

July 15, 2009
Beautifying the big house
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PHOTOS BY JOHN PATSCH/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jerry Contraras, of J. Denny Masonry Inc., places limestone around the sign posts to Joliet's Old Joliet Prison Park next to the Joliet Correctional Center.

Beautifying the big house

FROM STAFF REPORTS

JOLIET — The city's prison past will take center stage from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday with the grand opening of the Joliet prison tourist stop.

The site, which has been landscaped and outfitted with informational kiosks, now is called Old Prison Park.

On hand for the grand opening will be The Blooze Brothers, an eight-piece band that will perform. The KidsWork Children's Museum and Joliet Area Historical Museum will provide activities for children. Joliet police will offer Child Safety

ID photos and fingerprinting.

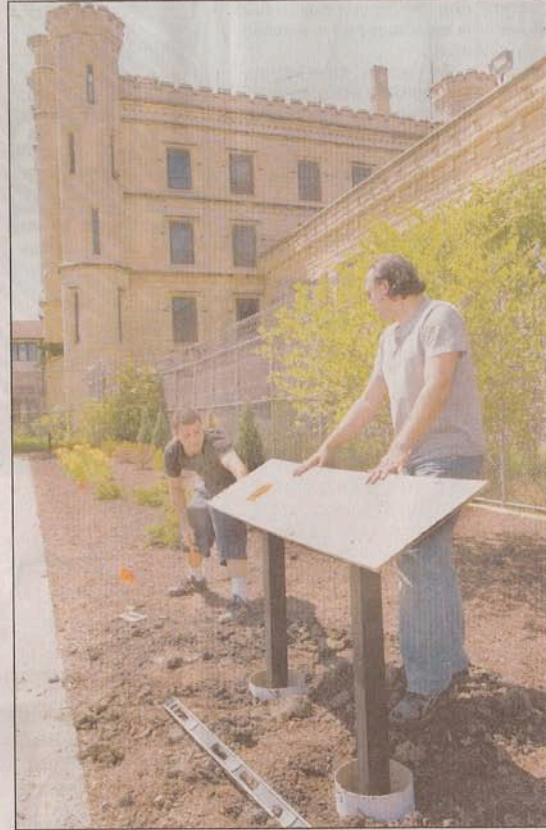
In the past, the prison has been used during the filming of television shows and movies. Most recently, the film "Public Enemies," starring Johnny Depp, was filmed there.

The prison stop is co-funded by the Illinois Bureau of Tourism.

The prison itself still is owned by the state and closed to the public.

That could change as the city has an agreement with a private developer who could buy the prison and convert it into a mixture of a museum, stores and condos.

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Artistic Signs' Zack Alberico makes sure that a sign board is level while co-worker Roger Carlson holds it as the crew installed the new signs next to the Joliet Correctional Center.