



**MESA COUNTY WORK RELEASE
AND JAIL DETENTION
PROGRAMMING STUDY**

Final Report

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POLICY STUDIES INC.
MESA COUNTY WORK RELEASE AND JAIL DETENTION PROGRAMMING STUDY
FINAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a study undertaken by Policy Studies Inc. (PSI) of the Mesa County criminal justice system. The study had three main purposes: (1) identify methods in the criminal justice system to reduce present and future jail usage; (2) enhance the use of alternatives to incarceration; and (3) develop an implementation plan for changes in the processes and policies of the courts and various criminal justice agencies to achieve the first two goals.

Mesa County will be approaching these issues from a position of strength. PSI staff have seldom been in a county where the levels of innovation, cooperation, and collaboration have been so strong. The strength and vitality of the branches of government and the individuals that serve within them is far and away the greatest asset that the county can have as it faces difficult decisions about the direction of the justice system in Mesa County. During two site visits and numerous interviews PSI staff learned that:

- There is a very high degree of justice system collaboration among the courts and probation, law enforcement, the district attorney, public defender, and other agencies;
- There is a very high degree of cooperation between county government and the justice system;
- There are numerous long established well run jail alternative programs already in operation; and
- The jail is well-designed and expertly operated by capable managers and motivated and dedicated staff.

We recognize, however, that these goals can only be met as long as the community believes that it is being adequately protected from crime. In particular, all aspects of the methamphetamine drug abuse problem were cited as a major cause of jail overcrowding and a challenge to the combined resources of the county and justice system. Any solutions to jail overcrowding must enable the county to deal with the methamphetamine problem and its ramifications.

A PERSPECTIVE ON CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The most difficult issue that Mesa County decision makers need to make is what combination of increased jail capacity and jail alternative programming will keep the citizens of the county safe and most rationally expend resources. The decisions that will eventually be reached will involve finding an acceptable level of shared risk (it is probably inevitable that some individuals will fail



in the programs to which they are assigned) and cost effectiveness (Mesa County cannot build itself out of its present circumstances).

In order to understand the costs and benefits of incarceration as opposed to alternatives, it is important to understand the following:

- Most individuals who are in jail will eventually return to society, so the primary issue is not who will get out but what kind of people they will be when they get out;
- For many offenders, public safety is better served by placing them in treatment programs rather than jail;
- There are people who may actually consider a small amount of jail time as less punitive than home detention or having to work; and
- Part of the cost of incarceration is the potential cost to the county if the offender is rendered unable to support his or her family during incarceration.

This study and the recommendations generated by it are based on the following principles of jail usage for pre-trial detention and convicted offenders, as reflected in nationally accepted criminal justice best practices.

REASONS FOR USE OF PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

About sixty-three percent of the Mesa County jail population consists of individuals who have not yet been convicted of the crime for which they are being held. In 2004 the jail had average daily population of 360, of which 228 were pre-trial inmates. The following are the main reasons for holding arrestees or charged offenders prior to trial and conviction.

- The individual is likely not to appear for court. This determination may be based on some combination of past failures to appear, statements made by the offender, out-of-county residence, incentive to flee the jurisdiction due to the seriousness of the offense, or other factors.
- The individual is likely to present a danger to self or others if released. Offenders who are under the present influence of alcohol or other drugs, who are considered a suicide risk, who have a prior record showing a propensity for repeated violent acts or other criminal activity, who have made believable threats toward others, or who are otherwise considered likely to commit a new offense, are included in this category.
- The detaining authority is unable to determine who the individual is or where the individual lives. People in this category could include the homeless, a population that is a growing concern in Mesa County.



Our review of data from the jail and through the interviews we conducted with justice system stakeholders indicates that the majority of persons held in the Mesa County jail are there because they fall within the criteria listed above. For all of the above categories of individuals, the decision to detain should be reviewed regularly by the court to determine if changed circumstances would permit release.

PURPOSES OF CRIMINAL SANCTIONS FOR CONVICTED OFFENDERS

With regard to convicted offenders, the criminal justice literature identifies the following five purposes for the use of criminal sanctions:

- Punishment;
- Protection, through separation from society;
- Deterrence of others;
- Rehabilitation; and
- Restorative justice.

Incarceration as a sanction plays a primary role in punishment, separation, and deterrence. It may play a secondary role in rehabilitation, if the offender is unlikely to be rehabilitated unless kept in a controlled environment. Restorative justice approaches typically are used as alternatives to incarceration.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The information for this study came from: (1) personal interviews conducted by PSI project staff with a wide range of criminal justice system actors in Mesa County; and (2) some aggregate analyses of jail population and court record data provided to PSI staff by the jail and court administrator. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the following criminal justice system organizations:

Judges of the District Court	Mesa County Sheriff's Office	Work Release/Day Reporting
Judges of the County Court	Grand Junction Police Department	Criminal Justice Services;
Mesa County jail	Probation Department;	Department of Human Services
Office of the District Attorney	State Department of Corrections	Municipal Court
Office of the Public Defender	Community Corrections staff	Municipal Prosecutor
		Mesa County Manager



The interviews were aimed at investigating the following issues:

PSI Interview Issues	
Organization	Issues
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-arrest dispositions of police calls: warnings; referrals to other agencies • Use of citations in lieu of booking • Use of detoxification facilities instead of jail for public drunkenness and Driving Under the Influence • Referral to emergency medical facilities for mentally ill • Post-arrest release practices • Development of clear arrest standards
District Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early case screening for release and charging decisions, including dropped charges and reduced charges that might affect incarceration • Early plea negotiations • Deferral of prosecution and referral to diversion programs • Expedited handling of cases where defendant is incarcerated • Alternative sentencing as part of a plea bargain
Public Defender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early indigent screening and appointment of Public Defender • Early screening for purposes of plea negotiations and alternation sanctions • Vertical case processing to avoid handoff delays • Expedited discovery • Early identification of conflicts
Criminal Justice Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information for bail/release decisions in time for initial appearance • Power to authorize immediate release of arrestees prior to jail booking • Screening for possible diversion • Supervision of release conditions, including drug testing • Monitoring the jail population for review of bond and for possible time-served pleas • Monitoring released defendants to reduce failures to appear
Jail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal of admissions • Jail ability to transfer pre-trial or sentenced inmates to work release or home detention without court order • Jail ability to set bail or release pre-trial inmates on their own recognizance without court order • Early release programs to reduce overcrowding • Inmate monitoring and court notification of inmates who might be eligible for pre-trial release or release for time served
Judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening of arrest warrant requests for citations in lieu of arrest • Expedited bond hearings • Delegation of release authority to the jail or Criminal Justice Services for specified classes of defendants • Use of periodic bond review hearings • Case management techniques to reduce delay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Early plea negotiations ✓ Fast track calendars ✓ Restrictions on continuances ✓ Trial management conferences to assure that parties are ready • Use of specialty courts: drug court, mental health court • Speedy sentencing • Expedited probation violation hearings • Use of alternatives to incarceration in sentencing convicted offenders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community service ✓ Probation ✓ Treatment programs



PSI Interview Issues	
Organization	Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Home detention and Electronic Monitoring (active and passive) ✓ Halfway houses
Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of alternative sanction programs • Expedited pre-sentence investigations • Policies to reduce the use of arrest warrants for probation violations • Expedited hearings for probation violations • Non-incarceration alternatives for technical probation violations

Some of the analysis of court record data and jail population and release data was performed by court and jail staff, within the time constraints of their other work. In some instances PSI was supplied with raw data for analysis. Due to the short time frame for project completion, some valuable data could not be supplied to PSI.

