



Corrections News

“Proudly Keeping Alabama Safe”

Professionalism - Integrity - Accountability

A Year in Review

Winter 2016

Governor Signs Criminal Justice Reform Legislation into Law



Governor Robert Bentley signs Senate Bill 67 into law at the State Capitol. Also pictured is Commissioner Jeff Dunn (right), Senator Cam Ward (left), behind Governor Bentley, Senator Vivian Figures, Representative Mike Jones, and Suzanne McBride, deputy director of the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

On May 21, 2015, Governor Robert Bentley signed into law historic criminal justice reforms designed to significantly reduce the state’s prison population and bolster public safety through an overhaul of how people are supervised after being released from incarceration.

“With the passage of SB67, Alabama has taken a significant step forward to address reform of Alabama’s criminal justice system,” Governor Bentley said. “This legislation represents a unified effort by all three branches of government to make the criminal justice system more efficient.”

SB67 includes policies to strengthen community-based supervision, prioritize prison space for people convicted of violent and dangerous crimes, and promote evidence-based services and treatment for people receiving supervision in the community. When fully implemented, the legislation is projected to reduce the number of people in correctional facilities by 16 percent and avert more than \$380 million in costs associated with expanding prison space over the next six years.

“I want to thank Governor Bentley and the State Legislature for their leadership in moving Alabama forward in this historic criminal justice reform initiatives,” Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said. “This bill demonstrates Alabama’s commitment

to addressing the challenges facing the state’s prison system. Through active and collective collaboration between all branches of government, I am confident this legislation will lead to safer prisons, safer communities, and a safer Alabama.”

Highlights of SB67 include:

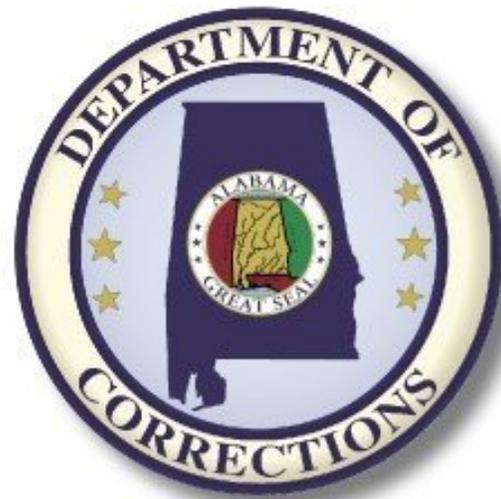
- Diverting people convicted of low-level property and drug offenses away from prison;
- Strengthening supervision through promotion of evidence-based practices, and establishing criteria for how parole decisions are made;
- Expanding notification to victims when inmates are released from prison.

The framework was developed with support from the Council of State Governments Justice Center, which has provided data-driven analyses and policy options to state leaders in 21 states to date, in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance.

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Corrections News is a publication of the Alabama Department of Corrections. Article submissions are invited and should be sent to Bob Horton, Public Information Officer, via e-mail at bob.horton@doc.alabama.gov, or mailed to: Alabama Department of Corrections, ATTN: PIO, 301 South Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL 36104



Mission Statement

The mission of the Alabama Department of Corrections is to provide for public safety through the safe, secure, humane confinement, and rehabilitation of offenders.



From the Commissioner *Jefferson S. Dunn*

Governor Bentley Announces Prison Transformation Initiative

After nearly 10 months of assessment and planning by the Alabama Department of Corrections, Governor Robert Bentley announced in his State of the State address on February 2, 2016, a bold plan to transform the Alabama Prison System with a state-of-the-art, modern system that increases public safety through safe, secure, humane incarceration and effective, evidenced-based rehabilitation and re-entry services.

Decades of underfunding have created a system where security concerns created by over-crowding and understaffing consume the majority of department resources at the expense of robust rehabilitation and reentry. The status quo is unsustainable.

The department's aged facilities require labor intensive security management operations to properly oversee offenders. In order to ensure a safe, secure and humane environment moving forward, the most cost effective long-term approach is to replace existing facilities with large state-of-the-art, operationally efficient regional prisons.

Governor Bentley has proposed a three-faceted approach to overhaul the department: One, close Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women and build a new 1,200 bed women's facility; Two, consolidate 13 of 15 close and medium security men's facilities into three, new, 4,000-bed, state-of-the-art prisons and; Three, repurpose and renovate the remaining antiquated, facilities into Rehabilitation and Re-entry Centers focused on preparing inmates for release back into the community. The department proposes to build the new facilities in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State in proximity to current prison locations to reduce the impact to our existing workforce.

