

# Carter: Baas (but not boos) mark Eugene visit

Democratic Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter was greeted with "baas" on his second campaign appearance in Eugene.

The baas came from contestants in the Lane County Sheep Show, which was held at the Lane County Fairgrounds on Saturday.

Carter made a hand-shaking tour around the fairgrounds building and later presented trophies to the winners of the show.

Part of his time was spent watching a demonstration of spinning yarn from sheep's wool. Carter also signed autographs.

The sheep were apparently unconcerned with the candidate and the crowd of reporters and interested persons who followed him throughout his stay at the fairgrounds.

Carter did not deliver a prepared speech, but he exchanged comments with persons in the crowd and briefly answered questions from reporters.

Carter's stop at the Sheep Show was the first of two appearances in the area. He also visited the Springfield Mall.

Carter, who visited Eugene Wednesday, said he was "glad to be back in Eugene. It's one of the prettiest places I've ever seen."



Presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter could hardly see the sheep for the secret service men during his brief return to Eugene Saturday.

Photo by John Johns

## County jail proposal:

*A change is necessary, but is the cost justifiable?*

**Editor's Note:** Penal institutions have been a major social question for many years.

A product of the Enlightenment . . . a humane alternative to mutilation, flogging, exile . . . an 18th century notion that the individual returned to reflective solitude would regain his or her essential goodness.

Instead, we have: "Human sewers, clogged and unworkable," writes Garry Wills of the nation's prisons and jails today.

Almost everyone agrees that conditions in the Lane County jail are bad, and on Tuesday, voters will decide just how bad its county jail is — and whether it is worth \$11.7 million in property tax bonds, payable over the next 10 years, to construct a new one.

"For two years we've been living under a situation never knowing from one hour to the next whether a battle over a pack of cigarettes could blow the whole place up," says Capt. Paul Bailey, county director of corrections.

With an average of 150 inmates and only 119 beds available, few people deny change is urgent. Supporters of the ballot measure have called the present facility one of the worst county jails in the state, largely because of the size of the county it is supposed to serve.

Originally a Eugene city garage, the existing jail was remodeled in 1951 for temporary use.

Twenty-five years later, male inmates are sleeping on the floor — under double bunks, in 18-inch spaces, and often two or three people to a six-by-eight foot cell, Bailey says. There is little room to separate the sick from the healthy, felons from petty offenders, or people awaiting

trial from those already convicted of a crime, he admits.

Over 65 per cent of the present inmate population are in jail because they cannot afford to pay bail, Bailey estimates.

Opponents of the ballot measure acknowledge the deplorable conditions. But they claim that it would be far less expensive to remodel the present jail than construct a new one.

The estimated effect on the property tax rate is an increase of 48 cents per \$1,000 value. A homeowner with a \$30,000 home would pay \$14.40 a year.

"They're asking too much from the taxpayer," says Orpha Thomas, who has reviewed jail plans since its inception. "The architects who drew up these plans were given an open-ended situation, instead of a top dollar figure to work with."

Voters might pass the ballot measure if planners come up with a jail for "six or seven million dollars," she added.

