

Striving to be #1



Marion County jail is first to seek national certification

The Marion County Detention Center could very well “put Kentucky on the map,” according to Kentucky Jailers Association (KJA) President and longtime Shelby County Jailer Bobby Waits. “It could soon become one of the first certified jails in America and the only certified jail in the state.”

Marion County Jailer Barry Brady is mindful of the national stage he is placing his jail on as he pursues certification by the American Correctional Association (ACA). But Brady said he felt it was the next logical step to receive formal acknowledgement of the quality of the facility and its staff.

Last year, the ACA approved the Core Jail Standards, which are critical levels of attainment for jail commanders to work toward to become certified. Brady and his staff strive to meet these standards and go “above and beyond” the state requirements. “We strive to do the right thing so we can reduce our liability issues without sacrificing the needs of the inmates or the professionalism of our staff,” said Brady.

“There are three things you don’t ever compromise: staff, staff training and life safety issues,” added the jailer.

Working to achieve ACA certification is a long, strict process, according to KJA President Waits. “This is a big undertaking,” he said, explaining that it is a year-long process where jails must show that they have met standards each and every day. “It’s important to bring all your staff on board, because every day things must be documented. You have to prove yourself over a year’s time.”

Several jails through the U.S. are actively working toward meeting the Core Jail Standards, although few with the commitment of Jailer Brady. He began his career in corrections in 1986 as a correctional officer with U.S. Corrections, and then moved around the country in various positions with the Corrections Corporation of America. In 2002, upon Brady’s return to Marion County, he ran for, and won, the office of jailer.

Brady said when he was elected jailer, the Marion County facility was operating at a significant deficit, staff received only minimal training, and there were virtually no programs for offenders.

Fast forward eight years and the Marion County Detention Center is a model of efficiency. The facility has a capacity of 297 inmates, and stays full most of the time, holding local inmates, state offenders and federal detainees. It is a clean, secure, well-operated facility where jail officers receive training at a newly dedicated state-of-the-art training facility on the jail campus. For inmates, there are several self-help programs, parenting classes, religious programs, work release and in-house work programs.

Equipment is updated annually. In recent years, a van sally port was built and a second security fence installed. Also, \$100,000 worth of cameras were added throughout the jail for “added protection for prisoners and staff, and so that we can better hold ourselves accountable,” said Brady.

Jail standards mandate that all prisoners be



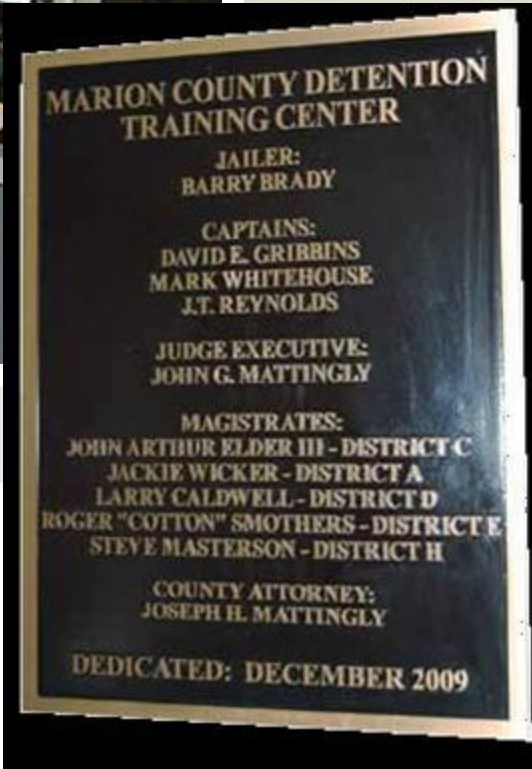
Marion County jailer earns national certification

Marion County Jailer Barry Brady received the national designation of Certified Jail Manager through the Jail Manager Certification Commission (JMCC), by authority of the American Jail Association (AJA). Brady is one of 366 jail professionals nationwide to have achieved this recognition – and the only Kentucky jailer.

This certification was achieved through successful completion of a rigid background application and written examination prepared by the JMCC and AJA.

Although not a requirement for Kentucky jailers, Brady said the certification is a “personal achievement... something I wanted to accomplish for myself.” Certification documents knowledge, growth and continuing education in the field of jail management.

Brady has been in the corrections industry for the past 24 years. He was elected Marion County jailer in 2002.



allowed out of their cells one hour a day for recreation, according to Brady. However, inclement weather often dictates when and where the inmates go for recreation. Brady is currently investigating purchasing a retractable roof system for inmate recreation using inmate commissary funds as the funding source. A retractable roof would provide access to more recreational square footage year-round, Brady said, and recreation “helps lower the stress of prisoners and staff.”

Brady said they are exploring the creation of some sort of local correctional industry, providing “green collar jobs” for inmates, something that “fits” with the community and with the jail.

“We want to be innovative and work on continuing improvement and continuing communication,” added Brady.

At a ceremony marking the Marion County Fiscal Court signing the contract with ACA to kick off the certification process, Judge/Executive John G. Mattingly said, “We think we have the best jailer and jail staff in Kentucky. Certification will prove that.”

Setting an example

KJA President Waits said he believes there are other Kentucky jails that are interested in seeking ACA certification. In fact, a workshop on ‘Standards, Accreditation and Professional Development’ and sessions on Kentucky jail standards were offered at the annual KJA conference June 21-24 in Louisville.

Waits said he told Brady, “Hopefully you’ve started something that other will want to follow suit on. The certification process is a long one, but there are many benefits, including legal issues.”

“We have good jails and good jailers in this state,” said Brady. “We must join together to continue to push for professionalism in this job.”