Commissioner, I never envisioned that during my term we would break ground for a Correctional Facility here in Bent County. Several counties across Southeast Colorado held hearings, regarding the opening of a private prison, but many individuals voted against the idea. Our facility here became the very first private correctional facility to be built in the state of Colorado. The Bent County Commissioners at that time included Ralph Tixier, Jerry Faust and me. We did not have the knowledge of how to operate a correctional facility, but we understood the economic importance that it would have for our entire community and county. This was a risk that we were willing to take but we wanted the Citizens of Bent County to have their voices heard. When we held our public hearing, 83% of the Citizens here in Bent County voted in favor of the correctional facility and therefore, we began the planning and development of this monumental project. At the beginning, like most projects that are undertaken we faced uncertainty regarding the overall safety of our citizens and our community. We did our due diligence to ensure that we kept the safety of our community at the forefront from the very beginning. For this operation to be successful the County Commissioners hired Mr. Bill Wilson, a Retired State Department Official, to supervise the correctional facility. Mr. Wilson encouraged

several of his colleagues to join him here in Las Animas to ensure that the facility's operation would be a successful one. As Commissioners we wanted nothing more than for this project to succeed as we understood just how valuable of an asset the correctional facility for Bent County was. Today, the facility employs approximately 220 individuals. Each Year this facility has an annual payroll of \$13.2 million dollars which is well above the average payroll in southeast Colorado. Each year this facility continues to have a positive impact on Bent County's economic development. I believe that the community has been served well by establishing this private prison.

Since 1995 several private correction facilities have been built across the state of Colorado. It is my wishes that the citizens of Bent county would all come together and fight to keep this correctional facility in Bent County. Over the last 25 years the facility has been an integral part of our economy and growth, I believe we need this facility to stay open more now than ever. The closing of our private prison would be absolutely devastating! It would be detrimental to the families that live here who would have to relocate as they would no longer be employed. A third of our student population has parents that are employed by the prison. This would affect our class sizes within our school district. The overall impact that it would have on Bent County would be astronomical if it were to close. I had the upmost privilege to stand among my fellow commissioners and break ground for the correctional facility and I am writing now as we need to stand once again. I come to you now 25 years later not as an elected commissioner but as a fellow citizen that is concerned for our community and Bent County as whole.

Harrell Ridley

Randolph DeVargas, Bent County

First and foremost, it is the responsibility of Private Enterprises, LLC's, Business', Corporations Etc. to provide Basic Employment Opportunities to the People of the Cities, Counties, and States of the United States of America. Business Foundation is and has always been created by countless organizations for the sole purpose of Profit. The Foundation of Compassionate Capitalism is the

extreme fundamental core belief of establishing For Profit Entities. It is the heart, the root and the source of privatized business practices. In NO Way should a company be locked out of Contract Negotiations, Discussions, Bids, or Blacklisted from providing valuable Jobs such as Private Prisons. Looking at the History of the United States Government, the US Government Headquartered in Washington DC is solely registered as an LLC. Shutting down Private Prisons, more specifically CoreCivic (Formerly CCA) would be a disaster and wrong for business practices. It would be the same as shutting down our US Government.

Prohibiting Corecivic from competing to acquire government or private contracts to run prisons would be a great loss for future enterprises wishing to gain government contracts. Private Companies can run prisons as good as if not better than their government partners. The purpose of running Any Business is for PROFIT. Making statements or claims that private business should not in any way profit off of housing offenders is Ludicrous since the state is in effect providing the same service, Yes, at a profit.

Allowing privatized business is the best way to keep costs down with companies allowed to bid for government contracts. It is what competition is about. Removing the competition (Private Companies), only paves the way for total Government Control also known as Socialism, or Communism where only Government Programs are allowed to Thrive or profit. Yes, we need Government to be involved with Criminal Jurisdiction, however discontinuing private enterprises would be a disaster to the common everyday people. by allowing corporations to bid, keeps the big guys also known as government from getting bigger. I hope that our State Legislators will vote to keep CoreCivic open and not pass any laws to the likes of closing private prisons entirely throughout the country. A vote to keep Private Prisons in Business is a vote to keep American Business' Thriving.

Jessie Sarmiento, Prowers County

I am a nurse here at Bent County Correctional Facility. I have been here for close to 3 years. I chose BCCF to work at, because I did my clinicals here and I admired the kindness and respect the staff had for the offenders here. Corrections is a

different kind of nursing and I am happy I chose BCCF. I personally have to commute 35 minutes to work. Corrections is where I want to be and if BCCF closes I will need to commute and additional 45 minutes to stay in the career I chose. A large percentage of the staff here has to commute 25-45 minutes to work.

In my time here I have met some amazing people who are good at their job and truly do care. They have families and bills to pay. I have seen them work so much overtime and still come to work with a smile because this is the career they chose and are passionate about. They strive on keeping the General public safe. They treat the offenders with dignity and respect and the offenders appreciate that. We have come together when one has a tragedy in their family, or when someone needs help for the moment, we are a family.

It would be devastating to our southeast Colorado region economically if BCCF closes. Please consider all the lives that would be affected by the closer of BCCF. And not to mention what would happen to the offenders being managed at the facility. Where would they be placed? Thank you

Justin Garcia, Bent County

Working in corrections I know for a fact that CDOC does not have the capacity or staff to house the 2900 offenders that are currently housed at Bent County/Crowley County Correctional Facilities! Plus, they cannot come close to housing them for the same amount of money that CoreCivic can. The impact on the Arkansas Valley would be very detrimental to the schools, small businesses, power associations and overall job opportunities. Bent County spends a ton of money in taxes, electricity and supporting our local businesses and schools. It provides jobs for people from Pueblo to Granada, Eads to Springfield so it doesn't just place burden on Bent county, this would be the worst decision have the state purchase these facilities, just consider the taxes that that would not be paid! Leave the facilities and their staff to keep doing the fine job they are doing and providing protection for our communities and the state's public. Bent County Correctional Facility is one of the best run and productive correctional facilities in the state of Colorado. Please consider letting them carry on. Thank you JG

Merrell Holland, Otero County

I have been in corrections for the last 22 1/2 years at bent County Correctional Facility. I have had a great career and am planning on retiring in June of 2022. In my career I have seen a lot of changes in corrections, this is now a way to put people's lives in better perspective to become better people in society and to put back into the community rather than to take from it. If we close the private prisons then not only are we doing injustice to the people in our care, but we are also doing injustice to the people who work here and to the community they live in. Core Civic is a huge company paying large amounts in annual salaries, as well as property tax and utility bills. If you take that away the valley will become a ghost town and our schools will drastically be affected because people will have to move in order to make a living, DO WE REALLY WANT THIS?

Tim Beebe, Bent County

Besides the obvious issue with crippling Bent County. Let us not forget the effects on other counties, such as Otero and Prowers. In this corner of the state it is very difficult to find a career that pays well and has good benefits. In January of 2021 I will have been at BCCF for 18 years. I have built a great career with great people.

Here at Bent we have always took great pride in being a family. We have always taken care of our staff and the community when in need. I personally have gone through some really tough times in my life, and I always knew that the facility and my work family would be there for me.

By closing this facility, it would not only devastate this corner of Colorado, but it would be breaking up a family!

Sharon Rabas, Bent County

Working in the education department at Bent County has been the most rewarding job I have had. We have GED classes that will assure an inmate will get a GED. I bring them to class when they

qualify after testing. To see the look on their faces when they go to class and pass a test is amazing, they want to learn and succeed so much. And when they pass GED tests and graduate you can't believe the difference in their attitude and what they want to do with their lives. I don't think anyone realizes what an effect it has on lives of these inmates that has never had the chance at anything. You can't put them into places for a couple of weeks then turn them loose they will end up the same way they were before

going to prison. Don't take that away with so many that can make something of themselves by the good programs we have here at Bent County. Our town will not make it if you take away this prison. The amount of people who work here will lose their homes. I have never really been passionate about too many things in my life, but to see how eager most of the

inmates are when they have a chance to do something with their lives in here or on the street please don't take that away from them.

Sharon Rabas Education Department

and I work for minimum wage

Rol Hudler, Kit Carson County

The Kit Carson Correctional Center, located in Burlington, has been vacant since July of 2016. The closure of the facility put the City of Burlington, Kit Carson County, School District and all other taxing entities scrambling to make up for the loss of \$1,217,998 in property taxes. In addition, the City was the provider for electric, water and sewer for the facility.

When the facility was operating at fairly full capacity, there were approximately 200 employees. The loss of this payroll was another huge loss for the community.

As current law now stands, inmates from other states can be housed in Colorado private prisons. It is extremely important that the legislature does not pass

legislation that would prohibit out of state inmates.

Re-opening of Kit is vital to Burlington.

There will be several others submitting to you in regard to Kit. I assume most of the information will be on the dramatic budget cuts that had to be made when Kit was closed.

We are not asking for any handouts. We are not asking to be compensated in any way for the closure to Kit. We are simply asking to allow us to continue developing Burlington and Kit Carson County. By adding 200 jobs in a rural area, the impact will be tremendous.

If you need any additional comments from me, feel free to contact me. Rol Hudler, economic development director, City of Burlington

Bernstrauch, Otero County

If this prison is closed it would greatly damage the local community. I currently work at a private facility and its income helps me care for my children and my home, if I were to lose this job I would not be able to care for my two kids. The local economy in this small town would diminish due to loss of jobs and the support of the facility would be gone. Including the numerous community projects that the facility supports for local benefit. In example the Angel Tree for local children, housing projects that have been completed by facility staff who volunteered their own time, and food drives that are done every year around this time that is donated to the local food bank. Stop thinking about the corporation as a whole because closing these facility's would not hurt them it would hurt the small town people who live and work here.

Jason Martinez, Otero County

why just the prisons? they are fine they need to do the county jail its beyond repair far beyond from the rusted metal poking out bunks to sleep con to the backed up plumbing inmates have to sit on bunks for hours or walk in your own

shit. the guards are not trained enough the med rounds are on their time really! why doesn't the county buy the old community center remodel half into a jail and the other half an intake center for drug addicts. first 3 drug possession charges you have option of help if you get help drop out go to jail or finish program after 4 arrest no option for help straight jail time 6 months i have many ideas as I'm an ex addict and artist.

Nomen Nescio, Bent County

It is false logic to say prisons, public or private, increase economic activity in any way. Every job created, every good consumed, every physical plant built, and every utility tapped has to be paid for by transfer of wealth by others, i.e., taxpayers. Net gain is zero. If it were to be positive, then every city should have one, which is patently ridiculous. Bent County thus benefits at the expense of others, but not as much as one would think. Don't prisons draw in families of the incarcerated, most on welfare? Don't these families breed more crime, require higher staffing levels of local law enforcement, put pressure on housing, drive uninsured vehicles, crowd schools, etc., ad infinitum? An example of legitimate enterprises for Bent County are food processing plant and light manufacturing. These enterprises produce a net gain in wealth to stockholders, managers, workers and society in general. Now, it does make sense to say every city should have such gainful enterprises, not prisons. An ancillary benefit to fewer prisons is fewer incarcerations which would lead to decriminalization of many draconian laws that besmirch our Constitution's "freedom and liberty for all." Good examples are conspiracy (thought crimes) and the felony murder rule (two men rob store, robbery goes wrong, one shoots and kills victim, both are charged with murder), just to scratch the surface.

Anthony Garner, Otero County

I have worked at both Crowley County Correctional and now Bent County Correctional over my 5 years in Colorado. The financial burden that getting rid of private prisons will put on 5+ counties of Colorado will be hard to come back

from and will essentially sign a death certificate for some of them. Between the two facilities, we have staff members that live in Bent, Otero, Crowley, Prowers, Huerfano, and Pueblo county as well as others. To get rid of private prisons just because they are privately owned is a disservice to the taxpayers and constituents in the state of Colorado. Some private prisons across the country have had legality and human right issues, although in the time that I have worked with CCA/CORECIVIC, we have not. The employees of these facilities are pushing forward to the same missions as the state which is to reduce recidivism and make the offenders at these facilities to properly reintegrate into society and be our neighbors.

Jerry Sonnenberg, Logan

The study should include an assessment of the impact of closing a private prison in a small community as a percentage of the economy of the community. In other words, what percentage of jobs, salary and tax revenue was lost in the community? Front range legislators need to understand the amount of devastation we are talking about.

When fully operational, Kit Carson Correctional Facility provides 300 jobs in Burlington. Burlington currently has an estimated 1600 full and part time jobs.

Janice Cline, Bent County

This community has supported this prison since its inception and welcomes the employment opportunities and education it has brought to this community. It would be devastating to these employees and to this community to lose this prison.

Cynthia Martinez, Otero County

While I don't support privatization of prisons because it leads to an increase of incarceration closing the prisons would have a dramatic effect on the economy and stability of these communities.



Vince Fraker, Otero County

Private prisons are held to a higher standard than doc. The contract requirements make it easier to demand more. Closing Bent and Crowley will drastically alter the economic status of this community

Jim Goodwin, Otero County

it would hurt the whole area to let even one prison close, let alone 2.

Tim Creany, Denver

I am a state employee who has worked within the Colorado Dept. of Corrections for 20 years. I have worked at five different state owned facilities within DOC (FCF, CTCF, AHCC, DWCF and CCF) and served for a time as the interim chief medical officer.

I went into Telemedicine and partnered with Corecivic to work in their facility in Bent County in 2014. I have been most impressed with this facility. Compared to every other place where I have worked, they are more efficient, deliver better on numerous aspects of patient care and create a better work environment for providers, nurses and patients alike.

I can highly recommend this facility and it would be a shame if it were closed. I am certainly available for any additional information if anyone in the research group or governor's office wants to reach out to me.

Tim Creany, MD tim.creany@state.co.us

Tiffany Saldana, Prowers

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tiffany Saldana and I am employed by CoreCivic, working at Bent County Correctional Facility. When I needed to find full-time employment the options available that would support my family were quite limited. I chose to work at Bent County Correctional Facility because it not only would allow me to

support my family, but also provided a sense of stability that many other employment options in the area didn't. I drive from Lamar to Las Animas for work, I choose to make that drive because my family has benefited significantly from my employment at BCCF. In the last 6 months I have been able to purchase my own home and take my children on their first ever real vacation. We no longer struggle to make ends meet, which is something my children and I haven't experienced in several years. Working in Las Animas also gives me the opportunity to contribute to the local economy through purchases made at local restaurants and Thaxton's grocery. Our facility also works to buy local, supporting businesses in Las Animas. We make several large purchases every year through Thaxton's and the L.A. Cafe for products needed for staff and facility events.

The team of people at BCCF are, in many ways, a family. We are assigned the task of ensuring the safety and security of the facility, fellow staff members, the offenders, and the public; we do this diligently each and every day. The staff at Bent County Correctional Facility works closely with local charities to help support the community. We hold a food drive annually, which benefits many local area food banks. During the holiday season our staff members sponsor many children through the Angel Tree charity, purchasing toys and other items from wish lists ensuring those children receive gifts that they otherwise would not. When the COVID pandemic forced schools and businesses to close earlier this year, Bent County staff came together again to assist the local food bank when they expressed a need for cereal donations.

In our facility we have staff members that truly want to help our offender population to become productive members of society. We provide several programs to our offenders that teach problem solving skills, parenting skills, and money management. As expected, many of our offenders have damaged relationships as a result of their crimes and incarceration, we work with those offenders to teach them how to repair those relationships and take responsibility for their crimes. We offer offenders a GED program and computer skills classes, and services such as assisting with job searches and obtaining identification for offenders preparing to be released.

The offenders housed at Bent County Correctional Facility also have programs to

benefit the public. We work with Canine Companions and have offenders that are responsible for training puppies in preparation to be service dogs. Some of our offenders translate books into braille through a program with the School for the Deaf & Blind. Our Fulfillment program has offenders packing food boxes that are then sent out to schools.

Closing this facility would be done at a detriment to the town of Las Animas and Bent County, as well as surrounding counties. The negative economic impact to the area would be significant. The southeastern corner of Colorado does not have many employment options available to its residents. The loss of Bent County Correctional Facility would result in many families being forced to choose jobs that won't support them and utilizing state benefit assistance or leave the area. If the state were to acquire the facility they could not guarantee that all of the staff would maintain their employment and that would also result in a very large tax income loss for Bent County. All of these options would have a huge negative impact on an already weak economy, causing further decline in the area.

Whether it be performing our daily job duties, supporting local businesses and charities, or working with our offenders to become productive members of society, we do it with pride. We are proud to be part of and support this community and hope to be able to for many years to come. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this very important subject. Tiffany Saldana

Brent Pierce, Crowley County

Colorado Prison Utilization Study

The State of Colorado was needing prison beds in 1992, so the Bent County Commissioners developed a plan to build a prison and staff it with local people. This was the first privately owned prison in the State of Colorado.

In 1993 I was looking for a career, not just a job. This is when I discovered Bent County Correctional facility. In February of 1993 I was hired as a Correctional Officer. The facility housed 309 inmates. Today we house 1400. I have had a good career here. The pay has been about the highest you could get in the area. I have

been able to promote numerous times to be the Shift Supervisor that I am today, 28 years later. I have been able to raise two children, put them through school and send them into their adult life while working at the prison.

There are a lot of young officers employed at this facility that would like to raise their family the same way I did. To have the opportunity to have a career and to be able to raise their children in a small community. To have the small classroom at school where the teacher to student ratio is smaller. To be in a community where you know everyone in the town.

Over the 28 years that I have been employed at BCCF there have been 1000's of inmates that have received their basic education (GED). There are many other inmates that now have a skill through our Vocational programs, (GED, Computer classes, Reentry programs, Electronics, Truck Driving (CDL), Janitorial classes, just to mention a few.) This facility turns a lot of criminals into productive citizens

By closing this facility, we will lose:

Tax 1.1 Million

This will be a big loss to the county. The road and bridge will not have good equipment so the roads will not be maintained as well, not to mention the county jobs that will be lost because of loss of taxes.

The Ambulance will not have a full time staff on duty anymore so this will increase their response times by quite bite.

Annual BCCF pay roll 13.2 million all of which is put back into the local business and surrounding areas. The small business will have to close. Some of the big businesses will suffer and lay off employees; the snowball effect is very gloomy.

We have already lost Ft. Lyon as an army hospital in 2001 and this devastated our community. Then we lost the state prison at FT. Lyon which had a large impact on our economy. We cannot afford another big business to close.

They are selling the water off our farms and the big corporations are taking over the farms, so families are leaving the area. If we lose the Prison in Bent County what will happen to our town and community. What will be left for the

families that try to stay? And where will the State of Colorado house another 1400 inmates. Will they just simply let them go?

Evelyn Koury, Otero County

I have been employed with Core Civic since 5-21-1997, when the first expansion was completed and it went from Bent County Correctional Facility to Corrections Corporation of America, now known as Core Civic. Through the years I have worked in several different departments and I am familiar with many sides of the correctional facility both here and at the state facilities. Without Bent County Correctional Facility in Las Animas Colorado, families would not be able to survive. Several staff travel from nearby counties to work for Core Civic.

Many times, I hear people talk about the private facilities like they are a bad thing. We must follow strict guidelines set up by the State of Colorado in addition to standards and practices in place by ACA; American Correctional Association. In a way, we are constantly under the microscope.

The American Correctional Association provides a professional organization for all individuals and groups, both public and private that share a common goal of improving the justice system. So, in a sense the privates have two sets of standards to follow.

Personally, working at Bent County has afforded me the opportunity to raise my two young daughters who are now 34 and 40 after divorcing and moving to La Junta in 1997. Later while continuing my employment with Bent County I also raised my two grandchildren who are now 19 and 21. I would not have been able to do that with any other job in the valley as jobs are very scarce and many only hire family and friends. I would have been forced to move or to take a job in a bigger town like Pueblo. This would have made for longer hours away from my family and being a single parent and grandparent, we all know this can lead to a negative impact on our children.

Closing the privates would have a severe negative impact on the communities surrounding it. The private facilities are just as safe, staffed and as clean as the state run facilities. Everyone who is in favor of closing the privates, needs to

take a good look at the impact this will cause to many towns and people/families. Come take a tour, meet the staff and the offenders and see for yourself what we have to offer. We are not a bunch of hick farm kids who walked out of the field into the prison looking for a job. We are educated, talented individuals who chose to raise our families in a smaller town and keep them away from the hustle and bustle of the bigger cities. We are not perfect, but we do the best we can.

We offer a lot of good programs in the private facilities to teach the offenders a skill they can be proud of while they are here and can take with them when they leave. We help them to become marketable in the workplace. We try really hard to make a difference in each life we come in contact with. For many of us this isn't just a job.

We teach them skills to help them survive and take care of their families, we don't want them to return just a bad as they don't want to come back. We do a good job here and coming to prison is an eye opener for many who do not want to fall back into the prison system once they get out. They just need a chance.

I really pray you take a good look at what the private facilities offer to the towns they are in, the economy and the offenders who pass through and leave with a skill. It's a win situation for everyone. Not just one person benefits, but many.

Thank you for your time.

Evelyn Koury - Administrative Assistant employed since May 21, 1997.

Tammie Mack, Las Animas/Huerfano

I serve in the adult education capacity. My affiliation with both Las Animas and Huerfano counties is imperative to the SE Region of Colorado. After the prison was closed in Walsenburg, the community has suffered catastrophic events. People have had to leave the area to find jobs and the commerce has been impacted to extreme measures.

I ask that you reconsider the facility closures to the Crowley, Bent and Otero areas. The negative impact it will have on these areas will not be easily reversed.

Dawn Robards, Morgan

From a workforce perspective, these prisons do a lot to support local economies - and closures have proven to be a negative for rural towns, such as the closure of the Burlington CCA location. The considerations go way beyond the prisoner aspect - these jobs are needed to keep communities afloat.

Debbie Bell, Fremont

I'm a Fremont County Commissioner still dealing with fallout from the closure of the Colorado Women's Correctional Facility in Canon City. Please understand both state prisons and contract prisons are vital and critical to the economic vitality of our small communities, where these facilities have resided for many years. All of Colorado currently is suffering with the negative effects of COVID-19, but the consequences are intensified in Rural Colorado, where we have fewer opportunities for diversity to create a healthy economic environment. Please take ALL state citizens into consideration when making these decisions and do not close private prisons in rural Colorado. Put rural first for a change. The economic impact would be absolutely devastating to those economies. Thank you.

Veronica Pinnecoose, La Plata, family member incarcerated at subject facility

Per the Bios on your website, you all seem to be a qualified team, so I hope all factors are considered, rather than just the panic that is being spun in local news: "they are trying to close our prison!" Is that truly the fact, because the study itself seems to contain wording that this is a feasibility study for the State to acquire the facilities. It doesn't seem that is the same as "shutting down." There is much controversy and moral question about creating an industry around incarcerating people and gaining profit from such as the model then creates a need to imprison more people. As you probably well know, small rural communities play a part in the private prison industry because these communities are hungry for industry and are often populated by citizens with limited employment skill sets.

My family member was incarcerated at Crowley and is now at Bent County. There are some wonderful people who work at BCCF, I have great respect for many of the CO's I have interacted with. That being said, I have also cringed at the sight of some of the COs I saw checking in - and I was seriously concerned for my son's safety if that individual were in charge of clearing a threat a/k/a perform their duties (Not everyone who is housed at these facilities is a monster deserving dehumanization). CoreCivic cleans up its image when the DOC representatives are coming to the facility. Even visitors learned to recognize the signs that DOC was in the building. I would love to see an undercover analysis occurring instead of scheduled notification giving CoreCivic the opportunity to warn everyone to be in their inspection uniform and on their best behavior.

When including a feasibility study, I would like to see the hard questions asked, holding a more intelligent conversation than "They're takin our prison!" What has been the actual benefit to the local community? What have been the drawbacks? Has there been an increase in "undesirables" since building the prison because Las Animas seems to have its seedy element. Many employees live in Pueblo and Colorado Springs, and drive to these small communities to work, then they drive home and take their economic benefit with them. There is HIGH turnover so I would like to know how many locals actually work at the facility. The private prison industry pays less than the state does, many trainees leave because it "isn't worth the pay."

It seems if CoreCivic were investing in the community that invested in it, Las Animas would be a community that the captive consumers would spend money and time in. Has it provided enough revenue to the community to benefit small business ownership? If the facility is procured by the state then what would be the benefits of that move, what other opportunity could residents pursue to direct benefit from the presence of the facility (albeit State run)?

To the local communities, I say: I stayed at National Chain hotels in La Junta because Las Animas doesn't really present an image that has seen significant or relevant economic gains. I spend very little, if any, money in Las Animas when I am forcibly drawn to your community to visit my loved one. You have a steady stream of captive revenue that you could benefit from, that is largely ignored.

The pandemic has prevented me to travel but once we clear this, I look forward to once again being able to hug and see him face-to-face. Overall, I am the type of person who will spend my money in local businesses, rather than national chains, whenever I can. Those options are minimal, and generally don't have appealing storefronts. Sincere apologies to anyone who takes this personally, I am hoping to provide an "outside consumer's" perspective.

Is the Private prison industry truly benefitting your life or using you as labor for their guaranteed revenue source? They make Billions in profit; your community is not benefitting as it should from creating captive capital. I would prefer to stay closer when I visit my loved one. When I visit, I am forced to spend elevated prices for vending machine food, drinks, and snacks. Do the math (before COVID) captive consumers spending all day, many are bringing multiple family members, the FIRST thing we do is stock up on food and snacks for our visit and continue to purchase throughout the entire visit. How does the community benefit from that revenue? The vending company is in Colorado Springs.

If the State were to acquire the facility, what would be the benefits? Reduction in turn over, improved training, safety, wages and standards that benefit employees? If most of the positions are filled by people who commute to work there, then you are not realizing the benefit of wages generated by the facility. You don't have to become a tourist town to benefit from the flood of money that is funneled to your community. If the State acquired the prison, CoreCivic would lose profit, money that they aren't sharing with you right now. If the prison is State run and stays there, you would significantly benefit from creating a community that visitors would want to stay in. Your competition is National chains in La Junta, not CDOC.

To the Consultants, I say: Please consider the information in this article https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/building.html#_edn19 . I find it accurate and there are references to support all of what has been my direct experience, or the experience of my loved one. The sad thing is, this article is from 2002 and all the cited facts are still true today, the private prison industry has failed to change despite being given almost two decades to change the way they operate in rural communities. Referenced studies have shown the actual impact to

communities, not just the promises spun by those who stand to benefit the most. Please see the reference to the true impact “property value increases” have on local poor and elderly, which typically make up a large majority of rural population. Let’s give this thing a proper shake and see what a true comparison analysis presents. Also give a good comparison of the job that prisons are supposed to do – rehabilitation (instead of a human warehouse), compare the programs and State credits given for the same programs in each facility: The GoFurther program is solely promoted by CoreCivic and not part of the state time reduction program, and is not recognized by parole. 7 Habits, ATC Drug & Alcohol Program are not recognized by DOC but when presented in other facilities, these programs are certified and accredited. There are no TC programs offered as programs are a budget line item that interferes with profit margin. Many programs exist on paper but have remained vacant for many years. Programs that do exist (pre-release and K9 companion) are very limited to specific individuals and some are limited to only 20 out of 1400 inmates. Please solicit feedback from inmate family members to broaden the polled perspective. Thank you for providing this open forum.

Kelli Tate, Crowley County

I would strongly encourage legislators to examine the impact closing the private prison would have on small communities, schools, churches, and economic aspects.

Kent Reyher, Bent County

To: State of Colorado Legislators,

Some State Legislators are unable to relate to economic issues facing less populated rural counties.

They are from areas that include a remarkably diverse quantity of industries and business. The higher populated areas (in the front range) have taken water and attracted other commerce from rural areas to meet their current needs which

naturally increases the burden on rural area needs in the future.

Agriculture areas have lost their market opportunities; Bent County a few years back lost an excellent Veterans' Hospital at Fort Lyon. Industry does not want to build in remote places due to multiple reasons.

Representative Lesly Herod should be thankful that private prisons are able to provide: 1) a service for the state, 2) employment opportunities for rural residents, 3) provides funds for counties that benefit all residents, and 4) do it while meeting all the requirements and guidelines demanded by the State at a competitive price.

Legislators should represent their district electors, but also for the good of the whole state. Rural communities have missed out not only on growth in Colorado but have lost industry and businesses in the communities for decades. The idea of buying back private prisons to utilize them for different things, to transition the local communities is backwards. Instead, bring in the new business, grow the community, and then remove the private prisons if needed. Colorado legislators should be looking at ways to improve economic conditions in rural communities, not make it worse. Rural counties in southeast Colorado for years have tried to welcome and encourage new business to develop in our area. It is hard if not almost impossible to accomplish. If Crowley County and Bent County has a problem, the State of Colorado has a problem.

