

AROUND CORRECTIONS

Official Newsletter of the
Virginia Department of Corrections

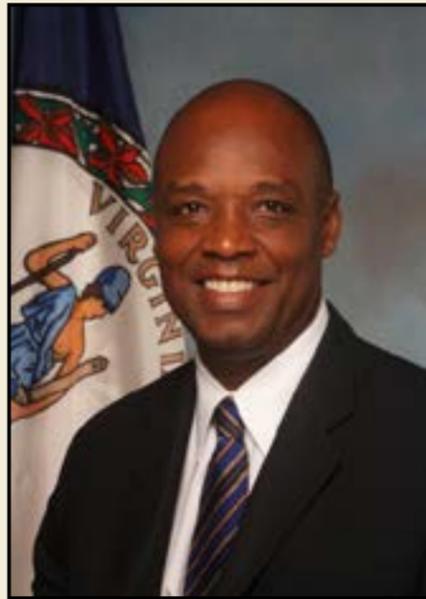


Spring 2016

Editor-in-Chief Lisa E. Kinney

Editor Win Sisson

Director's Message



As a Department, we are doing a lot of things very well. I see this everywhere I go, and our outcomes are proof of the good work going on in the VADOC. However, that doesn't mean we don't have important issues to address. Among the issues are illegal drugs getting into our facilities and unacceptable fraternization between some staff and offenders.

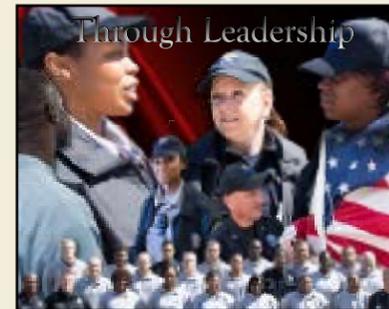
It's not unusual for me to find myself in a position of sharing with colleagues, the public, and our bosses what we're doing in the VADOC. That sharing is usually to highlight our successes and to make people aware of the good work we are doing. Not everyone hears the complete message at any given time, no matter how many times we share it. Last week, I had the opportunity to sit down and dialogue with a Senator and a Delegate from the Virginia legislature. As I shared information with them on initiatives and talked about the importance of EBP-influenced programs, both were surprised to hear that we have the second-lowest recidivism rate in the country. We have to continue messaging and not assume that people know how successful we are. If they're not aware of our rate of recidivism, what else do they not know?

I was at the Southern States directors' meeting recently, sharing with colleagues our accomplishments with the Step Down and STAR programs. However, some of our own staff are not familiar with these programs. It's important for staff to be informed about operations in the agency to include initiatives, accomplishments, etc. If we're not informed, we're not in a position to share information about the VADOC to colleagues, friends, neighbors, or legislators. We're not able to be ambassadors for the agency. But as indicated, despite all of our successes and how much I get to brag about the agency, we're still facing challenges that we must manage better.

Two of our challenges – fraternization and dangerous contraband (illegal drugs) getting into our institutions – need to be addressed. I am disappointed every time I learn of a new incident involving staff potentially violating policy and engaging with offenders in ways that are unbecoming of professionals, whether it is introducing contraband or engaging in other unauthorized and unacceptable relationships with offenders. The Department will continue to uphold the law and hold to account staff whose behavior is inconsistent with policies, practices, and the law of the Commonwealth. It is expected that staff are focused on doing the right thing. When we see a

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Virginia Department of Corrections Celebrates Correctional Officers' Week



The men and women who serve as correctional officers for the Virginia Department of Corrections play a vital role in the successful reentry of offenders into our communities.

The Commonwealth recognized and honored correctional officers for Correctional Officers' Week, May 1-7.

"Today's correctional officer wears many hats," said Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) Director Harold Clarke. "Our officers are a primary reason Virginia has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country. They readily implement our mission in its simplest form: they help people to be better."

