

2015 Jail Best Practices Award Official Entry Form


This form must be attached to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at <http://www.pacounties.org/ProgramsServices/Pages/CriminalJusticeSystemBestPractices.aspx>

County Name POTTER County Class 8TH
Address 1 N. MAIN ST. City COUDERSPORT Zip 16915
Contact Name PAUL W. HEIMEL Title COMMISSIONER
Department COMMISSIONERS Phone (814) 274-8290 EXT 203
Fax () _____ E-mail pheimel@pottercountypa.net

Project Information

Title CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESTRUCTURING Start Date SEPTEMBER 2013
"IF IT'S BROKE, FIX IT!"

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:



Chair of the Board of County Commissioners



County Chief Executive Officer

Chair of the county Prison Board

Program Narrative

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that answers the following questions in the order presented. This must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.

- **Need:** a description of the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort
- **Program/policies:** a description of how the project enhanced general operations programs/policies, treatment, and custody
- **Approach:** a description of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to jail diversion, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county-wide planning strategies, etc.
- **Evaluation:** a brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned
- **Stakeholders:** a brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project
- **Processes:** a description of how the activities or processes utilized in this project were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources
- **Costs:** a description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program

Scoring will be based on the elements as described above.

Please attach supporting documents, forms or other information that support the award entry. **Entries must be received by close of business on February 13, 2015.** Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 22 - 24 2015. More information: Brinda Carroll Penyak, bpenyak@pacounties.org or (717) 526-1010.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMS

February 12, 2015

Brenda Carroll Penyak
Attn: Best Practices Award
P.O. Box 60769
Harrisburg, PA 17106

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Potter County Criminal Justice System to recognize their efforts in the development of their DUI Specialty Court. I believe that the creation of the DUI Specialty Court has provided Potter County with a diversion program for a specific population as well as to help in the reduction of their jail population. Potter County implemented their DUI Specialty Court in September of 2013 and since their start they have successfully graduated 5 participants. Potter County is the first county in north central Pennsylvania to start a DUI Specialty Court.

An important aspect of their court is encouraging collaboration between county departments which is being successfully accomplished. The Potter County Single County Authority is part of the DUI Specialty Court's Treatment Team to insure that all participants are receiving the recommended level of care. In addition to treatment services, recovery support services are also being utilized by the participants. I commend Potter County for their efforts to help individuals within the criminal justice system to return recovering individuals to the community with an improved quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary Tennis".

Gary Tennis

'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'



Potter County Criminal Justice System Restructuring

- ♦ DUI/Drug Treatment Court
- ♦ Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center
- ♦ Community Re-Entry Initiative



Potter County, Pa.



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 1 -- NEED:



Upwards of 85 percent of the defendants coming into contact with the criminal justice system in Potter County suffer from addiction to -- or strong dependence on -- alcohol and/or other drugs. Many have little structure in their lives, inadequate family/social support, poor life skills, limited education and employability, and little accountability, all of which greatly enhances the likelihood of re-offending.

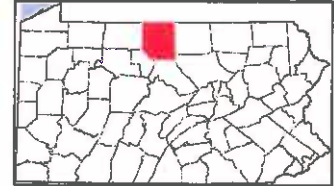
The court system and jail operation have historically not been equipped to separate out from the rest of the jail population those inmates who might be able to change their behavior through focused support activities. For example, very limited services -- in compliance with all applicable laws, but far from comprehensive -- have been available for those with mental health and/or addiction issues.

Potter County marshaled multiple resources for a concerted effort to establish alternative programs geared toward reducing recidivism and providing inmates with some of the tools and services they will likely need to allow for a smooth transition back into society.

This multi-faceted approach was initiated by the Potter County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB). The CJAB was formally organized in 2009, in cooperation with the Pa. Commission on Crime and Delinquency, with a vision to:

- Make the community safer;
- Reduce crime and jail recidivism;
- Pursue initiatives to control expenses without adversely affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the county's criminal justice agencies.

Potter County is located in northcentral Pennsylvania, along the New York border. It's a very rural county with a population of approximately 17,000 and a population density of just 16.1 per square mile. Median household income is \$40,970, which is \$11,300 less than the statewide average. Potter County poverty levels and unemployment rates are among the highest in the state.



An increasing number of women in Potter County are facing criminal charges. Drug-related arrests involving women more than doubled between 2012 and 2013. DUI arrests of women reached an all-time high in 2012-13. Arrest rates have also risen for men charged with drug crimes and/or DUI.

The number of repeat offenders, both men and women, for drug and/or alcohol cases has also been at a record high. Between September 2011 and September 2013, some 25 percent of the drug and alcohol cases heard in Potter County Court involved repeat criminals.



Potter County's CJAB hosted a visit by Dr. Michael T. Flaherty, founder of the Institute for Research, Education, and Training in the Addictions, to craft the county's multi-phased criminal justice system restructuring.



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 2 -- PROGRAMS/POLICIES:

A multi-faceted plan to achieve Potter County's identified objectives included three primary elements:

- 1.) A Specialty Court system implemented in increments;
- 2.) Establishment of a prototype Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center;
- 3.) A complementary Community Re-Entry Initiative to address the issues of male inmates.

During the transition to this new approach to criminal justice issues, Potter County has been able to pinpoint numerous gaps in service coordination and communication. These have incrementally been bridged, resulting in improved delivery of services and greater efficiencies of service.

The revitalized Potter County Criminal Justice Advisory Board, evolving in close consultation with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, has continued to oversee the comprehensive restructuring of criminal justice priorities and processes in Potter County. By coordinating these programs and policy changes through CJAB, each element of the criminal justice system is actively engaged.

Mission of the 55th Judicial District DUI Treatment/Drug Treatment Court is to reduce recidivism by facilitating treatment and increased supervision of moderate to severe alcohol/substance users, as opposed to merely incarcerating them. The goal is to return to the community recovering and sober individuals who are better equipped to maintain their recovery. The highly structured program combines alcohol/substance abuse rehabilitation and supportive services through court supervision.



