

## FACT SHEET ON THE PROPOSED PRISON IN FLORENCE, COLORADO.

The United States Penitentiary at Marion, located in Southern Illinois, opened in 1963 to replace Alcatraz, which closed that same year. Marion is the highest maximum security prison in the country, the only one with a "level 6" security rating. Marion is also the only U.S. prison that has ever been condemned by Amnesty International for violating the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Despite this international condemnation, Marion has become an experimental laboratory and trendsetter for the entire federal prison system.

Since 1983, Marion Prison has been in a state of permanent "lockdown." Prisoners are locked in their cells for 22.5 hours a day, and all standard vocational, educational and recreational activities are virtually nonexistent. The cells are 8' x 10' and contain a tv, bed, toilet and sink. Prisoners are forced to sleep, eat and defecate in their cells. They are also forbidden to socialize with each other or to participate in group religious services. Those who misbehave (an arbitrary determination made by the guard on duty) in their cells may be tied spread eagle and naked, on their concrete slab beds. At other prisons, a typical lockdown may last several days to a week. At Marion, however, the lockdown is permanent, and the entire prison has been transformed into a "Control Unit." The objective is absolute physical and psychological control over the prisoners.

In early 1990 the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) announced its decision to open a new maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado. Marion is no longer brutal enough. The prison in Florence will be designed so that one guard can control the movements of numerous prisoners in several cellblocks by way of electronic doors, cameras and audio equipment. "We'll be able to electronically open a cell door, shut it behind the inmate, and move him through a series of sliding doors" says Russ Martin, project manager for the Florence prison. Presently, at Marion, the prisoners can scream to one another from their cells; prisoners have minimal contact with guards when their food is shoved between the bars. In Florence, this "contact" may be eliminated. "These guys will never be out of their cells, much less in the yard or anywhere around here," the Florence City Manager states. State-of-the-art security technology and new construction materials will ensure near complete isolation. Martin claims, "Marion learned from Alcatraz, and now we've had 30 years to learn from Marion."

Ground was broken for the \$150 million complex in July, 1990. The giant prison complex (600 acres) in Florence, a town about 50 miles west of Colorado Springs, will consist of four different level security units: a 250-bed minimum security facility, a 750-bed medium security prison, a 550-bed high security penitentiary similar to Leavenworth, and a 550-bed "administrative maximum" security prison far worse than Marion prison. Two units are scheduled to open in 1992 and the other two in 1993. Rough grading (the leveling of trees, etc.) began in September 1990.