The new facilities will operate at security staffing ratios close to 15:1, allowing the department to use current employees to fully staff new facilities providing effective and safe population management and freeing resources to invest in rehabilitation. In addition to security staffing efficiencies, large scale regional facilities allow for support and medical staff consolidations as well as the potential for on-site medical care facilities designed to reduce both security and transportation costs.

Governor Bentley's plan offers a new vision for Corrections in Alabama—a vision of increased public safety, reduced recidivism, state-of-the-art facilities, and improved rehabilitation and re-entry. The initiative will serve as a national model that other states can use to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of its Department of Corrections.

ADOC Executive Leadership Conference: *Transformation... Motivated for Change*

The Alabama Department of Corrections hosted the 10th Annual Executive Leadership Conference at the Birmingham Renaissance at Ross Bridge with exceptional presentations from experienced and inspirational leaders and subject matter experts.

Held September 2-4, the conference featured in-depth and dynamic discussions of the issues facing the Alabama Department of Corrections, leadership challenges, and the need for reforming and improving ADOC policies and practices.

Legendary University of Alabama former head football coach Gene Stallings opened the conference with the keynote address. Stallings spoke of his beloved son, John Mark, or “Johnny”, who died in 2008 at the age of 46. Stallings said his son inspired people because of his maturity and genuine kindness. Stallings added that effective leadership requires the same character traits his son exemplified; “treating people with respect, and with kindness.”

Andie Moss, President of The Moss Group, was joined by Dr. Reggie Wilkinson and Anne Seymour, who serve The Moss Group as senior advisor and consultant, respectively, shared from their perspective the most critical issues facing the field of corrections. In particular, they explored issues related to restrictive housing, use of force, trauma-informed care, special populations, sexual safety, victims’ services and re-entry. During the breakout sessions, ADOC conference attendees were asked to identify some of the most pressing leadership challenges as the Department continues to build excellence in practices.

The conference also featured Mike Poulin, Professional Life Coach, who spoke about how values and principles are a roadmap to life.



Former University of Alabama head football coach Gene Stallings gave the keynote address during the ADOC Executive Leadership Conference.

Dean Argo, communications manager for the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, gave an informative presentation on finding the proper balance in life while focusing on one’s career, family, health, spirituality, and personal relationships.

Other speakers included Tom Albritton, Executive Director, Alabama Ethics Commission; Charleene Corby, Chief Executive Officer, Correctional Peace Officer Foundation; and Dr. Dave Migliore, Founder of Global Entrepreneurs Institute.

ADOC Chief of Staff Steve Brown presented an overview of the Department’s initiative to adopt a strategic planning model within Corrections with a goal to best use allocated resources.

The conference ended with attendees hearing from Commissioner Dunn as he laid out the framework for ADOC’s transformation based on vision, values, mission, and measurable metrics for evidence-based decision practices for moving the Department forward.

Alabama Prison Doctor: My Job's Not Glamorous, but I Believe It's My Calling

By Dr. Hugh Hood

At parties, some people move away from me when they hear about my job. They don't mind that I am a doctor. But they don't necessarily like my patients.

As an associate medical director for Corizon Health, I oversee the care of more than 25,000 inmates in Alabama prisons.

Many Alabamians don't understand how prisons operate, much less how we provide health care under our contract with the Department of Corrections.

To be fair, before I went to work for Corizon Health, I didn't know much about prison healthcare, either. Even though I have a medical degree, a dental degree and close to 30 years of experience as a private physician in Bessemer, I didn't know what to expect.

Eight years later, I know: The inmates whose care I oversee are not all that different from the patients I once treated in private practice. Some try to manipulate the system to get unnecessary care or narcotics—just as some patients did in the communities I once served in private practice. But most are respectful and appreciative of the care they receive.

My job, too, is fundamentally the same: I do my best every day to provide my patients the care they need to stay healthy or to feel better if they are sick.

As you'd expect, though, working in the prison system presents unique challenges.

For one thing, prisoners as a group tend to be less healthy than other people. Today I can say from extensive experience and observation that working to address the mental health issues that contributed to someone ending up in jail or prison is critical to keep them from returning.

In addition, many inmates have a history of substance abuse that continues to adversely affect their health, and some had virtually no health care before coming to prison. To make matters worse, incarceration itself often takes a toll on inmates' health: People age prematurely behind bars.

Alabama's prison facilities don't offer ideal conditions for us as health practitioners, either. Most were built long ago, well before anyone could anticipate the infrastructural needs of modern healthcare delivery. And because our prisons house far more inmates than they were designed to hold, just finding sufficient

space to provide medical care is itself a challenge.

