



**A report by COMMISSIONER JOE SCHMIDT
Alaska Department of Corrections**

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@alaska.gov

MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2010

GOVERNOR PARNELL TOURS GOOSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION SITE:



Governor Sean Parnell joined Commissioner Joe Schmidt on June 24th for a tour of the Goose Creek Correctional Center construction site. The walk-through included the general housing unit and part of the support/visitation building. The Governor commented positively on the quality of construction and the local labor workforce.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2010

DENALI AWARDS GO TO PATRICK-RILEY, POs GRIST, FULKS:

The Department of Corrections was well-represented in the recent Governor's Denali Peak-Performance Award. Colleen Patrick-Riley, Mental Health Clinician III, was winner of the Individual Exceptional Performance award. POs Lana Grist and Neal Fulks of the Enhanced Supervision Unit were named honorable mention in the Heroic-Team category for saving the life of an offender they were transporting to the Anchorage Complex. About 100



friends, family and co-workers gathered at the UAA Wendy Williamson Auditorium for the annual award ceremony. Patrick-Riley is the first Denali Award winner from the Department of Corrections. Patrick-Riley has served the department as a clinical social worker since 1988. "Ms. Patrick-Riley is known as the person who can pull together a release plan for the most challenging and difficult to serve offenders," said Commissioner Joe Schmidt when presenting the award. In endorsing the nomination of POs Grist and Fulks, Division Director Donna White wrote: "Although probation officers are trained for medical emergencies, they rarely are confronted with them. This team did an outstanding job under tremendous stress."



(Photos: *Commissioner Schmidt presents Denali Awards to Colleen Patrick-Riley, above; and to PO Neal Fulks, left.)*

COMMISSIONER, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VISIT DILLINGHAM:

There are times, perhaps on a busy summer weekend night, the eight-cell Dillingham Jail will hold as many as 30 prisoners. On May 12, to get a better idea of potential solutions to this strain on local resources, Commissioner Joe Schmidt and Deputy Commissioner Dwayne Peoples visited Dillingham. During their eight-hour visit, the commissioner and deputy commissioner toured the public safety facility, met with community leaders, and spoke with a reporter at KDLG. “Before you can construct a solution, you have to get a good idea of the problem,” the commissioner said. “This visit was an excellent first step, and I know we’ll be back.”

36-BED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING UNIT OPENS AT WILDWOOD:

A 36-bed Transitional Housing Unit formally opened March 4 at Wildwood Correctional Center in Kenai. The expansion includes a modular facility for inmate housing, and a fully renovated building for staff offices including new Electronic Monitoring unit. The new facility will be used to house offenders close to their release date as well as persons



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with short sentences, such as three days for a DWI. With the opening of the facility, an equal number of beds have been made available for offenders needing closer supervision, Superintendent Bob Hibpshman explained. *(Pictured above: PO IV Shannon McCloud, Deputy Director Bryan Brandenburg, and PO IV Brann Wade.)*

EXERCISE EXERCISE EXERCISE

AFTER EARTHQUAKE DAMAGES FACILITY, INMATES RIOT, ESCAPE FROM WILDWOOD; DOC STAFF, NATIONAL GUARD REGAIN ORDER

Not in the real world.

But this was the scenario played out at Wildwood Correctional Center in Kenai as the Department of Corrections took a key role in the large scale disaster drill Alaska Shield/Vigilant Guard, April 28-30. Dozens of COs, POs, staff and administrators at WWCC took on the roles of good guys and bad guys



for the statewide exercise, which included FEMA, Division of Homeland Security, the National Guard and many other state and local agencies.



ABOVE: Officers Warren Isham (right to left), Magdaleno Dominguez, Michael Arnold, and Assistant Superintendent Steven Richard (center) and Sgt. Jeff Anderson stand ready to quell a prisoner uprising as part of a training exercise during Alaska Shield. **BELOW:** Officer Pat Stone portrays a prisoner and is subdued by National Guard personnel.



DEPARTMENT'S I-T PROS PUT ACOMS ONLINE AS OTIS RETIRES:

“OTIS is gone.” With that statement, department IT manager Don Brand reported its replacement – ACOMS – is up and running. ACOMS stands for “Alaska Corrections Offender Management Systems,” Brand explained. “It got its start with Idaho, and now six states are using some version of the system.” The key improvement is that, unlike OTIS, ACOMS is web-based so it operates through a regular browser and includes photos as well as on-line help. “There’s a more natural flow. It’s like moving from DOS to Windows,” Brand added. The most dramatic improvement will be seen in the booking process, where booking times have been reduced in half according to early reports. This aspect of ACOMS may be the IT team’s biggest success, because Alaska is the only unified system in the consortium. So the booking process was built from the ground up. Launching ACOMS has been an 18-month project, and includes Brand and the department’s three programmers along with a small cadre of contractors.