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Virginia Prisoners To Be Eligible For College Credit Classes



Gov. Terry McAuliffe has announced that offenders in Virginia's prisons will now be eligible for college credit for five career and technical education courses recommended by the American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT®) that are offered behind bars, making Virginia the only state in the nation holding ACE CREDIT recommendation.

ACE CREDIT recommendations enable learners to submit an ACE transcript for completed courses to higher education institutions for evaluation as potential transfer credit in a degree program, much as they would from a traditional institution of higher learning.

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Victims' Rights Week: Serving Victims, Building Trust, Restoring Hope



The Virginia Department of Corrections held events to recognize Crime Victims' Rights Week, which ran April 10 through April 16. The Victim Services Unit of the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) provides notification assistance and referral services to victims of offenders in the custody of the Department.

The theme for the 2016 National Crime Victims' Rights Week was Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope. "Through awareness and action, our Victim Services Unit adheres to the idea that the Department has a role in serving victims, building trust, and restoring hope, effectively helping victims as they rebuild their lives," said VADOC Director Harold Clarke.

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Virginia Department of Corrections Marks Correctional Officers' Week



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Correctional officers' excellence in promoting the successful reentry of Virginia offenders ultimately promotes the safety of all Virginians. Around 90 percent of offenders in Virginia's state correctional facilities will one day be released back into the community.

This year, the Department again received recognition for its significant successes, a credit to every correctional officer. Among other things, the VADOC's restrictive housing reforms were highlighted by the Department of Justice and the Department was praised for its offender education efforts.

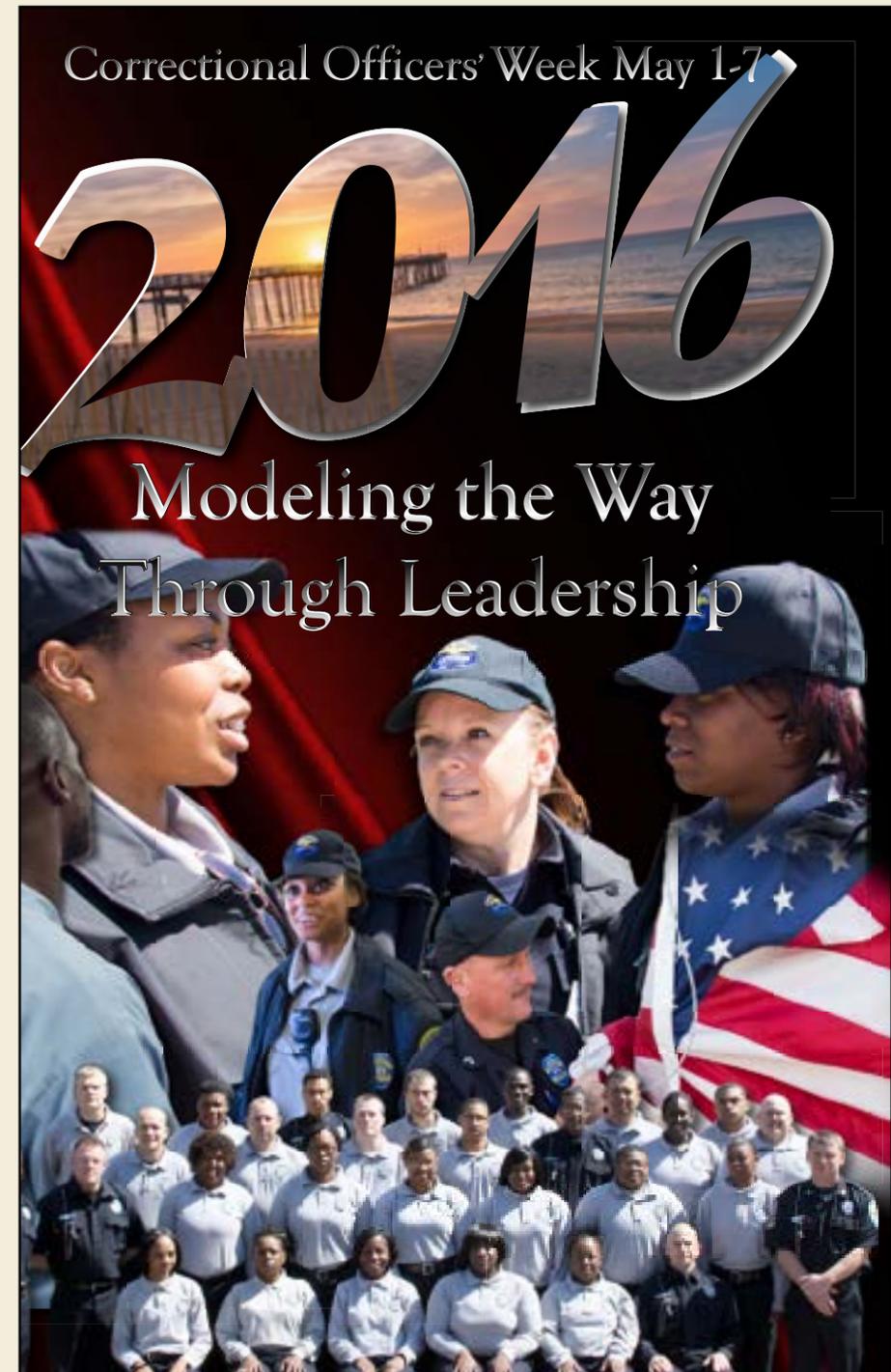
Correctional officers have taken a lead role in utilizing evidence-based practices and preparing offenders to reenter their communities. Reentry preparation begins with an offender's first contact with the VADOC, and that first contact is often with a correctional officer.



