

BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL

Jailer's approach to corrections recognized by Chamber of Commerce

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Barry Brady isn't actually a businessperson, but the Marion County jailer has taken a business-like approach to running the Marion County Detention Center. He frequently speaks of ways to be more efficient and about the need to market the jail to outside agencies. His approach is also the reason he was named the 2012 Outstanding Businessperson by the Marion County Chamber of Commerce.

"His performance and its effects definitely affect the private sector - and every taxpayer in Marion County," Marion County Judge/Executive John G. Mattingly wrote in his nomination of Brady.

Brady said working as the jailer has been his "dream job," but the Chamber award was overwhelming.

"I'm honored and humbled," he said.

Brady has worked in corrections since 1986. He started working in the private prison system with U.S. Corrections and later Corrections Corporation of America. While much of his private experience was at Marion Adjustment Center, he also spent time in correctional facilities throughout the country.

Outstanding winners

The 2012 Outstanding Award winners were recently announced at the Marion County Chamber of Commerce's annual awards banquet. This is the first in a series of stories about the award winners.

Jailer

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Adjustment Center, he also spent time in correctional facilities throughout the country.

"I've always felt real comfortable in this business," Brady said.

Brady did not anticipate rising to a leadership role. As he gained more experience and learned from working alongside other corrections professionals, he worked his way up the ladder.

In 2002, he decided to pursue a different job and ran for the office of Marion County jailer. He won and took office

in 2003.

"We had a good jail operation when I got here," Brady said, "but it had so much more potential for excellence."

Mattingly noted in his nomination that Brady ran the detention center for more than seven years without any funding from local taxes. Mattingly also pointed out that the average county jail requires \$250,000 to \$500,000 in general fund spending, and Marion County has been spared that expense throughout much of Brady's tenure.

Since taking office, Brady has constantly looked for ways to bring additional revenue into the jail from outside the county. In 2005, Marion County was one of nine jails

in the state to implement a substance abuse program.

"We continued to feed off that," Brady said.

Through contracts to house prisoners and inmates for neighboring counties and state and federal agencies, the detention center has also generated enough revenue to operate and to pay for improvements along the way. Under Brady's leadership, the jail has made a variety of capital improvements, including a training building, a camera surveillance system, an enclosed sally port, a retractable roof over the outdoor exercise area, and computerized control panels. The culmination of Brady's efforts may have come in the spring of 2011,

when the Marion County Detention Center became the first county jail in Kentucky to be accredited by the American Correctional Association.

Brady said the jail employees - "the backbone" of the detention center - are the reason that was possible.

"The staff bought into it," he said. "They worked with me side-by-side."

Meeting national standards has meant going above and beyond the minimum state requirements. One example of this is training. The state expects all corrections workers to have 16 hours of training each year, but the staff at the Marion County Detention Center receive 40 hours of training annually.

Although ACA re-accreditation audits only happen once every three years, Brady and his staff will be conducting internal audits each year to make sure they are continuing to meet national standards.

"They don't just follow," Brady said. "They actually participate. They let me know what works best for the jail."

Because of recent changes in state law that allowed more prisoners to gain early release, county jails throughout Kentucky have seen a decline in revenue. As a result, the Marion County Fiscal Court has had to provide funds for the jail during the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Brady and his staff have been proactive in pursuing

opportunities to replace the lost income. Within the past few weeks, they succeeded in increasing the number of beds devoted to substance abuse programs. Previously, the county jail had 42 beds for treatment program participants, but they have received approval to increase that to 128 beds.

In light of Brady's past efforts, Mattingly expressed confidence that Marion County would "weather the storm" created by the recent declines in state revenue and eventually get back to its self-sustaining status.

"These are all possible because of the foresight and vision of Barry Brady," Mattingly wrote.