

CCCS center revives Glendive

Montana Standard - 12/30/04

Growth of the Butte non-profit Community Counseling and Correctional Service is helping revive Glendive, in eastern Montana, while also expanding statewide drug treatment services in the Butte area.

Glendive suffered after the 2003 Legislature closed the Eastmont Human Service Center for developmentally disabled individuals, which employed about 100 people. Mayor Jerry Jimison compared the loss to Butte losing 700 jobs.

"Probably the first real challenge as mayor of Glendive was the news that the Legislature was going to close the Eastmont training center," said Jimison, who has been mayor for three years.

After Eastmont closed and the patients were relocated to a Boulder facility, according to Jimison, the Montana Department of Corrections considered using the five vacant state-owned buildings. Because of a long-standing relationship, the department contacted CCCS to possibly open a pre-release center there.

"We have been doing business with Community Counseling and Correctional Services for about 20 years, and we've contracted with them for a variety of services, and they have been very good partners," said Mike Ferriter, administrator of the Community Corrections Division for the Department of Corrections.

But the effort to open a pre-release center failed largely because the vacant Eastmont facility sits near a neighborhood that opposed those plans, Jimison said. The Department of Corrections and CCCS then switched gears and proposed a drug treatment center.

Ultimately, Glendive approved a 40-bed felony DUI treatment center that will mainly house women. Applicants will be admitted to the six-month program after being screened by a panel composed of law enforcement officials, elected representatives, Department of Corrections staff and townspeople.

"It doesn't come close to what we lost, but it's something we can grab and grow with," Jimison said.

CCCS Chief Executive Officer Mike Thatcher of Butte said the Glendive program was named after its Warm Springs DUI treatment facility and will be called WATCH East. It is expected to create 22 new jobs in Glendive and open Feb. 1, 2005.

"I'm confident that within a year we will be able to establish our credibility (in Glendive)," Thatcher said. "We want to be a good partner, and we want people to know what we are doing."

The new Glendive facility will not increase the number of beds the state offers to treat felony DUI offenders through CCCS — the state's only felony DUI treatment provider. That's because 40 of the 140 total beds available are merely being transferred from the Warm Springs facility to Glendive.

However, the 40 vacant beds in Warm Springs will be used to double the number of beds the state offers through CCCS for a 60-day drug treatment facility. That program is called Connections Corrections. It is based in Butte and differs from the WATCH program by offering services to people addicted to all types of drugs instead of only alcohol.

Expanding the Connections Corrections program is the central aim of relocating felony DUI offenders to Glendive, Ferriter said. The need for that expansion is apparent by the 100 people on a waiting list to enter that program, officials said.