April 25, 1989

Mr. Joseph Trotter, Director
Adjudication Technical Assistance Project
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mr. Trotter:

The following is my summary report for technical assistance assignment No. 200, Jail Crowding, Catawba County, North Carolina.

The technical assistance was provided at the request of Mr. Patrick Thomas, Assistant County Manager of Catawba County. This was intended as a follow-up to the technical assistance provided to North Carolina, on this subject, in November 1988.

The information presented included: 1) a comparative overview of the pluses and minuses of mainframe vs. micro-computers in a jail management application; 2) the three primary functions of a comprehensive jail management system; 3) jail inmate classification and its importance as a key data element in a jail management system; 4) a demonstration of a jail information management software system; and 5) further discussion on the relationship between selecting a good management information system and the statistical profile data it should provide in support of management, planning and policy development.

There were approximately 13 people present for the first day's workshop/demonstration of jail management software, representing three counties. Personnel present included representatives from data processing departments, county government, pre-trial services and the Catawba County jail.

The morning of the first day was devoted to initial discussions with Mr. Thomas and the data processing staff to coordinate the afternoon workshop and objectives. The workshop was then conducted from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. that afternoon. The presentation centered around the demonstration of the Jail Automated Management Information System (JAMIS) software as an example of a comprehensive jail management information system.
The second day was spent meeting with the pre-trial services administration regarding the automation of their program and the accessing and coordination of the jail's system, if adopted. A demonstration of an existing pre-trial services software system was also provided.

I also met with the Catawba County jail administrator and his sergeant regarding more specific issues about adopting an automated system. In addition, we discussed in more detail the issue of jail inmate classification and its potential benefits to the Catawba jail's operations.

I then met again with Mr. Thomas to discuss the technical assistance visit and our collective impressions of the past two days. We then discussed several "where do we go from here?" issues. These issues included: 1) the need to further assist the jail administration in identifying their needs and objectives regarding an automated information system; 2) the need for the jail and other key policy makers to develop a policy around the objective of collecting and analyzing inmate data; 3) the need for the provision of adequate staff training and support around the implementation of an automated system; 4) the coordination of an automated jail system with the pre-trial services program; and 5) the need to gain public support for the primary objective of informed management, planning and local corrections policy development.

I will provide Mr. Thomas with some materials to assist in the public education campaign. In addition, I will provide additional information to assist them in pursuing the automation of their jail.

I believe the technical assistance provided by the EMT Group went very well. Other counties present have also expressed an interest in proceeding with the automation of their jails. We will be providing additional information to them, as requested, to assist in their efforts.

We would like to thank the EMT Group for your support with this workshop.

Sincerely,

Dave Wells,
Research Director
Community Justice Alternatives, and
Senior Technical Advisor
Northpointe, Inc.