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Quimby Retires After 34-Year State Career

On March 8, Lisa Quimby retired from a 34-year DOC career.

Lisa started with the State at the Faribault Regional Center as a general maintenance worker in 1985. Lisa “jumped the fence” and joined Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-Faribault in 1991, working as the support staff in employee development. She also worked in finance, was the training director (work-out-of-class) for over a year, worked in maintenance, and worked at MCF-Red Wing in its finance unit.

For the past 14 years, Lisa had been in the Due Process Unit in Faribault. Lisa served on countless committees throughout her career. Staff wish her the very best in her retirement.



(L – R) Warden Kathy Halvorson, Lt. Walt Opsal, and Lisa Quimby

Godfrey Named ACA Committee Chair

Al Godfrey, Director of Field Services for the DOC, is the new Chair of the American Correctional Association Probation and Parole Committee.

The committee works on best practices surrounding probation and parole for those under community supervision or releasing from incarceration. This work keeps our communities safer and helps justice-involved individuals stay successful in the community.

As part of this committee, Al will be working to merge “What Works” principles with “Implementation Science” to further clarify which deliverables will promote agency readiness for change, which resource assessments are needed, and how to most effectively support and work together with staff and external stakeholders through the change process.

Congratulations, Al!



Al Godfrey

Mattison Retires After 29 Years

Sgt. Jim Mattison retired from MCF-Willow River/Moose Lake earlier this month after nearly 30 years with the department.

Jim started his DOC career at MCF-St. Cloud prior to transferring to MCF-Willow River/Moose Lake.

Jim was a staple in the property department and took pride in running a tight ship. His vast wealth of knowledge in anything property related will be greatly missed. Jim had a great run of 29 years!

Congratulations, Jim, enjoy your time out in the woods coming up!

(L – R) Warden Nate Knutson and Sgt. Jim Mattison



Stillwater Offenders Help with Sandbagging Efforts On St. Croix



In anticipation of flooding this spring, minimum security work crews from MCF-Stillwater and MCF-Lino Lakes filled sand bags for the levees being built for the City of Bayport. The heavy snow late this winter put the St. Croix River on track for significant flooding.

The City of Bayport reached out to request 10,000 sand bags be filled in an effort to protect the city from rising waters on the St. Croix.

In the first two days, the work crews produced 1,800 filled sand bags and were on track to produce the requested 10,000.

MCF-Stillwater Physical Plant staff developed a unique system using old traffic cones, ladders, and sawhorses to produce a fast and simple way to set up a bag filling production line.

MCF-Stillwater staff and incarcerated men were proud to be helping protect their community.



DOC Records Manager Courtney Retires

By Lisa Wojcik

When writing an article for someone retiring from the DOC, the focus is typically on their years of service and the classifications they held in the past. While these are important pieces of a person's career equally important is their character and integrity. Patrick Courtney is retiring April 3 from his position as the Records Manager, enough said about his work history.

Patrick's character is what will stand out about him, and what people will remember long after he retires. He has a kind and giving heart, develops relationships with everyone he meets, deeply cares about those he knows, volunteers for all staff appreciation activities, shows compassion for those having difficulties, allows himself to be vulnerable, wants to be effective in his work, listens to the opinions of everyone, and is seriously one of the nicest people I've ever met in my life.

He has led the records department through many critical business changes, such as centralizing offender sentence administration and detainers. He managed these changes by caring about all of the staff, engaging people through focus groups and meetings, and taking the time to get things right the first time. Pat will be missed as Records Manager, but mostly we will all miss Pat, the great human being we've all grown to love.



Pat Courtney



Beier Promoted to Sergeant at RC

Kevin Beier was recently promoted to sergeant at MCF-Rush City.

Kevin has been with the DOC for more than 15 years, starting his career as a trainee, graduated to a corrections officer 1, promoted to corrections officer 2 in 2004, and promoted to a sergeant in March of this year.

Congratulations, Kevin!

(L – R) Lt. Tracee Scherer, Sergeant Kevin Beier, and Lt. Paul Gammel

Hotline Story Submissions

Do you have an idea for a Hotline story? Working with your supervisor, please contact your facility or field services media liaison. Hotline represents every aspect of our department, and your contributions will help us illustrate everyone's excellent work.

Follow DOC on Social Media

The department's social media accounts recognize the excellent work of our staff and help us recruit new employees. The DOC has over 6,000 likes on [Facebook](#)! Also, follow the department on Twitter: [@MinnCorrections](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), or [YouTube](#).



Education Event at Faribault



On March 9, Commissioner Paul Schnell and Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker (*both pictured above*) spent time with DOC education staff and incarcerated students in education programming at MCF-Faribault. Members of the media were there to document the event and tour the facility.

The commissioners engaged with the students and discussed with the media the importance of education in improving offender's circumstances and preventing criminal involvement.

MCF-Faribault Warden Kathy Halvorson and her staff were excellent hosts!



Warden Kathy Halvorson being interviewed about the facility.



Reardon Retires After Nearly 30 Years

By Lt. Jason Hills

Inez Reardon, an Office Administrative Specialist-Sr. at MCF-Oak Park Heights, completed a 29-year corrections career when she retired on Feb. 15.