Justin Miller, Bent County

Bent County Correctional Facility Public Hearing Comments – 12/01/20

Submitted by Justin Miller, Bent County resident and McClave Public School PreK-12 Board of Education Member

Bent County Colorado is a small, rural, sparsely populated county located in southeastern Colorado. Agriculture production is the county's main economic driver, primarily consisting of irrigated farming and cattle ranching.

In 2010 Bent County had the highest poverty rate in the state of Colorado. In 2018 Bent County had the second highest poverty rate in Colorado at 33.9% with only

Crowley County having a higher poverty rate at 44.3%. Economic challenges and hardship are a way of life in these sparsely populated rural counties. This was one of the reasons that in the early 1990s when the state of Colorado was struggling with an overcrowded prison population that they reached out to rural counties like Bent and Crowley to help find solutions.

In 1992 the state of Colorado was struggling with prison overcrowding and was forced to transfer Colorado prisoners to other states to be housed. Under the administration of then democratic Governor Roy Romer the Colorado Department of Corrections reached out to rural counties for help with an idea of constructing private prisons in rural areas of Colorado.

As expected, many residents were not excited about the idea of a prison in their county. But as the idea was discussed further interest grew and people began to see the benefits of additional stable employment for local citizens and the expansion of the tax base for local school, fire departments, police departments and county services. It was much desired chance at real economic diversification for Bent County for the first time in many, many years.

What started out as a discussion that had many residents nervous has grown into the largest employer in Bent County. In 1998 still under the democratic administration of Governor Roy Romer further challenges in the state prison system lead to the expansion of Bent County Correctional Facility with the facility being approximately doubled in size. In 2008 under the democratic administration of then Governor Bill Ritter the Bent County Correctional Facility was expanded once again to help meet the needs of the Colorado Department of Corrections.

At its current capacity Bent County Correctional Facility now employs approximately 220 employees. That may not sound like much, but in a county with a population of 5,577 people 220 employee is huge! To put that into perspective with some urban counties in Colorado, those 220 jobs in Bent County would be equivalent on a per capita basis to the following numbers is each of these Colorado Counties: Denver County-28,264, Jefferson County-22,993, Arapahoe-25,901, Adams-19,610 or El Paso-28,418.

Additionally, those 220 jobs in Bent County generate an annual payroll of

\$13.2 million which is well above the average per capita income in Bent County of \$14,777 per year (2018) and even over the median household income for Bent County of \$34,392 per year (2018).

As a resident, a parent, and a school board member of the McClave School District which is located in Bent County I am highly concerned about the loss of property tax base to Bent County. The privately owned Bent County Correctional Facility pays over \$1.1 million in property taxes each year that go to support our Fire Departments, Sheriff's Department, Ambulance Services, Schools, Water Districts, Libraries and Cemeteries. Even if these private correctional facilities were converted to state owned prisons the property tax base would be lost and our small impoverished counties would be left to struggle even harder to find ways to make ends meet and to serve our citizens and education our children. Bent County Correctional Facility is the largest property tax entity in Bent County. In addition to annual property taxes paid of \$1.1 million Bent County Correctional Facility also pays

\$510,000 annually in additional fees to Bent County.

Closing private prisons makes a nice talking point in a campaign speech, but once you start to do the math the numbers do not add up. I have heard it said that the reason for closing Colorado's private prisons is that no person should make a profit from the incarceration of another human being. While I agree that sounds good, the idea that profits will be ended by converting private prisons to state owned prisons is not correct or defensible. State prisons still buy supplies, uniforms, food, utilities, and many other items. Will the state prison make each supplier of these items show they are being purchased at production cost? Absolutely not more likely the state will purchase these items at a higher cost than the private prison would have as it is well known that the government is not a strong negotiator. Once again when you do the math the numbers do not add up. Currently the cost to house an inmate at a private prison in Colorado is \$57/day or \$20,805/year while the cost to house that same inmate at a state owned prison is \$106/day or \$38,690/year, and this does not include any capital cost for the construction or renovation of new state owned prisons. The cost of incarcerating an inmate in a state owned prison is 86% higher than in an

equivalent privately owned prison. So undoubtedly, profits will continue to be made and potentially even grow from the incarceration of other human beings, the profits will just be moved from one pocket to another. All while at the same time the state of will be putting a higher tax burden on the taxpayers of Colorado through higher inmate cost while simultaneously lowering property tax generation in struggling rural counties in the state.

The toll that will be paid by our small rural counties that are already struggling to stay alive will be tremendous! We must ask ourselves, in a time when the state is struggling to fund education, transportation, and many other needed services, why are we considering doing away with private prisons that operate more efficiently and provide services equivalent to state owned prisons? Why are we considering a change like this that will do away with economic diversification in rural Colorado?

Why? The numbers just do not add up!

Brian Burney, Otero County

Economically speaking jobs and private industry of any kind are foundationally critical to rural communities. Earners spend money to live near where they work and consume goods and services where they work. Each segmented industry provides the thread which makes up the web of investment in housing, education, healthcare, infrastructure, law enforcement, fire protection and art and culture. For too long in Colorado the formula for rural economic development has been to replicate what works in downtown urban areas or in mountain regions. The eastern plains of Colorado represent different needs and different way of life. Disruption to one industry will have far reaching effects to other industries including manufacturing and agriculture. We already live with an unprecedented amount of crime and increasing poverty rate. The threat to economic viability of communities and other industries will also be significantly harmed if prisons are converted from private to state run or worse closed all together. Rural Colorado, specifically the South Eastern Plains needs more jobs in order to contribute to the Colorado success story. According to the Economic Innovation Group - Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties are Distressed

Communities. Communities in distress have fewer contributors to School Boards, City Councils, Charitable Organizations and Community Cultural Programs. Thus, lack of jobs and investment created through private industry, in the form of payroll, property taxes, employee health care deteriorates foundational infrastructure and community human resources. As an owner of a 90 year old Family Owned and Operated Manufacturing business, I strongly oppose transfer of private prisons in our region to the State. Not because of what it would do to my business, but what it would mean to the surrounding communities and to my employees way of life in the region.

James Keehne, Kit Carson County

The Kit Carson County Correctional Facility located in Burlington, Kit Carson County, Colorado, privately owned by Core Civic opened its doors to house medium security, Colorado inmates in 1998, with a population capacity of 824. In 2006 another wing or building was added, bringing the total maximum inmate population to 1,488. The State of Colorado encouraged the building of privately owned facilities to drive economic development in rural Colorado, to reduce costs to the State in housing a growing inmate population, and to provide beds to inmates as state run facilities were at capacity. Between 1998 and 2016, both Colorado inmates and inmates from out of state were housed at the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility as allowed under C.R.S. 17-1-104.5 – Incarceration of inmates from other states – private contract prison facilities, which declares the following(1) The general assembly finds and declares that the importation of prisoners from other states into correctional facilities not operated by the department of corrections is a matter of statewide concern. (2) No inmate from a state other than Colorado may be received into the State of Colorado and be housed in a private contract prison facility or a prison facility operated by a political subdivision of the state: a. Without the express approval of the executive director, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld; and b. Unless the private contract prison facility operated by a political subdivision is designed to meet or exceed the appropriate security level for the inmate.(3) The department shall develop and rely upon criteria for the protection of the health,

safety, and financial interests of the state of Colorado as developed by the executive director(4) Upon violation of this section, the executive director may rescind his or her approval pursuant to subsection (2) of this section and must provide at least sixty days' notice to the contracting parties of the rescission. In 2016, the state of Colorado and other states began moving inmates out of Kit Carson County Correctional Facility and stopped intake proceedings. By July 2016, KCCCF was essentially shut down with only a skeleton maintenance crew remaining. The impact of the closure of Kit Carson County Correctional Facility was immediately felt in Kit Carson County, and in particular, the City of Burlington where the facility is sited. The prison closure has resulted in:

- Loss of approximately 300 jobs equating to over \$12 million in salary and benefits.
- Steady population decline as recorded on DOLA's State Demographic website where population has fallen from 8,205 to 7,128, a decline of 1,077 or 13% in Kit Carson County. Of the 1,077 decline, 1,002 were residents of the City of Burlington.
- Loss in annual property tax revenues of \$505,022 to Kit Carson County of which approximately \$60,000 annual property tax revenues are lost from the City of Burlington.
- Loss of sales tax revenues to the City of Burlington of approximately \$150,000 annually, funds greatly needed to improve quality of life issues in Burlington and surrounding areas
- Loss of utility fees to the City equating to \$330,000 annually, funds needed to improve infrastructure need so as to better serve and provide for services to our residents and visitors alike.
- Loss of approximately \$80,000 annually in other fees associated with prison operations, funds greatly needed to properly staff law enforcement concerns. This resulted in loss of jobs and the inability to attract and retain qualified applicants.

The loss of the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility located in Burlington; Colorado has resulted in the above effects. This is not speculation as to impact of private prison closure; this is our reality at this time. The loss has greatly

impacted economic development, where because of our inability to address aging infrastructure, we find it difficult to attract new business concerns, instead, it has had somewhat of a trickle-down effect, with business closures rather than development. Remember, the state encouraged the placement of these facilities in rural areas of Colorado to promote economic development, we hope that it is not the states intent to close them down as this will destroy local economies. Core Civic, the owner of the private prison known as the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility has been in negotiations with out of state inmate concerns, to house up to 1,200 low to medium security inmates in the KCCCF. It is imperative that the state of Colorado allow this to happen, and not allow for the shuttering of private prisons in Colorado. Statutorily this is allowed under current rules, though with the rules that are desired to be implemented, the state of Colorado wants to shut down all private facilities in Colorado. Currently, the state does not have the bed space in state run facilities to address the housing of its own inmates yet wants to shut down access to private concerns. We here in Kit Carson County and beyond are very against this approach and at the very least, desire to see out of state inmates having the opportunity to be housed in private prisons. Please do not deny us this opportunity to grow and thrive here in rural Colorado.

James Keehne, City Administrator City of Burlington

Gregory Swiatkowski, Burlington, Kit Carson County

School Districts in Kit Carson County have been especially impacted through decreases in property tax, and population decline. It is estimated that each student in Kit Carson County provides for approximately \$10,000 in annual funding as required under the Public Schools Finance Act of 1994.

During the 2015-2016 school year, when Kit Carson County Correctional Facility was operational, enrollment in the districts in Kit Carson The closure of the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility in Burlington, Colorado in 2016 has created dire economic consequences to all of Kit Carson County, and in particular, the City of Burlington. It resulted in:

- Loss of approximately 300 jobs equating to over \$12 million in salary and benefits, annually; and
- Steady population decline where population has decreased 13% in Kit Carson County and 25% in the City of Burlington; and
- Loss of sales tax revenues to the City of Burlington of approximately \$150,000 annually; and
- Loss of utility fees for the City equating to \$330,000 annually, and
- Loss of other fees associated with the prison operations of approximately \$80,000 annually; and
- Loss of property tax revenues of \$505,022 annually to Kit Carson County of which \$60,000 was lost from the City of Burlington tax revenues. Loss of property tax revenues directly impacts the funding of special districts in Kit Carson County to include five (5) school districts, two (2) fire districts, Health and human services districts, Emergency/Medical Service district, and the Cemetery district.

County were recorded with the Colorado Department of Education at 1,415. 2016-2017 numbers were reduced to 1,273 and have steadily declined to 1,258 for the 2019-2020 school year. This is a loss of 85 students in Burlington School District and 72 student loss throughout the other four districts in Kit Carson County, equating to \$850,000 loss to the Burlington School District annually, and \$720,000 loss to the other districts in annual education funding. Annually, \$1,570,000 in state funding has been lost to our educational systems, resulting in low pay for teachers and the inability to attract and retain qualified staff.

The loss of the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility located in Burlington; Colorado has resulted in the above effects. This is not speculation as to impact of private prison closure; this is our reality. The loss has greatly impacted economic development, and our education systems in particular. Remember, the state encouraged the placement of these facilities in rural areas of Colorado to promote economic development and growth.

Gregory Swiatkowski, Mayor City of Burlington

Esteban Pedroza, Crowley County

Hello,

The closure of Crowley county private prison would have a devastating outcome on the surrounding communities including the town of Pueblo located on Pueblo county.

Other communities such as the towns of Fowler, Manzanola, Rocky Ford and many others depend on the Crowley private prison for employment and surrounding business for daily sales of essential supplies and needs.

My wife and I live in the city of Pueblo, but my wife is employed by Core Civic, which runs the prison and its closure would be a complete and total devastation to our standard of living.

Debra Haverfield, Otero County

Closing ANY of these prisons will devastate the already struggling economies of Bent, Crowley, and Otero counties! I have zero confidence that "recommend strategies to diversify the affected local economies" will provide ANY tangible relief to the people who will have their lives and livelihoods shattered by the closing of these facilities.

DO NOT DO THIS!!!!

Steven Salazar, Bent County

I have been an employee of Bent County Correctional Facility for nearly 18 years. My wife and I decided to raise our family in this community, and I became interested in corrections at the age of 22 with the goals of having a good career and being able to make a good stable life for our family. We currently have 5 children whom have all been in the Las animas school district, two of which have graduated , 1 senior this year and two children will remain in the school district. We are big supporters of the community and are involved in many community functions. My wife participates on several boards with Las animas school district.

My son was on the las animas city council and participated in several community functions until moving on to college. For these past 17 plus years I have watched the countless heroes of Bent County Correctional Facility enter those gates day in and day out providing a quality public service ensuring we are keeping community, staff and offenders safe every day. For the last several years we have been 100% committed in the reentry process ensuring we are doing our part to reduce recidivism. The last few years we have added core civics- Go Further Process, 7 habits, Parents on a mission, Dave Ramsey's Financial planning and the newest program was My song for Life collaborated with Mark Colley. Reentry at our facility starts from the moment they enter the building with case management staff completing CTAPs and planning for success. Correctional officers and all staff are involved in the reentry process either through assisting with classes or simply leading by example. We need the lawmakers to understand there is very important work being done in rural Colorado and there is life outside of the front range. The closure of the two remaining private prisons would be devastating to either counties and we need to ensure stability for community, Staff and offenders. This county came to the aid of lawmakers back in the early 90s providing these beds and they are just as important to the citizens as they were back then. I urge you all to please do the right thing for rural Colorado and taxpayers

Jody Bracy, Otero County

Closing the prisons in Bent and Crowley counties will literally and figuratively decimate three counties. It will have deep and lasting impacts for Otero, Bent and Crowley counties. Closing these prisons will kill the local economies of the counties in Southeastern Colorado. These are literally the poorest counties in the state. The private prisons are major employers. There are not a whole lot of other places for these people to work in the area. If these prisons are closed not only do you lose the jobs of those working at the prisons. You will lose jobs in the private sector such as the grocery store, the local pharmacy, schoolteachers, contractors, county employees, city employees, and many others.

Then there are the losses in taxes which I seriously doubt anyone has considered.

You will lose sales tax revenue, payroll taxes for the state, property tax revenue, motor vehicle taxes. This impacts these small communities harder and more devastatingly than the metropolitan areas.

Our local schools already struggle financially due to the fact that the area is economically depressed. Closing the prisons will deeply impact our schools which will have deep, devastating and lasting impacts on our children's education and lives.

Our elected representative for HD 47, Rep. Buentello didn't look at the bigger picture when she voted for this. She betrayed the people she was elected to represent. She betrayed her oath of office. She failed her constituents who live in Otero County and work in Bent and Crowley counties. Since she failed to protect the interests of her constituents, we voted her out of office and yet we will have to pay for her short sidedness and unfathomably poor decisions.

I head up a local charity that provides toys for young children (14 years old and younger). Every year we help around 800 to 1000 children who otherwise wouldn't have a Christmas. We only help those with a verified need. They are vetted through the Department of Social Services and Law Enforcement. Every year there are more and more children on the list that needs help. Closing the prisons is going to greatly increase the need while it also substantially decreases the donations we receive.

As a member of the community I implore you to reconsider the closing of the private prisons in Bent County and Crowley County. If you choose to close these prisons you will be killing the economy of Otero, Bent and Crowley counties.

Cathy Wooten, Bent County

Closing the prison would be so detrimental to our community. Please keep the prison open.

[Charlotte Salazar, Bent County](#)

Closing our prison would have a devastating effect on our community. Our town is barely surviving now, and the prison is our main source of survival and employment. Without our prison our schools would suffer immensely as 200 families would be forced to relocate and other sources such as the only grocery store we have would suffer also. I have lived here most of my life as other community members have and this is our home and we depend on the prison which is really all we have since the closure of Fort Lyon VA medical center which was a huge mistake to close that in my opinion. I would hate to see families having to move away from their close relatives. Please consider the devastating effect the closure would have on our whole community and I know everyone here feels the same way.

[Dayla Elliott, Crowley County](#)

I think it would be a grave mistake to close the private prison in Crowley and Bent. They provide an economical boost to these two counties. It therefore makes a win win for the state as well.

Nadine.Carrillo-Mendoza@state.co.us, Otero County

My husband has worked at the prison in Olney Springs for 2 1/2 years. He was hesitant to move back to the Valley knowing that job opportunities were slim in the area but decided to make the move back. He was so happy and felt so blessed to have been offered a job at the prison with such great pay and offered health insurance and retirement. The thought of the prisons closing makes me afraid, but also very sad. My husband along with other employees have been dedicated employees to this company and worked VERY hard and take pride in their work. If you are not from the valley you have no clue how scarce good paying jobs with benefits are. To think that potentially all these hard working employees are going to be out of a job, some that's the only income in the household. What are we supposed to do, no?

No job to pay bills, groceries, daycare. Which means people moving out of the

area, these counties will turn into ghost towns. For the higher ups that are in position to make decisions i ask them to think how they would feel, what would they do in this situation.

Rodarte, Weld

Governor Polis I have written you in regard to the situation in Bent County Correctional Facility with no response from your clemency office or you. There are three active cases there and if there are options to quarantine them, why aren't measures being g taken to protect the others and those at higher risk? It states in The Denver Post on November 13th, 2020 that you are the individual who is in authority to make these changes. Please protect those who are at your mercy. My son.

Michael Dietrich, Crowley County

Closing Crowley County Correctional Facility would have an enormously negative impact on the county's operational budget. Unlike Arkansas Valley Correctional, CCCF contributes approximately one dollar per offender per day, Ark Valley being a State run facility does not.

Also, it would cost considerably more to house the offenders at Crowley County Correctional in a state facility. It is simple economics and the reason that private prisons exist in the first place.

In addition, CCCF's offender population is currently over 1,500 which means that unless the state reopens one of their facilities it is unlikely that they have the bed space to accommodate this number of offenders.

Frank Smith, Out of state

I've been online for a half hour and no one has opened the meeting yet.

I'm concerned about Bent County continuing to depend on the buggy whip industry, ignoring the days of the horseless carriage. Wall Street understands that

this model is finished. CoreCivic is on very shaky ground, a situation of its own making.

I'll write a second note, assuming no one come on, about the amount of communicable disease and CoreCivics' inept response to the pandemic.

Aug 20, 2020

Is This the Beginning of The End for Private Prisons? The Market Seems to Think So Morgan Simon Senior Contributor

It's been a riveting few weeks for those following the private prison and immigrant detention industry, which incarcerates nearly one tenth of the US's total prison population and over 80% of immigrants in detention. Private prison companies face various courts of public opinion, and it matters greatly how they are both seen and treated by financial markets, public policy makers, and finally, the general public and social justice advocates. Here's a look at how the industry's two major, publicly-traded players — CoreCivic and GEO Group — had a tough quarter across all of these realms.

Financial Markets

This week marks a significant demotion for CoreCivic from the S&P Midcap 400 index, to the S&P SmallCap 600. If you're not familiar with indexes, they are lists of stocks that investors use to evaluate performance of certain segments of the stock market. The best known perhaps is the S&P 500; "large" cap stocks, then comes the "mid" and "small" based on the overall value of the company. Size matters: dropping down a level means your market value has fallen enough for you to have a new group of peers.

Motley Fool writer Rich Smith didn't mince words in his recent assessment of the company: "CoreCivic is underperforming the market. Last quarter, earnings tumbled 54%, and CoreCivic shares are down 47% in the past year... I see little reason for investors to buy the stock today."

This drop for CoreCivic is influenced by challenges the company and sector has had in credit markets — according to the Nashville Post, CoreCivic's hometown paper, major banks "have largely turned their backs on the private prison industry" in the wake of immense public pressure against the sector's role in

both mass incarceration and immigrant detention. CoreCivic's credit rating subsequently fell to BB-, a notch lower on the scale already colloquially known as "junk" bond status. Even if you don't speak fluent finance, one can imagine "small" and "junky" are not exactly how a CEO wants his company to be known.

CoreCivic's struggles culminated in two major recent announcements: the company will be suspending its dividend payments, and changing its corporate status from a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) to a C Corp.

Unpacking these items: dividends are payments companies make to shareholders. Stocks that provide consistent dividends are often called "income" stocks because they are designed to provide you exactly that: cold hard cash that people can depend on. Seeking Alpha notes that in the past, "many articles have touted the prison REIT as a strong income investment, thanks to its recession-resilient business model and its high dividend yield." But their recent headline, "CoreCivic: An Income Investment That Went South" implies a far less favorable view. They summarize their position in three bullets:

CoreCivic's access to capital is a lot worse compared to the past. CoreCivic has, therefore, cut its dividend to preserve cash.

CoreCivic is inexpensive, but there are risks that have to be considered, which is why shares may still not be a great buy right here.

Advocate-investors like Tanay Tatum-Edwards, the founder and CEO of FreeCap Financial, notes that both GEO Group and CoreCivic "explicitly identify a reduction in incarceration rates as a material risk in their annual reports." She urges "shareholders of these two stocks, including the two largest — mutual-fund and exchange-traded fund providers Vanguard Group and BlackRock... [to] divest from these companies."

Damon Hininger, chief executive of CoreCivic, told the Financial Times the company's cost of capital had been increased by its "incorrect" characterization as a "non-ESG investment."

While GEO Group has not announced a change to their corporate structure, the Financial Times noted the company will "lower its debt by curtailing its dividend. It is targeting a \$100m reduction this year." The Financial Times also reported

that GEO Group has seen its stock plummet over 40% since the beginning of March, “even as US stocks have largely recovered from the corona-induced market sell-off.” It makes sense why, according to the Motley Fool earlier this summer, “as investors sold CoreCivic, they also sold shares of The GEO Group” in predicting similar risks to the company’s fundamental business model.

GEO Group’s chief executive George Zoley said in a recent statement that he believes GEO’s “earnings and cash flows remain strong and our business is supported by long-term real estate assets and high-quality contracts entailing essential government services. We also recognize that political rhetoric based on the mischaracterization of our role as a government services provider has created concerns regarding our future access to capital. While we do not have any upcoming debt maturities until 2022, we have announced today an anticipated reduction to our future quarterly dividend payments in order to preserve capital and focus on paying down debt.” Notably, GEO Group is facing an investor lawsuit regarding their Covid-19 response — a result of advocates drawing attention to the conditions inside the private facilities. Which leads to the next stakeholder group showing intense opposition to private prisons lately...

The General Public and Activists

Concern about the private prison industry dates back decades, as many people fundamentally believe, across the political spectrum, that making money by locking people up is simply not the right incentive structure for a just nation. As a Kentucky Republican leader once told me, “ending private prisons is something we can all agree to, because society should privatize things we want more of — not less of.” Advocates like Dream Defenders and The Movement for Black Lives have been calling for the end to private prisons as just one piece of completely re-envisioning the criminal legal system — a movement encompassing calls for the removal of unjust and racist sentencing laws, more public services like mental health facilities and drug treatment, and more.

From 2018 on, as private prisons moved more deeply into the immigrant detention space, everyday advocates became incensed as they learned that their money in the bank could potentially be financing detention centers. Household-name banks like JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo were the biggest

financiers of private prisons and immigrant detention. Advocate organizations in the Families Belong Together coalition such as MomsRising/Mamás Con Poder, Presente.org, Real Money Moves, Make the Road New York, CREDO, Little Sis, and ICCR organized over 600,000 petitions and 500 in-person actions across the country. In the wake of this activism, eight major banks — representing 87.4% of all known financing — announced they would no longer finance private prison companies.

This was an unusual twist on the typical divestment campaign, which usually calls for investors to sell their shares, rather than stop providing debt. And these campaigns are often seen as symbolic rather than directly material to companies.

Analyzing these recent efforts, Financial Times cited Boston College law professor and pension divestment expert David Webber, who said: “Despite the controversies, it is rare for a divestment campaign to actually inflict financial harm on its target.” Within the private prison industry, however, “there seems to be some of the strongest evidence I’ve seen to date that divestment campaigns . . . can actually work in that bottom-line sense of hurting the target economically, and not just raising attention.”

This is to say that public opinion turning against private prisons isn’t just noise — it’s actually impacting their performance on the market.

Public awareness of private prisons has been reinvigorated this summer, particularly because of their problematic response to Covid-19. Recently The Intercept reported that GEO and ICE, working together, allegedly tried to suppress testing in order to avoid having to proactively address Covid. “Internal emails released as part of a lawsuit against ICE show that the agency and GEO Group officials could have tested everyone in Mesa Verde for Covid-19 but chose not to, knowing that to make room for positive cases to isolate, they would need to drastically reduce the total number of people held in the facility.”

The Intercept also found a lack of testing and medical care in transitional housing managed by GEO. After multiple men had already died from Covid-19, “Back at the halfway house, word from residents was that they were planning to test everyone for the coronavirus. But a week later, that still hadn’t

happened. On June 29, [the facility’s director] issued an all-staff memo, which was posted inside the building. ‘Be advised that the city of Houston COVID testing team has changed the date for on-site testing,’ the piece of paper read. Where the new date had been written — July 6, 2020 — someone crossed it out and wrote, ‘NEVER.’ ”

The first confirmed coronavirus-related detained migrant death — that of Carlos Escobar-Mejia — was at CoreCivic’s Otay Mesa detention center in San Diego, which has seen over 168 detainees test positive with Covid-19, as well as at least 11 ICE employees and 30 CoreCivic workers. Journalists found evidence of private prison employees suppressing protests from detained immigrants who were concerned about their health. For example, on May 5th, the Intercept cited a detainee who explained, “People were asking for medical attention for some of the sick people in there... But because [the staff] didn’t pay attention, they began protesting.” Detainees reported that correctional staff at the CoreCivic-operated Stewart Detention Center then pepper-sprayed detainees protesting the lack of health precautions taken during the COVID-19 outbreak.

A spokesperson for CoreCivic noted, “CoreCivic is working hard to protect our employees, those entrusted to our care, and our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic,” through measures like providing PPE.

Public Policy

In general, the government is the private prison sector’s primary “customer” — whether it be ICE, state governments or federal. Hence public policy has a major impact. The industry faces three major headwinds in this moment: the first, as explored above, is the impact of Covid-19, as prisons and detention centers have served “like petri dishes” for transfer and thus governments have moved to try and reduce populations. As the New York Times noted, “In American jails and prisons, more than 140,000 people have been infected and at least 932 inmates and correctional officers have died. During interviews with dozens of inmates across the country, many said they were frightened and frustrated by what prison officials have acknowledged has been an uneven response to the virus.” Groups like Human Rights Watch, therefore, have been calling on governments to “substantially reduce” prison populations, which means less beds for them to fill

and thus less revenue for private prisons. “Are we getting near a bottom?” asked one concerned shareholder on CoreCivic’s quarterly earnings call, in reference to the drop in detained immigrants from roughly 50,000 in 2019 to 22,000 in 2020 — crass phrasing to use in discussing human beings.

The second factor has been a wave of rejections of private prisons at the state level. In Oklahoma, for example, the state ended a CoreCivic contract last month with the Cimarron Correctional facility, “in order to help the Oklahoma Department of Corrections meet their budget needs” in the midst of the pandemic, according to CoreCivic. In New Mexico, the Educational Retirement Board is currently hearing arguments to drop private prison stock from their pension fund. Finally, in California, a judge upheld the statewide phasing out of private prisons in a recent court ruling. According to Responsible Investor, “seven out of the state’s 10 private prisons are owned by GEO,” and are ordered to fully close by 2028. “The ruling is as much about ICE’s private prison enterprise across the country as it is about the ban on it here in California,” says Jordan Wells, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California. “Because if California can do it, then other states can as well.”

The third headwind, of course, is the possibility of a new federal administration. Democratic presidential candidate, Joe Biden, has vowed to “end the federal government’s use of private prisons... And make clear that the federal government should not use private facilities for any detention, including detention of undocumented immigrants.” While the federal branch can’t control state-level programs, Mother Jones noted that “Biden promises to create a new federal grant program that will only give money to states if they do not contract with private prisons,” adding a carrot for them to join in hopefully seeking alternatives to incarceration.

Who will win on November 3rd is a major source of anxiety for many Americans — and this includes financial markets, who are watching closely to see how future policy will impact the private prison industry?

So, What Happens Next?

