

Old Main Revitalization

"Respecting Our Past to Create a Better Future"



"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things."

— Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci wasn't just an artist, he was a visionary. It can be difficult to see someone else's vision and even harder to stand with them to accomplish it. So let's be clear from the beginning, if you never want to rock the boat, always order vanilla, and spend most days trying not to have an opinion on anything, this vision is not for you. But, if you are a fighter, passionate about what you believe in, a visionary, then you will want to keep reading.

What's led us to our vision, started out as a nightmare. "Old Main" is prison whose violent past echoes in its now cold and empty halls. But we have an opportunity to change that prison's purpose, to take it from just being the site of tragedy, to a place of opportunity.



Old Main was built in 1955 and opened in 1956. The facility shut its doors in 1998.

On February 2, 1980, inmates frustrated with overcrowding, lack of job skill and educational programming and poor treatment by officers, took control of the Penitentiary of New Mexico. It started small, with offenders overpowering 4 officers. Within 22 minutes they had control of the whole prison. Inmates, armed power tools obtained from a cellblock under construction, used them on other inmates to torture and maim; eventually murdering 33. At the same time, they also held 14 officers hostage. Some were unharmed while others were stabbed, beaten and raped.



36 hours later the violence was over, but the emotional and physical scars would never heal.



In the thirty plus years since the riot occurred, the New Mexico Corrections Department has strived to address those issues that caused this tragedy and create a balance of social control and social support. Inmates must acknowledge that they are accountable for their actions, but we must ensure we offer them a chance for a better life. Lets be clear, the goal is to transition offenders who have been tax liabilities to contributing taxpayers, to take inmates with real world transferable skills and convert them into real world business owners who assist in the recovery of our economy, to cause offenders, who have previously selfishly exploited society, to confront the positive influence of service to the communities they formerly victimized.

We know that an good economy is intimately connected to the safety of its citizens. Success with our recidivism reduction and inmate programming ideas means a safer community and a better economy in the long run. The New Mexico Corrections Department runs 11 prisons housing approximately 7,000 inmates across the state and is in charge of supervising approximately 16,000 offenders on probation and parole. 96% of inmates in our custody will return to our communities. Of those, 46% will reoffend in 3 years. That's simply not good enough.

33 inmates were murdered and 14 corrections officers held hostage in the 36 hour riot.

Conventional and historical thinking on the issue of crime and recidivism suggests that in the span of a sentence to prison, the government can remedy all the preexisting education, socio-economic and psychological causes that precedes the crime and felony conviction. This is because in the past, government has been unwilling to look outwardly for solutions and collaboration with others to create community centered collaboration for community center social problems.

The Old Man reflects a paradigm shift for corrections paralleled only by the former shifts in law enforcement thinking that led to the community policing era. We are asking for your influence and partnership to ensure that changes made in an offenders life while in prison are meaningful, useful, and transferable to the real world. We want to create law abiding citizens who buy homes in good neighborhoods instead of breaking into them, who send their kids to college instead of continuing the cycle of dropping out of high school, who shop at local grocery stores or retail malls instead of stealing from them.

Rehabilitating offenders is intimately tied to the economy. Unlike a job or housing market report that can cause the markets to spike or dip on a moments notice, the rehabilitation of offenders is much less talked about, but I would argue just as important. Reducing our current recidivism rate by just 10% would save taxpayers more than \$8 million dollars alone. On top of that, more than \$40 million could be saved in victimization costs.

Think about the impact of that kind of money in the economy. These numbers are just a simple reflection of police, courts, prison and victimization costs. But these figures can't even begin to measure the boost to the economy that a productive, law abiding citizen adds to our state.

A drop in crime would increase the public's feelings of security and safety. We know that when people feel safe they are more likely to spend money, invest, open new business, etc. Your partnership in the Old Main Revitalization project is really an agreement to make our community a better place where citizens are spending more money, including with your company.

So how do we reduce recidivism? Well, we know the two greatest factors to keeping offenders from reoffending is connection to family and employment.