Inez spent her entire DOC career at Oak Park Heights and will be greatly missed.

When asked what she's going to do next, she stated "the camper is already packed and we are leaving for Texas tomorrow!"

Congratulations, Inez, enjoy your retirement!

Pictured: Inez Reardon

Cagle Retires After 25-Plus Year DOC Career



By Ian Heaslip

Lt. Camille Cagle recently retired from MCF-Willow River/ Moose Lake after spending 26 years promoting through the officer ranks, as a sergeant, and eventually as a lieutenant.

Camille was well-liked by her peers, direct reports, and supervisors alike. She was approachable and was never afraid to “tell it how it was.” Her direct, no non-sense approach was also accompanied by a genuine compassion for those reporting to her.

Camille, enjoy your retirement! You deserve this next chapter in life.

(L – R) Warden Nate Knutson and Lt. Camille Cagle

Melchert Retires After 27 Years

On March 5, MCF-Faribault said goodbye and good luck in retirement to Ken Melchert, an electronics systems supervisor in the physical plant.

Ken started working for the DOC in January 1993 as an electronics technician senior. He promoted to electronics systems specialist before promoting to the electronics systems supervisor.

After 27 years, Ken decided to retire and spend more time with his family, traveling, fishing and woodworking.

Congratulations on your retirement Ken!

Pictured: Ken Melchert



Lino Lakes Staff Recruitment

By Kristin Bjornberg

Recruitment was never something I ever saw myself pursuing in my career until I started at MCF-Lino Lakes. I was asked to be a co-coordinator for the recruitment team and I jumped right in. The recruitment team has been to many events trying to reach as many Minnesotans as possible to inform them of the great opportunities the DOC can offer. One of my favorite opportunities is going into a social studies class at Blaine High School to discuss the different types of jobs and how a prison operates. The students always have great questions and we try to spark their interest in working for the department, as most of the students will have the qualifications once they graduate.

On March 19, the recruitment team was invited to the “Hiring Our Heroes” Job Fair sponsored by the

Minnesota Wild. “Hiring Our Heroes” is held nationwide to help veterans, active duty service members, Guard and Reserve, and their spouses connect with job opportunities. At this event attendees were able to attend workshops as well as walk around the hiring fair. There were a few hundred attendees and the DOC had a lot of interested parties visit our booth. It was an honor to be a part of this event trying to help those who sacrifice so much for our country.

I feel as though I have found my place in recruitment as I talk to others about how much I enjoy my job and inform them about how it could be a place for them as well. I have much to learn from my knowledgeable teammates as we continue to attend events and find candidates to fill the vacancies within the DOC.

Shakopee Staff Attend Victim Assistance Academy

By Lt. Tom Vavra

The 2nd Corrections-Focused Victim Assistance Academy was hosted by the DOC Victim Assistance/Restorative Justice, MNCOSA and Domestic Violence Unit in late February in Walker.

The academy was attended by a number of work units and organizations, including Mid-Minnesota Women's Center, MNCOSA, North Star Family Advocacy Center and Department of Public Safety's Office of Justice Programs.

The academy was created to assist staff in serving survivors of crimes out in the community and survivors of crimes in facilities or on supervised release. Topics included: Victim Assistance/Restorative Justice/MNCOSA and Domestic Violence Program overview, team building, post-conviction victim rights, victim advocacy 101, trauma informed victim advocacy, restitution, sexual violence, domestic violence 101, DOC response to domestic violence, role play domestic violence "In Her Shoes" activity, offender reentry, response to other crime areas, staff victimization and self-care.

Many of the participants made notice of how the smallest interactions with the men/women who are currently incarcerated can have a long lasting impact in their change process – whether, if it is saying hello/good bye in the hallways when passing or just providing words of encouragement to assist them in their change process. There was a strong focus this year on staff victimization, dynamics of staff victimization in the workplace, needs of those victimized and the difference between grief and trauma. The conference ended with discussing the importance of self-care and self-care activities.

Commissioner Paul Schnell, Shakopee Warden Tracy Beltz, and Field Service Director Al Godfrey gave words of encouragement and shared their views on the topics covered for the graduation ceremony.

Dual Commitment Training: DHS/DOC Hearings and Release Unit

On March 13, the DOC's Hearings and Release Unit (HRU) collaborated with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Special Investigations to host a training related to Dual Commitment Offenders.

The training was geared toward field agents and applicable DHS Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) staff. Attendees were provided an overview of DHS DCT programs and policies. This training provided specific information regarding the Minnesota Sex Offender Program and Forensic Services Divisions of the Department of Human Services. HRU Director Rebecca Holmes-Larson and Senior Hearing Officer Zach Gahm presented information regarding the hearings and release supervision responsibilities and the violation process.

There were 61 attendees, eight presenters, nine Office



(L – R) Warden Tracy Beltz, Transitions Coordinator Katelyn Lambrecht, CPD Natalya Kandakova, Transitions Coordinator Greta Henderson, Case Manager Paul Klemme, Lt. Tom Vavra and Sgt. Troy Hedtke. Shakopee Intern Allie Paulson also participated in the event, but is not pictured.

of Special Investigations staff (DHS), 18 county agents/supervisors, 17 MSOP staff and nine forensic services staff. The training was very well received and has triggered continued collaboration between the two departments.

