

Corrections Briefings

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DOC Focuses on Transition

In keeping with its mission of “holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior,” the department initiated a Transition Project to increase the success of offender transition into the community.

Mental Health Problems Present Unique Transition Challenges

Columbia River Correctional Institution in Portland is piloting a new component of its transition program geared to male inmates who are mentally ill.

As part of their transition program, which includes assistance from DOC's Counseling and Treatment Services in symptom management and recognition, some of these inmates are being introduced to community mental health resources prior to their release.

The Portland Police Bureau's Crisis Intervention Team, Multnomah County Adult Community Justice parole officers, Multnomah County Community Mental Health counselors and other participants meet with the inmates over an eight-week period to educate them about community resources that they will need to access after their release.

The Transition Environment

- The Oregon DOC houses approximately 10,500 inmates within 13 prisons, most of whom will be eventually released.
- Of those in Oregon prisons as of January 1, 2001, 29.7 percent are projected to be released in the year 2001.
- Approximately 300 inmates per month complete their prison sentences with the ODOC and are released into Oregon communities.
- Of the Measure 11 population as of January 1, 2001, 4.1 percent are projected to be released in the year 2001.
- Another 600 offenders are released from county jails each month into their local communities.
- Oregon's 29.6 percent rate of recidivism (former inmate convicted of a new felony within three years of release) is better than average, but can be improved.

The Transition Project finds its genesis in one particularly compelling statistic:

- The riskiest time for re-offending is the first year after release; about 50 percent of convictions figured in the department's recidivism rate occur within the first year of release from prison.

This high-risk period is an obvious place to focus efforts to reduce crime. In addition to long-term strategies, the Transition Project has already been able to target some clearly defined reasons why former inmates commit crimes during their first year of release and create solutions that directly impact the problems. For instance, inmates who have a weekend or holiday release date were routinely released on Fridays and weren't supervised until the following week. Legislation passed by the 2001 Legislature allows the department to release these inmates on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday so they can be supervised and held accountable by parole officers immediately upon arriving home.

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.

OREGON DEPARTMENT
OF CORRECTIONS

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Transition as a Process:

In the past, transition was described as “a few months prior to an inmate’s release.” Transition has recently been more clearly defined as a process that begins immediately upon entering

**Fast Fact:
Offender Debit Cards
Give Access to Funds**

The Transition Project has partnered with the Department of Human Services to provide Oregon Trail Cards to inmates upon release. Offenders will be able to use these debit cards to access their DOC trust account funds. The card is expected to reap financial savings for the department and also enable ex-inmates to more readily access their funds from ATMs and grocery stores. The cards are initially being provided to graduates of the SUMMIT program at Shutter Creek Correctional Institution and will be expanded to other prisons soon.

the system and continues into and through incarceration to supervision in the community upon release. Offenders are expected to achieve their transition goals as specified in their individual Inmate Incarceration and Transition Plans. This transition process

strengthens community safety through enhanced supervision and services that mitigate identified risk factors associated with criminal behavior.

DOC Strategy:

In June 1999, a steering committee was formed and charged with providing direction to the project. They identified 10 key areas necessary for successful transition to occur:

- Information sharing
- Standardized continuum of programs
- Automated Inmate Incarceration and Transition Plans
- Re-definition of transition-related roles/duties
- Assessment of inmates/offenders
- Institution-based sex offender education
- Offender finances
- Release packet/process

- Work release/reintegrative confinement
- Housing

The planning effort is a collaborative and coordinated effort by a variety of stakeholders.

Transition Partnerships Crucial

The Transition Project is developing links with the community that allow felons to find and maintain housing, employment, and alcohol and drug treatment programs. With this stability, offenders are more likely to maintain family ties and pro-social relationships. The Transition Project also ensures the skills learned from prison-based work and programs are carried into community life.

The department already has several transition programs within a variety of institutions and counties. These programs will provide a solid foundation in implementing the Transition Project’s system-wide plan.

