



# Commissioner's CORNER

"To Protect the Public by Incarcerating and Supervising Offenders"

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COMMISSIONER, DOC



**A report by COMMISSIONER JOE SCHMIDT**  
**Alaska Department of Corrections**  
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## **WELCOME TO THE COMMISSIONER'S CORNER:**

Thanks for continuing to check in with this column. If you have ideas, issues or suggestions from institutions or field offices for the Commissioner's Corner, please submit them to

[Richard\\_Schmitz@correct.state.ak.us](mailto:Richard_Schmitz@correct.state.ak.us) or call 465 4640.

## **'INSIDE' FILM CREW INCLUDES GRADUATION, TRAINING IN SHOOT:**

Following on the success of last year's MSNBC 'Lockup' feature on Spring Creek Correctional Center, a second four-person film crew from the same production company spent ten days in Seward in mid April filming for the Court TV program 'Inside'. This year, however, the film crew also spent a successful day in Anchorage as they filmed drills and scenario training at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Basic CO Academy and at the graduation ceremony later in the day.





'Inside' featuring Spring Creek will air sometime in late summer or this fall on Court TV. In the photo immediately below, the film crew works in the yard. In the photo following that one, SCCC Superintendent Craig Turnbull faces the cameras as the crew wraps up its project in Seward.





**DOC PARTICIPATES IN POLICE MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY:** One of the final official acts of President John F. Kennedy before his death was to name May 15 National Police Memorial Day. This year, law



enforcement officers, support personnel, family, and friends from across Alaska gathered in Anchorage to honor the brave men and women who have answered the final call. Those gathered honored the more than 146 law enforcement officers, federal, state, and local, who were killed in the line of duty during 2006. During the ceremony, a bell tolled 59 times for each of the Alaska officers who have died in the line of duty since 1897. Among those honored was DOC Prisoner Transportation Officer James

Hesterberg, killed Nov. 19, 2002, when a commercial truck struck the prisoner transport van he was driving. He was 48 years old and had served the Department for 18 years at the time of his death.

**DOC TRAINING ACADEMY STAFF RECEIVE DENALI AWARD:**

In a May 9 ceremony, DOC's Elisa Huffman and Sergeants Jake Wyckoff, Kurt Reichard and Dave Fredericks were presented with the Governor's Denali Peak Performance Award. Governor Palin offered her personal congratulations to the Training Academy staff for being chosen as honorable mention in the Exceptional Performance Team category. During the last twelve months, the staff trained and certified an unprecedented number of officers for their Alaska Police Standards Council certification—almost 140% more than had been trained in previous years. In addition to instructing these new officers, the team provided continuing education and supplemental education for current employees. They worked as an integrated team, supportive of each other and cognizant of the needs of the Department of Corrections and the State of Alaska.



*L to R: Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards, Sgt. Dave Fredericks; Sgt. Kurt Reichard, Clerk Elisa Huffman, Former Training Coordinator Jann Palach; Sgt. Jake Wyckoff, Director Garland Armstrong*

## **AMCC INMATES RECEIVE FISHING VESSEL EMERGENCY TRAINING:**

Eight inmates at Anvil Mountain Correctional Center in Nome attended an AMSEA (Alaska Marine Safety Education Association) Fishing Vessel Emergency Procedures and Onboard



Drills course taught by AMSEA Instructor Dug Jensen and AMCC Education Coordinator Howard Appel. The inmates learned how to get into an Immersion Suit in less than 60 seconds, do abandon ship, fire, flooding, and man overboard drills, test an EPIRB (emergency tracking transmitter), and other life saving skills. Following the successful completion of the required skills, the inmates were awarded a card allowing them to conduct marine safety and survival skill drills on board commercial fishing vessels. AMSEA makes an extra effort to make boating safety education and training available in rural areas of the state that have a large percentage of Alaska Native residents. Often these areas have the highest drowning and boating fatality rates in the state. During Alaska's winter months AMSEA provides hands-on training courses to hundreds of individuals statewide. Many more are introduced to AMSEA's safety message with exhibits and brief presentations.

**DOUG LLOYD NAMED INTERIM TRAINING DIRECTOR:** former Academy Director Doug Lloyd has returned to the Department of Corrections in the position of interim Training Director. Doug Lloyd spent many years with the department as a Correctional Officer prior to transferring to the Academy where he retired as director. Additionally, Doug retired from the military and brings that wealth of staff development experience with him to his position. "Doug is taking the reins of a solid program most recently under the direction of Jann Polack," said Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards. "We are really glad to have Doug back at the DOC."

**COMMISSIONER TOURS GLACIER MANOR CRC IN JUNEAU:**

Commissioner Joe Schmidt undertook a familiarization tour of Gastineau Human Services' Glacier Manor halfway house in Juneau. The commissioner has placed a focus on revising and updating the department's population management plan. A key component of this plan is making sure all available CRC beds are filled.



