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Packed prisons burden budgets

Ron Shawgo | The Journal Gazette

Indiana's adult prison population has more than doubled in the last two decades, straining budgets and the limits of the buildings that hold inmates.

About half of the state's 24 correctional campuses were at or over capacity at the end of last year.

Here's a snapshot of the state's prisons and whom they held on Dec. 20, 2010:

Gender

The state's adult prison population is overwhelmingly male. Fewer than one in 10 inmates is a woman. Women are more likely than men to be in for drug charges. A third of women prisoners had drug convictions, compared with about one-fourth of men.

Race

In a state that is mostly white, it's no surprise that prison inmates are largely white. But blacks are disproportionately represented in the state's prisons. Totaling 8 percent of the state's adult population, according to census figures, blacks make up more than a third of the adult prison population.

Age

Although juveniles have their own penal system, there were three people younger than 18 doing time in adult prisons last year. Ages range from a 15-year-old boy, serving time for a Brown County robbery in which a man was killed, to an 86-year-old man, imprisoned for a Newton County voluntary manslaughter. The average age was 36.4 years. Blacks in state prison on average were about two years younger than whites.

Violence

About one-fourth of inmates are behind bars for crimes of violence, defined by the FBI as murder/voluntary manslaughter, rape, robbery and aggravated battery. That rate reflects mostly men. Only 11 percent of the women in prison committed a violent crime.

Inmates who have committed violent crimes are spread throughout Indiana's minimum, low-medium, high-medium and maximum-security prisons. However, about half the populations of three prisons are made up of violent criminals: Indiana State Prison in Michigan City, Pendleton Correctional Facility in Pendleton – both maximum security – and Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle, a high-medium security prison.

Getting out

The majority of adult prisoners are short-timers. At the end of last year, two in 10 were eligible to get out in less than a year. More than half had an earliest possible release date of two years or less. Release dates can change depending on credits for good behavior and other factors.