Fast Fact:

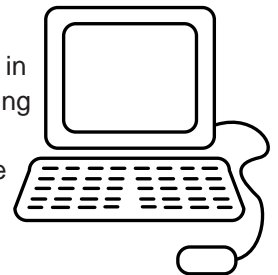
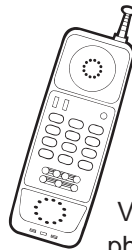
*Want more information?
Check out the DOC’s Web
site: www.doc.state.or.us.*

Victim Notification System Nears Implementation Phase

The DOC and the Department of Justice are jointly funding a new system, commonly known as the “VINE” system, to automatically notify crime victims about the status of offenders in the criminal justice system. VINE stands for “Victim Information and Notification Everyday.”

Victims will have the option to be notified by phone of an offender’s release from prison, scheduled hearings, escapes, jail terms in the community, and absconds and abscond captures from supervision.

The system is expected to be launched in October. Victims interested in participating must sign up for the system. Watch the local media and DOC Web site for more specifics about signing up.



Legislative Session Wrap-Up

In the just-concluded Legislative session, the DOC tracked 747 bills that could have affected the department's operations, policies or budget. Roughly a quarter of these bills passed and were signed into law.

Fast Fact:

A complete list of legislation affecting the DOC will soon be available on the Web at <http://www.doc.state.or.us>.

Listed below are those bills requested by the department that passed. Unless otherwise noted, the signed bills become effective January 1, 2002.

HB 2094 Enrolled allows the DOC to enter into agreements to provide services to local correctional and juvenile facilities. This legislation will allow the DOC to assist county jails, detention facilities and others by providing assistance such as tactical assistance and health care services, furthering our goal of interagency cooperation.

HB 2094 was signed by the governor into law, effective September 1, 2001

HB 2096 Enrolled allows the director of the Department of Corrections to adopt rules regulating the portions of an execution that witnesses may observe. This bill stems from an Oregon Supreme Court ruling that an execution begins when the condemned inmate is being strapped down in the execution chamber. The ruling nullified a DOC administrative rule that allowed the department to restrict viewing by witnesses until after the inmate was strapped down and the intravenous catheter was inserted. After working closely with legislators, the Association of Oregon Correctional Employees, the American Civil Liberties Union and representatives of the media, a compromise was developed that will allow witnesses to view the entire execution via live camera feed as well as observing the actual lethal injection through an observation window.

HB 2096 was signed by the governor into law, effective immediately.

HB 2097 Enrolled clarifies the authority of the Department of Corrections and the Oregon Youth Authority to provide specified medical and mental health treatment and services to persons under 18 years of age in DOC custody.

HB 2097 was signed by the governor into law.

HB 2099 Enrolled allows extradition of person without governor's warrant under certain circumstances. This legislation gives Oregon's courts authority to enforce other states' pre-signed waivers and return custody to the requesting states without court hearings and the delays and expenses of governor's warrants.

HB 2099 was signed by the governor into law.

HB 2379 Enrolled (formerly HB 2100) provides flexibility in the release of prisoners when their prison release dates fall on weekends or legal holidays. This bill allows the DOC to release these inmates as early as the prior Wednesday. These offenders will be required to report immediately to his or her parole officer in order to access vital services in the community instead of waiting through a weekend or holiday for offices to open.

The language from HB 2100 was inserted into HB 2379. It passed both chambers in the final hours of the Legislative session.

HB 3489 Enrolled allows the superintendent of State Police to appoint employees of the Department of Corrections engaged in medical transports as special State Police officers, enabling staff to be armed when crossing state lines into Washington and Idaho (agreements must be signed with neighboring states).

HB 3489 was signed into law by the governor.



Yoshida's Inc., Creates a Second Partnership with Oregon Prison



A unique community of artists is emerging at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution (EOCI) in Pendleton, where inmates are expressing themselves through woodworking.

