

# Report: Prisons to be less crowded

Gov. Nelson announced that by the year 2000, more resources should exist.

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior staff writer

Nebraska prisons will be less crowded by the year 2000, according to a prison population study released Tuesday.

Gov. Ben Nelson attributed the decline in projected prison population to the construction of new facilities and stiffer crime control measures.

"The forecast shows we'll have the resources needed beyond 2000," Nelson said.

The most recent study, completed in July 1996, projected the state prison population at 4,419 inmates in

the year 2000.

But with some changes in legislation and crime rates, this year's projections put the 2000 prison population at 3,707.

Nebraska's crime and growth rates have leveled off in recent years, and the Legislature has changed some sentencing laws, all of which contributed to fewer inmates, Nelson said.

Nebraska prisons are now operating at 146 percent of their designed capacity, Nelson said.

And if this year's projections hold true, Nebraska's prisons will be down to 112 percent of their designed capacity by 2001.

Steve King, Department of Corrections research and planning director, said prisons usually operate 20 to 40 percent above their design capacities at an occupational capacity level.

Prison capacity has been increased over the past few years with the addition of two new housing units at the state penitentiary and more beds in prisons statewide.

The construction of the new prison in Tecumseh and a work camp in McCook will help alleviate overcrowding, Nelson said.

Also, this year's study does not include the community corrections programs being developed across the state, King said. Community corrections programs offer an alternative to prison for nonviolent offenders.

"Community corrections is still in its infancy," King said. Nebraska communities still are submitting plans to develop community corrections programs.

With these numbers, Nelson said Nebraska may not have to invest in additional prisons until after the turn of the century.

# U.S. veterans remember past service with pride

VETERANS from page 1

For Gallardo and Wilson, Veterans Day gives the nation a chance to share in that pride.

The holiday got its start on Nov. 11, 1918, at 11 a.m. when Western nations signed an armistice in Versailles, France, that ended World War I.

In ceremonies around the world, unknown soldiers who died during what was then considered the most deadly and devastating war ever were buried in places of national significance: Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.; under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris; and in Westminster Abbey in London.

Those ceremonies celebrated the peace after World War I, which was coined as "the war to end all wars."

Congress named Nov. 11 Armistice Day in 1926 and made it a national holiday in 1938 - the same year Adolf Hitler's Nazi troops invaded Czechoslovakia, setting up the world for its second international conflict within 25 years.

After the death of thousands of troops in World War II and the Korean War, then-President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill making Nov. 11 Veterans Day - a day to remember the men and women who gave all or part of their lives to represent the United States in its military pursuits.

The day also recognizes those who served in more recent battles like the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War.

But Wilson and Gallardo said younger generations are out of touch with the meaning of war and what it means to respect the nation's veterans.

Wilson said the blame falls on the public school system, which has failed to teach what it means to fight a war during a period of relatively little international conflict.

Max West, who served 27 years with the U.S. Air Force, said policy-makers and politicians also disrespect veterans by taking back promises to provide health care and other needs to soldiers who have returned home.

West, a World War II veteran, said the United States' lack of economic support for homeless or impoverished veterans shows how little the younger generation understands lessons of the past.

Wilson also said the federal government, made up of baby boomers and politicians from those younger generations, is selling its veterans short.

"That tells us that the government can make promises, and with the stroke of a pen they can take them away."

Those problems are on the minds of VFW members Wilson, Gallardo and West as they travel across the state to speak at civic ceremonies and public school convocations today.

Nevertheless, Veterans Day remains an important part of highlighting the soldiers' selfless service to their country and nation, they said.

Wilson said presentation of the Stars and Stripes, singing of the national anthem and recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance show more than token support for the thousands of war veterans in the United States.

"Despite our faults, we still live in the greatest country there is," he said.

"There's just so many things the younger generation doesn't understand."

# UNL activities to promote Native American Month

EVENTS from page 1

Library and continues through Dec. 12.

The exhibit, which will have an accompanying symposium Saturday, has been in the planning stages for months and was not planned specifically to go along with Native American Month celebrations, said Linda Ratcliffe, spokeswoman for the Center for Great Plains Studies.

But Jones said students should take advantage of the coincidence and attend the exhibit and Saturday's symposium, which run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will feature lectures on different aspects of the photographs.

Other features of the month are the Pow Wow and Native American Speakers Day, which is being held in conjunction with Red Letter Day for American Indian high school seniors.

The event brings together six American Indian leaders who work in a variety of fields, said Amy Bearskin, organizer of the event.

The speakers will provide insight to American Indian students and give other students a chance to understand the American Indian culture beyond everyday stereotypes, Bearskin said.

The culmination of all the events will be the UNITE - University Program Council sponsored Pow Wow at the Nebraska Union beginning Nov. 21 and running through Nov. 29.

Jones said that while attending events during Native American Month and celebrating American Indian culture is important, people should participate in any activity that raises awareness about another culture.

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