

Delivery alert until NaN

MDC getting \$13.9 million in energy upgrades

By Martin Salazar / Journal Staff Writer

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Inmates stand outside their cells in a typical pod inside the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center. (Dean Hanson/Albuquerque Journal)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Bernalillo County's Metropolitan Detention Center is getting \$13.9 million in energy upgrades, and the county says money saved on utility bills as a result of the improvements will be enough to cover most of the cost.

Commissioners voted unanimously this month to enter a so-called guaranteed energy performance contract with Yearout Energy Service Co., a New Mexico firm also known as YESCO. Under the contract, YESCO is guaranteeing that the savings produced by the project will be sufficient to cover the cost.

On tap for MDC:

- A comprehensive LED lighting upgrade.
- Replacement of the aged heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment.
- A complete overhaul of the energy management system.
- Repairs and replacement to the roof.
- Repairs to the sanitation system.
- Enhancements to the landfill gas heating system.
- Installation of a 1.5-megawatt solar photovoltaic system.

The county will kick in \$2 million in direct funding for the project, with the remaining costs to be paid by utility savings.

YESCO, which conducted an investment grade audit of MDC, is projecting that the upgrades will reduce MDC’s energy consumption by 32 percent and to save the county 47 percent in utility costs for the 500,000-square-foot jail. The county is expecting to save \$472,000 on MDC’s electric bill and \$23,000 on the jail’s natural gas bill during the first year alone, said Kerry Bassore, a project manager in the county’s Fleet and Facilities Department.

“It’s not only going to save energy, but the jail was getting to the point and age where some of these systems were going to require work or replacement pretty soon anyway, like some of the HVAC systems,” Bassore said. He said another benefit is that the detention center will be reducing its carbon footprint through these upgrades.

“We’re glad to see that it’s finally going to construction,” Bassore said. “It’s going to be a big benefit as far as energy savings up there.”

YESCO plans to begin construction in January, although heavy activity isn’t expected to start until February.

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