



# The Insider

*North Dakota Department Of Corrections And Rehabilitation*



## DOCR Flood Efforts



When the Missouri River flooded South Bismarck/Mandan a few weeks ago it lived up to its nickname "Dark River", but for all the wrong reasons. It threatened homes, businesses and

even had parts of these neighborhoods evacuated, but the one thing that it didn't submerge with its murky waters was the sense of community pride. Large numbers of the community came out to volunteer and employees, inmates and juveniles of the DOCR were right beside them helping to save our neighborhoods.

Even before the sandbagging efforts were needed in Bismarck/Mandan several Bismarck Transition Center (BTC) inmates assisted the Red Cross at the Burleigh County Fairgrounds sandbagging for the smaller communities affected by the flooding. Then on March 20th when the flooding started locally, approximately 20 BTC residents participated in the sandbagging effort at the Bismarck Civic Center working in two shifts until March 22nd.

On March 24th sand was delivered to the Missouri River Correctional Center (MRCC) and fourteen inmates began filling sandbags to be used by the Burleigh County Emergency Services, but due to the threat of potential flooding MRCC was

evacuated the same afternoon. On March 25th ten MRCC inmates and a supervisor began sandbagging at the Bismarck landfill and by that afternoon another ten inmates were brought in to help, along with another supervisor. They then moved ten MRCC inmates and their supervisor on March 26th to sandbag at the Bismarck Civic Center where the need was greater.

Just west of the river on March 25th, 20 juveniles and eight supervisors of the Youth Correction Center (YCC) in Mandan were filling sandbags at the Mandan City Shop, and again on March 27th at the Morton County Shop with eighteen juveniles and eight supervisors. The work that they did was approximately several thousand sandbags used by the local community, and the e-mails were still coming in from community members complimenting the work ethic and behavior these youth showed.

On April 1st nine TRCC offenders worked on the North Dakota State Hospital grounds sandbagging areas of concern. On April 2nd approximately fifteen TRCC offenders and four staff assisted in the sandbagging efforts at the Jamestown Civic Center and continued the next few days until the threat had declined. Staff that assisted with the sandbagging efforts commented that the offenders jumped right in and that they enjoyed helping the community.

# Youth Assessment Center

By: Lisa Bjergaard, Director of Juvenile Services

In the July, 2008 edition of Connections, the Division of Juvenile Services announced its plan to adopt an assessment model of intake. After piloting the model for two months, the intake process began statewide on August 1, 2008. The process is obviously still quite young, and data is preliminary. However, some interesting trends are worth observing.

By way of background, DJS intended the Assessment Center to accomplish several purposes. First, the assessment of risk and need, and the subsequent development of the treatment and rehabilitation plan is arguably the important activity conducted within the Division of Juvenile Services. The assessment center model enhances this process by insuring that staff across the Division are mobilized quickly and efficiently to compile the most appropriate correctional treatment plan for each youth. Second, we hoped the introduction of a planned two to three week intake would smooth out what is often a tumultuous and traumatic time period for youth and families. Oftentimes, when a youth is committed to the care, custody and control of the Division of Juvenile Services, the most appropriate and least restrictive level of care has not yet been determined. When families and youth asked, "What happens next?" the answer was frequently, "We don't know." The new process allows everyone across our system as well as across our partner systems to have an answer. Everyone, most importantly the youth, understands that when someone enters the state youth corrections system, they come to the Youth Correctional Center campus for a 14 to 21 day process of assessment and case planning.

The process of assessment culminates with a staffing, which is the formal delivery of the findings within the assessment term and involves the youth, families, lead assessment staff, and the placing authority (there is also

the availability of having a representative present from the educational program or our mental health department if further interpretation is required). The staffing serves as a vital part of the process by providing a vehicle of communicating the assessment findings and presenting the conditions related to future placement and services. This not only provides a unified plan of action to the team, but it also supplies data and observation that qualify the position, which has greatly assisted buy-in levels from our families.

Third, because the process is comprehensive, planful, and accomplished by a team of professional staff rather than one field officer, we are optimistic that decisions will prove to positively impact our overarching goal: to reduce the risk of youth offenders. We are always focused on measurements such as length of stay, number of treatment placements outside of the home, and recidivism following discharge. In the effort to achieve continuous quality improvement, we are optimistic that the assessment center model will allow us to make improvements in all of these areas, even though our outcomes are already amongst the highest, if not the best, in the country.

