

Corrections Briefings

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The Best of the Story

Our hats are off to The Oregonian for redefining the way its writers cover stories that involve the criminal justice system. Reprinted below is an opinion article by DOC Director Dave Cook in response to The Oregonian's bold move.

As your readers are surely aware, The Oregonian has changed the way it covers crime to add more context to stories and to focus on issues rather than, in your words, "chasing sirens." We like to think of it as telling a GOOD story as opposed to your previous interest in pursuing a good STORY.

Bravo.

We think your readers will be surprised at the depth of the justice system and our zeal for accountability and public safety as you unfold its stories in the pages of your paper.

We have a passion and a commitment, too: We think there should be fewer victims. We hope The Oregonian will show readers how to be smart and tough on crime, not afraid of living. We hope that your words will demonstrate that offender accountability through incarceration, community supervision, work, and/or restitution are efforts and dollars well spent in terms of lower recidivism and thus, fewer victims.

Here's a GOOD story: One of my staff members was appalled to hear a prominent law enforcement official declare, in a public meeting, that we should give up on the current generation of 18 – 30 year olds. Yes, statistics show that these young men are the toughest to influence; in fact their recidivism rate is higher than any other age cohort. But give up? These people are the parents of the next generation and their errors are perpetuated for even more generations unless someone says, "break the cycle."

Our governor's juvenile crime prevention plan does just that. It looks at the statistical roots of criminal behavior and directs resources into preventing children from becoming criminals. We know who to target. For instance, did you know that the chance of someone becoming a criminal is directly related to the age of his or her mother? Our governor and his wife are crusaders in preventing teen pregnancy, and that's no coincidence.

Did you know that battered women often recant before a prosecutor can get a case to court? Most of Oregon's counties now have programs to shelter battered women and support them during a quest for the truth and subsequent justice. Washington County is a national leader; its reassuring to know that the next story you publish about a domestic assault might delve into the steps the justice system takes to protect those victims. And speaking of statistics, did you know that most incidents of battering are witnessed by minor children? They grow up thinking its okay to hit and to hurt. Together we can show people how to break the cycle for the sake of those children and their potential future victims.

OREGON DEPARTMENT
OF CORRECTIONS

DAVID S. COOK
DIRECTOR

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.
GOVERNOR



As a member of the justice system, prevention is our responsibility in corrections, too. That's why we invest in correctional programs that we know to be effective like alcohol and drug treatment. One of the least heralded contributions to public safety is the direct, one-on-one supervision provided by our correctional officers and the counties' community supervision officers. These people role model the fair, even and consistent behavior that many offenders never experienced in their family lives.

It's refreshing that The Oregonian is honest enough with its readers to recognize the role it plays in influencing perceptions and the responsibilities it has to report the realities. I think your readers are smart and wise; once the paper moves beyond the sound bites and tells the interesting stories to be found in our justice system, citizens will be better informed about the options available to create safer communities. For every crime there's a story, a prevention angle, a statistical connection. Finally someone is going to get at the best of the story.

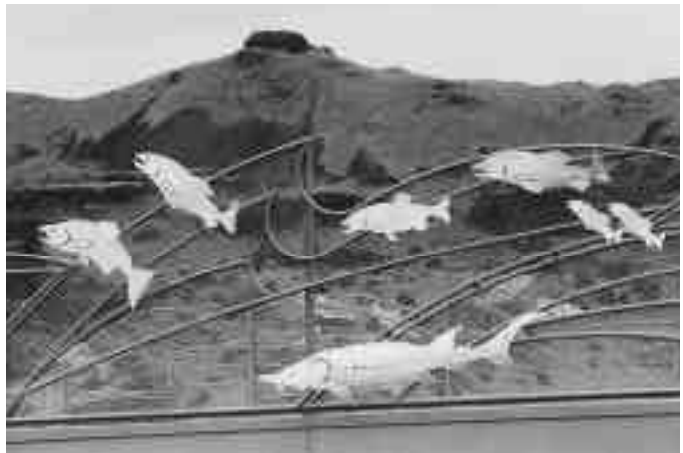
Employee Survey to Guide Communications Efforts

The department is embarking on a new communications initiative to learn what employees think about communications within the department. A survey, designed by Lt. Dave Rempel of Oregon State Correctional Institution, will be distributed to all employees in late June. It asks what they like about our communications efforts, what they think could be improved, and what kinds of information they'd like to have. The Public Affairs Office plans to conduct similar surveys every two years to track internal communications trends.

Inmate Artistry Adorns Chenoweth Overpass

Corrections has a long history of working closely with other state agencies to meet their needs. However, two years ago, we received a unique request from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT): Could we make some fish?

