

TO: Professor Andrea Armstrong and Professor Nishi Kumar
FROM: Courtney Blevins
RE: "Better Know a Jail" Memo
DATE: November 28, 2023

Assumption Parish Jail Memorandum

Introduction

The Assumption Parish Jail is located off Highway 1008 on the outskirts of Napoleonville. The original Assumption Parish Jail was thought to be established around 1880 in downtown Napoleonville parallel to the Courthouse which was built in 1896. Both buildings were on a large parcel of land facing Bayou Lafourche, but the view has since been obstructed by other surrounding structures.¹ The previous sheriff, Mike Waguespack, was elected in 2000, and after re-certification in 2013, the jail experienced issues with compliance until 2018. In 2016, Sheriff Leland Falcon took the position of Sheriff and with new leadership and major operation adjustment, the Assumption Parish Jail was granted a new three-year certificate in compliance with state health and safety guidelines for correctional facilities.² The Assumption Parish Jail belongs to the corrections division of Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office and is under the supervision of Warden Shawanda Lemon.

Jail Characteristics

The Assumption Parish Jail is a medium-security facility located at 233 Hwy 1008 in Napoleonville, Louisiana. The jail has direct supervision and correctional officers interact with inmates. The facility is capable of housing 108 male inmates, 128 in the case of emergencies, with juvenile and female arrestees being housed at separate facilities in the surrounding parishes.³

The facility was built in 1982 and houses inmates for Assumption Parish. The Jail is on the outskirts of Napoleonville primarily housing men awaiting trial or those with sentences lasting a year or less. The jail is designed in a "pod" layout, arranged around an outdoor yard. Each pod contains a central control station and a common room for inmates. The layout of the jail is to keep certain inmates together and others away from the general population.⁴

For the day-to-day operations the jail has a staff composed of a commander, 4 sergeants, 8 officers, and transport personnel.⁵ Since the jail is primarily for pre-trial persons and minor offenders, the jail provides programs for religion, education, and volunteer service.⁶ Of the

¹ [National Register of Historic Places](#)

² [The Advocate - Assumption Parish Jail clear of past noncompliance](#)

³ [Assumption Parish Corrections Division](#)

⁴ [Jail Layout Details](#)

⁵ [Jail Staff Details](#)

⁶ [Jail Staff Details](#)

inmates at Assumption Parish Jail, several are assigned to the Trustee Detail.⁷ Those inmates are assigned to work daily within the facility and various locations in the community.⁸ The work done outside the jail includes services like maintenance and upkeep of parish property.⁹

Inmate Composition

The Jail has a capacity of 128 beds.¹⁰ It houses only male inmates, sending juveniles and females inmates to the surrounding parishes. It is unclear who all is being held at Assumption Parish Jail as the inmate list has over 200 persons listed, including female inmates, which are not held in Assumption Parish Jail.¹¹ The facility is primarily for pretrial inmates and minor offenders with sentences of less than one year.¹²

The list of current inmates can be accessed from Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office main website at.¹³ On home page in the center there is a section titled "Quick Links" and the option "Public Portal." The link will direct you to the public portals the sheriff's office maintains, including "Current Inmates." This link will redirect you to the current inmates for Assumption Parish Jail, however, it is unclear if all persons listed are housed at the jail as the list contains female inmates, which are not housed in Assumption Parish Jail. The Sheriff's Office also issues media releases available on the Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office Facebook page with recent arrests, including name and charges, and wanted persons.¹⁴

Visitation is allowed if you are on an inmate's visitation list, which they fill out upon booking and processing into the Assumption Parish Jail. The inmates are typically permitted to receive social visits from 7:30 am to 9 pm on weekdays, and 7:30 to 2:30 pm on weekends. To deposit money into an inmate's commissary, you can deposit the money at the kiosk in the lobby during a visit via cash, credit, or debit cards, or via Tiger Commissary where you can deposit into their account or order items for the inmate.¹⁵

Public Record Request and Inmate Mortality

The Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office website is simple to maneuver. When on the home page, you can scroll to the bottom where there is a list of personnel and locations with included contact information for the Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Leland J. Falcon, Administrative Office, Criminal Investigation Division, Narcotics Division, Juvenile Division, Communication Center, Detention Center, and three Substations. Public records are requested through the

⁷ [Corrections Division](#)

⁸ [Corrections Division](#)

⁹ [Corrections Division](#)

¹⁰ [Corrections Division](#)

¹¹ [Inmate Roster](#)

¹² [Inmate Composition](#)

¹³ [Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office](#)

¹⁴ [Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office Facebook](#)

¹⁵ [Tiger Commissary](#)

Administrative Office, however, nothing on the Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office website specifically states where to request public records.