Similar objectives are at the foundation of the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center and the Community Re-Entry Initiative. Each of the elements in this restructuring of Potter County's criminal justice system requires coordination and management, based on the defendant's individual circumstances. The result is a greater likelihood that participants will remain drug-free; avoid further contacts with the criminal justice system; pursue employment and educational opportunities; improve family and social relationships, and become productive members of society.



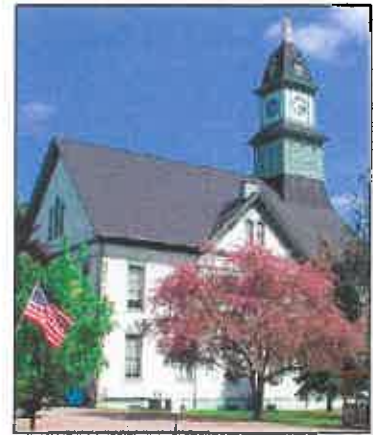
Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 3 -- APPROACH:

Part 1: Specialty Courts

Potter County's CJAB in 2013 established a Steering Committee to lay the groundwork for Specialty Courts. Members appointed to the committee included:

- President Judge and a Senior Judge from the 55th Pennsylvania Judicial District
- Potter County Chief Probation Officer
- Potter County District Attorney
- Potter County Public Defender
- Single-County Authority (SCA) Administrator and SCA Case Manager (Drug/Alcohol Services)
- Potter County Board of Commissioners
- Potter County Jail Warden/Sheriff
- Pennsylvania State Police
- Drug and alcohol treatment specialists
- Representatives of Alcoholics Anonymous
- Potter County Ministerial Association.



It became readily apparent that the challenges would be formidable. Few rural judicial districts in the U.S. and none in Pennsylvania -- had pursued Specialty Courts. Through research, field trips, personal visits and detailed research, the committee drafted a strategy calling for an incremental approach with a flexible timetable that would allow time for analysis and adjustments as needed. First step would be a DUI Treatment Court, followed in sequence by a Drug Treatment Court, a Mental Health Court and a Veterans Court.

Research into Specialty Courts in other jurisdictions demonstrated that there was great potential for a considerable return on investment from this new approach, meeting all three of the objectives identified in the formation of Potter County's CJAB. These conclusions were reinforced when the Potter County DUI Treatment Team attended the National Center for DWI Court's Professional DWI Court Planning Training Course at Holland, Mich., in August 2013.



With a small county population (17,000) and very limited resources, Potter County CJAB in partnership with the Potter County Board of Commissioners applied to PennDOT for start-up funding and was awarded a grant to support the establishment of a DUI Treatment Court. This first phase took effect in September 2013. PennDOT funding restricted the Specialty Court program to defendants facing alcohol/drug-related DUI charges. As the DUI Treatment Court was evolving, the CJAB Steering Committee began laying the groundwork for Phase 2. Start-up funding has since been received from the

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency through the Intermediate Punishment program for the start-up of the Drug Treatment Court. Adjustments are being implemented in the Probation Department and other agencies. The Potter County Drug Treatment Court is expected to debut by the end of the first quarter of 2015, at which time the research into establishment of a Mental Health Treatment Court will commence.

Part 2: Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center

A second element of Potter County's criminal justice restructuring was the establishment of a Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center for female inmates who would benefit from a structured program and individualized services.

This also began with extensive research. The CJAB was eager to discover best practices as well as potential red flags. In reaching out for examples through many resources (including CCAP and national criminal justice organizations), Potter County was surprised to learn that there were few prototypes for a comprehensive gender-specific rehabilitation center addressing the individual issues of adult women facing criminal charges for non-violent offenses.



The Potter County Jail is not equipped or staffed to handle female inmates. Women, which are the fastest-growing segment of the county's criminal justice system, are transported to other county jails at considerable expense. None of these holding centers is equipped to adequately address the women's needs for treatment of addiction and/or mental health issues. Visitation with spouses, children and other family members is difficult due to distance. Few services are available to assist women inmates with their transition back to society.

A decades-old former orphanage in Potter County had sat idle for several years. In keeping with their charter, directors of the non-profit organization were sincerely committed to supporting initiatives that would benefit the community while meeting the needs of those who were troubled and/or vulnerable. The Potter County Board of Commissioners and County Department of Human Services Administrator began discussions with the management of the Northern Tier Children's Home about the potential to launch the Potter County Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center in the former orphanage. In 2014, the parties reached an agreement in principal and the County Commissioners formally approved the plan by unanimous vote. Staffing is in place, an open house has been held, and the doors will open in late February 2015 with approximately half of Potter County's female inmate population being relocated to the center.

Potter County Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center serves as a post-plea program and an alternative to incarceration for women convicted of non-violent and/or substance abuse offenses. This center provides treatment, education, intensive probation supervision and accountability for residents. Treatment utilizes the Recovery Oriented Systems of Care to address drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues in order to reduce the likelihood of further offenses. Treating the addiction utilizing evidence-based and promising practices helps individuals to improve health, family relationships, and employability. Participants are eligible to apply for Medical Assistance benefits to help cover their physical and behavioral health care expenses.

Part 3: Community Re-Entry Initiative at Potter County Jail (men)



The third and final element of Potter County's criminal justice restructuring was a complement to the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center, with a specific focus on services for men. It began with the appointment of a Community Re-Entry Subcommittee by the CJAB. The group held its inaugural meeting in 2014 and laid the groundwork for a comprehensive Community Re-Entry Initiative geared toward reducing recidivism through enhancing current services and creating additional services for incarcerated men.

Current resources available in the county jail are: initial assessments, mental health counseling, crisis services, drug and alcohol assessments, drug and alcohol therapy, certified recovery specialist services, Alcoholics Anonymous, Inside-Out Dad (parenting skills program), GED services, pastoral care/prison ministry (voluntary), basic medical care and psychotropic medications as needed.