And then, security issues that never arise in private practice are an everyday part of the job in prisons. We can't just call an ambulance or send inmates to an emergency room; they must be escorted and accompanied by correctional officers around the clock. Every patient interaction poses some degree of personal risk to the provider.

Yet in spite of, and on account of, these trying circumstances, Corizon Health nurses and doctors work hard every day to provide quality care that improves the health of inmates, contributes to public safety after inmates leave correctional facilities and, most of all, achieves health outcomes that change lives and make us proud.

Sometimes, the fact of incarceration actually works in our favor. As one example, Corizon Health's results with diabetic prisoners in Alabama are consistently much better than those recorded for patients nationally who get health care through Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. One reason is that our patients are in custody, and we have the ability to follow up and better ensure they are adhering to treatments. But it's also because we do a good job of providing the right care at the right time.

And we work hard every day to try to do the same for every illness we encounter among our patients.

Some people mistakenly assume Corizon Health and Alabama's prison system save money by denying health care to inmates. And maybe there are those who believe we should deny inmates care.

But if you provide or pay for health care, you know the truth: Bad care costs more in the long run than good care. Bad care leads to bad outcomes and expensive complications. Good care means better outcomes, fewer trips to emergency rooms and fewer hospitalizations.

We strive to provide good care and have seen it pay dividends both in our facilities and in our communities where most of our patients end up.

While medical needs in prison cover a wide spectrum, the biggest problems remain those garden-variety conditions that dominate healthcare everywhere.

Healthcare, continued from page 5.

About 40 percent of Alabama inmates are enrolled in one of the chronic care clinics that Corizon Health established to help provide proper care for conditions such as diabetes and, heart disease. Through these clinics, inmates are placed on an appropriate treatment plan and receive regular follow-up care. These clinics help keep costs down for all of us—by keeping prisoners healthy.

My calling may not be the kind of thing people want to discuss at parties. But it's my job, and it's one I'm happy to do—and do well—on behalf of Alabama's prison system, my patients and my community. We know from our experience that a healthy inmate has a better chance at reintegration into the community than a sick one, and we know that communities are safer when we succeed.

Dr. Hood, a Vestavia Hills resident, is the associate regional medical director in Alabama for Corizon Health, which has a contract to provide health care for inmates in Alabama's prisons.



Inmates Benefit from Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project

The Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project teaches classes in ten different prison facilities across Alabama, covering everything from arts and literature, to engineering and science.

The classes typically have 18-22 students. St. Clair Correctional Facility's Dewayne Estes said inmates who are interested must send in a request and must have good behavior.

Warden Estes said he supports this program and hopes it continues because it can provide an opportunity for inmates to grow and can help decrease prison violence.

"It can be an opportunity for something an inmate to do, education-wise, program-wise, self-help-wise, social-skills-wise, anything that will be uplifting to an individual, everything helps," said Estes.

Program Director Kyes Stevens says since the program began teaching classes in Alabama prisons in 2003, they have served a total of 2,500 students. She says giving inmates an opportunity to learn can make a huge difference in people's lives. The opportunities to connect with human curiosity in prison are almost nonexistent.

"Not being able to feed that curiosity, I think kills part of the human spirit and so when you have individuals who come into a class who are so incredibly starved to learn and be engaged and learn new ideas and challenging concepts, as an educator that's really inspiring," said Stevens.

At St. Clair, fifteen students participate in a class that covers different medias in American culture. The inmates discuss how much it means to have a learning opportunity while in prison. One inmate in the class said, "The victimizer needs to understand the pain and suffering that they have created, and to educate the victimizer oddly opens a path to freedom and healing which is very important."

ADOC Recognized for Energy Efficient Vehicles

Visions for future U.S. vehicles seem to be in a constant state of flux. What will we drive one year, five years, 10 years from now? Engineers and executives at U.S. and overseas auto companies agree on only two things: Cars and trucks will have to be more fuel-efficient, and they will have to be less harmful to the environment.

See Clean Transportation Energy bottom of page 7.

2015 ADOC Training Academy



Graduates take the Oath of Office during the 2015-03 Alabama Corrections Officer Academy Graduation

In 2015, the Alabama Corrections Academy graduated some 323 Correctional Officers who took one step closer to a career in corrections. In his commencement remarks to class 2015-03, Associate Commissioner for Operations Grantt Culliver reminded graduates of their role as professional corrections officers.