Thus far, we appear to be on the right track. An analysis of the first 10 months of the past three years indicates that admission numbers at the Youth Correctional Center remained fairly steady. Youth Correctional Center admits fell traditionally into 4, and now into 5 categories. The 5th category is the newly added "assessment". Admissions for detention and time-out remained virtually steady. There was also a steady decline in the number of youth admitted for evaluation purposes, which probably means that with the advent of assessment, the need for evaluation decreased. Of course, all of the assessment admissions are new. However, the real story is the number of

*(continue on page 8)*

# Seriously Mentally Ill in Prison: Release and Integration

By: Rick Hoekstra, Deputy Director of Programs

In 2008, the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) and the Department of Human Services took another step to further coordinate and best serve inmates with Serious Mental Illness. Our agencies agreed to assess the need and implement improved practices to increase the opportunity for the Seriously Mentally Ill when released from prison. The ND DOCR reports 99% of offenders sentenced to prison will return to the community, either by expiration of their sentence or released with a viable plan to parole or probation supervision. The Seriously Mentally Ill is one particular inmate with greater challenges to succeed as they are released from prison.

To give us a bigger picture of the importance to assess and know the risk and needs of our prison population, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that more than half of all prison and jail inmates nationally have a mental health problem, inclusive of several diagnosis following a broad definition. Fifty-six percent of state prisoners, 45 percent of federal prisoners, and 64 percent of jail inmates have a mental health problem. In recent years the ND DOCR identified about 45% of inmates may be included in this definition for mental health, but most are not severe and they are very capable in their own recovery. However, it is the most severely mentally ill who require more treatment, medical services, and supportive efforts in and out of prison.

In 2008, efforts of the DOCR Programs and Treatment Department included establishing a clear definition of the Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) incarcerated in prison and chartering a work group to develop and recommend a

uniform policy and practice to releasing the SMI anywhere in the state with a treatment plan and continuum of care in the community. By research and work defining SMI, as well as establishing the reporting system, the Treatment Department initially identified 10% SMI inmates.

Almost immediately these efforts within the prison and into the community demonstrated practices improving a continuum of services to improve outcomes through treatment for the Seriously Mentally Ill. After three months of further development, with monthly meetings between DHS and DOCR, including the more timely information sharing, aids in scheduling and improving the coordination of treatment upon an SMI offender's release from prison.



The initial outcome of the project's work was the implementation of the program in July 2008. In September 2008 the project included coordination with the Dakota Women's Correction

Center for their release efforts of Seriously Mentally Ill female inmates. By November, on-going review and quality assurance provided recommendations that improved practices and took corrective actions in the coordination between the DOCR and DHS to the community. In April 2009 DHS and DOCR will further establish agreed to quality assurance practices combining our resources to sustain and further develop the program.

Other facts:

- North Dakota, since July 2008 through March 2009, have reviewed 55 SMI inmates in Release and Integration planning for release from prison:

*(continue on page 5)*

**Organizational Characteristics. All DOCR Inmates. One Day Counts On The Last Day Of The Month.** These Numbers Use The Association Of State Correctional Administrator (ASCA) Performance Based Measurement Standards (PBMS) And Are Based On The Controlling Sentence. The department is migrating to the use of these standards.

January 2009  
 March 2008  
 April 2008  
 May 2008  
 June 2008  
 July 2008  
 August 2008  
 September 2008  
 October 2008  
 November 2008  
 December 2008

**General Organization Information**

Prisoners Housed By DOCR Institutions	1,063	1,054	1,061	1,069	1,053	1,072	1,075	1,077	1,062	1063	1049
Prisoners Outsourced (Not In A ND DOCR Facility)	390	363	356	375	397	381	383	384	410	412	421
Total Inmates Under DOCR Responsibility	1,453	1,417	1,417	1,444	1,450	1,453	1,458	1,461	1,472	1,475	1,470

