



Commissioner's CORNER



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COMMISSIONER, DOC

"Enhancing the Safety of Our Communities, Providing Secure Confinement,
Reformatory Programs, and a Process of Supervised Community Reintegration"

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

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MAINTENANCE JOURNEYMAN BUILDS PRISONER TRANSPORT BUS:



Wildwood Correctional Center Maintenance Journeyman Dean Furlong, left, and Commissioner Joe Schmidt stand beside the department's newest Prisoner Transport bus. Furlong fashioned the vehicle from a surplus 28-passenger school bus. The bus will begin service within the next few months.

Maintenance Journeyman Dean Furlong spent 8-10 weeks this winter converting a 28 passenger Air Force school bus into a 22-passenger maximum security prisoner transport bus. Furlong and a small crew of unskilled inmate workers stripped the bus, removing windows and seats. Next, the crew replaced the windows with steel, installed a secure partition for the driver, an escort, and



Wildwood CC Superintendent Bob Hibpshman, right, and Commissioner Joe Schmidt take a look at the inside secure area of the new prisoner transport bus.

set aside secure shelves for property boxes. After a thorough mechanical look-over Furlong applied new paint and department logos. The bus is a 1985 International Harvester with a 7.3 liter, 170 horsepower engine and an automatic transmission. Furlong said the drive train was in excellent mechanical condition; however brakes and some parts of the exhaust system were repaired. Furlong will soon begin to refurbish a 44-passenger surplus school bus.

MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY, DOC RELEASE KEY STUDY:

More than 42 percent of those incarcerated in Alaska's prisons have a mental illness or a cognitive impairment, according to a study commissioned by the Department of Corrections and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, in coordination with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Beneficiaries of the Alaska Mental Health Trust, which funded the study, include people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chronic alcoholism and Alzheimer's or related dementia.

A link to the report is [HERE](#).

WILDWOOD BUILDINGS SHAPING UP FOR PHASE 1 EXPANSION:

The former military base medical building (see photo) and recreation hall at Wildwood Correctional Center has begun asbestos abatement as part of Phase I prison expansion. When opened –



sometime in late 2009 or 2010 – the buildings will add 80 beds to the facility. Located outside the present secure perimeter, the new facility will be secured and serve as a minimum custody/work release facility.

LEMON CREEK HOSTS ‘SUCCESS INSIDE AND OUT’ CONFERENCE:



Some 56 inmates, staff and 37 community volunteers took part in a “Success Inside and Out’ Conference at Lemon Creek Correctional Center. Inmates took part in a number of break-out sessions. Local musicians performed during the opening ceremony, while a fashion show – featuring the ‘dos and don’ts’ of dressing for a job interview – was held

Supreme Court Justice Bud Carpeneti and state attorney Annie Carpeneti, left, introduces an inmate volunteer modeling proper attire for a job interview. Below: inmates take part in a break-out session.

during the lunch break.



FIRST PROBATION OFFICER ACADEMY AT PALMER GRADUATES:

The first Probation Officer Academy held at the new DOC Academy in Palmer graduated on February 14. The ceremony was held at the Palmer Train Depot. The five week academy was a combination of 23 Field Probation and Institutional Probation Officers from communities across the state. The invocation was given by Chaplain Mike Ensich; keynote speakers were Commissioner Joe Schmidt, Chief Probation Officer Rebecca Brunger and Deputy Director of Institutions Bryan Brandenburg. Chief Brunger challenged the students to become “Agents of Change.”

Probation Officer Eric Einerson of Wildwood Correctional Center received the Academic award. Probation Officer Michael Dunham from the Nome Field Probation Office was chosen by his peers to give the student speech. The Department of Corrections Code of Ethics was read by Probation Officer Gail Jackson from the Anchorage Correctional Complex. PO III Dan Traxinger presented the Diplomas and Chief Brunger presented the officer’s with their badges. Deputy Director of Institutions Bryan Brandenburg administered the Oath of Office.

The DOC Academy Staff was commended for their team work and standard of excellence in providing the best curriculum to the students. PO III Dan Traxinger recognized the efforts of all the adjunct instructors

from the Departments of Corrections, Public Safety and Law, the Anchorage Police Department, Palmer Police Department and Judge



Cutler. Graduates are as follows (class picture is above): Brian Clausson, Nora Dale, Christy Davis, Douglas Delano, Michael Dunham, Eric Einerson, Debbie Entsminger, Paul Hendrickson, Rodney Hopkins, Gail Jackson, Morgen Jaco, Eli Jacobson, Rick Mallars, Phillip Marnon, Paul Scott, Christopher Seidl, Nicholaus Slater, Rebecca Tozer, Regan Tweedy, Kelcey Wallender, Jeremy White, Brent Wilson and Jamie Woolsey.

PCC INMATES DONATE HAND-MADE HATS, BLANKETS: Inmates taking part in the Community Care Program at Palmer Correctional Center have made and donated 339 hats and 25 blankets to local charities. These items have been produced since January 1, and follow a large donation for the holiday season,



Superintendent Cindy Betts reported. Of the hats, 50 will be donated to Mother Lawrence for distribution in the Mountain View neighborhood of Anchorage.



PRESENTATION TO HOUSE FINANCE: (from left) Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards, Commissioner Joe Schmidt, Deputy Commissioner Dwayne Peeples and (standing) Deputy Director Bryan Brandenburg prepare for the presentation to the House Finance Committee at the state capital in Juneau. The commissioner is speaking with Rep. Mark Neuman (R-Big Lake).