There are currently approximately 185 dual commit offenders between DOC and the DHS. There are about 145 offenders at the MSOP sites in St. Peter or Moose Lake and about 17 dual commit offenders at the Forensic Services division of DHS. About 25 of the dual commit offenders are housed in DOC facilities.

HRU will continue to work with DHS to improve therapeutic environments by providing client/patient accountability through enhanced agency partnerships and collaboration along with the management of supervision of our dual commit offenders.

Staff Raise More Than \$5,000 for Special Olympics



DOC staff from MCF-Rush City, Moose Lake and Stillwater were “freezin’ for a reason” on March 9 at the Mille Lacs Polar Plunge. They raised \$5,340 for Special Olympics! Way to represent the DOC!

First Lady Walz Attends Rush City Graduation Ceremony

On March 11, MCF-Rush City hosted Minnesota’s First Lady Mrs. Gwen Walz at the facility. She attended an education graduation ceremony and spoke to the incarcerated men, reminding them that they are part of the Governor’s vision for “One Minnesota.”

(L – R) AWO Jesse Pugh, Director of Adult Education George Kimball, Director of Career Technical Education Ruth Stadheim, Warden Jeff Titus, Deputy Commissioner Michelle Smith, Director of Education Marcie Koetke, MCF-Rush City Education Director Todd Lubben, AWA Deneen Clemons, and First Lady Mrs. Gwen Walz



March was Social Work Month

March was Social Work month and the DOC was proud to recognize the many social workers who serve the varied needs of Minnesota's correctional clients. Social workers play a critical role in a broad range of positions within the DOC – probation officers, treatment specialists, even commissioner.

The DOC thanks all social workers serving Minnesota in community-based organizations, schools, hospitals, social service agencies, and treatment programs.

(L – R) Kelley Heifort, Jaime Paukert, Jolene Rebertus (bottom), Jana Carr-Weets (top), Vicki Schroeder (top), and Rebecca Ramsey (bottom).



When the MSW degree reigned in DOC

By Roger Baburam, Program Director at MCF-St. Cloud

The Sept. 5, 1968 *Minneapolis Tribune* article read, “Two Social Workers Get Prison Post,” referring to the promotions of two Associate Wardens with Masters of Social Work (MSW) degrees at the Stillwater prison and St. Cloud Reformatory. What the article notably omitted to mention was that this was a deliberate management initiative of DOC Commissioner Paul W. Keve (1967 – 1971) to have this type of professional training for management promotion.

Governor Harold LeVander appointed Keve to the Commissioner post in 1967, with the understanding that he would be an innovator. Keve strongly embodied the core values of social work, believing in the responsiveness of organizations and communities to individual needs and social problems.

Keve acquired his MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University and was named the 1968 Minnesota Social Worker of the Year. When he was Director of Probation at Hennepin County, he mandated the requirement of the MSW degree for promotion. As the newly appointed DOC Commissioner, he fully expected to do the same at the



Former Field Services Regional Manager Andy Doom, who was one of the last employees to get his MSW under Commissioner Keve's initiative.

state level. Keve wrote in the October 1968 *Corrections Corner* (a forerunner of today's *Hotline News*): “Why then talk about the MSW being so important? This comes from the fact that I expect to be adamant about the MSW being required for what is ordinarily the next step in the ladder, the Correctional Supervisor.” He continued: “I can only be honest and admit that

most institution superintendents are going to be persons with the MSW simply because the route most frequently is through a supervisory position where that degree is required.” Orville Pung, who was Assistant Superintendent at Red Wing juvenile facility at the time, said Keve approached this requirement with a “religious zeal” and he wanted managers to “talk the same language.” Andy Doom, who acquired his MSW under the Keve plan, said: “Commissioner Keve believed strongly that social work was an essential part of corrections.”

Doom said Keve created an internal program that would pay employees a stipend of \$10,000 per academic year to study for the MSW. The August 1967 *Corrections Corner* publication listed the following individuals who received the stipends for that year: Bruce McManus, Harold Hansen, Ronald Bourdaghs, Ken Neustel, Lynn Nelson, Paul Sundet, Tom Kernan, John McLagan and Tom Robinson, several of whom later occupied prominent positions in the agency. Other individuals who acquired the MSW in later years were: Tom Lawson, Bill Fisk, Bert Mohs, Duane Erickson, Jack Young, Pat Mack, Charles Gadbois and Edward Goering. Denny Doege and Andy Doom were the very last two to receive their MSWs under the Keve Plan. These employees studied at universities throughout the country, including the University of MN, University of Nebraska, Tulane University, and University of Hawaii. Stipend recipients had to commit to work for the DOC for four years after graduation.