Through the EOCI Wood Products Program, 45 inmates carefully craft approximately 30 items a week out of quality ash, alder, black walnut, basswood and fir. Pieces range in size from small intricate toys to finely detailed cedar strip canoes between 16 and 18 feet long. Many of the pieces feature Native American themes, reflecting the heritage of some of the artists.

Yoshida's Inc., collaborates with EOCI and Cloughs on Main, a Pendleton merchant, to market these elaborate works of art. After EOCI recoups its costs, earnings from sales replenish supplies and materials. Inmates receive awards for their efforts via a points system.

Yoshida's Inc. is a diverse group of 15 companies that are privately held and owned by Junki Yoshida. Recognized as one of the fastest growing companies in Oregon, Yoshida's Inc. continually seeks business opportunities that allow it to make a positive impact on the communities it serves. One of its companies, Array Corporation, the producer of the Prison Blues clothing line at EOCI, seeks to positively impact the lives of inmates. Yoshida's involvement with the woodworking program is yet another example of their partnership spirit.

PAC Members Tour Prisons

Every Oregon state prison sponsors a prison advisory committee (PAC) to provide a dialogue with the community. Tours were recently provided to PAC members at a number of DOC prisons as well as the Deschutes Mobile Work

Camp. Some tours also included representatives of the media and officials from communities where new correctional facilities are being constructed.

"We watched women answering Department of Motor Vehicle's phones and training Canine Companion dogs. We toured laundry services, artists' woodworking areas, Prison Blues clothing production, a mattress factory, a ski board factory, a bakery and watched landscape crews. We ate food prepared and served by inmates who want to become chefs and waiters," said Susan Huntley, vice-chair of the Southern Willamette Valley PAC (associated with the future Junction City facility). "The work experience gained will help assure the inmates will be employable and not return to the prison system. Visiting these places has changed my image of prisons."

Tours provide PAC members with a better understanding of the department's mission and the complexity of holding inmates accountable while carrying out activities that help them to become better individuals and succeed when they are released into the community. "We have found that educating advisory committee members about the department and inmate incarceration is a very effective tool for assisting them in advising the department about integrating our facilities into their communities," said Bobbi Burton, Community Development manager.

One community member from the Wilsonville area who attended a tour wrote, "My interest in going on this tour was near zero, but my husband, a PAC member, wanted me to see the facility. Imagine my surprise when it turned out to be one of the most informative and interesting tours I've been on."

Fast Fact:

In October, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility will open its minimum custody facility for women. The medium units and intake center will open in the spring.



"New" Learning Lab at OWCC

When the office technology instructor at Oregon Women's Correctional Center retired recently, the education staff was faced with the challenge of finding a way to continue to offer computer training. There weren't any resources to hire a new instructor. Also,

Fast Fact:

For the fourth month in the last year, no inmates tested positive on random drug tests in July. Approximately 5 percent of the inmate population is tested monthly.

OWCC inmates often don't stay at that prison long enough to complete a long-term program.

Necessity is truly the mother of invention: the education staff put together a new self-guided, self-paced learning lab using the computers and many of the programs from the former community college course. The lab's programs teach inmates how to use a computer, expose inmates to new concepts and provide information in a variety of subject areas. Some of the newer programs teach Spanish, communication skills, high-level math, science, geography, and provide training in the use of a CD encyclopedia. The most popular programs are Spanish, typing and word processing. Courses are offered in 3-week blocks. Inmates must have high academic scores to enroll. Hours spent in the learning lab help inmates develop computer skills while learning new subject matter. About 30 - 40 inmates currently use the lab.

The skills learned in the lab prepare inmates for employment, both within the prison and in the community. For example, several lab students work at the prison's DMV call center and are taking Spanish to improve their ability to communicate more effectively with Spanish-speaking customers.

Speaking of Education...

