

# NewsPress

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Stillwater, Oklahoma

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## County opens new jail

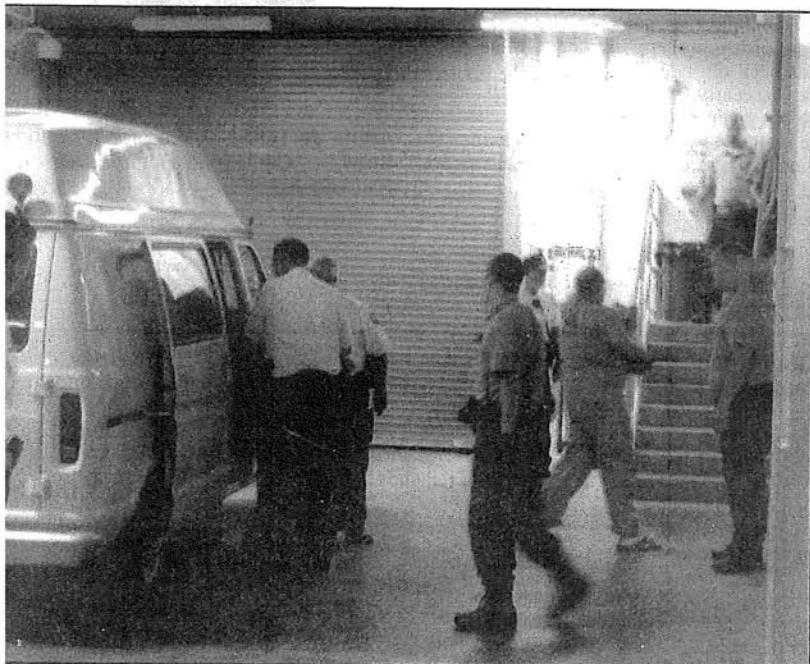


Photo by Monique Headley

County Sheriff's Office personnel transport inmates Wednesday into the new County Jail.

• Sheriff's Department moves inmates into new space Wednesday afternoon

By Monique Headley  
Stillwater NewsPress

The first wave of Payne County Jail inmates were transported yesterday at about 2:30 p.m. via partitioned passenger van to the newly constructed Payne County Jail.

While individually handcuffed, about 30 inmates, each with personal effects in a brown paper bag, were moved two blocks from the jail annex on Duncan Street and Ninth Avenue to the new jail's interior vehicle bay on Seventh Avenue. Immediately following, an additional 70 inmates were moved in small groups from the main jail underneath the Payne County Courthouse building to the adjoining new facility.

The entire move was completed in about four hours, and there were no incidents, said Patricia Benavidez, Payne County Jail

Detention Officer.

"Over the last three to four weeks, we started a planning process to determine how best to move prisoners. We considered prisoners, the personnel required and the best methods to use," said Sheriff R.B. Hauf.

About 24 law enforcement personnel were involved in the maneuver, he said. Mutual aid from other agencies was not requested.

Though the inmates knew a move would take place, said Hauf, "the inmates had no knowledge of the move date due to security reasons." They were notified shortly before the move began, he said.

"It is not a very far move to the new jail, but we had to consider the manpower and where to have different personnel positioned," he said.

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As a courtesy and security measure, he said, "we did notify the Stillwater Police Department in the event of any problems ... Every precaution has been addressed and planned."

According to architect Billy Knowles of BKL Inc., the high-tech facility cost \$18.2 million dollars to build and has a capacity of 284 inmates.

Previously, Knowles said the next phase in the project will be renovation of the rest of the courthouse. After July 6, the former main jail in the basement is scheduled to be demolished and converted for dispatch use, lockers, patrol offices and evidence storage. Phase three is set for five to six months later when sheriff and district attorney offices will move to the first floor of the building.