IDOC Users Only: See the Director's Video Message



To read the Governor's Proclamation for Correctional Officer Week, click [here](#).





Virginia Prisoners To Be Eligible For College Credit Classes:

VADOC Is Nation's Only Correctional Entity To Hold ACE CREDIT Recommendations

Director's Message

Continued from Page 1

colleague doing something that isn't right, we need to bring that to the attention of our colleague. Minimally, potential violations need to be brought to the attention of someone who can do something about it. That's how we hold each other to account and become ambassadors for the Department, looking forward to a better future and taking action to make it happen.

We have recently been experiencing an increase in the introduction of dangerous, unauthorized drugs into our institutions. While I fully understand that offenders and their associates are constantly looking for ways to violate our safety and security practices, I am troubled and dismayed when it's brought to my attention that staff may be deliberately facilitating the introduction of contraband or failing to adhere to policies and training, causing the dangerous contraband to be introduced. Again, we will continue to hold individuals to account.

I'm pleased to say, however, that these situations are not reflective of the agency overall – they are the exceptions, not the rule. I call on all employees to have a sense of duty and responsibility to make sure such violations are reported. Failure to report results in these situations going undetected, adversely affecting the safety and security of our people and facilities.

As I shared recently in the message to COs during CO Week, correctional officers serve as the front line of the Department and are a critical component of our continued success. The VADOC is a national leader in corrections, with the second-lowest recidivism rate in the nation, and we are making progress every day. That success reflects not only our COs' performance, but the general top-notch performance of VADOC staff across the state, for which I am very grateful.

Harold Clarke

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ACE CREDIT recommendations enable learners to submit an ACE transcript for completed courses to higher education institutions for evaluation as potential transfer credit in a degree program, much as they would from a traditional institution of higher learning. Decisions about acceptance of credit are made by individual colleges and universities.

"Virginia is a national leader in corrections," said Gov. McAuliffe. "Virginia has one of the

lowest recidivism rates in the nation, and this comes from its emphasis on reentry, including education."

"This is a significant step forward as Virginia's reentry efforts progress, one that promises a brighter, safer Commonwealth for all of us," said Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. "Offenders who take these classes are working hard while they're behind bars to ensure their success when they get out."

"Our teachers and principals in the prison system have worked very hard to make this happen," said Harold Clarke, VADOC Director. "Many of Virginia's offenders are learning to make better choices through education."

VADOC students may receive ACE CREDIT for the following courses: Introduction to

Business, Business and Software Applications, Commercial Arts & Design, Computer-Aided Drafting, and Digital Print Production.