As a methodological note, if Mesa County staff were to undertake a more complete data collection and analysis effort, including hand data collection from jail and court records, we suggest that they consider investigating the following:

- The percentage of pre-trial offenders who are in jail at each step of the criminal court process for different types of cases (misdemeanor, felony classes one to six), to identify how often people initially held in jail are released later in the process;
- A profile of who is in jail pre-trial at each step of the criminal process for each type of case, including age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, residence (including homeless), employment, substance abuse issues, mental health issues, prior failures to appear, and prior criminal record, to investigate whether there are people being kept in jail at each step in the process who might be considered for release;
- A comparison of the length of time between steps in the criminal court process for offenders who are in jail and for offenders who are not incarcerated pre-trial, to determine the extent to which the process is expedited for those offenders who are in jail;
- Analysis from jail release data of average length of stay by age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, residence, employment, substance abuse issues, mental health issues, prior failures to appear, and prior criminal record, to supplement the information we received on average length of stay for different types of detention status;
- A comparison between offenders released and offenders held in jail pre-trial: (1) by the conditions set for release (Personal Recognizance bond, bond by size, cash bail, other); and (2) by age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, residence, employment, substance abuse issues, mental health issues, prior failures to appear, and prior criminal record, to help determine the extent to which some people are released while others with similar characteristics are being held in jail;



- An analysis of which offenders are released after having their bonds lowered at the arraignment or plea, to identify whether some of those could have had bonds lowered earlier in the process;
- An analysis of which incarcerated offenders are released after completion of their pre-sentence investigation report and how much their length of stay was increased by having to wait for the pre-sentence investigation;
- An analysis of how much delay is caused by waiting for the appointment of a conflict attorney in lieu of the public defender; and
- An analysis of how many jail bed days could be saved if the public defender were available at the first appearance for misdemeanor pre-trial inmates.

Some of the analysis listed above will require the ability to match data from the court register of actions with jail data for individuals. At present, we understand that this can be done only by matching names. We suggest that the court and jail consider developing a common identifier in both the jail records and the court register of actions. Possible solutions would be to enter the court case number in the jail record, or alternatively to enter the individual's unique jail identification number into the court's register of actions file.

THE CONTEXT

In this section we discuss two topics:

- The present use of the Mesa County jail, including a profile of who is in jail and for what period of time, and observations on the management of the jail; and
- External pressures on jail use in Mesa County, including recent and likely future demographic trends and trends in crime rates.

PRESENT USE OF THE JAIL

The following discussion summarizes data provided to PSI staff from the jail and from a sample of 53 registers of actions for cases in which the defendant was held in jail pre-trial. This data summary focuses on inmates being held in the jail at each stage of the criminal process.

Overview of the Jail Population

The Mesa County jail is a direct supervision jail with 336 beds, divided into three housing units. There is a separate section for female inmates and provision is made for segregating inmates with special needs or who present additional security problems.

In 2004 the jail had an average daily population of 360, of which 294, or 85 percent, were males and 53, or 15 percent, were females. The jail processed 7,988 bookings and 7,952 releases over the year. The following table, taken from the data for released inmates provided by the jail,

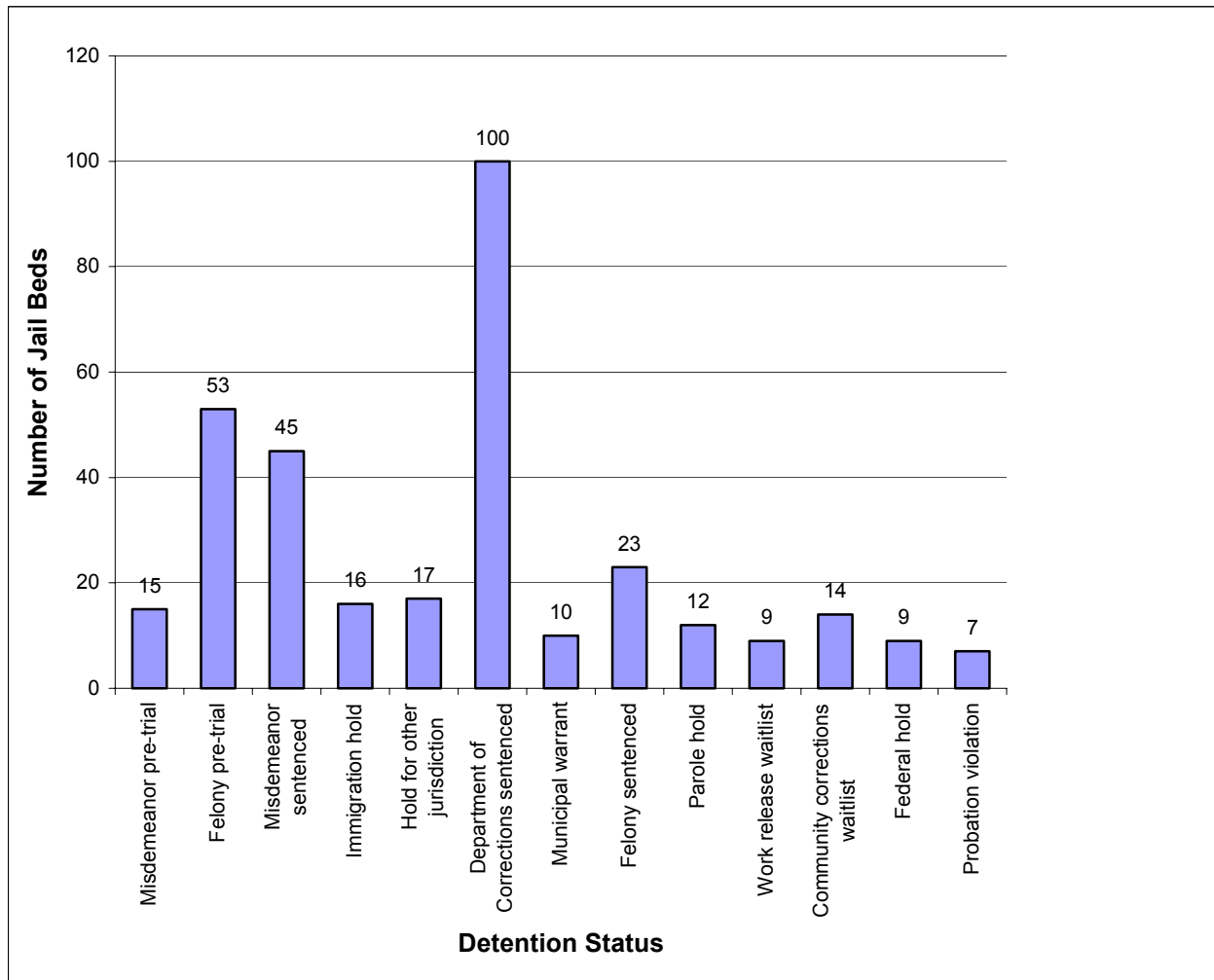


presents the number of inmates released in 2004 for each type of detention status, their average length of stay, the resulting total number of jail bed days, and the jail bed days translated into bed years.

