

# Doors open to new jail

Scott Welton  
Standard Democrat

**BENTON** - The new Scott County Jail was filled with nearly 200 people for the facility's dedication and open house Saturday.

Presiding Commissioner Martin Priggel said opening the new jail is a highpoint for the county, marking the culmination of years of effort from present and past county officials such as Dewaine Shaffer, former county commissioner, during the three-year process.

Once the new jail is operational, the county's normal inmate capacity will increase from 48 beds to 120, allowing the county to reduce its reliance on surrounding jails to house county prisoners.

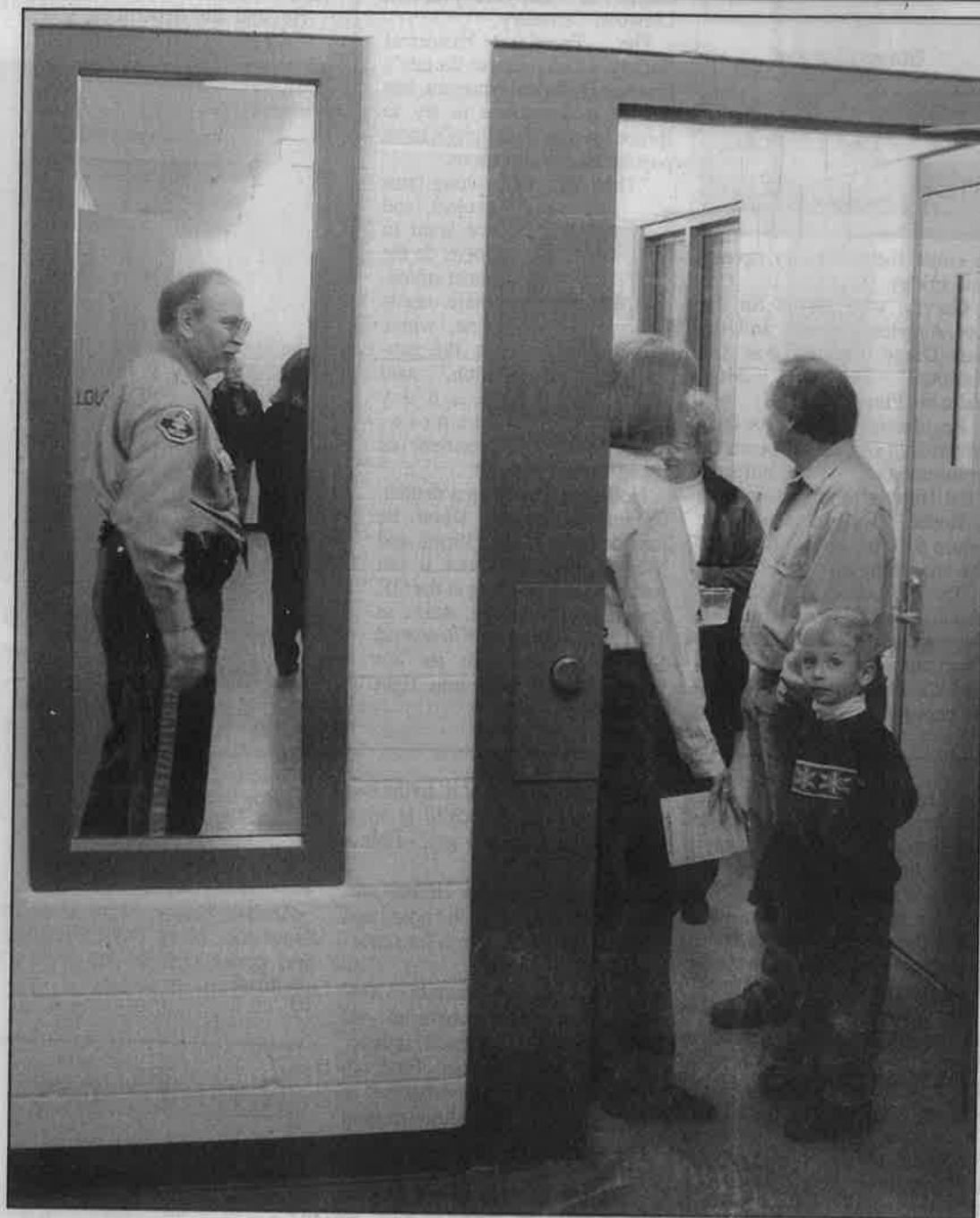
The cost in 1999 to house prisoners out of the county was \$68,000, Priggel recalled, "And we thought that was bad." By 2002, the cost had risen to over \$634,000.

Priggel thanked those who supported the campaign for a new jail and Scott County voters for approving the sales tax which made it possible, adding they can only imagine "how bad it would have been if we did not pass the tax." The half-cent law enforcement sales tax was approved by voters in April 2000 and expires in 2008.

Construction costs will reach \$4,285,000 supplemented with another \$560,000 in additional funds for state-of-the-art equipment, furnishings, land and design fees.

The new jail will not eliminate all the crime in the county, Priggel said, "but it is bound to slow it down and make Scott County a safer place to live."

The jail was designed, "not to be fancy, but practical," Priggel said. "This jail is built the way modern jails are built."



Area officials and residents tour the new Scott County Jail during the facility's dedication and open house Saturday.

Scott Welton, Staff

The county jail now in use was originally built in 1932, according to Sheriff Bill Ferrell. It was

also obtained additional land to the south of the jail for future expansion should it be necessary,

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**— Martin Priggel**

then updated and remodeled in 1971, adding a kitchen and office area among other improvements.

Priggel said once the new facility is fully operational, the old jail will be demolished to make room for parking. The county has

he added.

With the county having its first full-time prosecuting attorney in office, prisoners are moving through the system faster than ever, Priggel said. Later during the open house, Scott County

Prosecutor Paul Boyd confirmed that the new facility will be just a "temporary holding facility" for prisoners as he continues to move offenders to the Department of Corrections or into the probation-parole program.

Following Priggel's remarks, Commissioner Walter Bizzell introduced elected officials among those at the dedication including local officials and State Rep. Lanie Black.

Commissioner Jamie Burger then took the podium to recognize a few of the many people from the 80 companies that par-

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