



# NEWS RELEASE



## ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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### For Immediate Release:

**Today's Date:** November 13, 2007  
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**Release #:** 2007-113

### Media Advisory:

Representatives from the National Institute of Corrections visited the Alachua County Sheriff's Office Department of the Jail on September 24 and 25, 2007, as part of a reevaluation of the Jail's inmate classification procedures requested by Sheriff Sadie Darnell. The previous evaluation of the Jail's classification system was completed in March of 2004.

The two-person team observed significant improvements in the jail's inmate classification system and specifically took note of areas that fulfilled the intent of the original 2004 recommendations. Currently, the jail's classification unit uses a model of classification developed by Dr. James Austin. This model takes into account an inmate's past criminal history and institutional behavior when selecting appropriate housing within the jail. The team commented that the inmate interview currently in use by classification staff could serve as a model for other jails to follow.

Other improvements noted include the recently implemented pre-classification male housing unit. Although only in operation for a short time, the unit has been well received by both inmates and security staff.

Due to the increase of the jail's inmate count over the last few years, the team offered the opinion that the jail would greatly benefit from a formal Jail Population Assessment or even an assessment of the entire criminal justice system. With the jail population continuing to grow beyond capacity, the team advised that Alachua County would benefit from taking steps to develop a master plan to serve as a rational model for future expansion, while taking into consideration the causes of jail overcrowding and alternatives to incarceration.

Sheriff Sadie Darnell has a well articulated vision for increasing the programs available in the jail, initiating outside inmate work crews, increasing the overall productivity of the inmates, adding vocational training, and vastly expanding the jail's emphasis on reentry planning for Alachua County's chronic offenders.

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