

## **Report calls for inmate transfers**

**By Tory Newmyer Staff Writer**

A consulting firm will recommend heavier use of the Silverdale Workhouse to alleviate overcrowding at the Hamilton County Jail.

Consultants for the South Carolina-based Carter Goble Lee Associates in the next two weeks will present to the Hamilton County Commission their final draft of a top-to-bottom judicial study, according to Jeannine Alday, county chief of staff.

Seven months after they were hired, the consultants also will recommend increased use of in-house arrests and community programs to help empty the perennially packed county facility, County Commissioner Larry Henry said. "We're not necessarily talking about turning these people loose, but we've got to utilize some of our options," said Mr. Henry, chairman of the commission committee that recommended the \$109,000 study. "I think the study has been well worth it — it showed us where we needed to improve the system itself."

The Hamilton County Jail was built in 1974 to hold up to 489 prisoners, but has consistently held more than 150 prisoners over capacity for many years, officials said.

Bruce Orenstein, head of the consulting team, said he was charged with reining in the jail's headcount.

"I've certainly seen a lot worse, but on the other hand, I've seen better," Mr. Orenstein said. "I've made recommendations that would enhance efficiency to get people through the system without releasing people."

He said the report called for "fine-tuning, not wholesale changes."

Carter Goble Lee personnel interviewed officials from the jail, sessions and criminal courts, the U.S. marshal's office, city courts and the community corrections program over a three-day period in early April, officials said.

Using information gleaned from the interviews and county reports, the consultants submitted their first draft in August. They since have completed two more revisions, Ms. Alday said.

Hamilton County Sheriff John Cupp said he has not seen the most recent draft but is anxious to read the findings. "I am thrilled this has finally come to pass, and I'm just anticipating the results," he said. "Whatever they recommend, I'll certainly go along with them."

The Silverdale Workhouse is constructing a 128-bed addition, which Mr. Henry said would be complete by the end of the year.

According to the report, Mr. Henry said, the addition would allow the postponement of any new construction until 2010. Mr. Orenstein said the report includes a suggested process by which county officials can implement the firm's recommendations.

"There's a lot of stuff that's no-brainers, but sometimes implementing isn't as easy as you might think," he said. "I don't expect that to happen here." E-mail Tory Newmyer at [tnewmyer@timesfreepress.com](mailto:tnewmyer@timesfreepress.com)



Larry Henry