Director's Message

As we continually strive to be the best corrections professionals we can be, we may overlook an easy way to improve, and that is by tapping into our communications network.

In the past three years, our social media efforts have taken off. Expanded use of social media is in keeping with our strategic plan, one goal of which is that we reinforce public confidence through operational excellence. How might we best demonstrate that? By our numerous communications efforts, outlining all the great work being done in the Department.

Today, the Department offers its story on multiple platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, and through external media coverage, news releases, the agency newsletter Around Corrections, and iDOC.

All of these have grown significantly recently, with iDOC submissions doubling over the last year, giving recognition to the many great members of our team, their accomplishments, milestones and celebrations.

iDOC offers several gems, including frequently used links – from job openings to the Virtual Library and Learning Team lesson plans. You do not have to invest a large amount of time to learn something new and valuable.

As an agency, we must tell our own story. We must endeavor to make our fellow Commonwealth citizens aware of the strides being made by the largest agency in their state.

Staying informed is an important part of your professional work. We equip ourselves to be effective ambassadors for the Department when we can tell others about the amazing things happening across the agency.

Moreover, we benefit from seeing ourselves as a whole and not solely from the perspective of our personal circumstances. We learn about our peers and their successes, and we see ourselves as part of something larger. Telling our story helps us know ourselves, and in doing this we learn where we must go next, and we realize what we can accomplish when we all work together.

Harold Clarke

Virginia Recognizes Its Probation and Parole Officers

As the Virginia Department of Corrections acknowledged Pretrial, Probation and Parole Officers’ Week, July 15–21, it did so holding the lowest recidivism rate in the nation for the second straight year.

Probation and parole officers exemplify the agency mission and vision.

VADOC Volunteers Offer a Helping Hand at RAM Event

More than two dozen Virginia Department of Corrections employees from Wallens Ridge State Prison and Wise Correctional Unit volunteered July 20 to 22 at the annual Remote Area Medical event in Wise. Organizers expected hundreds to attend the event that offered free medical, dental and vision care during its three-day run.
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Their Dedication Helps Maintain Nation’s Lowest Recidivism Rate

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Probation and parole officers exemplify the agency mission and vision by ensuring sentenced men and women are provided appropriate supervision and effective interventions that ensure public safety. Supervision and effective programming are directed toward changing criminal thinking resulting in lasting public safety.

“Our probation and parole officers are a critical component of our success,” said Harold Clarke, the Director of the Virginia Department of Corrections. “They work with offenders regularly utilizing evidence-based practices to provide support and guidance. Their work ultimately promotes re-entry success.”

Probation and parole officers collaborate with a variety of public safety partners, including representatives of local and state police, jails, the court system and a wide array of support organizations. This collaboration is in furtherance of our mission and vision.

Virginia’s legislature enacted a formal statewide probation and parole system on October 1, 1942. Today, Virginia has 645 probation and parole officers and 164 senior officers serving 43 different districts and supervising more than 65,000 offenders statewide.

By guiding returning citizens as they successfully transition back to their communities, probation and parole officers help to make Virginia a better place to live and work.
As part of P&P Week Celebration

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran Visits District 1

See the Governor's proclamation [here](#). See Secretary Moran’s tweet and a video of him reading the proclamation [here](#).
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The Commonwealth of Virginia offers eligible employees up to 16 hours of community service leave per year, allowing them to offer their contributions to a voluntary community event. VADOC officers worked Thursday through Sunday from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. securing the medical area.

“As the Remote Area Medical event concludes another successful event in Wise County, the Virginia Department of Corrections would like to thank the many men and women who volunteered their time and energy to this important event,” said VADOC Director Harold Clarke. “Our employees are committed to making our communities safer and making Virginia a better place to live and work.”

VADOC volunteers and offenders from Wise Correctional Unit set up large medical tents as well as seating and additional tent cover that provided shelter during the intermittent weekend rains.

VADOC volunteers greeted and guided patients, provided security, and distributed bottled water.

“We had people there every day, staying busy the whole time. This is a big event and it draws people from everywhere,” said Velisa Stallard of Wallens Ridge State Prison. “We were happy to be able to help.”

Group above, from left: Dallas Gentry, Cody Craft, Brittany Gibson, Greg Ewing, Sherry Hounshell, Tyler Bailey, Sheilah Collins (RAM), Daniel Stidham, Lance Parsons, Tre’ Meade;

lower left: David Moses, B&G Supervisor, Wise Correctional Unit, is checking the RAM trailer prior to delivering chairs and tables to the Wise Fairgrounds;

lower middle: Scotty Moore, B & G, WRSP, delivering VADOC donated produce used to feed RAM volunteers.
VADOC volunteers, above, helped direct traffic; immediate right, set up a canopy; lower right: rolled in food donations; far right WRSP volunteers help with check-in.
VADOC K-9 and Handler Help Apprehend Absconder

A Pocahontas State Correctional Center Officer and K-9 have received praise for their aid in the search for an offender who eluded Wise County Sheriff’s deputies and escaped from a Big Stone Gap hospital in early June.

