

and juvenile offender state and local government reentry demonstration projects.

• **State and local reentry courts** — \$10 million for the creation of state and local reentry courts, similar to those established for nonviolent drug offenders. Such courts would monitor offenders and provide them with access to comprehensive reentry services and programs.

• **Prosecution drug treatment** — \$10 million in grants to state and local prosecutors to develop and implement qualified drug treatment programs as alternatives for imprisonment, which require an eligible nonviolent offender to participate in a comprehensive substance abuse treatment program.

• **Grants for family-based substance abuse treatment** — \$10 million in grants to states, local

parents who have minor children.

• **Grant program to evaluate education methods at prisons, jails and juvenile facilities** — \$5 million for grants to state local governments, Indian tribes and other public and private entities to evaluate and improve academic and vocational education for offenders in prison, jails and juvenile facilities and then recommend to the U.S. attorney general best practices for such education programs.

• **Technology careers training demonstration grants** — Authorizes the attorney general to make \$10 million in grants to states, local units of government and Native American tribes to provide technology career training to prisoners.

• **Offender reentry substance abuse and criminal justice collaboration program** — Authorizes the attorney general to make \$15 million



Photo by Donald N

NACo met with Justice Department officials to discuss a proposed national commission on the mentally ill in jail. Pictured here (l - r) are Lisa N chair, Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee and Multnomah County, Ore. commissioner; NACo First Vice-President Valerie Brown, Deborah Rhodes, acting principal deputy U.S. attorney general.

in grants to states, local units of government and Native American tribes to improve the provision of drug treatment to offenders in prisons, jails and juvenile facilities.

• **Mentoring grants to nonprofit organizations** — \$15 million for the attorney general to make grants to nonprofit organizations to provide

mentoring and other transitional services to adult and juvenile offenders reentering the community.

• **Federal prisoner reentry initiative** — Establishes a \$5 million comprehensive prisoner reentry program and creation of a federal prisoner reentry strategy, and incentives for participation in self-development programs.

• **Offender reentry research**

Financial Services News

Artificial Turf

'Green' Is Gold

In this day and age when everyone wants to use more natural green products, minimize their impact on the environment and reduce their costs, a bit of an irony is developing for people building athletic fields.

The greenest and most cost-effective product is actually synthetic turf instead of natural sod. Synthetic turf requires no water, mowing or fertilizer, which helps with water conservation efforts and reduces carbon emissions and phosphorus run-off.

Although upfront costs for installation are higher for artificial turf, maintenance expenses over the life of the field are significantly lower. There is no need for expensive sprinkler systems or mowing equipment, and labor and maintenance costs are drastically lower than with natural sod.

To help school districts, higher education, states, cities, nonprofits and counties replace or install new grass fields or parks and playgrounds, Fairfax County, Va. Public Schools has awarded General Sports Venue/AstroTurf USA (GSV/AstroTurf) the contract for synthetic turf, athletic surfaces and related products. This new contract is offered through the U.S. Com-

munities Government Purchasing Alliance.

GSV/AstroTurf has partnered with a supplier that incorporates a soybean base as a replacement for petroleum-based components in a portion of the polyurethane chemistry. Systems with soybean-based polyurethane backings emit very low levels of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, a leading contributor to poor indoor air quality, resulting in healthier indoor fields.

Additionally, materials used to cushion the backing are made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled plastic bottles. To put the impact of this into perspective: a single 10,000-square-yard field uses 40,000 discarded plastic bottles.

Finally, a product made from coal flyash, a byproduct of coal-fired power plants, is used to provide strength and resilience to the turf. There are more than 420 electric power plants burning coal in America. The average power plant produces approximately 15 to 20 rail cars of flyash per day.

However, the biggest concern regarding synthetic turf is the product's structural integrity and durability. All of these components

meet or exceed the quality of comparable traditional materials.

By competitively soliciting synthetic turf, athletic surfaces and related products, U.S. Communities has eliminated the need for public agencies to go through the bidding process.

U.S. Communities has a lower price per square foot of turf than a single entity would be able to generate through a competitive process from one of the contract holders, plus the research for a quality company has been done. All of this saves agencies time, money and labor.

U.S. Communities is a nonprofit instrumentality of government founded in 1999 and comprised of more than 30,000 public agencies across the country.

Participating agencies, whose numbers increase by about 400 each month, spend more than \$1 billion a year on products and services via contracts and suppliers of U.S. Communities. It costs nothing to join, nor must an agency spend a minimum or maximum number of dollars each year.

For more information go to www.astroturfusa.com/uscommunities or e-mail uscommunities@gvenue.com.

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