For more than 30 years, colleges and universities have trusted ACE CREDIT to provide reliable course equivalency information to facilitate their decisions to award academic credit. For more information, visit the ACE CREDIT website at www.acenet.edu/credit.

Founded in 1918, ACE is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents and more than 200 related associations nationwide.



College Credit Attracts Media Attention

Read what the media had to say about college credit eligibility for inmates.

[Richmond Times-Dispatch](#)

[WSLS 10, NBC, Roanoke](#)

[Bristol Herald Courier](#)

[Culpeper Star-Exponent](#)

[WHAG 4 NBC, Hagerstown](#)

[The Cavalier Daily, Charlottesville](#)



Virginia Department of Corrections Marks Crime Victims' Rights Week: Serving Victims, Building Trust, Restoring Hope

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ing victims as they rebuild their lives," said VADOC Director Harold Clarke.

In 2015, more than 1,400 new victims were registered for notification through the Victim Services Unit (VSU). Registered victims are notified of offender transfers, work release, name change, escape, interstate compact, civil commitment, death, release, and parole events.

Additional services provided to registered victims included explanation of the criminal justice process, referrals, and the Victim/Offender Dialogue Program. The VSU also assists

with victim awareness education for Department staff and impact of crime education for offenders.

During Victims' Rights Week, the VSU offered Department staff information on local and statewide victim related services.

The VSU encouraged facilities to assist offenders in developing posters for entry in a competition to mark National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Entries were judged by how well they incorporate this year's theme, reflect accountability, and encourage victim empathy.

"For victims, our services mean that they and their families are not alone to face the physical, mental, and financial devastation of crime without the services and support they need," said VSU Director Wendy Lohr-Hopp.

This week is a reminder of the work still before us to collaborate, engage, and empower all those harmed by crime. Services the Virginia Department of Corrections provides to victims help to ensure a comprehensive healing environment for everyone.

Poster Winners Announced

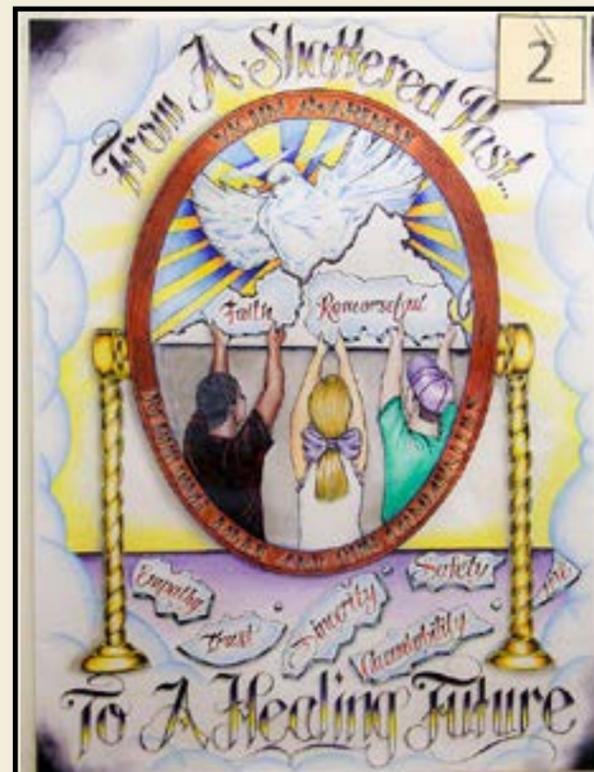
Submitted by the Victim Services Unit

On behalf of the Victim Services Unit, we want to say thank you to all of VADOC staff and offenders that participated in the "National Crime Victim's Rights Week" poster contest this year! The theme for 2016 is "Serving Victims, Building Trust, and Restoring Hope" and each entry was judged in three categories: Accountability, Victim Empathy, and Best Representation of the 2016 Theme. We were pleased to display posters from Lunenburg Correctional Center, Deerfield Correctional Center, Deep Meadow Correctional Center, Sussex II State Prison, and Brunswick Women's Pre-Release.