ODOT's new interchange on I-84 near The Dalles was going to be an engineering work of art, and the community wanted the overpass at Chenoweth to be something special. Together, they designed overpass screening that looked like wind-blown waves on the Columbia. On those screens would be kinetic sculptures of Steelhead, Chinook, and Sturgeon to greet travelers and to make The Dalles a more memorable wayside along the freeway.



The Oregon State Penitentiary Metal Shop accepted the assignment of taking the fish from rough cut-outs to finished works of art, complete with a new attachment system. Inmates shaped and burnished more than 50 stainless steel fish, adding the accents that made them look three-dimensional: fins, gills, and scales.



IWP Construction and Logistics Manager Dale Zehner completed the project by participating in the dedication ceremony last Friday.



"Our role in this project -- while quite small compared to the enormous task of building a new interchange -- was fun, and as you can see, extremely visible," said Zehner. "The Department of Corrections is honored to be a part of this celebration of Oregon's dedication to innovation and the beautification of our state.

Speaking of Fish...

The successful fish rearing program at South Fork Forest Camp began in the mid-1980's with two crate-size hatch boxes in a creek and the formation of the inmate's Fish and Feathers Club. Under the guidance of the Departments of Corrections, Forestry and Fish and Wildlife, inmates began to raise fish and rehabilitate other wildlife.

The program gradually expanded to six hatch boxes and construction of a water collection and filtration system. In 1989, with assistance from Northwest Steelheaders, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, a rearing pond and intake dam were constructed. Later, hatch boxes were replaced by a hatch house. Inmates now

hatch and release fry (hatchlings), rear smolts and trap wild steelhead.

The three agencies now cooperate in directing and supervising an inmate worker who is assigned to the full time care and maintenance of the facility. Daily duties include feeding fish, cleaning screens, picking and documenting pond mortality, recording water temperature and flow, egg mortality and fry mortality. Periodic duties include recording transactions regarding fish received, shipped and liberated, vacuuming pond bottom, sampling fish for growth, clipping fins and proper storage and repair of equipment.

Release of fry since 1988 includes 29,300 Coho and 121,250 Chinook. Rearing pond releases since 1989 include 633,200 Chinook and 105,200 Steelhead. The total release effort for the Wilson River and Cedar Creek systems has produced over 890,000 fish in nearly ten years. The joint coordinated efforts by agencies, clubs, foundations, and especially by inmates and staff who volunteer supervision are greatly appreciated. This program has been a tremendous success for all involved.

Two Inmates Certified as A&D Counselors

Two inmates from Oregon State Correctional Institution recently became state certified level one Alcohol and Drug Counselors.

The inmates, Miguel Tellez and Jose Navarro, are graduates of the Hispanic Alcohol and Drug Day Treatment Program, Programa Libertad y Recuperacion, offered at the prison. These inmates were selected to work for the program because of the length of their sobriety and potential counseling skills. Both inmates perform assessments, treatment planning, peer counseling, curriculum design, and group facilitation.

During the two year process of certification, the inmate counselors concentrated on accumulating clinical hours while working to enhance their counseling skills.

According to the National Association of Addiction Counselors, these are the first inmates the association has certified. Both men are extremely proud of their accomplishments and insist that, "better things are yet to come."

DOC Participates in Grand Floral Parade



The Department of Corrections Color Guard, under the direction of Sergeant John Whitney, led the Rose Festival's Grand Floral Parade through the streets of Portland. The officers gained a new understanding of heat and blisters, but that did not deter them from posting the colors on the floor of the Senate just four days later.

ODOC to be Cited in Book

Dr. Robert Freeman of Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania is writing a book to examine the strategies corrections professionals are using to confront the negative image of corrections that has been presented by popular culture for so many years.

The book uses examples from the field to illustrate positive actions corrections professionals are taking to promote professionalism and educate the public. Dr. Freeman will use a portion of the DOC's 1998 tour invitation, specifically the "teaser" list of negative perceptions DOC tours could neutralize.

"Corrections professionals are attempting to counteract negative imagery through educating the community about the professionalism of modern corrections."

— Robert Freeman, Ph.D.

DOC Raises Money for Heart Research

Some 50 DOC employees really put their hearts into the American Heart Association's Heart Walk, held recently in Salem. Team DOC was the top fund raiser, responsible for \$2,000 in donations. The Salem Walk raised \$15,000 of the \$19 million raised nation-wide. The money will be used to fund heart research and education.

Symphony Reaches Out to Inmates

The Bassoon Brothers of the Oregon Symphony performed recently for inmates, staff, and community members at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton. Mr. Anthony Woodcock, president of the Oregon Symphony Association told the 160 male and female inmates that the Oregon Symphony's mission is to reach diverse audiences and that, "music is for everyone," including inmates.

