

# Prison expansion will cost \$9.5M

Money to grow facility would come from Justice Reinvestment Fund

By Paris Achen  
Capital Bureau

State lawmakers say they may have to take more than \$9 million from a state fund designed to keep offenders out of prison to pay for expanding prison space.

A 2013 law intended to flatline growth in the state prison population has been less successful than anticipated. The state is projected to have 150 more prisoners in March than previously forecast, according to the Office of Economic Analysis.

The Department of Corrections plans to accommodate the extra prisoners by opening a vacant medium-security facility at Deer Creek Correctional Institution in Madras, said Colette Peters, department director. Executing the plan by March would cost about \$9.5 million, she said. The department plans had called for opening that



Courtesy Oregon Department of Corrections

The Deer Creek Correctional Institution in Madras, DOC wants to renovate the facility to accommodate an increase in inmate population. The \$9.5 million needed to expand and staff the facility would come from a program designed to keep parolees out of prison.

facility in 2019.

House Majority Leader Rep. Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, said the only option for covering that cost is to siphon the money from the Justice Reinvestment Fund.

The Justice Reinvestment Fund was created in House Bill 3194 in 2013 to give resources to counties to set up support services for offenders on probation and parole.

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Heidi Moawad, public safety policy adviser to Gov. Kate Brown

The bill also restructured the state's sentencing guidelines to try to ebb the flow of offenders into the prison system.

“What we hear from judges and prosecutors is there are folks they send to prison because there are no supervision resources locally,” said Mike Schmidt, executive director of the Criminal Justice Commission. “This justice reinvestment is building the infrastructure so we can keep offenders out of prison and actually give them a shot.”

The Criminal Justice Commission doled out \$15 million from the fund in 2013-2014. About \$40 million was earmarked for the fund for 2015-2016. The \$9.5 million expansion at Deer Ridge would come out of the \$40 million amount.

It's unclear whether each

county's grant would shrink proportionally or whether the balance of grant money would be awarded according to merit.

“My concern is that would end justice reinvestment in Oregon,” said Heidi Moawad, Gov. Kate Brown's public safety policy adviser. “It was a hard-won battle ... to get our \$40 million fund this biennium.”

Since funding started last year, some jurisdictions, such as Multnomah County, have already reduced the number of prison intakes. The counties need more time to see how the programs affect recidivism, said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Caroline Wong.

Multnomah County's grant funds pay for offender housing, drug treatment, employment development, mentorship, parenting classes, probation officers and other services for offenders in the community.

Dale Primmer, Umatilla County community corrections director, said he is concerned the program may be gutted before it has had a chance to show results.

Umatilla County applied for a \$914,251 justice reinvestment grant for this year. The county plans to use some

of that money to establish a program to connect offenders with treatment centers before they are released from jail. The shorter the time between jail and treatment the more likely it is that offenders will complete diversion programs and avoid recidivism, Primer said.

The fear is that the counties will start new programs this year and then lose funding in 2016 because the state needs to expand Deer Ridge, Primer said. That kind of uncertainty makes it difficult for counties to plan because they craft their budgets far in advance, he said.

Brown strongly supports continuing the fund, Moawad said. The governor plans to meet with county officials from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 10 to discuss ways to immediately reduce the prison population and stave off the need for the expansion. The meeting is scheduled at the Department of Public Safety Standards in Training Hall of Fame, 4190 Aumsville Highway in Salem.

The Deer Ridge expansion plan entails moving the existing 787 minimum-security prisoners from the minimum-security building to the medium-security facility. The medium-security building has 200 additional beds to accommodate the statewide spike in prisoners projected for March, Peters said.

Moving the prisoners and repairing and furnishing the medium-security facility would cost about \$2.5 million. Hiring people to serve the additional prisoners would cost about \$7 million, Peters wrote in a letter to the Oregon Public Safety Task Force.

The Department of Corrections director said the new sentencing guidelines and Justice Reinvestment Fund have been working to slow growth in the prison population, just not as much as anticipated.

She said she is still hopeful that counties may be able to work together to stave off the projected growth of 150 prisoners in time to avoid expanding Deer Ridge.

## Agency's open house shows plan for future

Safe Harbors takes on a larger role, seeks financial support

By Steve Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

With a new director and some staff changes, Safe Harbors, the Wallowa County agency dedicated to providing intervention and advocacy services to victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse, is taking on a greater role in the community.

Safe Harbors hosted an open house Oct. 19 to show the community and some of its community partners some of the agency's plans for the future. “Our open house was great,” Safe Harbors Director Amy Stubblefield said. “A lot of our community partners came in to see us and the new office area and meet the new staff. We had some community members come out including one who is interested in being on our board, and some who want to volunteer.”

Financial support always is a primary concern for Safe Harbors. “One of the issues we've been running into is there's no non-specific funds that we can provide for -- things like getting a victim a new birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license -- those vital documents they need and sometimes have to flee without,” Stubblefield said.

Even providing some necessities for protecting a victim, such as travel expenses or safe housing for extended periods, is beyond the financial capability of Safe Harbors.

“Our max time we can offer at the shelter is about 30 days, although we've been able to extend it a few times,” Stubblefield said. “Sometimes victims can save enough for first and last (month's rent), but not enough for a deposit, so it's heartbreaking to tell a victim that we've hit the end of what we can do to help because the barrier is financial and our funds are limited.”

Still, the Safe Harbors staff tries to help victims seek other resources. “We always try to encourage victims to be empowered and seek out other organizations and other programs that have money for those programs,” Stubblefield said. “If they (the victim) haven't done their work, I don't want the discouragement to come from, ‘So, great. I left, and now what?’”

The agency's most recent funding push is the creation of a “100 Club.”

“We're looking for 100 individuals who are willing to donate \$100, and that would give us a \$10,000 pool of money to use specifically for those types of needs,” Stubblefield said. She added that the organization already received some donations via word of mouth, but expects to start a full-fledged campaign soon. “The giving season really happens around the holidays, plus people are looking at avenues for tax deductions,” Stubblefield said. “And because we're a 501C, donations are fully deductible.”

Stubblefield said local business Sugar Time Bakery is donating 50 percent of the proceeds of its purple items, which signify the importance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, to Safe Harbors.

The agency is conducting a class for Safe Harbors volunteers from 5-7 p.m. Nov. 10, 17 and 24.

“We're asking for an RSVP by the 5th of November,” Stubblefield said. “We will provide light food and we can provide daycare if needed.” For more information, visit [www.wcsafeharbors.com](http://www.wcsafeharbors.com).



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### ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

This week's athlete of the week hales from the ranks of Enterprise Grade school in the person of Tyler Knapp, 8. He plays on the Raiders soccer team and recently scored six consecutive goals in one match. The young Knapp generally averages four goals per game.


At the moment, Knapp is enjoying his time in third grade where his favorite subject is Rocket Math. Some of Knapp's hobbies include his magnetic building set and walking his dog, Cooper. As for athletic hobbies, Knapp enjoys any sport that has a ball. He is the son of Mark and Rebecca Knapp.



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