

Jail Plans Sheriff remaining optimistic

By AMY OBERLIN
Herald Journal Staff

White County Sheriff Reg Shireman is optimistic about plans to build a new jail.

"I'm pretty enthused about it," he said.

Bonds based on a \$5.8 million construction estimate will be sold within the next two weeks. Bids submitted last Tuesday reflected an over \$7 million building project.

White County Board of Commissioners and the county council, along with engineers, architects and construction experts, worked together to close the funding gap.

"There were a lot of good ideas and a lot of options," said Shireman. "There were legitimate differences."

Minor cuts are being made in certain construction packages to help make up for the \$1.4 million shortfall. By skimping on topsoil and changing some fixtures in the lobby, the county hopes to make up \$19,000.

"That's cosmetic," said Shireman. "It will still be a very presentable building."

Schenkel-Schultz Engineering, Fort Wayne, is checking into

— See Jail, PAGE 2 —

Jail

From PAGE 1

changing masonry walls around the outdoor recreation area to chain link fences. If the Department of Corrections approves the alteration, the county will save \$50,000.

"It will be a little more burdensome to us for security reasons," said Shireman.

Schenkel-Schultz had proposed making the building shorter by cutting off eight cells. Shireman said he is glad the commissioners are sticking with the 124-bed facility.

"I think it's critical for our future needs," said Shireman.

White County Jail is currently being sued for overcrowding.

"I was really apprehensive with the possibility that we would have to go back to federal court," said Shireman. County attorney John Goss obtained a stay in court, hoping to resolve the case by building a new jail.

When bids came in higher than expected, some said plans should be scrapped and started over. Shireman said he didn't think the judge would let White County slide that long.

After bonds are sold, contracts will be awarded and construction will begin. Shireman is ready to get things started, so as much as possible can be done before winter weather arrives.