Western State Hospital
Center for Forensic Services

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Department of Social and Health Services
Mental Health Division

CI Proves Expertise Fulfilling High-volume, Custom Order

Although Western State Hospital (WSH) had plans to construct a new Center for Forensic Services (CFS), those plans were expedited after the 2001 Tacoma area earthquake caused the whole top floor of the former Legal Offender Unit (LOU) to shift. Washington State Correctional Industries (CI) was selected to fulfill the furniture needs of the new facility that replaced the LOU.

These unfortunate circumstances provided CI with an opportunity to showcase its ability to competently fulfill large orders of highly-customized products under pressure. Unexpected challenges outside of their control put CI's new management and communication structures to the test. Nonetheless, CI's staff and crews produced and installed all elements of the project on time and delighted CFS officials with high-quality products and first-rate services.

The Center for Forensic Services is a 240-bed residential facility for offenders of the criminal justice system who need to be evaluated and treated for mental illness prior to trial. As such, furniture needs of the facility required significant considerations for safety and security, including rounded corners, the ability to be bolted down, restraints on beds and other safety features. Furniture also needed to be extremely durable and reliable.

Correctional Industries was challenged with delivering all furniture needs for residential and administration areas of the Center. These elements included conference rooms, offices, visitation rooms, locker rooms, patient bedrooms, nurses' stations and day rooms for the offenders. Because of the required safety and security measures needed, detailed planning of furniture needs began long before construction of the facility was complete.

"They came through in more than flying colors. It's a pleasure doing business with CI."

- Jennifer Vein, WSH

Four Person Square Table (Spider Base)

Dayroom and Nurses Station

Among the products installed at the Center for Forensic Services was a series of spider-base tables for the cafeteria. These tables, built at Correctional Industries' Washington State Penitentiary facilities in Walla Walla, were constructed of rugged 12-guage steel tubing welded together at the joints. Seat supports extended from the tables' center in spoke-like fashion, and each table arrangement was securely bolted to the cafeteria floor upon installation.

Logistical Challenges Elevated CI Staff to New Levels of Coordination and Cooperation

The size of the Center for Forensic Services order and the short time span available in which to design and build all the custom furniture for the facility challenged Correctional Industries' logistical capabilities. Sales representative Susan Smith coordinated efforts from all divisions of CI and helped facilitate communication between hospital officials and CI production and design staff. Designers, supervisors and production managers met with hospital officials regularly to ensure that CI products met all of the facilities needs, safety standards and security precautions.

"All of their production managers would come in at a moment's notice," said Jennifer Vein, the hospital representative who oversees furniture needs for the facility. "They had a lot of good input. They would give us the good and the bad (feedback on furniture selections), and they were always willing to try new ideas."

The coordination and effort involved in fulfilling the CFS project represents a milestone for CI, proving its ability to fulfill even the largest orders, despite high quantities of custom work and high-pressure deadlines. "This was the largest project I had ever worked with CI on," Vein said. "CI was excellent. They really banged out everything."

All of CI's furniture for institutional use is highly resistant to wear and specially designed to minimize potential hiding places for contraband, including capped tubes and welded steel joints.

Multipurpose
Wardrobe Closet

Security and Safety Require Customized Products

All furniture in the dormitory areas had to be designed specifically for use with the Center's unique offender population. Steel beds were adapted so that drawers underneath could not be removed. Patient restraints had to be fitted to each bed and a special water-proof lining was designed to prevent the steel frames from being rusted out by bodily fluids. Special hardwood desks with attached chairs and wardrobe units were designed so they could be bolted to the concrete walls in each room. CI staff took particular care to find specialized bolts that offenders could not unscrew, assuring that the furniture would remain in place and that the offenders and staff would be safe.

Training Room

Despite Installation Obstacles, CI Earns Customer's Approval

Not everything went smoothly with the Center for Forensic Services project. While Correctional Industries' designers and manufacturing crews made sure the furniture fit all specifications of the building's architects, construction of the actual building deviated from blueprints in several places. This was particularly troubling in the patient bedrooms where windows varied from design specifications in seemingly random dimensions.

As a result, nearly all of the custom desks and some of the wardrobe units had to be altered on site in order to make them fit. Despite the unexpected challenge, CI's installation crews completed the job on time and hospital officials state that they were "exceptionally pleased" with the results. "They pretty much rolled with all the punches," Vein said. "They came through in more than flying colors. It's a pleasure doing business with CI."

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Dakota Stacking Chairs
(Dolly stacks up to 45 chairs)

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CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES MISSION STATEMENT

As a business, Correctional Industries is committed to maintain and expand offender work training programs which develop marketable job skills, instill and promote positive work ethics, and reduce the tax burden of corrections.

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