The Community Re-entry Initiative committee members are working on development of targeted resources to assist inmates who are scheduled for release within 30 days. Members identified the need for one-on-one meetings with each inmate for individualized attention to each man's issues and needs. A certified recovery specialist will meet with inmates who struggle with addiction. A mental health case manager will meet with those who would benefit from that service. All inmates will meet with Potter County's housing specialist. Another project of the Community Re-Entry Initiative committee is assembly of a comprehensive folder containing information on resources available to inmates who are returning to society. The packet will be presented to the inmates and thoroughly reviewed during the one-on-one pre-release meetings with the specialists.



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 4 -- EVALUATION:

It is premature to evaluate the effectiveness the Drug Treatment Court or Mental Health Treatment Court, as well as the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center or the Community Re-Entry Initiative. However, the results of the Potter County DUI Court can be fully quantified and all partners who are involved in the project are encouraged. These results have created greater enthusiasm for the subsequent restructuring of Potter County's criminal justice system.



Approximately 20 percent of the criminal defendants facing jail time were deemed eligible for the DUI Treatment Court, based on criteria established by the PennDOT grant and the Steering Committee. The results are contained in the Potter County Criminal Justice Advisory Board's annual report for October 2013 through October 2014.

Potter County CJAB Annual Report October 2013-October 2014

The Potter County CJAB held meetings on the following dates:

- October 1, 2013
- January 24, 2014
- April 24, 2014
- July 31, 2014

Current membership is 36 with two new members being added during the past year. Priority issues as identified in the strategic plan are:

- Drug Abuse
- Mental Health
- Recidivism

Progress towards Goals, Objectives and Action Plans:

1. Increase CJAB member participation at meetings:

- October 1, 2013 – 12 in attendance
- January 24, 2014 – 18 in attendance
- April 24, 2014 – 19 in attendance
- July 31, 2014 – 17 in attendance

2. Institute Drug and Alcohol Courts in Potter County:

- DUI Treatment Court was instituted on September 24, 2013:

As of 9/24/14 there were nine active participants in the DUI Court Program: one in Phase 1; four in Phase 2; and four in Phase 3. Five participants have successfully graduated from the program.

For the period 9/24/2013 – 9/23/2014:

- 2,849 jail days have been saved
- 1,885 hours of community service completed which equals \$15,076
- 8,569 Substance Abuse Tests given (UA, SCRAM, Alcohol Breath tests); of these, 8,563 were negative and 6 were positive

- 529 Scheduled Contacts made
- 71 Field Home Contacts made
- 21 Unscheduled Contacts made
- 939 Twelve step meetings attended
- 239 Treatment Sessions
- 2,104 Sobriety days
- 55 Incentives earned – 53 for 100% club, one for two years sober and one for strong start in program
- 24 Sanctions – nine jail time, three increased community service, six essays, three phase demotions, one self-help groups increased, one alcohol testing increased and one curfew imposed

Of the 12 individuals placed in the program, one defendant has violated sentence and has been dismissed from the program. All participants are active in the PCPC recommended levels of care specific to their phase of the program.

3. **Address the prison overcrowding issue by referring more eligible criminal cases and incarcerated persons to treatment courts, the work release program, alternative sentencing to incarceration and the Day Reporting Center.**
 - DUI Treatment Court was started on Sept. 24, 2013 and a Drug Treatment Court and a Women's Residential Rehabilitation Program will begin in 2015.
4. **Investigate the possibility of more early education programs to identify and address the rise in juvenile anti-social behavior and criminal activity.**
 - Potter County Human Services is working to begin Parent/Child Interaction Therapy at both the Potter County Jail and the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center.
 - Inside-Out Dad was implemented in the jail in 2014.
5. **Investigate the options and opportunities for transitional/half-way housing for offenders along with an increased focus on skills training and employment needs.**
 - Oxford House opened in July 2014 in Coudersport.
 - Potter County hired a Certified Recovery Specialist in May 2014 to provide recovery services to clients with substance abuse.
 - Potter County Mental Health provided CJAB members with an updated, comprehensive Potter County Housing Brochure.
6. **Increase Community Services Program participation for offenders and their families.**
 - Potter County Probation has increased the community service program placements by 20 over the past two years. Potter County Probation currently has more than 200 different placements options for offenders to complete their community service hours. In 2013, 173 offenders completed 5,899 hours of community service.

7. **Increase the referrals of eligible offenders to the Potter County DUI Treatment Court and Drug Treatment Court and provide alternative sentencing to incarceration.**
 - Potter County's Intermediate Punishment Plan was approved by PCCD in 2014.
 - Potter County has approved the opening a Women's Residential Rehabilitation Program.
 - Potter County is working toward starting a Drug Treatment Court.

8. **Investigate the feasibility of starting Mental Health and Veterans Treatment Courts in the future.**
 - No action taken during the past year.

9. **Evaluate a training program or session on understanding, cooperation and communication among all the criminal justice agencies and offices in the county.**
 - A two-hour training was held in May 2014, titled, "Evidence-Based Practices in the Criminal Justice System." There were 40 people in attendance.
 - Potter County has started initial conversations with the national Smart Justice initiative, working with the National Association of Counties and other partners.
 - Potter County has started conversations with PCCD concerning Cross-System Mapping and Re-Entry Planning.
 - A Community Re-Entry Subcommittee was formed and held an organizational meeting, resulting in the beginning of the Community Re-Entry Initiative at the Potter County Jail.

Another evaluation tool comes through quarterly reporting to PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. PennDOT is provided with all data from the DUI Court and CJAB operations. PCCD requires a tracking of individuals who are Level 3 or 4 offenders and are subject to an Intermediate Punishment sentence.



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 5 – STAKEHOLDERS:

A revitalized Criminal Justice Advisory Board has been the key element in the restructuring of Potter County's criminal justice procedures. The following is a list of full current membership of the Potter County CJAB.

