

Welcome To 'Hotel 254'

New Atlanta Jail

By Stan Washington

Long recognized as one of the top convention centers in the country, Atlanta offers visitors a choice of top hotel chains with some of the finest accommodations in the country. Just one Marta train stop south of the convention district at the end of famous Peachtree street lies a new multi-million dollar facility with far less comfortable accommodations.

Welcome to "Hotel Two-54", the new Atlanta Detention Center, where you won't find little chocolates on your pillow at night and checking in is easier than checking out.

Mayor Bill Campbell, city council members and corrections officials proudly dedicated this state-of-the-art, 882 bed jail Tuesday amidst freezing temperatures and 25 boisterous homeless advocates protesting the jail's opening.

Ceremonies were delayed for more than 30 minutes as city and police officials discussed whether or not to make the demonstrators organized by the Atlanta Union of the Homeless and Empty Shelters, the first "guests" of the new facility. The small group of demonstrators feel that the new jail is another component of the city's war against the homeless. The group's leader and Police Chief Beverly Harvard reached an agreement, the demonstrators stayed and some even toured the \$56 million mega-jail.

With the public's demand for more longer, tougher prison terms, building additional expensive detention facilities is a costly venture facing many large and small metropolitan municipalities. For this reason Campbell is pleased that the two-year project came in ahead of schedule and under budget.



"Hotel 254", the new Atlanta Detention Center is set to open Feb. 1, 1995.



Atlanta City Councilwoman Debbie Starnes listens to a homeless advocate who feels the jail was built to house the homeless during the Olympics in 1996.

The city estimates that more than \$1.6 million in construction costs were saved by implementing the "direct supervision" management concept which places correction officers in constant direct contact and control of inmates. According to corrections officials, this concept eliminates the need for costly security barriers, fixtures and finishes throughout most of the facility. In addition, inmates are grouped in 48 and 56-bed, self-contained units that can be efficiently managed by

one officer which minimizes the need for staff to frequently move about the facility.

Gwinett County is the only other jail in the metro Atlanta area which uses the direct supervision concept. Atlanta Corrections officers were trained by the Gwinett staff.

The jail was constantly lauded as being far more "humane" and more "efficient" than the current 50-year-old obsolete city prison which is set to be closed.

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The Atlanta Detention Center

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Councilman Michael Bond, a former city corrections employee applauded the new facility as being "humane" for corrections officers.

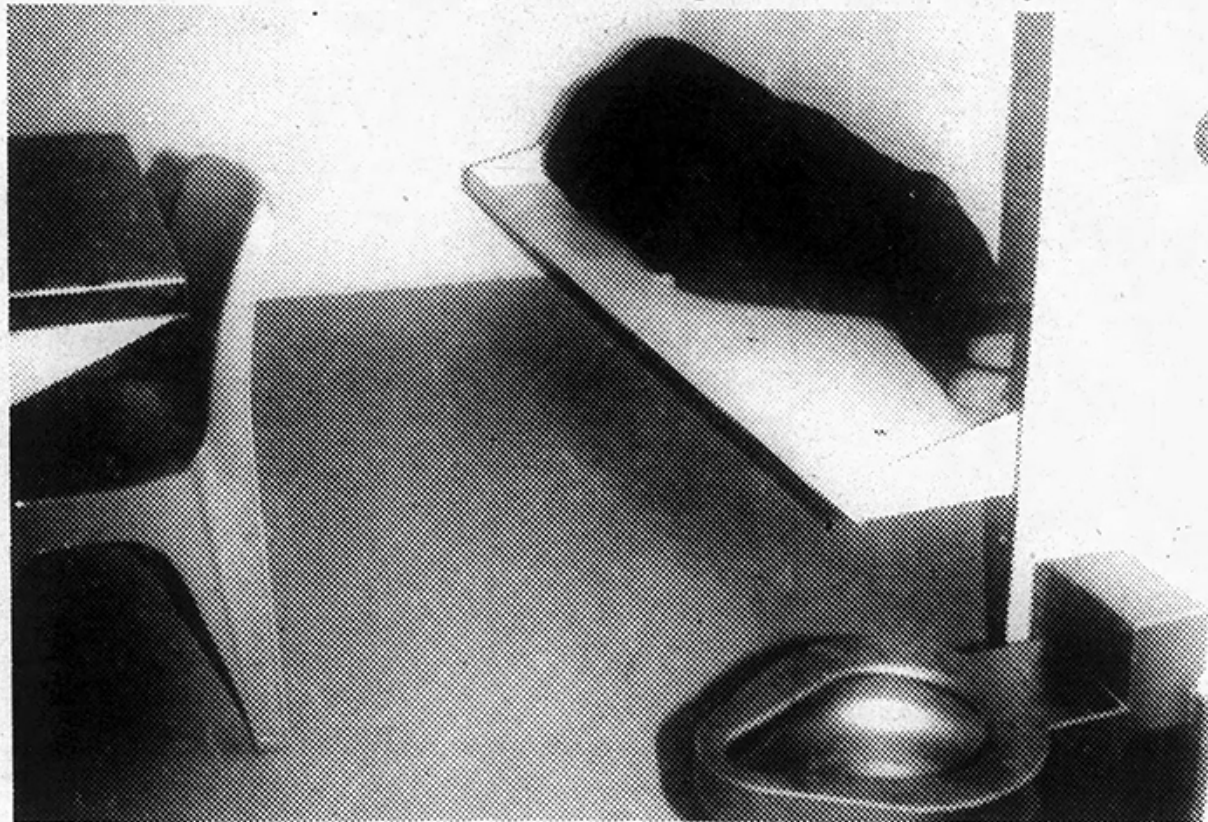
"This building is a tribute to those employees who

will work here and help keep all us - the guilty and the unjustly accused safe," Bond said.

The facility which can be expanded to 1,100 beds will also feature such technological advances as video arraignment and prisoner

photo imaging and expanded inmate rehabilitation programs, including literacy training, GED instruction and drug counseling, testing and treatment.

"Hotel 254" is scheduled to receive its first guests on February 1.



Cold-blooded, ruthless news reporter takes a break in one of the maximum-security cells while touring the jail. He refuses a mattress.



The medium-wing of the mega-jail. The jail can house between 882-1,100 inmates

NEWS BRIEFS

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CDC Warns Oil Can Harbor Botulism

Foods such as roasted eggplant kept unrefrigerated in oil may harbor dangerous bacteria among their exotic flavors, federal health officials warned.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported on cases of botulism, a severe type of food poisoning that can lead

to paralysis. The cases occurred in 1993 in Italy, among people who had eaten a particular brand of roasted eggplant sold only in that country.

The CDC blamed the cases on the preparation of the eggplant, which allowed a bacteria to grow and produce the botulism toxin.

Because preserving food at home is so popular in the United States, the U.S. has the highest reported rate of botulism in the world. There are about 20 cases of food-borne botulism a year, resulting in fewer than 10 deaths.