

EXHIBIT 2

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News articles about video visitation in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Revenue from Westmoreland County Prison jail video chat falls short

<http://triblive.com/news/westmoreland/9859739-74/video-county-prison>
(/news/westmoreland/9859739-74/video-county-prison)



Sean Stipp | Tribune-Review

The Westmoreland County Prison on Jan. 25, 2016.

BY RICH CHOLODOFSKY | Monday, Jan. 25, 2016, 11:00 p.m.

A program allowing people to pay to video chat with friends or family who are inmates in the Westmoreland County Prison failed to generate the revenue projected during its first year of operation.

Warden John Walton said Monday that video visits generated just under \$14,000 since being made available to the public — about \$86,000 less than officials said they expected when the system was put in place in January.

The county paid \$92,000 to install nine computers and software that inmates can use for the online video chats. People who call inmates pay \$15 for a 25-minute session.

“We thought it would be substantially higher,” Walton said of revenues from the service following a meeting of the county prison board.

An outside company manages the video service and gives a portion of what it collects in fees to the jail. Prison board members said they expected each of the jail's nine computers to register at least two visits every day, but that has not occurred.

Walton said the county averaged about 89 video visits each month through November. The number spiked to 139 video chats during the holiday season in December.

Even though officials were disappointed with the low level of use, they said making video chats available is beneficial because it reduces the number of visitors coming to the jail and lowers the possibility of contraband being smuggled in.

“To me, it was more of a security issue than a money issue,” said Sheriff Jonathan Held, prison board chairman. “In the long run it will pay for itself. If it breaks even or makes a profit, it's a win.”

Until June, the jail allowed inmates three in-person visits each week. The advent of the video visitation system prompted officials to reduce that number and permit one in-person visit and two online sessions weekly. But the change didn't encourage a greater use of the video system, Walton said.

The number of visits might be low in part because three of the computers malfunctioned for several months, Walton said. Numbers might be lower because female inmates unexpectedly haven't used them, he added.

“We put two machines in the female unit, but they're barely used at all,” Walton said.

The warden said computer programmers are working to create an application that will allow video visits to be made from mobile devices such as cellphones and tablets, which could increase usage. The system can now be accessed only through desktop and laptop computers that have high-speed Internet connections.

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Video visits not cash cow for western Pennsylvania jail

The Associated Press

GREENSBURG, Pa. — Online video visits with inmates at a western Pennsylvania jail haven't generated nearly as much revenue as county officials hoped.

Westmoreland County earned about \$14,000 from the visits last year — about \$86,000 less than projected, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (<http://bit.ly/1JBIWKQ>) reported.

The jail announced in 2014 that it was paying \$92,000 to have Renovo Software of Edina, Minnesota, install web cameras and computers at the jail about 30 miles east of Pittsburgh. The service went fully online last year.

The county is charging \$15 per video visit, with nearly \$13 of that going to the county's general fund. But last year, the jail averaged just 89 video visits a month, though that number spiked to 139 in December, likely due to the holidays.

"We thought it would be substantially higher," Warden John Walton said following Monday's county prison board meeting.

Still, Walton and Sheriff John Held defended the new practice, saying it reduces the number of visitors who physically come to the jail and, along with that, security risks linked the smuggling of contraband.

"To me, it was more of a security issue than a money issue," Held said. "In the long run, it will pay for itself. If it breaks even or makes a profit, it's a win."

Still, the county has asked computer experts to devise a mobile app so video visits can be made from smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices. The visits can be accessed now only through desktop and laptop computers with high-speed Internet service.

Before the video visits were introduced, inmates got up to three weekly in-person visits, with up to three people at a time. Those visits lasted 30 minutes.

Inmates now get just one in-person visit per week, but can also have two 25-minute video visits each week.

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