Mesa County 2004 Inmate Release Data Summary				
Detention Status	Number	Average days length of stay	Total days	Bed years
Misdemeanor pre-trial	2749	2	5,498	15
Misdemeanor sentenced	1027	16	16,432	45
Felony pre-trial	1494	13	19,422	53
Felony sentenced	226	37	8,362	23
Probation violation	36	69	2,484	7
Parole hold	163	26	4,238	12
Department of Corrections sentenced	411	89	36,759	100
Municipal warrant	259	1	259	1
Federal hold	60	54	3,240	9
Immigration hold	639	7	5,751	16
Hold for other jurisdiction	521	12	6,252	17
Community corrections waitlist	75	67	5,025	14
Work release waitlist	93	36	3,348	9
Return to county on writ	101	23	2,323	6



The chart below shows jail bed use in Mesa County by detention status.



The data in the above table, along with the detailed data from which the table was created, show that in 2004:

- (1) Inmates sentenced to the Department of Corrections and awaiting transfer constituted 5 percent of the released inmates but took up about 28 percent of the annual jail bed days used (based on the average daily population of 360). Of those, 58 inmates, or 13 percent, spent over 180 days in the Mesa County jail awaiting transfer to the state penitentiary and used approximately 16,000 jail bed days, or 44 jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, the jail bed days that they used cost the county \$838,400. Speeding up the transfer of these inmates to the state penitentiary could save a substantial number of jail bed days.
- (2) Probation violators constituted less than one-half of 1 percent of the released inmates. Most jails across the country have a much higher jail bed use by probation violators. This group took up just under 2 percent of the annual jail bed days used. On the other

hand, eight of the 36 released probation violators were in jail for over 120 days and used 1502 jail bed days. Those eight accounted for four jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, their jail bed days cost the county \$78,705.

- (3) Misdemeanor pre-trial inmates constituted nearly 35 percent of the released inmates during 2004 but accounted for only about 4 percent of the annual jail bed days used. On the other hand, a small minority of those inmates accounted for most of the jail use. Of the 2749 released pre-trial misdemeanor inmates, 1956, or 71 percent, were released within 24 hours. At the other end of the spectrum, 81 inmates, or 3 percent of the total, were in jail for two weeks or longer and used 3,930 jail bed days, or 11 jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, their jail bed days cost the county \$205,932. Reducing the time spent in jail for that very small number of inmates could produce a substantial saving of jail beds. Later in this report we discuss one possible source of delay in releasing those inmates, delay in having a public defender appointed.
- (4) Felony pre-trial inmates constituted nearly 19 percent of the released inmates during 2004 and 15 percent of the annual jail bed days used. A little over three percent of those, or 52 inmates, spent over 90 days in jail and used 7,819 jail bed days, or 21 jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, their jail bed days cost the county \$409,716. Reducing the time spent in jail for that very small number of inmates could produce a substantial saving of jail beds. Much of this time expenditure is likely due to the time that it takes from arraignment to entry of plea and from entry of plea to sentencing, as discussed later in this report. Finding ways to speed up those two parts of the process could lead to substantial savings in jail bed use.
- (5) Sentenced misdemeanants constituted about 13 percent of the released inmates in 2004 and used about 13 percent of the annual jail bed days.
- (6) Sentenced felons constituted about three percent of the released inmates in 2004 and used about seven percent of the annual jail bed days.
- (7) Of the 93 inmates released to work release, 36 spent 31 days or more in jail prior to release and used 2,625 jail bed days, or seven jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, their jail bed days cost the county \$137,550. An increase in the capacity of the work release program could save a substantial portion of that cost.
- (8) Of the 75 inmates released to community corrections, 46 spent 31 days or more in jail prior to release and used 4,920 jail bed days, or 13 jail beds per year. At a daily jail cost of \$52.40, their jail bed days cost the county \$257,808. An increase in the capacity of the community corrections program could save a substantial portion of that cost.
- (9) Parole violation holds had an average length of stay of 26 days. If the state could speed up the hearing process and reduce the average length of stay to 14 days, the result would be a saving of 1,956 jail bed days, or five jail beds per year.



- (10) Inmates held on municipal warrants have an almost negligible effect on the use of jail beds.
- (11) Inmates on Federal hold or immigration hold took up a total of 25 jail beds per year. There were fewer federal holds than immigration holds, but their average length of stay was significantly longer.

Transients and the Homeless

In the docket data, the jail was listed as the address for many of the inmates in the sample. Most of these are likely to be transients or homeless. A few others were listed as homeless. As we do not have enough reliable data to reach any conclusions about the actual number of homeless in the sample, we combined these categories into one category that we call “unknown residence”.

In the cases in the register of actions study, the residence of the people in jail pre-trial was the following:

Grand Junction	25	Aurora	1
Clifton	2	Out of State	5
Fruita	1	Unknown	17

In the case sample one-third of the people in jail pre-trial had an unknown residence. As was discussed above, one of the reasons for holding a person in jail pre-trial is because they have no reliable contact address or phone, or no place to live while the case is pending before the court. Mesa County has a major transient problem that appears to be growing. Transients tend to commit significant numbers of low-level crimes. The City of Grand Junction is especially tough on panhandling. Violators are booked into the jail on municipal ordinance violations. Transients frequently fail to appear for scheduled hearings. When a failure to appear occurs, a warrant is issued, and an individual with a failure to appear who is subsequently arrested will be held in jail until the next court appearance.

For people in jail who have Grand Junction addresses, high bonds appear to be designed to reduce recidivism rather than significantly reduce failures to appear. The failure to appear rate does not, by itself, seem to be a serious community concern, unless an individual is rearrested on a new serious charge.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES ON JAIL USE

A variety of demographic changes that are occurring or are likely to occur in Mesa County will have an effect on jail bed needs, including:

- (1) A growing problem with methamphetamine use;

- (2) An expected influx of oilfield workers and miners relocating to Mesa County to seek jobs in the growing energy extraction business;
- (3) An increase in the homeless population;
- (4) A growth of population in the unincorporated parts of the county, more distant from the county jail;
- (5) A general increase in the population of the county; and
- (6) A growth in the criminal caseload that exceeds the growth in population.

There were 2,051 felony cases opened in 2004, and in 2005 through August 24th there have been 1,413 felony cases opened. This leads to a projected caseload of 2,185 cases in 2005, or a 6.5 percent increase over 2004, as compared to a two percent increase in the population of Mesa County. Felony arrests thus grew at a rate over three times the rate of growth of the population.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ISSUES AFFECTING JAIL USE

Our study identified the following seven criminal justice system issues affecting jail use and the need for jail beds in Mesa County.