The average inmate in NMCD's custody has less than a high school education and will now face a job market where they will be competing against non-felons for the same positions. We have taken a critical thinking approach to inmate programming and recidivism reduction. Inmates are now assessed for their inherent work and life skills and then are placed in programming to compliment those skills. We aren't just making smarter criminals, we are providing the tools and education to help offenders create their own business when they leave prison.

Giving an offender the tools to create their own business is essentially giving them a fresh start. Offenders will be more invested in the businesses success, will be more likely to give other offenders a hand up in the future and contribute to rebuilding our economy through the vital small business models that America was founded on.

With your partnership, we will use Old Main to create entrepreneurship opportunities for our inmates, educate the public about the corrections system and begin to take the burden off taxpayers to provide inmates programming. The building itself provides maintenance, landscaping, electrical, and a variety of opportunities for inmates to learn transferable skills.

We know what caused the riot, and with your help, we can use Old Main to actually provide programming and opportunities that inmates in 1980 wanted. Imagine having an offender made meal in the mess hall. Sounds interesting to a visitor, but it's so much more. It's an opportunity to expand our culinary program, to teach offenders how to run their own restaurants, delis or even small scale food truck.

Or, would you like to get your hair cut by an inmate barber at the Old Main Barber Shop? A quick snip or trim would be a fun story for a visitor to share, but it will give our barber program a new avenue to get inmate barbers real world experience and interaction. When offenders leave prison it only takes \$50 a year to keep their license valid, they can work as much as they like and be their own boss.

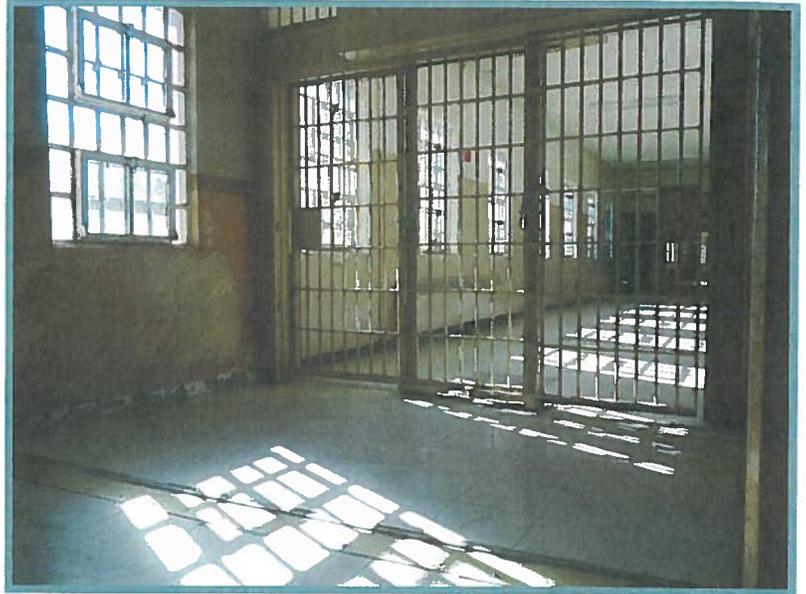


How about leaving the tour with an inmate made painting, hand carved oak bench or intricately crafted jewelry box? Our inmate hobby craft area will be a gift shop for visitors to buy inmate products. These inmates will be taxed on their sales, just like in a real business. Some of the money will go to victims organization, some back to that offender's children to support them and some will be put in a savings account for the offender to have when they leave prison. What is left will be used to buy their supplies and tools. This program will also have strict requirements; so much clear conduct, a written business plan, an outline of products to be offered.

We need your partnership to put these visions into reality. There is a five year plan for the facility, but some of these project, like the Inmate Hobby Craft, will be up and running by next summer. The facility is old, it needs repairs and a rough estimate would run us into the millions. We have decided that taxpayer money will not be used for this project. Every dollar spent by visitors to tour the prison will go right back into the revitalization fund.



You may be wondering how much interest there really is to visit an old prison? The response we have had is almost overwhelming. Last year, for New Mexico's Centennial celebration, Secretary Gregg Marcantel opened the old prison for the first time for public tours. What was supposed to be a once a month free public tour, booked up in a matter of days. The Secretary agreed to add a second day in the month, and again, those tours were full in a few days.



