

# Leavenworth could become hub for immigration detention

By ZANE IRWIN  
Kansas News Service

LEAVENWORTH, Kan-  
sas — Nestled into the  
crook of a wooded two-  
lane highway on the  
edge of northeast Kan-  
sas, a complex of con-  
crete and barbed wire  
sits mostly vacant — for  
now.

For over a decade, the  
Leavenworth Detention  
Center held federal in-  
mates awaiting trial. But  
that chapter closed in  
2021, when then-Pres-  
ident Joe Biden signed  
an executive order that  
caused many federal  
contracts with private  
prisons to expire.

Now CoreCivic, one of  
the country's largest pri-  
vate corrections compa-  
nies, wants to reopen  
the more than 1,000  
bed complex in Leaven-  
worth as an immigrant  
detention center.

THE DORMANT facil-  
ity would adopt a new  
name, the Midwest Re-  
gional Reception Cen-  
ter, and a new mission:  
to boost regional capac-  
ity for President Donald  
Trump's push to deport  
millions of people in  
the country without leg-  
al status.

But a lawsuit stands in  
the way of CoreCivic's  
proposal. Under local  
ordinance, the city of  
Leavenworth argues  
CoreCivic needs to fol-  
low a formal process  
to receive permission  
before it can reactivate.  
The company insists  
those rules don't ap-  
ply to them because, in  
their view, the facility  
never closed.

On the surface, it's  
a mundane matter of  
statutory interpreta-  
tion. But for the groups  
who oppose CoreCivic's  
plan to reopen the de-  
tention center, it's a  
fight to protect their im-  
migrant neighbors and  
keep traumatic memo-  
ries of the troubled pris-  
on firmly buried in the  
past.

FORMER corrections  
officer William Rogers  
remembers where he  
was when an inmate  
slashed his head open  
with a blow from a met-  
al lunch tray.

Squinting into the  
sunlight, he pointed at  
a slate-gray building  
scored with tall, narrow  
windows. Behind that  
same unbreakable glass  
in 2018, he said, an in-  
mate started to threaten  
a case counselor.

“Man, I'll hit a wom-  
an. Don't think I won't,”  
Rogers recalls the in-  
mate saying.

He reported those  
threats and started to  
transfer the inmate to



William Rogers worked as a corrections officer at CoreCivic from 2016 to 2020. He's a vocal critic of the plan to reopen the facility as an immigrant detention center. ZANE IRWIN/KANSAS NEWS SERVICE

a different unit. That's  
when the man decided  
to take his anger out on  
Rogers instead.

“When he hit me in  
the back of the head —  
I mean, it hurt. But I  
didn't know it was split  
open,” he said. “Because  
at that point you're just  
going to fight.”

Rogers finished his  
shift that day with 14  
staples in his head.

THAT WAS ONE of  
three instances in Rog-  
ers' four years at the fa-  
cility when an inmate  
assault sent him to the  
emergency room. De-  
spite the violence he and  
his colleagues endured,  
Rogers doesn't place all  
the blame on inmates  
who lashed out.

He said understaff-  
ing created unbearable  
conditions for detain-  
ees. Coveted recreation  
hours dwindled without  
enough officers to run  
them. The same prob-  
lem arose for staff that  
helped set up phone  
calls, manage commis-  
sary money and provide  
basic needs like cloth-  
ing.

“They're just in that  
pot all day brewing,”  
Rogers said. “How do

you think they're going  
to act?”

A 2017 audit of the fa-  
cility by the U.S. Depart-  
ment of Justice found  
that chronic under-  
staffing by CoreCivic,  
coupled with poor over-  
sight by the U.S. Mar-  
shals Service, created  
dangerous conditions  
for inmates and staff.

At one point, accord-  
ing to that report, nearly  
a quarter of the facility's  
jobs sat vacant. Recent-  
ly-hired staff were as-  
signed to fill roles they  
weren't trained for.

Staff put three in-  
mates in cells designed  
for two — and then tried  
to cover that up. Entire  
units went unsuper-  
vised.

## Public notice

(First published in The Iola Register April 18, 2025)

On behalf of USD 257 Iola, DCS  
Services LLC will be soliciting bids  
for concrete improvements at Iola  
Middle School. Interested parties  
should contact DCS Services  
at 316-869-1008.

We encourage participation  
by disadvantaged small and  
minority businesses and women's  
business enterprises.