“You are the future for transforming the Alabama Department of Corrections into the best corrections agency in the country. Don’t underestimate your value. Stand tall and be proud of who you are and the organization you represent.”

Alabama correctional officers complete one of the most rigorous and demanding corrections academies in the country. Graduates must pass all academic and physical training requirements of the 12-week course, and receive certification from the Alabama Peace Officers’ Standards and Training Commission to serve as law enforcement officers in the Department of Corrections.

Clean Transportation Energy continued from page 6.

A number of alternatives to fuel efficiency are available right now to reduce reliance on foreign petroleum, stretch fuel dollars and better protect the air.

Already on Alabama roads, businesses, school systems and government agencies are using propane autogas to fuel their vehicles, saving thousands of dollars a year in fuel charges and maintenance costs.

The Alabama Department of Corrections is one state agency using alternative means to conserve fuel.

ADOC began looking at alternative fuels because of work-release vans that travel an average of 5,000 miles each month and using about \$1.3 million in fuel cost a year.

After investigating several options, the department purchased 10 vans and converted them to run on propane. Even with the recent decline in gasoline prices, ADOC is saving money on fuel. For propane, the operational cost per mile is 12.2 cents compared to 20.3 cents per mile for gasoline. That is a savings of more than 8 cents per mile that adds up. Over a year, the savings per DOC van is approximately \$6,200.

As the Department of Corrections moves to convert more of its fleet to propane, the fuel savings will compound, and Alabama taxpayers will benefit in other ways. ADOC also can expect to spend less on vehicle maintenance as a result of using a cleaner-burning fuel, and the state’s air will also reap the benefits.



E-Learning Center Opens at Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women

J.F. Ingram State Technical College has taught adult education and vocational training at Julia Tutwiler Prison and some other Alabama prisons for decades.

Now the college is trying a new approach that could reach more inmates with more course offerings. Inmates in one dorm at Tutwiler will have access to new tablet devices in a pilot program that could be expanded to other Alabama prisons.

Governor Robert Bentley and other officials announced the initiative at a ribbon-cutting for Tutwiler's new E-Learning Center on August 19th.

Ingram State President Hank Dasinger said the tablets and technology could mark a "sea change" in inmate education and rehabilitation.

"That's my hope and desire, that we'll be able to provide tablets at every correctional facility across the state," Dasinger said.

Ingram State bought 60 tablets from Edovo, a company that specializes in the learning devices for prisons, for \$25,000 through a request for proposals.

The price includes access to adult education courses and other learning content through a secured server. The tablets cannot access the Internet.

Tutwiler's E-Learning Center includes seven desktop computers tied to the same closed network as the tablets and a larger "smart board" for a classroom type setting.

The Ingram State Technical College Foundation gave almost \$60,000 in private funds to outfit the E-Learning Center in what was previously a classroom for a commercial sewing course.

Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said the commitment to technology for inmate education fits with DOC's top priority, which he said is protecting the public.

See E-Learning Center continued on page 9.

E-Learning Center continued from page 8.

"Effective education can be a key to reducing recidivism, and that's ultimately the goal," Dunn said. "If we can achieve that we have significantly contributed to public safety."

Dunn said the key to whether the tablets can be made widely available in prisons is "figuring out how to do it smartly."

The tablet vendor, Edovo, also provides the devices for prisons in California, Illinois and Pennsylvania, said Anna DeLuna, director of business development for the company.

The tablets are housed in a sturdy case with what the company describes as a shatterproof screen protector.

Inmates will log-in when they use a tablet, and the devices will track their individual progress.

The content includes academic and vocational courses as well as programs like substance abuse, anger management and parenting. DeLuna said inmates can earn credits that allow access to movies, music and magazines via the devices.

Alabama Community College Chancellor Mark Heinrich said Tutwiler's pilot program will be

ATEF Graduations Host Honored Speakers

Summer began with a blockbuster season of graduations as over 100 residents graduated CEC's residential reentry facility, the Alabama Therapeutic Education Facility (ATEF), after completing six months of reentry treatment programming. Located in Columbiana, ATEF is a joint effort between the Alabama Department of Corrections and the Department of Postsecondary Education that provides evidence-based reentry treatment programming designed to keep participants drug and crime free.

"We are very pleased to host our honored guests at these special occasions," said Steve Tomlin, Senior Vice President of Reentry Operations. "Graduations are very rewarding days for the staff and residents. It is a testament to the belief that lives can be turned around for the better. We are gratified to provide this programming and see individuals reenter society with new skills and a new outlook."