The GHS facility includes dorm-style beds for male and female offenders transitioning into the community and short term apartments for offenders on probation/parole.

**BRING YOUR KIDS TO WORK DAY, 2007** enjoyed a strong turnout at the Juneau Central Office. Taking part, from L-R, were: Joshua Dore Jr., Heather Pavlik, Johnathon Schmitz, Commissioner Joe Schmidt, Erika Halsted, Isabella Bugayong and Mackenzie McDonald-Cox. Liam Greeson was not pictured.



**HILAND MOUNTAIN ‘GIVE BACK’ PROJECT EARNS AWARD:** The Eagle River Chamber of Commerce recognized a 12-week collaborative community project between Hiland Mountain Correctional Center, Eagle River Parks & Recreation and Dina Pappas, a local artist/quilter in April. The project created six wall hangings each measuring 4’ x 8’ to be used for a sound barrier at the new Beach Lake Trails Chalet off South Birchwood Loop. ‘Developing the Artist Within’ is the name of the class held at the women’s prison at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. Seven women enthusiastically attended class each week. Six of the women were residents of the ‘Hope’ wing, the Mental Health Unit. Pappas, owner of Dina’s Cozy Cabin Quilts along with HMCC Education Coordinator Karen Jenkins, taught the weekly class of developing the artist through the creation of the wall hangings. The project was inspired and designed by Linda Vizenor of Eagle River Parks & Recreation.



The wall hangings replicate the outdoor scene that surrounds the Beach Lake Trails Chalet. Three summer and three winter scenes were created using fabric to create a 3-dimensional effect. The winter scenes reflected

Nordic competitive skiers and a family skiing trip through the birch and spruce trees. The summer scenes are filled with colors of green grass, purple lupine and mauve fireweed encased within the forest setting. Walkers, runners, and a family adventuring for a picnic fill the summer scene. Each wall hanging also has wildlife typically seen on the trail: fox, rabbit, and moose. A plaque will be placed at the Beach Lake Trails Chalet will acknowledge the collaborative effort of the Hiland Mountain Correctional Center and Dina Pappas. The class will resume again in January 2008 to complete six additional wall hangings of fall and spring scenes.

**PROBATION OFFICERS TOUR RURAL COMMUNITIES, MINE SITE:**

In mid-March, Anchorage-based Probation Officers Ann Fallico and Dan Traxinger and Bethel-based PO Tim Sherman toured regions of rural Alaska covered by their caseloads. The team stopped in Kipnuk, Quinhagak, Scammon Bay, Donlin Creek, Mountain Village, Grayling and Shageluk – at one point just missing the last Iditarod team passing through Grayling and Shageluk.



“PO Traxinger and myself work from the Anchorage Central office, but supervise the caseloads of all convicted felons that reside in the villages along the YK Delta,” said PO Fallico. “Our goal is to travel to those villages every other month,

weather-dependending, for home visits and networking with the local VPOs and VPSOs when available. We had a unique opportunity to visit the Donlin Creek gold mine that employs many of our offenders. This mine actually hired an on-site substance abuse counselor for the employees. She reaches out and provides free substance abuse treatment and mental health counseling to any employee that desires it. Many of our offenders that work there are required to attend.”



“This mine was very impressive in the sense that the company seems to reach out to the local communities and in turn, the employees from those areas appear to go the extra effort for the company,” Fallico added. “Make no mistake about it, many convicted felons on supervision are very hard workers and loyal to their employers.

“The hardest part of the trip was of course the extremely cold weather, and arranging a ride (and sometimes walking) from the airport to the village. PO Traxinger and I would like to stress how much we appreciate the opportunity to supervise within the remote villages. It has been a great experience to see these places and meet the community members while at the same time ensuring public safety and conditions of probation and parole are met,” PO Fallico added.



**PICTURES:** top: POs Traxinger and Fallico walk with VPOs into the village of Quinhagak. Middle: POs and VPSOs meet for a group picture in Kipnuk. Directly above: Staff meets with Mayor Shirley of Grayling.



**NEW WOMEN'S DORM AT MAT-SU PRETRIAL:** A new women's dorm with 16 bunks has opened at Mat-Su Pretrial, marking an increase of six bunks. "This new dorm was a conversion of the gym," said Superintendent Steve Brunger. "Mike Harbaugh, my only maintenance worker, completed the entire project himself along with inmate labor provided generously by Pt. Mac. The bunks were all made at Pt. Mac along with tables. The floor is unique in that it is industrial strength epoxy paint with a clear epoxy finish. We are anxious to see how it holds up as this finish has a highly polished look without the need for wax."