Keve's professional training requirement was not without objection or controversy. Some believed he was circumventing civil service procedures for promotional selections. He later conceded that the approach may be too inflexible and was willing to interview qualified individuals without an MSW for supervisory positions but was unapologetic about his preference for social work

(Continued on next page)

Social Work Month Continued

professional training for the DOC (Corrections Corner, January 1969). Some aspiring managers elected not to go the route of the MSW. One such individual was Orville Pung. He said he took a “gamble” by not acquiring the MSW. The gamble paid off: Pung was promoted several times and became the longest serving - and one of the most respected - DOC Commissioners (1982-1993).

Keve’s MSW initiative ended when he was replaced by Commissioner David Fogel in 1971 under Governor Wendell Anderson. Fogel had an MSW but also had a Ph.D in Criminology and believed the MSW approach should not be the only professional training required for aspiring managers. Keve’s administration only lasted for 4 years but his legacy for professional training lasted decades. Dennis Rykken, Assistant Superintendent of the now closed Sauk Center Facility, said he joined the DOC in 1974, long after Keve left, but still observed evidence of the value of the MSW for career advancement for many years to come. Many MSW recipients became wardens and prominent leaders in community corrections. Andy Doom, retired Regional Manager for Field Services who was one of the last individuals to receive the MSW under

the Keve plan, stated: “I was motivated to pursue an MSW by the emphasis of the departmental management of the time. While I do not believe the acquisition of an MSW was essential, I found it to be very beneficial. It provided productive, career-long contacts; enhanced and eclectic perspectives; and improved skills in the supervision of offenders initially and later staff.”

Editor’s note: Commissioner Paul Schnell holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of St. Thomas.

An appreciation is expressed to former Commissioner Orville Pung, former Field Services Director Andy Doom and former Assistant Superintendent of MCF-Sauk Center Dennis Rykken for sharing their knowledge and experiences from the 1960s-1970s era in MN Corrections.

Sources:

Corrections Corner, Vol. II, No. 10, August 11, 1967.

Corrections Corner, Vol. III, No. 15, Oct. 4, 1968.

Corrections Corner, Vol. III, No. 21, January 1969.

Department of Corrections, Commissioner’s Office. Subject Files of Paul W. Keve, 1965-1970. Minnesota Historical Society.

Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 1968. “Two Social Workers Get Prison Posts.” September 5, p. 26.

Trade Union Representatives Speak at Togo

By Lucy Hart

MCF- Togo Transitions Coordinator David Copp arranged to have representatives from local trade unions speak with incarcerated men on March 6.

Ricky Cannata, who is also the Mayor of Hibbing, represented Laborers Union local 1097. Daniel Hendrickson represented the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) local 294. Aaron Wright and Jacob Ridlon represented the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters (NCSRCC). They spoke



(L – R) Trade Union representatives Ricky Cannata, Jacob Ridlon, Daniel Hendrickson, and Aaron Wright

to the incarcerated men about their respective unions on the topics of work, pay and benefits. They also presented information on how to be accepted into each of their unions. Most beneficial to many of the offenders was how to get back into the union if they have been incarcerated for a substantial period of time.

There were many questions from the offenders, such as type of education needed and specifics of an apprentice program. The incarcerated men were also told to be open and honest with employers.

Furthermore, the union representatives were engaging and gave real possibilities for work opportunities that could mean making more than minimum wage for offenders in a sector that does not shy away from individuals with a criminal history.

Johnson Retires From WR/ML

By Ian Heaslip

Congratulations to Officer Brian Johnson, as he wraps up 16 years at MCF-Willow River/ Moose Lake.

Brian spent his entire career on 1st Watch and was great with coming up with training scenarios for new staff members. He was unwaveringly professional and dependable as an officer.

Congratulations, Brian, enjoy your retirement!

(L – R) Warden Nate Knutson and Corrections Officer Brian Johnson



Instructor Profile: Sgt. Matthew Wallace, Lino Lakes

Emergency Response Team Instructor

Sgt. Matthew Wallace began working at MCF-Lino Lakes in 2007. He has worked both living units, and as a utility officer. In 2017, he promoted to sergeant assigned to 3rd Watch. He recently bid to a 2nd Watch A-Team/utility sergeant position.

In 2008, he joined the Special Operations Response Team (SORT) and in 2010 he was accepted into the Emergency Response Team (ERT) as a marksman/observer.

Matthew conducts A-Team, firearms, and staff professionalism training. In addition, he is a master instructor in chemical munitions. As a senior member of the Lino Lakes SORT, he is frequently called upon to assist with other aspects of their training program.

“Sgt. Wallace has taken his role as an instructor very seriously and has shown true commitment to the role of teaching others,” said ERT Commander Lt. Rick Wilson. “He has been involved in the development of several of the training plans which makes the training better for all. His knowledge and commitment has truly made him a subject matter expert and he is often called on because of his expertise.”

“I enjoy being an instructor because I can promote a ‘team’ mentality. Whether it is training new academy students or ERT members, I like to know that I can count on the people I have trained to have my back as I have theirs,” Matthew said. “I also like to promote confidence and competence so when the time comes to use the skills I have taught, it will be within the scope of policy and staff will be protected.”



Matthew Wallace

Peterson Promoted to Sergeant at Oak Park Heights



(L – R) Lt. Jeff White, Sgt. Austin Peterson and PD Bronson Austreng

On March 6, Austin Peterson promoted to sergeant on 3rd Watch at MCF-Oak Park Heights.