Particularly in the wake of the nation’s renewed attempts to reckon with racial justice, there has been a greater awareness about the power of money to make

social change. It's easier than ever for investors to understand and make conscious decisions about which companies they hold. Resources like As You Sow's Prison Free Funds tool are now publicly available, to help individuals "find out if your money is invested in" economic systems like "the prison industrial complex, exploitative prison labor, and immigration detention centers." According to As You Sow CEO Andrew Behar, the release of the tool was fast tracked for this moment, when "investors are increasingly wary of their money benefiting companies that contribute to 'racist policies' in the U.S. which disproportionately affect Black people and other people of color, such as long sentences for nonviolent offenses and the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border." Additionally, wealth manager and investor resources like NorthStar Asset Management's "Prison Labor in the Supply Chain" paper, Robasciotti & Philipson's "Racial Justice Exclusion List," Cornerstone Capital's "Investing to Advance Racial Equity" research, and my firm Candide Group's "Financial Activist Playbook for Supporting Black Lives" are encouraging peers to identify and screen out for-profit prisons and ancillary companies.

BlackRock and Vanguard are the two largest investors in GEO Group and CoreCivic. "The vast majority of the equity assets we manage for clients are held in index funds and ETFs, which are designed to track the investment performance of third party indices" noted a BlackRock spokesperson. "Index providers determine which companies to include in the indices they create. For investors seeking to avoid certain holdings, BlackRock also offers sustainability-oriented ETFs that do not invest in these two companies." A Vanguard spokesperson said "Vanguard's Investment Stewardship team actively identifies material risks across our portfolio including issues related to equality, injustice, and diversity... We have engaged with companies in this industry and will continue to do so, representing the interests of Vanguard investors and voicing concerns over basic human rights."

It's possible that with the growing trend of sustainable investing, investors like BlackRock and Vanguard who choose to stay in industries like private prisons — which continue to face criticism across the financial market, public policy, and civil society — will be increasingly alienated. Whatever your opinion may be of private prisons, this is a sector where your dollar and vote undoubtedly make a

difference.

Thanks to Jasmine Rashid for her contributions to this piece. Full disclosures related to my work available here. This post does not constitute investment, tax, or legal advice, and the author is not responsible for any actions taken based on the information provided herein. The organization Real Money Moves mentioned in this article was co-founded by author Morgan Simon. CoreCivic has filed a lawsuit against author Morgan Simon and her firm Candide Group, claiming that certain of her prior statements on Forbes.com regarding their involvement in family detention and lobbying activities are “defamatory.”

Paul Pacheco, Huerfano

None.

Rich Vaughan, Crowley County

What is the current turnover rate versus the state DOC turnover rate at AVCF? What is the current and last year's fines due to staff shortages paid back to the state for under mandatory staffing? What is the state status on the wastewater plant that serves the prison? Last I heard it was close to being shut down due to dereliction of maintenance.

Chastity Salazar, Bent County

As a lifelong member of this community I've seen businesses come and go... Safeway, Duckwall's, too many restaurants to remember, The VA Hospital at Fort Lyon, and DOC Fort Lyon to name a few. Why do the Senators, DOC, and other big wig politicians think they know what's best for our community? In all honesty, not a damn thing! They continue to take from an already impoverished community to fatten their pockets and it's disgusting and infuriating. Why would someone want to pay a higher price for a commodity as opposed to a bargain with higher quality!? I'll tell you who, greedy politicians who have nothing more in mind than to benefit themselves. Closing CoreCivic private facilities including

Bent County will without a doubt completely crush this County, our schools, and most importantly: FAMILIES. If you are one that believes these felons shouldn't be incarcerated you need to get your head out of the sand. THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM places them in these facilities for the SAFETY of the American people.

Many inmates are similar to addicts in the way that it can take upwards of 15 inpatient rehab facilities for a possible life change... I've seen this with my own eyes! For once think about US, the members of the impoverished communities that are also important in keeping America running. God Bless.

Duane Gurule, Otero County

My name is Duane Gurulé and I am a Rocky Ford resident and native. I'd like to share a bit about my education and professional background and my qualification to provide public comment about the Colorado Prison Utilization Study and its potential impact on Crowley/Bent County.

I am a 2004 Rocky Ford High School graduate and I hold a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems from Metropolitan State University of Denver. The majority of my professional experience has been in the IT industry as a Systems and Network administrator. I currently work for The Colorado Trust as a Community Organizer for southeast Colorado working to address the social determinants of health and increase health equity in our region. I am also a Director for the Board of Southeast Health Group as well as the Board Chairman for the CDS Policy Council. My education and experience demonstrate my passion and knowledge for business and economics, social justice, and education. But my most important qualification is my personal experience as a Hispanic minority from a low-income family, and as a formerly incarcerated person in both State and Private prisons.

We've heard the statistics on the economic input of CoreCivic's presence in our region. I'd like to share some other finance data on CoreCivic.

- CoreCivic went public on July 18, 1998 at \$101.25 per share
- They have been on a downward trend which has their stock price at \$7.09 at the close of the market today (11/30).

- 22 states have banned the use of private prisons. Colorado introduced Bill 1019 this year. Minnesota introduced a similar bill this year. And All of GEO Group's known bank partners — JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, BNP Paribas, SunTrust, and Barclays — announced they would no longer provide lines of credit to the company by September 2020.
- This is a company on a decline in an industry that is burning out. We have two of CoreCivic's detention facilities in a State that has increasingly passed some of the unfriendliest policies for their industry. We can trust that CoreCivic's doesn't care about the inmates or their employees. They care about their shareholders and with the shareholder's best interest in mind CoreCivic's time in Colorado will be limited.

The sad reality is that Private prisons make money based on how many inmates they house. These companies need inmates to be in operation, essentially making incarcerated people a required commodity for financial gain.

Our justice system requires convicted offenders to pay restitution for their crimes by spending time in a correctional facility. However, the mission of correctional institutions should be to reform and prepare inmates to re-enter society, not just house them while they serve their sentences. This should always remain the ultimate objective of our correctional system.

Counter to this objective, private prisons do not have incentives to reform or rehabilitate inmates. The longer an inmate stays in a private facility, or the more times they re-offend and return, the more private facilities make off them. The late Huerfano County and Kit Carson facilities as well as Crowley and Bent County are known among inmates as the Las Vegas or Wild West of DOC. It's a free-for-all which is not only detrimental to rehabilitation but actually stem criminal activity. A nick name you will not hear in this report is "Crowley Ink" given its name for being the facility where you go in with clean skin and come out with bodies, faces and heads completely tattooed. The environments of Crowley and Bent CCF do not promote a space for rehabilitating inmates,

promoting self-directed changes, or reducing recidivism.

I recently read a blog article published on the CoreCivic website stating that BCCF and CCCF had the highest level of GED completing in 2020. I cannot find that data on the CDOC website, but I would say that from my experience it is because most inmates come out of DRDC and go to privates and then progress or regress back to state facilities with their GED. There are very few programs available in the private facilities. However, there are dozens of programs for rehabilitation led by qualified instructors available at state-run facilities. These programs truly support inmates in succeeding upon reentry into society. These programs supported me in succeeding upon my reentry into society and set a foundation for the positions of leadership I am in today.

In all, private prisons are bad business, and this is our opportunity to move ahead from a forgettable era with them in our region. Walsenburg moved on. Burlington moved on. It shouldn't be about the money. It should be about the PEOPLE. Let's move on.

I am in 100% agreement with those who say that losing a company of this size would have a detrimental effect on the region's economy. However, I'm of the opinion that we cannot ethically support a company which makes a profit on the incarceration and involuntary servitude of a human being.

I believe we as a community should demand better for our region in moving away from an industry of disrepute. We are in a position as a community to use this study to our advantage by being proactive and creating a better economy, an economy founded on innovation and leading in what we know best – Agriculture.

My recommendation is for our local leaders to look at recruiting a national Cannabis cultivation and processing company looking for a new location in Colorado. A company in a \$60 billion dollar industry. A company that needs the infrastructure and workforce Crowley/Bent County could offer. A for-profit company that would continue to pay the property taxes the county depends on. A company that could provide the annual payroll required to stimulate the local economy for growth. A company that is leading in innovation in the Cannabis industry – which is also the Ag industry and it's what we do best.

Now, I know that easy to say, but with the hard work of key stakeholders and with the right opportunity it's feasible. This study is being done to identify the impact that closing these private prisons will have on the local economy. We've heard many comments today that will provide support for the devastation it will cause. The data will also support that. Denver knows that much. Our opportunity now is to leverage our position with the State and demand a program and budget that will incentivize the right company to take over this facility. With the support of Representative Holtorf and incoming Senator Cleave Simpson along with County Commissioners and other local leaders the State could create a program in partnership under the Department of Local Affairs and the Office of Economic Development and International Trade that will support local efforts to create a new regional economic driver.

I'll end with a quote from John C. Maxwell which speaks to both critical pieces of this issue.

"If you're proactive, you focus on preparing. If you're reactive, you end up focusing on repairing."

If we're proactive as a State, we can focus on preparing for a better future for our youth and the populations which have been disenfranchised by New Jim Crow laws and the prison industrial complex. As a result, we'll spend less on repairing our broken individuals, broken families, and broken communities.

And, if we're proactive as a community, we can focus on co-creating a better future for our business and job economy. As a result, we'll spend less time repairing a broken economy, broken tax basis, and a broken community.

Thank you.

Amy G, Jefferson County

My husband is an inmate at CCCF, I understand that these private prisons produce a great deal of revenue for your town however the prisoners that are housed in these facilities are more than just a dollar sign, they are husband's, sons, fathers and brothers, They are people. Yes, they committed a crime, but they are still human. Let me tell you the truth about this facility, what goes on

behind those walls and what it's like to live in this prison. 1. The ceilings are falling apart. 2. When the toilet floods in one cell it floods in multiple cells and the inmates are not given proper supplies to clean it up. 3. More than half the showers in each pod are broken. 4. Their showers are either scolding hot or freezing cold, nothing in-between. 5. The number of drugs and alcohol that are inside this prison is ridiculous. 6. The statement that was made during the meeting about getting tattoos in this prison is absolutely true.

The staff is incredibly lazy, offender mail does not get passed out until late at night, the case managers say they will do things and then never do, the staff is incredibly rude to family that calls in inquiring about their loved one. 8. These men are working 8-9 hours a day for 83 cents, some of them are working 2 jobs and still only make 83 cents a day. 9. The classes and programs that are offered are extremely limited. It is so bad that there are inmates in there with drug, alcohol, and anger issues and they are being told they do not qualify for any of the treatment options that are offered in this prison. 10. The food that these men are served, you would not even feed to your pets. 11. They can't or won't even provide these men with proper medical and dental treatment. My husband is constantly on and off his blood pressure medication because they can't get his meds into the prison before he runs out, even with 2-3 weeks' notice they still fail to meet these men's basic needs.

The hard truth is that this prison does not care about the rehabilitation of these men. The only thing they care about is the money that are bringing in. While the thousands of men that are currently living in Crowley County Correctional facility and Bent County Correctional Facility may be nothing but criminals and dollar signs for Core Civic and the community, I want you to remember that these men are far more than that to the people that love them and are out here fighting for them. Each and every one of the men that are mistreated in these private prisons has a name and they deserve to be in a prison that will give them a fighting chance That is not Crowley

Jessica Cruz, Jefferson County

Capitalism, the beautiful system of America's economy, allows for money

making opportunities in almost every situation. There are a few things that should be off-limits to enterprise and the prison system should be firmly in the off-limits category

Privatized prisons have one goal in mind: not to rehabilitate prisoners but to make money on others' mistakes anyway they can.

The difference between private and government prisons is similar to that of public and private universities. At the end of the day, the private prisons and private universities are for profit. It is trying to make money whatever way it can.

Private prisons make money on government stipends. The government will pay the prison X amount of dollars to house a prisoner, and the contract will continue as long as it is theoretically cheaper to house the prisoner in a private prison. More prisoners equal more money for private prisons. The private prisons then, like any good business, try to lower their costs in order to increase their profits. Private prisons house a little over 8% of the U.S. prison population, and they have a financial incentive to house more.

This system is flawed for multiple reasons, the first of which being the purpose of a prison.

Prisons are designed as a punishment, yes, but also as a rehabilitation center to help inmates be able to make the jump back into normal society. However, private prisons have little-to-no incentive to help rehabilitate prisoners because that eliminates a possible revenue stream.

The recidivism rate, the rate at which former inmates are arrested and enter back into prison, is high in the U.S. A study done by the U.S. Bureau of Justice showed that of prisoners released in 2005, 83% were arrested in the nine years following release. The system isn't working the way it should, and private prisons have a vested interest in not changing that statistic.

Missouri is an example of a state that has lower recidivism rate and has absolutely zero private prisons. Missouri has a recidivism rate at 43.9%, according to the Missouri Department of Corrections, which is nearly half the national average. There are many factors that can go into this, but the lack of

private prisons helps substantially.

Private prisons are not only bad for inmates, they are bad for employees as well. Employees of private prisons make \$5,000 less per year than their government counterparts and receive nearly 60 hours less training, according to a study done by the Justice Policy Institute. This leads to a higher turnover rate and prison employees who are less prepared for their jobs, which is bad for both employees and prisoners.

On top of all the problems that private prisons present, they're morally wrong. Their goal is to keep people in prison longer or to get more inmates to maximize profits.

The prison system is meant to prevent crimes and rehabilitate those that have already committed crimes, but private prisons goals are opposite to that. They want more convictions and more recidivism because it helps their bottom line.

The private prisons don't do the job of a prison, and they aren't incentivized too. It's time for them to end!!

Private prisons fuel corruption Nathan English

Published: October 17, 2019

This piece originally appeared on the Northwest Missourian.

Tim Creany, MD, Denver

I am a physician and have worked in CDOC for 19 years. During that time, I have been employed in the medical clinics of 6 different facilities. I have worked in the private prisons now for the last 6 years and the level of care given is excellent. I am impressed by how much work the medical dept does and by their methods of staffing and treating patients. The medical clinic at BCCF is far and away the best run I have seen and experienced.

It would be devastating to the local community if this prison were shut down. It has stayed near capacity for the last 6 years, quickly adapting to CDOC's needs and it is hard to imagine CDOC finding alternative beds for all the inmates housed at BCCF.

I have had numerous patients tell me that they get excellent care at BCCF. I implore you to keep this prison open for the option of good local employment as well as the ability of inmates to get excellent medical care.

Blaine Arbuthnot, Crowley County

I would like to comment after Crowley Counties Public Meeting. All except one of the speakers were positive about Core Civic and the positive benefit to Crowley County and the Arkansas Valley. A few points that I would like on the record.

1. Government enters into public-private agreements all the time. This benefits both the government and the private co. Private business tends to be more efficient and yes expects to make a profit. As corrections go the privates find ways to streamline the process yet provide all the deliverables that the state monitors and requires.
2. Our board has been told many times from high level DOC officials that the state facilities would not pass the requirements that the private prisons must meet as required by the state.
3. The only anti-prison individual that spoke reminds me of societies current problem. Someone that blames others for their problems and never considers that they are to blame. They tend to be the victim whenever they don't get their way or are questioned about an event.
4. The state does not include all costs related to running the prisons. The cost of construction, cost of funds, maintenance, retirement and who knows what else is not in their prison costs. The BILLION dollars that Crowley County Prison has saved the state, could be much higher that we can figure. Dollars saved that are used for health care, Medicare, Medicaid, and all other programs that help law abiding citizens.
5. The early release of inmates around the state should concern everyone. A high percentage of inmates agreed to plea's which reduced the serious of their crimes. We are not releasing people back into society that jay walked. Many have committed serious crimes and should remain in prison to protect society.

Lucile Nichols, Crowley County

(former Crowley County Clerk) - Closure of the private prisons would have a huge negative impact on nearby communities. Loss of prison jobs would result in loss of family income and loss of support for local businesses. Many prison employees are Crowley County High School graduates. The prisons provide good jobs so that young people can find work in the community. Loss of property tax would seriously cut county services.

Sandra Brown, Otero County

I personally have worked for Bent County Correctional Facility for 20 years. This facility has been the center of a lot of our lives in this area. I have raised my family and taken care of both my ailing parents and my mother and father in law during the last of their lives. I could not have done this without the ability to have employment in this area, and the caring support of the staff here at BCCF. My daughter works for this facility as well and is supporting her family through her employment at BCCF.

There is so little for employment here in this small area of Colorado and it is more like a family than a business. We know each other personally and most of our families know each other as well.

Throughout the years that I have been employed here, this facility has worked closely with the community on food drives (local and surrounding areas), housing project, Christmas Angel Trees, community cleanup days, Toy bowels, color runs, Santa Fe Trail Day booths, disc golf signs. We work closely with the Community leaders, County Commissioners, Bent County Development, Helping Hands, and the schools.

Cheryl Floyd, Bent County

My son has been incarcerated at BCCF for 8 years. Conditions there have significantly deteriorated in the past few months, due to COVID. They're so short-

staffed due to the virus that they're not even segregating the COVID-positive inmates from the rest of the prison population.

The prison and the commissary warehouse are severely short-staffed. CDOC statewide has implemented a new restriction on commissary orders, such that inmates can only order a few essentials, but not any food. My son depends on the commissary food items to supplement the chow hall food, which is woefully inadequate.

Other loved ones of inmates have reported to me that their loved ones are currently sicker than they've ever been and the BCCF medical department has run out of Ibuprofen and acetaminophen. So, these inmates are suffering with no medication whatsoever.

My son reported to me this afternoon that there are so many COVID-positive prisoners that they're not even segregating them anymore. There are so many correctional officers (COs) out sick or on quarantine that there is ONE CO for 3 entire pods...that's 360 prisoners.

Meals are being delivered to the prisoners in their cells, but they're as many as 1 to 4 hours late for all 3 meals. Some prisoners have told their loved ones they've been given only a hard-boiled egg and a piece of wet ham for dinner as late as midnight.

I understand the entire economy of Bent County is dependent on this prison for many people's livelihoods and feeding their families. However, I want to bring your attention to the conditions that are being allowed to exist by a corporation (CoreCivic) whose sole reason for existence is to keep people in concrete cages for years. As you feed your children their Fruit Loops and Cheerios, please keep in mind that only a few miles away, there are men in concrete cages being fed worse than animals.

Adam Nevland, Bent County

After seeing the impact that private prisons have on the local communities around them, I'm not sure why this even being considered. The private prisons cost less of taxpayer money to accomplish the same job as the public prisons,

yet the private prisons pay substantial local taxes and benefit the local communities more than just providing jobs. Many local businesses are just making it and eliminating more jobs from a depressed area seems wrong. I hope the Colorado General Assembly can put some logic behind their decision and see private prisons as a more equitable solution than public prisons and definitely no need to reduce the use of private prisons before reducing the use of public ones.

Elsie Goines, Bent County

Bent County Core Civic provides 25% of the assessed evaluation for Las Animas School District. Last year, legislators introduced a bill that would have required a mill levy equalization process that would impact school district's much like Las Animas School District. If passed, LASD would be required to increase 9 mills to meet the requirements of this particular bill. Though it did not pass, it will be reintroduced. The concept that the state will backfill school funding because lack of property tax generated locally may be short lived, thus causing a double jeopardy for Bent County residents.

Frank Smith, Oregon – Lane County

I can't find the Zoom password Could you send it to me; minervaorganizer@gmail.com

Teale Hemphill, Bent County

When predicting the number of prison inmates after the COVID pandemic is over, are the mental health effects of the state population being considered or predicted? If crime rates are driving these predictions, pandemic-related mental health issues should be a heavily-weighted factor of potential increasing crime rates, and so the need for prison capacity, in the future.

A solution that state legislators will presumably offer to our county is some sort of funding for entrepreneurial efforts to "offset" the jobs at the Core Civic facility. Yet, we see in the data presented that private prisons are financially more

efficient than state-run prisons. Core Civic is an entrepreneurial private business that has been successful. Instead of closing down this successful private business in our county, I ask the state to consider the potential county success if this entrepreneurial business continues operating while the State of Colorado ALSO financially encourages additional entrepreneurs. The fact that individual income in our county is more than 60% from subsidies rather than income earned in jobs should be reason enough to leave successful current entrepreneurs AND encourage additional entrepreneurs.

Jaszmin Ontiveros, Denver

Please bring up the issues going on within the facility. Lack of staffing issues affecting the inmates meals, daily medication schedule, adequate appointments for medical care, lack of more programing for successful re-integration into society, etc.. Right now, the facility is operating in a phase III lockdown it's been a very overwhelming time for both staff and inmates. Inmates overhear frustration issues within staff (inadequate training, forced over time, employees being burned out, etc.) The facility is also old and needs many repairs and updates that affect the men incarcerated. Mold on tables, moldy showers, no air circulation, no adequate ventilation, A/C and heat, plumbing. I think there should be inmate interviews to help improve this facility overall. This facility should not be closed down, but it does need major improvement with CoreCivic and the building itself. The inmates are willing to work themselves to help improve their living environment too

David Armstrong, Bent County

When I moved to Las Animas 16 years ago to teach, my students echoed the same sentiment: "You'll leave. No one ever comes here, and nothing stays." I stayed. I wasn't initially accepted, but I stayed. Now I am a member of Las Animas City Council, Bent County Development Foundation, and a leader in a number of other capacities in the area.

Bent County Correctional Facility is much like me. As others mentioned, it wasn't

initially accepted, it was under capacity, and it had to grow to meet the needs of the state and the county. It grew, and as Commissioner MacDonnell said, it became a woven part of our community. Many echoed the capacity of the facilities to weave into their communities and become an integral part of them -- not only monetarily -- but through other means of support at schools, at events, and with well-paying jobs to gainfully employ folks in poverty stricken counties.

Back to the comment of "nothing ever stays:" Please, taking away an integral piece of our community that many rely on for food, money, and ever essential funds to fire, ambulance, and sheriff's department. Taking this resource away would cater to the notion that rural communities don't matter. That they will find a way to bounce back. Our current era is not designed for rural counties to bounce back.

Help us sustain. Help us grow. Aid our county by voting against the closure of private prisons. Thank you.

Merlin Holmes, Bent County

As the Superintendent at McClave School District, I want to add my support for the private prison in Bent County. Although the prison is not located in our school district, the economies of the communities along the Arkansas River Valley are connected. Changing this successful model can have serious negative impact on jobs, property values, and the overall economy. For our district, this could mean lower enrollment, tax base, and total revenue. This in turn hurts the children in our school. The many challenges of our families and community would only be made worse by this closure. We need more economic stimulus, diversity, and resources, not less.

Jack Goble, Bent County

My name is Jack Goble and I live in eastern Bent County and also sit on the McClave School Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a statement this evening and I really

hope our lawmakers take the time to listen to and consider the comments made tonight.

As a sixth generation Bent County resident, I am familiar with the history of southeastern Colorado and Bent County. And like most places, we've experienced ups and downs with our local economy through the years, but what's different now is that we are faced with the potential of losing our largest employer and our largest taxpayer at the same time.

When our lawmakers decide whether or not to close these private prisons, I would ask them to consider what it would look like if the largest employer and taxpayer in their county was shuttered. ...what effect it would have on their county if 25% of their tax base was lost all at once? (50% for Crowley County)

The dollar amount that represents 25 percent of Bent County's revenue may not seem like a lot to many, but when you scale that up to say, the City and County of Denver, which is where the Senate Sponsor of this bill's district is located, it's pretty eye opening. The City and County of Denver collected roughly \$131 million in property taxes alone in 2019. If they lost 25% of just their property tax revenue (not including all of the other revenue sources that Bent County would lose without this private prison), they'd be looking at almost \$33 million dollars lost each year.

The difference is that Denver would eventually rebound from that loss because of the economic engine that is Colorado's front range. They simply have more opportunity for economic growth and don't have to rely so heavily on a single source of revenue. To us, this loss would have a domino effect that would absolutely devastate Bent County and the surrounding area for many decades to come.

We are already one of the poorest counties in the state whose largest resource has already been and will continue to be heavily targeted by growing front range cities... and that's our water. Similar to most counties east of I-25, our economy relies heavily on agricultural and for us, it's even more dependent on irrigated agriculture. Irrigated agriculture in Bent County and the surrounding area grows tens of millions of dollars in foods, fuels and fiber each year and is the foundation for our area's economy.

Simply put, that water is being targeted by growing front range cities that have already begun purchasing water rights and have completed master plans that show they need much much more water from the Arkansas Valley and Bent County farms. Once that water is removed, jobs will be lost, tax revenue will drop, and our area will be once again devastated without other economic options. When farms are dried-up in Larimer, Weld or other northern Colorado counties that have historically relied on irrigated agriculture, that land is developed, and the economy continues to thrive.

Unfortunately, that is just not the case for southeastern Colorado.

I ask our lawmakers to please set aside political or other reasoning and allow our private prison to continue providing Bent County and our area of the state with a rare opportunity that will help prevent us from falling off of an economic cliff.

Thank you.

Donna DeVries-Hestand, Otero County

I am the wife of the Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator at BCCF, Chaplain David Hestand. This private prison system differs from the state facilities in that chaplains and volunteer coordinators are employed to offer/support religious opportunities which has been shown to help reduce the rate of recidivism. I am currently employed as a part of the case management team at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless at Fort Lyon. Over the years I have worked with staff and volunteers of many agencies, and one of the things that I have observed is that a significant measure of the quality of a program can be determined by the volunteers in that agency/program. I have the unique privilege of having gotten to know many of these 80 some volunteers, from those who live in the area, to those who value the religious program at BCCF enough to drive long distances to be involved with this program. About a dozen of the 26 religions recognized by DOC are offered a place to meet for their services/programs. If those meetings are a bit cramped, it shows that offenders are participating in good numbers. To echo Jessica Gonzales' comment on the quality of the programming at BCCF, the

number of volunteers at Bent has exceeded what has been expected for a rural facility by several monitoring groups. This is to the credit of the staff, including my husband David, his assistant, Claire, and all the admin and security staff who have supported the ongoing (pre-COVID) programs and those yet to come.

This has been a political issue for years, and I am speaking in opposition of my identified political affiliation. If we are to judge private prisons for 'profiting off the suffering of persons', I would entertain and offer the challenge that we reconsider that 'same profiting off of the suffering of patients' by for-profit hospitals.

Andrew Huffman, Bent County

Hello,

Thank you for holding the zoom meeting this evening (December 1, 2020). Time for comments was stopped due to time and I was unable to give my comments via the meeting but was made aware of this option as well. I appreciate the ability to share some history and my view. My name is Andrew Huffman and I live and work in the city of Las Animas, Bent County. My wife and I moved to Las Animas in 1997 from the Denver metro area in order to raise our family in a rural community. We are in the process of raising four kids in this rural community. Two have completed their education from Las Animas (Bent County School District) and then their first two years of college from Otero Junior College in La Junta, Otero County. My two younger kids are in high school in Las Animas. I'd like to share my view of Bent County and why I have chosen to live here. The simple answer is the people. One way to say it is the people (residents, individuals who work in Bent County and the actual businesses in the county) are the "oil" that keeps the engine running. When I say "oil", I'm trying to describe the service and support that many residents, employees and businesses contribute to our community. This service and support comes in many ways. Some chose to support the community via monetary donations. Others give via serving on a local board, committee or volunteer. I'm the treasurer of our local summer swim team that teaches kids to swim and then gives them the opportunity to compete at local swim meets. We would be able to offer the

lowest swimming fees in the valley without financial support from local businesses like the correctional facility. I'm a past president on the Bent County Chamber of Commerce. When I served on that board, the correctional facility supported us via representation on the board, monetary donations, and various other services like gigantic murals on cloths that could be hung in vacant stores down town to bring some beauty to closed stores and various themed scenes that were hung up at the community center to turn the old gym into various places for prom or after prom. When our Elementary School holds an Amazing Family Challenge or a Trunk or Treat during Halloween, some correctional facility employees are there to help out. When the high school FBLA or FFA have fundraisers, someone representing the correctional facility is there donating money for the school program. The correctional employees hold various events like toys drives to share with kids in need during Christmas time and inmates have made toys for kids as well. Jumping back to when I lived in the Denver metro area my wife coached soccer and was paid by the city. In Bent County, individuals like correctional facility employees volunteer to coach rec sports. Some correctional employees live in surrounding towns and serve those communities in the same way as ours. What I'm getting at, is that if the correctional facility closes, people will leave our community to find work at other correctional facilities. Remove the people from our community and you will have a domino effect that many people talked about tonight. I work for the First National Bank in Las Animas. There most likely would be a loss of account deposits and loans with less people. The insurance office next door and many other small businesses will lose the people who support our community as well. Spouses who work at other places in town will leave to find a new job where the available correctional facilities are at. Families will leave the community, lowering the student enrolment, lowering the funds that are available for education in our communities. The number of teachers may be reduced and the number of classes (subjects) may need to be cut as well. This could reduce the number of students attending Otero Junior College as well. I appreciate you taking the time to read this and considering how important each individual is in a rural community in order to keep things running. Andrew Huffman 719-691-8669

Ashley Brandon, Bent County

I have been employed at Bent County Correctional Facility for a little over 10 years. I currently am in charge of the Fulfillment Program. The Fulfillment Program is a Colorado Correctional Industry that teaches offenders skills that they can utilize when they are released. These offenders are also paid a monthly production bonus. We receive shelf stable food items from Global Foods (some of which are purchased from the local grocery store Thaxtons Market) which are then repackaged into weekend packs for children across the US including right here in our community to the Las Animas School District. The program employs 30 offenders who learn skills such as pulling product for orders utilizing First In First Out, working on an assembly line, inventory control, quality control and storage and organization to name a few. Some of the offenders also become Certified Forklift Operators, a valuable skill that follows them upon release assisting them with finding employment. In addition to the Fulfillment Program, I am also a 7 Habits facilitator. This a self-help program offered to the offenders who wish to learn skills to help them with re-entry. Over the duration of 11 weeks the offenders learn the 7 Habits on the Inside. This program is specifically designed for incarcerated individuals to help them understand their behaviors that led to their incarceration and how they can change their paradigm to make behavioral changes to be productive citizens upon their release back into society. I believe the work we do at Bent County is a great asset to this community and surrounding communities. Closing this facility would be devastating to the Arkansas Valley. Please consider the comments from those of us who work inside these walls who know the truth about the good work we do and not the comments of those making assumptions about what they think we do or do not do.