DEPARTMENT BENEFITS FROM NIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING:

At the beginning of his administration, Commissioner Joe Schmidt set a goal of working closely with the National Institute of Corrections. The NIC is the premiere nationwide training group devoted solely to corrections related issues. Earlier this month, the department completed its second NIC training session, with the topic being leadership. “Based on the positive feedback received, it will no doubt not be the last time we hold this type of training,” said Deputy Commissioner Sam Edwards. “We have representatives from institutions, field, medical, programs and the parole board participating. Discussions have been lively and our goal of preparing the leaders of the future is on track.”

PCC INMATES EARN 11 BLUE RIBBONS AT HOBBY/CRAFT SHOW:

Inmates from Palmer Correctional Center participated in a hobby/craft show sponsored by the Alaska Woodworkers Association in March in Anchorage. The inmates competed in the Artistry in Wood competition and earned 11 blue ribbons for first



place, six for second place and one for third place. “Tractor Trailer with Track Hoe” earned the Peoples Choice Award and three items were named best in division. The divisions included covered jewelry boxes,

scroll saw displays and model heavy equipment and trucks. Items from the Ivory Shop were on display as well. “The manager of the show was very happy with the quality of the work displayed and how these items help to “draw the people in,” said PCC Superintendent Cindy Betts. “Inmates express their appreciation for the privilege of developing skills in the hobby craft program.” The show was held at the Northway Mall. (Photo below: Inmates pose with Sup’t Betts and Sgt. Martin Steinriede at the PCC Hobby Shop.)



ALASKA ONE OF 5 STATES SELECTED FOR CORRECTIONS FORUM:

Alaska has been selected by the National Governor’s Association to be one five states to participate in the upcoming Cross Governmental Sentencing and Corrections Policy Forum, June 24-25 in Annapolis, Md. Alaska, with four other states, were competitively selected to participate in the forum designed to improve state sentencing and corrections policies in order to reduce costs and improve outcomes while maintaining public safety. As a participant, Alaska will have access to a national faculty of experts and resources that highlight current research and customized technical assistance.



HILAND MOUNTAIN C.C. HOLDS MOCK JOB FAIR: Over a dozen female inmates at HMCC participated in the institution’s first Mock Job Fair. Representatives from Princess Holland America Lines, Nana Management Systems, Credit Union One, Alaska USA Mortgage and others participated in the all day event. Each inmate was scheduled for a 20 minute interview and a 5 minute critique by the employer.

COMMUNITY WORK SERVICE STEPS UP AT HILAND MOUNTAIN:

The Hiland Mountain Inmate Council, Native Culture Club, and the Transformational Living Community (TLC) Faith Based program collaborated on a project to repair and re-upholster 108 dining room chairs and 15 visiting room chairs for the facility. The Inmate Council and Native Culture Clubs provided the financial resources while the TLC participants provided the labor to disassemble the chairs, clean the frames, then re-upholster and re-assemble the chairs. “The Native Culture Club and Inmate Council saw this as a way to give something back,” said HMCC Sup’t Dean Marshall. “As for the TLC, our women were able to see that giving has as many rewards, if not more, than receiving. It builds self-worth and self-esteem. After reupholstering the chairs in the dining facility, our women have achieved a sense of accomplishment and see that what they have done has made a positive difference in their living environment. Giving back develops a sense of healthy pride.” *Pictures below: Before (left) and after (right)*



SGT. BARRY BRUNING NAMED SCCC EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: CO III

Barry Bruning was named Employee of the Year at Spring Creek Correctional Center. As Security Sergeant, Bruning investigated grievances, tracks down contraband and investigates other issues with the walls at SCCC. “Sgt. Bruning is quiet, but steady and hard working. He’s a natural leader,” said Division Director Garland Armstrong. “He’s respected for drawing out



cohesiveness and he doesn't compromise the department's mission," said Bruning's supervisor, Assistant Sup't Tom Reimer. Bruning is a former Army tank commander.

SUCCESS INSIDE AND OUT CONFERENCE HELD AT LEMON CREEK:



Success Conference: *Dozens of inmates participated in the annual Success Inside and Out Conference at Lemon Creek Correctional Center. It's the fourth year in a row for the event, which draws local businesses, civic groups and judges.*