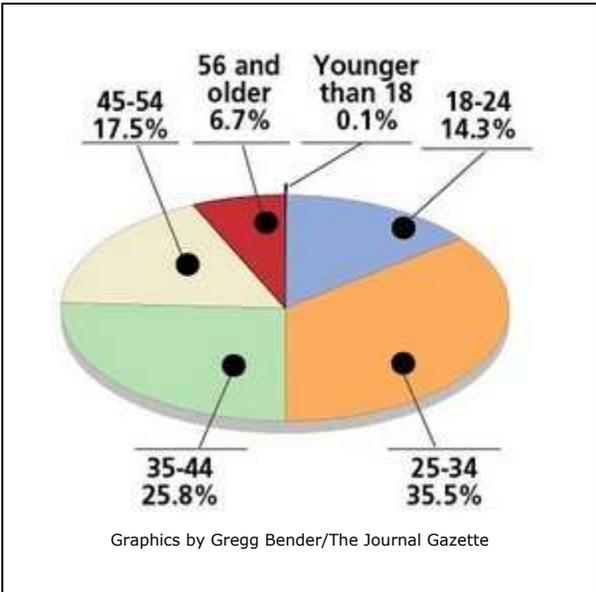
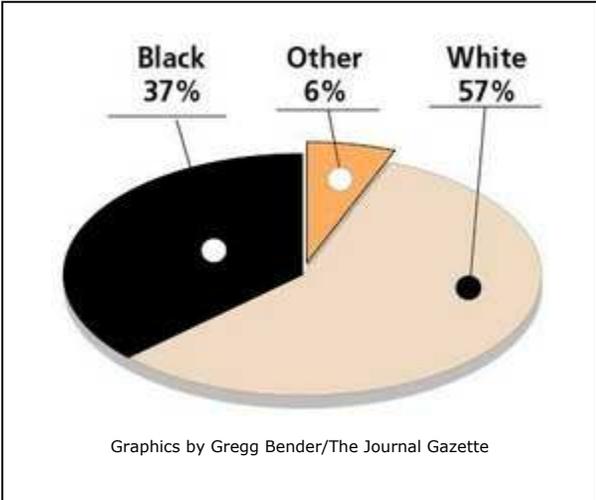
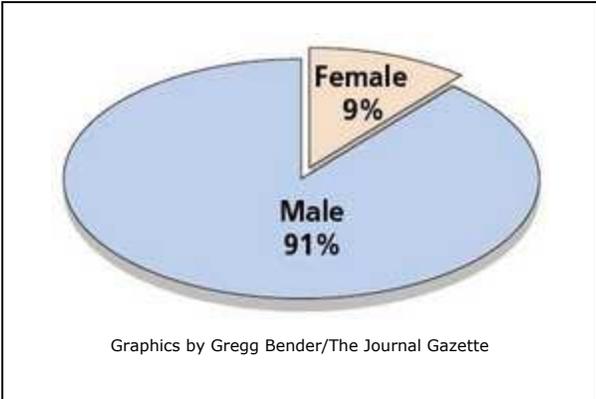
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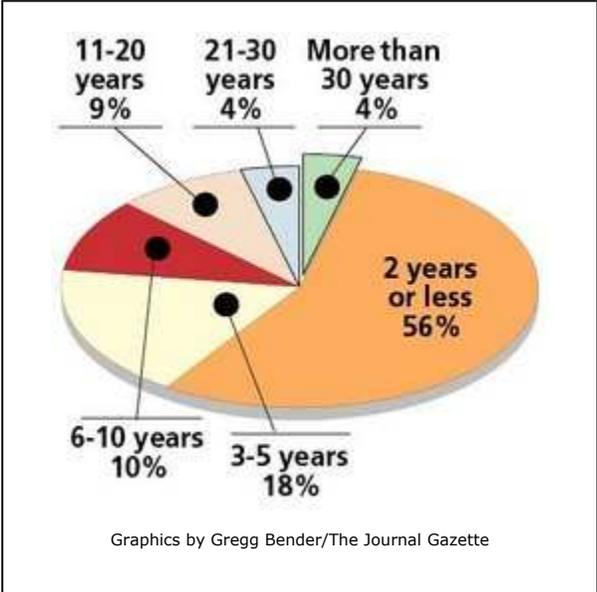
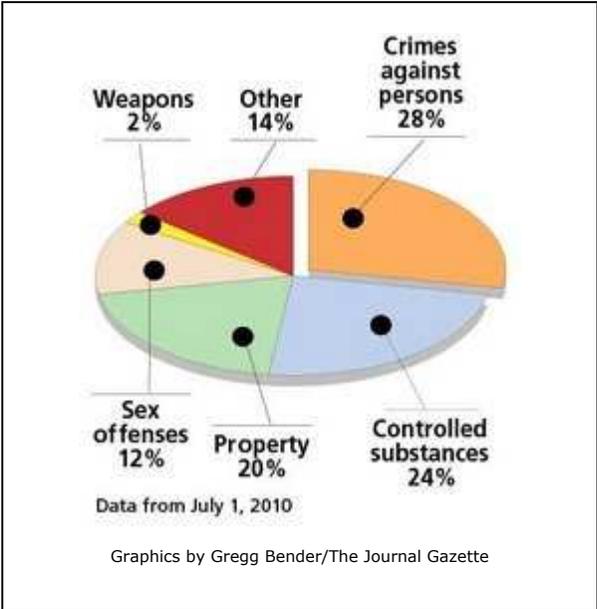
About the half of the inmates at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City have committed violent crimes.



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Correcting Corrections

- Second in a five-day series on the state of the Indiana prison system

Coming up

Tuesday: The politics behind sentencing reform
 Wednesday: Money the key issue
 Thursday: Melissa Long describes wearing an ankle bracelet

On TV

- Indiana's NewsCenter also examines sentencing reform this week on newscasts at 5 and 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Look for writers from The Journal Gazette to appear on some of those newscasts.