

I am trying to rationalize the reason for the closing of the Botetourt Correctional facility by the Virginia Department of Corrections that will move 350 or more inmates, cost jobs of 60 employees and the relocation of 61 correction officers.

Was it a matter of saving money? **Camp 25** had been under budget for the past 20 years, and had the lowest food costs of any facility.

According to the DOC Web site, these features are listed for Botetourt **Camp 25**:

It provided substance abuse therapy to inmates who need it.

It had installed trailers for use for its literacy program, allowing those in the facility to work on their GED, giving them the opportunity to better themselves when they were released.

It had a pen pals program. It also provided Pet Pups programs for the inmates, with St. Frances.

The facility was constructed in 1960, with site additions and upgrades in 1990, with the unit laundry, commissary and mess hall, along with expansion of the recreation yard. Additional housing for inmates was also added at that time, which totals approximately 350 to 400 inmates.

And it constructed greenhouses to grow foods for use at the **prison** to further reduce the cost of operations to the **state**. All it needed to do at this point was install the heaters to make them operational for the year.

Last, but certainly not least, its location was within 15 miles of excellent medical facilities for those inmates requiring emergency medical attention.

Now, let's look at these facts. The **state** has a facility at Cold Springs in Greenville, houses 113 inmates, built in 1953, with no inmate programs. Patrick Henry in Ridgeway was built in 1967, houses 136 inmates, with no inmate programs. Wise in Coeburn, built in 1964, houses 108 inmates, again with no inmate programs. This information is from the DOC Web site also.

Together, that's approximately 350 inmates. You would think that closing three facilities -- with maintenance, upkeep, food services, transportation and heaven only knows what else to keep them going -- would have been more economical. I would be interested in knowing what criteria they used to determine that **Camp 25** would be the least cost effective?

In the governor's grand scheme, does that make sense? At a time when families are consolidating, moving in together, can't Virginia DOC do the same? Is the savings going to be more by closing one unit, as opposed to closing three? A unit that offers more to the inmates for rehabilitation.

Perhaps Dels. Morgan Griffith, Lacey Putney or Onzlee Ware would provide some input on this

decision. Were they consulted? Did they make an effort to prevent the closing of this unit? Could this be a political maneuver, rather than one based on good sound economic judgment?

Noell, of Hardy, is a manager of the Vinton Bookkeeping & Tax Service in

Vinton.

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

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