1. Doug Morley, Chairman, Potter County Commissioners
2. Paul Heimel, Potter County Commissioner, CJAB Vice-Chairman
3. Susan Kefover, Potter County Commissioner
4. Honorable Stephen P.B. Minor, President Judge, CJAB Chairman
5. Honorable John B. Leete, Senior Judge
6. District Attorney Andy Watson
7. Brent Petrosky, Potter County Public Defender
8. John Moshier, Chief of Potter County Probation
9. Honorable Annette Easton, District Judge, Coudersport
10. Honorable Kari McCleaff, District Judge, Shinglehouse
11. Honorable Delores Weiss, District Judge, Galetton
12. Chief Chris Brackman, Galetton Police
13. Chief Brad Buchholtz, Shinglehouse Police
14. Chief Lee Gross, Coudersport Police
15. Chief Brian Phelps, Sweden Township Police
16. Potter County Sheriff/Jail Warden Ken Sauley
17. Angie Milford, Deputy Warden Potter County Jail
18. Kathy Schroeder, Clerk of Courts and Prothonotary of Potter County
19. Corporal Michael Murray, Pennsylvania State Police
20. Trooper Michael Delp, Pennsylvania State Police
21. Anita Mead, Victim Impact Coordinator
22. Jim Kockler, Administrator, Potter County Human Services
23. Melissa Gee, Potter County Human Services/Mental Health
24. Colleen Wilber, SCA Director, CJAB Facilitator
25. Steve Symans, Director of Potter/Elk Crisis Services
26. Jack Goga, Dickinson Center Inc. (mental health services)
27. Nancy Hurt, Domestic Relations Director
28. Crystal Thomas, SCA Drug & Alcohol Case Manager
29. Scott Graham, Superintendent, Northern Potter School District
30. Frank McClard, Superintendent, Oswayo Valley School District
31. Alanna Huck, Superintendent, Coudersport School District
32. Arnie Haskins, Licensed Social Worker
33. Terry Cole, Pennsylvania CareerLink
34. Bob Veilleux, Potter County Education Council/Grant Consultant
35. John Wright, Potter County Housing Authority
36. Reverend James Campbell, Coudersport Area Ministerial Association



Numerous partners have been brought into the planning process and implementation of the three initiatives being pursued by the CJAB for restructuring of Potter County's criminal justice system.



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 6 -- PROCESSES:

The Potter County DUI Court started in September 2013. It continues to evolve. Improvements are implemented through a comprehensive approach, including quarterly administrative meetings during which the DUI Court Treatment Team meets to review policies/procedures, funding, sustainability, data and evaluation/results, and other topics.

Potter County DUI Court in 2014 applied for accreditation by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in order to insure the court is adhering to the National Center for DUI Courts Ten Guiding Principles. The accreditation process was another opportunity to evaluate the court and pinpoint areas for potential improvements.

The Potter County DUI Court Treatment Team evaluates its effectiveness through feedback from defendants themselves. Below is an example of 2014 participants' feedback:

1. **Please describe how you feel that the DUI Treatment Court has benefited you?**

- a. I have now been sober over four months. I have a lot of new responsibilities with this program. I am well focused. I have a job and my family is very good to me. The counseling has been very, very good, both through Drug and Alcohol and Probation. It has kept me out of state prison and given me a chance to get my life back.
- b. Very grateful that I can do this. I know now that I couldn't do this on my own. I feel like a new person and I love it. Thank you.
- c. It improved my health. It has straightened my way of life out and I hope it will keep on.
- d. The DUI Court has helped me to stay clean. I am so grateful to the court.
- e. It has helped me stay away from alcohol and given me a positive attitude.

2. **When attending court; how do you feel the court is run. List any suggestions or changes you believe should be considered.**

- a. The court is very thorough. The judge takes full control and then makes the clients produce feedback. Probation is right there to follow up. It is a tough treatment but can be successfully done. The requirements are good.
- b. I believe you're doing a fine job.
- c. I like it just the way it is -- no changes needed.
- d. The court is run very well. Everyone definitely knows what they are doing.
- e. I feel the court is run good. I just wish it was later in the day so I did not have to miss work.

3. **What do you dislike about the program and what improvements could be made?**

- a. Because we have no drivers' licenses, it's hard to get to court dates or appointments. That is incredibly tough. Investigate possible remedies for that. Possible work license or something along that line.
 - b. I have to miss too much work time from work -- at least 4-6 hours a week if not more. Don't know what I am going to do when I get fired.
 - c. None.
 - d. My only dislike is not having a driver's license. It is very hard to depend on other people to drive me where I need to go. I do realize though the court cannot do anything about the driver's license.
 - e. None.
-

4. What do you like about the program?

- a. Everyone and I mean everyone I feel is trying to help me. A handshake from the judge himself is incredibly motivating. The District Attorney, as well. Everyone cares which is very, very important.
 - b. My freedom. I don't feel that I was just tossed aside for a stupid mistake. Very thankful that you're trying to help us and others we could easily have harmed.
 - c. Everything, because it makes you stop and think before you do something. It also gets you out and makes you do something so you don't have time to think about drinking or doing drugs.
 - d. The opportunity to hang with people going through the same things as I am.
 - e. Everybody is positive and they all keep your spirits up.
-

5. Do you have feedback/suggestions for the DUI Probation Officer/DUI Coordinator?

- a. If someone slips, it doesn't automatically mean he's out of the program. Penalties are fair so far and I think are needed. Keep asking the questions.
 - b. Possibly hold our own meeting and discuss how we could improve or help future programs. Maybe even have these on our own (without missing more work, of course).
 - c. I think maybe they should make more home visits, especially for those who seem to respect the system.
 - d. All I can say is she is great. Very helpful and willing to listen if there is a problem.
 - e. Later hours to help out with my work schedule would be appreciated.
-

6. Do you have feedback/suggestions for the Judge and/or the DUI Treatment Team?

- a. Excellent job by the judge (both of them). They really do care and that just might save people's lives. The team seems to have it all together. Keep sharing information.
 - b. No I don't. You're doing a fine job. Maybe an easier way to take these urine screenings twice a week. It's a little much for someone who works and doesn't use or doesn't have a history of using.
 - c. Judge – just keep on doing what you are doing. Treatment Team – maybe you could meet once a month after court to see how things are going.
 - d. Once again, the judge and DUI Treatment team are great.
 - e. No.
-

7. Any additional comments?

- a. I think after six months or so you might drop two urine tests a week to maybe one random test at your request. You have people all over the place who should inform the team if any games are going on.
 - b. Nothing other than thank you for letting me find a new and rewarding life. It gets better with every moment.
 - c. I think everyone involved in this is doing a fine job.
 - d. I feel they can't do anything different because they are doing things great!
 - e. No.
-



Potter County Criminal Justice: 'If It's Broke, FIX IT!'