Ryan Siefkas, Bent County

Hello, I am Ryan Siefkas, a teacher in Las Animas and a farmer. As many individuals have already shared, the prison makes up a significant portion of our tax base. Evaluating our community from an economic lens we can also see that there are few “primary” level businesses in Bent County that bring in funds.

Primary level businesses of course provide the money that can then turn over within the community to support the “secondary” level service type businesses that would be impacted greatly. While our county has a need to diversify, it should be noted that as manufacturing and other primary level businesses have left the country our county has struggled to attract others.

Furthermore, when we dissect the decisions made at various levels over the past generation we can see a history of closing facilities in Bent County and running into issues shortly thereafter. We can see the VA closing 20 years ago only to have the Department of Veteran’s Affairs build a new campus in Aurora that was \$1 billion over budget and 5 years behind schedule requiring congressional inquiry. Meanwhile veteran’s in Southern Colorado suffered, I know, I’m related to one. The VA was turned into a prison for inmates requiring more care. When this was then closed it was found that the CO prison system lacked the capacity to care for these individuals. More inquiries, more costs, poor care for those who were once served in our county. Sensing a trend yet? We have also witnessed water leave Crowley and Bent Counties to build an ever growing front range requiring I-25 expansion, more roads, new schools many of which at the expense of the Colorado taxpayer. We have the roads, homes, school capacity and other necessary infrastructure to support these facilities and allow those who work in them to live a solid middle class life, please quit moving them to the Front Range. It only creates a Hunger Games-esque “Capitol City” and I’m certain that is not the Colorado anyone wants.

In college I took a course “Literacy and the Learner” in which we learned that Literacy rate directly correlates with prison population when those students become adults. Diving into learning data we can see that students who have one poor year of learning must show tremendous growth the next three years to catch up. This requires having an Exemplary or Accomplished teacher for the next three years. All students in Colorado have lost a year of learning due to COVID despite our best efforts. The data is not in yet to show how dramatic the loss of this year has been, but it will be significant. Looking into the teacher shortage I can say without a doubt that not all students in Colorado will have even a Proficient teacher for the next three years, let alone the Exemplary teacher necessary to close the literacy gap left from this year. In my own Career and

Technical Education program I can see that job placement has dropped off statewide for students due to COVID. Job placement and incarceration rates are inversely correlated. Need we dive into the current jobs data? Inevitably we will then face increased conditions for incarceration growth that could not have been adequately captured in any models.

Lastly, as we saw the private prisons are cheaper for Colorado Taxpayers (yes, compared at the same security level) and provide outstanding services to inmates. I would prefer to see the incompetence of the Colorado Mental Health Institute be corrected before the state dabbles in taking on more facilities to manage and staff. While they may be different departments in the end the ones on the hook for the continued shell game of shut down, move, build new are the Colorado Taxpayers and the ones losing services. I appreciate your time and efforts to make the best decisions for our stakeholders, not activists with addresses in Oregon.

Mary Ward, Bent County

I am Mary Ward, and I currently live near the small town of McClave in Bent County, CO. I was raised most of my younger years in southeast Colorado in Prowers and Kiowa counties on beef cattle ranches. I have seen over the years what occurs to the Lower Arkansas Valley region when big manufacturing facilities close, such as the transit bus company called Neoplan in Lamar, CO. I have seen what occurs when large pig farm facilities close or downsize in the region specifically in Baca, Prowers, and Kiowa counties.

I moved from the region in 2005 for my college education and could not financially return for 14 years. I lived primarily in Fort Collins, CO. I am a single mom that all of a sudden could not pay rent and basic expenses in Larimer County due to the recent COVID issues. I was an essential employee that received a pay cut with increased labor hours so my employer could keep their real estate company afloat. A single- income of \$60,000 a year could not pay for housing and basic expenses in Larimer County. So now I am one of the 'boomerangs' that has recently moved back to southeast Colorado. My family is thriving because of it.

I am now closer to elder parents and a disabled, elder brother that will need care that cannot be provided nor afforded by my single-income in a large city such as Denver. I can provide for them here. My son has been able to attend high school in-person, stay active in sports, and engage with his peers until the recent holiday 'school-from-home' orders. That has done tremendous things for his mental and physical health. His mental health was taking a sudden decline in Larimer county during COVID, and I had never seen these kinds of changes in him before March of this year.

I am not an employee of the prison system, but I can see what the loss of 300 employees, their children, their medical needs, and their general purchases in the community would do to Bent County and the region that already greatly suffers due to drought conditions. It will stall and kill any small business sustainability and growth that has occurred over the last 20 years. The 2nd largest industry in the area is agriculture production, and it has been unable to sustain the area for many years, as you and I well know.

Keeping the prisons open and privately managed will save the State money. Not only will it save dollars in the prison budget line-item, but you will not see skyrocketing increases and needs for Food Stamps, Adult Financial, Colorado Works, Medical Assistance Programs, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, CCAP, unemployment payments, mental healthcare expenses, and other state welfare benefits.

Thank you for your time.

Vickie Mireles, Larimer

Yes, I am a concerned mother, my son is Arrowhead facility, I want to know why they are putting inmates who are testing negative with inmates that have tested positive. My son has tested negative and they put him with inmates who have tested positive and now he has COVID 19. and very sick and not being cared for. I don't want nothing to happen to him.

Tony Salazar, Arapahoe County

To our Representatives,

Hi, my name is Tony Salazar, I currently reside in Aurora, CO but grew up and graduated from Las Animas. Having lived in Aurora for 15+yrs, I will say the city is where I live but my "Home" will always be Las Animas. I have to tell those that are making decisions that this community is like no other. The people of this community care about one another and their town. They are one big family that always helps those needing little extra push or assistance. Having lived in other states during my military service and college you don't see that close-knit community environment these days. The friends you make outside of Las Animas come and go and very seldom do they keep in touch. The friends from Las Animas have never stopped being your friend no matter how close or how far apart you may be. They are always there for you. A trait that is contributed to the close-knit community of Las Animas.

To close the Bent County Correction Facility would be devastating! This town experienced the tragic event of Ft Lyon VA Medical Center closing and the significant impacts it had on all. Please, I ask of the decision makers don't put this town thru another tragic event by closing the prison. This prison is the lifeline for Las Animas and the surrounding communities. Taking away the prison would be just like taking away the ventilators for those ill with COVID. The state is trying to keep those lifelines (ventilators) available for those ill in our state. Why not keep the lifeline of the prison for the town of Las Animas? By having the prison in Las Animas, it has helped its residents develop long careers (for many 15+ years) and has allowed the community members to provide for their families whether they work at the prison or other places of employment. In other cases, it has drawn families to the community to allow them the opportunity of a career helping those that have had setbacks in life and are currently housed in the prison facility.

In closing, I would like the decision makers to take a step back from the big city they see daily and look at all the other areas that are part of Colorado such as Las Animas. These places are struggling to make a comeback from what used to be. Meanwhile, at the same time in the major cities we see the cities growing

tremendously, almost too much. The significant growth we are experiencing in the city is helping the major cities keep up through increased taxes being received. Why not shift focus to South Eastern Colorado? Help these small communities get back on their feet by providing job opportunities. Again, they have already experienced tragic events that have changed the town forever, don't do it again to this close-knit community. By keeping the prison in place and bringing more opportunities to small communities it will also draw others to the town. Speaking with several colleagues to include those that are nearing the retirement age they want out of the city; it's getting to big. What they want is a small town like Las Animas that has opportunity for employment, where it's safe for them to live, kids can play outside without fear someone may try to take them, and it's not busy or congested. There is a chance here for the decision makers to make a big difference in our state. You just need to take a step away from the city and help the smaller communities instead of making the major cities too large people don't want to come to our state (congested population, high housing costs, high cost of living). That is what is happening so reach out and help our state grow beyond the cities.

Bryan Simmons, Bent County

Updated Comments 12-2-2020

My employer, The First National Bank of Las Animas, has an office located in each of the communities that will be impacted by the proposed closures. These locations include Ordway, Las Animas, Fowler, Rocky Ford and La Junta. Core Civic employees are a meaningful part of our customer base. Their paychecks are deposited with us and we provide them with loans and other services. Our organization as well as other locally owned community banks will suffer as a result of the contemplated actions.

As a bank officer in Bent County, I have seen firsthand how many businesses struggled due to the reduction of jobs as the result of the State Prison closure at Fort Lyon in 2011. Multiple small businesses throughout the Arkansas Valley were impacted significantly. Although these numbers may not seem dramatic to front-range communities basking in the over-abundance of growth along the I-25

corridor, these numbers were devastating to this small community struggling to keep afloat. Every job is important, and every business is valued in Southeast Colorado.

I was a Las Animas school district board member when this facility was closed. I was afforded the opportunity to sit across the table to discuss our concerns with Governor Hickenlooper and DOC Director Clements. We believe that their decision to close was made, in part, on flawed data and misinformation. The impacts were overwhelming as families left our schools. Staff reductions had to occur as our census and related funding declined. This was a further unintended consequence of the closure which we can expect to be duplicated in the proposed scenario.

With my position as Chairman of the Bent County Economic Development Foundation board I have become painfully aware of how difficult it is to recruit new employers to our communities. The initial construction and opening of the Bent County Facility were a direct result of a coordinated efforts between the Foundation and the Bent County Commissioners to provide employment opportunities in our region as well as to assist the State of Colorado with prison population issues. At the time, this was endorsed by the State and Bent County was encouraged to engage in this activity. Unfortunately, we have now come full circle. To replace this enterprise within these communities will be an overwhelming if not impossible task. It is likely that the funding that the Economic Development Foundation receives from Bent County will be reduced due to the anticipated decline in property tax and other revenues. I have no doubt that this will further hamper our business development efforts.

We are fighting battles on other fronts as well. Cities, investors and developers have their eyes on Arkansas River water that irrigates farm ground in the lower Arkansas Valley. They continue to make plays on buying and moving water to the front range to support the dramatic growth that is being seen there. Farming is a major economic driver in both Crowley and Bent Counties. This has been and will continue to be detrimental to our communities.

I currently serve as the Secretary / Treasurer for the Arkansas River Conservancy District. Our primary purpose is the maintenance and management of the levy

that protects the City of Las Animas and adjacent areas from flooding by the Arkansas River. The private prison provides 28% of our meager operating revenues. Should we not be able to fund maintenance projects and, as a result, the Army Corps of Engineers decertifies the levy, FEMA flood protections could be eliminated. This would in turn require anyone obtaining a bank loan on improved property in Las Animas to purchase flood insurance. The costs of this to the community would be staggering should this situation play out.

I understand that a driving factor behind the legislation is the concern that it is not “ethical” for private institutions to profit from the incarceration of criminals. I would suggest that the State does not exist in a bubble regarding this as the DOC is also reliant on vendors, contractors and suppliers in the public sector that provide their services for profit. I am not sure how the proponents of the closures can reasonably reconcile this point.

Core Civic has been an excellent neighbor, partner and contributor in our communities. My home, where my wife and I raised our family, is located on the same road within ½ mile of the facility. I have never once been concerned about our safety. They provide sponsorships to local activities such as the schools, recreational organizations and civic groups. All while providing much needed jobs and a cost- effective solution to housing inmates for the State. Not only do they provide these services cheaper than the state can, but they do it while pouring millions of dollars of tax revenues back into the local communities. It’s a double win!

On a personal level, two of my daughters, along with their husbands have chosen to live and work in Bent County and make this their home. We all know how hard it is to convince the next generation to stay and be engaged in these rural communities. Along with my wife, 4 of the 5 are employed by either the school district or the county. Given the information presented by Gabe earlier, the odds are that at least one of them will lose their job as collateral damage from this ill-conceived plan.

We beg you to be accurate, frank and unbiased in reporting the significant impacts that this decision will have on the residents of our communities. You do not have the luxury of looking at this through “Rose Colored Glasses”. There are

far too many lives that will be negatively impacted. I hope that the Governor and the legislature will remember that we too are a part of the State of Colorado. We cannot take many more blows and remain viable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bryan Simmons

Chief Credit Officer, First National Bank of Las Animas

Chair, Bent County Development Foundation

Secretary / Treasurer, Arkansas River Conservancy District

Nancy Mitchell, Bent County

“We are from the state and we are here to help you.” This is what comes to mind when I think about the Prison Utilization Study legislation. Multiple times over the years that is exactly how it has felt, but never to our advantage.

It seems like much of Colorado does not consider the part of the state south of I-70 and east of I-25. Southeast Colorado is unique from any other part of the state. What works in other areas does not work in our rural area. There are increased demands on the water, numerous years of drought, a declining population, and businesses struggling. Our community leaders have worked tirelessly to bring businesses in to stabilize our economic base.

When Fort Lyon closed as a VA hospital, the county was pleased to have a DOC prison open at the Fort. Only to have a new prison built outside of our area and it closed. Once again Fort Lyon was vacant until the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless opened its residential treatment facility.

The Bent County Correctional Facility is a key business in our community. It has an enormous financial impact as it provides jobs, pays property taxes, and supports other local businesses from which they purchase many of their supplies. It would be devastating to have this private prison close. Likewise, closing the Crowley County Correctional Facility would have the same impact on Crowley and Otero counties. Because of the interconnections of the three counties what happens in one affects all the others.

How are we hurting the rest of the state by having private prisons in our communities? Since it works for us, why do we need the state to interfere in our sustainability? Once again thinking they know what is best.

Kara Leighty, Bent County

I am a Bent County native and part of a family that has lived here for going on 6 generations. I teach at McClave School and have 2 children with my husband who commutes to Kit Carson county for work.

Our children would like to move back to this area after college but considering the economic downfall and opportunities that continue to shrink, this dream may falter. Our State Lawmakers and Governor continue to make decisions detrimental to this rural area. The prison closures would be just another nail in the coffin of our way of life here. When the state needed Bent County to step up and help with providing a prison, we did it. Now, we are being kicked to the curb. Rural people continue to have less value in lawmakers eyes than the Almighty Front Range. We are sick and tired of not counting! Why is the welfare our community and way of life of less value than the incarcerated? Why can't we find support of economic diversity ? One argument I've heard that supports closure of private prisons is that the people incarcerated are being used as pawns for making a profit. The studies have shown the private system is more efficient at housing prisoners. It's cheaper to house them there AND it promotes economic stimulation in rural areas. Why do they count more than this community, who are law-abiding citizens? Why do lawmakers insist on sabotaging Southeast Colorado? There is talk about repurposing the prison facilities but THE ONLY thing that would be fair and acceptable is something that would guarantee the same sustainability these facilities currently provide. When you consider the impact of prison closure and the water issues the area is facing (both situations created by the hand of lawmakers), it is not just crippling to these citizens, it will destroy us. Lawmakers are responsible for these ethical decisions and need to be held accountable for the wellbeing of ALL Coloradoans. DO THE RIGHT THING!

Kelly Roesch, Bent County

I strongly support keeping the private prison system in Southeast Colorado. The prisons are serving a state need while at the same time providing much needed jobs and economic stimulus to our area.

Shawn Cardinelli, Bent County

Sending strong support for our local prison. My husband is a nurse there. Realizing not only would he lose his job but a possibility of mine as well. The economic impact the closure of this facility would have is huge to Bent County. I cannot believe it would be seen fit to close a facility, that the outcome would drastically have a huge negative impact on all of southeast Colorado, which is already a low income area. Closure of this facility would be the nail in the coffin to many local families and businesses. In the age range we are (low 60's) relocation is not an option. Urging all to completely consider the ramifications the closure would present to our community, schools, businesses, families and all of the southeast Colorado area.

Shauna Millspaugh, Larimer

To consider the closing or changing of any of these 2 private prisons would be detrimental on the economy in the counties they are in and in the surrounding communities. As a previous resident of Prowers County for 22 years, and a native of Colorado, currently living in my hometown in Larimer County, I have seen and witnessed the impact that big city government has on rural communities. They (big city government) have no clue how rural communities thrive. That is a disgrace when making decisions that impact these rural communities including the ones the private prisons are in. Please consider the long term implications of others where you don't live.

Terry Davidson, Bent County

Prison closure:

Let me begin with a statement of the obvious: No person, with even the slightest exposure to government operations, can believe there is a possibility that any program can be run more efficiently or with better results by the government than by private enterprise. But first we must question the motives of government in desiring to resume control over a program which the government relinquished to private concerns years ago in the interest of efficiency. If the government was unable, years ago, to efficiently manage prison operations, why suddenly have they decided they are now capable of such management? The government suggests that private prison conditions are sub-standard, presumably that food, medical care, and other basic necessities are not being met, that prisoners are not afforded programs available to prisoners in state run institutions, and that privately run prisons are not capable of delivering this level of prisoner maintenance. This is a hard pill to swallow. If programs aren't available, if the level of prisoner maintenance is lacking, the first suspicion would be in the funding. The second suspicion is that there's a reason the government desires control of these prisoners. It may be that acquiring these prisoners would aid in the government balancing their own books. It may be that the government isn't able to run prisons as efficiently as private institutions. There are too many possibilities. But one cannot look at any federal or state government and honestly say that it is economically efficient. It is impossible for many reasons. One is that the government isn't under pressure to show a profit. They may have a budget to which they must adhere, but always budgets are expanded rather than shut down programs. Shutting down programs is expensive and politically dangerous. The second reason is that, in government, it is very difficult to fire someone. It is so difficult, and expensive, that frequently a bad manager is given a glowing review or accolades and promoted to remove them from a particular program.

But the bottom line is this: you have a state government that is perfectly comfortable in economically destroying the economies of the two poorest counties in the state. Regardless of the reasoning behind the plan it is incomprehensible. Were the state government capable of such an economic miracle, the savings wouldn't justify the potential destruction of the economic welfare of ten thousand citizens. So then, we are left with the indication of political malice. Is the governor playing footsie with state programs, and the lives

of the people of two counties, for some purpose? Is he attempting to further marginalize Colorado's rural communities?

Bent County Farm Bureau

32470 County Road 10

Las Animas, Colorado 81054

November 6, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bent County Farm Bureau feels the closing of private prisons is not in the best interest of The State of Colorado, the local community, or those serving in these facilities.

These communities, companies, and individuals all stepped forward to help Colorado when it needed housing for an over crowded prison system. In return these communities gained jobs for those living in these areas. Whether it is a primary or secondary job, this employment has provided an income that allows individuals living in these areas enough of an income they can continue living here. Otherwise they would have to move to an area where jobs are more available. Many of our residents have roots in agriculture and own small or modest agriculture enterprises. The prison provides them a job with an income they can continue living a lifestyle they enjoy. These individuals also volunteer for fire departments, sheriff's posse, coaching summer sports, etc.

Coloradoans in rural areas are getting weary and tired of those idealists who are pushing their wants on less populated areas. We want your WATER, We want your open space to put PRAIRIE DOGS on because we don't want them in our populated area, We want your people in our over crowded cities so we have more votes (power), we want your tax dollars to build roads for our over crowded roads. When your grocery store shelves were empty where did you go?

Since when does the safety, and welfare of those law abiding citizens become secondary to those who have broken our laws? Our government's position on the mentally ill and some of the issues with homeless.

What is wrong with private prisons? Does the government takeover manufacturing of war equipment so private companies do not make a profit? Does the government propose to house prisoners cheaper?

Bent County Farm Bureau strongly believes keeping private prisons open and functioning is a win for the local areas and the state of Colorado.

Bill Long, Former Bent County Commissioner

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the State of Colorado Prison Utilization Study. I have a long personal history dating back to 1992 concerning the State of Colorado's use of prison facilities not owned and operated by the State.

In 1992, I served as both a director and staff person for the Bent County Development Foundation (BCDF) and have remained a director for the past 28 years. During that year, the BCDF and the Bent County Commissioners together worked with Governor Roy Romer's administration to address prison overcrowding and the shortage of prison beds the State was experiencing. At that time, the State had Colorado inmates incarcerated in out-of-state facilities which caused a hardship for both inmates and inmate families. This problem was the result of State revenue shortfalls that did not allow for the funding of capital construction projects, which included the construction of new prison beds. The collaboration between the State of Colorado and Bent County led to the County obtaining the funding to construct and open a 360-bed prison facility located in Bent County. This partnership allowed the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) in 1993 to move the CDOC inmates back to Colorado and into the newly built Bent County facility. The State of Colorado and Bent County both benefited in many ways as a result of this new partnership. CDOC saved money housing

inmates in Bent County rather than the out-of-state facilities, reduced transportation expenses, did not require a capital outlay by the State and restored the opportunity for inmates and families to reunite via regularly scheduled visits. Bent County benefited economically with the construction of the facility, the new permanent jobs created and the activity that comes with the arrival of a new opportunity. There was then, and it still exists today, a sense of pride within the community that Bent County was able to establish a relationship with the State that benefited all parties, the State of Colorado, Bent County and the inmates.

In 1996, Colorado once again faced a shortage of prison beds and Governor Bill Owens' administration sought the assistance Bent County and others in their efforts to alleviate the overcrowding of CDOC facilities. Bent County once again responded to the States needs by expanding the capacity of the Bent facility by 320 beds and at the same time began a partnership with Corrections Corporation of America (Core Civic). The partnership was created to assist with funding the expansion and to bring a higher level of expertise to our operation. It was also at this time the Bent County Correctional Facility expanded the inmate training and educational programs for the benefit of the inmate and to better mirror the programs offered in state facilities.

The financial crisis and recession of 20,08, as well as another shortage of prison beds in the CDOC system required the State to consider how to address the looming crisis of overcrowding. Governor Bill Ritter's administration released a Request for Proposals (RFP) and once again Bent County in collaboration with Core Civic responded to meet the needs of CDOC. This included another expansion of the Bent facility with no capital outlay by the State and also temporarily housing CDOC inmates in the Core Civic facility in Sayre, Oklahoma until the Bent County beds were available.

I share this information because few in Colorado State government today are aware of the long and important history of the partnership between Bent County, Core Civic and the CDOC. This partnership has saved the State of Colorado hundreds of millions of dollars in both capital construction

investment dollars as well as operating expenses over the past 27 years. It has always been the goal of both Bent County and Core Civic to meet and exceed the expectations of the State of Colorado regarding the services we provide CDOC. Our cooperation and professional relationship with the CDOC Private Prison Monitoring Unit (PPMU) has strengthened our partnership and has insured the State that both Bent County and Core Civic are committed to providing top quality facilities and services to the State of Colorado and State inmates. During my 12 years as a Bent County Commissioner (2005- 2016), monthly reporting provided by the PPMU to the commissioners was always positive in nature. The PPMU reporting to the Commissioners and Core Civic also provided the opportunity for our operations to grow and change to meet the needs CDOC.

It is my understanding that the study as directed by HB 20-1019 will consider future prison bed needs, as well as the economic impacts of the prisons in Bent, Crowley and Otero Counties. The closure or reduction in operations at the Bent and Crowley County facilities would have a devastating impact on all of southeast Colorado. The negative impacts would include not only devastating economic impacts but also crippling socioeconomic impacts to an exceptionally large area of Colorado already impacted by high poverty rates that would likely last for decades.

In closing, it is my hope all factors are taken into consideration while conducting the study and most importantly during the decision-making process. The safety and wellbeing of the inmates housed in the Bent County Core Civic facility is always the top priority for both Bent County and Core Civic. Bent County and Core Civic have answered the call when the State faced difficult and challenging times over the past 27 years by providing an exceptional and valuable service at a substantial savings to the State. I strongly believe there are many reasons and facts that support that this long-established and valued partnership between Bent County, Core Civic and the State of Colorado should continue well into the future.

The State of Colorado was needing prison beds in 1992, so the Bent County Commissioners developed a plan to build a prison and staff it with local people. This was the first privately owned prison in the State of Colorado.

In 1993 I was looking for a career, not just a job. This is when I discovered Bent County Correctional facility. In February of 1993 I was hired as a Correctional Officer. The facility housed 309 inmates. Today we house 1400. I have had a good career here. The pay has been about the highest you could get in the area. I have been able to promote numerous times to be the Shift Supervisor that I am today, 28 years later. I have been able to raise two children, put them through school and send them into their adult life while working at the prison.

There are a lot of young officers employed at this facility that would like to raise their family the same way I did. To have the opportunity to have a career and to be able to raise their children in a small community. To have the small classroom at school where the teacher to student ratio is smaller. To be in a community where you know everyone in the town.

Over the 28 years that I have been employed at BCCF there have been 1000's of inmates that have received their basic education (GED). There are many other inmates that now have a skill through our Vocational programs, (GED, Computer classes, Reentry programs, Electronics, Truck Driving (CDL), Janitorial classes, just to mention a few.) This facility turns a lot of criminals into productive citizens

By closing this facility, we will lose:

Tax 1.1 Million

This will be a big loss to the county. The road and bridge will not have good equipment so the roads will not be maintained as well, not to mention the county jobs that will be lost because of loss of taxes.

The Ambulance will not have a full time staff on duty anymore so this will increase their response times by quite bite.

Annual BCCF pay roll 13.2 million all of which is put back into the local business and surrounding areas. The small business will have to close. Some of the big businesses will suffer and lay off employees; the snowball effect is very gloomy.

We have already lost Ft. Lyon as an army hospital in 2001 and this devastated our community. Then we lost the state prison at FT. Lyon which had a large impact on our economy. We cannot afford another big business to close.

They are selling the water off our farms and the big corporations are taking over the farms, so families are leaving the area.

If we lose the Prison in Bent County what will happen to our town and community. What will be left for the families that try to stay? And where will the State of Colorado house another 1400 inmates. Will they just simply let them go?

Captain Brent Pierce, Employed since 1993

Harrell Ridley former county commissioner and longtime resident of Bent County

Comments on the Colorado Prison Utilization Study:

I would like to thank the Bent County Commissioners for hosting this meeting. Additionally, I would like to personally thank each of the men and women that work at the Bent County Correctional Facility, without each of you the success of this facility would have never been possible for the last 24 years of operation. This facility has been a large spoke and wheel not only for Bent County but for Southeast Colorado as well. Prior to entering office in 1988 as a County Commissioner, I never envisioned that during my term we would break ground for a Correctional Facility here in Bent County. Several counties across Southeast Colorado held hearings, regarding the opening of a private prison, but many individuals voted against the idea. Our facility here became the very first private correctional facility to be built in the state of Colorado. The Bent County Commissioners at that time included Ralph Tixier, Jerry Faust and me. We did not have the knowledge of how to operate a correctional facility, but we understood the economic importance that it would have for our entire community and county. This was a risk that we were willing to take but we wanted the Citizens of Bent County to have their voices heard. When we held our public hearing, 83% of the Citizens here in Bent County voted in favor of the correctional facility and therefore, we began the planning and development of this monumental project. At the

beginning, like most projects that are undertaken we faced uncertainty regarding the overall safety of our citizens and our community. We did our due diligence to ensure that we kept the safety of our community at the forefront from the very beginning. For this operation to be successful the County Commissioners hired Mr. Bill Wilson, a Retired State Department Official, a former Warden to supervise the prison. Mr. Wilson encouraged several of his colleagues to join him here in Las Animas to ensure that the facility's operation would be a successful one. As Commissioners we wanted nothing more than for this project to succeed as we understood just how valuable of an asset the correctional facility for Bent County was. Today, the facility employs approximately 220 individuals. Each Year this facility has an annual payroll of \$13.2 million dollars which is well above the average payroll in southeast Colorado. Each year this facility continues to have a positive impact on Bent County's economic development. I believe that the community has been served well by establishing this private prison. Since 1995 several private correction facilities have been built across the state of Colorado. It is my wishes that the citizens of Bent county would all come together and fight to keep this correctional facility in Bent County. Over the last 25 years the facility has been an integral part of our economy and growth, I believe we need this facility to stay open more now than ever. The closing of our private prison would be absolutely devastating! It would be detrimental to the families that live here who would have to relocate as they would no longer be employed. A third of our student population has parents that are employed by the prison. This would affect our class sizes within our school district. The overall impact that it would have on Bent County would be astronomical if it were to close. I had the upmost privilege to stand among my fellow commissioners and break ground for the correctional facility and I am writing now as we need to stand once again. I come to you now 25 years later not as an elected commissioner but as a longtime resident that is concerned for our community and Bent County as whole.

