

**Creek County will keep at least some of its taxes by choosing a company that builds jail cells in the county.**

**KEEPING IT IN THE COUNTY**

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SAPULPA -- A Drumright company is giving Creek County taxpayers a return on their money.

Dozens of steel cells are being installed in the new county jail, each one made by the Sweeper Metal Fabricators Corp. in Drumright.

The prefabricated cells were made by Sweeper's 49 employees, according to Yvette Schiffmacher, Sweeper's president.

Sweeper is a subcontractor to Lambert Construction Co. of Stillwater, which is building the \$7.4 million jail in the Otis Rule Industrial Park northeast of Sapulpa.

Creek County voters approved a one-cent county sales tax in November 2001 to build the 300-bed jail, which will replace a crowded, dungeon like jail adjacent to the Creek County Courthouse.

And Sweeper Metal Fabricators is getting \$2 million of the jail's costs for its cells.

Sweeper is somewhat of a secret to all but construction companies building new jails across the nation.

The company, which started in 1987, has earned a reputation for building compact, sturdy cells and has built some 400-plus jails and prisons nationwide, Schiffmacher said.

"We've never had complaints or legal issues" about our cells, she said.

Its cells have been used in facilities ranging from a maximum-security federal prison in Atlanta to a minimum-security facility at Riker's Island, N.Y., a company brochure says.

Dick White, chairman of the Creek County Public Facilities Authority, which is overseeing the jail's construction, said officials are pleased that Lambert was the low bidder on the jail.

"We're doubly pleased that a Creek County company got a big portion" of the jail work, he said.

"That worked out well for everyone," said White, who admitted that he had never heard of Sweeper until architects told him about the Drumright company.

Drumright City Manager Ed Tinker said Sweeper is a prominent industry in the county.



An idea that cells  
James Frazier of Sweeper Metal Fabricators Corp. helps guide a prefabricated jail cell into place at the new Creek County Jail. Each cell weighs 6,000 pounds and is painted and ready to occupy once plumbing and electrical systems are attached.  
STEPHEN HOLMAN / *Tulsa World*

"They're a quiet outfit," he said. "They just do their thing" of building cells for export across the nation.

Tinker said Sweeper's cells for Creek County's jail will keep part of the penny sales tax and many jobs in Creek County.

Sweeper's modular jail cell is essentially a steel cage, complete with steel bunks anchored to steel walls. Eventually, mattresses will be placed on top of the bunks.

Each cell is delivered with a toilet, lavatory and wall-mounted desk and stool.

All the jail has to do is hook up plumbing and electrical systems and install locks, said Bill Knesek, Sweeper's vice president for sales. Knesek was on site last week when Sweeper began delivering and installing the first of 64 cells for the jail.

Each cell can hold two inmates. The cells are prefabricated to specifications and trucked to the Sapulpa jail site. Each cell is lowered into the jail by cranes and secured in its predetermined spot. In Creek County's jail, eight cells -- four on the first floor and four above on a second floor -- will comprise a pod.

The jail will have seven pods for maximum-security inmates. Outside each cell pod is an open area with tables and stools for the inmates to gather when not in their cells. Each pod is monitored from a central security station from which guards can watch activity in all the pods. Each cell has 80 square feet. That meets Oklahoma jail standards calling for 60 square feet for one inmate, plus 20 additional square feet for a second occupant, Knesek said. Similar cells have been used in other Oklahoma jails, including in Bryan, Payne, Lincoln and Grady counties, he said.

Jack Carpenter, Lambert's construction superintendent, said a steel roof will enclose the cell pods within the next two weeks after all the cells are installed. Carpenter said the jail is about 40 percent completed and should be finished by August, weather permitting.

Workers are erecting walls on the separate dormitory in which minimum-security inmates will be bedded without cells, with segregated areas for men and women.