

Justice Center Briefing Sheet

Sheet 2, April 2005

Justice System Needs Assessment Consultants Begin

Portage County is taking the next step to improve its entire justice system and has embarked on a comprehensive needs assessment study that began April 12, 2005. The County's Justice Center Management Team reviewed proposals from seven companies and interviewed the four top-ranked teams. Based on their extensive experience in justice planning across the United States, the Portage County Board of Supervisors hired Mark Goldman & Associates of Atlanta, who teamed with two Wisconsin-based firms - Preston Corp. and Mead & Hunt.

Agencies Included in the study are:

Courts, Judiciary, District Attorney's Office, Probation & Parole, Public Defender's Office, Stevens Point Police, Sheriff's Department, Dispatch, the Jail, Justice Programs & Administration, Coroner's Office, Portage House, Register of Probate, and Juvenile detention and programs.

Schedule.

The study is expected to be completed in September 2005. During this time:

- The public will be invited to discussions and presentations.
- Each of the committees will continue to meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.
- Several interim reports and a final report will be presented.

Turn the page to learn more about the project...



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Scope of Work. The consultants are studying operations, operations management, staffing, programs, processes and facilities. The team will work with Portage County and Stevens Point officials to analyze issues and consider various options regarding all of these agencies and the system as a whole. The team is interviewing local experts, collecting and analyzing data in order to answer questions such as:

- How can the County better provide safety and security to its citizens?
- Are there process and program changes that can make the justice system more effective and efficient?
- What are the opportunities to enhance the collaboration between the City of Stevens Point and Portage County justice agencies?
- What changes are expected over the next 30 years that would impact the justice agencies, and what are the best ways that the County can address these?
- What are the 30-year projections for court case filings, jail population, alternative program participants, and how will that impact their space needs?
- Are there changes to the justice system and correctional options that can reduce jail bed needs, construction costs, and operational costs – and improve community safety?
- What jail and non-custody programs work to reduce recidivism and help defendants and offenders become contributing members of society? Which of these should be provided in Portage County?
- Which offenders should be jailed and not released on any programs?
- Over the coming decades, what will be the best ways for the County to continue to collect and analyze data and, as a result, update the justice system plan so it continues to meet needs within given constraints, such as limited funds?
- To what extent do existing buildings support current and future needs?
- What building improvements are anticipated over the next 5 to 30 years to help each justice entity fulfill its mission?

Participants. Many people from throughout the county will be involved in the planning process. They will provide input, debate issues, examine the data, review the pros and cons of issues, consider various options, and make recommendations and decisions. Participants include:

- **Citizens of Portage County** through a series of public meetings and these briefing sheets.
- **Judicial Center Management Team** comprised of County and City administrators and justice system leaders
- **Space and Properties Committee**
- **County Board of Supervisors.**
- **Justice Coalition**

Further information. Mark Goldman, Lead Planning Consultant, may be contacted via email at mark@markgoldman.org with questions about the needs assessment project.



Justice Center
project
information is
available on the
web at

www.co.portage.wi.us

click on the
Justice Center
Planning
Project link.



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