

Ludlow Jail Receives Plaudits From Evaluation Team

The 3-member panel said the facility was 100% compliant on 38 mandatory issues and 99.2% compliant on 388 non-mandatory standards.

By Chris Hamel

Staff writer

LUDLOW- A national team of evaluators heaped praise on the Hampden County Correctional Center at Sony Brook at the conclusion yesterday of a three-day performance audit by the American Correctional Association.

Although formal, written results will not be released until later by the Maryland-based professional association, the three-member panel said the county jail and house of correction was 100 percent compliant on 38 mandatory standards and 99.2 percent compliant on 388 applicable, non-mandatory standards.

To be accredited by the association, each facility must score 100 percent on mandatory standards and at least 90 percent on non-mandatory ones.

“The Hampden County jail and house of correction is a model for this (corrections) industry,” said Major Carlos Jackson of the Denver Sheriff’s Department, who was chairman of the evaluation team. “I haven’t seen better anywhere in the country.”

Jackson, who serves on the association’s board of governors, made his remarks to a gathering of more than 50 staff members and administration officials, including Sheriff Michael J. Ashe, Jr.

Jackson, who is chief administrator of one of Denver’s two jails, was joined by fellow auditors Susan J. Dean, a certified registered nurse with the Palm Beach County, Fla., Sheriff’s Department; and Walter B. Ridley, a private consultant for the association and former corrections commissioner and parole board chairman in the District of Columbia.

Jackson and Ridley each have logged about 30 years working in corrections. Each said that they had visited many jails and prisons nationwide.

“You stand head and shoulders above them,” Ridley told the gathering. “You’re an outstanding team.”

The panel reviewed daily operations inside the medium-security compound, including policies and procedures, the physical plant, medical care, education and training and spiritual programming. Ashe said the panel’s highest compliment was its recognition of the consistency with which the staff does quality work.

Evaluations are every three years. In 1994 and 1997, respectively, the correctional center scored 98.9 and 99.5 on non-mandatory standards, and 100 percent each time on mandatory sanctions. Penal facilities use the association’s evaluations for reasons, including meeting national standards and demonstrating to legislators that acceptable professional levels are being reached.