CRIMINAL CASE PROCESSING

There are a variety of ways in which the criminal process could be streamlined to reduce unnecessary jail time, both for the felony process and the misdemeanor process.

Felony Case Processing

The following table presents the major steps in the felony criminal process.

Felony Case Process	
Step	Description
Arrest and booking	There are three methods of arrest: (1) arrest on warrant; (2) warrantless arrest on affidavit; and (3) arrest on summons and direct file to the District Court in lieu of booking. Individuals arrested by one of the first two methods are taken to jail.
Advisement	This is done on weekends by a bond magistrate at the jail and during the week by county court judges via a videoconferencing link with the jail. Bonds, including Personal Recognizance release bonds are set at this time. If the defendant is not released, the case goes directly to formal filing. A majority of offenders have a bond amount set rather than release on Personal Recognizance, so it is bail bondsmen that effectively determine who is released pre-trial and who is not for that group.



Felony Case Process	
Step	Description
Formal filing	This is the first court appearance for the defendant before a District Court Judge. It typically takes place two to five days after advisement, but it may take longer, particularly if the judge who is assigned the case is unavailable. At this hearing the charges are filed by the District Attorney, and if the defendant is eligible for a public defender, the Public Defender is appointed.
Bond returns	If the defendant is in custody, the court will review the bond periodically.
Preliminary hearing	In cases where a preliminary hearing is statutorily authorized, the hearing is scheduled for about 30 days after the formal filing. The District Attorney will typically have a plea offer on the table prior to the preliminary hearing. In 90 percent of the cases the defendant waives the preliminary hearing, although he or she must still appear in court to do that. The District Attorney pressures defendants to waive by refusing to keep its plea offer open if the defendant does not waive. Defendants rarely enter a plea at this time.
Returns	There can be periodic returns before plea entry or trial. A return is set to allow the judge to monitor the status of a case. The most frequent result of a return hearing is no activity.
Arraignment	This is the point in the process where the plea is typically entered. It may be two to three months after formal filing. The delay may be due to either the prosecution or the defense waiting for crime lab test results on the weight of drugs, Colorado Bureau of Investigation reports, mental health evaluations, or other information that one side or the other deems necessary to impact the plea decision.
Entry of plea	This is a court appearance required to formally enter the plea. The judge explains the consequences of the plea to the defendant. It takes place two or more weeks after the arraignment. Sentencing can take place at this hearing if both sides waive the pre-sentence investigation report.
Trial	It is rare that a felony case goes to trial in Mesa County. In the sample of 189 cases that were analyzed for this project, reported in the table below, only two went to trial.
Sentencing	This requires a pre-sentence investigation report unless <u>both</u> sides waive it. The pre-sentence investigation report can take as long as two months, even for in-custody defendants.

The following table presents the median time (in days) between the major events in the felony criminal process for a sample of cases involving incarcerated defendants drawn from cases filed in 2004-2005. A sample of 189 cases was drawn, of which 186 resulted in a plea entry, one had missing data and two had trials. The table below presents the data for the cases resulting in entry of a plea, for all cases in the sample and separately for felony types and number of charges.

We divided the felony types into three categories, class one through three felonies, class four felonies, and class five and six felonies. Class five and six felonies start with a presumption of release on Personal Recognizance bond. Class four felonies have a possibility of release on Personal Recognizance bond. The three most serious categories of felonies have little likelihood of release on Personal Recognizance bond.

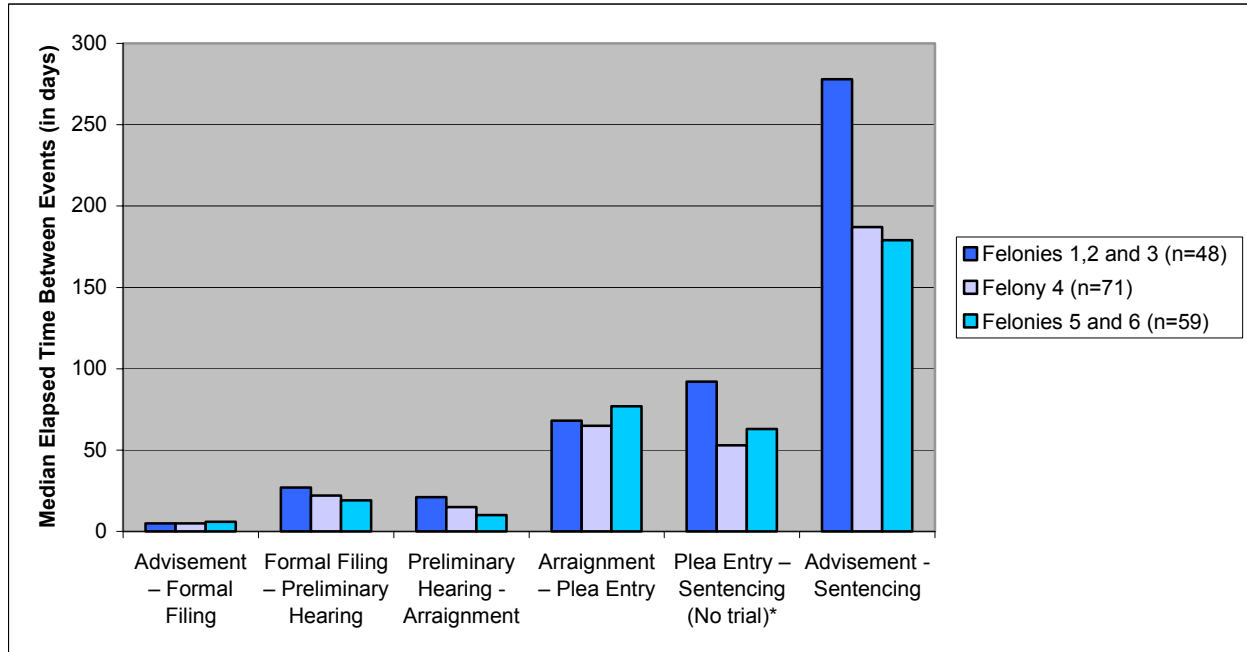
Median Elapsed Time Between Events, Cases With Plea Entry* (in Days)						
Category	Advisement to Formal Filing	Formal Filing to Preliminary Hearing	Preliminary Hearing to Arraignment	Arraignment to Plea Entry	Plea Entry to Sentencing	Advisement to Sentencing
All cases (n=186)	5	23	16	68	59	199
Felonies 1,2 and 3 (n=48)	5	27	21	68	92	278
Felony 4 (n=71)	5	22	15	65	53	187
Felonies 5 and 6 (n=59)	6	19	10	77	63	179
One charge (n=11)	4	34	22	211**	49	129
Two charges (n=45)	5	21	8	83	68	199
Three Charges (n=47)	5	25	13	61	45	188
Four or more charges (n=81)	5	22	20	68	64	216

*Only two cases in the sample reached trial, and one resulted in a not guilty verdict. Another eight had trials scheduled for a future date.

**Only three cases with one charge had both an arraignment and a plea entry. The times between arraignment and plea entry for the three cases were 98 days, 211 days, and 408 days, all longer than the median for the full sample.



