

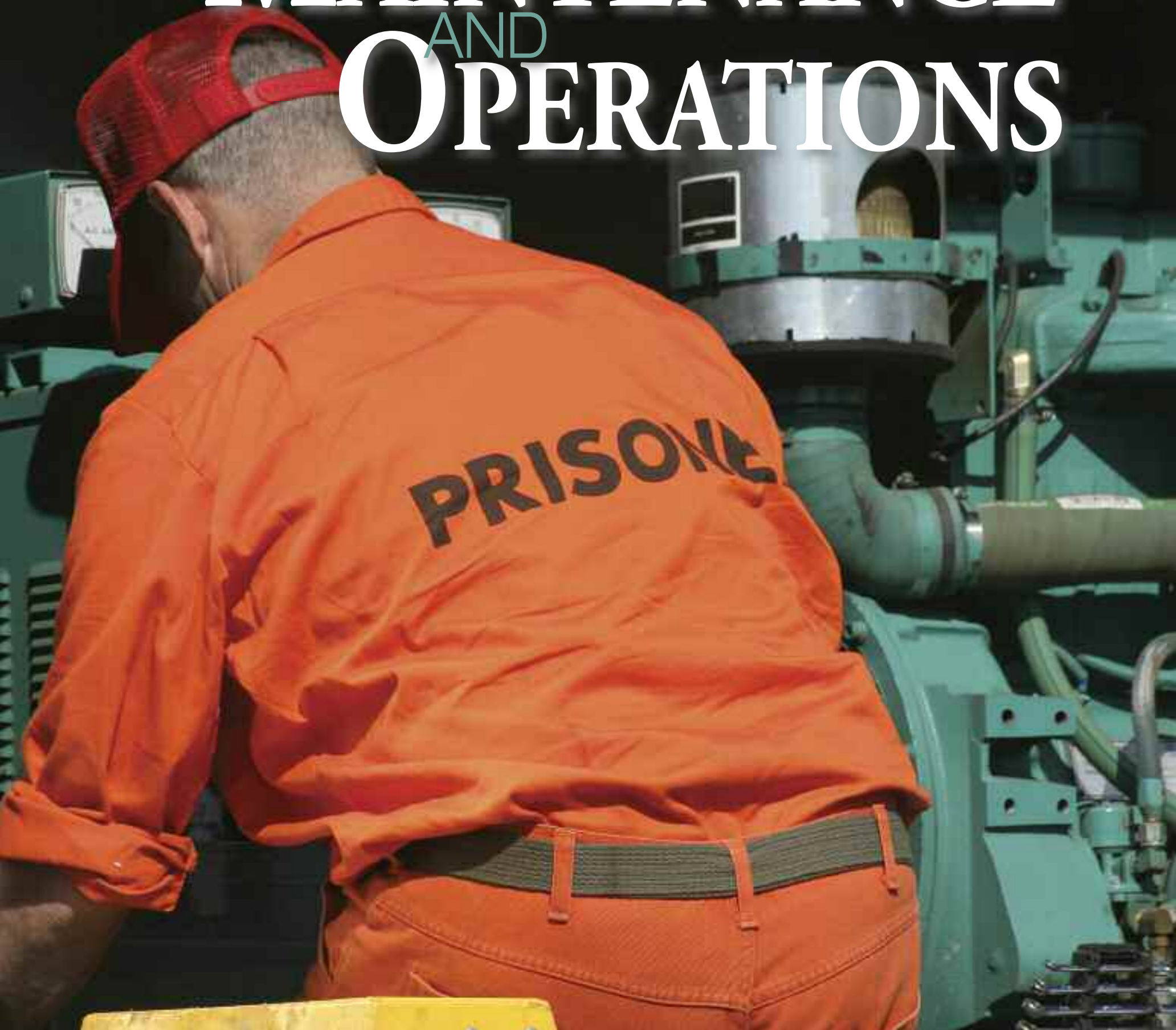
CorrectionalNEWS

design+construction+operations

MARCH/APRIL 2012 | VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2

 **EmlenMEDIA**
Publisher of specialized business news since 1994

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS



Designing 21st Century Detention Facilities

By Jerry 'Dutch' Forstater

Addressing the challenge of providing constitutional and cost-effective settings that address the unique blend of risk and needs found in the adult pre-trial population, New York City's Architecture for Justice Committee prepared a session covering these topics and more in NoHo, New York. On Feb. 2, a wide range of speakers focused on objective jail classification and screening methodologies to accommodate reduction in stays, and fundamental changes in best practices reflective in current layouts of model jails and intake facilities. The event was made free by support of Turner Construction Company.