**Initial Prison Sentence By Court In Years**

Average Length of Sentence (Years)	5.00	5.09	5.09	5.04	5.04	5.03	5.03	5.00	5.03	4.99	4.98
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**Number Of Inmates In Sentence Category**

Inmates Serving Less Than 1 Year	30	39	39	39	36	37	32	33	34	32	30
Inmates Serving 1 To 3 Years	827	788	786	814	813	826	832	842	845	840	842
Inmates Serving 3 To 5 Years (3.01 to 5)	275	279	281	276	287	276	280	271	274	276	275
Inmates Serving 5 To 10 Years (5.01 to 10)	154	157	157	156	155	155	155	156	157	161	157
Inmates Serving 10 To 20 Years (10.01 to 20)	75	72	72	74	74	74	73	73	75	76	76
Inmates Serving 20 To 40 Years (20.01 to 40)	33	31	31	32	32	32	32	33	33	33	33
Inmates Serving More Than 40 Years (40.01 plus)	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	9
Inmates Serving Life With Parole	34	28	28	29	29	29	29	30	30	32	32
Inmates - Life Without Parole	16	13	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	16	16
Inmates - Death Sentence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Crime Distribution Statistics**

Part I Violent Crime Inmates	459	440	438	443	443	443	445	451	457	468	462
Other Violent Crime Inmates	142	148	150	152	153	150	154	154	164	160	154
Property Crime Inmates	315	286	291	296	305	309	311	310	306	301	318
Drug Offense Inmates	352	394	381	379	373	373	375	377	374	372	366
Other Public Order Offense Inmates	185	149	157	174	176	178	172	169	171	174	170
Other Crime Inmates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Inmate Demographics**

Average Inmate Age	34.37	34.64	34.40	34.23	34.09	34.03	33.81	34.03	34.36	34.39	34.41
Male Inmates	1,298	1,264	1,269	1,294	1,289	1,290	1,296	1,299	1,314	1,317	1,310
Female Inmates	155	153	148	150	161	163	162	162	158	158	160
White Inmates	966	930	921	943	947	958	957	964	968	969	972
Black Inmates	81	82	80	81	83	83	83	83	86	86	84
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Inmates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American/Alaskan Native Inmates	317	318	324	329	327	321	326	324	331	332	326
Hispanic Or Latino Inmates	79	82	86	84	86	85	85	82	79	79	79
Asian Inmates	5	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
Other Race/Ethnicity Inmates	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5
Inmates With Unknown/Missing Race/Ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inmates Non-Citizens	9	12	12	12	12	11	11	10	12	11	10

- Average six new SMI inmates reviewed monthly for release planning to coordinate services in the community,
- All discharges, averaging four monthly, were linked to recommended services,
- All discharges were released with adequate supply of medication,
- DHS reports a decrease in the number of "no-shows" for scheduled appointments.
- DHS reports a reduction in the gap of time for individual to access direct services for SMI releases from prison, DOCR reports improvement in the practices and timeliness to coordinate the reinstatement of eligibility and benefits and services for SMI offenders.
- Over 10 % of the adult prison population in North Dakota is Seriously Mentally Ill. (reported in 2008).
- ND DOCR Prison count: 1419 on March 26, 2009 (146 female, 1273 male)

- About two million people are incarcerated each day in U.S. prisons or jails.
- An estimated 11.4 million people are admitted to local jails annually in the United States.
- The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health states in 2001 approximately five-seven percent of adults have a "serious mental illness."
- 5.4% of adults in ND general population have a serious mental illness. (DHS - reported in March 2008)

Finally, thanks to all the staff of the DOCR and DHS who made a commitment and continue to provide insight into developing and implementing the Release and Integration Program. The list would be lengthy, and it would be difficult to identify everyone so we won't include all their names. Also, critical to the success is the support of the DOCR Medical Department, nursing and pharmacy, working to increase the number of days supply of medication upon release to assure there is no gap in the individual's progress and treatment.

## DOCR Employee Awarded the NDPOA Life Saving Award



On March 20, 2009, Tracy Stein was awarded the North Dakota Peace Officers Association (NDPOA) Life Saving Award. On Monday, February 9, 2009, at 8:00 am Tracy Stein saved the

life of a fellow employee by acting fast but calm in performing the Heimlich Maneuver.