The following bar graph shows the elapsed time between events in the felony criminal process by felony type.



From the above data, the type of felony and the number of charges show very little difference in case processing times, with one exception. The three cases with one charge that had both arraignment and plea entry had significantly longer times between those events than did cases with two or more charges. All three of those cases involved class four felonies. We do not have an explanation for this result.

The following are the issues with regard to the effect of felony processing on jail usage.

The use of felony direct filing in lieu of booking

Arresting officers rarely use the direct file process in lieu of booking, and the use of direct filing is declining. In 2004 there were 252 cases filed by summons and complaint (without booking the suspect in jail). In 2005 through August 24, there have been 98 cases filed by summons and complaint, leading to a projected 152 cases for the year 2005. This is a 40 percent decline in the use of summons and complaint for felony filings from 2004 to 2005.

Our interviews indicated the following possible reasons for this lack of use: (1) some officers may find the paperwork too burdensome, making it easier to bring people to jail; (2) officers may not be concerned with jail overcrowding; and (3) officers may be reluctant to let felony suspects go due to a perception that the public is opposed to pre-trial release, based on the belief that most people arrested are guilty and are likely to commit other crimes unless they are held in jail.



Setting bond

Criminal Justice Services interviews every person brought in for booking. They are available to process cases for 16 hours every day. Criminal Justice Services can set the bond, according to a bond schedule, cash bail, or Personal Recognizance release for all warrantless arrests other than for domestic violence or extradition to other states.

For class five or six felonies, Criminal Justice Services starts with the assumption that a Personal Recognizance bond will issue. A Personal Recognizance bond requires a 15 percent premium that can be paid with cash or through a co-signer. The co-signer must be either employed, a property owner in the county, or self-employed and able to show a tax return. For people with ATM cards, there is an ATM machine in the booking area of the jail. Through June of 2005, the ATM had been used to withdraw \$13,860.00. Criminal Justice Services can also set court dates from the jail.

The bond schedule has not been reviewed in four years. Should the chief judge, the judges of the Mesa County District and County courts, and other justice system stakeholders decide to review the bond schedule, it will be important for them to assess the extent to which some people are released while others with similar current offenses, prior records, and community ties are held in jail solely because of an inability to raise the money for the bail or bond surety.

People with a prior failure to appear cannot be released on Personal Recognizance bond without the consent of the District Attorney and may have difficulty finding a bondsman, even if the failure to appear occurred far in the past or was the result of foolishness rather than malicious intent. Those who have jobs could be candidates for release if proper monitoring and supervision were available. If the person arrested has a prior failure to appear, it is the current District Court practice to double the bond for each failure to appear.

State law requires a mandatory \$10,000 bond be posted for driving under suspension if the suspension was due to a Driving Under the Influence conviction. The judge can convert the bond to \$1,000 cash and \$9,000 Personal Recognizance bond, but Criminal Justice Services cannot do that at the jail.

Bond is not available for immigration holds and parole violators.

Judicial review of bond amounts

The docket study sample indicates that it is rare for bonds to be significantly reduced in the early phases of the case. If bail remains high, the defendant is likely to stay in jail until the plea or sentence. The preliminary hearing stage is rarely used for a significant bond screening function. There is no formal screening event during the life of the case. There are bail reduction hearings but we could not determine from the docket, the extent to which the strength of the District Attorney's case was evaluated. The bail decision might be influenced if such evaluations were more formally made part of the process.



Some inmates had bonds lowered at the plea hearing. Many of these cases had multiple counts, and the resolution was a plea to one count, often one of the least serious counts. This may stem from deliberate overcharging or the lack of time between the arrest and filing decision to make a more fully informed filing decision. We question the need for detention decisions that keep these defendants in custody, given the outcome of the case. Some reductions later in the case indicate that there might be cases where bonds could have been reduced with a more effective bond review process that includes assessment of the strength of the District Attorney's case.

The following are examples of bonds set initially according to the bond schedule and reduced near the end of the case.

Examples of Judicial Bond Reductions		
From	To	Percent Reduction
8,000	1,000	87.5
20,000	7,500	62.5
60,000	20,000	66.7
75,000	5,000	93.3
75,000	10,000	86.7
75,000	10,000	86.7
125,000	50,000	60.0
150,000	5,000	96.7
225,000	6,000	97.3
577,000	70,000	87.9

Elapsed times between events in the criminal process

The typical felony case has six court appearances, most of which accomplish nothing, before it is resolved.

Preparation of Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports

The length of time it takes to obtain the pre-sentence investigation report was noted as a major source of delay between plea and sentencing. The major delay in the preparation of the pre-sentence investigation report is in obtaining criminal history information, which requires the input of agencies outside of the Probation Department.

The Probation Department had the following suggestions with regard to the use of the:

- ✓ A pre-sentence investigation should not be required for stipulated Department of Corrections sentences;
- ✓ A pre-sentence investigation should not be required a for every juvenile, especially those with minor offenses; and



- ✓ A pre-sentence investigation should be requested in more misdemeanor cases, as those offenders are often more dangerous.

Appointment of the Public Defender

There can be an added delay in appointing a public defender in situations where a conflict attorney is needed.

Misdemeanor Case Processing

The following table presents the major steps in the misdemeanor criminal process.

Misdemeanor Case Process	
Step	Description
Arrest or Citation	The arresting officer can choose to issue a citation rather than bring the person to the jail for booking.
First appearance	At this step the offender meets with the District Attorney and may resolve the case right away. The public defender does not attend the first appearance. If the defendant is arrested and released on a summons, the first appearance is in the Appearance Center in the County Court. For in-custody defendants, the first appearance is in the court's holding cell. If the defendant wants to speak to a public defender, no plea will be entered at the first appearance.
Arraignment	If no plea is entered at the first appearance, the next hearing is an arraignment. The County Court judges hear arraignments on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. They alternate weeks, so if no plea is entered at the first appearance, the defendant's next hearing will not be held until two weeks later.
Trial or plea	About 80 percent of the cases are resolved by plea. When the defendant does not enter a plea, it is usually because they want the case combined with other cases that they have pending.

The following are issues with respect to the effect of misdemeanor case processing on jail use.

Use of citation in lieu of arrest

Law enforcement in Mesa County are conservative in their use of citation and summons in lieu of arrest. They will not issue a summons in a domestic violence case.

Appointment of the Public Defender

As there is no public defender at the first appearance, another hearing will be required if the defendant wants to speak to the public defender. This can cause a two-week delay for in-custody defendants and a two to four week delay for out-of-custody defendants. If there were a public defender at the initial hearing, every plea obtained at that stage would save two weeks of jail bed use.



Mandatory jail time for Driving Under the Influence offenders

State law sets mandatory jail sentences for a second or subsequent Driving Under the Influence offense. These sentences are presently being served in the jail, although the District Attorney would consider using an alternative such as a workender program (described later), if it were available, work release, or some other combination of residential punishment and community service.

Domestic violence cases

The law requires a hearing before a judge so that the offender can be advised of the contents, requirements, and possible sanctions for violation of any restraining orders. The County Court had developed a fast-track process for this, but it is no longer in use.