ATEF held four separate graduations with esteemed speakers at each commencement ceremony. The May commencement hosted the Honorable Vivian Davis Figures, Senator, who represents the 33rd District in Mobile County, Alabama. Senator Figures gave inspiring remarks and encouraged the graduates to carry on with a positive lifestyle after their reentry treatment at ATEF.

The first of two June graduations hosted the Honorable Agnes Chapell, Judge of the Birmingham, Alabama Domestic Court, who addressed the graduates with a message of hope and that change is possible.

evaluated to help determine how technology can be used to expand prison education across the state.

Heinrich said he worked as a psychologist in a Tennessee state prison about 30 years ago and saw how education and treatment could reduce recidivism.

"It is huge in terms of potential for the state," Heinrich said.

Dasinger said the plan for the pilot program is to evaluate how inmates taking adult education courses on the tablets compare to those taught by an instructor and those who use a combination of time on the tablets and time with an instructor.

"We anticipate good results and then we'll figure out what the next phase will be," Dasinger said.

The possibilities include bringing adult education and other courses to Alabama prisons with no such offerings now.

Dasinger said Ingram State can make more course content available through the tablets, including courses from state universities.

"This helps us to be a force multiplier for education," Dasinger said.

He said the tablets will be less expensive if Ingram expands the programs and buys larger quantities.

AL.com reporter Mike Cason contributed this story.

June and July graduations followed with Gene Jelks, former University of Alabama football player, NFL player, CFL player and author, and David Gaitlin, from Bill Glass Ministries, a prison ministry organization were the speakers at the commencements. The ceremonies were all joyful occasions, complete with guest speakers, music, award of certificates, and remarks from residents," said Gary Hetzel, Director of ATEF.

ATEF is a unique facility that provides CEC's continuum of care model that is proven to reduce recidivism. The treatment component consists of individual assessments, individual and group counseling, substance abuse treatment, educational services, vocational training, skills-based trainings, family services, and aftercare/Alumni services. Emphasis is placed on treatment and provision of above services, as well as a "Ready To Work" program through its partnership with Postsecondary Education that includes vocational training designed to increase employability upon release. Vocational skills available are carpentry, window & door framing, roofing, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, sheet rock installation, welding, computer training, and fork lift certification.

Since opening in 2008 ATEF has graduated more than 4,000 individuals from the facility after receiving reentry treatment and vocational training, and has an alumni group that continues to support others after release. ATEF accommodates 662 males and 56 females from the Alabama Department of Corrections.

ADOC Trained Tracking Beagle Helps Catch Game Law Violators, Lost Hunters

When this tracking dog gets on the trail of a poacher or lost person, the odds are they will be found in short order.

Crenshaw County Conservation Enforcement Officer Brad Gavins has a new partner to assist him in the enforcement of

Alabama's fish and game laws. Holeyfield is a 10-year-old tracking beagle trained to trail a human scent rather than a rabbit scent like most beagles.

Trained by the Alabama Department of Corrections to trail escaped prisoners and other criminals, he now assists Gavins in apprehending game law violators, searching for lost hunters, children, and dementia patients or for any emergency involving a lost or missing person. Gavins and Holeyfield have also assisted other law enforcement agencies in the tracking and apprehension of home invasion suspects and other criminals.

Gavins says Holeyfield was trained by the Alabama Department of Corrections and used for several years with that agency.

"The Department of Corrections prefers a dog that barks on the trail of a fleeing criminal. The reason they prefer a barking dog is because in the pursuit there are often multiple law enforcement agencies involved, and they can tell by the barking where the subject is headed. A barking dog on the trail of a fleeing felon also causes stress on the one being pursued, causing them to be more likely to make a mistake that results in their apprehension," says Gavins.

But Holeyfield does not bark on the trail and is referred to as a silent trailer.

"A silent trailer may be an excellent trailer, but they just don't bark when trailing. While this is an undesirable trait for a dog trailing escaped prisoners, it is exactly what we want when investigating fish and game law violations. For example, I may note where a hunter parked their vehicle so I can return to the site after they leave and use Holeyfield to backtrack to the area



Crenshaw County Conservation Enforcement Officer Brad Gavins with his tracking dog, Holeyfield.

hunted to determine if the area is baited, or other illegal activity is going on. I can often follow Holeyfield right up to the bait pile rather than having to search all over the woods looking for it. When doing this type investigation, we don't need a dog that barks," said Gavins.

