

Jail/Lockup Resource Center

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Michigan Sheriffs' Association

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An Overview of  
Computerized Jail  
Management Information  
Systems

NCJRS

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## Introduction

In Saginaw County, a reporter calls the sheriff and inquires about the jail crowding problem and what types of prisoners the federal court might release to ease crowding. The sheriff calls a deputy who, with the push of a key on his computer keyboard, calls up a menu that allows him to ask the system how many sentenced misdemeanor property offenders are in the jail. In a matter of minutes, a screen shows this information and it is printed out.

In Kalamazoo County, a detective asks the booking officer whether he could run a line-up report in an attempt to find jail inmates who are white, over 35 years of age, and with scars or marks on their right forearm. The officer goes to his computer, selects the line-up menu, and in about 5 minutes has a printed report listing by name and cell location each inmate matching the requested description.

In Kent County, the federal court orders a reduction in the sentences of all sentenced prisoners to ease crowding. The administrative staff goes to the computer, selects the sentence reduction report screen, and in a matter of minutes has the computerized system reduce the sentences and adjust the outdates of all sentenced prisoners.

In Northwest Michigan, a county is faced with building a new jail. In order to build the jail in the most cost-effective way possible, the sheriff asks Community Justice Alternatives to provide summary statistics on all prisoners who were booked and classified in the jail during the last year. Community Justice Alternatives accesses its computer data base and produces a report for the sheriff showing that, in the last year, 60% of all prisoners in the jail were minimum security misdemeanor offenders and therefore do not require secure bedspace.

Does the above sound futuristic? Are computers in the jail more of a "Star Wars" type of idea than a reality for Michigan sheriffs? The answer to both questions is an emphatic "no". The above examples are based upon actual use of computers and computerized management information systems in Michigan jails. Sheriffs, jail administrators, classification officers, booking officers, corrections officers, county board members, and others with a stake in local criminal justice in many Michigan counties currently use computerized jail management information systems to perform their day-to-day functions of managing inmates and making policy decisions concerning the housing of offenders. They find such systems cut costs, allow staff to be more productive, and provide information about the jail never before available. In short, computerized jail management information systems play an important role in operating their jail and local criminal justice system.

## An Overview of Computerized Jail Management Information Systems

A computerized jail management information system is a computerized way of keeping track of inmates booked into the jail, inmates moving through the jail, and inmates released from jail. Such systems can usually be divided into two categories. The first, inmate tracking, includes booking and release of inmates, and cell assignment, movement, and management. The second category, management and statistical reporting, includes reports generated on a regular or as-needed basis to assist jail administrators and officers in operating their jail, and reports which provide detailed information concerning the make-up of the jail population.

Such systems have a number of common benefits. First, computerized booking tends to dramatically cut the amount of time a booking officer spends on booking. In Kent County, a 20 - 30 minute manual process now takes about 8 minutes through the computerized system.

Second, even with computerized management information systems all jails rely on "hard-copy" to some degree. Typically, jail officers never see a computer terminal nor input information into a terminal. However, they do use shift or daily reports, generated by the computer, to make sure prisoners are who they are supposed to be and are where they are supposed to be.

Third, systems are set up to be secure; only authorized individuals are able to access the computer system to modify data. Typically, security is imposed by rank or job function. For instance, it is likely that only a captain or shift commander could go into the system and expunge a record. Similarly, safeguards exist so that only the administration and the release officer could authorize a release from jail through the computer system.

Fourth, all systems have some type of manual back-up system that comes into play in case of a computer or power failure. In the larger systems, this may be simply relying on the many hard-copy reports that had been generated prior to the failure, and updating them manually. In the smaller systems, a much simpler parallel manual index card system is often kept in case of failure.

This paper was developed after examining and observing several systems in Michigan. Each system is a very good system. In fact, it is likely that each system could work well in most jurisdictions in Michigan. If a sheriff or jail administrator is considering a computerized jail management information system, the paramount question in their mind should be "what do we want such a system to accomplish". With this question in mind, they should review this white paper for an overview of the types of systems now in operation in Michigan.