At intake, a one-year sampling of inmates (about 3,700) indicated:

- 41% haven't finished GED or high school
- 38% claim they have a GED
- 16% claim they have a HS diploma
- 5% claim they have a two or four-year college degree (79 percent have not completed traditional school)

also...

- 7% have limited English proficiency
- 18% read below the mandatory (basic literacy) reading level
- 72% do math below the basic level

According to the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, "Learning disabilities among inmates has been estimated at between 30-50 percent compared to 5-15 percent among general population."

**Fast Fact:
Work-Based Education**


DOC's education programs are provide a basic education for inmates who do not have a GED or high school diploma. Inmates also may participate in work-based education programs that teach viable skills to be used while incarcerated and upon release.


Grant Benefits Needy

The City of Ontario was awarded a \$22,924 grant for an Onion Recovery Program in partnership with the Oregon Food Bank and Snake River Correctional Institution. The program calls for the collection, packaging and distribution of onions from five packers in Ontario for distribution to the hungry. The goal is to recover 500 tons of onions that would otherwise be disposed of and help feed more than 500,000 people each year. About 1 million pounds of fresh onions collected from September through March will be delivered to emergency food box recipients. Inmates from Snake River will pack the onions into bags for distribution.





DOC Garners Awards for Good Work


 The International Association of Correctional Officers selected Sgt. Ron Park of Snake River Correctional Institution as their Correctional Supervisor of the Year.


 OR-OSHA presented Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla with a Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (S.H.A.R.P) award. TRCI is the second Oregon prison to be recognized with this award (SRCI won last year).


TRCI leadership actively encourages safety and health excellence to reduce injuries and illnesses through employee training and participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, and voluntary and routine inspections.

 The Oregon Food Bank board of directors voted to give a 2001 Stone Soup Award to the Oregon Department of Corrections for providing inmate labor worth \$300,000 a year and for other partnerships to help process food from farmers and deliver it to the Oregon Food Bank. The Stone Soup Awards are presented each year to community partners for their actions toward fighting hunger.

 The 2001 Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference selected Snake River Correctional Institution to receive the "Public Employer Award." The award is given to "employers that have made an outstanding contribution to occupational safety and health." According to SRCI Superintendent Bob Lampert, the award, "exemplifies the hard work we all do to provide a safe working environment, and it gives us encouragement to continue our efforts."

 The National Commission on Correctional Health Care named Oregon State Penitentiary's hospice program as its 2001 Program of the Year. The hospice program was chosen from programs at more than 500 prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities participating in the NCCHC accreditation program.

 The Oregon Film Commission presented Coffee Creek Correctional Facility Superintendent Joan Palmateer and DOC Communications Manager Perrin Damon with Governor's Film Advocate Awards for their roles in bringing the feature film *Bandits* to Oregon. The commission estimates that the production brought about \$15 million into the state's economy. *Bandits* opens on October 12.

 The Oregon State Finance Association recognized Don Mathews of the DOC Payroll Unit for his outstanding contributions to the state's finance and accounting efforts. Don was recognized for creating new ways to develop and query various types of reports, sharing that knowledge across the agency and outside the agency, and chairing the Oregon State Payroll System's user group.



Catching Up

During the Legislative session, *Corrections Briefings* was replaced by *Legislative Briefings*. Lots has been going on in the department since the last issue of *Corrections Briefings*. Here are some highlights:

DOC Helps Fight Summer Fires

During the peak of the 2001 fire season, 300 inmates fought fires and provided fire camp support. Over 40 DOC staff supervised the fire and camp crews. Additionally, institution food service managers and their staff coordinated inmate efforts to prepare over 25,000 sack lunches. DOC Central Distribution Center staff transported the department's mobile kitchen and refrigerated units to the fire sites to support the Department of Forestry.



