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Cleveland County celebrates juvenile center upgrades

Ribbon cutting marks Phase I completion of planned improvements, additions

Cleveland County celebrated the completion of Phase I of a multi-million-dollar upgrade of the Alan J. Couch Juvenile Detention Center with a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, May 31. Phase I provides 12,500 square feet of detention and educational space.

Funded by public safety sales tax money approved by county voters, Phase I of the project added two mental health safe rooms, two ADA compliant rooms, a new outdoor recreation area and other detention space improvements to enhance safety for detainees and staff.

"This ribbon cutting marks a milestone in our planned upgrades for Couch Juvenile Detention Center," said Cleveland County Commissioner Rod Cleveland. "These improvements to enhance juvenile justice were done with the blessing and support of the people of Cleveland County who approved the renewal of the public safety sales tax with overwhelming support in November 2019."

This is the first significant upgrade of the 26-bed facility since it was built in 1991. GE Johnson Construction Company coordinated with county leadership and detention center staff from Community Works on the project. The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners has partnered with Community Works since 2006 to manage and operate the Alan J. Couch Juvenile Detention Center, also known as the Cleveland County Regional Juvenile Detention Center.

"I want to thank our taxpayers for supporting these improvements which will increase safety for the juveniles and staff at this facility," said Cleveland County Commissioner Rusty Grissom. "We're excited about completing this first phase, and we look forward to Phase II which will increase space for education and behavioral health counseling to help get these young people back on track."

Cleveland and Grissom thanked the Norman Chamber of Commerce and community leaders for their support in the Phase I ribbon cutting.

About the Cleveland County Juvenile Detention Center

Since 2006, Couch Center has had nearly 3,900 juvenile admissions, male and female. The facility operates under the Office of Juvenile Affairs. Upgrades were needed to modernize and improve the facility and to allow for the expansion of programs to provide greater services to these at-risk minors and better facilities for the educational component which is taught by teachers from the Norman school district.