David Burney, FAIA, moderated the session, and is commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction, being responsible for the design and facilitation of a new 1,500-bed intake and classification facility on Rikers Island, the largest operating island correctional facility in the world.

Dr. Todd Clear, Ph. D., dean at Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, opened the session with his perspective on identifying offender risk. Dr. Clear is well-written in correctional classification, prediction methods in correctional programming, community-based correctional methods, intermediate sanctions, and sentencing policy. A distinguished professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York since 1999, he identified that the numbers are often confusing related to reduction measures in the detention of offenders.

He juxtaposed different classes of inmates, resolving counter-intuitive impressions by politicians and the general public which may lead to wrong arrestees being released — incurring higher risk to the community based on faulty presumption. Dr. Clear, in a clear and concise fashion, gave an informative geopolitical perspective on the correct interpretation for statistical basis of risk assessment and the demographic likelihood of the detainee repeating a similar infraction if released early.

He introduced the concept of "criminogenic need," a systematic vs. clinical assessment of needs and a stronger statistical prediction methodology.

Ray Sabbatine, director of the Lexington-Fayette Detention Center in Lexington, Ky., and leader of his own consulting firm, gave demonstrative examples through video excerpts and demonstration that objective jail classification was necessary to increase short-term stays and reduce the allocated resources within the jail to detainees who will be released within a 12-hour period. He refers to this as "greening

classification," reducing system costs by population reduction in two ways: reduction of arrests and reduction in length of stay.

The implementation of technology has been a driving factor in Lexington-Fayette jails to embed the idea that hearings, arraignments, and other technology uses can avoid prolonging stays to overnight or even days — affecting costs of the jail in a spiraling effect. Sabbatine quickly showed how subjective arrest methods induced by placing more police on the streets incurred substantial operational and daily cost increases in detention due to satisfying legal political push, putting more badges on the street, and detainees in jail.

A simple example was shown of how an average officer, if arresting 100 persons in a year, directly affects detention budgets by costing as much as \$127,000 to the system due to detainee-related costs. An ad hoc, on-the-spot analysis of New York's detention system with the same new officer placed on the street calculated an over \$1 million cost to the New York Department of Corrections for each officer placed per 100 arrests.

Sabbatine gave a provocative account of what he considered a completely subjective arrest, leaning toward blind justice, instead of using an objective basis for what can only be considered a poor use of government funds. An alcoholic young man climbed a tree while drunk, fell out and became paraplegic. His dogs chewed his legs, which became infected. Failing to license his dogs and unable to get to court three times, a warrant was issued for arrest.

He was brought in by a cadre of emergency medical staff and arresting officers for non-appearance at court hearings for the lack of dog licenses. While certainly not indicative of every unusual arrest, it brought the over 150 persons in attendance a new perspective on the use of government law enforcement and the detention system's "absorption" of law enforcement's action.

Sabbatine's "barbed-wire-to-bandwidth" moniker was as catchy as it was clever in its approach to get subjects out of jail by using high-bandwidth communications technology. His mantra is to "move images — not inmates." Now that's green.

Laura Maiello-Reidy, associate principal of RicciGreene Associates, Architects & Planners, gave particular examples of objective jail classification encompassing quick release theories so as to not make a temporary detainee, even an overnight detainee. The quick release procedure, encompassing less than 12 or even 16 hours of intake, results in dramatically less cost and effects much less drain on limited financial resources of detention centers. For example was the new 1,500-bed Van

David Burney, FAIA, commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction, moderated the panel.



Cise-Simonet Detention Center, Denver, Colo., organized with an operational layout on the premise of objective jail classification.

Maiello-Reidy also stressed the need for smaller, smarter, greener, and kinder facilities with more natural, low-stress settings that are perceived as meaningful to visitors and relatives responding to a detainee's need for bail, to the officers, staff, and even detainees who enter these facilities.

She stressed that even a photo mural of the outdoors in the intake and booking areas seem to lower the stress of inmates and staff in a broad and therapeutic manner.

Ken Ricci, principal of RicciGreene Associates, Architects & Planners, re-emphasized her observations of better objective classification by detailing the in-depth planning and processes that allowed, for provision of providing well-designed space adjacencies in a multi-storied detention center on a footprint which was far from ideal.

His team's graphical skills in communicating the design opportunities along with matching the operational mission of detention staff was conveyed through readable diagrams prepared for the lay person unfamiliar with architectural backgrounds.

Ricci related a recent story where an officer stated that in the old jail, he used to go home every evening with a headache, that being no longer the case in the new facility. Ricci ended his ses-



"Smaller, Smarter, Greener, Kinder: Detention Planning and Design for the 21st Century," was the focus of the event.

sion with inviting, modern, rich architectural statements with sensitive, stress-reducing photo images of the new Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center.