PRCF Garden Reaps Rewards

Last summer, inmates at Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City planted a newly enlarged garden to assist in Measure 17 compliance and, at the same time, provide more vegetables for use in the kitchen. Last year the Food Services Section processed, prepared, and served corn, potatoes, and pumpkins that fed inmates throughout the winter months. In fact, over 17,000 pounds of potatoes were eventually harvested — a thirty-week supply for the 186-bed prison. This year's garden is bursting at the seams with corn, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, and squash that will again be used to defray prison food costs.



Environmental Lawsuit Dismissed



A lawsuit brought primarily by inmates and former inmates at Oregon State Penitentiary was recently dismissed with prejudice by the US District Court, meaning that the suit cannot be brought again in federal court.

The plaintiffs claimed they had been harmed by dry cleaning chemicals that were discovered in the groundwater near the penitentiary in 1989. The solvents were thought to be from OSP's dry cleaning operation that closed in 1983. Although it maintains that no one was harmed, the DOC initiated a major (and ongoing) clean-up effort to extract and aerate the groundwater.

"The court's dismissal of this lawsuit is consistent with the opinions of the Department of Environmental Quality and federal government authorities as well as our private-sector consultants," said DOC spokeswoman Perrin Damon. "We will continue the clean-up knowing that we are doing the right thing."

DOC Puts Heat Back in the Community

When staff at Mill Creek Correctional Facility in Salem noticed that trees were being cut in a local industrial area, they asked permission to salvage the wood for a community service project. Given the go-ahead, the volunteer staff and inmates were able to salvage and process over 25 cords of prime oak and fir fire wood. The wood was delivered to families in need and stacked by 21 volunteer inmates and six volunteer staff. Recipients were delighted at having been selected. "You don't know how bad we needed this," said one single mom.

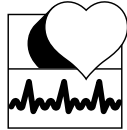


OWCC Initiates Hospice

Oregon Women's Correctional Center has introduced the first female hospice program in the Department of Corrections

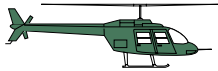
Employees and inmate volunteers attended a hospice training workshop given by Trey Malicoat of the Willamette Valley Hospice Program. Mr. Malicoat is the same trainer that helped develop the penitentiary's award-winning hospice program.

In addition to the hospice focus, the inmate volunteers will be available to offer peer support to other inmates dealing with grief and loss issues. The volunteers will be referred by the prison's officer in charge, chaplain, or the health clinic. These volunteers will also be peer educators in wellness classes that talk about healthy ways of dealing with grief and loss.



SFFC Enhances Response Capabilities

Due to its remote location in the Tillamook State Forest, South Fork Forest Camp staff and



inmates have a long history of providing assistance in various emergencies such as floods, forest fires, traffic accidents, and local medical emergencies.

In an effort to enhance emergency readiness, a Life Flight helicopter team flew in to present training on activation procedures, landing zone logistics, communication and patient loading procedures. SFFC has been used as a Life Flight landing zone on several occasions.

Canine Companions Graduate



Five Canine Companion puppies trained by inmates at Oregon Women's Correctional Center in Salem moved on to advanced training at Canine Companions for Independence in California, joining many other dogs their age. The sadness at parting was soon offset by the arrival of six new three-month-old puppies. The inmates that worked with the last set of dogs are also training the new group.

OWCC staff and inmates alike enjoy helping the disabled by raising and training puppies.

Inmates Make Camp Bearable

Oregon Women's Correctional Center, which will close in April (to be converted to a men's minimum facility), paroled its last set of crocheted bears to Camp Ukandu this summer. Camp Ukandu is a summer retreat for children with cancer and their siblings.



For a number of years, inmates at the medium-security prison have made bears to greet each camper on their first night at Camp Ukandu. Three hundred bears were made for this year's camp and next, with yarn, buttons, and stuffing.

Since January, more than 70 inmates and some staff members spent spare moments transforming the donated materials into unique lovable bears. The inmates resoundingly agree that the project warms their hearts while giving something back to the community.

Corrections Briefings

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