Tom Wallace

To whom it may concern

As a former Bent County Commissioner, I find it concerning that any elected official would even consider discontinuing the utilization of the Private Prison System. It should be the prime responsibility of our elected officials to responsibly manage tax-payer funds.

I don't have the current cost differential between the cost per day per prisoner of State run prison versus Private run; but the last numbers I saw the Private System was between \$20 and \$50 per day per prisoner cheaper. Several million dollars savings for the taxpayers.

The Private Prisons are monitored by the State and held to the same or higher standards than the State Prisons. They are fined for any infractions; such as not having enough mental health workers which even the State System has difficulty staffing at no reduction in cost to the taxpayers.

The Private system has to pay private property tax to the counties, pay sales tax and State income tax. They have to pay for maintained and infrastructure, training for employees and reintroduction for the inmates equal to or better than the State System.

Isn't it the responsibility of elected officials to be more frugal with the taxpayer funds? In a time of budget crunch, cutting funding for Education while increasing costs for incarceration makes me wonder.

Greg Brophy, former Bent County Commissioner

Gabe,

Thanks for all your work on the prison study. I did want to restate what I said on the public hearing.

I served in the legislature for 12 years with a house and senate district that covered almost all of eastern Colorado.

The number of prisoners held in Colorado did come down a little with some of the reform bills that the legislature passed. That was reflected accurately in the drop from around 20,000 to the 18,000 range. The drop during Covid will be a

temporary experience. The Governor chose to let as many people out of prison early as possible. I do not believe that will continue post pandemic.

Between the back log in county jails, the increase in crime that we are seeing statewide and our population increase I think prisoner numbers will climb fairly quickly back to pre-pandemic levels and then grow gradually over time from there.

Finally, from an economic development perspective, it is substantially harder to attract outsiders to our towns in eastern Colorado than it is to Durango or Salida. There is no way to replace the jobs and tax revenue from these facilities. Kit Carson County has been lucky to attract wind farm development, but the wind resource isn't as good in Bent and Crowley.

Stephen Raher Attorney at Law* stephen.raher@gmail.com

Thank you for your hard work overseeing the prison utilization study required by House Bill 20- 1019. Following this week's public hearings in Bent and Crowley Counties, I write to submit some brief comments. Because the online public comment form does not allow for attachments, I am sending this document directly to you with the request that you pass this information on to the project's consultants and advisory committee.

I. Prisons Should Not Be Used As a Job-Creation Strategy

Regarding the normative debate that the study has provoked, I write to urge the committee to adopt a final report that categorically rejects a public policy of using prisons as tools for job creation. While the state should provide substantial economic resources to rural communities that face job losses as the result of prison closures, the potential for such job loss is not a valid reason to keep unneeded prisons open.

I lobbied against the private prison industry in Colorado for many years in the 1990s and early 2000s. During that time, supporters of privatization repeatedly trumpeted the benefits of "corporate flexibility," arguing that one beneficial effect of privatization is that prison beds can be easily activated and deactivated in response to changes in the state's prison population. A combination of policy changes has resulted in a pronounced decrease in the Department of

Corrections' jurisdictional population; therefore, it is now time to utilize the flexibility that was promised.

My general thoughts about the role of local economics in this debate are summarized in an opinion editorial that the *La Junta Tribune-Democrat* published in today's print edition. A copy of the online version of this piece is attached to this letter as **Exhibit 1**.

* Admitted in Oregon and Washington

II. Use Caution When Making Quantitative Comparisons Regarding Cost Efficiency and Local Economic Indicators

I appreciate the presentations that Karl Becker and Gabe Preston made at the recent public hearings. While I realize these presentations may have been somewhat simplified due to the venue, I was concerned with two types of quantitative observations that the speakers made.

First, the presenters made several references to per diem costs for beds in state-run prisons versus privately operated facilities. A comparison of nominal per diem costs is highly misleading, both because the state's operating costs include functions for which private prisons are not responsible, and because private prisons generally house people with lower medical and programming needs. In 2002, I published a report on comparing Colorado's public- and private- prison costs (a copy of which is attached as **Exhibit 2**). While the figures in this report need updating, the methodology is still relevant today. I would hope that any comparison of costs in the prison utilization study considers the substantial differences noted in my previous report.

The second concern I have relates to some of the local economic indicators that Mr. Preston cited regarding Bent and Crowley Counties. As should be clear from the attached editorial, I acknowledge the economic challenges faced by these two counties (and the larger region of the Lower Arkansas Valley). Nonetheless, when making decisions, policymakers must rely on accurate data. Because Bent and Crowley Counties have such significant numbers of incarcerated residents, any calculations that rely on census data must adjust remove institutionalized group quarters populations from county-level data, or else the resulting

measurements will be highly unreliable. When discussing local employment and poverty trends, Mr. Preston did not state whether he made such adjustments. Once the appropriate adjustments are made, analysis often reveals that Colorado's rural prison-hosting counties do not have significantly healthier local economies than other peer counties. An example of research using adjusted census data is attached to this letter as **Exhibit 3**.

Thank you again for your work on this project. I hope these comments are useful

NOTE: As exhibits referenced in this letter are part of a different organization's study, they are not included in this report.

Jerry Roark, CoreCivic

To BCCF Staff & Members of the Community:

Last legislative session, the Colorado legislature passed a piece of legislation, **HB20- 1019**, that authorized a study of the local impact of prisons in their communities and an analysis of the Colorado Department of Corrections future needs. As part of the study, there will be a series of **public meetings**, including one being held at **Bent County Community Center on October 27, @ 5:30pm**. I encourage you to attend this meeting to make your voice heard regarding the positive impact of Bent County Correctional Facility on the community and the CDOC correctional system for nearly 25 years.

At BCCF, we are committed to public safety, but we are equally as committed to making sure that all those in our care are prepared to return to the community as productive citizens.

Separately, since the onset of **CO VID-19**, we have been hyper-focused on the health and safety of those we serve. To date, with nearly 300 COVID-19 tests administered in partnership with CDOC, we have had **zero positive results** among offenders. That is a testament to the preventive work that our team manages daily.

Outside of our work during COVID-19, we remain committed to the successful reentry of every offender we serve. Here is a look at how we support offender reentry:

EDUCATION

To help offenders succeed on their path to reentry, BCCF offers a variety of

education courses including GED prep and career technical education. We offer Commercial Driver's License (COL) training, braille transcription, computer technology and welding. Welding is a new program and I am grateful to CDOC for partnering with us to use Pathway grants to help build this program.

REENTRY PROGRAMMING

BCCF boasts a wide range of evidence-based reentry programming. Our **Go Further** Reentry Process helps offenders prepare for their successful transition back into the community. **Parents on a Mission** and **Financial Peace** are two other programs designed to provide vital life skills to prepare offenders to navigate relationships and finances after release. We also partner with CDOC to provide a variety of reentry programs that are offered in state-managed facilities.

BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

With a focus on reentry, our behavioral health team provides programs on substance use disorders, victim impact, and mental health. The **Mental Health Peer Assistant Program** pairs peer offenders with others to help navigate the stress of incarceration, resulting in fewer mental health issues overall. We also offer programs that can help offenders think about how their actions impact others and how to make better decisions such as **Threshold** and **Seven Habits**.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING

At BCCF, we offer several enrichment opportunities. **Fulfillment** is one such program. Funded through Corrections Industries, it meets the food needs of underprivileged children throughout the United States, to even include our own community at times. This year, more than **45,000** packages have been assembled at BCCF. **Canine Companions for Independence** is a program that pairs an offender-trainer with a puppy to begin the process of becoming a service dog. To date, more than 45 dogs have been trained at BCCF for service.

Here are some testimonials from program participants:

"Through these programs, I have become a better father, husband, and son and an asset to my community matter where I am. - lee l.



"I don't have to wait to be released from prison to start using what I've learned. What a difference programs make!"

- Dennis S.

"The Parents on a Mission program made me look at how effective or ineffective I'd been as the father to five sons. Today, my relationship with them is better than it's ever been and getting better daily."¹¹

-Khai P.

While I am incredibly proud of the robust programming we offer at Bent County, it is our outstanding team that really stands out. Approximately **35 percent** of BCCF staff are military veterans and about **36 percent** have worked in corrections for more than ten years, all experience that is used to improve outcomes for those in our care.

While our work inside the facility takes priority, we also take great pride in our many community partnerships. Some examples include:

- Partnering with local community and business leaders to provide some much-needed repairs around a project home
- Conducting annual food drives through local food pantries including Las Animas Helping Hands, La Junta Associated Charities, and McClave 5 Loaves Pantry
- Supporting underprivileged children at Christmas through community partnerships
- Donating 100+ boxes of cereal at the onset of COVID-19 when children were unexpectedly at home and in need of readily available breakfast options
- Raising funds for the Rocky Mountain Cancer Treatment Center in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

I encourage you and your family to participate in the meeting on **October 27th** and make your voice heard. This is your opportunity to help educate others about the difference BCCF is making for those in our care, the community, and the great state of Colorado.

To CCCF Staff and Members of Our Community:

Last legislative session, the Colorado legislature passed **House Bill 20-1019**, authorizing a study to report on the local impact of correctional facilities in their respective communities and provide an analysis of future capacity needs for the Colorado Department of Corrections. As part of that process, officials will be holding **public hearings** in communities with both state and state-contracted facilities like

Crowley County Correctional Facility.

As warden of the Crowley County Correctional Facility I have been privileged and honored to see firsthand the important work that our more than 230 dedicated team members perform each and every day to keep our community, each other and those in our care safe, while offering life-changing reentry programs that help offenders prepare to successfully rejoin their families and communities. The track record of quality corrections by our outstanding employees spans more than 20 years. I am especially proud of some of the more recent achievements by our staff. Following are some examples of operational excellence by Crowley staff in 2019 and 2020:

- Obtained the highest overall score during CDOC's COVID-19 audit
- Developed education delivery processes to help offenders stay on track amid the pandemic
- Increased overall GED participation in 2020
- Maintained the highest GED completion rate for CO offenders across public and private facilities
- Named 'Facility of the Year' for Safety by CoreCivic in 2019

In addition to the great work that we do with those in our care, we also take pride in the many partnerships and the meaningful work we do in our community, such as:

- Conducting food drives to support organizations that fight hunger
- Holding school supply drive to ensure local students are prepared for the classroom
- Sponsoring the Angel Tree program to make sure the holidays are happy for children in need
- Supporting community efforts including school sports, youth activities, and holiday events
- Leading a volunteer program for offenders to produce hand-crafted items for donation to the local Hospice (i.e. scarfs, hats, stuffed animals, calendars, and blankets)
- Employee participation in community activities (youth sports, civic groups, churches)
- Regular participation in community parades and other events

- Inviting community members into the facility for regular community relations meetings
- Habitat for Humanity program is involved in work-shops

The public meeting for the Crowley County community) is scheduled for October 28th. I would encourage you and your family to participate and make your voice heard. This is your opportunity to share how Crowley County Correctional Facility) has impacted you, your loved ones, and our great community.

TRANSCRIPTION OF COMMENTS: BENT COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING, DEC. 1, 2020

Bent County Commissioner Chuck Netherton

First off, I guess I'd like to thank everyone for attending and giving us an ear. The commissioners appreciate that. And I guess I'd kind of like to say that, you know, years ago, our largest economic contributor was originally agriculture and of course, the Fort Lyon VA Medical Center. Fort Lyon was closed by the federal government and our agricultural water has been and is being purchased by a large metropolitan area. In 1993, Bent County taxpayers constructed the Bent County Correctional Facility to satisfy the state of Colorado's need for additional prison beds. The state didn't have the funding to do that themselves. So, the taxpayers stepped forward and fulfilled that need for them. In 1998, and again, in 2008, the facility was expanded to add additional beds needed by Colorado. It was sold to a private prison corporation, which today is CoreCivic. It looks as though now that the penalties have been reduced for some crimes. And the fact that the pre-COVID state budget was a lot more robust, we're now not needed like we were before, so beds were not a necessity. We're now being kicked to the curb. If our prison facility can accomplish the same desired outcome, while saving the state taxpayers millions of dollars, while benefiting Bent County, the Arkansas Valley, isn't that a win win situation for Colorado taxpayers, Bent County and the Arkansas Valley? Why would you want to end a successful and mutually beneficial relationship? I don't quite understand their thinking. I personally attended the "Go-further" graduation out of the facility. It's a program that's designed to help the offenders transition back into society. My visit had the opportunity to visit with a few

after this program, and they expressed to me that they were so appreciative of the staff's willingness to go the extra mile to prepare them for a successful reentry into society. It's the state's leading GED program. They have a welding program, a computer program, electronics class, CD class, and many others. All are designed to reduce their recidivism rate and allow smoother, successful transition back into society once they've completed their time in the prison. I'm chairman of the three county Community Corrections Board. And I feel like this is probably one of the primary goals of a prison is to train these guys, equip them and get them mentally ready to step back into society with a successful outcome. I guess I would urge the governor and legislators to strongly weigh the pros and cons before you sign this legislation. It's going to severely impact the entire Arkansas Valley. If you add the drought, together with the COVID this is an economic disaster looking for a place to happen. And we have a staff out of the prison that's very proud of their facility and I think they go the extra mile to ensure that the inmates have what's needed to successfully navigate society once they get out. This decision will impact the entire Arkansas Valley along with the two counties' abilities to function. These are people's lives and livelihoods you have in your hands. And I guess I would urge you to make a decision that's not a politically driven decision and a decision that your conscience can live with. If you decide to phase out these two facilities and either cripple or bankrupt our two counties. Is that the legacy that this legislature and governor want to leave behind you? I guess that's my thoughts and thank you for your consideration.

Bent County Commissioner Jean Sykes

I would like to address some of the human aspects that an economic study cannot address. In January while we were speaking with some of our legislators about the private prison and a concern, before the study became a part. One of the suggestions that some of the legislators gave was the idea that the state could take over the prison and therefore lead to jobs in our counties. That may be somewhat true, but what isn't mentioned is that those jobs may require our residents to move to other communities just to keep that job. For many who work at the Bent County Correctional Facility moving is not an option. They may be taking care of older family members, have bought homes, have spouses that may not be able to find a job in the

next community, or who are tied to Bent County with farms and ranches. For some, it's a matter of wanting the way of life Bent County offers. Can homes be sold, and new ones purchased? Certainly. But in Bent County the average income, if it can be sold, would not be enough to even make a down payment on a home in the Front Range. That leaves families with little option of moving and starting new in another community. Financially, many couldn't make that change, so they're left without a job. The stress of constantly wondering whether or not you will have a job tomorrow is hard on families and especially on our children who see and feel that stress of their parents on a daily basis. That child stress is often taken to the school, where the child finds it difficult to concentrate and to learn. Mental health is a growing concern throughout the United States in the small rural communities. The resources for help are very limited. Losing the private prison and the jobs means added mental and physical strain on our residents. Bent County will no doubt see an increased need for mental and physical health care. Bent County relies on surrounding counties for our doctors, hospitals and mental health services now, losing the property tax and jobs in Bent County leaves our residents and our community without care. And no way to recruit professionals for our counties. Bent County has been faced with continued drought, equaling the dust bowl days, stressing our agricultural community. Irrigation water has been sold to municipalities and young families are often left with no choice but to find employment in other areas simply because we don't have the jobs to provide to them. While 250 jobs in Denver or El Paso is easy enough to make up with a new business. That is not the case for small rural communities. Allow me if you will, to put some of those losses into perspective. Losing 250 jobs in Bent County is the equivalent of losing 32,724 jobs in Denver County, or 32,418 jobs in El Paso County. A county with those kinds of job losses does not recuperate overnight, in ideal situations, let alone in a county where infrastructure cannot support large industries, and our small businesses struggle to keep their doors open now. Would Denver or El Paso County idly stand by and let the state of Colorado take away that many jobs and property tax revenue from them? I ask that our legislators consider the devastation they will bring to all of lower Arkansas valley with a vote to close private prisons. Aren't the lives of our residents and their ability to make a living important? Thank you.

Bent County Commissioner Kim MacDonald

I would like to add that the Bent County correctional facility has been a part of the fabric of this community for over 27 years. From the very beginning, the commissioners were committed to the safety and wellbeing of the men who lived in the facility and to providing this critical service to the state just like Chuck was describing a moment ago. It was also at that time an opportunity for our community to invest in the future that provided much needed jobs, and the revenue streams that Gabe discussed earlier in the evening for the county, the city and for the special districts. Core civic, which has operated the facility for nearly 25 of those years, has carried out that commitment to service and excellence.

Although they're a private business, the correctional facility operates in close partnership with Bent County. And as a commissioner, I would like the opportunity to continue to support this collaborative model. The county has been continually contracting as the agent with the Colorado Department of Corrections since the very beginning. So, the commissioners we meet regularly with the warden, and with representatives from the prison private prison monitoring unit from DOC. These meetings have always been productive and positive. CoreCivic has consistently met the benchmarks that were set forth in the contract. There's nothing that they've looked at CoreCivic over time and said, you're doing this wrong, you're doing this badly, you're on the bubble. They've been excellent. They've also consistently been accredited by the American Correctional Association. You know, over the years CoreCivic here in the community has introduced and expanded inmate programs, and educational opportunities that are aligned with those that are offered by the state, in addition to providing these excellent services to offenders, CoreCivic funds all of its own capital needs. So, both of these just translate into savings, I don't have to explain that. If you're not paying, you're not having to pay for those things you have money to do other stuff with. I find it just interesting and kind of ironic that today is the second day of a special legislative session to address the impacts of COVID-19 that it's had on our communities, our businesses and our people. The same legislative body that is meeting today, will in the near future, utilize the results of this study that we're talking about this evening, to inform their decision about the future of the key industry in our community. We take that very seriously. So, I hope that the legislature will focus on efficiencies and best practices, rather



than changing this model that has worked effectively for a quarter of a century.
Thank you.

Steven Salazar

A little bit about me. I've been at the facility for almost 18 years. I'm currently the chief of unit management. I oversee the programming side of the facility to include the reentry programming education. For 18 years, I've watched our wonderful staff walk through those doors and take pride in everything they do with the facility. We have built a reentry culture. We've been doing reentry for several years, but as Commissioner Netherton noted, the last three years we've really pushed the reentry culture. Starting with our "Go-further" reentry process. We've added Seven Habits, Parents on a Mission, Dave Ramsey Financial Planning, and we were just starting My Song for Life, which is in collaboration with country singer Mark Colley out in Nashville, we're just getting ready to start that program with the assistance of Miss Sharon Bullock in Los Animas School District. Going back to myself, my wife Chastity, and I have raised two kids through high school in Las Animas, we have two kids currently in school and we'll have another little one in school in a couple more years. Came to Bent County correctional facility as a 22 year old young man, looking for a better career for my family. I was amazed that when I walked in, the pride that the staff took on caring for the offenders, the public service to the community, and how they took care of each other. And that's what has kept me at the facility for 18 years: the amount of pride in behind those walls. I want to talk about a little bit of the community involvement. In addition to the Angel Tree and the canned food drives, one of our biggest programs that's been running since 2018 is the Fulfillment Program led by Miss Ashley Brandon, you may know this as the backpack program, after school lunch program, has a couple different names, but the Fulfillment Program packs after school snacks for various entities across the nation. And it's in collaboration with Global Foods and Colorado correctional industries. And we employ 30 offenders.

Since 2018 we've shipped out 1,474 pallets 796 "140 bags" to multiple states, including Las Animas School District. So, we're very proud of that program. These programs are in addition to Commissioner Netherton mentioning the electronic shop computers. Soon, we'll be starting a welding program. And our GED program

has been very, very effective. We have very dedicated teachers at the facility. So, someone might ask what Bent County correctional facility means to me and our staff, it means everything. As you pointed out, Rick, we have a voice in rural Colorado. And we just need the Front Range to understand that our facility does good work. We are very important here in Colorado and in our facility means everything to this community. And our staff are very prideful in what they do every day. I'd like to thank you guys for taking your time tonight.

James Robinson

My name is James Robinson. I'm a 10 year military veteran. I started working at Bent County in 2011. Like Mr. Salazar, two of my two children were raised in the system here in La Junta. Both of them graduated within the last two years, which is kind of a blessing. As a lot of people have already said, it's mostly about people. I mean, everybody's talking about it. It's about people. The inmates that we work with, I've worked pretty much every shift. I've started out as a CO, I worked up into recreation, and I now work for the reentry program and the prerelease. Like he was saying, we started a lot of different programs, because a lot of these guys that are getting out and back into society, have never actually had a mentor or role model to look up to. And that's what we as professionals actually try and emulate for them, because a lot of them have never had it. And I find that that in itself is one of the biggest things for me that I come home, and I feel that I've helped somebody. And getting those guys back out there into society and being able to see the impact of what it's doing for them. And just to see that light come on for him. I think that's one of the biggest things that we all look forward to every single day.

Bryan Simmons

Thank you. My employer, the First National Bank of Las Animas has an office located in each of the communities that was impacted by the proposed closures - could be impacted by the proposed closures. These locations include Ordway, Las Animas, Fowler, Rocky Ford and La Junta. CoreCivic employees are a meaningful part of our customer base. Their paychecks are deposited with us. We provide them with loans

and other services. Organizations as well as other local community banks will suffer as a result of the contemplated actions. As a bank officer in Bent County, I have seen firsthand how many businesses struggled due to the reduction of jobs as a result of the state prison closure at Fort Lyon in 2011.

Multiple small businesses through the Arkansas Valley were impacted significantly. Although the numbers may not seem dramatic to Front Range communities basking in the overabundance of growth on the I-25 corridor, these numbers were devastating to our small community that we're trying to keep afloat. Every job is important, and every business is valued. As my position as chairman of the Bent County Economic Development Foundation Board, I have become painfully aware of how difficult it is to recruit new employers to our community. The initial construction and opening of the Bent County facility were a direct result of the coordinated effort between the foundation and the county commissioners to provide employment opportunities in our region, as well as to assist the state of Colorado with prison population issues. At the time, this was endorsed by the state and Bent County was encouraged to engage in this activity. Unfortunately, we have now come full circle. To replace this enterprise within these communities will be an overwhelming if not impossible task and it's likely that the funding that the Economic Development Foundation receives from Bent County will be reduced through the anticipated decline in property taxes and other revenues. I have no doubt that this will further hamper our business development efforts. We're fighting other battle battles on other fronts as well. Investors and developers have their eyes on Arkansas River water that irrigates the ground in the lower Valley. They continue to make plays on buying and moving water to the Front Range to support the dramatic growth that's being seen there. Farming is a major economic driver in both Crowley and Bent counties. This has been and will continue to be detrimental to our communities. I currently serve as secretary treasurer for the Arkansas River Conservancy District. Our primary purpose is the maintenance and management of the levees that protect the city of Las Animas and adjacent areas from flooding from the Arkansas River. The private prison provides 28% of our meager operating revenues. Should we not be able to fund the maintenance projects and as a result the Army Corps of Engineers de-certified the levee, FEMA flood protection could be eliminated. The cost of this to the community would be staggering should that situation play out. I understand that the driving factor behind the legislation is a

concern that is not ethical for private institutions. to profit from the incarceration of criminals. I would suggest that the state does not exist in a bubble regarding this and DOC is also reliant on vendors, contractors and suppliers in the public sector to provide their services for profit. Not sure how the proponents of this closure can reasonably reconcile this point. CoreCivic has been an excellent neighbor, partner and contributor in our community. My home where my wife and I raised our family is located on the same road within a half mile of the facility. I've never once been concerned about our safety. They provide sponsorship to local activities such as schools, recreational organizations and civic groups, all the while providing a much needed job in a cost effective solution to house inmates for the state, not only do they provide the services cheaper than the state, but they do while pouring millions of dollars of tax revenues back into our local communities. It's a double win. And I see my time as well over thank you for listening.

Justin Miller

Good evening. My name is Justin Miller. I'm a Bent County resident and a member of the board of education in the McClave School District. McClave is a town located in Bent County. I said tonight, I'll try not to replough too much ground, but I said tonight, Bent County's a small rural county - struggles economically. In 2010 Bent County had the highest poverty rate in the state. In 2018. It climbed to the second highest poverty rate at 33.9%, only behind Crowley County, at 44.3%. Economic hardships are a way of life in these small rural counties. And that was why in 1992, when the state reached out to rural counties to help with the prison overcrowding situation. It was embraced by rural counties. It wasn't initially embraced, as you can expect, many residents were not excited about the idea of a prison in their county, but as they thought through it, they saw it as a stable employment for local citizens and an expansion of our tax base and some true economic diversification that these small counties hadn't had an opportunity at for years. The partnership was so successful that it was expanded again in 1998, and then in 2008. And I would say that all three of those, the initial relationship in the two expansions all took place under Democratic governor leadership at those times. At its current capacity Bent County employs about 220 employees and that doesn't sound like a lot, but with a population of 5500 people - it's

huge. As Commissioner Sykes noted, when you compare that to some of the more Metropolitan counties, Denver, Arapahoe, El Paso it's nearly 32,000 employees on a per capita basis in comparison to those counties. As a resident, parent, and school board member in the McClave School District, I'm highly concerned about the loss of the property tax base to Bent County. Currently, Bent County Correctional Facility pays \$1.1 million in property taxes annually. And that goes towards our fire department, sheriff's departments, ambulance services, schools, water districts - very vital services to our residents. In addition to that \$1.1 million in property tax Bent County Correctional Facility pays another \$510,000 in annual fees to Bent County. Again, this is huge to the economy of our county and to providing the services to our citizens. As stated before, it's been said that nobody should make a profit off of the incarceration of another human. But when you look at the numbers, this doesn't add up converting private prisons to state run prisons, the incarceration cost is 86% higher, to go from a private prison to a state run prison. There will continue to be profits made off the incarceration of people, it's just moving it from one pocket to the other. So, when you look at the total that will be paid by our small rural counties, when we convert these prisons from private to public, we have to ask ourselves, why - why should we do this? In a time when our state is already struggling to fund education, transportation, and many other needed services, why are we considering doing away with private prisons that operate more efficiently and provide services equivalent to state owned prisons? Why are we considering a change like this that will do away with economic diversification in Colorado? When you look at the numbers, they just don't add up.

Bill Long

This is Bill Long. I live in Las Animas, Colorado, former Bent County commissioner. I do not want to be terribly repetitive here. But I do want to go over a few things that really have not been addressed. I participated as the director of the Bent County Development Foundation in 1992, with the Bent County commissioners working with Democratic Governor Roy Romer, to establish this first private facility in Bent County and really the first in the state. At that time the state did not have the capital construction funds to expand or grow their own facility. The state had inmates in facilities outside of the state of Colorado. So, we took it upon ourselves to raise the

funds to construct the first facility. Shortly thereafter, in '96-'97 again, the state was short of beds and money. We once again worked with the Romer administration and it was at that time we partnered with what is now CoreCivic, to expand the facility. So, for a second time, we worked very hard as a community and with our partner CoreCivic to meet the needs of the state, with the state not having to invest any capital construction dollars of their own. When I became a Bent County commissioner in 2005, and in 2007, the state once again, had inmates in out of state facilities. I think we all remember the recession of 2008-2009. CoreCivic and Bent County, once again, found the dollars to expand and continue providing the much needed services that the state could not afford at the time. So that said, I think that historical part of our partnership with CoreCivic, Bent County's partnership with CoreCivic, as well as our partnership with the state of Colorado for 27 years is not something that we can take lightly. It's truly been a community effort throughout that time period. I do think, however, though, the bigger question is, are we providing the services that meet the state's expectations at a cost that is affordable? And I think the answer to both of those questions is absolutely, yes. The 60-some dollars at both Ben and Crowley get per inmate per day, is somewhat less than the state average. And I very much appreciate the explanation as to why there is at least some difference. But I think we need to keep in mind that 60-some dollars includes the capital investment dollars the community and core civic made to provide the beds. So, it truly is an exceptional savings to the state of Colorado. Secondly, and maybe more importantly, are we providing the services that are satisfactory to the state of Colorado and to the inmates? And the answer that question is yes, as well. My 12 years as a commissioner, there was not one time the private prison monitoring unit of the Department of Corrections suggested that there was even a small problem with the services we're providing. So, Rick, I see my three minutes are up. Thank you very much. And I want to thank all of you for putting this together and allowing the community to have a voice in the decision making process.