Category 7 – COSTS:

In establishing the three elements incorporated in the criminal justice system restructuring, Potter County officials were well aware of the fact that a traditional cost/benefit analysis would not apply -- it's impossible to measure the economic impact of "an ounce of prevention."



A portion of the return on investment can be quantified in terms of jail days prevented and community service hours in the field (*see Category 4/Evaluation*). Savings will also be measured to some extent by cost-avoidance. For instance, by having female offenders ordered to the county-operated Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center, rather than serving their time in distant jails, the county saves a daily cost of roughly \$75 per inmate (travel and medical care not included).

Less measurable is an even more significant benefit -- the impact of criminal defendants becoming responsible citizens, contributing to their families and communities, and avoiding criminal activity. In the case of the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center, about a dozen jobs are being created and a dormant facility is being revitalized, which will directly benefit the village of Harrison Valley and surrounding communities.

All of the work put into the restructuring of Potter County's criminal justice system has also brought together many agencies and individuals to strengthen partnerships and open the door for future initiatives and coordinated efforts that can improve services and make maximum use of limited financial resources, while pursuing new funding streams.

Piecing It Together



Securing the PennDOT grant was the impetus for moving the DUI Treatment Court from the drawing board to the courtroom. An immediate expense was the addition of a staff position – DUI Court Coordinator – to the Potter County Probation Department. It was funded largely by the PennDOT grants of \$74,000 in 2013, \$74,000 in 2014 and \$50,000 in 2015. (An initial \$30,000 PennDOT grant covered the Treatment Team's training and other preparatory and start-up expenses).

The county is now working on securing funding through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency in the form of an Intermediate Punishment Grant. Previous PCCD Intermediate Punishment grants (\$9,509 in 2013 and \$29,670 in 2014) were used largely for alcohol and drug testing supplies, as well as outpatient treatment and certified recovery support services for the DUI court. County funds have been committed by the Board of Commissioners to allow the hiring of a new probation officer to supervise many aspects of the Drug Treatment Court as well as intensive probation cases.

Numerous funding sources were secured to support the second element of the county's criminal justice restructuring – the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center. A major element fell into place when PCCD approved the county's application for a JAG Grant in the amount of \$150,000. Potter County's proposal to support certain services at the center through a \$104,000 carve-out from the county's Human Services Block Grant for fiscal 2014-15 was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Due to the nature of the services provided there, most of the defendants held at the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center will qualify for Medical Assistance, which will largely cover their physical health and behavioral health services. These would otherwise be very costly to the county, particularly with women requiring surgery, pregnancy services and certain medications.

Future funding sources are being pursued. In the case of the Specialty Courts, accreditation by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court will likely open the door to other potential financial support. Additionally, the county will assess a

program fee to Drug Treatment Court participants. A \$500 fee in place for each defendant entering the DUI Treatment Court has generated approximately \$7,500 entering 2015, which will be used as needed for sustainability of the program. A similar participation fee for residents of the Women's Residential Treatment Center is also being discussed to help offset costs.

Potter County leaders will also approach Commissioners and Prison Boards from other counties in the region to offer the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center as an option for their criminal justice systems. Early discussions have gone well. Some of the nearby counties are facing jail overcrowding and an adjacent county (Cameron) already sends all of its female inmates to out-of-county jails. The Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center has capacity to expand from the current anticipated occupancy of roughly 16 residents to as many as 45. This would have a ripple effect of exposing out-of-county inmates to expanded services that are not available to them in their home jails.

Please see Appendix for a sampling of media coverage focused on the criminal justice restructuring initiatives in Potter County.



Local program national model

'Specialty Court' recognizes first 'graduates'

A national organization that supports innovative criminal justice programs has recognized Potter County's "specialty court" program dealing with lawbreakers who suffer from addiction and/or mental health disorders.

All Rise, a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, cited Potter County's program as a model for others.

The first three defendants to successfully meet all requirements of the program were honored last month in a ceremony attended by family members, court officers and invited guests.

Each completed requirements of a rigid, closely supervised DUI Court. About 10 others are progressing through phases that lead to the formal graduation.

Senior Judge John Leete presides over the court. Each defendant was facing incarceration for a crime related to alcohol abuse. All three stayed sober, connected with family and community support resources, and took other steps to get their lives in order. They'll remain subject to probationary supervision.

President Judge Stephen Minor presented a detailed overview, citing the positive impact the specialty court movement is already having on individual lives, public safety and the county's bottom line for criminal justice expenses.

"It's definitely not for everybody," Judge Minor emphasized. "It's a very selective and very intensive program. Most of these men and women have been stuck

in a revolving door between freedom and incarceration, and we're hoping to stop that cycle."

Specialty courts are growing across the country. Potter is the first county in north-central Pennsylvania – and one of the few rural counties nationwide – to embark on that path.

Judge Minor said national studies show that 80 percent of defendants with addiction or behavioral disorders who go through the traditional criminal justice system end up back in jail, compared to just over 20 percent of those whose cases are handled through specialty courts.

In the first year the DUI Court has been in operation, there were 2,850 jail days

MODEL

avoided, Minor reported. Some of those were female inmates who would have been sent to Smethport, Lock Haven or another jail at a fee to the county of \$60 or more per day.