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Readers will find most of the systems do an excellent job in addressing inmate tracking, such as booking and release. They will find that most systems do a very good job at producing management and statistical reports. What should stand out in the reader's mind, though, is that while each system profiled here meets basic needs, all address those needs with a different twist. The process of considering a computerized jail management information system is not too much different from buying a car. Most any new car will take you where you want to go. However, velour seats will get you there more comfortably, and the V-6 engine will get you there more quickly. Like cars, some of the systems profiled here have more "options" than the others. The reader, in considering a system, needs to determine what basic needs must be addressed, and what options he wants to add to the system. The perfect system does not exist, or, if it does, it is a matter of personal preference. By ensuring that basic inmate tracking and management and statistical reporting needs are accommodated by the system, and by carefully considering the different options available to upgrade and fine-tune the system, the reader will be able to develop for his or her jurisdiction as perfect a system as possible.

#### A Word About Costs

The most important point to make about costs of computerized jail management information systems is that a county should not summarily dismiss the idea of developing a system because of likely costs. Instead, a county should precisely determine what its needs are, in terms of both inmate tracking and statistical reporting, assess what is acceptable as the minimum basic system, and determine what "options" are desirable.

The costs of the systems surveyed ranged from only a few thousand dollars to nearly a quarter of a million dollars, when adding together both development and annual operating costs. It is safe to say that a small county could likely develop and operate a system with a personal computer and purchased software. On the other hand, a large county could spend years to develop a system that requires a county mainframe computer, terminals in the jail, a custom-written software program, and a \$100,000 annual operating budget.

Many of the factors a county should examine when assessing systems and costs include : whether the county and/or sheriff's department has a data processing department and staff, and, if so, whether the sheriff's department will be billed for time spent on developing or purchasing a system; whether the county has sufficient computer hardware, including the storage capability, to efficiently handle a system, or whether new computer hardware will be required; whether already-existing data management or jail management software can be purchased, or whether it is necessary to develop a program specific to the county's needs; whether it is possible to time-share with other criminal justice officials in the county, such as the prosecutor

or judges, or with other county jails which seek to develop and operate a computerized jail management information system.

The above are just a few examples of what a county should consider in determining the costs of a system. It is advised that professional county data processing staff, or experts in jail systems such as the Jail/Lockup Resource Center or Community Justice Alternatives of Traverse City, be consulted as early as possible in order to realistically assess system needs, desirable "options" and cost implications.

## Computerized Jail Management Information Systems--Examples of How They Work in Michigan Jails

### Saginaw County Sheriff's Department Sheriff's Management Information System

Contacts: Captain Fred Clark  
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#### Introduction

Like other management information systems examined, that in Saginaw County is an excellent example of a system that combines both booking and inmate tracking with statistical reporting capabilities. Additionally, Saginaw County is the only system examined that is moving toward interaction with others in the criminal justice system, such as judges and prosecutors. Saginaw's system is both comprehensive and easy to use. It is a fine example of a system for either an urban or rural county.

#### Development of System

The current Saginaw system evolved from the early 1970's when the county was working with the state to provide the state with information through the SPARMIS system. Recognizing that the Sheriff's Department needed a system tailored to its own needs, in 1978 and 1979 Sheriff Kelley and Captain Clark began to explore the options available to the Department. This included an examination of the Baltimore, Maryland management information system, as well as the Jailtrac system developed by Inslaw, Inc. The information gained from looking at these systems was then combined with Sheriff's Department's concerns, such as the need to be interactive with the Prosecutor's PROMIS system and the desire to develop a system in cooperation with the judiciary. The county's data processing department, in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department, then developed the current system, which became on-line in November, 1982.

#### Inmate Tracking and Booking

Like other systems examined, Saginaw's system has very good

inmate tracking capabilities. Inmate tracking can be divided into three areas: (1) Intake, or booking, and release; (2) cell control and management; and (3) special features, such as property control and trust account management.