John Lofdahl

Hello, I'm John Lofdahl. I'm a 23 year Bent County resident. I'm a father of a third grader in Las Animas Elementary School and I'm also the production manager of the

second biggest private employer in Bent County - Mountain Prairie Farms. The impacts I could see of a prison closure on our community are a mass exodus of gainfully employed residents that will further restrict the already limited hiring pool that we have in our area. Also, could see harm to local businesses, retail, grocery, and restaurants. Not all of them could be sustained if we lose residents. The next thing would be our harm to our emergency services, which are greatly funded by the private prison. The next one would be harm to our education, less headcount and less funding for the schools. We know a quarter of the funding for our local school comes directly from the private prisons, we already have a third of our kids that are under the poverty line, why would we make a decision to make that worse. And also, I would ask all local elected officials to be stewards of our taxpayers' money and make the comparison of how much cheaper it is to run a private prison versus state prison. And also, if there's a loss of tax revenue from the private prison closure, who's going to make up the difference for those funds, that is going to fall back on the residents and the business owners in this area. I think the biggest thing is we got to think about our children, our children's future and if the private prison closes, that could have a very negative impact on our community. I'd like to thank you for your consideration of my comments and urge you to consider these comments before you make a vote to the detriment of our community. Thank you.

Elsie Goines

I am Elsie Goines, Las Animas School District superintendent, Bent County. One of the things I wanted to talk a little bit about is - I just want to make sure that we're very clear on this concept that if we were to lose that 25% of our tax base to the property tax reduction, that there's this misconception that through school funding that the state will fill that through state equalization. That was a comment that I saw made a couple weeks ago. I think the concern with this concept of backfilling through state equalization, and the reason why I went last year to testify before this committee, was that there was a bill last year called the state equalization. I mean, sorry, state equalization mill levy bill. If that bill was passed, the state is not going to backfill equalization monies because we're a poor district. And so, I just really wanted to make sure that people understand that. The reality is that the state of Colorado is not going

to consider backfilling state equalization just because certain school districts can't raise enough mill levies to support their property tax base. So, I just want to make sure we clarify that.

Warden Jerry Roarke

I want to thank you all for listening to me and my staff. My staff had a lot of good things to say about our work and the good work we do for the people of Colorado. I want to take a moment to say how proud and glad I am of the staff I have at Bent County. A lot of prisons struggle with the balance between safety and reentry. We don't struggle with that at all at our facility. I have a staff that is committed to both sides of the correctional mission. We want our inmates to succeed. We want our offenders to succeed when they leave us and not come back to any prison system. I have a staff that is so committed that, I've never been in a prison, I've been in the business for 32 years and 30% of my staff have over 15 years of experience. That shows a very big level of commitment. We are in the process of starting two new programs this year, a welding program which we're partnering with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Labor to use a Pathway grant to help those offenders not only learn a vocation in prison but to find a job once they leave prison. The other program that I heard Steve Salazar mention it, Gone for Life, it's a program in which we teach cognitive skills that the inmates will learn how to not think not like a criminal anymore so that they will be successful in the community. I'm very proud of what we're doing. My staff is a staff whose culture is committed to both the safety of the offenders and the safety of the community and preparing offenders for release into the community and for a successful release, That's a rarity in corrections and we have that already built into our prison. Thank you for your time.

Lana Gardner

I'm Lana Gardner, principal at the Las Animas Elementary School. We serve approximately 275 students in pre-K through 6th grade. We anticipate that the closing of the BCCF would directly impact at least 50 students in our school district of nearly 500, or at least 10% of our kids. I'm not here today to request another opportunity for

Bent County, I would like to really connect with what Jean talked about as far as the human aspect of the closure of Bent County Correctional Facility. I'm here tonight to ask that the opportunities provided by the BCCF be allowed to continue and that the doors to opportunity for our community remain open. Currently these doors are open, the partnership between the facility and Bent County has supported and continues to support financial sustainability for Bent County and countless families and businesses in southeast Colorado. Colorado Kids Count reports that 12% of children in Colorado live in poverty. In Bent County that's 35%. This means that Bent County has three times the percentage of children living below the poverty line than the state average has. Three times - that's significant. Children of the families in that 35% require greater academic, social, and emotional support than typical middle class children. BCCF provides access to middle class jobs which are limited in rural America. The facility offers the largest number of middle class job opportunities in our entire county and for many others in southeast Colorado. The potential closing of BCCF will be devastating as the middle class families will be forced to move out of our rural community and the children living in poverty in our school will certainly increase. The domino effect will be catastrophic with potential implications which we cannot begin to predict or fathom. As a life-long educator in my rural community, my hometown, I've worked alongside countless students and families to explore opportunities and open doors. We've spent years nurturing and encouraging students to explore opportunities to remain in rural America and to be successful contributing members of our community. The decisions that this board is going to make today and in the near future regarding BCCF will have a lifelong and immeasurable impacts for myself, my students and our families in my community. Members of legislative bodies will come and go as we still fight to preserve our community and provide opportunities and hope for our children's futures. The closing of this facility as a private facility represents many closing doors and denied opportunities to not only the employees and their families but to all of us in southeast rural Colorado. Please allow us to continue the partnerships we've created with the staff and leaders at BCCF to provide opportunities and open doors out of poverty for our students and our families. Thank you.

Addie Wallace

I'm a shorter term resident of Bent County, I have only worked here at the school while being in the community 14 years - short term for many of the residents who are on here and making statements. During that time, I have seen what we can do at the school with the money and the funds that we are offered and from that tax base. Without those funds there are many of our high school programs that we would probably have to cut and look at getting rid of which is something that we've been fighting for as long as I've been here. We've gone up and down, up and down, and we're finally at a place where we are able to provide some extra opportunities for those kids and some new opportunities for those kids. With that loss I'm afraid that would be something that would go away. As Mrs. Gardner said we've been trying to give these kids opportunities to look outside of our small community and see what there is and what they can bring back to our community and make our community better. Without the money to do that and to take them outside and to look and to see what's going on we won't be able to provide those opportunities to expand their horizons per se. I have two children of my own that are in the school system and they are happy and love coming to school here because of what we have and what we can offer. I'd love to be able to keep that for them, not only for my children but for everyone I work with here at the school. Also, those kids who will be impacted through their own parents' loss of jobs. I've had many students already talk to their high school teachers. We have a time for them to talk to their teachers about what's bothering them and there are several of those kids who are old enough to understand what is going on and what is being discussed at the state level and how that would impact their lives. There are several of them that are very, very worried about what this means for them.

Las Animas Mayor Jim Collins

I'm sitting here listening to all of you and all of the different points you're making and I'm different than everybody because I'm not from here, I retired from the Army after 22 years in 2008 and came here and made this my home. The one thing I can't get out of my head is in the 22 years I was in the Army I had the privilege of visiting quite a few armpit nations like spending a year in Al Anbar province in Iraq and a year in

Helmand River province in Afghanistan. The amazing thing was that the whole time I was there I wondered about, how does a place like Baghdad be so successful when the Al Anbar province is dead broke and suffering from poverty? And the same thing happened in Afghanistan with one major capital city that was phenomenal with everything you can imagine and everyone else in the region was broke. And we called those people that were those leaders terrible names and went to war with them and I always wondered how that happened. Now I sit here, and I see it happening right here. So, it's amazing to me that we're even having this conversation. But at the same time, I also understand that by watching the presidential debates that the reality is it is going to be forced upon us anyway. So, the question becomes at that point what we are going to do. What is the state willing to do when you do make this decision that you will probably make to close this? Why do we need to be an Al Anbar province? There's no reason. Do you want to be part of that decision that basically shuts down the entire eastern part of the state and lets Denver be a Baghdad or do you want to be part of that decision that helps us to continue to be a country out here where we want to be. That's all I've got to say.

Otero County Commissioner Keith Goodwin

My name is Keith Goodwin. I'm a commissioner for Otero County. Thank you for the opportunity to speak again and thank you all for having this opportunity for everybody to speak on this important thing. We're working on a dangerous formula for our area. Closure equals reduced population equals plus reduced economy plus reduced student population which in addition to that plus reduced property values. As you can see from the economic indicators that Gabe gave earlier this is one of the poorest areas of the state. We're adding insult to injury in talking about this activity. Where else can you go and have 228 jobs make a 30% impact on the total economy of an area? This major impact is impacting Bent County, Crowley County, Otero County. And just the simple statement as you can tell from what's happening around here is that we want, and we need the private prisons to stay open. Thank you.

La Junta City Manager Rick Klein

My name is Rick Klein and I'm city manager for La Junta, Colorado for the past 20 years, I've been with the City 30 years, and with Otero County almost ten years as County Engineer. I watched these prisons come in, I watched the partnerships, and it was to put economic development on the plains and to help us. And as you can tell - it did. These people that we are talking about, they're our community members. The loss of revenue alone would be devastating. But the loss of the community members themselves that are on our water associations, on our volunteer fire, that help out with all our community events, help out with our schools, you might just say we'll write off southeast Colorado especially the towns of Las Animas, La Junta, Ordway, Manzanola, Fowler, Rocky Ford - all these employees live there. When they go back into those communities they are community members that make a difference. We're here for a purpose, we love this way of life, we love southeast Colorado as we believe we live in the land of milk and honey. You can't shut these prisons down without it being more devastating than what we're seeing with the COVID in the world. Thank you.

Sammie George

My name is Sammie George and I'm the director of the Bent County Development Foundation. I'm responsible for countywide economic development. As Bryan stated before, the Development Foundation is a private-public entity and heavily depends on funds from the Bent County general operating fund to function and continue to provide on-going economic support throughout the county. It is my job to provide support and assistance to existing business and also to help develop economic diversification strategies for the future health and growth of Bent County. I would like to reiterate that private prisons were originally brought in as economic diversification for both counties. Specifically, as a solution to the state problem of shortage of prison beds in the first place. What lawmakers in Denver don't seem to understand is that economic diversification in rural communities is not possible when the intent is to replace what rural communities currently have and have fought very hard to keep? Diversification is only possible through expansion and the introduction of new businesses while utilizing our existing assets as launching points to expand and grow

from. If Bent County is faced with crippling budget cuts caused by the loss of tax revenue earned from the private prisons commissioners will be faced with the impossible task of lay-offs and many of these lay-offs would involve some of the higher paid jobs in the county. They would also be faced with cutting funds for programming and activities and assets that not only increase the quality of life for our local residents but also provide options and amenities for me, the economic developer, to offer potential new businesses as incentives for bringing new business and their employees to our community. Without these place-making amenities Bent County will be at an even greater disadvantage in the pursuit of economic diversification than we are now. Regardless of your position in the philosophical argument about private prisons it cannot be argued that closing private prisons is not a solution for rural Colorado - it's a death sentence. Thank you.

Mary Cardenas

I was born and raised here in Bent County. My father Chris Carenas along with his widowed mother and two younger siblings immigrated to Denver in 1991. The family established citizenship and my grandmother met and married my step grandfather. In '96 my father met my mother Blanca and I was born in '97. In that year my grandfather moved the family to Bent County finding the small community more fit to raise small children. There my grandfather, a lifelong entrepreneur, opened La Spensia, a small Mexican restaurant right off Highway 50. With my Grandma in the kitchen and Mom's smiling face waiting tables business boomed - so well that they acquired a more accommodating location in our quaint little town and renamed the business Carmen. In late 2000 I learned that I would be a big sister. News of the addition spread and an observant loyal customer, a Bent County Correctional Facility employee saw the strong leadership and discipline skills my father possessed and brought my father an application to the facility, knowing that the facility's benefits were exactly what his growing family needed. Mom stayed with the family to help run the restaurant and my father, now a lieutenant, has been employed at the facility ever since, 19 years to be exact. In those 19 years, Bent County staff became family. Fort Lyons state prison, Roxanne Boutique, Uptown Video, Medina's Restaurant, Duckwall's General Store, Chuck Netherton Motors, Seven Star Dining, Quickies Gas Station, and a handful of

other businesses have come and gone in those 19 years taking their employees and their families with them. Leaving Carmen's cutting outside staff and only employing a handful of family. While businesses left - Bent County Correctional Facility nearly doubled in size. Calling for monthly maintenance meetings, lunch meetings at Carmen's, SWAT team meetings at Carmens, but over-all they brought jobs. Jobs that brought new employees, employees from up and down the valley with spending money that meant going out for dinner or splurging for lunch and reintroducing our small little business to the concept of a profit. We have now established a customer basis all over the state thanks to the facility's employees and inmate visitors. Losing the facility means losing our lunch and a good portion of our dinner income - enough to cause us to close our business. I lose both the businesses that helped put me through college and I have to reconsider my master's classes next semester. My family loses both sources of income and our cook, a single father of three, loses his sole income. The dishwasher who supports his parents loses his income - the list goes on. Personally, I can tell you that the facility closing means having to watch multiple people who I consider family leaving the county. Bent County Correctional Facility isn't a computer simulated community in which sources of income can be added in a move to test the impact. The facility and jobs in Otero, Crowley and Bent counties is a community of families barely getting by who cannot afford to lose their jobs and attempt to relocate. Bent County isn't study material, it's real people.

Frank Smith

This is Frank Smith calling from Oregon. I've been very involved in the prison situation in southern Colorado for almost 20 years. I actually was asked to come to Colorado and stop the building of the group prison in Pueblo which was unneeded and would have caused economic calamity there. And at the same time, I approached people in Lamar, Colorado, to do the same thing because I thought they were going to get in the same kind of bind and position that Bent County now finds itself in. When Bent County built this prison it seemed like a pretty good idea. That's because it was difficult to decipher, and people just felt that it would be a going enterprise forever. But it's not. I don't know the Bent County facility that well, I know the Crowley County facility was very poorly built. The poor construction contributed substantially to the riot that

happened, I think it was January 10, 2004, I may be off on the day. I was called the night that riot went off and I drove there and got there early in the morning while Crowley County was still smoking - literally - and was surrounded by law enforcement from all over the state to control that riot. Because I stopped those two prisons I think you might recognize you have a lot less competition in the game than you would have had otherwise. I also tried real hard to stop the Hudson prison. That was the second one I wasn't able to stop, and I pled with them and explained things to them, and they were sure that the people who were trying to sell them a bill of goods were right and they went ahead and built it. And of course, it's been closed for ten years. It's left a huge burden on the county, it's a calamity in Weld County because nobody wants to build near a prison private or public. A lot of people have been talking about the savings involved in private prisons today and that's comparing apples to oranges. You've got prisoners that are low custody that don't have typically 30 years of violent crime behind them - that's the folks that the state is dealing with that's much more expensive to deal with. The medical problems are much more expensive to deal with. Speaking of medical problems this is probably the most important thing I'm going to say. I looked at the incidence of Corona virus spreading in CoreCivic prisons. A few months ago, the number in just one prison in Tennessee, Truesdale, was over a thousand people. This isn't the first time there have been problems. In Eloy, Arizona there's been virus after virus that spread and harmed people. At least four people died, I don't have a current number on that, employees died. Because the corporation cares much more about making money than they do about the welfare of their employees. If you can't see that you haven't been paying attention. When I first came to southern California I had whistle blowers tell me that the Crowley prison was unsafe in great detail and I couldn't get the state to listen to me at the time. They aren't safe because they failed badly on a number of measures that are present with public prisons with training programs with retirement benefits with health insurance. I was told that the people at Crowley for instance that the employees had been offered a smorgasbord of health plans, but nobody could afford any of them that would do them any good, so they just didn't have any healthcare there. I don't know what the situation is in Bent County, but I presume it's the same. I'm sorry to be the guy who brings bad tidings, but I think you've been very fair, and you were last night also. Thank you very much.

La Junta City Councilmember Ed Vela

I was talking to a CoreCivic employee today and they said they're up to almost a full population at both prisons, I didn't know if that was true or not. They also told me that both prisons are at the pleasure of the governor, all the governor has to do is sign a piece of paper to close them down and they'll come closing down. I don't know how much of that is true, but I thought maybe one of the wardens could address that. I pretty much agree, I'm Ed Vela from La Junta, Colorado, I'm a city councilman, and I pretty much agree with all three of the county commissioners including Mr. Long who has been, right from day one, in this economic development project and I appreciate the heck out of him and I know that the Bent County commissioners would not even settle to discuss this as saying it's going to be a trickledown effect, if they close it will not be a trickle but it will have a tsunami impact on the entire tri- county. That's what I believe is going to happen and I'm glad we had input from the staff who worked there. I never knew the things they were describing but I'm certainly very happy and proud for them that they were able to accomplish and in particular the superintendent of schools, she talked about things that happened there and that it would be very devastating to the kids there. I like what everybody said particularly the commissioners including Commissioner Long and I'm happy for everybody if we can get this turned around and make those state legislators vote yes to keep them open. Thank you.

Greg Brophy

This is Greg Brophy. I'm a former state senator and state representative from Wray, Colorado, and I had the pleasure of representing most of eastern Colorado for 12 years. I've been in all of the facilities we've been talking about tonight, plus all of the publicly owned facilities and you really can't tell a difference between how any of them operate once you're inside it's a prison and they're all well-run and well taken care of, I appreciate all the things the commissioners said and thank you Mr. Becker and Mr. Preston for all the work you're doing and I hope that you include in the study a couple of other ideas in the study from House Bill 1019. I forgot to mention that I am currently representing the City of Burlington Colorado and Kit Carson County where we know

the economic effects of closing down a private prison because we went through that as a community three years ago. Losing close to 300 jobs and losing all the revenue and tax revenue that comes with that. If the state does decide to purchase these privately owned facilities that is supposed to be contemplated in the study from House Bill 1019 they must include a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes to all of the entities that currently receive property taxes from these facilities because if the state buys them they would no longer have to pay property taxes like a private business so we certainly hope that they would have a PILT payment included in there and included as part of the study. I think also I'd like to ask Mr. Becker if he would look into it, I don't think that the prison population forecast going forward should be accurate if it reflects the kind of drop in population that we saw from the COVID times when they were letting people out of prison early. I don't think that type of activity would continue post COVID. I want to thank you all for your interest tonight and for all the work that you're doing on this and am happy to visit with you some more. I'll probably put most of this writing and send it to you guys - thanks for your time.

Charlotte Harbaugh

My name is Charlotte Harbaugh and I work at Bent County Correctional Facility. I am currently a case manager supervisor. I started as an officer, moved to case management, and then again promoted to case manager supervisor. I moved here almost four years ago. I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from UCCS. I knew criminal justice is where I wanted to go. Case management seems like the career for me, I had a desire to help people, but I also liked to explain why their excuses didn't work. I have five kids so that's kind of what I did on a daily basis, so anyway. I moved all my five kids here to Las Animas. Didn't know anybody, not related to anybody. Started working at the prison. In that time, I realized that this community is just great. I thought it was going to be another small town - I've lived in smaller; I've lived in bigger. I've lived in Denver, I've lived in Vona, Colorado, for those of you who know Burlington - near there. That prison, as far as working there goes, has any issues that you would have at any other job. It's been such a support for me personally I've created friendships there I feel like there's definitely room to grow. We have a strong team. We work together and we have each other's back. My kids love the school here.

It's a small town, they're from Colorado Springs so they're from a bigger area but they make their connections here. One daughter's already graduated, she moved back to the Springs and then came back to Sugar City and I believe she's supposed to be starting a job in La Junta. We love the area. I can leave my car unlocked. I can leave my garage open. If the prison were to change, just the culture itself, that would be different. If it went to the state, like somebody mentioned before, it would be changing the diversification that Colorado has right now. I believe that what we have is good, we're growing, as far as programs go I do teach Parents on a Mission. The offenders love it. They love it that we offer programs that aren't offered in other places. With CoreCivic programs. They don't get paid for those programs; they are considered self-help programs. They volunteer to take them; they're courses where they can learn how to be a better person. So, when they get out they've gotten those tools to be better people. I really appreciate having the job I do, I appreciate the work now, I know there's been comments when this meeting has been brought up about how some people don't like this prison but the issues I've had you could have at any other prison. That prison has come to my support when I needed it. I think it strengthened us as a family. I would hate to have to move my five kids back to the big city where they don't get that individual attention that they do here. Thank you for listening to me and I appreciate you listening to everybody who's tried to speak here today.

Las Animas City Council member Terry Kim

My name is Terry Kim. I'm a city councilman in Las Animas. I've been in the community for six years. I want to say that politics aside, if I look at what this community has to offer, the lack of opportunity for growth in Bent, Prowers, Otero counties that it would be very short sighted for the I-25 corridor to decide to close this just because it's what they're doing. It's not going to help us at all. It's a Damocles sword - we're darned if we do, darned if we don't. I think this should be a warning to the cities and the counties that we need to - unfortunately because of the weather, the drought, being an agricultural community, we've really been doubly hit. So, it's really going to be harder for us to stand up without some kind of return from the state for closing the prisons that they helped build. I think that the prison for right now is

for the money we use for the schools is very necessary for at least for maintaining the stability of the county and the cities. I don't know how much growth, I'm sure there's going to be some, but again I think it should be a sign that as communities start looking at beginning to diversify business growth to where we won't be having just one business or entity to rely on so much. 30% I believe is the number given and because of 30%...So whoever's going to make this decision I believe we need to look at the livelihoods and how it's going to affect especially the tax dollars generated by the property tax that was one point one million dollars I believe was the number. And that's a lot of money for communities like these right now. I really believe it would be in the best interest of politicians to right now let us have what we have and give us time to think and plan around the situation and personally I think that the gentleman from Oregon is a prognosticator of things to come and what we as rural communities are up against as opposed to the more larger, economically diverse communities. That is a lot of the problems rural communities across the country are facing. Thank you all for your time and listening to me have a good night and be safe.

Teale Hemphill

I'm a lifelong resident of Bent County. We raise crops and cattle. We're landowners in the county. We're parents, small business owners and I'm on the school board at McClave. I have a question and a comment about the data collected. I'm wondering when predicting the number of prison inmates after the COVID is over are the mental health effects of this population being considered or predicted. So, if the crime rates are driving these predictions, pandemic related mental health issues should be a heavily weighted factor of potentially increasing crime rates in the future. I would just ask if that is being considered and if it's not that it would be in some way. In regard to the potential closing of the prison here in Bent county. A solution I'm gathering that may come our way by the state would be to offer our country some sort of funding for entrepreneurial efforts to offset jobs at the CoreCivic facility yet we see in the data presented that the private prisons are more financially efficient than state run prisons so CoreCivic is an entrepreneurial business that is successful. So instead of closing down the successful private business in our county I ask that our legislators consider the county's potential success if this successful private business can continue to stay

here and financial encouragement for additional entrepreneurs is offered, so both of those things. The fact that the individual income in our county is more than 60% from subsidies other than income earners and jobs should be reason enough to leave successful current entrepreneurs and encourage additional entrepreneurs. Thank you for your time.

Paul O'Brien

I'm Paul O'Brien and I'm the director of Canine Companions for Independence. I live in Colorado Springs. Our state office is here in Colorado Springs. We're a national, non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by training dogs to assist people with disabilities. Then we provide on-going support to ensure quality partnerships. We have two very successful partnerships one at Bent County Correctional Facility and one at Crowley County and the programs basically have the inmates who raise puppies for us, they train, socialize the puppies for about 18 to 20 months. Then they turn them back over to us and we train them as service dogs. So far, since 2016, when the program was founded at Bent County, they've raised 44 dogs for us and there are currently 10 dogs being raised at that facility. At Crowley County there are four dogs and we hope to grow that program to ten and we started that program last year. The program has been a win-win for the facility, the community, Canine Companions has benefited. The inmates usually provide us with dogs that have a better success rate through our program. Obviously the clients that those dogs are eventually placed with and then the offenders benefit greatly from the program. We've had offenders who've used their experiences to get jobs once they were released and they've actually come back and volunteered for our program as well once they've been released. I just wanted to lend my support and let everyone know that we've had a very successful partnership with CoreCivic for over 20 years and we're proud to partner with both Bent County and Crowley County. Whatever we can do to support the cause, we're happy to do it. Thank you.

Jessica Gonzales

I'm Jessica Gonzales. I'm the quality assurance manager at the Bent County

Correctional Facility. My job is to ensure we're meeting all requirements that are put in place for our facility by outside and internal entities. When there are deficiencies, it's my job to follow up on them and make sure that they're corrected. Along with being the legal coordinator, PIO, I have a lot of pride in what I do. I started out as a correctional officer there for a short period. I was a single mother. I've developed a lot of wonderful bonds with the people I work with, the people in this community and that to me has meant so much. I was not born and raised here, I'm originally from Denver which I can tell you does not provide the same kind of support that this community has. One of the most things that I'm proud of is first of all our staff's ability to communicate with our offenders. They do a wonderful job of being able to talk to the offenders and being the role model that these offenders need when they re-enter into society. Our programming - we have just as many programs as state facilities do we're always looking to expand that programming because our biggest goal with our staff is with reentry and recidivism. Our leadership at Bent County has also developed a great and not just the leadership but all of our staff has developed a great relationship with the community. I would say that most people in the community understand that when there is a need we are more than happy to step up to the plate. We've done so when assisting and working with the school as far as the Angel Tree. Every year we help provide Christmas gifts to children in the community who may not have Christmas otherwise and we take great pride in that. We always work directly with the Food Pantry. I know that it only takes one phone call and our staff takes great pride in that we can say we can provide that assistance to our community. We also provide assistance to our team members when they're going through some type of hardship. These team members are members of our community. One thing that I want people to remember is that this isn't about politics, it really isn't about money, it's about people in this community, and the livelihoods that this will impact.

It's a scary thought for me to believe that there are people who don't live in this community and don't go through the things that people in this community have had to go through because they're making decisions and they don't have any idea of what's actually happening here. Our staff at Bent County Correctional Facility take a lot of pride in what they do. We treat each other as if we're family and that's also what we expect from the community. We constantly reach out if it means helping somebody fix up a house, and we need to provide the volunteers, we're willing to do it. We not only

provide services for the needs of our community locally, but we're also doing that for the state as well. We have a strong commitment to programming and providing the offenders who reside with us tools that will help them find jobs such as computers, flagging, CDL, our welding program, fulfillment program, Seven Habits, and Go-further. Those two that I just listed I'd like to say, to me are the most important. And again, those are not state programs, those were initiated by CoreCivic. And our staff takes a great deal of pride in those two programs and those two programs will provide inmates with the ability to create internal change.

That internal change is something that will last forever with them. On a personal note I actually had an offender approach me while I was washing my car one day just to thank me and tell me what a positive impact we had and that he is now successful. He now lives in our area, has a job, and is a successful contributing member of our community.

Samantha Vail

My name is Samantha Vail and I'm an employee of the Bent County prison. My family moved down here about four years ago and I was employed with a day care here in town that has since moved from the nursing home over to the school. And then I also worked for a year as the lead teacher with the CDS here in town. Different opportunities and I started working for the prison I can say wholeheartedly I lived in several different areas, several different places, and I've lived in communities where you know there was a lot more jobs, better jobs, but I have five kids and this job is my livelihood and we definitely have made a home here and my kids love it here. The school system here is fantastic. I know Elsie, I know Lana, I speak every day with Lana, this community is very close. Everybody out at that prison is very close, a close knit community. I couldn't imagine the impact with this closing. We have done better down here in this small area than we did anywhere else in our lives. I love it here. I definitely don't want it to go away. It's just insane even when my husband was working oil field and pipeline jobs we made it of course but it was something different and down here in this tiny little community where you'd think that it's small and there's not much here but I definitely love it here and we've made off better than we've made it anywhere else. I definitely want to put my voice in and let everybody know that this is something that we need to keep as this is going to impact us. Like everybody else said

this is not politics this is personal, and I couldn't imagine us leaving. I have a lot of family down here. Thank you for your time.

Kathleen Navrich

My name is Katherine Navrich. I am a resident of Bent County. I'm a widow here. I want to say thank you I appreciated your graphs and your charts they're very informative, I would like to know more about, you kind of breezed over the crime trend changes that are to be expected that I would love to know more about whether it's going up or going down or what you suspect they might do. I love my community. We are more than just numbers. I know that your job must be awfully arduous, and it must be difficult to just sit there and listen to all of us. We love each other in our community. We care about each other. We work together. And with everything that's been shafted with you one thing that stuck out with me the most is that we are the backbone of Colorado. We are the one that has come to Colorado's rescue with the prison situation when you have had difficulties, when Denver couldn't afford it, or the state couldn't afford it. We stepped up as a community and supported our state and helped out. In our community, it's not like Denver or big cities I should say, where people don't really care about other people or if they do its only their few close neighbors. But we as a community as a whole we care about each other; I was a volunteer before COVID... (voice connection lost)

Anthony Garner

I'm actually an employee of the Bent County Correctional Facility as well. I'm the current safety manager. I started at Bent County in September. I worked at Crowley County from 2016 to September of this year. I've been a part of both facilities. Some of the things I want to talk about between Mr. Becker and Mr. Preston's quantifiable data that we've seen on the charts and the non-quantifiable stuff that we've heard over the last two days of the human factor I want to talk about us and what we can gain in the state from the facility. Number one, the people that we bring into the state much less our communities we bring in veterans because we're a veterans preference hiring. We sent, while I was at Crowley, a group of people to Puerto Rico to recruit in Puerto Rico

and brought almost 50 individuals from Puerto Rico to Colorado to work at the facility and be productive members of the state. The veterans part is we're trying to bring those people into our communities as well to help our communities. We've heard a lot about what the loss will do for us but what we gain by having these facilities here in our communities and in the state is much much more than we would gain by closing these facilities down. I appreciate everyone's time tonight.