About a dozen offenders involved in the specialty courts so far have devoted 1,880 hours to community service.

Potter County is approaching the specialty court initiative incrementally, Judge Minor told *Endeavor News*.

DUI Court is the first step and officials hope to begin the next phase, Drug Court, in the near future. Eventually, a Mental Health Court could be added.

See MODEL | Pg. 3



A team of drug/alcohol treatment specialists, law enforcement officials and others implemented Potter County's DUI Court. Those selected must participate in the "12-step" sobriety program, undergo intensive counseling, work community service hours, meet with a judge at least twice monthly, and make a concerted effort to find employment and expand their education. Among team members (from left) are Colleen Wilber, Potter County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Agency; Darlene Manning, treatment specialist; Public Defender Brent Petrosky; District Attorney Andy Watson; Judge Stephen Minor; Senior Judge John Leete; Laurie Harrier, Potter County Probation; Chief Probation Officer John Moshier; and Crystal Thomas, Potter County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Agency.

Verdict is in: Potter County's DUI specialty court making large impact

By ALEX DAVIS
Era Reporter
a.davis@bradfordera.com

A Potter County court program is helping to free individuals from alcohol addiction and make the roads safer at the same time.

It's all part of the county's rigorous DUI specialty court, which county Senior Judge John Leete calls lifechanging for the participants. Completing the program means individuals have remained sober, connected with family and community support resources and pursued other ways to straighten out their lives.

And, recently, two more defendants have made their way through program that launched in 2013. In the first year of the program, five people completed the requirements of the specialty court. Ceremonies are held for graduates, which includes family members, court officers and guests.

Also, more than 3,000 jail days have been prevented, and more than a dozen offenders involved in the court have put in 2,000 hours to community service.

In the long run, the specialist court is expected to make people sober, ensure

highways are safer and reduce jail and prison populations, Leete said.

"I have yet to find a downside," he said.

A team of drug/alcohol treatment specialists, law enforcement officials and experts in related fields choose who is accepted into the program. Defendants charged with violent crimes and certain other offenses do not qualify.

Those deemed eligible must take part in a "12-step" sobriety program often associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, undergo intensive counseling, work community service hours, meet with Leete or President Judge Stephen Minor at least twice monthly and do their best to find employment and expand their education.

Individuals must also meet regularly with Laurie Harrier, who manages the compliance and counseling elements for the Potter County Probation Department.

In addition, an ankle bracelet that detects consumption of alcohol must be worn, and defendants undergo several substance abuse tests each month. Penalties are in place and strictly enforced for violation of any provision, according to Potter County Today. Defendants are subject to having their cases referred back to the

traditional court system.

The individual will remain on probationary supervision after graduating from the court.

"It's part of a long-term commitment by county officials to a new style of dealing with lawbreakers who suffer from addiction and/or mental health disorders," reads a statement from Potter County Today.

When an alcoholic gets out of jail, that individual remains an alcoholic who has just served time, Leete said. The DUI specialty court provides an alternative.

A \$70,000 state Department of Transportation grant covers much of the costs for the special court over the first three years.

In his 27 years as a judge, Leete indicated that the DUI specialty court is one of his most rewarding tasks.

"It's really a good thing. It's not a perfect thing, but it's a good thing," he said.

Potter County Commissioner Paul Heimeel agreed.

"I believe Potter County has approached the specialty court project cautiously and methodically," Heimeel said. "It is gratifying to see people turning their lives around and becoming productive citizens."

(COURT, Page 10)

Court

There is a ripple effect to that.

"From a dollars and cents standpoint, it is difficult to measure the impact of the program because you can't quantify the prevention aspect," he continued. "But, we know it is there. Our two judges and others who are involved in the court system and the Human Services Department are very dedicated to this innovative program."

Potter County officials are also planning launching drug court, similar to the DUI court structure.

Specialty courts are on the rise across the United States as well.

"National studies show that 80 percent of defendants with addiction or behavioral disorders who go through the traditional criminal justice system end up back in jail, compared to just over 20 percent of those whose cases are handled through specialty courts," according to a statement from Potter County Today.

Two more complete new 'specialty court' requirements

Two more defendants who have successfully met all requirements of Potter County's new "specialty court" system formally completed the program in a ceremony attended by family members, court officers and invited guests.

Both of the defendants, Leo and Ernie, expressed their appreciation to the county's treatment team and reaffirmed their commitment to continue in their recovery. They will remain under probationary supervision for several months.

It's part of a long-term commitment by county officials to a new style of dealing with lawbreakers who suffer from addiction and/or mental health disorders.

A highlight of the ceremony was testimony from a Lewisburg man who was among the first graduates of a similar treatment court in Union County.

He spoke of his emergence from the dependency of addiction and irresponsible living to his current lifestyle, which includes sobriety and counseling young adults with active addictions.

The two local defendants completed requirements of the specialty courts' first phase — a rigid, closely supervised DUI Court. Plans are also in the works to begin a Drug Court, which is somewhat similar to the DUI Court structure.

Senior Judge John Leete presides

SPECIALTY COURT

treatment specialists, law enforcement officials and experts in related fields determines who is accepted. Defendants charged with violent crimes and certain other offenses aren't eligible.

Those selected must participate in the "12-step" sobriety program often associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, undergo intensive counseling, work community service hours, meet with Judge Leete or President Judge Stephen Minor at least twice monthly, and make a concerted effort to find employment and expand their education.

over the specialty courts. With the recent graduation, five individuals who were facing incarceration for a crime related to alcohol abuse have stayed sober, reconnected with alienated family members and community support resources, and taken other steps to get their lives in order.

Specialty courts are growing across the country. Potter is the first county in northcentral Pennsylvania — and one of the few rural counties nationwide — to embark on that path.

National studies show that 80 percent of defendants with addiction or behavioral disorders who go through the traditional criminal justice system end up back in jail, compared to just over 20 percent of those whose cases are handled through specialty courts.