Inmate tracking is initiated when an inmate is booked into the jail. At booking, biographical information, such as name, address and date of birth, arrest and custody information, and state fingerprint classification information is entered into the computer by the booking officer. This system allows the booking officer to determine whether an inmate being booked into the system has been through the jail before, in which case much of the biographical information already exists and is on file in the computer. The booking officer can check this, for instance, by typing in the inmate's last name and then checking all identical last names shown by the computer to compare for first name, race, date of birth, scars, and other identifying factors. If the booking officer determines that the inmate has been previously booked into the jail, the officer simply enters the previous file number and the historical information on the inmate appears and is updated by the officer. Upon completion of the booking process, with a push of a button, a booking card, fingerprint card, and a worksheet for the inmate are printed out for use by the jail. The entire booking process takes approximately two to three minutes with the computerized system, which is substantially less time than the fourteen minute average it used to take to book an inmate before the computerized system.

Prior to being released from the jail, the release authorization is checked by the releasing officer to determine whether a "hold" exists on the prisoner from another jurisdiction. As with other systems, when releasing a prisoner the computer has a "hold flag", so that a prisoner is not released without authorization.

In addition to booking and release, the inmate tracking system is used for cell control and cell management. Here, the classification committee uses the tracking system for physically moving inmates. For instance, in ensuring that an inmate is assigned to an appropriate cell, the committee would look at the history of the offender, which was entered by the booking officer, to check whether the offense was a felony or misdemeanor, whether any particular medical problems exist, and who the prospective cell-mates are and what their offense and criminal history looks like. Similarly, in determining what options exist for purposes of cell assignment, the classification committee can ask the information system, for instance, what male cells are currently over capacity. This tells the committee that the inmate should not be assigned to that cell.

Special features of the Saginaw inmate tracking component include the "browse" feature, which allows all users to look at virtually any information on any inmate in the jail, such as out dates, next court dates, offense history, current charges, medical alert information, and other information. This is helpful to the staff

if, for instance, the cell block officers want to move an inmate to another cell. This is also how the booking officer would do a re-booking of an inmate that had been previously booked into the jail.

Another feature is the "inmate alert" feature, which provides for both temporary and permanent alerts on an inmate. For instance, a temporary alert might include the comments of an officer that the inmate was throwing or wasting food. These comments would be in the computer file of the inmate until he was released. Upon release, they are automatically deleted. A permanent alert would include medical information, such as the name of the inmate's doctor and a comment that he has, for instance, a heart condition. This file is kept in the history data bases that exists even after an inmate has been released from jail.

### Management and Statistical Reports

Reports from management information systems can be categorized into two categories, inmate management reports and statistical reports.

In Saginaw County, inmate management reports are used to help manage the jail. For instance, daily housing reports are printed out which show each inmate in the jail, by name and cell assignment. The printed reports are used during the midnight count to make sure that all inmates are in the cells they are supposed to be in. This function also is a good check on the computer system to ensure that inmates moved from cell to cell are shown correctly in the computer system. Other inmate management reports include a daily housing report, which shows inmates booked into the jail within the last 24 hours, and court movement reports, which are generated by the court's once per week and shows inmates who are scheduled to go to court within the next week.

Saginaw's system is very powerful in terms of statistical report capabilities. The Saginaw system is now tied directly to the required Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) reports which are sent to the Michigan State Police on a monthly basis. While prior to the management information system a deputy would have to research hard copy reports and then have that data entered into UCR format--a job that often took as many as 40 hours per month--now it is automated to the point of simply having the computer generate the report, the results of which are simply typed onto UCR forms.

Additionally, the Saginaw system has a menu whereby the user can obtain reports on booking dates, projected release dates, and next and last court dates. For instance, the user can ask for projected releases during the second week of January. The computer will search the inmate files and provide the user with names and release dates for inmates to be released during that



week. Most impressive is the ability to do cross-tabulations by a number of criteria, such as trustees, race, sex, age, work release, offsite, juvenile, next court date, charge classification, charge disposition, sentenced, unsentenced, felony, misdemeanor, and other criteria. By simply typing in the desired criteria, the computer will provide a table showing, for instance, inmates in the jail who are white males, 35 - 50 years of age, sentenced on felony assault convictions. This is a convenient tool for the sheriff and administrators in responding to questions concerning who is in their jail. With a push of a few buttons, the system will quickly respond and tell them how many felons, misdemeanants, or other questions they might ask. It should also be pointed out that questions which do not appear on a particular menu still can be asked and answered through a "query" feature, which would most likely be initiated by the deputy in charge of the system.