Duane Gurule

My name is Duane Gurule. I want to clearly express that my comments yesterday and tonight are from my personal position as a legal resident of Otero County and do not reflect the opinions or views of my employer or any other local organization that I'm affiliated with. My opinion on the use of private prisons is that they are bad for people and bad for our community. If you would like to hear the statement I made at last night's meeting I would encourage you to do that. I'll finish up that statement tonight. I'm in 100 percent agreement that losing a company this size would have a deterrent effect on the region's economy, however my opinion is that we cannot ethically support a company which makes a profit on the incarceration of human beings. I believe we as a community should demand better for our region in moving away from an industry of this repute. We're in a position as a community to use this study to our advantage by being proactive in creating a better economy founded on innovation and leading in what we know best - agriculture. My recommendation is for our leaders to work hard now to recruit companies looking for a new home in Colorado. Like a company in the cannabis processing and cultivation industry. It's a 60 billion dollar industry that has and will continue to see exponential growth as policies shift in favor of that industry. A company that needs the infrastructure and workforce that Bent County could offer, a for-profit company that would continue to pay the property taxes the county depends on. A company's that could provide the annual payroll required to stimulate the local economy for growth. This study is being done to identify the impact that closing these private prisons would have on the local economy. We've heard many comments that will provide support for the devastation it will cause. The hard data also supports that. Denver knows that. Our opportunity now is to leverage our position with the state possibly mandating these closures and

demand a program and budget that will incentivize the right companies to take over this facility. With the support of local leaders, a state program could be created that would backfill any immediate losses and support local efforts to create a new regional economic driver. I'll end with a quote from John C. Maxwell which speaks stop both critical pieces of this issue: "if you're proactive, you focus on preparing. If you're reactive, you end up focusing on repairing." If we're proactive as a state we can focus on preparing for a better future for our youth and the populations which have been disenfranchised by the prison industrial complex. As a result, we'll spend less time repairing our broken individuals, broken families, and broken communities. And if we're proactive as a community we can focus on creating a better future for our business and job economy. As a result, we'll spend less time repairing a broken economy, broken tax bases, and a broken community. Thank you for the opportunity to speak again tonight.

Robert Arguello

My name is Robert Arguello, I'm the director of the Bent County Community Center and Recreation for Bent County as well. I represent about six employees and 400 children that participate in youth recreation and after-school programs and summer programs throughout Bent County as a whole. A large majority of these children are obviously underserved based on the data you've already heard, and they have no other safe option for after school safe activities. Therefore, our participation and numbers have increased each of the last few years I've been here. We are unique in the fact that we are a single source of wellness for our community. In our region I believe we are the only community center that offers youth sports, after school resources, summer resources, fitness opportunities for parents, meeting rooms for our community. Our primary source of support is derived from the tax dollars paid to Bent County. We are very much at risk with this particular scenario. To put into perspective how much our community utilizes the community center we average 120 visitors per day, 3,000 per month pre- COVID. And the population of Las Animas is approximately 2,100 people so that means we have the potential to service the majority of our community each month. That's unheard of on other scales. Our community sees value in what we offer as far as wellness. There are no public fitness facilities in Bent County

except for our community center. The challenges that we face as a non-profit trying to seek funding is endless every year, so we work very hard on that. Before we existed there was no option for our children and parents and our seniors for fitness on a public scale. If we cease to receive the support from Bent County tax dollars our existence is not just limited but would definitely close our doors. The last factor I want to share is our youth programs have increased in daily participation in each of the last few years. That translates into children that we value and feel safe. We want our children to attend their community center every day. If the children and parents were on this call they would share their love for this community center and the programs - but they're not so I'm going to simply say this on our behalf - our community is trying to optimize the limited resources that we have and I'm sure that we all agree that poor, underserved communities, not only benefit from health and fitness, they thrive and they become better. So, if we close due to a lack of tax dollar support the momentum that we've gained in recent years will certainly be lost and unlike larger communities in metro areas our small community does not have the luxury to send children to other programs. Therefore, we are the only option that they have. So please consider the negative impact this will have on our community's overall health, and our future health to come in coming years. Thank you.

Justin Garcia

This is Justin Garcia. I've worked for the prison, in the prison system, for 25 years. I've worked for Bent County Corrections Facility all but four months of those 25 years. I did go to the Department of Corrections out at Fort Lyons for a little bit of time for those four months and I went back to Bent county correctional facility for the simple fact that the family orientation that they have with the team that's there, the programs that they offer to the inmates, and what we do for this community of Las Animas and the surrounding counties. What people don't realize is that we have staff that comes from Lamar, we have some staff that comes from Springfield, which is Baca County which nobody has mentioned yet tonight, Otero County, Crowley County, Pueblo County, Las Animas County, and it's a big impact if something was to happen to this facility. The other thing nobody's talked about tonight is the grocery stores, the convenience stores, all the local businesses, the schools, I mean we touched on the schools, but

these people we provide money into this county into the city of Las Animas, and all the counties, the hotels, nobody mentioned the hotels with the inmate visitors. So that's the thing we need to think about if we take just the tax dollars that Bent County Correctional Facility pays into Bent County, if we take that away where are we going to make that up from? You're going to raise the taxes to the landowners, the ranchers, the farmers, it's very detrimental. We need to think about it and realize that down here we're a small boy, but we have a huge impact. And what we provide for the inmates, for the staff, for the community, for the schools, everybody involved it's a big deal and we do have a lot of pride. We pay attention to what goes on, and to the guy from Oregon talking about riots and all this kind of stuff I'm proud to tell you that we've had zero at Bent County Correctional Facility. So, we need to look back to the staff that's worked there and is still working there that know what they're doing, they know their profession, and they take great pride in what we provide. Thank you.

Inmate fiancé (requested to remain anonymous)

I would like to remain anonymous. I'm the fiancé of an inmate at Bent County. Although I understand the financial repercussions that will occur if the prison closes I'd also like to share what I've seen since my loved one has been in there. Despite what some of the callers have said there is very limited programs and limited space in those programs. My loved one has been on a waiting list for over three years to get into a program. The only good thing has been the dog program, but the dog program has been removed since the lock down began. Because of COVID they've barely been let out of their cells, they're barely being served proper portions of food, they're not able to order canteen. Men in there are out of food and are relying on what the prison is providing which is really nothing. My visits are ten dollars for twenty minutes and barely work half the time. The inmates are treated poorly, and I've witnessed this with my own eyes. The men in there are hungry and sick with COVID and are not being taken care of. There are men in there that have tested positive for COVID and are being allowed to walk around their units with uninfected people. Private prisons only care about money. That's why they were made in the first place. They don't care about rehabilitation of inmates. And until communities start to understand and acknowledge the problems with private prisons this is going to continue to be an argument. Feed

these men. Allow them to visit and talk with their families. Give them proper medical care. Treat them like human beings. Give them programs so that they can be rehabilitated. Don't treat them like they're animals. If you want to keep this prison in Bent County you need to fix the problems within the prison. Please focus on developing jobs and companies that don't profit from the exploitation of the inmates and their families. Thank you.

Closing comments

Bent County Commissioner Kim MacDonnell

I would thank all of the folks who have stayed with us on the call or Zoom tonight expressing your concern for the community and support for the facility. I have heard all of the comments including the last one by the young woman who spoke, and I respect that so thank you. I would like to reiterate that this facility just like every facility across the state public or private has eyes on from DOC, so if there are issues at any facility for any reason for any length of time I say address the issues and move on like you would in any other business that functions in this country and let our community continue to survive.

Bent County Commissioner Jean Sykes

I'd like to address Mr. Gurule with his ideas for some additional ways to bring in agricultural products and possibly increase our things. Cannabis was one of his ideas, in Bent County we currently have a hemp farm, really several small ones, but one that's fairly large. One of the problems that's happening with the hemp farm is the fact that that particular product throughout the state has had a flood on the market. So, if you will, the bottom of the market fell out, so hemp is worth very little in comparison with what it was, does not pay the bills, and leaves many individuals with a big hole in the pocket. I foresee that same kind of thing happening with cannabis if we continue to have marijuana grows or something if we have a massive amount of those that same type of thing will happen. Trying to have some diversification - trust me - I think the commissioners for years and years before me and the commissioners now have worked very diligently to find different ways to bring in different types of industries, different types of diversification, and to be really honest that is really difficult because

our infrastructure sometimes is not so that they we can provide the things that they need. Nor do we have the labor force quite often, Thank you

Bent County Commissioner Chuck Netherton

A couple of points. I would like to address legislator Brophy's statement about a PILT payment. That sounds good, it's a nice proposal but it makes me wonder how long that will last - the term of this governor or the term of this legislature or is that something that can go away in the near future - here today and gone tomorrow. Is that something the county residents can count on? And are they really planning on taking over this prison by the state or are they planning on closing it permanently? On the point that the economist brought up adjacent to this study it's not near as easy to entice a business to come into a small struggling community which we definitely are. We're not going to get Boeing to come here to build jetliners so some of those things are just beyond our capability and never will be in our capability. Realistically I think it's an uphill battle to try and entice something, so we've got to try to protect what we've got because it's hard to lure something else in here. Those were my two points that I came away with and thank you very much for your consideration.

Transcription of Comments: Crowley County Public Hearing, Nov. 30, 2020

Warden Barry Goodrich, Crowley County Correctional Facility

Barry Goodrich, warden at Crowley County. We are very excited to be on the call this evening, so thank you for having us. I just wanted to state that I've been with CoreCivic for 28 years, and in the role of the warden for 13 years, having been in 5 states on 10 assignments. So, it's a pleasure this evening to get a chance to talk about our staff here at Crowley and the role they play. I think people look at the staff right now in these times and they are real heroes but not just because of essential employees, it is the everyday duties they do to protect our public, which is everybody, I believe, on the call this evening. So, our staff take it very seriously to make our offenders better people,

and to achieve a better outcome and a better life. In doing that, it is our responsibility to keep them safe. So just briefly, I want to read a recent letter that I received from an offender's mother, and it says, "Dear Warden Goodrich, I wanted to take a moment to express my deep gratitude to you and to all the staff at the prison. I can only begin to imagine how difficult the lockdown challenges have been in light of the COVID-19. I spoke with my son, and I won't mention his name or number, yesterday, and he told me a bit about how many extra challenges you have all faced as you continue to prepare and deliver meals, keep up with cleaning and sanitizing protocols, providing opportunities for the offenders to shower, and handling ongoing positive cases of coronavirus. I am so grateful for the safety and provision my son received during these weeks of lockdown. I continue to pray daily for you and for all of your staff and inmates at Crowley County. You make up my son's community and I appreciate the exhausting efforts you have put forth in recent weeks. Please extend my thanks to your staff." So, it is very important to us to be able to share that with you this evening because I have received numerous letters from not only offenders' families but also from the community and from their friends. So, our speakers today will give some examples of how our offenders become better people here at Crowley County and how our relationship with the community is so very important to us. And the reason I brought up the five states is Crowley and our community work really well hand-in-hand to make life better for all. And this is one of the better communities in those five states that actually have a complete community approach to it. So, we believe also that we have a very good partnership as I was listening to Mr. Becker, we have a very good partnership with our customer, which is the State of Colorado, and we work closely with them daily. I would think and hope that all of you know that in 2019, Crowley County achieved the Correctional Facility of the Year for the safety department in our company, which really speaks volumes. The reason that we achieved that was because of our staff here. So, I am very proud to introduce four employees that will be speaking tonight and a special guest about the facility, what we offer, and what role they play in the community. So, I am just going to briefly introduce them and move out of the way so that way they can share their brief time with you. First is Jennifer, our HR manager and training manager; next will be Myra and Braleigh, her daughter; and then I have Ken, who is our subject matter and vocational expert. Myra is the administrative supervisor and mailroom supervisor. Ken also being the

subject matter expert and vocational instructor, he will talk about our woodshop program, which is the best in the state. And John, our principal, will talk about the high achievements that led the state of Colorado year after year after year here at this facility. So, I am going to turn it over to Jennifer, if you don't mind, Rick.

Jennifer Aravallo

Good evening. My name is Jennifer Aravallo. I began my career with Crowley County Correctional Facility in 2007. At that time, I was a single mother of a two-year-old and a five-year-old, who was getting ready to begin school in the fall. I was commuting from Manzanola to my job in La Junta. I quickly realized a few things. Number one, I needed something closer to home due to my children starting school. Number two, I needed employment that would support myself and my two children. And number three, I needed a career. I was informed by a family friend of a position at Crowley County Correctional Facility. I was leery due to the fact that the facility had a disturbance a few short years before that. I took it upon myself to talk to several staff who worked at the facility; the overwhelming response was yes, there was a disturbance, but the facility has recovered. There was a new warden and security measures, and most importantly, they stated they felt safe working at the facility. I was hired as the HR manager in April 2007. Taking that position put me within 15 minutes of home, helped me provide financial stability for my small family, and I finally began my career. Crowley County Correctional Facility provides stable employment not only for me, but for over 230 staff members at this time.

This number does not include the various contract staff that come in and out of our gates daily. We have staff from Bent, Crowley, Otero, Pueblo, Huerfano, and even El Paso counties that depend on Crowley County Correctional Facility. In my time with Crowley, I have worked with three different wardens. They have all been very supportive of my ambitions and my goals, inside and outside of work. I have been supported and encouraged by my wardens while coaching high school volleyball for the last nine years. Like all other staff, they have also encouraged me to promote. I recently moved into the learning and development managers role, where I am able to start another chapter in my life, but also a new chapter within our facility. I have seen staff start as correctional officers, and promote to shift supervisors, HR managers, and

even move on to our corporate office in Tennessee. What is this our facility has done? It has provided the opportunity for success. Of course, our facility not only provides for me and all our staff, but it provides for Colorado offenders as well. They have access to prepare themselves for release by obtaining their GED, acquiring certificates through our various vocational programs, and also learning from our life skills and reentry programs. Addictions treatment and mental health are also two highly effective programs that we provide to our offenders to help ensure their success on the outside. And soon Mr. Bailer will mention our woodshop, as the warden has. Our woodshop, under the direction of Mr. Bailer, provides woodwork and trusses for Habitat for Humanity. It also provides our offenders with skills they can use in the real world. In fact, we had an offender start his own business after release due to the opportunity he was given in our woodshop. So, what has the facility provided once again? Success. Crowley County Correctional Facility has given donations to my children's robotics class for supplies, to their gifted and talented team for out-of-state competitions, and helped with many other school functions. This also helps our children's success. I am very proud of my facility and my staff. I hope our facility can continue to be the source of stability and success for myself, my staff, our community, and the offenders. Thank you.

Myra Walter

Good evening. My name is Myra Walter, and I am the administrative supervisor and the mailroom supervisor. I have been with Crowley for nine years. I started out as a correctional officer and I was able to promote. I oversee the mailroom and I am responsible for the weekly and monthly reports. I am a Seven Habits Core Facilitator for the Seven Habits Program here. I have had the privilege to see offenders become better people through this program, which is just one of the many programs this facility offers. I have supervised several porters in the admin area and encourage them to learn more skills and take more classes to better themselves. I have written several letters of recommendations for some of the offender porters for their parole plan.

(daughter of Michael and Myra Walter speaking)

I am a member of a local 4H Club and also a member of the Crowley County Shooting Sports. Crowley County Correctional Facility donates the masks we put on our targets for shooting meets. Crowley county Correctional Facility is also a sponsor of the local fair where I along with my brother and other 4H local members show fair and general projects. I have gone with my mom to donate school supplies to four local schools – Ordway, Manzanola, Fowler, and Rocky Ford – that all the staff at Crowley County Correctional Facility donate. Every year, the facility donates turkeys and hams to local citizens who are in need. There have been fun events like Trunk or Treat that the facility has held and opened up to the local community.)

Myra Walter

I am thankful to have a career that is close to home that my family can be proud of. I am able to attend my children's school and 4H activities. I have truly been blessed to be employed by such a great corporation. I worked here through my last pregnancy and I had some complications. I received numerous phone calls from staff who checked on me, and as soon as I had the baby, they called me and walked me through the process to add my new child to the insurance. This facility has really treated me like family. I have been very impressed by the work that our re-entry program has done. We offer so much to offenders who are getting ready to start the next journey in life and society. Our staff that facilitate the reentry program here has really put a lot of heart and work into this program. There have been several offenders who have benefited greatly from it. My husband runs his own irrigation construction business, and also helps with the family farm. He and my father-in-law also run a bean- cleaning factory in Rocky Ford. My husband and I were raised here in this rural area, and it is important to us to raise our children here. We are able to instill the agricultural roots in our children, and I can still have a career for my children, especially my daughters, to be able to look up to. I am able to provide for our children and help with the finances in the household. That is important to me, and I am so grateful that this company has allowed me to do that. Thank you.

Ken Bailer

Good evening. I'm Ken Bailer, vocational instructor here at Crowley County Correctional Facility. I have been with the facility for 22 years. I've actually been here when they opened up, before they ever even received inmates coming back from Minnesota, so the majority of my career has been right here at Crowley County. And I told you, or been mentioned, that I am a vocational instructor and I oversee and run the vocation trade programs down in our G Building. There are three instructors, one program facilitator, and two correctional staff, so there is six good-paying, decent jobs that are just right there in our vocational building. On an average day, we see 145 students. We teach cabinetry, fine and finish carpentry; we teach framing, wall framing, roof and floor truss design, floor and truss manufacturing, and also stairs. The unique thing that we created through CoreCivic and that is that our vocational programs are community based – so what we've done, we've incorporated not only our local communities but throughout the state an opportunity for these inmates to perform what's called "live works projects." Those live works projects give these men the opportunity for hands-on skills, and the things that they learn and the things that they do, those products are then shipped out of this facility, and was mentioned Habitat for Humanity, which is just one of the organizations that are partners with this vocational program. This vocational program partners with affordable housing throughout all of Colorado. It has partnered with local and different state nursing homes, elderly facilities as far as assisted living, our local schools, our local jails, and of course, just a lot of affordable housing right here in Otero and Crowley and Bent counties. This program, as I looked back, has a financial impact on our local community just by itself. I looked at the last five years, and over the last five years, we averaged between \$300,000 to \$400,000 of money that was used for our program for products and services that were purchased right here in Crowley County and Otero County. So, the program has a huge financial aspect to it here locally, beyond what the correctional facility you heard from them. I want to talk a little bit about what we've seen and what we've done for our past students and that, and one of the greatest things that I think should hit home is an individual that is faced with lifetime supervision. Some of you may know what that means, some of you may not, but anyway, he was able to take and go through every program that we had, learn as much as he could, he got into the

roof and roof truss and floor truss design and engineering, he worked his way to a minimum facility where he was picked up by CCI, Colorado's Correctional Industries, to do designing for them. When he was released on parole, he was granted parole, one of the first things he did was contact Eagle Engineering, which is the outfit that does our engineering certification for our floor and roof trusses, on the designs that we do. And he contacted them, introduced himself, and told them what, you know, his skills and what he had been doing for the last 10 years while incarcerated. The next day, I got an email from Barrett, who is the owner of that corporation, a company down in Dallas, Texas, and he asked me about the individual and so forth, and I was very frank with them, told them the whole situation and I believe without a doubt that this man would be a great opportunity for your company. So Barrett put him on as a contract employee, and being the uniqueness of this individual's opportunity, he wasn't able to leave the state, so Barrett worked with his parole officer and set him up with a home office, a remote computer, and different things to do truss designing for the company under contract. Within a year, he became a full-time employee, and just this last spring, this individual has taken over the lead on their truss designing and engineering, actually over the other contract designer staff, and he is doing software and production, basically glitch fixing and different things like that for their software. So, it's been a great success. This man was able to reunite with wife, his daughters. He's making well over \$100,000 a year, and the greatest thing is this company is working with his parole officer because Barrett wants him to come down to his Dallas corporate office and be there, so they're working things out. So, there's great opportunity through... And this is just one story of many that we have. I want to talk a little bit about myself and what it is. I've been here for 22 years. I got out of college and I was born and raised here locally. In the 80s and that, there wasn't a whole lot going on in this area, so I moved to Kansas and went for work in one of the packing houses down there. I worked my way up into shipping manager, local company, Montfort of Greeley, bought the place, had a fire, closed that plant down, lost my job. Moved back here to Colorado into Crowley County, went to work at the grain elevator, managing it, it sold, the new company decided that they weren't going to run it, I lost my job. I then went to La Junta where the food processing plant was and was able to go to work there with my skills – guess what? That's another business in the Arkansas Valley, they closed that plant. In 98, when this facility opened up, I had the qualifications, they gave me the

opportunity, so I've had 22 years of stable employment that I've been able to raise my four children right here at home, provide a great income, and actually have a very well sustained future for my retirement. It burdens me to even think that once again, my job might be in jeopardy. And here I am, at 55 years old, thinking what in the world would I do next, where in the world would I have to go. So, I just want to thank you for this time. I got one last thing that I would like for all of you, if you could, to write this down. Take your pen and paper. I want you to hear what the value of this program and this facility is, coming from the offenders themselves. And I would like you to go to www.changeinpeople.com, – all one word – dot com, click on the program that says "Out of the Woodwork." That's us. It's a documentary that was done on Crowley County and our program. Again, I thank you for your time.

John Donball

Good evening. How's everyone this evening? They saved the best for the last here. Last for the best or something of that sort. I'm John Donball, the principal for the Crowley County Correctional Facility. I've been with CoreCivic for nine years, two years I worked over in Bent County, which is our sister program over there, and I have been here for seven years as the principal of the instruction. We believe education is the number one success of our inmates that we have here in Crowley. For them to get out without an education, the recidivism rate goes up and we have more problems out in our community if they are not educated. Here in Crowley, we have dedicated our educational program, just as our vocational is. We have more GEDs than any other facility in the state. Just to put that into perspective, I did a little calculation. In 2019, we had 23% of all the GEDs passed in the entire state – 23%; now, if you include Bent County in that, that goes up to 34% of all of the graduates that we had, from those two facilities, came from the privates. Now, if they do away with the privates, that's going to be 34% of the inmates are going to be let out without a high school education. What's that going to do? That's going to increase the recidivism rate, because they are not going to be able to get a job, they are not going to be educated, and it's going to make a big impact on the entire state, not just our area right here. Last year, we had 136 graduates; that's 135% of our goal. The closest to us facility in the state was 91; that was the Denver Women's Correctional Facility. And, as a result, that's 39 more

graduates that we had closest. All the rest of them were way down lower than that. As a result, our GED program has excelled. Out of the last six years, five of those six years, we had the most graduates in the state. Not just in our area, but in the state. The only one year we weren't, that was Bent County, and they beat us by 6. Both of our areas in the private sector are excellent as a matter of graduates in the state. Not only do we offer GED, but we also offer pre-release classes, which helps them prepare for when they get out. If they don't have the proper preparation for getting out, then they are going to be coming right back in. We offer healthy lifestyles, family relationships, support systems, how to live under supervision, help them get their social security card, their drivers' licenses, help with housing so they have a place to live, employment readiness, and so on to help them to succeed when they get out. Because that's our number one goal here, is to help them succeed so that they don't come back. Vocational classes, Bailer talked a lot about those, but we offer electronics, besides that, we offer foundation classes which is a safety program for the woodshop that we have, we also offer horticulture. We have the seven habits program that develops character for them so when they get out, they will at least have the character to attend their jobs and not falter. We offer a Father Read Program, in which they are able to read a book to their children, which helps with that communication between the family so that they don't lose that communication. We also have distance learning in which we have college classes that they can take here. We've had one person get a master's degree while he was here in prison. We had another one get a doctorate degree. And so they can continue their education while they are here. You know, if they do away both of our privates, that's over 500 people employed. That's going to make such an impact in our area that will be very difficult to recover. That's 500 families in our area that would make a difference. I have appreciated being able to work here for the 9 years I've worked with CoreCivic. They've been great for me. And I think our educational program is one of the top in the state, and they are going to lose that if they try to shut us down. Thank you very much.

Leif Berg

I've been a banker here, well, I've lived in Crowley County virtually my entire life, been a banker here for over 20 years. I've seen Crowley County prior to the prisons, have

seen how they currently stand with both prisons. Our community is a much stronger community with prisons here, economically for sure. I sit on the school board; I've been the treasurer of the school board for over 10 years. Definitely, the ups and downs of the prison have affected our school student counts as well as financial wherewithal of the school substantially over that time. Without the prison, the private prison specifically, it was a much tougher go for our school district. With the private prison, it is a much better situation. I just know that economically speaking, without the private prison, the effects will be dramatic to our community, to the whole Arkansas Valley. That even a reduction to our private prison has substantial effects, which we saw back in 2010. That's pretty much all I have to say. I'm just a big supporter of the prisons and for what they have done for our communities. Hopefully they will be here for years to come.

Jerry Davis

My name is Jerry Davis. I'm a retired pharmacist, been in Crowley County 41 years and spent my entire career here, also on the school board, so a couple of different hats from a business perspective. Every business we have is important. We rely upon one another for financial success. When you take away an employer the size of the prison, it would be huge. I think the pharmacy would survive, but that's not a guarantee. The other thing that kind of came out with, when you listen to the private prison guys, was family kept coming up over and over again. That's something that I don't know that the city guys understand about rural America. We are family. So, when Mr. Bailer talks about his four kids, I know those guys. We know every one of them, and we need them, we rely on them. You had your numbers for their financial impact, it didn't talk about the donations, the things that happen in our county that don't happen without business stepping up. That's not reflected. So many opportunities our kids would not have without private business stepping forward and helping out. From the school board, our high school is 100 years old; we've tried three times since my tenure on the board – once to do new construction and a couple of times for remodeling – one of the chief concerns is what happens if the private prison goes out? The taxpayers are going to have to pick that up. And I think it is an instrumental thing every time when we go to ask, it scares everybody because it

seems like that is always over our heads, that you guys are going to take that away from us, and the taxpayers are going to have to pick that up. I guess I'll stop with that.

Scott Cuckow, Crowley County School District

You know, we have talked a lot about facts. Tonight, I was a little bit surprised by Gabe Preston's numbers. I would question the 19 to 20 percent yearly that the prison brings in, because I've always been told for over 10 years that it is in excess of 50 percent, and I wonder if they're including the reserves within the county budget and that drives that number lower, so I would ask if Gabe could talk to me. But I would question the 19 to 20 percent, because I do believe that it is in the excess of 50 percent of what the prison brings in annually. There is so much to say, but I am very tired of the emotional stress placed upon my families, the children; the mothers and fathers who work at the private prisons. Why must we face the annual stress of a Democratic governor or legislators threaten to shut them down? We have a private corporation that basically lives the American dream – comes in, establishes a great relationship with the county, with the businesses, and the community that they serve, and they are able to build a prison, employ a workforce that is very, very awesome compared... You know, look at Ken Bailer's story – How often do you get that story? Yeah, maybe the state prison has more programs, but on a percentage basis, the GED program speaks for itself. The woodshop program speaks for itself. The care that those CoreCivic people display to the inmates speaks for itself.

I'm just tired of the emotional stress, just because a party platform says one thing. The last time the government threatened to cut back inmate numbers, and I do believe it was somewhere around 2012, 2013, our enrollment dropped 80, then over the next year it dropped another 30. So, when you multiply that by \$8,000 or \$9,000 depending upon the revenue per year, that's in excess of \$800,000 per year. What does that mean to a school district? Very simple: Reduction in staff, less course offerings for our students. For example, we would love to teach more auto mechanics, nursing, expand into carpentry, plumbing, electricity, hands-on training for our kids. But we can't, because we don't have the finances, we're just barely hanging on to teach the FFA program and FBLA, and that might be the extent of our extracurricular

offerings. And we need more of those extracurricular to get those kids interested in school. Like I said, the emotional stress on the family, you see with the kids when you talk to them.