Austin started with the DOC in 2011, has worked on all watches and has taken on many tasks assigned to him. He’s currently an FTO and has worked in many positions.

Congratulations, Austin!

Red Wing Education Ceremony

On March 19, Dr. Mitchell Palmer McDonald, Ed.D was the guest speaker at the Walter Maginnis High School graduation ceremony at MCF-Red Wing.

Dr. McDonald is a social studies and journalism teacher at Johnson Senior High School in St. Paul and sports photojournalist for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder in Minneapolis. Dr. McDonald also served as a volunteer community outreach worker at the Jimmy Lee Recreation Center and Loft Teen Center in St. Paul. At Johnson High School, he teaches U.S. History, U.S. Government and African American Studies, and served as advisor to the Yearbook Club and Hmong Club.



(L – R) Principal Barbara Christensen, DOC Education Director Marcie Koetke, Juvenile Services Director Melissa Callahan, Dr. Mitchell Palmer McDonald, Warden Shon Thieren, and AWO Tammy Wherley

Kasal Promoted to Sergeant at Oak Park Heights



On March 19, Corrections Officer James Kasal promoted to 1st Watch sergeant at MCF-Oak Park Heights.

James began his DOC career on June 21, 2010. He has worked all three Watches as utility and has also been a unit staff member. James is a mentor, CIT trained, and warrant certified.

Congratulations, James!

(L – R) Sgt. Joshua Roloff, Sgt. James Kasal, and Lt. Chad Mercure

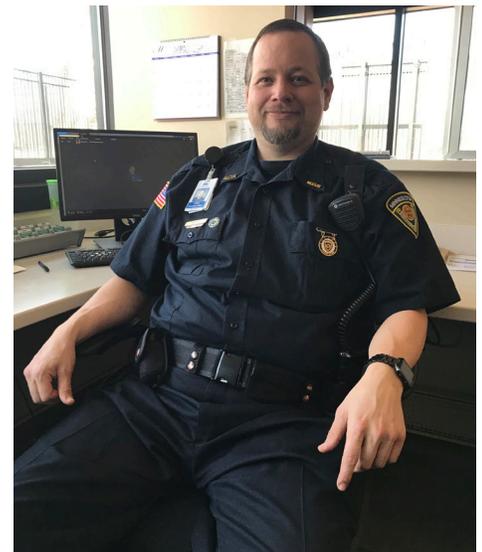
Shakopee Staff Donate to LEMA

The Diversity Committee at MCF-Shakopee recently held a fundraiser for the Law Enforcement Memorial Association (LEMA).

The fundraiser challenged uniformed staff and non-uniformed staff in loose change collection. LEMA is the organization that provided the graveside memorials for both Officers Gomm and Parise for their funerals. LEMA also organizes the honor guards for other occasions.

MCF-Shakopee staff donated \$123.31 to the organization that, over the past year, did so much for the families of Officers Gomm and Parise. LEMA provides many services to the families of those in law enforcement who have died in the course of their duties. To learn more, visit: <https://mnlema.org/about-us/>

A special thank you goes to Officer Jason Block, pictured, who organized this fundraiser.



Paulus and Nelson Receive Combined Charities Hero Award

On March 11, Jennifer Paulus and Kevin Nelson were recipients of the 2018 Hero Award for their work on the 2018 Combined Charities Campaign at DOC Central Office back in October.

The award is given to individuals who have shown an exceptional commitment to the Combined Charities Campaign by going above and beyond the call of duty to make a difference during the campaign. Both Jennifer and Kevin were unavailable for the reception at the Governor's Office at the State Capitol back in February so Ron Bisek, the Chair of the Combined Charities Board of Directors, delivered the award during a short awards ceremony at DOC Central Office attended by Jennifer and Kevin's colleagues in the Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit and the Victim Assistance/Restorative Justice Program.



Jennifer and Kevin were nominated for the award by Halie Rostberg (shown in the photo with Jennifer, Ron, and Kevin). Jennifer recently won the award in 2017 and Kevin was previously awarded the prize back in 2016.

Congratulations, Jennifer and Kevin!

Congressman Emmer Visits MCF-St. Cloud

On March 29, U.S. Congressman Tom Emmer toured the MCF-St. Cloud.

Joining Rep. Emmer on the tour were Deputy Commissioner Sarah Walker, Warden Shannon Reimann, AWO Carol Krippner, AWA Brian Collins, and Sgt. Rick Neyssen. During the tour, staff discussed the agency's staffing needs, the reinstatement of Pell Grants for incarcerated persons, probation reform, the agency's exceedingly high deferred maintenance costs, and how deteriorating facilities affect safety, programming capacity, and recruitment efforts.



(L – R) AWO Carol Krippner, Rep. Tom Emmer, Warden Shannon Reimann, AWA Brian Collins, Deputy Commissioner Sarah Walker, and Sgt. Rick Neyssen.