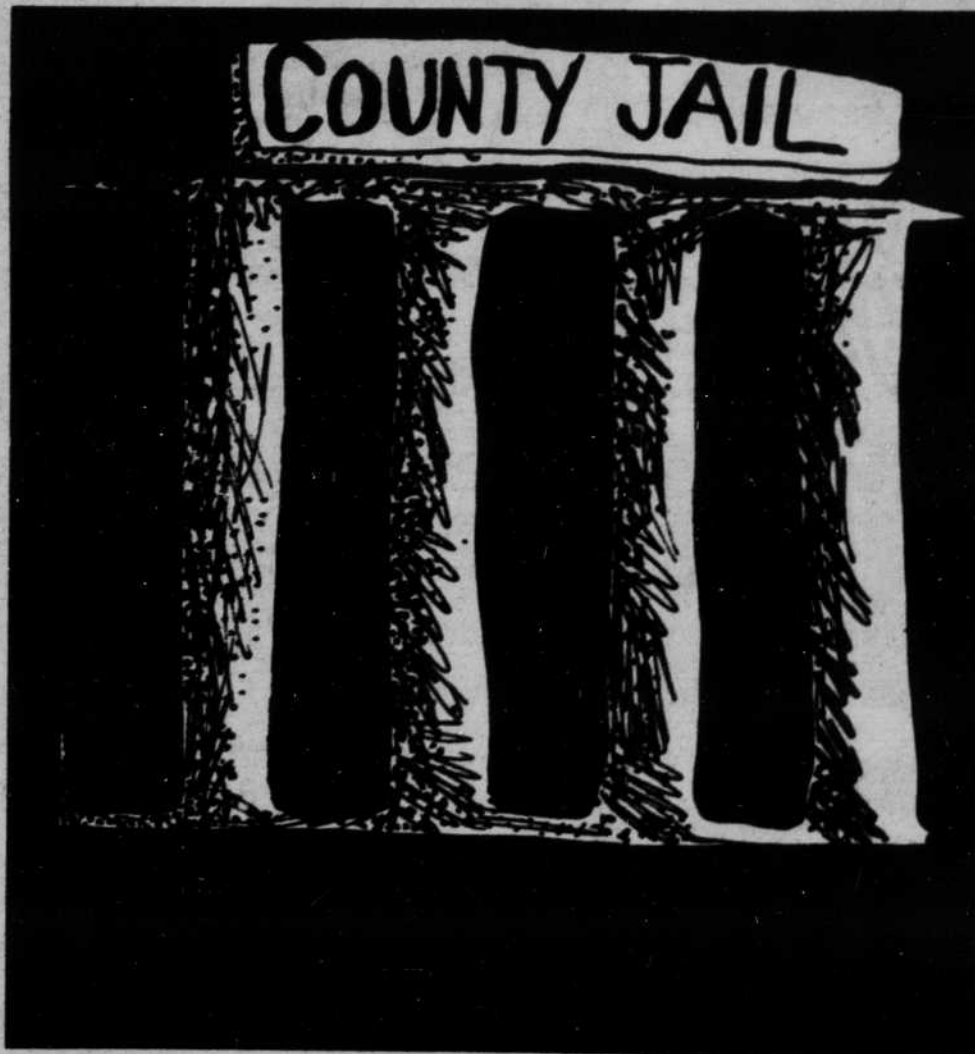
The new building would be located between Willamette and Charnelton streets, north of 5th Avenue. Four stories high, in addition to a basement, it would accommodate 288 inmates with a capacity to expand if necessary. The plan calls for 20 beds for short-term mental-health emergencies also.

Instead of the existing 13 individual cells, the proposed adult corrections facility would contain 204 such cells.

Bailey claims that dormitory-style quarters for the majority of the county inmates is dangerous to prisoners and staff alike.

"We are charged by Oregon law with keeping these people in our care safe and secure. This institution does not allow for that."

The new jail would take up almost



130,000 square feet, over five times the present size. Construction cost is a whopping \$71 per square foot.

"San Diego built an 11-story, 500,000 square foot jail for the same price as our 'Cadillac,'" says John Dotson, candidate for county commissioner. "Grants Pass built a beautiful jail at an atrociously low figure. The whole concept here is a rip-off of the taxpayer."

Bailey counters that the cost of jail construction is high because of the nature of the building. Concrete and steel are the basic materials, instead of plywood. An intercommunications system, an extensive security system and a massive plumbing arrangement would

all contribute to the drain on the taxpayers' purses.

If the jail measure is approved, it would take two and one-half years for the new facility to be completed. In any event, Bailey notes that inmates throughout the country have been bringing suits to federal courts claiming violation of their First and Eighth Amendment rights.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed suit last month on behalf of prisoners in the Jackson County jail based on alleged inhumane conditions. If that suit wins, the court may order guidelines for local jails — which already occurred in Alabama.