Case Processing on Municipal Warrants

The Municipal Court does not hold arraignment on weekends. Arraignments are heard only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so a person arrested on a municipal warrant on Friday will stay in jail until the following Tuesday for arraignment.

There is no facility available for the Municipal Court to lock up first offenders for a day or two. It appears that the Municipal Court's practice of sentencing individuals to jail for minor non-violent offenses results in a poor use of scarce jail beds. Work release or house arrest appear to be better solutions for these offenders. However, at present the police do not have alternatives to taking these individuals to jail.

Municipal warrants for failures to appear are low in number and enforcement is happenstance. Most warrants are issued for individuals who are transients and who can't post bond. They are arrested Thursday and sit in jail until Tuesday. There is a need for a Monday morning arraignment calendar, which the city judge is willing to do. The community has little tolerance for transients. In response to this perception, law enforcement routinely incarcerates these individuals.

A major part of the Municipal Court caseload is made up of alcohol violations committed by 18 to 20 year olds. There is a need for better communication between municipal judge and jail. The Municipal Court would be willing to give jail administration discretion regarding the decision to keep an individual in jail or place them into a jail alternative.

PRE-TRIAL AND POST-TRIAL ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

The following is a summary of the pre-trial and post-trial alternative programs to incarceration that are presently available or being considered in Mesa County.



Pre-Trial Programs

Criminal Justice Services monitoring

Criminal Justice Services both interviews individuals booked at the jail and monitors some offenders who have been released on Personal Recognizance bond. In 2004 Criminal Justice Services had an average daily population of 125 such offenders.

Detoxification center other than at the jail

For people arrested for a Driving Under the Influence offense, there is a need for a one-stop detoxification facility so that an arresting officer can leave the person at a detox center for fast booking, prints, and photos without the waste of time a jail booking entails. At present the sheriff's office does not have an intoxilyzer other than at the detention facility. The city police have an intoxilyzer at the station but still prefer to transport Driving Under the Influence arrestees to the jail. Transients pose a detox liability for the Sheriff. The rank and file city police prefer to put them in jail, so there will have to be a culture change to move to expanded use of a detox facility

At present the judges use jail to enforce sobriety on Driving Under the Influence cases and then to get the person into a program. The offenders routinely need 30 days to achieve sobriety. They are getting help in jail but not to the extent that is needed or could be provided by an alternative program.

Monitoring transients and the homeless

The county might look for ways to monitor transients arrested for minor crimes other than using jail beds for this purpose. This might also relieve some pressure on the system to move these cases through the courts more quickly.

Electronic Monitoring

In 2004 the average daily population for electronic monitoring in Mesa County was ten. One reason for this low usage is that the judges believe that the cost to the county is too high. The cost, however, is actually less than the cost of jail. Passive Electronic Monitoring costs \$5 per day, and active Electronic Monitoring costs from \$10 to \$14 per day, depending on the extent of the monitoring. The county presently uses both passive and active monitoring, depending on the needs of the offender. The county is also examining a prototype of monitoring that can determine if the defendant is using alcohol. This compares to a jail cost of \$52.40 per day, including amortization of the jail. Typically the offender is expected to assume the costs of the Electronic Monitoring program. Offenders who are unable to pay but are otherwise eligible for the program might have the costs waived.



Post-Trial Programs

Probation (Including Intensive Supervision)

The Probation Department has the authority to handle technical violations but cannot use jail as a punishment without taking the individual to court and obtaining a judge's order. They typically will work with the individual and not bring the case to court until there are multiple violations. As a result, technical probation violators account for less than one percent of the jail population in Mesa County. The Probation Department has a variety of increasingly restrictive intermediate sanctions available, including treatment, day reporting, and electronic monitoring, to utilize prior to sending a person to jail for a technical probation violation.

The Probation Department has an administrative hearing process for processing technical violations. If the result of the hearing is to impose sanctions that only a judge can grant, the decision must be sent to a judge for approval.

Probation would like to have more programs for 18 to 21 year olds. These offenders often have few job skills, little education, and poor life skills but still think that they are invincible. The Probation Department indicates that these offenders need programs and not incarceration.

Workender Program

This program does not exist at present but is being considered. There is a prototype workender program in Larimer County. The offenders stay in dormitory facilities on the weekend and perform community service, and the typical sentence is two weekends. The judges believe that 40 to 60 people could be diverted from the jail for such a program. State law imposes mandatory sentences of five, seven, or ten days for second or subsequent Driving Under the Influence offenders. The judges indicated a willingness to use a workender program in lieu of jail for these offenders, if it were available. If a facility were to be purchased or built for such a program, one issue is what use to make of the facility during the week.

Restorative Justice Programs

There is a restorative justice program in Mesa County for people convicted of minor crimes, consisting of a sentence to perform useful public service. In 2004 the program had an average daily population of 1,222 convicted offenders who were given such sentences.

The Useful Public Service staff is also using a restorative justice board that interviews specific clients referred by the District Attorney's diversion program for first time adult offenders. This program currently has an average daily population of about 120, with about 57 percent being 18 to 20 year olds who have been convicted of a minor in possession of alcohol offense. Other offenses include possession of marijuana and criminal mischief. The Criminal Justice Services Department monitors those individuals. The board may sanction these offenders to perform community service projects specific to the harm they have caused, including alcohol or drug education.

Work Release/Day Reporting

Work release is used in lieu of jail for sentenced misdemeanants and traffic violators, and as a condition of probation. The county has both a residential work release facility and nine independent living apartments. The independent living units have a curfew, and staff check on the residents three times every day. In 2004 the work release program had an average daily population of 66 individuals. The work release facility is considerably cheaper to run than the jail. At present there is a waiting list for work release. People who fail in the work release program are returned to jail.

People on day reporting live at home but have to report every day. In 2004 the day reporting program had an average daily population of only two. It is thus very underutilized.

The offenders in these programs must meet a variety of conditions, including employment, treatment, and restitution. They also may be referred to on-site treatment and educational programs, employment classes, and job referral. Offenders pay a daily fee to be in these programs, but they are also working and paying restitution, fines to the court, family support, and taxes.

Both the work release and the day reporting programs could be made available to more offenders in Mesa County if capacity were expanded. An expanded work release program might provide an option for pre-trial offenders as well, particularly for people who have a prior failure to appear but live in the community and have jobs. The county might also consider combining work release with a residential drug treatment component.

Community Corrections

Community corrections is used primarily for sentenced felony offenders, including: (1) transition from prison back to the community, and (2) diversion in lieu of prison. Failure to meet the requirements may result in return or resentencing to prison. In 2004 community corrections had an average daily population of 116 individuals. There is currently a waiting list for community corrections, with many waiting in jail for bed space in the program. Of those waiting in jail, many are women. Most of the people in jail on the waiting list, both men and women, are addicted to methamphetamine, have had previous failures on probation, or pose a danger to themselves or others.

Colorado West Mental Health

This program has both inpatient and outpatient capacity. The inpatient programs include a crisis triage unit with eight detox beds and four seclusion beds, an adult unit with 16 beds, and a juvenile unit with 16 beds. The adult unit can be used for 21-day inpatient meth treatment programs, Colorado Revised Statutes Section 27-10 holds (for people who are a danger to themselves or others or are severely disabled), and detox.