### Special Features

The special feature about Saginaw's system that most stands out is the fact that the sheriff's system, and the philosophy that drives the system, goes beyond the jail to other aspects of the Sheriff's Department and even extends to others in the criminal justice system, such as the prosecutor and judges.

The Sheriff uses the management information system for not just jail activities, but also law enforcement, civil, and administrative functions. As noted above, the UCR system, which addresses mostly law enforcement questions, is linked to the jail system for reporting purposes. Some examples are:

--The latest system developments have been to develop a means to keep track of employee emergency information so that relatives and next of kin are entered into the computer for ease of contact upon an emergency.

--Information on the status of employee training is kept via computer.

--One special feature of the system that Saginaw officials are particularly proud of is the tracking of confiscated evidence in the property room. Any movement of such property into the room, within the room, or out of the room, is now tracked by computer.

--The Saginaw system also uses the management information system to bill inmates from other jurisdictions for jail housing costs. This is done on a monthly basis.

--Saginaw was the only system in Michigan examined that not only interacts with others in the criminal justice system, but actually encourages and facilitates such interaction. For instance, it is expected that in the near future, court dispositions, such as sentencing information, will be directly

entered into the jail's system by court clerks, not jail staff. Similarly, charge information will be entered by the prosecutor's staff, not jail staff. Such interaction is atypical; usually, a printed disposition of such court action follows the prisoner to the jail and is then entered into the prisoner's record by the jail staff. In addition to pointing up the cooperation of a criminal justice system, it also has implications for the jail in terms of cost and time savings.

Kent County Sheriff's Department  
Sheriff's Management Information System (SHAMIS)

contact: Lt. John Short  
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### Introduction

The Kent County Sheriff's Management Information System (SHAMIS) is an excellent example of a system for a large jail that combines both thorough inmate tracking with sophisticated reporting capabilities. SHAMIS collects a tremendous amount of information on each prisoner booked into the jail, produces many regular management reports, and is able to produce statistical reports to answer most questions that might be raised. It is a fine example for large jails considering a management information system.

### Development of System

SHAMIS went on line in April, 1985, after several years of development. In 1979, the county began identifying computer needs for several departments. This resulted in the Sheriff's Department being given priority by the county for the development of a system. The Sheriff's Department, in cooperation with the County's data processing department, explored several systems around the country, and ultimately decided to develop their own. In 1983 a consultant was hired, and after literally hundreds of hours of work by consultant, Sheriff's Department staff, and the data processing staff, SHAMIS was born.

### Inmate tracking and booking

Like the jails in Saginaw and other counties, SHAMIS has a thorough inmate tracking and booking process. Information entered at booking includes biographical information, history information, arrest information, property of the prisoner, and other necessary and relevant information. The system has the capability to search name and history files to check for aliases and to otherwise determine whether a prisoner booked in has been in the jail before. If so, the historical data appears and that information is updated. If not, new information on the prisoner is entered. A key feature of SHAMIS' booking process is that upon completion of booking 18 documents are printed with the prisoner's name and address printed as a header for all documents

that will be used by the jail during the course of the inmate's stay. For instance, forms for classification authorization, release authorization, mail log, and inmate activity sheet are printed upon booking with the name and address already entered upon them. This saves a great deal of time in that such information does not have to be printed on the documents when they are used. Sheriff's Department staff estimate that the computerized booking process through SHAMIS takes about 8 minutes. This compares favorably to the 20-30 minutes it used to take to book a prisoner into the jail.

Upon release, like Saginaw and other jails, a release screen on the computer requires the releasing officer to authorize the release. It automatically checks for "holds" from other jurisdictions to guard against improper releases.

The inmate tracking system is also used by the classification committee or the appropriate sergeant if a prisoner is going to be moved within the jail. The system has the ability to examine what cells are currently available and the history of the prisoner to be moved or his prospective cell-mates. Information such as whether the prisoner has been moved before, who moved him, and why he was moved is available, as is information concerning his disciplinary history, and whether he has a hazard or keep separate flag.

Kent County's system also has some impressive special inmate tracking features. For instance, SHAMIS has a "check-in" menu which allows the front office to determine which recently booked prisoners are eligible to bond out. Therefore, if a friend or family member goes to the jail's administrative office to bond out a prisoner, the front office can immediately obtain the information entered on the prisoner at booking in order to bond the prisoner out immediately.