Trespassing on private land is a common complaint received by conservation officers in Alabama. The officer often arrives after the trespasser has left the area, and about all an officer without a tracking dog can do is search the area or ride rural roads looking for the trespasser. "Rather than just trying to visually track a suspect or searching the woods hoping for a visual contact, I can often put Holeyfield on the trail and track and apprehend the trespasser.

They usually don't even know we are on their trail until we walk up on them. I have been called many times to assist wardens in other counties where they are having trespassing problems."

Gavins says Holeyfield has a lot of stamina and is relentless when he gets on a trail. "I was called by a warden in an adjacent county to help him apprehend a trespassing suspect he had complaints on. We found the suspect's tracks and started trailing him with Holeyfield.

See Holeyfield on page 11

Holeyfield continued from page 10

We trailed him ... for several hours. The suspect hit a dirt road where his wife was supposed to pick him up. She wasn't there because she was arrested earlier for trespassing. The suspect hid his gun in a brush pile and started walking down a dirt road. Holeyfield led us right up to where the gun was hidden. We confiscated it and then tracked the suspect down the road to his house. Holeyfield just doesn't give up. After several hours and a long walk through the woods, he led us right up to the suspect's door. We made an arrest and got a conviction in this case," Gavins says.

According to Gavins, tracking dogs like Holeyfield are proving how useful they are in Alabama and other states. Because Holeyfield has proven such a valuable tool, another Alabama warden is scheduled to obtain

a tracking dog soon. "Due to budget constraints and less wardens in the field, I think we will see more and more wardens with tracking dogs. They can save a lot of man hours while doing an investigation," Gavins says.

The majority of Alabama sportsmen are law-abiding citizens, but for those tempted to throw out a little bait or take a buck or gobbler out of season, beware. Holeyfield may be on your trail.

Alabama Living reporter Ben Norman contributed this story.

headquartered at prisons around the state, assists law enforcement on the city, county, state and federal levels.

Each team, which is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, trains and handles passive tracking dogs, mostly beagles and bloodhounds. The dogs are bred at the prisons, and from the time they're weaned, the puppies are trained to follow leads and track people, eventually learning to traverse all manner of woods, water and roadways. Inmates are used to lay down a track to train the dogs. Older, well-trained dogs can track a man for 6 to 8 hours, or even longer.

Bystanders who spot a tracking team often assume that the dogs are searching for an escaped inmate, but McDaniel says that's not usually the case. The dogs also track missing children, or dementia patients who have left home. The teams also patrol the perimeter of the prisons, searching for "ninjas" who try to drop off drugs and throw phones over the prison fences for inmates.

The dogs are well conditioned, so the officers have to be able to keep up. The handlers, however, often wear a bulletproof vest, snake chaps and other equipment that weighs them down, and must traverse downed limbs and thickets of briars as well as drop offs and fences. But both man and dog are up to the task.

"Just like these inmates try to beat us, they're going to try to beat the dogs," McDaniel says. "I can't let that happen. I can't let my dog down like that, and I can't let my team down like that."

Alabama Living reporter Allison Griffin contributed this story

K9 Units on Call 24/7



ADOC K9 Handler Lt. Adam McDaniel

The tracking dogs at Staton Correctional Facility in Elmore know that when Lt. Adam McDaniel pulls the truck up to their kennel, the work is about to begin. And they love it.

They bark, howl and paw at the chain-link fences to get McDaniel's attention, eager to show off for the boss (and perhaps earn a tasty reward).

And they don't know what their day holds. McDaniel may be loading them up for a training run, a medical checkup, or for a real-world call to assist another law enforcement agency.

McDaniel is one of four on the team of K9 handlers at Staton. That team, like seven others that are

Program Improves Behavior, Reduces Recidivism

By Beth Shelburne, WBRC Birmingham

The William E. Donaldson Correctional Facility in Bessemer is a maximum security prison where men convicted of the worst crimes end up, many of them on death row or facing life in prison.

But Donaldson is also the only maximum security prison in the nation to allow an intense meditation retreat for inmates, where volunteers transform one of the prison gyms into a meditation studio so a group of convicted felons can eat, sleep and meditate in silence together for 10 days.

About 30 inmates began their Vipassana meditation experience at Donaldson Prison last weekend. The program, pronounced "vi-POSH-nah," originated in India and consists of guided meditations focused on breathing. It is run by a group of volunteers called the Vipassana Prison Trust.

In order to facilitate a session at Donaldson, several volunteers fly in from different parts of the country to host three 10-day sitting courses a year for inmates.

David Tytell, Psy.D., now Chief Clinical Psychologist for the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC), coordinated the program when he worked at Donaldson from 2012 to 2014.