After a week of staff and visitor voting, we would like to congratulate the following:

- Sussex II State Prison for WINNING overall in the competition and in the category of "Best Representation of Theme!"
- Deerfield Correctional Center for WINNING in the category of "Victim Empathy"
- Brunswick Women's Pre-Release for WINNING in the category of Best Representation of "Accountability"

Sussex II State Prison



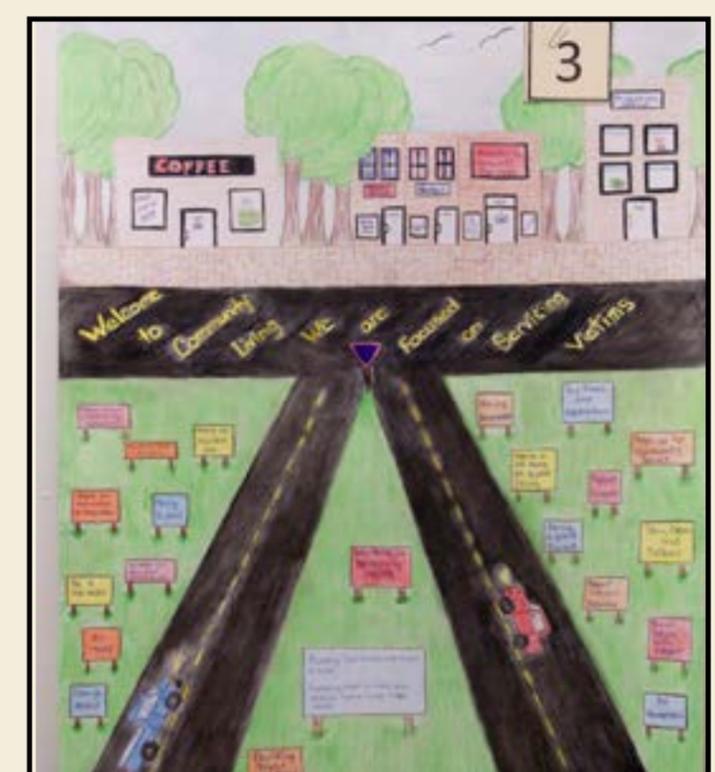
Overall Winner
Winner: Best Representation of Theme

Deerfield Correctional Center



Winner:
Victim Empathy

Brunswick Women's Pre-Release



Winner:
Best Representation of Accountability

VADOC Offenders at Southampton Help Foundation Boost Nutrition of Local Children

Offenders at Southampton Detention Center play a significant role in providing nutritious meals to thousands of school kids in Eastern Virginia. It's all part of a partnership between the center and the Cover 3 Foundation based out of Franklin, Virginia.

Greg Scott, founder and CEO of the Cover 3 Foundation calls it “a blessing” and “one of the better partnerships I’ve made since I’ve been in business these seven years.”

With the use of Detention and Diversion Centers, the Virginia Department of Corrections provides offenders a structured environment which can encompass work outside of the facility. When Greg Scott developed a plan to deliver after-school meals to kids, it took off right away. However, Scott underestimated the need. As more organizations reached out to Cover 3 for help, Scott, a former NFL player, needed a larger team to help assemble the meals. After a meeting with Major Early Turner, Assistant Supervisor at Southampton Detention Center, a team of food certified detainees began making trips to the Cover 3 headquarters, putting in several hours of work each weekday to fill the growing orders.

Click on the image at right to see how this partnership is benefiting communities and changing lives.



From the NFL football fields to a flourishing food ministry, Franklin's Greg Scott has found his calling, and one of the things he is most grateful for is the help he has received from offenders at the Southampton Detention Center.



Ordinary People Can Do Extraordinary Things



Unit Heads Conference Examines Present and Future Challenges Facing Corrections Professionals

Attendees heard from a variety of speakers including the Richmond Times-Dispatch commentator Jeff Shapiro, who discussed Virginia's interesting political past and present.

