

# Corrections Briefings

Summer 2002

Volume 5 Issue 2

## Changes at the Helm

On July 1, leadership of the Department of Corrections transferred seamlessly to Ben de Haan as interim director. Mr. de Haan succeeds Dave Cook, who retired at the end of June. Mr. de Haan was the department's deputy director for seven years.

"The change in leadership for the department doesn't mean a change in direction. Our number-one priority continues to be implementation and refinement of the Oregon Accountability Model," Mr. de Haan declared. "The model focuses on safe communities, safe prisons, and a safe workplace. It is inspired by our mission of public safety, offender accountability, and crime prevention.

"The Oregon Accountability Model is a purposeful plan — from incarceration through supervision — to change an offender's criminal behavior through evaluation, education, treatment and work," Mr. de Haan

explained. "It begins at the assessment phase and involves offenders throughout incarceration, reintegration, and their time on community supervision."

Mr. de Haan is also committed to maintaining the department's strong relationships with leaders in the corrections and public safety communities, both locally and nationally. "Partners such as the county community corrections offices, sheriffs, other members of the criminal justice community, the Oregon Social Learning Center, Portland State University, Early Head Start, the National Institute of Corrections, as well as our rock-solid employees are helping us to drive down recidivism and to set a standard for running effective programs nationwide.

"I'm proud of our progress to date and excited about a future that holds so many possibilities for changing lives and enhancing our communities — all while

running safe, civil and productive prisons," Mr. de Haan said. "Because of the combined efforts of our partners and our staff over the last few years, we have a solid foundation and a clear vision upon which to build."



*Ben de Haan has been in public service for more than 25 years, including seven as deputy director of the Oregon Department of Corrections. He has worked*

*in juvenile corrections and administered a number of human service programs. He also directed a university-based research center, conducted research in the area of family violence and worked as a consultant in human services agencies across the nation. Mr. de Haan holds a masters degree in Public Administration from Lewis and Clark college and a Ph.D. in Social Work and Social Research from Portland State University. He also serves as chair of the Children's Trust Fund, an agency that promotes good parenting and healthy childhood experiences.*

OREGON DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS

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



## Accountability Model a National Example

Because of the work-to-date on the Oregon Accountability Model, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has selected Oregon to assist in designing effective model transition programs. This recognition — while it came with no additional funding for programs — does give Oregon increased access to technical assistance grants from the NIC as well as the opportunity to share what is learned and developed with other states. The NIC Executive Board held their meeting in Oregon in March with the Oregon Accountability Model as primary topic.

Historically, many states' transition planning began only during the last months of incarceration. The Oregon Accountability Model recognizes that there is no magical transformation period and no specific inoculation against recidivism after release. Rather, it makes the whole period of incarceration and post-prison supervision a time for inmates to work hard and focus on preparation for release.

How to help inmates be successful when they return to their communities is a very large puzzle. The Department of Corrections is seeking solutions by looking not only within our own department, but at local, national and international innovations.

## US Recidivism Rises Despite New Prisons

Evidence continues to show that simply locking up more offenders doesn't reduce recidivism. An article by Fox Butterfield in *The New York Times* in June reports that nationwide, 67 percent of inmates released from prisons commit new crimes within three years of release.

The article was based on a U.S. Department of Justice report that demonstrates that longer sentences do not necessarily deter crime. "The main thing this report shows is that our experiment with building lots more prisons as a deterrent to crime has not worked," said Joan Petersilia, professor of criminology at the University of California at Irvine (as quoted by Mr. Butterfield). The report also shows that the first year after an

inmate is released is critical to his or her successful return to society.

According to the Urban Institute's Jeremy Travis, those offenders who are unable to maintain jobs and housing are most likely to return to crime. He said that many inmates are released having received little or no job training, drug treatment or education in how to be a better parent.

Many elements of the Oregon Accountability Model are in place to help offenders reduce the risk factors associated with reoffending, including work and training programs, alcohol and drug treatment, anger management classes and more. Another key to Oregon's low rate of recidivism is the involvement of staff in modeling appropriate, pro-social interactions.

You can read the full DOJ report at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/rpr94.htm>

## Incentive-Based Housing Succeeds at Snake River

To make efficient use of staff time, improve inmate behavior and facilitate the Oregon Accountability Model, Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI) in Ontario, a 3,000-bed prison, implemented a new concept that puts similar groups of inmates together in the same housing unit.

