

Memo

Date: March 5, 2026

To: Family and Friends of Incarcerated People

From: Michelle Basham, Interim CEO, MINNCOR Industries and Crystal Brakke, Deputy Commissioner of Client Services and Support

RE: Changes to Work Assignments at Select DOC Facilities

We are writing to inform you of an upcoming change that will affect incarcerated person (IP) work assignments at several Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. We know that employment within our facilities matters to incarcerated people and to their families, and we want to share this information with you directly.

Over the coming weeks, there will be a significant reduction in work hours and assignments connected to MINNCOR Industries, which operates DOC's industry work programs.

This change is the result of market influences affecting Anagram International LLC, a Minnesota-based balloon manufacturer and long-time vendor partner of MINNCOR Industries.

Anagram has informed us that it must substantially reduce its production inside DOC facilities due to multiple factors affecting its business, including:

- advocacy organization efforts that affected Anagram's customer relationships
- market shifts toward overseas production
- excess inventory among distributors

Because MINNCOR's work programs operate through contracts with outside businesses, changes in a company's business needs directly affect available work hours and assignments within our facilities.

Correctional facilities in Faribault, Shakopee, Stillwater, Rush City, and Oak Park Heights are primarily impacted. At Rush City, all balloon packaging work assignments will end. In the other facilities, the change will result in decreased work hours for incarcerated people.

We understand the importance of work assignments. They provide structure, work readiness skills, and wages that help individuals meet personal needs and maintain family connections. We recognize that this news may be disappointing or concerning.

Facility and MINNCOR leaders are working together diligently to respond to this unexpected change and to plan for next steps. MINNCOR will prioritize future work assignments at the current pay rate for individuals at Rush City who lose their work assignment but remain in good standing and free of formal discipline.

Unfortunately, for the IPs whose work role is lost, there are no immediate alternative work assignments available. Identifying and developing meaningful work assignments to replace these lost hours will take time. We are actively working to pursue new partnerships and exploring new and creative opportunities where possible. Please know that the DOC is particularly focused on identifying new opportunities at Rush City, which was profoundly impacted by this market change. We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.