#### Management and Statistical Reports

Kent County makes the most use of inmate management reports of any county examined. Like other systems, SHAMIS produces a daily alphabetical report of all inmates, and a shift report three times daily which includes all inmates by floor and cell. Many other management reports are also produced. Kitchen staff are provided daily diet reports so that inmates with special diets have the correct food prepared. Jail staff receive daily reports of "hazard" inmates in order to keep them separate from others. SHAMIS automatically calculates prisoners' out-dates, based upon the sentence information entered at booking or whenever the prisoner is sentenced. Similarly, SHAMIS has a sentence reduction report which automatically reduces sentences and recalculates outdates pursuant to a federal court order on overcrowding.

SHAMIS also generates statistical reports. Billing reports for jail housing costs for prisoners from other jurisdictions are

produced. A monthly report is produced for the Department of Social Services which allows them to drop from their rolls inmates who are incarcerated more than 30 days. This saved the county about \$67,000 last year. Additionally, SHAMIS has the ability to generate just about any type of statistical report imaginable. Although a ready-to-use menu does not exist which allows, for instance, the user to ask questions about the population of the jail, with relative ease Lt. Short, sometimes with the assistance of the county data processing department, is able to produce such information. Thus, if the Sheriff or county board would like to know the average amount of bond set by particular judges, or the average length of sentence given for felons sentenced by a particular circuit court judge, Lt. Short is able to retrieve this information.

### Special Features

Kent County's SHAMIS system has many special features. Certainly, the most impressive is the fact that the system has designed into it every type of information imaginable on both an inmate tracking and management report basis. There are few questions that can be asked about a prisoner, whether it's his offense or discipline history, biographical information, or court information, that cannot be answered by SHAMIS. This not only provides excellent prisoner-specific information, but when combined with the statistical reporting capabilities of SHAMIS, allows for extremely sophisticated statistical reports.

As with Saginaw County, the speed with which booking is now accomplished must be pointed out. A process formerly taking approximately 20-30 minutes now takes approximately eight minutes. One important reason for the speedy booking process is the fact that the booking officer can move through the whole system from one screen; the officer does not have to return to a main menu to go from biographical information to arrest history. Another feature which expedites the booking process is the history search. When booking in a prisoner, history search allows the officer to search all 96,000 existing records (history records exist for all prisoners coming through the jail, including those who have left and are no longer in jail) by name, date of birth, race and sex in a matter of seconds. This is possible to do in a few seconds because the history search feature is contained in a data base connected to, but separate from, other SHAMIS records.

Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department  
JAILEM

contact: Deputy Richard Haron  
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### Introduction

Kalamazoo County's JAILEM system is a straightforward, easy to

use management information system that is geared toward booking and release. Its simplicity should be considered a key feature for other jurisdictions looking at JAILEM, particularly if such jurisdictions are interested primarily in booking and do not intend to dedicate a computer-oriented staff to the system.

### Development of System

Kalamazoo County's JAILEM system evolved from a jail management information system first developed in the mid-1970's. With the involvement and cooperation of the state, which had been instrumental in setting up the prosecutor's PROMIS system in Kalamazoo County, the county prioritized the further development of a jail management information system in the last 1970's. Under the direction of the county's data processing department, systems from around the country were examined, the needs of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff Department were identified, and the JAILEM evolved. It has been on line for approximately three years.

### Inmate Tracking and Booking

Like other systems, JAILEM is a very good computerized inmate tracking and booking system. In fact, Kalamazoo County's JAILEM is used primarily for this purpose. At booking, information concerning inmate history, biographical information, arrest information, inmate trust fund, and other relevant information is entered by the booking officer into the computer. As with other systems, if it is determined that the inmate being booked into the jail has been through the jail before, historical information is recalled and need only be updated. New inmates must have all information entered. Upon the completion of the booking process, booking cards are printed.