Inmates who present the lowest risk to the public and to the prison are housed near those who are most like them in terms of behavior and away from those who present higher risks. Risk is determined using two criteria: inmates' official classification level and their history of obeying prison rules.

By housing inmates with similar behavior histories together, the prison hopes to lower the number of incidences in which inmates break prison rules. This allows the prison to free-up resources to modify the behavior of high-risk inmates in order to, ultimately, improve the odds that they will live crime-free lives upon release.

Over 800 inmates of varying classifications at SRCI have demonstrated that they can consistently meet



all their work and program requirements while maintaining acceptable behavior, including at least one year without breaking the rules. "All inmates have the opportunity to control their housing destiny by adhering to the rules," explained SRCI Superintendent Bob Lampert.

"Furthermore, if they qualify, inmates may also apply for an assignment in a privileged housing unit — a separate complex where they enjoy coveted privileges such as additional time to eat their meals, extra recreation time and longer telephone time."

Based on their daily observations, staff recommend inmates to be considered for privileged housing. If accepted, inmates have to maintain the same standards of conduct or reach a higher level and most strive hard to do so.

The concept of incentive-based housing has had a positive impact on inmate behavior. During the past three years, the number of privileged housing units has grown from two to ten, while the percentage of inmates with repeated disciplinary infractions has declined proportionately.

## Thousands Attend Coffee Creek Opening Saturday, April 6, 2002

Dozens of people milled around, waiting for their chance to get into prison. The doors opened early, letting the curious from around the state get their first, and likely their last, look inside the new Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville.

Ready for them were 35 tour guides to show the facility to visitors. More than 2,000 people took the guided tours, with as many more opting to wander through on their own.

At times there were 28 tour groups moving through the institution. Favorite stops were a transport bus,

intake, housing units, Health Services, Food Services (where snacks were served), hallway displays of DOC and related programs, and visiting (where kids could be fingerprinted at a table sponsored by AFSCME).

An afternoon dedication ceremony featured the DOC Color Guard, comments from DOC Director Dave Cook, CCCF Superintendent Joan Palmateer, and Wilsonville Mayor Charlotte Lehan.

By 4:30 p.m., the crowds had thinned to a trickle coming in the front doors. Tour guides were hoarse from talking loudly for hours on end. Voices soon healed, but the work of searching every nook and cranny remained. CCCF staff spent the next few days combing the prison for contraband, but nothing of concern was found.

## Lakeview Breaks Ground this Summer

A public ceremony to commemorate groundbreaking for the new men's minimum-security facility in Lakeview is scheduled for 11 a.m., Friday, July 19, 2002. The DOC,

along with the Lakeview Prison Advisory Committee, will host a reception at the Lake County Fairgrounds following a brief ceremony at the prison site.

The Lakeview prison is included in the Department of Corrections' long-range construction plan. It is the third new prison to be built by the Department of Corrections as a result of the prison siting process that began in 1996. The 90-acre site was selected by the governor in December 1996.

The Lakeview facility will be a minimum security work camp. It will include areas for work and education programs, health services, food services, and facility support functions. The 400-bed prison is expected to be completed by April 2004 and will employ about 125 corrections professionals.

### Why do we have to build more prisons?

*The size of Oregon's prison population is forecast every six months. The number of prisoners is determined by demographics, arrest rates, incarceration rates, criminal justice policy and laws such as Measure 11.*

*In order to have enough beds ready to match the growth, the DOC carefully plans prisons' housing units to open precisely when the beds are needed.*

*Based on the forecast, DOC knows now when it will need beds in the future and it can build them just in time. Based on what's known today, five new prisons are slated to open between 2004 and 2010. The construction plan flexes with changes in the forecast.*



## Deschutes Conservation Camp Recognized by Feds

The Oregon Department of Corrections has been presented a US Department of Agriculture 2002 Secretary's Honor Award for maintaining and enhancing the nation's natural resources and environment.

Given for the department's ongoing partnership with the US Forest Service that sends inmates to live and work in the national forest each summer, the USDA specifically thanked the department for vital natural resource restoration work worth over \$1.2 million.

The Deschutes Conservation Camp is already up and running for the third consecutive summer. For eight-weeks this year, inmates will reduce excess fuels from the forest, remove noxious weed, and build firebreaks to protect nearby communities and their watersheds.

## Organic Gardens a Win-Win

Oregon prisons are growing — vegetables that is. Oregon prisons are in full bloom this time of year with organic gardens to help defray food costs and provide meaningful work to a number of inmates.