In the first 16 months the Potter County DUI Treatment Court has been in operation, thousands of jail days have been avoided. More than a dozen offenders involved in the court so far have devoted many hours to community service, attended support group meetings and been confirmed as drug- and alcohol-free in 98 percent of random urine tests. Those who do not pass these tests face sanctions.

It was launched with a \$70,000 grant from PennDOT that covers many of the expenses over the first three years. A team of drug/alcohol

See SPECIALTY COURT | Pg. 3

They also meet regularly with Laurie Harrier, who manages the compliance and counseling elements for the Potter County Probation Department. Penalties are in place and strictly enforced for violation of any provision. Defendants are subject to incarceration at any time or may have their cases referred back to the traditional court system.

Potter County seeks 'smart justice'

Work on 'specialty courts,' addiction treatment continues

A "smart justice" evolution is continuing in Potter County, with innovations that include separate treatment of criminal cases involving defendants with alcohol and other drug addictions.

At last week's meeting of the Potter County Board of Commissioners, board member Paul Heimel presented an update on the specialty court project.

It began less than a year ago with a DUI court that involves separate criminal proceedings for those who are diagnosed with alcohol problems and deemed eligible for the program.

Next step is a drug court for addictions other than alcohol. A third component that could be added later is a mental health court.

Heimel said the goal of each separate court is to address some underlying causes that have resulted in people being arrested, so that the defendants are less likely to end up back in court and jail.

An effective specialty court has numerous benefits, he added, including reductions in criminal justice expenses for the county.

Measuring those cost savings is one reason the Potter County Commissioners have signed on for the Smart Justice initiative, a project of the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Commissioner Heimel reported that he made the Smart

Justice connection during the recent NACo annual conference in New Orleans. Its mission includes:

- promoting evidence-based, data-driven local justice policies and practices throughout the nation's counties;
- taking a leadership role in exploring and implementing local justice reforms;
- developing strategies to save counties money while creating safer communities;
- providing education and assistance to counties to assess their adult and juvenile systems and explore opportunities for efficient and effective use of public dollars.

Potter County is also engaging with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, which is committed to "justice reinvestment." According to the CSG website, the center supports "a data-driven approach to reduce corrections spending and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and strengthen neighborhoods."

"I've had discussions with the organization and one of its directors has expressed a willingness to engage with Potter County, since we're considered sort of a pilot project for a very small, rural county working on specialty courts," Heimel said.

Commissioner Susan Kefover said Potter County is already experiencing some successes in its more comprehensive ap-

JUSTICE

proach to criminal justice.

"We're a microcosm for some of the bigger national issues," she said. "Yes, we have seen the recidivism at our jail, but we're making progress on it."

She spoke of one unnamed inmate who had consented to counseling for anger management problems.

"He's changing his life," Kefover said.

Women's rehab center unveiled

Potter County hopes to have a new Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center open by February at the former Northern Tier Children's Home in Harrison Valley.

Many women who would otherwise be sent to jails in Lock Haven, Wellsboro or other towns will serve their time at the center, where they'll receive a host of services designed to reduce the likelihood that they'll be back in court.

Jim Kockler, county director of human services, presented an update on the project at the Potter County Board of Commissioners

year-end meeting. He's been spearheading the project for the commissioners and the local court system for more than a year.

Kockler said the facility would house non-violent female inmates, many of whom are in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, employability support, educational assistance and other services.

Commissioner Doug Morley pointed out that the county pays an average of \$70 per day to rent jail cells in other counties, since the Potter County Jail is not equipped to house women. Cost savings from keep-

ing those inmates in Potter County are expected to offset expenses at the new center.

Judge Stephen Minor and District Attorney Andy Watson will have to approve each offender who's sentenced to the facility. Potter County Probation Department will also be involved. Kockler said the program complements the county's movement to establish "specialty courts" that provide special handling of criminal cases involving alcoholics and other drug addicts.

The women will be housed in a residential setting, where

See UNVEILED | Pg. 3

UNVEILED

families will be able to visit and participate in structured counseling sessions with the detainee.

Commissioner Paul Heimel pointed out that a complementary effort is underway to improve re-entry services for men who are nearing their release at the Potter County Jail.

Northern Tier Children's Home has been empty for several years since Adelphi Village suspended its juvenile detention services there. Morley said the facility's management supports the county's plan and a lease agreement is pending.

A \$300,000 grant from the Pa. Commission on Crime and Delinquency will subsidize expenses for the first two years of operation at the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center.

Open house slated for Women's Rehabilitation Center

By AMANDA JONES
Era Correspondent
amandajonesera@yahoo.com

An open house will be held on Thursday at the Women's Rehabilitation Center in Harrison Valley, Potter County, at the former Northern Tier Children's Home on Route 49. The center is expected to begin operations later this month.

The ground-breaking facility is the first of its type in Pennsylvania, and less than a handful of similar institutions exist in the United States and Europe.

"This program is an alternative to incarceration. We can keep the ladies here, in Potter County, provide them with a residential setting for mental health, drug treatment, GEDs and training, and life skills," said Jim Kockler, Potter County Human Services director. "This will allow the courts, probation and alcohol services to reduce recidivism, reduce drug and alcohol use and strengthen families.

"About 80 percent of Potter County inmates are in jail at least partially due to drugs," added Kockler.

Currently, all females sentenced to incarceration are housed out-of-county, as the Potter County Jail in Coudersport is only equipped to handle male inmates. Costs of housing women in other facilities are upwards of \$70 per day, plus there are transportation costs to bring them in for court hearings. It currently costs more than \$25,000 per year to house female inmates in facilities in McKean, Tioga, Jefferson and other counties across the region.

"We currently pay more than \$70 per day to send the women to another facility. We'll still incur the costs but the funds will be used within the county," said Kockler. "When the women are sent to other counties, they're not getting treatment and the kids are separated from their mothers for long periods of time."

