



Jail report: Nearly half of inmates ineligible for bond

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Almost half the inmates at the Curry County jail do not have the option of bonding out.

Jail records show 123 of 289 inmates being held on Jan. 31 — 43 percent — were being held with no bond.

Of those without the option of bond, the majority were state parole violators or probation violators, with another 45 serving sentences locally or awaiting transport to the state Department of Corrections. A small percentage was being held without bond based on the nature of their charges.

Inmates with federal immigration holds — there were 12 — represented just over 4 percent of the jail's population.

The information was provided to the Clovis News Journal last week in response to a request for a one-day roster of inmates that included charges, bond amounts and the court handling the case.

Detention Administrator Keith Norwood said it is common for a large percentage of the inmates in his jail to be probation or parole violators.

Parole violators are state prisoners held by law until their violation can be evaluated but the county has to provide for their care until the courts decide if their parole will be revoked and they will return to prison, or if they will be released.

Similarly, probation violators have to see the judge to determine if they will be sentenced to incarceration.

Norwood said it's hard to give an average for how long the process takes, but said, "Sometimes it takes a while ... (If they can be adjudicated) in a timely fashion that will alleviate some of the overcrowding."

Officials have said overcrowding at the facility has led to growing costs for housing inmates in other facilities and was cited, along with structural security concerns, as justification for a new jail.

In November, voters rejected two bond issues designed to raise \$32 million for construction of a new jail and courthouse.

Norwood said the county is working with the courts to try and schedule regular weekly hearings so judges can review the cases of some of those inmates held on technical violations — such as going into an establishment that serves alcohol, failing a drug test or not being where they're supposed to be — to see if they could be released.

However a portion of them are charged with new crimes and can't be released until their cases get through the system, he said.

Records showed there were 1,106 individual charges booked at the jail on Jan. 31, translating to an average

of four charges per inmate.

Officials believe the date reflects an average day at the facility.

Other information gleaned from the Jan. 31 jail reports:

By the numbers:

1,106 —Charges against inmate population

289 — Inmates at the facility

123 — Inmates ineligible for release with no bond

45 — Inmates serving local sentences or awaiting transfer to state prison

12 — Inmates held for immigration authorities

The courts:

Under state statute, magistrate courts hear the bulk of cases — including traffic, petty misdemeanor, misdemeanor and felonies — and conduct felony preliminary hearings, binding more serious charges over to district court, which serves as a general jurisdiction and appeal court.

Municipal court is tasked with petty misdemeanors, traffic and municipal ordinance violations.

On Jan. 31, charges for which inmates were booked at the jail were distributed between the courts as follows:

- 691 cases were filed in Curry County Magistrate Court, which assigned the following bonds:

Highest: \$400,000

Lowest: \$100

Total: \$5,676,330

Average bond: \$8,214

87 percent of bonds were below \$50,000

- 357 cases were filed in the 9th Judicial District Court, which assigned the following bonds:

Highest: \$400,000

Lowest: \$500

Total: \$4,610,350

Average: \$12,914

71 percent of bonds were below \$50,000

- 46 cases were filed in Clovis Municipal Court, which assigned the following bonds:

Highest: \$641

Lowest: \$157

Total: \$16,022

Average: \$348

Highest bonds

Six inmates had bonds set at \$100,000 or greater, including two charged with child abuse resulting in great bodily harm, two charged with murder, one for shooting at a dwelling and one for multiple charges of failing to appear on charges of battery on a police officer.

Charges per law enforcement agency:

- 748 — Clovis Police Department
- 277 — Curry County Sheriff's Office
- 36 — New Mexico State Police
- 29 — NM Adult Probation and Parole
- 20 — Texico Police Department

Jail budget:

- \$4.2 million to operate the facility budgeted by the county
- \$115,000 contributed by the city this year
- \$374,000 anticipated state contribution this year