This October, the New Mexico Corrections Department opened the facility again for public tours; what we called "Preview Tours" at \$10 a ticket. These tours were scripted based on the Attorney General's report after the riot, news reports from the time and survivor accounts. We asked visitors for their feedback and the comments were enlightening and insightful. But, here was the most important part for us, visitors made it clear that they understood our mission, "Remembering our past to create a better future", and they agreed with our plans.

"Preview Tours"
hosted in October
cost visitors \$10 a
ticket. More than
500 people took part
in the tours.

Remembering our past means respecting and honoring the officers and murdered inmates from that night. Remembering that the human spirit is indomitable and an over abundance of social control will only end in tragedy. Remembering that we have a responsibility to every person involved in that riot to never let it happen again. Creating a better future defines our attitudes toward out-of-the-box approaches to reducing recidivism.

We also used these tours to educate and interact with visitors about our prison system today. To often people think that sending someone to prison means they are locked up and forgotten about. That is simply not true; offenders just don't disappear into oblivion once the gavel comes down on their sentence. We have been able to use time on the tour to explain to visitors how often offenders will return to society, what we do to try and prepare them, and what part they play as law abiding citizens. It's only when we get people talking about what happens in prison and why we should care about educational and life skills programming for inmates that we break down the theoretical walls that have been built by society that tells them what happens to an offender after a guilty verdict isn't important.

Since our October tours have ended, we have received emails, phone calls and even facebook messages asking when tours will resume again. We have set a goal to host a dozen or so more tours in 2014. We will up ticket prices, between \$15-\$20, and will be offering more Saturday tours. For right now, our biggest hurdle is the roof. It needs to be replaced and we are currently working on creating a partnership that would allow our inmates to learn roofing skills, get real work experience by fixing Old Main, be certified at the end of the program and even be connected to potential employers through our partnership so they can obtain jobs when they leave prison.

Some of our other goals include: Renovating and opening other areas of the prison, such as the infirmary. Re-painting and reconstructing some areas to look like they did in 1980. Restoring electricity to the facility.

These are separate from our inmate programming and opportunities goals but are naturally intertwined with each other. We will need you to make both work and when it does, a mark will be left on our prison system, our society and our state. This is a chance for us to reach out and ask for your help, and for you to take part in something that is truly innovating and inspiring.

If you would like to partner with our organization to sponsor renovations at the facility, a monetary gift will be honored with a permanent "Thank You" brick carved by our offenders. We can work out logistics on how we can make it worth your donation. Your organization's logo will also be displayed shown to visitors as one of our "Penitentiary Partners". We have different levels of partnership:

PARTNERSHIP LEVELS

White Stripe Partner	A monetary donation of \$500 - this distinction comes with the "Thank You" carving in a standard brick size and your organizations name in a list of White Stripe Partners.
Silver Stripe Partner	A monetary donation of \$1,500 - this distinction comes with the "Thank You" carving the width of two standard bricks and your organizations name in a list of Silver Stripe Partners.
Gold Stripe Partner	A monetary donation of \$5,000 - this distinction comes with the "Thank You" carving the width of four standard bricks and your organizations name in a list of Gold Stripe Partners. Your organization's logo and name will be displayed on a banner to hang in the facility no less than one year.
Platinum Stripe Partner	A monetary donation of \$10,000 - this distinction comes with the "Thank You" carving the width of four standard bricks and your organizations name in a list of Platinum Stripe Partners. Your organization's logo and name will be displayed on a banner to hang in the facility no less than two years.



You decided to read this paper because in the beginning, you heard from a visionary. Now that you have heard our vision and how it deeply impacts you, I'd like to leave you with wisdom from another creative man who's visions have inspired children to dream and achieve.

"Unless someone like you comes around, things will never change."

— Dr. Suess



Secretary Gregg Marcantel
4337 New Mexico 14,
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87508
Phone: (505) 827-8884

Alex Tomlin
Public Affairs Director
(505) 249-8023
alex.tomlin@state.nm.us