The county is using a Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency grant to offset the costs of

opening the facility — the grant provides \$150,000 each year for the first two years. In addition, Kockler said Potter County Human Services will use funds that normally would have been relinquished to the Commonwealth if unused, thanks to the county's participation in the human services block grant program.

"It's a huge project financially," said Kockler. "We'd like to see the facility break even by the end of the year."

The facility has room enough for 44 beds, but will start with only 12-14 beds until operations are running smoothly. Twelve females incarcerated across the state are interested in transferring to the facility right now. However, there are many prohibitions to entering the facility. A judge must order the inmate be sentenced to the rehabilitation center, which does not accept individuals convicted of violent crimes such as rape, kidnapping, escape, aggravated assault, manslaughter, burglary or many others.

(See CENTER, Page 10)

Center

"Public safety is a major focus up there," said Kockler. Two security systems, camera surveillance and motion detectors will be employed, and the facility will be staffed 24 hours per day.

However, it will not be a lock-down type facility. Staff will be trained on how to maintain individuals within the facility, but "if they decide to take off or run, their sentence could become a felony for escape" in addition to their prior charges, Kockler said.

The women will also be better prepared for release, in addition to receiving treatment for any issues they may have. Several case managers will work with the women to establish a re-entry plan, with follow-up appointments for 12-18 months following release.

These principles will also be applied at the Potter County Jail to benefit male inmates. The men will also be worked with to develop re-entry plans, information will be provided to familiarize the men with available resources, housing opportunities and meetings, and family situation concerns are being addressed.

The Inside-Out Dad program, recently implemented at the jail, is the first step being taken to help transition inmates back into the community.

At the Rehabilitation Center, services will eventually be expanded to include family meetings, which will help make meaningful differences in the women's lives and go a long way toward keeping the family unit together even while a woman is incarcerated. Discussions have begun with other counties to allow their female inmates to be sentenced to the center as well.

The county is also working to have the facility licensed as an in-patient mental health treatment facility.

"This is a unique opportunity to take a difficult situation and turn it into something positive," said Potter County Commissioner Doug Morley. "These are not high-risk individuals. There are criteria for the court to vet the individuals who will be participating, and there will be no violent offenders."

More information will be provided at the open house, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday and will include a tour of the facility and introductions of administrators and staff.

The new facility and programs complement the specialty courts, beginning as DUI and now looking to expand to cover individuals with drug addiction issues, that are being operated in Potter County, and continue a partnership between the county courts, human services, drug and alcohol, and probation.

Women's rehab center opens

Hiring of staff is imminent and an open house is planned as Potter County prepares to open its innovative Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center by mid-February.

At last week's meeting of the Potter County Commissioners, Chairman Doug Morley reported that prospective employees are being interviewed for several jobs that will be created at the center, which is being established at the former Northern Tier Children's Home in Harrison Valley.

Many women who would otherwise be sent to jails in Lock Haven, Wellsboro or other towns will serve their time at the center, where they'll receive a host of services designed to reduce the likelihood that they'll be back in court.

The facility will house non-violent female inmates, many of whom are in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, employability support, educational assistance and

other services.

Potter County pays an average of \$70 per day to rent cells in other counties, since the Potter County Jail is not equipped to house women. Cost savings from keeping those inmates in Potter County are expected to offset expenses at the new center.

Judge Stephen Minor and District Attorney Andy Watson will have to approve each offender who's sentenced to the facility. Potter County Probation Department will also be involved.

The women will be housed in a residential setting, where families will be able to visit and participate in structured counseling sessions with the detainee.

Commissioner Paul Heimel pointed out that a complementary effort is underway to improve re-entry services for men who are nearing their release at the Potter County Jail.

Northern Tier Children's Home has been empty for

several years since Adelphoi Village suspended its juvenile detention services there. The facility's management supports the county's plan and a lease agreement is pending.

A \$300,000 grant from the Pa. Commission on Crime and Delinquency will subsidize expenses for the first two years of operation at the Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center.

In another matter, Commissioner Susan Kefover reported that about 20 people attended a recent meeting of the Coudersport Downtown Committee, which included presentations by Erb Building Inspections on regulations covering commercial construction.

The committee is pulling together public officials, business leaders and other interested parties to support downtown improvements in conjunction with PennDOT's resurfacing of Rt. 6 next year between South West Street and Ludwig Lane.

Women's Rehab Center opens this month

An open house on Thursday, Feb. 12, will introduce the public to the new Potter County Women's Residential Rehabilitation Center, which is scheduled to open the following week in the former Northern Tier Children's Home in Harrison Valley.

Many women who would otherwise be sent to jails in Lock Haven, Wellsboro or other towns will serve their time at the center,

where they'll receive a host of services designed to reduce the likelihood that they'll be back in court.

Thursday's open house, scheduled for 10 am to 2 pm, will include a tour of the center and introductions of administrators and staff.

It's a project of the Potter County Board of Commissioners and has been spearheaded by Human Services Administrator Jim

Kockler, who said there's no center like it in Pennsylvania and few others in the nation.

The facility will house non-violent female inmates, many of whom are in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, employability support, educational assistance and other services.

The county pays an average of

See REHAB CENTER | Pg. 3

REHAB CENTER

\$70 per day to rent jail cells in other counties, since the Potter County Jail is not equipped to house women. Cost savings from keeping those inmates in Potter County are expected to offset expenses at the new center.

A state grant has been secured to subsidize the operations for the first two years. Discussions are underway with officials from neighboring counties about sending their female offenders to the center.

Judge Stephen Minor and District Attorney Andy

Watson will have to approve each defendant who's sentenced to the facility. Potter County Probation Department will also be involved.

The program complements the county's "specialty courts" project, providing special handling of criminal cases involving alcoholics and other drug addicts.

The women will be housed in a residential setting, where families will be able to visit and participate in structured counseling sessions with the detainee.

A complementary effort is underway to improve re-entry services for men who

are nearing their release at the Potter County Jail.

Northern Tier Children's Home has been empty for several years since Adelphoi Village suspended its juvenile detention services there.