

**TO:** Professors Andrea Armstrong and Nishi Kumar

**FROM:** Madison Leveque

**RE:** "Better Know a Jail" Memo

**DATE:** November 7, 2022

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## **Lafourche Parish Detention Center**

### Introduction

The Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex began operations in January 2019. It replaced the Lafourche Parish Detention Center which is now permanently closed.<sup>1</sup> Originally built in 1976, the facility held about 245 inmates. The new complex houses more than 500 inmates and will focus on rehabilitation and reducing the rate of recidivism. It serves as the long-term holding facility (jail) for the Parish of Lafourche, City of Thibodaux, Town of Lockport, and Town of Golden Meadow. It also houses inmates arrested by Port Fourchon Harbor Police, Louisiana State Police and other state and federal agencies.

### Jail Characteristics

The Correctional Complex project was completed as a joint venture with Duplantis Design Group. The project size is 120,000 square feet and it was completed in 2018.<sup>2</sup> Construction began in 2016 after parish residents in 2014 approved a 0.2 percent sales tax for the project.<sup>3</sup> Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex is a secure facility with 600 beds that accommodates pretrial detainees and sentenced inmates.<sup>4</sup> The facility supports comprehensive reentry initiatives related to education; mental health care; medical care; drug and alcohol use/dependency; domestic violence; technical and vocational training, and more according to the website, <https://ghc-arch.com/portfolio/justice/lafourche-parish-correctional-complex>. Facilities include inmate intake and processing, a work release program, a video and contact visitation area, a commercial kitchen and cafeteria, and education and rehabilitation classrooms. Staff-focused areas include property storage, maintenance and administrative offices, a secure sally port and an onsite water treatment plant. To increase security, the facility is

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lpsso.net/about-lpsso/departments/corrections/lpcc/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dailycomet.com/story/news/2019/10/05/lafourche-jail-wins-national-award/2603488007/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.houmatoday.com/story/news/crime/2018/12/20/lafourche-opens-new-jail/6402222007/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ghc-arch.com/portfolio/justice/lafourche-parish-correctional-complex>

organized around a central spine that separates housing units from areas such as the library, commissary, and dining and laundry facilities. This ensures inmate movement is streamlined and easily monitored. Dormitories feature double bunks around the perimeter with single bunks in the middle, giving the security desk within the dormitory full visual access. Partial walls behind the single bunks create a headboard, while desks and chairs on the opposite side of the walls give the inmates extra personal space to work or study. The dormitories also include detention-grade couches, elevated televisions, and a secure outdoor recreation yard with basketball courts that is accessible 24 hours a day. Housing classifications range from maximum security to open dormitories. A special housing unit for more challenging or higher-risk inmates includes interior game tables and a secure outdoor recreation area.<sup>5</sup> Inmates in the new facility will have greater autonomy, living in open dorms of about 50 people, with recreation and other activities available throughout the day. They will be able to go to the medical or visitation rooms of the building, all with direct supervision

The Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office uses Tiger Correctional Services to provide inmate commissary. This allows inmates to purchase items while they are incarcerated such as snacks, beverages, and hygiene items. It also offers online ordering. Through their website, you simply choose the facility and find the inmate's name. You can either place an order for the inmate or deposit money into the inmate's account for future purchases.<sup>6</sup>

Video visitation is available through ICSolutions.com.<sup>7</sup> An inmate is limited to one 15-minute visit. Multiple visitors (up to 2) must meet with the inmate together – no separate visits. Special visits and Child visits are set up and approved by the Correctional Complex administration and visitors who have been previously incarcerated must wait 120 days after release before they are allowed to visit an inmate. Near the visitation area are two family rooms where inmates could one day be able to spend the night with their children, putting to use the skills learned in parenting classes.<sup>8</sup>

The facility also includes a large medical wing and triage centers in the male and female dorms.