Germane to that end, Rep. Emmer toured the new health services area and saw firsthand how long-overdue capital investments yield drastically improved services. He also toured the facility's existing intake area, which was designed before St. Cloud officially became the Department's intake facility for adult males. Its current configuration is too small and outdated to safely process the number of people entering and leaving the facility. Construction is underway to renovate, construct, and improve the intake, laundry, and loading dock areas. Rep. Emmer was happy to see the state legislature making "smart" investments.

Rep. Emmer has represented Minnesota's Sixth District in the U.S. House of Representatives since January 3, 2015. Rep. Emmer previously served in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 2005-2011.

Mental Health First Aid

By Karla Jager

Department-wide managing of mental health concerns within the prison population has become a high priority. You can find references to mental health in new staff orientation, de-escalation trainings, CNT, CIT, and so on. These references aren't by accident – they help educate staff on how to yield positive outcomes which impact safety and ultimately recidivism. In addition to increasing awareness and intervention skills with staff, offenders are also receiving important skills and education.

Sadie Watts, a MH CPT at Faribault, is a Mental Health First Aid Trainer helping to increase offender's knowledge of signs, symptoms, and risk factors related to mental illnesses and addiction.



Sadie Watts

Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental illnesses, builds understanding of their impact, and overviews common supports. This eight-hour course is available for offenders and uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis and connect persons to the appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care. The program also teaches the common risk factors and warning signs of specific types of illnesses, like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, and schizophrenia.

Just as CPR training helps a person with no clinical training to assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a person assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis such as contemplating suicide. In both situations, the goal is to help support an individual until appropriate professional help arrives.

Mental Health first aiders learn a single five-step strategy that includes assessing risk, respectfully listening to and supporting the individual in crisis, and identifying appropriate professional help and other resources. After completing the course and passing an examination, the participants are certified for three years as a Mental Health First Aider. Mental Health First Aid is included on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Watts recently trained offender tutors, mentors, and aids at MCF-Faribault. The mental health first aiders are another resource that can be utilized when looking for ways to support the more mentally ill offenders in each living unit and at their work stations. At MCF-Faribault, Linden aids, education tutors, and chemical dependency and SLS mentors are trained given their position and that they are commonly housed with offenders needing extra support. First aiders offer cues for medication and hygiene, offer job skills training, and prompt offenders to use their coping skills and refer to staff as needed. There has been additional interest at other facilities to recreate this program given the help trained peer support can offer offenders with mental health issues. This training allows first aiders to support these offenders and has ultimately provided trained individuals healthy skills that can transfer effectively into the community.

Partner Spotlight: Otter Tail County Probation Director to Retire

Submitted by Joannie Gontarek, Probation Agent with Otter Tail County

Otter Tail County Probation Director Desta Lutzwick is retiring at the end of May after more than 35 years of public service. She began her career working in Anoka County before going to Otter Tail County. She has spent the last three years as probation director and prior to that was a probation agent.

Desta has committed her career to helping offenders and new agents. She will be deeply missed.

Hotline is produced by the DOC Communications Office: Sarah J. Fitzgerald (Communications Director), Aaron Swanum (Information Officer), and Michael Ojibway (Principal Marketing & Multimedia Strategist)

Attorney General Keith Ellison Visits Shakopee



Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison (center) is pictured with Challenge Incarceration Program participants.

By Jeff Spies

On March 18, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison visited MCF-Shakopee.

Ellison conducted listening sessions with the incarcerated women and facility staff. He conducts listening sessions in communities throughout Minnesota to engage citizens in “open community dialogue.” Ellison emphasized that incarcerated people are members of our communities, and their voices are no less significant than those of people in the greater community.

Ellison told the incarcerated women the main activities of the Attorney General’s Office include consumer protection, anti-trust actions directed at predatory practices of large companies, the high cost of prescription drugs, women’s economic security, rural community issues, living wages, affordable housing, and senior care/elder abuse. As the chief law enforcement officer in the state, his office is also responsible for the prosecution of crime.

While at MCF-Shakopee, he met in informal sessions with 34 women from the Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) where issues that concerned the women were raised. He fielded questions related to college tuition, felon friendly housing, chemical dependency treatment availability, sentencing for drug offenders, transportation issues for releasing offenders, enterprise grants and opportunities for women, and health care for incarcerated persons.

Ellison also met with a group of staff and discussed issues of concern which included resources and housing for releasing offenders, especially those with significant mental health needs. He asked staff about their workdays and what staff in various roles do throughout their day. He learned about gender responsive approaches, and how working with female offenders differs from working with men, and the special challenges these differences pose.

Following the listening sessions, Attorney General Ellison and his staff toured MCF-Shakopee’s parenting unit where he met with another group of offenders and toured the industry building and learned about work opportunities for offenders in MINNCOR.



Photo Gallery: Attorney General Visits Shakopee



(L – R) DOC Communications Director Sarah Fitzgerald, Attorney General Keith Ellison, and Shakopee Warden Tracy Beltz



Field Services Support Staff Conference



Field Services Office & Administrative Specialists and contract county support staff attended a Support Staff Conference on March 6 - 7 at Camp Ripley. Here, Deputy Commissioner Sarah Walker (above, left) kicked off the conference with a welcome from the new Administration, while Gaye Lindors (an author/speaker/blogger pictured right) provided a humorous and inspirational message on Thursday afternoon.