"You can walk down the halls and pick out the inmates who have sat through the course," Dr. Tytell said. "There is something different about them; they're calmer, they're more relaxed, they're not as anxious, they're not as predatory," he explained.

Improved behavior means some inmates who complete the program are transferred to lower custody prisons or are paroled, according to Dr. Tytell.

He said this type of program can also reduce recidivism for the inmates who will one day get out.

A 10-day meditation retreat is no day at the beach. This is an intense challenge of inner contemplation where inmates agree to a vow of silence, 10 hours a day of guided meditations and special vegetarian-only meals.

One of the rules is no lies, and the best way to stop the lies is no talking, explained Dr. Tytell.

"That forces them to really focus on themselves," he said. "When they're sitting there for 10 days, they can't blame anyone else for any of their issues. They have to realize what they've done, who they are and they have to come to terms with that and then grow from there."

Dr. Tytell said there are usually around 100 inmates interested in participating in a Vipassana session. The inmates fill out an application, then the field is narrowed down by the prison psychologist, warden and finally the Vipassana instructor. Participants cannot have recent disciplinary infractions or mental health problems. According to Tytell, the program provides an incentive for good behavior and inmates who follow the rules are rewarded with this new opportunity.

But Donaldson houses some 1500 inmates, so limited space for rehabilitative programs means only a small percentage of the population can be served.

For the inmates who choose to try and are accepted into the program, the meditation retreat can be transformative. Not all are able complete the program; typically seven to nine of the 30 participating men will drop out during the course. Ten days of inner contemplation can lead to some intense personal moments, known as "storms" during the session.

"When someone is in deep meditation and a lot of their demons from the past come up, they have to fight with it then and there," Dr. Tytell explained. "It's not unusual to have grown men cry when they fully come to the realization of what they've done to themselves, their families and to society."

While there is no communication between students, they are allowed to ask questions of the teachers and they can take breaks, sipping on tea and lemon water or quietly napping on a mat.

Dan Rosenberg from New York is volunteering as the course facilitator for the fourth time at Donaldson Prison. He explained the sense of accomplishment inmates gain in completing the course, sometimes one of the first positive things they've ever achieved.

"We're sharing a technique for people to purify their minds, to come out of patterns of reaction so they can lead a happier life," Rosenberg said.

The program has been at Donaldson for about a decade. The late Dr. Ron Cavanaugh, former treatment director for the ADOC, is credited with bringing it to Donaldson as a way for inmates to understand a deeper sense of themselves. Donaldson is unique because it has two gyms, which allows for the required space to host a Vipassana session. The cost to ADOC is minimal, said Dr. Tytell, because the Vipassana Prison Trust, through donations, pays for almost everything involved.

The program was discontinued at Donaldson for a few years over concerns that it was recruiting inmates to Buddhism, but volunteers and Dr. Tytell said any religion can participate and the meditation does not represent a particular faith.

Still, the significance of an Eastern-based mindfulness program finding a home in the Bible Belt deep south is not lost on those who participate.

"A lot of the inmates believe it's a little bit wacky, so does some of the staff, until they actually see it in action," Dr. Tytell explained.

Several years ago, Dr. Tytell went through a 10-day Vipassana course in Georgia, which he described as "enlightening and amazing."

He said the center in Georgia included an outdoor walking path that allowed students to clear their minds and experience nature during the intense periods.

Inmates at Donaldson can't do that because their entire experience is limited to the prison gym, adding another layer of challenge and difficulty for the meditation program adapted for prison.

"You can't really force this program on an inmate, it needs to come from within," Dr. Tytell said.

Deputy Commissioner Recognized for Dedicated Service to Corrections



ADOC Deputy Commissioner Jeffery Williams

Jeffery Williams, ADOC Deputy Commissioner for Governmental Affairs, was recognized for his leadership and dedicated service to the Department of Corrections by receiving the prestigious Fred Bryant Award from the Alabama Council on Crime and Delinquency during the council's annual conference in October.

Deputy Commissioner Williams championed the use of evidence-based practices in administering the state's Community Corrections Program, and his advocacy and leadership was instrumental in Governor Robert Bentley approving the establishment of the Council of State Government's Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Alabama. His technical expertise and

involvement with the Alabama Prison Task Force aided the State Legislature in crafting criminal justice reform legislation that eventually passed and signed into law by Governor Bentley on May 21, 2015.