(4) 18, 25

## Public notice

(First published in The Iola Register April 25, 2025)

IN THE THIRTY-FIRST JUDICIAL  
DISTRICT COURT  
ALLEN COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of  
WANDA CARLEEN BROOKS,  
Deceased

AL-2022-PR-000033

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION  
FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL  
PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are notified that a Petition  
has been filed in this Court by  
Teresa R. Brooks, duly appointed,  
qualified and acting Adminis-  
trator of the Estate of Wanda  
Carleen Brooks, deceased, pray-  
ing Petitioner's acts be approved;  
account be settled and allowed;  
the heirs be determined; the  
Estate be assigned to the persons

entitled to it; fees and expenses  
be allowed; costs be determined  
and ordered paid; the adminis-  
tration of the Estate be closed;  
the Administrator be discharged  
and Petitioner and the Surety on  
Administrator's bond be released  
from further liability.

You are required to file your  
written defenses to the Petition  
on or before Tuesday, May 20,  
2025 at 11:30 a.m. in the District  
Court, Allen County, Kansas, at  
which time and place the cause  
will be heard. Should you fail to  
file your written defenses, judg-  
ment and decree will be entered  
in due course upon the Petition.

Teresa R. Brooks, Administrator

HEIM LAW OFFICES, P.A.  
424 North Washington Avenue  
Iola, Kansas 66749  
(620) 365-2222  
Attorney for Petitioner

(4) 25 (5) 2, 9

### CHAPTERS OF THE

American Civil Liberties  
Union from around the  
region made more ex-  
plicit accusations about  
the facility in a 2021  
letter urging the White  
House to ensure its clo-  
sure.

“Stabbings, suicides,  
and even homicide have  
occurred with alarm-  
ing frequency in the  
last year, with weapons,  
drugs, and other con-  
triband now a common  
occurrence,” the letter  
said.

It continued, “food  
has been restricted,  
contact with legal coun-  
sel and family denied or

## Public notice

(Published in The Iola Register April 25, 2025)

FINANCIAL REPORT				
For the period from January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025				
Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Ending Balance	
General Fund	549,695.11	3,878,722.28	(3,151,727.31)	1,276,690.08
Police Crime Donation Fund	10,752.22	500.00	-	11,252.22
Police Seizure Funds	28,793.17	284.25	-	29,077.42
Special Alcohol and Drug	32,355.10	795.56	-	33,150.66
CITF Fund	46,228.80	1,795.00	-	48,023.80
Industrial Fund	219,224.89	60,072.10	(21,658.00)	257,638.99
Police Calendar Fund	3,609.03	-	(850.00)	2,759.03
Copenning Trust Fund	1,153.91	-	-	1,153.91
Tourism and Convention Fund	33,203.94	17,361.54	-	50,565.48
Employee's Benefit Fund	827,422.20	412,450.18	(413,329.06)	826,543.32
W.N. Greene	18,728.78	32.24	-	18,761.02
Fire Insurance Proceeds Fund	18,290.41	106.25	(7,527.62)	10,869.04
Kansas Sales Tax Fund	120,943.32	114,098.04	(90,944.28)	144,097.08
Library Fund	44,169.74	147,636.22	(135,140.88)	12,495.34
Special Trafficway Fund	832,468.44	44,169.74	-	876,638.18
Stormwater Fund	793,197.78	17,770.00	(2.00)	810,965.78
Gas Fund	1,253,450.58	1,809,240.75	(1,418,807.71)	1,643,883.62
Water Fund	594,956.85	699,936.62	(562,062.95)	732,830.52
Electric Fund	6,804,897.25	2,555,953.15	(3,240,916.41)	6,119,933.99
Stores Fund	61,100.27	120,863.99	(130,524.54)	51,439.72
Solid Waste Fund	189,936.30	103,339.25	(112,647.46)	180,628.09
Joseph & Mary Wolf Fund	24,447.11	475.76	-	24,922.87
Wastewater Fund	301,150.35	272,438.09	(308,347.01)	265,241.43
Recreation	48,193.41	125,732.45	(113,262.46)	60,663.40
Equipment Reserve Fund	3,229,000.72	329,928.81	(136,816.47)	3,422,113.06
Major Non-Street Projects	1,914,204.49	276,913.75	(290,167.31)	1,900,950.93
1998 Comprehensive Street Program	2,520,886.98	150,887.89	-	2,671,774.87
Water CIP Fund	-	-	-	-
Electric CIP Fund	1,674,595.54	16,817.61	-	1,691,413.15
Waste Water CIP Fund	481,676.98	-	-	481,676.98
Recreation CIP Fund	104,031.44	5,604.76	(1,453.45)	108,182.75
Gas CIP Fund	278,472.65	-	-	278,472.65
TOTALS	23,017,068.02	11,163,926.28	(10,136,184.92)	24,044,809.38