"There is a lot of positive spirit around these gardens, shade houses, and greenhouses," explains Steve Ickes, assistant director of Institutions. "Food Service managers and staff see the gardens' economic benefit and have suggested items for production that will reduce their costs further.

"We are now growing food for the table and vegetarian meals, herbs for cooking, flowers for local community beautification projects, and a lot of sound, positive work ethics through this strategy. We want inmates who know how to be productive and appreciate the benefit to self and others of an honest day's work.

"These gardens are a tribute to what the inmates, and staff can do together - and, I might add these days, on a 'shoestring.'"

## Sustainability Update

- A new 28-page publication, "Looking for Oregon's Future: What Is Sustainability?" helps government agencies and employees who work with Oregonians on sustainability issues. Bulk quantities of the publication and discussion guides are available from the Oregon State University Extension Service by contacting Sandy Reichhuber at (800) 561-6719 or e-mail: puborders@orst.edu.
- Recycling is taking off at Coffee Creek Correctional Institution (CCCF) in Wilsonville. For instance, the prison uses an "in-vessel" composter to reduce its waste stream and the need for regular trips to the landfill. The composter takes in table scraps, yard debris, paper and cardboard to create useable compost, and is expected to help reduce CCCF's landfill waste by 70 percent. It operates through a natural process of heat and bacteria to break down the organic matter much more quickly and efficiently than a regular composter, with little or no odor problem.

Working with staff at CCCF the DOC Sustainability Committee has found recycling options for Styrofoam, most plastic products, and worn/scrap cotton material. In combination with an outlet for organic waste, CCCF may eventually divert virtually all of its waste from the landfill.

## Death Row Moves Within Penitentiary

Death row is moving. Not far — just around the block — but for the first time in many years, a sufficient number of cells for the state's condemned population will be available under one roof.

To optimize the use of its limited space, the Department of Corrections is moving several discrete groups of inmates who have special housing needs. These transfers have made cells available in the penitentiary's Intensive Management Unit building to house condemned inmates together.



Other recent group moves include transferring inmates in protective custody as well as a specialized medical population to Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla. Ninety-six beds in the 192-bed Intensive Management Unit at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario are operational which helped to free-up space in the Salem unit for death row.

Death row inmates have long been housed on a tier in the penitentiary's Disciplinary Segregation Unit building. The tier accommodates only 15 inmates, but the population of condemned inmates exceeded capacity. The overflow was housed in a partitioned section of a regular cell block called "Administrative Segregation." Inmates in protective custody were housed there as well. That space will be converted back into housing for inmates in the penitentiary's general population.

The new death row has 49 cells. The condemned population numbers 27. One of those inmates is housed in another prison so he can receive medical services that are not readily available in Salem.

The Intensive Management Unit (IMU) at Oregon State Penitentiary opened in 1991. Its 196 beds, as well as the 192 newer beds in Ontario, were designed to accommodate inmates who demonstrated a significant inability to obey prison rules and otherwise compromised the safety of the prison system. Through various behavior modification programs, inmates are encouraged to change their behavior to enable them to return to the general prison population.

Because the building was not originally designed to accommodate death row, several modifications have been made to the unit. An outside recreation area has been expanded, tables on the tiers have been added, and cells have been equipped to accommodate inmates' personal property.

## Briefs

- To help inmates return to regular prison life after being assigned to a maximum custody unit, Two Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI) in Umatilla is opening a Close Supervision Unit (CSU). A new concept for Oregon, the unit has 78 beds. Opening in July, it will start out gradually with approximately 20 inmates. Consistent with the cognitive restructuring programs offered in the state's two maximum custody units, inmates in the new CSU will participate in programs to ensure their smooth integration back into the general prison population.
- The department purchased 234 puncture-resistant security vests in a pilot project to test their effectiveness. Selected staff at the department's six higher-custody prisons may be eligible to participate. Vests will be custom fitted to those volunteers selected for the pilot project. They will be expected to wear the vests at all times when working at their normal duty stations during the six-month trial period.
- The Rotary Club of Wilsonville honored Coffee Creek Correctional Facility Superintendent Joan Palmateer by presenting her with its first Professional Leadership Excellence Award on June 20, 2002. This is a new award given to select leaders who go above and beyond expectations in their field of service.
- Snake River Correctional Institution and Two Rivers Correctional Institution won SHARP (Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program) certifications from Oregon OSHA. SRCI is the first prison to receive two consecutive annual certifications.