Military Spotlight



Specialist A.J. Croucher assigned to the U.S. Army Caisson Platoon provided mounted escort in Arlington National Cemetery for our nation's fallen heroes on Jan. 24. He is the son of Greg Croucher who works in the DOC's Inspection and Enforcement Unit.

AmeriCorps Members Honored

In mid-March, the DOC joined thousands of Americans across the country to celebrate the valuable contributions of the AmeriCorps members who pledge to “get things done” for America as part of the annual AmeriCorps Week.

The DOC celebrated the service of DOC AmeriCorps members Peter Solberg and Sarah Paulus.



Peter Solberg



Sarah Paulus

Peter is a Recovery Navigator working out of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development CareerForce Center providing peer recovery supports to high-risk release violators.

Sarah is a Minnesota Opioid Response Corps Member and serves in the Health Services Department helping to expand initiatives around Opioid Use Disorder and recovery post-release.

Reverend McAfee Speaks at Oak Park Heights Event

On Feb. 19, in honor of Black History Month, MCF-Oak Park Heights invited Reverend Jerry McAfee to present on the topic of “living your best life in and out of prison.”

McAfee is the pastor, preacher and teacher at New Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis. The message was well received from the offenders and staff.

(L – R) Acting AWO Sherlinda Wheeler, Reverend Jerry McAfee and Acting Warden David Reishus



Starkson Becomes Case Manager at Faribault



(L – R) Program Director Melissa Paquette and Case Manager Jason Starkson

On March 6, Jason Starkson became a case manager at MCF-Faribault.

Jason started his DOC career as a clinical program therapist (CPT) in 2008 at MCF-Faribault. He promoted to CPT2 in 2008 and CPT 3 in 2013. He was a facilitator in the New Dimensions Treatment Program for the Introduction to Domestic Violence Programing, and worked in two work out of class temporary assignments, including in transitions (2017) and case management (2018). Jason is involved with the mentoring program, and is a member of the care club and wellness committee.

Congratulations, Jason, and welcome to the team!

Shakopee Hosts Black Storytellers Alliance Event



On March 9, MCF-Shakopee hosted the Black Storytellers Alliance. The group provided an uplifting message which moved and inspired the incarcerated women.

Commissioner Paul Schnell, along with Deputies Sarah Walker and Michelle Smith took in the performances, and Minnesota Public Radio sent a team to document the event.

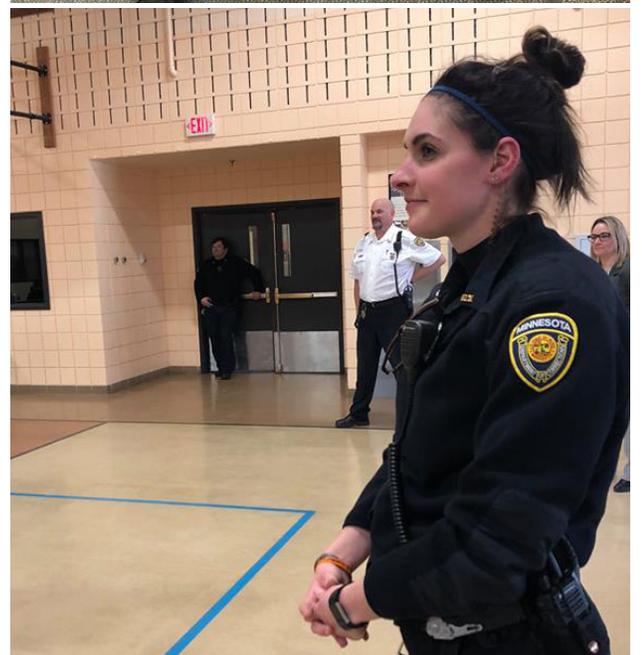
Thanks to MCF-Shakopee staff for hosting a meaningful event!



(L – R) Commissioner Paul Schnell and Officer Carlos Herrera

(L – R) Lt. Tom Vavra, Deputy Commissioner Michelle Smith, and Deputy Commissioner Sarah Walker

Photo Gallery: Black Storytellers Alliance Event



Shakopee Recognizes Officers Regner and Barry

Employee Recognition Awards honor DOC employees for their contributions to the workplace and/or the community. Throughout the year, we highlight some of the award nominations.

CO2 Ben Regner was nominated for Creativity/Innovation: Ben was nominated for contributing to the development of an electronic informal sanction log. They save paper and create efficiencies.

CO2 Kaitlin Barry was nominated for Outstanding Individual Performance: Kaitlin works 3rd Watch in the Roosevelt living unit. Throughout her assignment to this post, the unit has been without a lead worker multiple times for an extended period of time. She began completing tasks generally belonging to a lead worker. She maintained a positive and professional attitude with the offender population and maintained a clean and orderly unit.



(L – R) Officer Ben Regner, Captain Mike Hennen, Officer Kaitlin Barry, Lt. Greg Marquette

Shakopee Recognizes Mailroom Staff Johnson and Swanson

Sarah Johnson was nominated for Outstanding Individual Performance: Sarah joined the Shakopee mailroom April of 2017 and has helped streamline and simplify operations in the mailroom. She goes out of her way to research the best possible solution and how to implement the solution.