Sometimes when things don't work, they send the troubled kid to me. I sit down and, after a matter of three or four meetings, I really get to hear their story: mom and dad are stressed, they don't know if they have a job next month because of what the government is doing. That is real, that is emotional, and that is factual. I really appreciate what CoreCivic has done; I think they are a tremendous asset to this community, to southeast Colorado, and I just wish some of the emotional stress would go away and the people... I feel like I'm talking to the choir here, but the people who are in the legislature, making a difference, really need to pay attention to those stories. And I thank you for you guys listening to me, and if there are ever any questions, please let me know. Again, Scott Cuckow from Crowley County School District. Thank you.

LaShelle Benbow

I just wanted to say that I appreciate the prisons being in the area. I myself have been a resident of Crowley County for most of my life. And when I had met my husband, he was in the military, active duty for 11 years, and after 11 years, he decided to go National Guard, and we were trying to determine where we wanted to spend our life. I had mentioned being from a rural community, in a small town, I like the family aspect of it, and I thought this would be a good place to start out and build our life. He was concerned, he was infantry in the military, and he was concerned that, what am I going to do? You know, what job could I possibly hold with my skill set? And I had explained to him that there were prisons in the area, and I thought that he would be a good fit. So, when we moved here, that is where he began his job. And I appreciate the fact that they were available, because I do believe that they are an employer who has a lot of opportunities for veterans. And it gave my husband a start in our community; he has transitioned on, but we've built our lives here and continue to live here and plan on retiring here. I just think the prisons are a great employer for the community, not only for veterans, but also for local people. Thank you.

Tobe Allumbaugh, Crowley County Commissioner

I would like to give you some financial history of the county. Back in the day, Crowley County was a small, relatively prosperous agricultural community. You wouldn't know that by looking at us today. However, in the mid-60s, the sugar factory in Sugar City closed. Everybody worked at the sugar factory. In fact, unemployment in Crowley back in those days was probably negative because everybody had a job, everybody worked the sugar factory, everybody had a small farm, most people did, and things were good. But when the sugar factory in Sugar City closed, it was devastating to this area, it impacted virtually every family in Crowley County, and certainly put a huge dent in the Crowley County tax base. In 1963, all of the schools in Crowley County consolidated into one, with a total of approximately 1,447 students; currently, we have approximately 450 students. As these numbers have declined over the years, so followed the local economy. In the 1970s and 1980s, many of the farmers in Crowley County sold their water that was used for agriculture, and specifically crop production. As a result, the 70,000 acres that was once under cultivation is currently more like 7,000 acres, in a good year, and 20 percent of that in not-so-good years. Once again, our tax base was devastated. In 1996, the railroad shut down, and the county lost its largest remaining taxpayer. When I became a county commissioner in 1997, we were so short of available cash, we worried about making payroll each month. And the problem seemed to never go away. Thank God we managed to negotiate the private prison in early 1997, and had a working, taxpaying correctional industry in 1998. Since this facility provided jobs and paid a substantial portion of our overall property tax, it was a blessing, to say the least. However, all good things apparently must come to an end, whether we like it or not. Depending upon how you do the math, the private facility in Crowley County has saved the State of Colorado approximately a billion dollars over the past 25 years. That's a billion dollars, starting with a "B." The facility in Bent County probably mirrors this number. By saving this money, one would think there would be more for education, health care, and other social programs. But after going to Denver and talking with the legislators, that apparently isn't the case. A group of us met with President of the Senate Leroy Garcia, who many of you probably know, he's from Pueblo, he's a local, he should be – he's our neighbor... We hoped, since we were neighbors, he would support us against the prison closures, but all he said was, and I will quote, "Nobody cares about the money." They say Crowley County

Correctional Facility saved the State of Colorado a billion dollars over 25 years, and our legislator said nobody cares about the money. Pretty scary when politicians care more about their own agendas than the people they represent. How in the world could anyone think this is a good idea - Giving away a billion dollars and destroying the economy of a small rural county? Only a politician with a very strong agenda could ever conceive of something this wrong. I urge you, please call the governor's office as well as many legislators as you can and explain to them just how wrong this really is. Closing our private prison is not good for anybody. I thank you for your time.

Roy Elliot, Crowley County Commissioner

Good evening. I wanted to touch on a couple of the reasons that were given to us last year when we were fighting this bill, House Bill 2019, or 1019. We were told that private prisons have a higher recidivism rate than state facilities. This is not only grossly false, but extremely difficult if not almost impossible to study. Colorado's prison population is in and out of several facilities, including the private prisons, so which prison is to blame for a particular inmate offending? Colorado's recidivism rate has been 50 percent. At the time of the bill's introduction, 3,800 prisoners resided in private prison and 15,950 at state facilities. So, if we consider that every inmate that came out of that private prison were to re-offend, then based on Colorado's recidivism rate, over 6,000, or 38 percent of inmates from state- ran facilities, would also re-offend. We drop those numbers down to a more realistic scenario, let's just say 55 percent of the 3,800 private prison inmates re-offend, then over 7,700, or 49 percent of the state facility population would also re-offend. Governor Polis and state legislators would like to ruin our county's economy over a possible reduction in recidivism rates. That's if it is even reduced, maybe even raised, if private prisons were to close. We look at other states' recidivism rates and private prison use – it's all over the place. For example, Arkansas has zero private prison population, yet has a 51 percent recidivism rate as of 2017. Montana has a recidivism rate of 31 percent, while over a third of their population resides in a private prison. Utah, Delaware, Maine has some of the highest recidivism rates in the nation, all having zero private prisons. Other states have exceptionally low recidivism rates, and state-only run facilities. This shows that it is the programs that are offered to the inmates that lower recidivism

rates, not closing private prisons. Incidentally, state statutes decide what prisons run in what programs. The private facilities are directly overseen by a state branch known as the private prison monitoring unit. Another reason that we were given for closing private prisons is that corporations should not be making money off human lives, supposed suffering of inmates. This type of thinking, in my opinion, is absurd and socialist. Even inside the state facilities, there are other companies making a profit off of inmates – food services, electric companies, water companies, gas companies, and several others. Now, what about other businesses that survive off of true suffering – is the state going to take over emergency rooms, cancer treatment centers? Will Governor Polis and the legislators deem the state is the only one fit to run funeral homes? Neither one of these reasons hold any merit. There are just pathetic excuses used by state government officials in hopes to satisfy the southeast Colorado residents, who they believe aren't smart enough to see through their bull. Thank you.

Ed Vela, La Junta City Councilmember

A lot of the previous speakers gave me a lot of ideas, and I was going to bring up something, some of those things they talked about that were positive about the area, and really, in particular, is stressors that are putting in on people. It all started out like one of the commissioners, I think it was Allumbough, that said the area has been dry for a long time, sold out, that was devastating to their tax base. And now, today more up to date, the COVID-19, which has caused a lock-up of people at home, business closures, and ongoing threat of closure for the prison jobs – that really is a lot of stress on people.

Another thing that we're picking up on is it's a lot of mental stress on people that really should not have. On another issue, the... I'm given to understand that 20, that in the metro area, their populations, it's difficult to keep and hold onto prison staff. It is not that difficult a case as it is in the rural areas, because while there is still a shortage of workers, that shortage could possibly be attributed to ongoing threat of closure. But with COVID coming up and making a devastating, particularly today in our area, that doesn't help very much. I think the staffing problems would be much more workable in the rural areas than they are in the metro areas. Also, we've got, I think you mentioned, somebody mentioned prisons that are vacated and not being used by the

state – Is there any way that any counties in close proximity can utilize those empty prisons that belong to the state for new county jails? I know Otero County is not the only one that is lacking for jail space, and certainly Pueblo is really hurting for a new county jail. But let's think about that, too. Another thing, back in 2013, I believe it was, we closed the Fort Lyon Correctional Facility, and now we've turned it into a rehab – perhaps there should be some expansion in there to work it out with the correctional facility owner down there at Bent County, and the current Crowley County Correctional Facility, too. Those are big things that really need to be taken care of. And how many state prisoners do we have in the county jails – I think I heard somebody mention a figure that was just over 800, I believe. Well, Otero County, a lot of their problem was being all stressed and probably Crowley County also, is that there was too many state prisoners that they didn't have room for them in the existing open prisons, so we kept them in our jail, and that has put a crush on us, too. The rural jails, private prisons, they are, and the state prisons, too, they are essential to the economies and the livelihoods of people and especially to the overall health of the rural areas. Thank you.

Tobe Allembaugh

Rick, can I interrupt? I'm afraid our time is going to run out and would like to hear the impact on things you know about, the health, how it would even affect the health department.

Rick Ritter, Otero County Health Director

Are you talking about social determinants of health? Social determinants of health, basically, this has been studied for several years. Where we live, what jobs we have, where we grow up, where we go to school, the economies where we live and all of that, come together to determine social outcomes. Basically, and I've said this for years, if you want to improve public health, lift people out of poverty.

Give them good jobs, good insurance, make sure they have jobs, and we're going to improve public health outcomes. We're going to improve cardiovascular disease outcomes, cancer outcomes, respiratory diseases, and all of this. It's a proven fact, when you look at poor health outcomes, a lot of these outcomes come from areas that

are socio-economically deprived, from poor areas. They live in food deserts, they don't have access to good food, they engage in riskier behaviors, and there is a whole science behind this. Basically, if you take a large employer out of an area that is already struggling, what you are going to do is you are going to hit the economy there, you are going to make an already impoverished area – and we are impoverished in southeast Colorado, we have some of the highest Medicaid-utilization rates, kids on free or reduced lunches, people in this area of the state make low wages – and you are going to take this area, and you are going to take jobs away? And you are going to take income away? You are going to make it more impoverished. And so, what's going to happen statistically speaking is you're going to, that's going to lead to poor health outcomes. Plus, this is kind of a dual-edged sword. These types of areas need more services, to help out impoverished areas. When you take, and we saw from Gabe's presentation, when you take that much money out of the local government system, that leads to less money for public services, but you have increased need because you have more than likely increased the poverty rate. Something to look into – social determinants of health and health equity. And that's something we shared with Mr. Preston, and it's certainly going to impact us from a health equity/social determinants status.

Carl McClure

This is Carl McClure in Olney Springs. I think there is a simple solution to this, even though some people say that money doesn't make any difference to the state. But the simple solution is to close a state facility where it costs \$72,000 a year for an inmate and utilize the private prisons, which are only \$42,000 per an inmate, and you can close a more costly state facility in an area where there are a lot of facilities and save an awful lot of money that way. The private prison is obviously doing a good job, and that's the simple way to do it, as far as I'm concerned. Close the more, close the state facility, which is much more expensive to run and utilize the private prisons.

Rick Klein, La Junta City Manager

Back when the state decided to work with us and put the private prisons on the

plains for economic development purposes, the City of La Junta, we lost our pickle plant, Western Foods, and so they retrained a lot of these people and made prison guards out of them. And it worked. You see that the numbers came up from about 1,000 to about 1,600. When you look at the combination of Crowley, Bent, Otero, and Pueblo, now you got to remember that a lot of the guards that live in Pueblo, live in eastern Pueblo, out on the plains, and that's 80 percent of the staff, so they will be ripping our communities apart by doing this. That would be about 70 jobs right here in La Junta that we'd be, because these prison guards live here. You start taking away the labor participation, that non-labor will eat you alive. During COVID, we have noticed the power of money turning over in our community and region – it turns over 7 times. People when they were home-bound, they were shopping local, we really saw how much it matters, population level to keep it up, because you reduce that, we don't get as much money. When you talk about the incomes and taxes, well the other revenue, that's those people who are out into the communities still shopping in Bent, Otero, and Crowley counties. If this goes through, this will be devastating to southeast Colorado.

Sheriff John Kurtz, Crowley County

I've been dealing with DOC inmates for the last 53 years, I started in law enforcement in Fremont County. I've dealt with the most vicious convicts there ever was, and let me tell you what, whether they are in a private prison or a state prison, the thing that makes these guys get straightened out, they start learning a trade, they get interested in something besides going out and committing crimes and victimizing other people. I noticed Mr. Radtke shook his head when they recommended closing down the state prisons. I want you to know that I was present in Sayer, Oklahoma, when we had inmates down there and they closed that private prison, it was ConCore then, and they closed that private prison down there at Sayer, Oklahoma, and all those people were without jobs, couldn't pay for their homes, started drinking alcohol, doing drugs, and committing crimes themselves. Then, look what happened when they closed down Fort Lyons and did away with a facility that cost the taxpayers millions of dollars to convert a veterans nursing home to a prison, and it was supposed to be for sick inmates, and next thing you know, they are not sick inmates at all. Half of them are

victimized and are the sick ones in that facility. Then what happened at Walsenburg. Go down and talk to the people there that lost that facility. I think what we need to do is close out some of the state government jobs up in Denver and keep these prisons open. When you have these people out on the street that have nothing better to do that don't know a trade, they are going to go back to what they were originally in prison for, and that is committing crimes, making us victims. Please do not let the State of Colorado close down any of these private facilities. They get the medium-security inmates, and the other prisons can deal with the maximum- security inmates, the close-security inmates, and they have a popular word for this, and I've said this for years, they do what they call an override to medium security from maximum security. That is garbage.

You take murderers and put them in medium facilities, that's why these people are getting killed. Look at the deaths of the officers – Mr. Autobee up at Limon, Mary Ricard at Ark Valley Correctional Facility. Those lives don't mean anything to you guys in Denver or the governor, or any of the previous people. Please wake up and smell the roses. You close down any of these facilities, you're going to put these people right back to their old habits, and that's doing drugs, doing booze, neglecting their children, and not being able to care for them, as well as not sending them to school. Because I deal with them now on a daily basis, and I see where they go when we can't give them a job. So at least the ones with jobs, and I'm not talking about the gentleman that had all the stats today, which I thought was very interesting, but I can give you some statistics that will curl your hair, except for Roy. So, please, go tell the Governor, mind his own damn business and leave the prisons alone. Thank you. Anybody that would like to talk to me at length, please call me at the Crowley County Sheriff's Office. I would be happy to discuss this with you for days, because I can do it. Thank you.

Matt Heimerich

I'm a former county commissioner, now a farmer in the Olney Springs area, I farm with my wife's family which started here in 1951. I just want to make one comment. Even though agriculture is no longer the prime mover in the county some of us are working diligently to keep that heritage alive. I think taking a private prison out of Crowley County would certainly put that back on its back heels. I would just like the governor to

consider just one thing, and some of the proponents of closing the private prison, I give them this to think about: Maybe in corrections there's been disparities in the way people of different ethnicities and color have been treated over the last many decades. But what we're talking about here, in my opinion, is a Faustian decision. You're going to take and try to make addresses for decades of some kind of inequity by putting another entity that's already under a great deal of financial stress and pressure and just flip the switch and automatically try to make one better versus the other and I would argue that it's not going to work and you'll be right back to where you began. Thinking that by taking it out on some large enterprise that decided that their business model was going to be private corrections and ruin their business model is only going to affect the men and women who work in those facilities and live in our communities, the surrounding businesses, and the other taxing districts that rely on that money. I'd like to challenge the legislators that are pushing this and the governor to see if they can actually sleep at night with that on their conscience. Thank you.

Andrew Rivas

My name is Andrew Rivas. I'm a sergeant at the Crowley County Correctional Facility. I've been there for eight years. It's done great things. It's a great family. We always help out the community. Every Halloween we do a trunk or treat for the community to come down in Olney Springs and Crowley so we can all get together and celebrate Halloween together. There's lots of times where our facility makes stuff for the pre-school that's here in Manzanola because I currently reside in Manzanola. My daughter lives in Fowler. I stay close to the facility because it's a big part of me. It's grown on me. The community has grown on me especially when it gets to the point where we see each other out there in our community helping out and seeing the offenders making little things for the preschool. We get to the point where we're all just one big family and I don't want to lose it. Been there eight years. Worked in Bent County for a year and it's a big family out there too. I know plenty of co-workers who are out there, and I wouldn't want to have this place shut down. It's a career. It's what I do. It's what I know. I love what I do. I appreciate what everybody does. Especially for the county - I appreciate everyone who's on the screen and what they do for the county as well.

Keith Goodwin, Otero County Commissioner

We're in between Bent County and Crowley County. Two little comments - number one is I think Karl Becker mentioned that the reason that the private prisons in our area are less expensive than the state prisons is that they don't have the programs. I think that you've heard from all the testimony that's going on that we have some excellent programs going on in there. I think that's the wrong message to be delivering to the legislature. Next is the long term effects that could be happening through this for some short term goals. And this is not the first time that the state has changed the number of prisoners then turn around and have another prison built - it's up and down. We're making long term effects.

Prison restructuring is not only about capacity and the budget but of the results for the people in the prison and the families and the communities associated. It's a domino effect and I'm concerned about is the tipping point . When you get a small community as in Bent County or Crowley County and you lose 30% of anything, of a business, you've reached the tipping point where other businesses cannot survive. What happens is that you have a continual degrading of the environment where they're no longer a viable business and they close up. And during those times of mass lay-offs and a variety of things there's a loss of revenue for all the businesses that are in effect as well as we lose property values because of the mass of property that's for sale at the time because they're going to have to leave the area to find a job somewhere else. That will be devastating to the counties associated with that and as you can see in the study that there is 29% of the workforce lives in Otero County and that's the effect it would have on Otero County is the property values. Their just now starting to turn around and to have this happen would be a complete devastation to our property values and our real estate market. Whoever is going to be reading this report needs to have some of these facts in there and I'm thinking the message needs to be clear that there's an impact to the counties and not just subsidiary remarks that were made during these hearings. There are some things that need to be in the body of the report - some of the things mentioned tonight. Thank you.

Linda Elliott

I'm Linda Elliott and I am from Olney Springs. My husband lost his job a while back and

I started working at the private prison. I worked in the mailroom. It was a good job. It was a steady job. I worked there for about a year. Then I decided I wanted to see my kids more, so I went to work for the school. I spent two years as a special education para and this year I'm a second grade teacher and last year a Kindergarten teacher. I really want to echo what Mr. Cuckow said and the effects that all of this has on children. It's staggering and if we lose the funding from this private prison to what the school gets I fear for my students. I changed from being a parent to a teacher because I fell in love with kids and I fell in love with the kids that were ornery, and that people didn't understand, and people determined were behavior children and they are my favorite kids. I want them in my class. If we lose the funding and I'm not able to help those kids I get scared for what's going to happen to those kids and where are they going to go? And is there going to be a teacher wherever they go without our school being there and will they be able to help our community. Who's going to love them and who's going to teach them and who's going to help them. As a teacher I really want the focus to be on the students and how to help them the most. Thank you.

Leonard Talkington

I've been the manager of the Crowley County Water Association and the Town of Crowley's water and wastewater for 40 years. I grew up with both of the prisons. Michelle who talked to you earlier happens to be my daughter. The Water Association in an effort to provide a more substantial supply of water for the prison and a better quality of water than they were actually getting from our springs several years back constructed a well for about \$400,000. Much better quality of water. Then about two or three years later we constructed an alternate transmission line, a 12 inch line, where we float tested it, it all passed and everything, where we could deliver a total of 928 gallons per minute to that elevated tank in case the prison needed it. We spent numerous amounts of money buying water shares for augmentation purposes. It would not be a good thing for the Water Association if the private prison left town. We have a lot of money invested in it. They do make up a third or maybe a little more because they use more water typically due to their capacity than the state prison does. There's a lot of us around this county that have spent a lot of money doing things to try to keep that prison around. Thank you.

Adrian Hart

My name is Adrian Hart with SECO News dot org. I'm working on helping our media provide better coverage across the southeast corner of Colorado through using a social media platform that replicates other functions of the media like traditional radio, newspaper, print, etc. In my career I've sold advertising for a cluster of - whether it's print products, magazine products, radio stations, I've spent my career in southeast Colorado, born and raised here, born in La Junta. I got my degree at OJC, got another degree in mass communications from the university up in Pueblo. I have been mostly trying to boost our economy through advertising in the community. Seeing the ripple effect from other employers going under, I don't have the years of experience some of our other speakers do, I'm only 40 years old and I've spent all 40 of my years in southeast Colorado, three of them in Pueblo and all of my professional career has revolved around selling advertising and marketing. Seeing an employer like this close is going to be a massive impact on our media if there's not people here to spend their paychecks within the community with our small mom and pop businesses those small mom and pop businesses are going to shutter the doors and close down. Seeing the 30% of the revenues coming off of the prison is drastic. I would like to reiterate what our county commissioners have said in that it would surely put us beyond a tipping point. Just the impact that would happen from them closing the pickle plant - we suffered 200 jobs lost - there've been other factors, but you can look at how much our local media has diminished without those jobs being in the economy. It basically means that the corporations create more of a skeleton crew running the media ship. There's less coverage, there's less access to useful public information for the community. This is the trickle down that's going to happen from losing these good jobs in our community is going to impact all of our mom and pops and our media. I just wanted to speak to the volumes of which I can see how it's going to ripple across the communities in my industry. I would also like to ask, is there a way you guys can make the video on YouTube sharable? I can't embed it on my news network in order to share it with my viewers. I can link it, and that's cool, but I always like it better when it works right then and right now. And that's what American consumers are looking for. If there's a way that you guys can open it up so I can share your video I'd be very pleased. I would also like to reiterate that from a media standpoint losing these two private employers,

there's over 500 jobs there, it's going to absolutely crush us. Thank you very much.

Duane Gurule

My name is Duane Gurule and I'm a Rocky Ford resident and a native and I'd like to share a bit about my education and my professional background and my qualifications for providing my public comment about this study and its potential impact on Crowley County and the surrounding Arkansas Valley. I'm a 2004 Rocky Ford High School graduate. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from Metro State University of Denver. The majority of my professional experience has been in the IT industry however I currently work with the Colorado Trust as the community organizer for southeast Colorado working specifically to address social determinants of health and increase health equity in our region. I'm also a director for the board of Southeast Health Group as well as the board chairman for PDS quality council. My education and experience demonstrate my passion and knowledge for business and economics, social justice, and education. But my most important qualification is my personal experience as a Hispanic minority from a low income family and as a formerly incarcerated person in both state and private prisons. We've heard the statistics on the economic input of CoreCivic's presence in our region. I'd like to share some other finance data on CoreCivic. CoreCivic went public on July 18, 1998, at \$101.25 cents per share. They've been on a downward trend which has their stock price at \$7.09 at the close of market today. 22 states have banned the use of private prisons. Colorado introduced bill 1019 this year, Minnesota introduced a similar bill this year. All of GEO Group, CoreCivic's direct competitors, known bank partners, announced they would no longer provide lines of credit to the company by September 2020. We are seeing major investment and hedge funds pull out of the private prison industry. The company is on a decline in an industry that is burning out. We have two of CoreCivic's detention facilities in the state that has increasingly passed some of the unfriendliest policies for their industry. We can trust that CoreCivic doesn't care about the inmates or their employees - they care about their shareholders. With the shareholders best interest in mind CoreCivics time in Colorado will be limited. The sad reality is that private prisons make money based on how many prisoners they house. These companies need inmates to be in operation essentially making incarcerated people a commodity for

financial gain. Our justice system requires convicted offenders to pay restitution for their crimes by spending time in a correctional facility. However, the mission should always be to reform and prepare these inmates to reenter society not just house them while they serve their sentences. Counter to this objective, private prisons do not have incentives to reform or rehabilitate.

The late Huerfano County, Kit Carson facilities as well as Crowley are known among inmates as the Las Vegas and wild west of the DOC. It's a free-for-all in those places which is not only detrimental to rehabilitation but actually stem criminal activity as they're coming out. A nickname you'll not hear in this report is Crowley Ink. Given its name as the facility where you can go in with clean skin and come out with bodies, faces, and heads completely tattooed. Definitely against AR policies. The environments of Crowley do not promote a safe space for rehabilitating inmates, promoting self-directed changes, or reducing recidivism. I've read this article about high GED rates coming out of these private facilities and I can only attribute that to the fact that many offenders are coming out of the RDC and into these private prisons and then entering and regressing or progressing and back into state facilities. The private prisons are not only bad for those incarcerated but they're bad for the employees as well. We're seeing higher rates of criminal charges brought against...(ended due to time limit)

Nolan Walter

My name is Nolan Walter, part owner of HBI Construction in Rocky Ford. One thing I'd like to bring up is a shout out to all the school workers and everything that Scott Cucow had to say. Also Mr. Lynn Talkington. A lot of people don't realize what the money brings in, what money comes from this private prison that's invested back into not only the small businesses but the schools, the maintenance of your water, your water facilities, people don't understand how much it costs to get water to their house.

They don't understand how much it takes to run a pump or fix a pump or anything like that. This private prison has been a big deal in the community as far as that goes in supporting that. One last thing that a lot of people haven't mentioned yet is something that's really impacted Crowley County right now, and I really don't see anything coming from the state to help fix it or anything like that but recently we had Highway

71 shut down and we've had Highway 50 shut down. And they redirected all that traffic, all those semis, everything that's being shot up to the I-25 corridor, it's all been rerouted down Highway 96 and Highway 207. I don't know if anyone has taken a drive down Highway 207 lately, but I do see county workers trying to fix and patch and make what they can of that road which comes from the private prisons tax paying dollars. But all the semis that take all these county roads and everything else have devastated all your local county roads, 3.5 they devastated, they devastated C trying to get across and I see a lot of county workers trying to fix this but you don't see the actual state coming down to fix any of these roads. The question you've got to ask yourself is where is this money coming from? We as a county are hurting on maintenance as it is and now you take something as big as CoreCivic away paying into taxes and helping this county have nice roads and have what roads we have left - where does that leave us as a county. You take something like this away, we're going to have enough money to barely make what we can. Where is the money going to come from to take care of all these back roads, the water facilities, and so on and so forth? It's a lot more devastating than people think. I don't know if this was brought up earlier, but I helped recently transport some 300 turkeys from your local food market out of Ordway, Colorado and I really don't see any other prisons doing that. Thank you.

Stephanie Meyer

I don't have a lot to say but I just wanted to show support for the private prison and for all that it does for our community. Between having jobs for our community people and it could really affect them substantially financially, emotionally, and socially, which has all been mentioned already but I want everybody to understand that the community members see this, and they understand that, and they know that. I think the majority of us have support for the private prison. I also want to remind everybody that funds to the school, you also have funds to the county services, ambulance, sheriff's department, road and bridge, and also the general services the county provides to everybody in the county. As well as the economic impact that it would have on our local businesses were the local prisons to shut down, as to just their workers coming to our local businesses and the prison also utilizing our businesses. That's really all I have to say. Thank you.

Concluding remarks

Blaine Arbuthnot, Crowley County Commission

I just want to hit on a few items. Government enters into a lot of public-private partnerships and they do it for a reason. That reason is that the private industry tends to be more efficient, and they are there to make a profit, but as long as they're producing the needs of the state, it's a very good relationship for both. The second item is Tobe talked about the savings the privates have given the state over the years. That's based on the state's numbers. And we know for a fact that they do not include capital costs to build the facilities, they don't include cost of money, they don't include the retirement, they don't include maintenance. So that number could be much, much higher. Whereas the private industry has to have every cost put into that project in the per diem they receive. The third item is part of the study is the economic diversification for areas where these prisons are in case they close. And Gabe's bunch has been working on this and they've come up with some ideas, which are ideas that could work in this area, but they don't come within a thousandth of replacing one of these facilities in either of our counties.

What I don't want is a report handed in and legislators in Denver read it and say, look, we paid for this report, here's a way you can diversify your community, and feel like that takes care of the whole deal. Because to replace 250 jobs and the tax base that these facilities provide - it just can't be done. In rural areas, I don't think they understand growth out here, we get one or two new businesses a year, four or five new houses, and we're celebrating. They put a neighborhood up in the cities in a matter of a month. So, they have no concept of what we deal with out here and that brings up a whole array of other problems where we don't have the power to expand current businesses that we have here already - housing, it just goes on and on and on. Those are the three items I wanted to bring up. Maybe one more, we did hear a rumor that the state might want to purchase these prisons. That would be higher paying salaries and that's welcome and we have that in our state facility, and we value that but all taxes, as far as property tax, would go away. It would be worse than them closing and shuttering it at least you'd get a little bit if the building is standing there.



Thank you. Crowley County Commissioner Roy Elliott

I want to address what Duane had to say about private prisons not having a need to rehabilitate offenders. I'd like to ask him how he feels like going to a doctor's office they have no reason to rehabilitate you other than they care. And just like a doctor's office or a hospital people are going to continue to break the law, that's an unfortunate matter of fact, people have been doing it for thousands of years it will never stop. So, prisons need to be around, unfortunately. We can hash out if private prisons will be around but any person who has half a brain who finds out that if you're saving money - that's a good thing. Something else that didn't quite get brought up, it's a little off topic, bills that have wanted to be passed, they're off the table right now but mill levy equalization as far as our schools go. If that passes the same time our private prison closes you can kiss Crowley County School District goodbye. Thank you.

[Tobe Allenbaugh, Crowley County Commissioner](#)

I just want to thank you very much for everything you've done. It was perfect. Thanks to everybody that spoke up and wish us luck and we'll hope that this thing goes our way. Thank you very much.