



Eloy Set to Grow By Thousands, Thanks to Prisons

By [J.D. Wallace](#), KOLD News 13 Reporter

On Tuesday, guided tours and exotic leis marked the opening of a new Arizona destination, which offers most visitors very extended stays.

"Well, it's really a capacity issue. We, like many states, have not been able to build large prisons in our state," said Marc Antrim, commissioner for the Alaska Department of Corrections.



Inmates from Alaska and Hawaii will fill the new Red Rock Correctional Center, a medium security prison in Eloy. People from both states got a firsthand look, from the living quarters, to the medical area, to the cameras keeping watch, which included the ones outside, which were able to zoom in on license plates in the parking lot.

"It's a new facility, so in this business, just like computer systems, there's always innovation," said Red Rock warden Frank Luna.

A non-lethal stun fence will help keep about 1600 inmates inside Red Rock Correctional Center, but the old standby of patrolling corrections officers will also be in force.

"I always have two parameters roaming constantly," Luna said.

Only a few months ago the Eloy Detention Center next door, also owned by Corrections Corporation of America, had to let about a quarter of its staff go. CCA said this new center should make up for that loss.

"We're going to need 300 new positions here at this facility, we do have some corrections officers and managers coming over from other facilities, but definitely a need-demand for additional employees here in Pinal County," said Mark Brnovich, a senior director in business development for CCA.

A business that makes many say, "Not in my backyard," area politicians call a welcome neighbor.

Then again, the mayor of Eloy is also a CCA corrections officer.

"It definitely opens up more opportunity for citizens of Eloy to come work here," said mayor Byron Jackson.

"A win-win not only for CCA but for the community because they do provide employment and an economic benefit to the communities so that we don't have communities as bedroom communities where they're having to commute an hour, hour and a half into Maricopa and Pima County," said state senator Rebecca Rios.

Prison might not be a destination for everyone, but it's an industry that is keeping Eloy on the map.

The new inmates arrive in the next few weeks. Red Rock should be to full capacity by December.

Saguaro Correctional Center opens mid 2007, and it will hold about 1900 inmates.

While the prisons aren't where most Eloy citizens will see them, they are within the city limits. Therefore, the thousands of prisoners there can be called citizens, and bring in state tax revenue funds.