And now the numbers...

Number of inmates

June 1, 1999:	9,457*
Inmates under 21:	9.4%*
Inmates over 60:	2%*

*(includes DOC inmates in Youth Authority custody)

Increase of inmates in state prisons since 1986:

135%	
Increase of women in state prisons since 1986:	219%
Increase of men in state prisons since 1986:	131%

Recidivism rate: **33.4%****

Original crime group with least recidivism: Homicide	4.5%**
Original crime group with most recidivism: Vehicle Theft	57%**

**(% convicted of any felony within 36 months of release)

Death Row census: **25**

Youngest with death sentence:	20
Oldest with death sentence:	64

Work-Based Education Crafts Governor's Table

The Cabinetry Shop, a work-based educational program located at Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI) in Salem, has recently created two six-foot Demilune console tables and one 17-foot three-pedestal dining room table for Mahonia Hall, the governor's mansion.

The hand-carved edges of the dining room table mirror the dentil molding on the ceiling of the mansion's dining room. OSCI inmates completed the construction and finish preparation for this table that seats 18; then the table was delivered to Portland where finishing professional Frank McGinness applied a "stressed" antique look that ages table over 100 years. The Demilune console tables are finished with a similar antique look.

This furniture is a product of one of the department's work-based educational programs. Work-based education programs integrate vocational education and real work in a way that they are "so close you can't tell the difference," according to Assistant Director of Programs Steve Ickes. These programs provide training based on the needs of the labor market while creating quality, marketable products.

Most projects are developed in cooperation with private sector partnerships. In addition to Mr. McGinness, the Mahonia Hall tables were designed in cooperation with Betsy Daily Design of Portland.

Call Center Opens

Computer equipment, phone lines, workstations, and other equipment totaling nearly \$1.2 million have been invested to open the new Inside Oregon Enterprises call center at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario.

Portland-based Research Data Design is IOE's initial private-sector partner in the call center, using the work of 35 inmates to conduct telephone surveys for such clients as national television networks and computer software manufacturers. It is expected that opportunities will soon expand and require the work of 25 additional inmates.

The call center's inmates cannot dial out on the phones — all calls are placed by the phone system's computers. The inmates do not know who is being called nor what part of the country. All calls are digitally recorded and archived; silent monitoring is another key security feature.

As with all of Inside Oregon Enterprises' telecommunications operations, inmates have no access to confidential information such as Social Security and credit card numbers.

National Panel on Infectious Diseases

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) will present a 3-hour interactive videoconference - Managing Infectious Diseases in Corrections - on July 8, 1999. Director Dave Cook is the only non-health professional on the panel of authorities.

The videoconference will cover:

- Infectious diseases and their implications for corrections management;
- Medical issues related to Hepatitis-B, Hepatitis-C, HIV, and tuberculosis;
- The risk to staff, differentiating between reality and myths;
- Approaches for reducing risk to staff and inmates - education, prevention and/or protection, and post-exposure options;
- Methods of evaluating an institution's infectious disease control program;
- Planning for release and a continuum of care for inmates with an infectious disease;
- Identifying medical, social service, and other resources in the community.

Viewers will be encouraged to call in questions through a toll-free number shown on the screen during the broadcast.

Two-way videoconferencing is available at several locations throughout the state. Contact Wendy Wilson in DOC Staff Training for more specifics (wendy.wilson@state.or.us or 503-378-2826).

Inmates Exceed Expectations

Inmates from the Deschutes Conservation Camp are not only meeting the expectations of the U.S. Forest Service, they are exceeding them.

"The inmates are clearing significantly more acres of forest land per inmate per day than originally projected," says Inmate Work Programs Project Coordinator Kelley Shen.

"This isn't easy work. . . . It's amazing how much they are getting done."

Eight 10-man crews work 10-hour days, six days a week. Their work includes clearing diseased and fallen trees, pulling noxious weeds, protecting planted seedlings from deer, and restoring fish habitats.

At an estimated cost of \$55 per acre cleared, the U.S. Forest Service estimates a savings of \$245 - \$645 per acre by using inmate labor over private-sector costs for the same work. Without inmate labor, the work would not get done.

Overseeing work on a 53-acre parcel in the Crescent Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest, Forest Service employee Jody Prummer praises the inmates' dedication. "The inmates are committed to working hard and following instructions," says Prummer. "A lot of them haven't had a job they've been proud of before this."

A pilot partnership between the Department of Corrections, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Oregon National Guard, the eight-week camp began May 24. At the end of the pilot, the camp's success will be carefully evaluated to determine whether such a project will be repeated at this or other locations in the future.