The employee was visiting with Tracy in his office while enjoying a piece of hard candy to sooth a soar throat, when suddenly they coughed. Tracy noticed their face turning red and not responding. The employee tried to stand from their seat but fell over; hitting their

head against the wall causing their cheek to bleed and passed out on the floor. Tracy ran over to them, got down on the floor, hovering over them, and started the Heimlich maneuver, which forced the hard candy out of their throat. The employee regained consciousness and Tracy helped them up. They had blacked out because of the lack of oxygen from choking on the hard candy.

When the employee had a piece of hard candy in their mouth they coughed causing the candy to obstruct their airway and become lodged in their throat. Tracy Stein acted fast to removed the lodged candy in their throat. His calm but fast reaction saved this employee from severe to fatal injury.

# Code Name: Operation SOC

(Operation Sex Offender Compliance) By: Barbara H. Breiland

A state-wide "blitz" in the form of "Operation Sex Offender Compliance" occurred during the first week in December. Probation Officers assisted by local, State, and Federal law enforcement conducted 94 searches within a span of four days.

Probation officers worked closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office, BCI, ICE, Marshal's Office, Border Patrol, Drug Task Force teams, and local police and sheriff departments. As a result of this state-wide cooperative law enforcement effort, "Operation Sex Offender Compliance" was a great success.

Seven teams led by parole/probation officers specializing in the supervision of sex offenders were each assigned a region of the state. Their assignment was to search designated sex offenders homes, vehicles, and computers with the task of looking for violations of probation with an emphasis on identifying and confiscating child pornography. Team leaders were: Kristin Plessas, Loralyn Waltz, Rob Sanderson, John Knutson, Sherrie Prochnow, Brian Weigel, Tony Soupier, and Terry Grumbo. Also assisting was: Liza Koenings, Lloyd Haagenson, Mike Nason, Rob Parsons, Renae Elshaug, and Heidi Arnhalt, Dyan Jordheim, Wade Price, Megan Scherf and Darin Cote.

Parole and Probation Officers supervise approximately 300 sex offenders in North Dakota. Of the 76 computers searched, only one computer was found to contain child pornography; 18 offenders were in possession of other pornography or sexually stimulating material.

Alcohol, drugs, and/or drug

paraphernalia were found in the possession of 14 offenders. A standard condition of supervision is that sex offenders are prohibited from possession of sexually stimulating material, alcohol, illegal drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, and contact with minors.

One offender, though prohibited from having contact with minors, was found in the presence of a child without written permission of the Court or his probation officer.

As a result of the searches, 43 sex offenders were found in violation of their conditions of supervision. Nine violations have resulted in either law enforcement investigations and/or new criminal charges.

"Operation Sex Offender Compliance" was an orchestrated effort to get the maximum number of searches done in a minimal amount of time. Our efforts and the efforts of assisting law enforcement sent a clear message to our offenders and the community at large.

"Operation Sex Offender Compliance" was Parole & Probation's first attempt at doing a state-wide search of sex offenders. Since the venture was successful, we plan to follow through with other concerted efforts at checking offender compliance. Even though this type of operation can be exciting and get the adrenalin flowing, a "blitz" cannot, nor will it, take the place of good case management. We are able to promote public safety and prevent further victimizations through our daily task of managing risk and supervising offenders; it is then that we are most effective.

# The Success of Adult Drug Courts

By: John M. Gourde

## History

The drug court movement in North Dakota began in 1999 with the planning of the state's first drug court in the South Central Judicial District in Bismarck. This court accepted its first drug court participant in 2001 and has "set the standard" for expansion of drug courts across the state. After witnessing the success of this court, the governor professed to further increase the availability of drug courts and expand the war on methamphetamine by giving his support to expanding drug courts throughout the state.

In 2003, the second drug court was planned and implemented in the East Central Judicial District in Fargo, which has been a tremendous benefit for the eastern part of the state. In fact, due to its success and the need for additional capacity, a second drug court has been implemented as well.