The two-day event April 12 and 13 addressed topics in both broad strokes and fine detail.

Director Harold Clarke opened with an uplifting State of VADOC message followed by Karen Michaels, who focused on the impact and importance of social media. At the end of the first day Carmen Rodriguez made a presentation "The Four C's of Happiness."

In the second day, participants discussed legislative strategies for 2017.

Later, Communications Director Lisa Kinney made a presentation on how to effectively engage with the media.

"We are in the business of helping people to be better."

~ Director Harold W. Clarke



Correctional Centers Offer Help to Correctional Officer Displaced By Fire

Adrian Sprague – Lunenburg Correctional Center

While on duty March 1 at Lunenburg Correctional Center, Officer Travis Curtis received the call that his home, located in Blackstone, was on fire. There was extensive damage to the home, causing Officer Curtis and his family to be displaced.

During his time of need, several institutions contributed various donations of household items, clothing and money. Lunenburg staff collected more than \$2,000 and donated clothing and household items.

Employees of Nottoway Correctional Center also assisted Officer Curtis and his family by collecting kitchen items, bedroom items, bathroom items and some clothing; he also received more than \$100. Other dona-

tions were delivered individually by some staff who wanted to see him personally.

Employees of Baskerville Correctional and Fluvanna Correctional Centers also made contributions, as did the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation (CPOF).

Officer Curtis is still receiving donations from his VADOC family to assist him during his transition to a new home.

Officer Curtis is very appreciative and humbled by the generosity shown during his unexpected misfortune.



From left: Assistant Warden Jeffrey Snoddy, Warden Dana Ratliffe-Walker, Officer Travis Curtis and Personnel Analyst and CPOF member Tammy Williams



RNCC Plunges For Special Olympics

On Saturday, March 19, several River North Correctional Center employees participated in the Radford Polar Plunge to raise money for the Special Olympics. Group picture of Polar Plunge Participants (front row participants from RNCC from left: Correctional Officer Jared Boyington, Major Amanda Mullins and Assistant Warden Barry Kanode). Other RNCC employees that were in attendance but were not shown in the photos: Warden John Walrath; Chief of Housing & Programs Curly Sellers.



From left, Barry Kanode, Asst. Warden; Major Amanda Mullins; Corrections Officer Jared Boyington; Steven Kanode; and Western Region PREA-ADA Analyst Ella Farrington.

P&P District 1 Challenges Staff to “Cross the Line”

After months of research, the District 1 Executive Team unfurled a new initiative designed to take its staff to new levels of excellence.

This new initiative borrows from “Cross the Line,” a video by the nationally known motivational author Sam Parker (*212 the Extra Degree* and *Smile & Move*). District 1’s “Cross the Line” is designed to cultivate an environment of trust and accountability where people can develop professionally, challenge themselves and make a larger contribution to the Department.

“We are always looking for ways to improve,” explained Deputy Chief Simon Miranowicz. The District 1 Executive Team worked painstakingly to integrate Sam Parker’s concept in hopes it will have a positive impact and influence, a mind-set change where EXTRAORDINARY is

