

New private jail solves crowding issues

A private firm will manage the new jail

Last Edited: Friday, 16 Jan 2009, 6:59 PM CST
Created On: Friday, 16 Jan 2009, 5:46 PM CST

[Erin Cargile](#)

BURNET COUNTY, Texas (KXAN) - The overcrowding problems at the Burnet County Jail are about to be solved at no extra cost to the taxpayers.

The finishing touches are going on a new \$27 million dollar correctional facility - a 90,000 square foot state-of-the-art building that holds 587 beds.

The current Burnet County Jail has only 98 beds, so the county has been transporting the overflow to Crystal City and paying to keep them there. Now, other jails will pay the county to use their new space.

"Now we can spend our money in other areas," said Burnet County Judge Donna Klaeger.

The county will start out leasing about 100 beds. They are currently negotiating contracts to house federal, state and other county's inmates.

Southwest Corrections, a private firm, will manage the new jail. The Burnet County Sheriff is still responsible for the operations.

"There's no question it's going to be a secure facility," said Sheriff W.T. Smith. "Not one, but two fences lined with rolls of barbed wire surround the structure. They are equipped with touch sensors that set off an alarm."

The new jail was paid for with revenue bonds from the Public Facilities Commission.

"The facility pays for itself," said Klaeger.

According to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, there are about 15 county jails in Texas managed by private contractors.