On June 8, K-9 Officer Goober worked with his handler, Lonnie Howington, to track Samuel Penley from the point of his escape at Lonesome Pine Hospital. The pair tracked through the town for four miles before stopping at a house where a van had been reported stolen.

Two days later, officers from the Bassemor City Police Department in North Carolina apprehended the escapee in the van that had been reported stolen from the home at which Goober lost track.

“Our K-9 unit is well trained and highly effective,” said PSCC Warden Stan Young, “and we are always glad when we can support local law enforcement and help to make our community safer.”
Dear Warden Walrath,

I would like to commend two of your fine officers who assisted me in a time of need, Officer Aspuru and Officer Tyler. On June 11th while rushing to meet my husband and son for a celebratory dinner, I discovered that I had developed a flat tire while parked in the Virginia Commonwealth University parking structure.

Officer Aspuru was first on the scene and jumped right in to help me as she was preparing to drive home. She parked her car and quickly offered me assistance. I had some limitation of my left hand following an unexpected surgery and her assistance was greatly appreciated. Her ready smile and “let’s get ‘er done” attitude was very refreshing. She brought out her toolbox and proceeded to assist with jacking up the car.

Another female officer arrived shortly thereafter, unfortunately I did not catch her name. She quickly loosened the lug nuts and was on her way.

Later, Officer Tyler stopped to assist both Officer Aspuru and me. He brought out the king toolbox, rolled up his sleeves, and set to work. He did the heavy, dirty work with a warm smile, gentlemanly manner, and expert skill.

In no time, we were all wiping our hands with Officer Aspuru’s handy wipes and on our way to our respective families. I am pleased to report that I made it home to change for the celebration and arrive at the party in a timely fashion. This would not have been possible without the generous assistance from Officers Aspuru and Tyler at the end of their busy work day. Their chivalrous qualities are to be commended. With respect and gratitude,

[Doctor's Name Redacted]
SBCC Hosts Summer Resource Fair

Two-hundred and fifty-eight soon to be returning citizens attend the St. Brides Correctional Center Summer Resource Fair held June 28.

A total of 57 guests representing 38 different agencies provided networking opportunities for the men to learn about future employment and resource possibilities.

Attendees included specialists in housing, employment, financial assistance, education, government benefits and banking. Military veterans spoke with representatives of the Hampton Medical Center. And fathers spoke with representatives of the Department of Social Services Division of Child Support Enforcement to stay abreast of their status with the agency and how to become more active in their children’s lives.
VADOC Officers Encourage At-Risk Youth

Nottoway Correctional Center's OIT Harvest McIntosh and ITO Lt. Danielle Watson spoke to the cadets at the Youth Challenge Academy located at Fort Pendleton in Virginia Beach on June 21. They presented perspectives on positive self-image, healthy friendships and anti-bullying.

Nottoway CC’s OIT McIntosh is an alumni of the Youth Challenge Academy, a military-oriented establishment designed to help at-risk teenagers.

“Too often people are too quick to assume that once you are doing poorly, your role in life is predestined for worse,” Officer McIntosh said. “My main point was to make sure (the cadets) left knowing that no matter what people say about our generation, those words do not define us. We are not a statistic. We are all our own individuals and do not have to play into the negative judgements.”

According to the Academy’s website, the Virginia Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy is a 17-and-a-half month program, which includes a five-and-a-half month residential phase, followed by a 12-month post residential and mentoring phase. The residential phase is a structured, quasi-military style environment designed to promote academics, attention to detail, time management and leadership, while promoting self-esteem, confidence and pride. The academy is paid for by state and federal funds. The academy was established in 1994.

From left: Director M. Chicoine, Lt. Danniele Watson, OIT Harvest McIntosh, Jenny McIntosh (founder of MyTruthBomb.com), and Sgt. Major R. Laury.
Recently, 11 Virginia Department of Corrections Institutional Safety Specialists (ISS) completed training that allows them to aid Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (VDLI) representatives as they critique workplace safety standards in Virginia.

On July 19, the 11 completed a two-day Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Region 3 Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Special Government Employee (SGE) training class.

They are now eligible to join VDLI’s Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) VPP teams as they evaluate workplace safety throughout the Commonwealth.

VPP offers two levels of certification – Merit and Star. Star, the highest, recognizes continuous improvement to workplace safety and health management, especially efforts that keep injury and illness rates below the national average.

There are currently 38 STAR sites in Virginia and more than 2,000 in the United States. Among Virginia’s Star sites are two VADOC facilities: Augusta and Lunenburg correctional centers.

VADOC’s newest SGE’s are Brian Clark (Keen Mountain), Nicole Commodore (St. Brides), William Eubanks (Indian Creek), Jerry Fife (State Farm Complex), Barry Gilliam (Wallens Ridge), Timmy Hamm (River North), Elizabeth Kendrick (Bland), Ron Nowland (Deep Meadow), Brandon Rawlings (Greensville), John Taylor (Marion), and Margaret Vann (Deerfield).