Dr. Dora Schriro, commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction, was the final speaker of the session. Schriro is a Staten Island native and served in Mayor Koch's administration from 1984-1989, and left as assistant commissioner to the Department of Correction. Schriro brought executive experience in overseeing large detention systems to the states of Missouri and Arizona where her bio states that she is "uniquely qualified to carry on the important work here in New York City, with a clear focus on reducing violence, ensuring inmate and staff safety, while also preparing inmates to transition back into their communities and

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appropriate for the dignity of the court," Miller said. "What I think was very unique, was suggesting copper, over the other materials, as a cost-savings material."

Copper is clad on the mid- to upper-portions of the building's exterior. It was bought at a time when its price was at a historic low.

"Copper went from over \$4 a pound to \$2.30 cents a pound, and we were able to take advantage in the market conditions," said Todd McMillen, project executive at Gilbane/Ryan. "We responded in the design process by modifying the exterior skin from a primarily precast feature to a precast and copper feature, and saved the client over \$3 million."

We did not design and build this building so the courts were specific to the judges.

The exterior copper is pure copper that will weather and oxidize in the following years, ending up as an old penny bronze. It will not turn green as copper does in some other environments. The copper is nearly 100 percent recycled.

The metal stands in "pretty attractive contrast," in Miller's words, to precast concrete panels, between 6- and 8-inches thick, placed relatively low in the building. Architects selected it for its security and high-thermal mass.

The terrazzo flooring that covers the interior of the lobby was chosen for its long lifespan, low maintenance and durability. A local artist incorporated an abstraction of the Arizona and Maricopa County landscape into the terrazzo. The pattern and the design are different on every floor.

A travertine stone is present in the new tower at the elevator bays, on the south side of the lobby and in



The lower level serves as a secure transportation hub. Prisoners are bused to and from this facility from multiple jails in Maricopa County.

the East Court building. The stone is used in the high-volume areas where durability and impact resistance were key.

During the 2 million man-hours that went into construction, worker safety conditions were held to a high standard.

An EMT or paramedic trailer was on-site full-time. During peak days, more than 800 workers were on-site.

"We never had an instance where a worker who was injured was not able to return to work the next day," McMillen said. "We are very proud of that fact."

The labor force also supported the local economy: 97 percent of the trade contractors were local residents.

Gilbane/Ryan managed the project during an up market and into a down market, while allowing savings to go back to the county for additional projects.

With a price tag of approximately \$335 million, the criminal court tower is the county's single largest project paid for in cash. The estimated savings are \$190 million in bonds. There was also no cost to acquire the site, which was secured through an intra-governmental agreement.

The building is expected to receive LEED Silver recognition under the U.S. Green Building Council. The formal opening was Feb. 14, Arizona Statehood Day and its centennial. ■

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lives after release."

Schiro discussed how her budget is over \$1 billion and has a staff to inmate ratio of 1:3. She reviewed the new temporary intake facility being designed by Fletcher Thompson Architects at a location with old sprung structures on Rikers Island. She then spoke about the new 1,500-bed facility to begin design in March of this year by 1100 Architect/Ricci Greene Associates Joint Venture. These two facilities will begin a new approach to intake.

A major concern presented by the commissioner was that an average of 35 percent of all detainees have behavioral disorders while mental health related disorders of women, which comprise 7 percent of the population, reached 50 percent of this female group in detention.

It was stated that when mental and behavioral health issues of incoming arrestees encompass 35 percent of arrestees, classification and intake processes are thwarted due to the difficulty in correct classification and to house the detainees appropriately.

Those in attendance included Joel Davidson of STV Architects and Engineers; Michael Biddetti of The LiRo Group; and Frank Eilam, the assistant commissioner of DOC facilities in New

York City.

During the question and answer period, discussion revolved around President Reagan's dismantling of funding for state hospitals by the federal government which led to a temporary infusion of mental health patients into poorly prepared community facilities, with the adverse effect of turning many into today's homeless. The discussion revolved around these homeless and persons that need mental health care being a major component of those who are arrested and placed into detention — hence, the 35 percent population average into New York's system.

Commenting on how *The New York Times* had recently written a negative article relating to corrections, Frank Greene, principal of RicciGreene Associates, Architects & Planners, commented on how this seminar gave a positive and refreshing look at detention and the nuances developed for the 21st Century, and how difficult it is to rectify the justice system into easily correctible solutions when funding is cut and so many aspects of justice and detention are as transitional as society's nuanced perception of what justice meted should mean.

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