

Press Release

For Immediate Release

December 2, 2008

Special Committee to Resolve Jail Space and Site Needs

The Eau Claire County Special Committee to Resolve Jail Space and Site Needs is at an important point in their process to fulfill the task of resolving Eau Claire County's jail space and site needs. At the Committee's last meeting a 30-year jail population projection was adopted. The projection plans to limit the growth in jail population to 1% per year, significantly less than the 6% per year increase Eau Claire County has experienced over the last decade or more. The adopted projection will be used to plan the size of the future jail. To reduce the rate of increase in the jail population from 6% to 1% per year Eau Claire County will have to aggressively implement alternative to incarceration programs.

Two important issues will be taken up by the Special Committee at their next meeting on Thursday, December 4, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 2550 of the County Courthouse. The first issue will be to discuss and act on the size of the future jail. The Committee will use the population projection adopted at the last meeting and select a target point in the future to use for jail size planning.

The second issue will be discussion of jail siting criteria. Determining siting criteria will be an important part of the process to resolve jail space and site needs. Discussion and adoption of siting criteria is expected to continue into the next Special Committee meeting, giving the Committee and the public an opportunity to consider criteria between meetings. The Special Committee emphasizes that all options for jail siting are on the table.

The Special Committee believes the public must be involved in the decision making process and encourages citizens to attend the Committee meeting(s) and provide input into their decision-making. A fifteen-minute comment period is provided at the start of each Special Committee meeting and public questions and comments are sought at important decision points during the meetings.

Colleen Bates, Chair of the Special Committee, and Will Fantle, Committee Vice-Chair, will hold a press conference on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at 12 noon in Room 2550 of the Eau Claire County Courthouse to review the progress of the Special Committee, discuss important issues on the agenda for the December 4 meeting and review a time line for future jail planning decisions.

Questions or comments may be directed to Mel Erickson, Eau Claire County Department of Planning and Development, 721 Oxford Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701 ♦ 839-1657 ♦ mel.erickson@co.eau-claire.wi.us