My experience with Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office has been pleasant. On August 28, 2023, I requested form CJ-9 from the years of 2020 to August 2023. I emailed the Director of Human Resources and received a response that they were looking into the documents and information requested. A short while later I received a follow-up email stating that there had been no deaths that occurred within the Assumption Parish Jail during the period requested. I then asked for a Zero Death Letter on Letterhead, which simply states that there have been no deaths at the facility during a specified time frame and received that promptly.

Jail Leadership

Sheriff Leland Falcon was elected sworn into office in May 2016 and re-elected without opposition in 2019. Sheriff Falcon was a graduate of the Louisiana State Police Basic Training Academy and served as a Deputy Sheriff of Assumption Parish and joined the Louisiana State Police in 1990 as a Uniform Patrol Officer. He served in many different positions over the years until running for Sheriff in 2015. Since being elected, Sheriff Falcon has implemented Assumption Parishes New Sex Offender and Child Predator Registry and served on the Interagency Council on the Prevention of Sex Offenses, as well as reduced the backlog in the Bureau of Criminal Identification.

The Warden of the jail is Shawanda L. Lemon. The jail is managed by the Assumption Parish Sheriff's Department personnel, and operations are overseen by Warden Lemon. Warden Lemon has over 43 staff members and corrections officers that are responsible for the well-being of all inmates and visitors that come through the jail. With several individuals arriving needing medical care to some degree, correctional officers are tasked with getting a person seen for treatment of their injury or illness.

Jail Oversight

The state's Legislative Auditor's Office is responsible for auditing Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office annual financial report. The state's Legislative Auditors Office website makes these reports available for the public.¹⁶ It should be noted that the cost of maintaining and operating the Assumption Parish Detention Center is paid by the Police Jury and those expenditures are not included in the financial report.

The Louisiana Department of Corrections provides oversight for the Assumption Parish Jail. The Department of Corrections requires the Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office to submit CJ-9's every year. Further, the Department of Corrections is responsible for data collection and surveys of local jails, including Assumption Parish Jail. The Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE) sets the requirements for training through the Peace Officer Standards and

¹⁶ [Financial Report - Year Ended June 30, 2022](#)

Training Council (POST). Sheriff Falcon began implementing an in-house correctional officer P.O.S.T. approved training academy, which was the first of the kind under his administration.¹⁷

It is unclear how to file a complaint about the Assumption Parish Jail. The Assumption Parish Sheriff website includes a public portal for citizen feedback, but nothing specifically states how to file a complaint regarding the jail.¹⁸

Notable Complaint

In 2018, Edward Murphy Jr. of Labadieville was pulled over for a routine sticker inspection and arrested on charges of driving with an expired inspection sticker, driving with a suspended license, and DWI. While on the way to the Assumption Parish Jail, Mr. Murphy notified the Louisiana State Trooper of a heart condition which required him to take medicine three times a day. The Trooper stopped by Mr. Murphy's home to grab the medication and told the Sheriff's Office about his condition and medication requirements. The lawsuit claimed the jail did not provide Mr. Murphy with his heart medication and ultimately Mr. Murphy went into cardiac arrest and collapsed in his cell not even 12 hours after being booked. Mr. Murphy's mother filed a Federal Lawsuit against the Jail and several Assumption Parish officials.¹⁹ In late 2019, a Federal Judge dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice, and left the only place of relief to be a state lawsuit.²⁰

¹⁷ [In-House Training](#)

¹⁸ [Citizen Feedback](#)

¹⁹ [Mother Sues Assumption Parish Jail](#)

²⁰ [Wrongful Death Suit Tossed from Federal Court](#)