Kathy Swanson was nominated for Creativity/Innovation: Kathy was nominated for finding new ways of recycling waste, including a cost-free option for recycling tennis shoes. She found a company that not only recycles, but supplies the box to ship shoes in, eliminating any cost to the facility. She is researching companies that will accept textiles that cannot be donated to Good Will, which could help keep items out of landfills.



(L – R) Kathy Swanson, Sarah Johnson, Michelle Follmer

Kathy Swanson was nominated for Outstanding Individual Performance: Kathy has worked in the mailroom for almost 13 years. Her dedication to her work has not only kept the facility safe but allows offenders to effectively communicate with their family and friends, which helps reduce recidivism. As one of the major locations for drugs to enter the facility, she has intercepted numerous drugs and other contraband. Kathy is also part of the Green Committee and has found ways to recycle jeans, shower shoes, and tennis shoes. Additionally, she has found programs to donate food, non-food items, and glasses that the incarcerated women wish to donate.

Parenting Coordinator Testifies In Support of Visitation Services

By Lori Timlin

Deborah Jiang-Stein is the CEO of the UnPrison Project. She is probably best known at MCF-Shakopee for facilitating the donation of several hundred pairs of reading glasses (purple frames), and for bringing Gloria Steinem to visit. She has written a memoir called *Prison Baby*. She was born in prison to a mother who was drug addicted. She was then adopted, and didn't learn of her origins until she was 12.

Some time ago, she asked me what the women here need, and I said "a way to get their kids to visit." She took it and ran, and has a program proposal called *Mama's Bus*. She has partnered with former state representative and educator Yvonne Selcer in putting together her proposal. The program would provide a Greyhound bus that would go as far north as Bemidji to pick children up and bring them for a visit here. The bus would also have a child therapist, books, snacks and numerous volunteers. Her pool of volunteers also happen to already be approved volunteers here. This would allow inmates who have never had a visit see their kids! The bill is being carried by Rep Becker-Finn, who grew up in Cass Lake, Minn. and is a Leech Lake Band member. Rep. Becker-Finn has taken an interest in this initiative as American Indian women are overrepresented in our facility, and many of the reservations are a considerable distance from Shakopee. Deb and Yvonne also want to emphasize child literacy, so every child and mother who has a visit will receive a book (at each visit) to read together here and hopefully when they are apart.

My role in testifying was to speak to the numbers of mothers in the facility, and provide some real life examples of how visiting (or not) impacts the women. Here are some interesting facts about visiting at Shakopee:

- 77% of incarcerated women in MN have minor children.
- 66% were living with their children prior to incarceration, and a majority will return to their kids after.
- Inmates who have visits have lower rates of recidivism.



(L – R) Parenting Coordinator Lori Timlin, Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, and Deborah Jiang-Stein

- Despite making up only 1.5% of the population of MN, American Indian women constitute 19% of the women at Shakopee (with a population of 613 that means 90 women).
- Women in prison report that their greatest source of stress is limited ability to maintain contact with their kids.
- When men are incarcerated, the mother of their children typically brings the child for visits. When women are incarcerated, the child's grandmother is most often the caregiver, and may have limited funds, other children for which they are providing care, etc.
- The largest obstacles for women in having visits are: physically getting their child here and having a family member or friend who can qualify to be on their visiting list.

Research supports the benefit of regular contact between incarcerated parent and child.

- Parental incarceration is detrimental to children.
- The current Parenting Program (60 beds) provides extended visits for 13 children per weekend, and has eligibility criteria that many women do not meet.

St. Cloud Caseworker Eibes Presents at MACCAC

MCF-St. Cloud Corrections Caseworker-Career Tom Eibes was a presenter at the recent Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC) Conference. The organization held their annual conference at the River Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud on Feb. 27 - 28.

Eibes, assisted by Casework Intern Erika Sonsteby, presented at one of the sessions to a packed room of over 50 attendees. Eibes, who has a Master's degree in Criminal Justice and is also an adjunct faculty member at Saint Cloud State University, shared historical information about the facility, the casework and intake process, Transition from Prison to Community (TPC), along with intake/release data and statistics.



MCF-St. Cloud Case Manager Tom Eibes presenting at the recent MACCA Annual Conference.

Oak Park Heights Reopens Improved Firing Range

On March 19, MCF-Oak Park Heights reopened its indoor firearms range with a new Meggitt "state of the art" trolley target system along with a new HVAC ventilation system.

MCF-Oak Park Heights firearms instructors, from left to right: Sgt. Tony LaBrie, Lt. Graham Besonen, Sgt. Brad Gross, and Officer Doug Witte.



STS Crews Help with Sandbagging



On March 23, Sentencing to Service (STS) crews from Austin, Albert Lea, Blue Earth and Fairmont assisted with sandbagging efforts in Waterville.

STS is a sentencing alternative for courts that puts nonviolent offenders to work on community improvement projects. Supervised STS crews work in parks and other public areas, frequently in combination with jail time.