OUTSTANDING BONDS			
GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS:			
Water Plant	305,000.00		
TOTAL CITY OF IOLA OUTSTANDING BONDS	305,000.00		

Kathy Green  
Kathy Green, Treasurer



iolaregister.com/archives

THE IOLA Register ARCHIVES

THE IOLA Register

302 S. Washington Ave.  
Iola, KS 66749  
620-365-2111 | iolaregister.com

Published Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, except  
New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day,  
Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Subscription Rates

	One Year	6 Months	3 Months	1 Month
Mail in State	\$180.14	\$100.10	\$56.71	\$20.39
Mail out of State	\$211.05	\$113.65	\$67.15	\$26.85
Internet Only	\$180.14	\$100.10	\$56.71	\$20.39

All prices include 8.75% sales taxes.  
Postal regulations require subscriptions to be paid in advance.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Iola Register, P.O. Box 767, Iola, KS 66749.

Member Associated Press. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use for publication all the local news printed in this newspaper as well as all AP news dispatches.

2024 Award of Excellence  
Kansas Press Association  
AWARD WINNER

Susan Lynn, editor/publisher | Tim Stauffer, managing editor

Periodicals postage paid at Iola, Kansas.  
USPS 268-460 | Print ISSN: 2833-9908 | Website ISSN: 2833-9916

curtailed, medical care  
is limited, and showers  
are infrequent because  
the facility is too un-  
safe.”

In an email to the  
Kansas News Service,  
CoreCivic spokesperson  
Ryan Gustin acknowl-  
edged that the facility  
faced security challeng-  
es in the past. But he  
said most issues with  
safety and staffing were  
concentrated during  
an 18-month period co-  
inciding with the pan-  
demic.

Gustin said CoreCivic  
has learned from those  
challenges and plans  
to ensure a secure en-  
vironment with a more  
stable job market.

WHILE ACTIVISTS  
and community mem-  
bers repeat allegations  
about the facility and  
the U.S. immigration  
system, CoreCivic and  
its supporters put for-  
ward arguments of their  
own.

In email records Rog-  
ers obtained via an open  
records request, Core-  
Civic made a number  
of promises to city offi-  
cials about how the fa-  
cility would benefit the  
community.

The company said  
reactivating the facil-  
ity would create 300  
well-paying jobs and  
bring in millions of dol-  
lars in property tax rev-

enue and direct impact  
payments.

Gustin told the Kan-  
sas News Service that  
over 1,000 people have  
applied for jobs at the  
Midwest Regional Re-  
ception Center. Those  
listings are online de-  
spite the city's pending  
lawsuit to block the de-  
tention center from re-  
opening.

Some local lawmak-  
ers have promoted Core-  
Civic's proposal. Repub-  
lican Rep. Pat Proctor  
who opposed the com-  
pany's failed bid for an  
ICE contract in 2023,  
said he now supports  
the facility reopening.

He said the company  
had addressed his con-  
cerns that the facility  
would hold detainees  
indefinitely or release  
them into the commu-  
nity.

“CoreCivic's new fa-  
cility fulfills a criti-  
cal need for detention  
space, as DHS struggles  
to manage a huge op-  
eration, deporting the  
millions of illegal im-  
migrants that flooded  
our country through Joe  
Biden's open borders,”  
Proctor said in an email  
to the Kansas News Ser-  
vice.

While opposing sides  
trade barbs in the court  
of public opinion, Core-  
Civic only needs a win  
in federal court to move  
ahead.

Today

Saturday

Sunday

71 | 52

66 | 55

74 | 64

Temperature

Precipitation

High Wednesday

Low Wednesday night

High a year ago

Low a year ago

78

55

70

42

24 hrs as of 8 a.m. Thursday

This month to date

Total year to date

Excess since Jan. 1

0

4.39

12.33

4.26

Sunrise 6:32 a.m.

Sunset 8:07 p.m.

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