During the 2007 North Dakota legislative session, the governor and legislature recognized the value and benefits that current drug courts provide in the state. In fact, they mandated the further expansion of drug courts with funding for a court in the Northeast Central Judicial District in Grand Forks and the Northwest Judicial District in Minot. These courts have been planning and building their drug court teams, collaborating with community partners and have implemented and accepted program participants. With the addition of these two courts, our state-wide capacity will be between 125-150 program participants.

## DOCR

The North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has played an important role in the planning, implementation and development of adult drug courts across the state. The DOCR has recognized how important this evidence-based program is for chemically addicted offenders and is committed to seeing these courts succeed. The DOCR has partnered with local judges, state's attorneys and treatment providers who make up the core of the drug court team. This team is responsible for identifying and selecting program participants. In addition to the drug court team, each court has an advisory board

consisting of defense attorneys, local law enforcement, human service representatives, court officials and employment specialists. This board is a great resource in developing and enhancing each court in their communities.

The DOCR has trained five parole officers across the state to become drug court coordinators. The drug court coordinator plays a key role as part of the drug court team. They are involved in screening potential participants to ensure they meet program requirements. Once this is done, the coordinator staffs each case with the drug court team and a decision is made on program entry. From this point, the coordinator is responsible for supervising the offender throughout their time in the program. They ensure each participant is meeting weekly requirements such as drug testing, full-time employment, treatment participation, self-help group attendance and weekly drug court sessions.

The drug court program is an effective alternative to incarceration that provides the necessary long-term treatment and supervision of drug and alcohol offenders. This program allows participants to remain in the community, pay court-ordered obligations, support their dependents and maintain employment.

A decade of research indicates that drug court reduces crime by lowering rearrest and conviction rates, improving substance abuse treatment outcomes, reuniting families, and also produces measurable cost benefits.

The 5 drug court coordinators are:

- Penny Blotsky,  
South Central Judicial District Drug Court-Bismarck
- Jennifer College,  
East Central Judicial District Drug Court-Fargo
- Dave Birrenkott,  
East Central Judicial District Drug Court-Fargo
- Christin Thelen,  
NE Central Judicial District Drug Court-Grand Forks
- Jackie Jenson,  
NW Central Judicial District Drug Court-Minot

(Youth Assessment Center continued from page 2)

admissions under the category "treatment".

Treatment is a category reserved for longer-term placements. This number dropped by 65 youth between 2007 and 2008. Although a thorough explanation here would

be complicated, a fair summary would be that youth came in at the same rate, but were subsequently placed into lesser restrictive levels of care more quickly than in previous years. If those youth over time do equally as well as they have in years past, we are confident this will translate into improved outcomes for youth.

## A Message From The Editor

The Insider Newsletter is an official publication of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and is published four times each year. Its goal is to enhance communication and keep staff, and all those interested, informed of developments and achievements throughout the Department.

All employees are encouraged to submit articles, letters, comments, and ideas for future issues of The Insider to be considered in the next publication.

The Editor reserves the right to edit or exclude, if deemed inappropriate, any items submitted for publication. Please e-mail articles to:

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### Parole Board Members

Parole Board Members are appointed by the Governor for a three-year term. The Parole Board Members are listed as follows:

Members	Location
John Olson, Chairman	Bismarck
Dr. Richard Davison	Bismarck
Everett Nels Olson	Minot
Budd Warren	Fargo
Beverley Adams	Fargo
Donna Jacobsen	Dickinson

### Pardon Advisory Board Members

Pardon Advisory Board Members are appointed by the Governor for an open ended term to include the attorney general, two members of the parole board, and 2 citizens/residents of the state. The Pardon Board Members are listed as follows:

Members	Location
Duane Dekrey, Chairman	Pettibone
Craig Smith	Bismarck
Wayne Stenehjem	Bismarck
Beverley Adams	Fargo
Everett Nels Olson	Minot

### Parole Board Meeting Dates for 2009

January	4-5
February	8-9
March	8-9
April	5-6
May	3-4
May 31 - June 1	(June PB)
June 28-29	(July PB)
August	2-3
August 30-31	(September PB)
October	4-5
November	8-9
December	6-7

### Pardon Advisory Board Dates for 2009

April 7

November 10

*Our mission is...*

*To enhance public safety, to reduce the risk of future criminal behavior by holding adult and juvenile offenders accountable, and to provide opportunities for change.*