

NEWSRELEASE

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Contract for northwest prerelease center awarded

A contract to build and operate a new 40-bed prerelease center in the Kalispell area was awarded Thursday to Community, Counseling and Correctional Services Inc.

The Department of Corrections selected Butte-based CCCS, a nonprofit corporation, from among four proposals submitted by organizations responding to a request for proposals.

CCCS was chosen based on scoring criteria that an evaluation committee used to assess the scope of the project, the qualifications of each offeror and the cost. The contract calls for the state to pay a daily rate of \$84.03 per offender.

Awarding a contract is not the final step in determining whether the prerelease center will open. A public hearing must be held in Kalispell to discuss the possible site and then an independent survey will be conducted to measure local support for the project. After reviewing the survey results, a local committee will determine if the center has public support. Only if that support is found will the project proceed.

The 2007 Legislature authorized creation of a prerelease center in Northwestern Montana, recognizing that region as only one in the state not yet served by such a facility. Prerelease centers help offenders as they transition from prison to communities and those who can benefit from a higher level of supervision in order to avoid prison. Offenders must have jobs and comply with strict restrictions on their movements each day during an average stay of six months. Prerelease residents receive treatment, counseling, education, job training and placement services. About 800 offenders are in six existing prerelease centers in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena and Missoula.

In developing plans for a Kalispell-area prerelease, the department worked closely with local government officials and community leaders, listening to their concerns and answering questions about the project. As with all prerelease centers, a local screening committee will determine which offenders are accepted at the Kalispell facility.

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Historically, Flathead County is the fourth largest contributor to corrections with more than 1,300 offenders in the system. In the past seven years, 899 offenders from Flathead County have spent time in prerelease centers elsewhere in the state. About half of those offenders have moved back to Flathead County after completing their prerelease stays.

“The Department of Corrections’ top priority is public safety and we firmly believe that helping offenders succeed in the communities where they eventually will live is the most effective way to reduce the likelihood of them committing new crimes,” said Kerry Pribnow, prerelease program contract manager. “We feel creation of a prerelease in northwestern Montana is invaluable addition to our ongoing efforts to provide appropriate supervision of offenders throughout the state.”

CCCS operates several correctional facilities in Montana under contract with the department, including prerelease centers in Butte and Bozeman. The company also operates a revocation and sanction center at Warm Springs for offenders who violate conditions of their community placement, a methamphetamine treatment center at Lewistown, treatment programs for felony DUI offenders in Glendive and Warm Springs, and a chemical-dependency program in Butte and Warm Springs.

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