The police can bring people in directly for 27-10 holds rather than charging them with a crime. St. Mary's hospital was handling those cases, but Colorado West is taking over the program. They plan to expand to have 48 beds available.

The County is currently having discussions with Colorado West Mental Health and other local inpatient programs to determine if the county can manage its own programs at a lower cost and in a manner that makes the best benefits jail space.

OTHER CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ISSUES

Women Offenders

The number of women offenders in the Mesa County jail has increased substantially in the past few years, mostly due to methamphetamine use. The jail staff estimate that 80 percent of the women in the jail are there in part due to methamphetamine use. There is a shortage of work release and community corrections beds for female offenders in Mesa County.

Female offenders present a number of special problems, including: (1) health issues; (2) problems stemming from having been a victim of prior child abuse, domestic violence, or sexual abuse; and (3) child protection issues if they have children. In July 2005, Mesa County Human Services has 212 children in state foster care (including 27 children in one day) as a direct result of their mother's involvement with methamphetamine. There is a serious need to coordinate services for female offenders.

State Department of Corrections Parole Violators

About four percent of the people in the Mesa County jail, or 12 inmates on average, are there for violation of parole. The state has been holding hearings for parole violators twice per month, causing an average length of stay of 16 days for people held for parole violation in the Mesa County jail. At the time of this writing the state has recently reduced the number of parole hearings to one per month. This has doubled the number of parole violators in the jail, from 12 to 24. There is a need for weekly parole hearings. Discussions are underway between the jail and the parole board concerning the use of videoconferencing to expedite parole violation hearings.

In order to make the most appropriate use of jail beds for parole violators, the Department Of Corrections must better assess which offenders truly need to be held in jail pending a parole hearing as opposed to other forms of monitoring or home detention.

Methamphetamine Users

Methamphetamine (meth) use is proving to be a major problem for the Mesa County criminal justice system. It is highly addictive, cheap, and easy to make. The number of users is increasing, and more meth is starting to come in from Mexico. Meth is causing auto theft, auto burglary, purse snatching, and credit card offenses. Meth users can be paranoid, unpredictable, dangerous, and highly addicted. They also present a high failure to appear risk. Meth can erase

the users' capacity to know right from wrong or even care about their children. It causes medical problems, in that it is both an appetite suppressant and a stimulant. Treatment of medical and dental problems pose significant costs to the county when these offenders are incarcerated.

Meth also causes major problems for the dependency system. System actors in Mesa County estimate that 50 percent to 60 percent of all children in foster care are there because of meth use by the parents. Some even estimate 100 percent. As noted above 27 children were taken into state custody in Mesa County in one day due to meth, compared to the prior record for one day of 12. Meth often affects entire families and makes relative placements difficult. Further, children of meth-addicted parents often present significant health problems, and there are few foster parents for special needs children.

The vast majority of meth users are not sociopaths, but rather are people who need help. In order to break the high and low cycle of meth use, they must confront their use of this drug. The primary method of treatment is the Stanford Matrix method, which is a cognitive approach that involves the community and family of the client. It has about a 40 percent success rate. There is a significant need for additional residential meth treatment capacity, both for adults and children, to supplement the twenty-one day inpatient plus outpatient transition program that is presently provided by Colorado West Mental Health.

Typically female meth offenders in jail have been victims of child and/or sexual abuse. They need self esteem, job training, and support rather than jail. Initiating a diversion program through the District Attorney's office is one possible approach to accomplishing this objective.

For parents with children in foster care, there is a need for half-way houses that can provide a continuum of care and supervised visits with children.

Mentally Ill Offenders

Transients and the homeless often have mental health problems. In addition, for the meth user it is often difficult to separate the problems caused by meth from other mental health problems. The Probation Department now has one probation officer designated as a mental health officer.

The major mental health problem for incarcerated offenders is personality disorder. This includes maladaptive behavior patterns that cause people difficulty in relating to others. People with personality disorders cause substantial problems for the jail: they tend to misbehave, but it is hard to identify the personality disorder as the reason for their misbehavior; and once identified they are hard to classify for supervision purposes. The treatment modality is cognitive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are our recommendations for Mesa County to consider as it addresses issues of jail and program expansion. As jail use is a function of the number of people who are in jail and the length of time that they stay there, all of the recommendations have one of two goals: (1) reducing the number of people who are put in jail; or (2) reducing the length of stay of people



who are in jail. We have divided our recommendations into three categories: (1) recommendations for construction of additional facilities by Mesa County; (2) recommendations for procedural changes or changes in staffing within the Mesa County criminal justice system; and (3) recommendations for changes in procedures that will require the approval of the Colorado Department of Corrections. Where possible from the data, we have provided estimates of jail bed savings that could be achieved by implementing a particular recommendation, along with the related cost savings at \$52.40 per jail day.

One caveat with regard to expanded alternatives to incarceration is the possibility of “net widening.” Net widening is defined as imposing sanctions on people who might have had their cases dismissed were the alternatives not available. Net widening could affect jail bed savings. The county should closely monitor which offenders are being sent to each program to determine whether such net widening is occurring.

It is also important to keep in mind that, with the diversion of some offenders to alternative programs, the remaining inmates are likely to be a more difficult group to manage. The county must provide the resources necessary to maintain the high quality of the direct supervision in the Mesa County jail, as managed by the Mesa County Sheriff, including training and staff, in order to assure that the county will be able to manage the remaining inmates in a way that preserves the safety of both staff and inmates.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES

1. Build additional capacity for the work release and community corrections programs. At present there is a waiting list for both programs, and many people on the wait list sit in jail until a space opens. Our data indicate that eliminating the wait list could free up 20 jail beds per year, providing a savings of \$382,520.
2. Build a “workender” program facility. The workender facility could be used for a substantial number of offenders who are presently incarcerated. If the program had a 50-bed capacity, and assuming a saving of one jail bed day for every day in the program, the program would save 100 jail bed days per weekend. If it operated for 48 weekends per year, allowing time off for holidays, the program would yield an annual saving of 4,800 jail bed days, or 13 beds per year, providing a cost saving of \$251,520. The county must monitor this program closely to assure that it is used only for offenders who would have otherwise been sentenced to jail.
3. Build a residential treatment center for male and female methamphetamine offenders. A major focus of such a center should be on the needs of female methamphetamine offenders. Most of the females in the jail are there for problems stemming from methamphetamine use, and many of these female offenders have children who are in foster care. A residential program could not only keep these offenders out of jail but also provide treatment programs to help reduce the time that their children are in foster care. The jail presently estimates that 80 percent of the 53 women in the jail, or 42 inmates have a methamphetamine addiction. While we do not have average length of stay data for the women in the jail, the average length of stay for sentenced felons in 2004 was 37

days. Taking 37 days as the average length of stay for the 42 women with methamphetamine addiction, removing just these women from the jail would yield an annual saving of 1,554 jail bed days, or four jail beds per year, providing a cost saving of \$81,430. In addition, the county would achieve additional savings to the extent that children of these offenders are able to return home more quickly.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MESA COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS AND STAFFING