Stephen Nuffer from Augusta, an SGE through a previous training, helped teach the class.
Offenders Receive Welding Certification

Wise Correctional Unit, in partnership with Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence, is proud to announce the certification of offenders Jay Stilwell and Timothy Williams. Offenders Stilwell and Williams received certification from the nationally recognized American Welding Society.

Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence (SVAM-CoE) obtained funding to pay for the testing fees for the offenders and submitted the related certification paperwork to the American Welding Society.

The Department is working to expand the welding program at Wise so that more offenders can be certified in the future. This creates an excellent opportunity for offenders to develop vocational skills and prepare them for a very rewarding career upon their release.

Offender Williams was released from Wise Correctional Unit and was scheduled for an interview the following day with a prominent manufacturing company. Offender Williams began working one week later as a welder making $17 per hour.

Offender Stilwell will be released from Wise Correctional Unit in the fall, and he has numerous employment opportunities that will allow him to utilize his newly obtained certifications.

Jay Stillwell, left, and Timothy Williams recently received certification from the American Welding Society.
Project Pink Panther Completed

Offender Technology Machines Tagged

Submitted by Rick Davis

Project Pink Panther - tagging Offender Technology Machines with highly visible stickers - has been completed. There are a few machines at the facilities which the team was not able to get access in the first round, which the team will tag this week, and next week onward tag as a part of normal operations.

As a part of this project, five team members from Offender Technology tagged approximately 3,200 assets at 46 locations over the course of six weeks with minimal impact to the day-to-day operations of Offender Technology.

Excellent Work Team.

Thanks to Johnathan Slagle, who worked with me as the Project Lead for the effort and completed Pink Panther at his assigned locations.

Thanks to Justin Norwood for completing Pink Panther at his assigned locations.

Thanks to Kerry Rock for completing Pink Panther at his assigned locations.

Thanks to Robert Walton for completing Pink Panther at his assigned locations.

Thanks to Ronald Cranmore for completing Pink Panther at his assigned locations.

Thanks to CTSU’s newest addition - Taylor Sanderford for consolidating all the different counts from the 45 plus locations.

Thanks again to our business partners for all the support and communication to the facility partners.

Thanks to Cleon Ross, Olga and Anita Prince for communicating and re-communicating to education leadership and facilities education staff regarding the project which helped tremendously with getting the project completed.

Thanks to Melissa Welch for helping with the CCO Memo for Pink Panther, after which all the impediments at facilities magically disappeared.
In Case You Missed It: VADOC celebrates P&P Week!

On Facebook:

“We’re celebrating National as well as Virginia’s Probation and Parole Officers week. If you know a PO, thank them...as they see and do stuff every day that most people would just say no to.” - Chief Jennifer D. Lester, District 18, Norton

Tweets to Repeat:

Our probation and parole officers utilize evidence-based practices to provide support and guidance. They are a critical component of our reentry success.
—Harold Clarke
Director

I make a difference by giving my clients positive life skills that will help them become productive citizens of society.
—Felicia Smith
Probation Officer
Pilot program aims to return opioid-addicted inmates to society free from that addiction: A new pilot program in Virginia targeting inmates with a history of opioid abuse will use a non-narcotic drug to help them reintegrate into the community when they are released. Read about it in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph.

Virginia child predator, fugitive arrested in Calif. after 18 years on the run: A 60-year-old man convicted of the 1989 sexual assaults of three young Virginia girls had eluded law enforcement for 18 years until his arrest Tuesday at a Los Angeles homeless shelter.

Honoring officers that help keep low recidivism rate: The Virginia Department of Corrections reports it has the lowest recidivism rate in the nation for the second year in a row. This is coming as the department recognizes its Pretrial, Probation and Parole Officer’s Week.

Departing prison inmates with drug-addiction histories to get opioid abuse treatment: Under a new pilot program, some Virginia probationers and inmates nearing release who have a history of opioid addiction are receiving an injection of naltrexone, a drug that blocks the effects of the narcotic.

Web Extra: Hard Time: Tyrone Wyche had been in prison before. Initially, he thought it would be much like his previous stint, but this time, Wyche says, “I got hit with a sledgehammer.” Those few years became almost three decades. Read the Richmond Magazine story here.

From the Archives: This women’s prison in Goochland instituted a number of ground-breaking programs including self-sufficient farming in the 1940s: The VCCW instituted a number of ground-breaking programs including a self-sufficient farming program in the 1940s. See the pictures here.

Program allows inmates to train service dogs: “You just have to be completely patient and happy all the time and that’s how they respond the best,” Baron Goldsberry, pup program participant. These dogs are training to be Saint Francis service dogs. They train to help people with disabilities.

Do you have a story idea for the newsletter (or IDOC)? Please contact Win Sisson at george.sisson@vadoc.virginia.gov or call (804) 887-8072.