A 35-year veteran of ADOC, Deputy Commissioner Williams serves as the department's legislative liaison with the State Legislature, and other state and federal agencies. Additionally, he serves as Director of the Department of Corrections Community Corrections Division, which is statutorily charged with providing oversight of county-managed community corrections programs.

The Alabama Council on Crime and Delinquency established the Fred Bryant Award in 1972 as a tribute to the council's first president. Bryant served as the council's president from 1943 to 1950, and was known throughout the state for his dedication to the field of Corrections.



ADOC Food Service Stewards ServSafe Training Class of 2015

Stewards Complete Food Service Training

ADOC Food Service Stewards completed the nationally accredited ServSafe training that focused on food safety, FDA Food Code, and food sanitation. The Stewards were trained to follow food safety practices to ensure that the inmate population is provided safe, quality nutritious foods. In continual commitment to this goal, all Food Service Stewards will be trained to become Food Safety Managers. ServSafe is accredited by the American National Standards Institute Conference for Food Protection.

ADOC Annual Picnic a Huge Success with Friendly Competition, Comradery, Food and Fun

The Annual ADOC Picnic was held at the Alex City Park on May 30th. Hundreds of employees and family members turned out for a day of fellowship, friendly competition, great food and fun. A big thanks to Henrietta Peters of the Engineering Division and her team for planning the successful event.



The picnic included competitive sports, games and much more. With stiff competition, Kilby Correctional Facility placed first in the softball tournament.



A game of Family Feud was a big hit at this year's picnic.



Families and friends cheer on their favorite team.



Elmore Correctional Facility won the basketball tournament for the men's division.



The first place honors for the basketball women's division went to the ladies of North Alabama facilities.

ADOC 12th Annual Golf Tournament Raises \$5,500 for ACESF



The team from Red Eagle received the Commissioner's Cup Award for placing first in the tournament. Pictured left to right: Arnold Holt, Chase Hornsby, Mike Hudson. Team member Kellie Sanders is not pictured.

ADOC hosted the 12th Annual Golf Tournament at the Arrowhead Country Club in Montgomery with a field of 25 teams. Despite overcast skies and occasional rain, the course provided for professional golfing conditions and low scores.

The tournament raised \$5,500 for the Alabama Correctional Employee Support Fund that provides financial support and assistance to department employees and their families who are in need, ill or distressed because of a disaster, hardship or other circumstances. The ACESF also provides educational scholarship opportunities to ADOC employees and their families based on need and/or merit. The tournament was made possible by the players, sponsors and volunteers.



The team from the Hamilton Aged and Infirm Facility finished second. Pictured left to right: Shane Stidham, David Beck, James Earl Woods, Drew Battles.

ADOC Supports Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign



ADOC employees from the Classification and SRP Divisions joined together for the 2015 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Campaign.

Alabama Department of Corrections employees, led by Classification Division Director Cassandra Conway, raised \$1,293 toward the 2015 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Campaign. Throughout October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, employees from the Classification and SRP Divisions held fundraising events, such as “Sundae Monday”, and by participating in the “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk” that was held October 31 in Montgomery. Shari Smeltzer of Central Records won the campaign’s Halloween Costume Contest.

Director Conway thanked those who participated in the fundraising events, and who generously gave to the campaign.

“Because of the teamwork of our employees, ADOC exceeded its goal of \$1,000. Contributions toward the campaign will help the American Cancer Society save more lives from breast cancer by investing in research, and providing support for those touched by the disease,” Conway said.

Each year during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Birmingham Women’s Facility partners with the University of Alabama at Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center to bring awareness of the disease to women inmates. The partnership also allows the inmates to show their support for the patients receiving care at the center.

“October is a very important month for increasing awareness of the disease to our women inmates and staff,” said Warden Patrice Richie. “At this time of year the inmates and employees enjoy giving back to the community by showing their support to cancer patients receiving care at UAB.”

The women’s facility, Corizon Correctional Healthcare, and the Jesus In Me Ministry partnered with UAB to knit 100 pink scarves and hats for the patients. Attached to each hat and scarf was a motivational message, “to uplift the spirits of those going through treatment.”

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center has long been recognized as a leader in community outreach, most notably for its work in increasing education and awareness in minority and underserved populations.



Pictured left to right: Beena Thannickal, UAB Cancer Center Communications Director, Sherry Moore, Drug Treatment, M.S. Sgt. Ann Fulgham, PREA Compliance Manager, Gwendolyn Sadler, R.N. Nurse Manager, Patrice Richie, Warden of Birmingham Women’s Facility, Jane Slabaugh and Alice Brumbach from Jesus In Me Ministry.



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