The department already has more than 40 soft skill programs that educate inmates about things like parenting, job interviews and earning high school or higher education credits. Students from Nicholls State University will help lead some of these programs in the new facility.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ghc-arch.com/portfolio/justice/lafourche-parish-correctional-complex>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lpsso.net/about-lpsso/departments/corrections/commissary/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://thevisitor.icsenforcer.com/index.php/jail-information/74-lfula>

<sup>8</sup> <https://duplantisdessigngroup.com/projects/lafourche-parish-correctional-complex/>

Located on the website of Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office website, The VISION and MISSION of the Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex (LPCC) are to provide and ensure a safe, secure, efficient and constitutional, new-generation facility. This facility shall serve and protect the community, the staff, and the inmates while seeking to return a productive citizen to our community through the use of technology, innovation, and comprehensive rehabilitative and re-entry initiatives. The LPCC shall provide a humane parish-wide confinement facility for inmate intake, pretrial detainees, and sentenced inmates. The facility shall be operated in compliance with the Constitution; federal, state, and local laws; controlling jurisprudence; Department of Correction's rules and regulations; and appropriate professional standards, customs, and practices.

The LPCC shall work toward the accomplishment of these goals through innovative, credible, and reliable strategies to include programs, services, and opportunities in the following areas: education; mental health; medical care; jail ministry/religion; drug and alcohol use/dependency; family support systems; domestic violence; technical/vocational; and other meaningful alternatives.<sup>9</sup>

Because the facility is so new, I have been unable to find current demographics of the facility. The last reports published were in 2015.

### Public Records Request and Inmate Mortality

Mike Jimenez, the Chief Legal Officer of the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office is the records custodian for the Correctional Complex and the Transitional Work Program. He was the first custodian to respond to my Public Records Requests that I sent out in the beginning of the semester. For the Correctional Complex, he informed me they had not submitted any of the forms I had requested to the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics for the time period indicated, (2019-2022). In the interest of full-disclosure, he did inform me that there were two natural-cause deaths during the time period (2020-Present) and I could purchase the reports for \$14.44. Once the payment has been received, he would mail back the document to my mailing address. I still haven't received the document as of yet.

### Jail Leadership

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.lpsso.net/about-lpsso/departments/corrections/lpcc/>

Under Sheriff Webre's leadership, the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office achieved National Accreditation under the watchful eye of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In 2015, the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office was re-accredited with excellence – CALEA's "Gold Standard" for accreditation. Then in 2020, the Training Academy and Communications Sections were accredited, resulting in Tri-Arc Accreditation status with CALEA. In addition, the LPSO Transitional Work Program maintains National Accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The new Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex, which began operations in January 2019, initially achieved ACA accreditation in 2021.<sup>10</sup> The new facility is under the direction of the warden, Capt. Contrell Davis, a 20-year veteran of the parish jail.<sup>11</sup>

### Jail News Coverage and Transparency

On September 16, 2022, Parish officials said an inmate escaped from the Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex. 23-year-old Leroy Miles Jr. squeezed through a drainage opening after removing the metal cover with assistance from one or more inmates, as well as a person or persons outside the facility. The opening was about the size of a regular manila envelope, meant to allow rainwater to escape. He put soap on his body to reduce friction while squeezing through the 8 to 10-inch pathway.<sup>12</sup> The agency sent an alert Saturday at 10:20 a.m., saying Miles had been recaptured and that more details would be provided later.

The Sheriff's Office said Miles was booked into the Lafourche Parish Correctional Complex on Sept. 4 after being arrested by the Lockport Police Department for aggravated flight from an officer and obstruction of justice.

He was also being held on charges of second-degree murder and aggravated second-degree battery for Lafayette Parish and attempted second-degree murder in Terrebonne Parish.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.lpsso.net/about-lpsso/sheriff/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.houmatoday.com/story/news/2010/11/09/new-warden-appointed-at-lafourche-parish-jail/26947029007/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.wvlv.com/article/news/local/lafourche-terrebonne/sheriff-reveals-design-flaw-allowed-inmate-to-escape-lafourche-parish-correctional-complex/289-0e07f7ab-5632-488f-b163-02af5be4daae>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fox8live.com/2022/09/17/authorities-recapture-inmate-who-escaped-lafourche-parish-jail/>

