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## **Supermax security prison promises unpleasant stay; [FINAL Edition]**

**Pantagraph.** Bloomington, Ill.: Jan 27, 1997. pg. A.7

### **Abstract (Summary)**

TAMMS (AP) - The warden of the super-maximum security prison being built in a soybean field north of this Southern Illinois community has a simple message for inmates elsewhere in the state prison system.

"Privileges that were routine at other facilities won't be available here," says Warden George Welborn of Tamms Correctional Center.

Welborn plans to throw open the doors of his \$70 million-plus hostelry in December. The guests will be the orneriest inmates in the system - too tough for maximum-security prisons at Stateville, Pontiac and Menard.

### **Full Text (444 words)**

*Copyright Chronicle Publishing Company Jan 27, 1997*

TAMMS (AP) - The warden of the super-maximum security prison being built in a soybean field north of this Southern Illinois community has a simple message for inmates elsewhere in the state prison system.

This isn't a nice place to visit. And you wouldn't want to live here.

"Privileges that were routine at other facilities won't be available here," says Warden George Welborn of Tamms Correctional Center.

"This is meant to be hard time and it should be hard time," says Welborn. "The prisoners will have earned their way in here and they will have to earn their way out. They won't want to come back."

Welborn plans to throw open the doors of his \$70 million-plus hostelry in December. The guests will be the orneriest inmates in the system - too tough for maximum-security prisons at Stateville, Pontiac and Menard.

Accommodations won't exactly rival the Ritz-Carleton.

Prisoners will be locked in their cells 23 hours a day. Cell doors will be electronically operated from control rooms with bullet-proof glass.

Prisoners will be able to exercise, one at a time, in a 15- by 30-foot area with no recreational equipment.

They will have no televisions or radios in their cells in their first six months at Tamms. After that, they can buy them if they have made no trouble.

Prisoners will be fed in their cells and escorted in handcuffs by two guards when they visit the doctor or see a visitor.

There won't be any guard towers. That's in part because there won't be any group activities that would require watching from a tower.

"This prison is about security," says Welborn, who has been with the Illinois Department of Corrections for two decades and was warden of Menard for four years. Prisoners will "not be put in a situation where they will be around other prisoners."

The prison will house up to 500 inmates who have assaulted guards or other prisoners - the bottom of the correctional barrel.

Prisoners will remain at Tamms for at least a year. After that, they will be evaluated for transfer elsewhere. "Some will never leave here," Welborn says. But he wants some to go elsewhere and spread the word that Tamms should be avoided if at all possible.

Also within the razor-ribboned perimeter at Tamms: an execution chamber.

There will be no death row. The condemned will be delivered to Tamms by helicopter or van from Pontiac or Menard when their time comes.

Executions are handled the same way now, with the condemned being transported a day or two ahead of time to Stateville. Once Tamms opens, it will have the state's only execution chamber.

Credit: AP

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