### Management and Statistical Reports

JAILEM has built into it a Report Information Menu which will produce several management reports. For instance, an alphabetical inmate roster, inmate roster by location and cell, and a lodging, release, arraignment report are generated on a daily basis. These reports obviously help the jail staff determine whether inmates are where they are supposed to be, and also points up which inmates are scheduled to be released from the jail that day for, for instance, an arraignment. Other management reports that can be generated include a report of inmates on work release, a report of inmates awaiting trial, and a weekender no-show report.

According to the data processing department, a statistical report menu is not built into JAILEM; however, detailed reports of jail populations can be produced by the data processing department.

One special feature of JAILEM's reporting capabilities is the line-up report feature. If, for instance, a detective wants to conduct a line up of white males, over 30 years of age, with

tatoos on the right forearm, JAILEM will search either all current inmates or all 35,000 historical records to attempt to produce inmates matching such a description. A search of current inmates, approximately 300, takes about five minutes. A search of the 35,000 historical records takes approximately 30 minutes.

### Special Features

Perhaps the most striking special feature of JAILEM is its simplicity and the fact that it is easy to use. As primarily a booking system, it is designed for use by jail personnel who have no special computer or data processing skills. It is, in essence, user friendly.

As opposed to some of the systems examined with literally dozens of menus and sub-menus, JAILEM has three main menus. The booking officer primarily uses the Inquiry Information Menu, which allows him to book the offender and call up information concerning a name search, biographical inquiry, custody inquiry, and inmate history. A second menu is entitled Modifications. From this menu, the booking officer or administrative staff can update records of inmates accordingly. And last, for management reports there is a Report Menu. The management reports noted above, such as the line-up report, are generated from this menu. The simplicity of JAILEM, and the fact that it is very user friendly, certainly makes it more likely that booking officers, and others whose jobs are not specific to computers or data processing, can not only use the system but thoroughly understand its capabilities.

### Oakland County Sheriff's Department JAILTRAC

contact: Lt. Barry Eriksen  
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### Introduction

Oakland County's JAILTRAC system is unique in that it is a pre-developed software package tailored to the specific needs of Oakland County's jail. It demonstrates that a very large jail can develop a sophisticated management information system without starting from scratch. The lessons learned in Oakland County would be particularly instructive for large jurisdictions which want to build upon a base of expertise that already exists, without having to expend an inordinate amount of time and money in developing the basics of the system.

### Development of System

JAILTRAC, on line since September, 1985, evolved from an earlier system that existed in Oakland County that did not meet the needs

of the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department, in conjunction with the county's data processing department, examined several systems before settling on JAILTRAC. Unlike the systems examined from other counties, JAILTRAC is a pre-developed software system, developed by Inslaw, Inc. of Washington, DC. The Sheriff's Department purchased JAILTRAC from Inslaw, Inc., along with the right to modify the software according to the needs of the Sheriff's Department. Thus, a modified version of JAILTRAC is in operation in Oakland County.

### Inmate Tracking and Booking

As with the system's of the other counties examined, JAILTRAC offers excellent inmate tracking capability. Beginning at booking, booking officers enter biographical, custody, arrest, medical, and inmate property information, which results in the printing of booking cards and follows the inmate throughout the system. As with other system's, a name search is initiated to determine whether the inmate had been booked into the jail previously. If it is determined that the inmate had been previously booked into the jail, historical information is updated. This information, and updated information, is used by the classification officials in determining which inmates should moved to which cells, and follows the inmate through release when, as with other counties, holds from other counties are flagged so that an inmate with a hold from another jurisdiction does not leave the jail.

### Management and Statistical Reports

Much like Kent County, Oakland County makes extensive use of regular management reports. Daily reports include an alphabetical roster of all inmates, medical reports for the clinic, and a report of new bookings so that the classification staff will know that these individuals must be assigned a permanent cell. Weekly reports include reports to judges and the prosecutor so they know, for instance, which inmates in jail are of pre-trial status.

Statistical reports are generated through inquiry menus, and through special requests, that provide specific information on the inmate population. For instance, from the menu jail staff can perform some basic cross-tabulations, such as black inmates who are maximum security and on pre-trial status. Such analyses that cannot be accomplished through the menu are easily performed by the county's data processing staff persons who work with the jail.

### Special Features

JAILTRAC has a number of special features. Foremost, it is a very good, already existing, "canned" software system, that certainly meets the needs of an extremely large, urban jail.