1. The county must increase the use of electronic monitoring and home detention for both pre- and post-trial offenders. The most expensive home detention is much less expensive than the average \$52.40 that it costs to keep a person in jail for a day. With an average length of stay of 13 days for felony pretrial inmates, every 28 felony pre-trial inmates who are put on Electronic Monitoring would save the county one jail bed per year. Even a target of 60 inmates to start, up from the present ten, would yield a savings of two beds per year, or \$38,252.
2. The county must increase the use of summons in lieu of arrest. The data show that the use of summons in lieu of arrest for felonies is declining, resulting in more offenders being booked in the jail. At the present rate of use of direct file for felony arrests, there will be 100 fewer direct files in 2005 than in 2004. At an average length of stay of 13 days for felony pretrial, just restoring those 100 would lead to an annual saving of 1,300 jail bed days, or about 3.5 jail beds per year, providing a cost saving of \$68,120.
3. Take steps to speed up the felony court process from arraignment to entry of plea. Steps could include (1) developing and institutionalizing a status conference between the District Attorney and public defenders; and (2) not rescheduling cases in which the defendant is ready to enter a plea of guilty. The longest part of the felony criminal process is the time between arraignment and entry of plea. One way to shorten this time is to promote earlier discussions on pleas between the District Attorney and the Public Defender. Further, a major cause of delay is in separating the initial offer of the defendant to plead guilty from the final entry of plea, in which the judge explains to the defendant the consequences of the plea. The judge should enter the plea and advise the defendant of his or her rights at the hearing where the plea is offered. As noted earlier, the 52 felony pretrial inmates who were in jail longer than 90 days used up 7,819 jail bed days and had an average length of stay of 150 days. If the average length of stay of those 52 could be reduced to 90 days, the result would be an annual saving of 3,139 jail bed days, or almost 9 jail beds per year, providing a cost saving of \$164,484.
4. Develop arrest standards for law enforcement. Law enforcement officers need to have clear standards for when to use arrest, summons in lieu of arrest, transport to a detoxification center, and referral to Colorado West for mental health evaluation. This then leads to the following two related recommendations.
 - a. Designate one location as a detoxification facility. Law enforcement officers do not have a viable place to bring intoxicated individuals other than the jail. They



should be encouraged to use intoxilyzer equipment available in locations other than the jail unless they intend to have the person held in jail.

- b. Take arrested individuals with obvious mental health issues directly to Colorado West. Mentally ill individuals pose substantial problems for the jail, and many of them should be in a hospital facility rather than a jail.
5. Use a duty judge system instead of weekend magistrates. The magistrates tend to set higher bonds than the judges do. We recommend getting arrested offenders in front of a judge at the earliest opportunity.
6. Review and revise the bail bond schedule. The bond schedule has not been reviewed in four years. We believe that such a review would lead to downward revisions in some bond amounts.
7. The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County should hire a drug analyst/fingerprint expert. There is excessive delay waiting for fingerprint analyses and drug tests, in particular obtaining the weights of drugs.
8. The City of Grand Junction Municipal Court should hear cases on Friday afternoons and Monday mornings. The municipal court presently holds hearings only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This means that people arrested on weekends for municipal warrant violations will sit in jail at least one extra day waiting for a Tuesday hearing.
9. Stop requiring the jail to “stack” bond, that is, to compute the total bond required for release by adding up the bonds for each charge. The court should just impose the bond required for the most serious offense.
10. Limit requests for pre-sentence investigations to only the minimum number required. The second longest part of the felony criminal process is the time from entry of plea to sentencing. Much of the delay in this part of the process is due to waiting for the pre-sentence investigation report, which takes an average of 60 days to complete.

RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS ACTION

1. Reduce both the number and average length of stay of inmates awaiting transfer to the state penitentiary. This group of inmates had the highest use of jail beds per year of any judicial status. We recognize that Mesa County will need the cooperation of the state Department Of Corrections to address this problem. If the state and county could work to adopt a 180-day maximum stay prior to transfer, in 2004 a total of 58 inmates would have had their length of stay reduced and yielded a saving of 7,020 jail bed days, or 19 jail beds per year. If the state and county could work to adopt a 90-day maximum stay prior to transfer, in 2004 a total of 137 inmates would have had their length of stay reduced and yielded a saving of 16,910 jail bed days, or 46 jail beds per year.

2. Work with the state to implement a video hearing process for parole violators, to allow hearings every week rather than every other week. As discussed earlier, this could provide a savings of five jail beds per year.

CONCLUSION: EFFECTS ON THE JAIL

We recommend that the county not build a new jail pod until the above recommendations have been implemented and evaluated. In particular, we recommend that any construction funds be spent first on: (1) the workender program; (2) a methamphetamine residential treatment program; and (3) an expanded work release and community corrections facility. Based on our present understanding of Mesa County's capability to build, it is likely that building a new jail housing unit would effectively preclude any capacity to build the facilities necessary for these other programs. In addition to the above three building efforts, we recommend that the county give high priority to three other improvement efforts: (1) expanding the use of Electronic Monitoring; (2) expanding the use of direct filing in felony arrests; and (3) implementing felony criminal process improvements to decrease the time from arraignment to entry of plea.

We estimate a total potential jail bed savings of 51 beds from implementing the above six recommendations. In 2005 through the end of August, the daily population of the jail averaged 364 inmates, although the jail has had as many as 390 inmates on a single day. The 51 bed saving would reduce the average daily population to 313. Starting from this figure and assuming that the jail population will grow at the county's projected population growth rate of two percent per year, it would take about three and one-half years for the average daily jail population to reach the rated bed availability of 336 if all six are implemented.

In addition, we strongly advise, that the county work to implement all of the recommendations contained in this report, to provide a cushion of safety in case unforeseen effects arise that reduce the jail bed savings or cause jail bed use to rise faster than we have predicted based on population growth. In particular, we recommend that the county open discussions with the state to expedite movement of inmates to the state penitentiary and to provide faster parole violation hearings. These two improvements could have a dramatic effect on reducing jail use in Mesa County.

In order to implement the recommendations of this report, Mesa County will need to build on its already long-standing collaboration among the courts and all of the agencies and governmental bodies involved with criminal justice in the county. In particular, the leadership and active participation of the Chief Judge of the District Court is essential for the successful implementation of the recommendations in this report. The Chief Judge will need to: (1) develop support among the judges of the District and County Courts, particularly in designing and implementing criminal justice process improvements, and (2) promote the collaboration of all the key actors in the system.

Collaboration requires setting aside individual agendas, group identities and loyalties, and organizational and institutional boundaries. A typical result of collaborative processes is the formation of new partnerships as participants on the team share responsibility, authority, and accountability for creating a shared vision and joint strategies, and ultimately for achieving results. To promote collaboration, we suggest that the county designate a multi-agency criminal



justice improvement team to guide the implementation effort. The team will need a clear mandate and scope of authority, along with adequate resources, including staff and access to information. Given the existing spirit of collaboration in the county, we are confident that such a team will be able to accomplish a great deal.