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5 DOC Prisons and 15 Work Releases Awarded Accreditation

Five Washington prisons received accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA) at the Association's national conference in Kansas City, Mo., on Aug. 13.

The accreditations were announced by Department of Corrections Secretary Harold Clarke and the facility audit managers from Airway Heights Corrections Center, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, Stafford Creek Corrections Center, Cedar Creek Corrections Center, and Clallam Bay Corrections Center. All 15 DOC work release facilities have been awarded accreditation or re-accreditation as well.

The accreditation process evaluates facility operations against recognized national standards. Each of these facilities met those exacting standards.

Successful accreditation means each facility met accepted national standards for staff training, fiscal controls, safety procedures, food service, sanitation, offender discipline rules and other performance categories.

Olympic Corrections Center will be receiving formal accreditation in January and audits at the nine other prisons are scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2008.

Secretary Clarke has set a goal that by December 2009, all Department prisons, work releases, and community corrections operations will be successfully accredited.

Offenders at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center Strive to be Better Dads

In an effort to reduce the likelihood children of incarcerated parents will one day be incarcerated themselves, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center (CRCC) offers a program for inmate fathers called Inside<Out Dads.

The program, which is specially tailored for incarcerated fathers, was developed by the National Fatherhood Initiative. It originated at the McNeil Island Corrections Center and was previously titled Long Distance Dads. Inside<Out Dads has been offered to inmates at CRCC since 2005.



In the United States, over 2 million children have a parent who is incarcerated. Statistically, those children are more likely to end up in prison themselves.

Facilitator Jim Plunkitt (3rd row, blue shirt) and the graduates of the May 1, 2007, Inside<Out Dads class at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center

Offenders in the 12-week, character-based program learn about the risks facing their children, such as higher incidences of drug abuse, teen pregnancy, involvement in gangs and eventual incarceration. They also have the opportunity to connect with their children through letters, pictures and Coyote Ridge Corrections Center's family friendly and visitation programs.

The program is facilitated by community volunteers, such as Jim Plunkitt, who first started working with the program while a Pastor at the First Baptist Church in Richland. Plunkitt, who recently relocated to Spokane Valley, now travels to Connell once a week to facilitate the class. Offenders also have the opportunity to become peer facilitators. In order to do so, they must complete at least one full cycle of the class as participants, show interest in the position, and have leadership abilities.

"We like to enroll the men into Inside<Out Dads early enough so they have time to practice parenting skills while they still have a significant amount of time at CRCC," said Correctional Specialist Patricia Gaimari.

Offender Joey F. and five other offenders who took the class went on to become peer facilitators for the program. Joey F. said he wanted to be a teacher and a role model for his son. He also wants to teach his son the difference between right and wrong. He says it is essential for him to use this time of incarceration productively to regain his son's trust and respect before entering back into society. This is a common goal for men involved in this program.

"Once you become a dad, it is something that you have to be committed to for the rest of your life," said offender and Peer Facilitator Jeffrey C. "Parenting is not something you can treat as a part time thing, but as a full-time commitment."

Since its inception at Coyote Ridge, 92 offenders have participated in the program. When the program began in 2005, about nine men were enrolled. This year, over 20 men enrolled in Inside<Out Dads.

"I applaud the participants of the Inside<Out Dads Program", said Superintendent Scott Frakes. "It is a great way for offenders to be involved with their children prior to returning to the community, and their families."

Earl Wright Receives NABCJ Chairman's Award

Earl Wright, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Programs Administration in the Division of Community Corrections, is the recipient of this year's National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ) Chairman's Award.

Wright received the award for his leadership, dedication and contributions to the NABCJ at the chapter or regional level. Deputy Secretary for Community Corrections Mary Leftridge Byrd, when congratulating Wright for this award, cited his interest in "growing" opportunities for generations to come.

Wright, who has been an active member of NABCJ for the past 10 years, has worked as a corrections professional for 28 years. In April 1979 Wright was hired to State service/DSHS as a Group Life Counselor at Cedar Creek Youth Camp. The majority of his experience has been with the Community Corrections Division, but has also worked in facilities as an Associate Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Acting Superintendent.

As chairman of the Washington State Chapter's Leadership Development Committee, Wright spent numerous hours steering the committee through a pilot series that resulted in an 18-hour leadership/management development seminar with 12 participants. The pilot series began in June and is designed to introduce participants to critical leadership competencies, expand their knowledge and help them develop skills needed to lead both today and in the future.



Earl Wright

"The project he has been working on has been an inspiration to the committee members and to those who participated in the pilot program," said Wanda McRae, Superintendent at Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women. "He is the epitome of a leader because he is ever endeavoring to reach back and help others achieve."

DOC: Working Toward a Sustainable Fleet

During the last fiscal year, 29 of the 44 vehicles purchased by the Department of Corrections were either hybrid, flexible-fuel or electric vehicles.

“Hybrid vehicle” most often refers to a petroleum-electric hybrid which uses a gasoline engine and batteries to power an electric motor. A flexible-fuel vehicle is a vehicle that can accept gasoline mixed with varying levels of ethanol (gas made from vegetable oil).

This coming year is shaping up to be even better as the first two vehicles purchased were completely electric crew cab pickup trucks made by Tiger Truck. These will be used at the Washington State Penitentiary (WSP).

And then there's the fuel: Three facilities (Cedar Creek Corrections Center, Stafford Creek Corrections Center and Washington Corrections Center) are using biodiesel and two more (Monroe Correctional Complex and WSP) are poised to start. Biodiesel is made from vegetable oil and burns far cleaner than petroleum diesel. The facilities are using a blend of B20, which is 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent diesel. State law requires all state agencies to use B20 by 2009.



A Cushman Titan electric vehicle currently in use at Monroe Correctional Complex.

From Cemeteries to Food Banks, CCOs Lead Community Efforts

During her 14 years with DOC, Kathy Lamb has had several positions, but none of them have been nearly as rewarding as her current one.

As the coordinator for the Spokane Community Restitution Crew, Community Corrections Officer 3 Kathy Lamb and her four crew supervisors take offenders into the heart of their communities. From cemeteries to senior centers to gardens to roadsides and beyond, the Community Corrections Officers (CCOs) and their crew members make an impact on their communities.

“It’s really rewarding work,” Lamb said. “You make so many great connections with the community, and you feel good because you’re giving back.”

DOC recently celebrated national Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Week, by recognizing some of the work that CCOs do in their communities.

“Our CCOs do so much every day to give back to their communities, it really is impressive,” Deputy Secretary Mary Leftridge Byrd said. “While I take every opportunity I can to thank them for their hard work, I do think it’s important that they have a week like this that’s dedicated to them and our profession.”

Like the other restitution crews across the state, the Spokane crews do a wide variety of work. They provide janitorial services at a senior center, unload trucks for a food bank, clean up litter along highways, hand out fruits and vegetables to poor families and more.

The Spokane CCOs have led a few unique projects as well. In 2003, the crews began digging up tombstones near Eastern State Hospital. Over the decades, the tombstones became buried under grass and weeds.

After three summers of work, CCO-led crews had uncovered all the tombstones. They still return each summer to maintain the cemetery.

Along with her crew supervisors, CCOs Randy Palmer, Julia Porter, David Perry and Brandon Avery, Lamb organizes crews that can swell to about 20 members during weekends.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Earl Wright said CCOs like Lamb serve as great ambassadors for DOC.

“These are the people who are literally out in their communities while they’re at work,” Wright said. “It’s good to know that such outstanding people are out there representing DOC every day.”

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