Thus, Oakland County has shown that its needs concerning inmate tracking and sophisticated reporting abilities could be accommodated by simply fine-tuning the JAILTRAC product. They did not have to start from scratch, nor re-invent the wheel.

JAILTRAC also is a good example of a large jail's system that is at least minimally interactive with others in the criminal justice system, such as judges and prosecutors. This is probably due in part to the fact that JAILTRAC is developed by the company that created the prosecutor's PROMIS system. In any event, in Oakland County limited access to JAILTRAC is provided to judges and the prosecutor to provide, for instance, the status of bond on a particular offender.

Community Justice Alternatives  
Northwest Michigan  
Booking and Classification Management Information System

contact: David Wells  
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#### Introduction

The Community Justice Alternatives system is the only system examined that is a pure management and statistical reporting system. This system would be of particular benefit for jurisdictions that want to delve into many of the difficult policy questions related to jails, such as how much bedspace do we really need, and how do we tailor new bedspace to the types of offenders that will be in our jails.

#### Development of System

Community Justice Alternatives (CJA) is a 10 county regional community corrections programs in Northwest Michigan. CJA, a private non-profit agency, assists sheriffs in nine jails by providing in-depth needs assessments on jail inmates, substance abuse education services, job skills classes, and referrals to other agencies, such as community mental health. CJA also provides research and technical assistance to sheriffs so that they can better manage their jails.

In order to provide sheriffs and county board members with more and better information on the make-up of jail populations in Northwest Michigan, in the early 1980's CJA began to collect copies of booking sheets. Additionally, after several years of research and testing, CJA implemented in several of the jails an inmate classification system, which, based upon the offense and inmate's history, classifies jail inmates according to security levels. The classification level affects both cell assignment and program eligibility. Copies of the classification instrument are also collected by CJA. (In cooperation with the Department of Corrections and the counties of Macomb and Oakland, the CJA classification system is now being implemented in those



counties.)

Once CJA collects the booking sheets and classification instruments, the data from these are entered into CJA's computer system and management reports are regularly provided to sheriffs and county board members.

### Inmate Tracking and Booking

The CJA Management Information System is not an inmate tracking and booking system. Therefore, it is not discussed here.

### Management and Statistical Reports

The CJA Management Information System's main feature is statistical analysis and reports for county jails. Annual reports, based upon booking sheets, are provided to the jails showing detailed breakdowns of the year's population in terms of average daily population, felons, misdemeanants, race, sex, state and county of residence, prior record, marital status, employment status, judge, offense categories, sentences, early release, reason for release, booking day and hour, and many other factors too numerous to list. Similarly, regular reports, based upon classification instruments, are provided showing the jail's population in terms of whether they are minimum, medium, or maximum security, and breaks such information down according to the month of the year.

### Special Features

The key feature of the CJA system is that it is geared toward research, development, and jail and criminal justice system management. Vivid graphics show sheriffs and commissioners that, for instance, 60% of their jail population is made up of prisoners who are classified as minimum security. This raises the question in the minds of the sheriffs and commissioners of how must these prisoners be housed. If they are minimum security, do they need to be in jail or could they be housed in a work-release annex? If they are to be housed in jail, then should the new bedspace be the more expensive maximum security bedspace, or could it be less costly minimum security bedspace? Similarly, information on the security classification of prisoners in jail, or the most common days and hours for booking inmates into the jail, could assist sheriffs in determining staffing needs.

Information analyzed by CJA goes beyond the jail to affect the rest of the criminal justice system. For instance, in cooperation with the judiciary, CJA has profiled the jail population in Grand Traverse County to identify minimum security inmates with chronic substance abuse problems. This information will allow CJA and the county to begin to develop an intensive

substance abuse day treatment program for those offenders, which may be imposed as a sentencing option in lieu of part of a jail sentence.

Another key feature of the CJA system is that CJA is an independent organization. To the extent that it views management information systems as a priority, it is able to extend that priority to the jails that it serves. While it is able to make management information systems a high priority, jails, particularly small jails in rural counties, may not have the staff or budget to do so. Thus, it is likely that the smaller jails are better served in terms of management information than if this was a direct function of the particular sheriff's department.