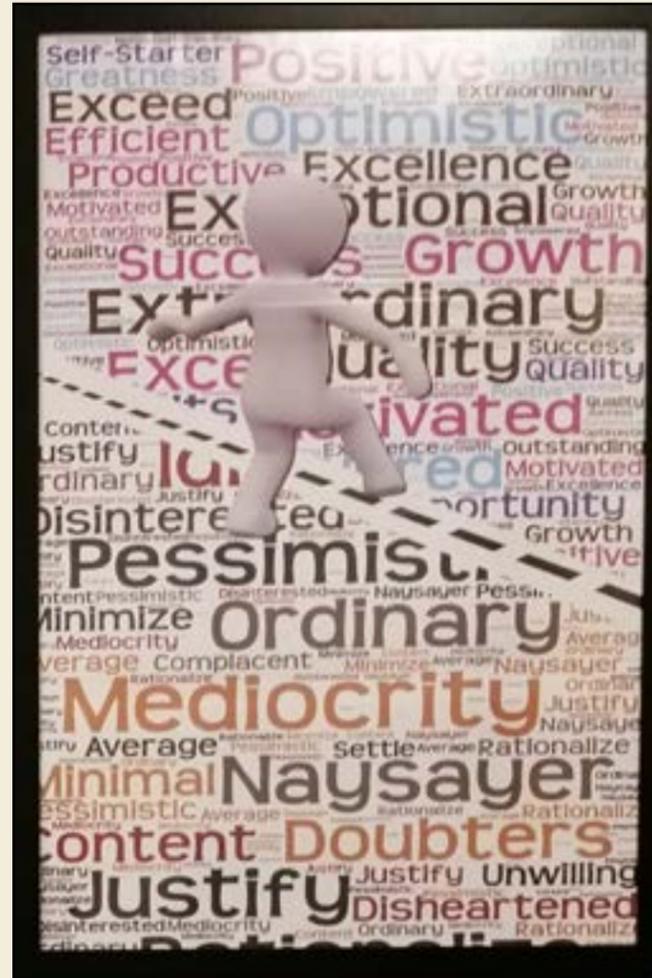
the new standard for staff, according to Deputy Chief Miranowicz. “The District 1 Executive Team is always seeking ways to motivate and inspire. We do not want people to become complacent. We are very forward thinking, never idle, and we’re always seeking ways to improve,” Mr. Miranowicz added.

District 1 has created posters, placed throughout the office, to reflect the new expectations and standards.

Ultimately, the Executive Team hopes the new approach will increase work quality, challenge staff, evoke employee engagement, and promote accountability and staff development. This effort also aligns with the Director’s statement, “We are in the business of helping people to be better.”



District 1 Reentry & Program Officer Kathy Rodgers stands with the inspirational posters that encourage District 1 staff to “Cross the Line.”



ASD Marion Hosts First Corrections Crisis Intervention Team Training

The National Institute of Corrections conducted the Virginia Department of Corrections’ first Corrections Crisis Intervention Team training at the Academy-Marion from March 28 – April 1, 2016. The inaugural “CCIT” class boasted 29 graduates from three pilot sites including Nottoway Correctional Center, River North Correctional Center and Sussex II State Prison.

Crisis Intervention Team is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program that provides graduates with a special skill set to manage offenders experiencing a mental health crisis.

“Our people are trained in dealing with many difficult situations,” said VADOC Organizational Development Manager Dr. Susan Williams. “Developing a Crisis Intervention Team helps our frontline staff be more responsive to our clients and provides a safer environment for correctional officers,” she added.

Director Harold Clarke participated in a Dialogue session with the graduates and spoke at the closing ceremonies. Colonel Robert “Bobby” Russell, bottom left, of Western Virginia Regional Jail in Salem served as the graduation’s guest speaker.

Sussex II's Thelma Wyatt to Retire after 50 Years as a Teacher



Thelma Wyatt, left, soon celebrates a remarkable personal and professional milestone. In June, she marks her 50th year in the teaching profession. Ms. Wyatt taught in the Southampton Public Schools for 32.5 years then became a correctional educator working for the Virginia prison system for more than 17 years. She is pictured with Sussex II State Prison Warden Tracy Ray.

Buckingham Teacher Represents Multi-State Region in Teacher of the Year Competition

Submitted by Brittany Powell, Buckingham Correctional Center



From left: DCE Principal Wendy Lyle-Jones, ABE-GED Instructor Darlene Maddy, and Warden Rodney Younce

Darlene Maddy has been selected the 2016 Correctional Education Association (CEA) Region II Teacher of the Year. Region II includes Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

Ms. Maddy works at Buckingham Correctional Center as the ABE-GED instructor.

Ms. Maddy has a BA in History and Political Science, Middle & Secondary Education and an MS in Education Administration. Currently, she is a doctoral student working towards an Education Administration PhD, specializing in Transformational Leadership. Most recently she was selected to participate in the Principal Mentoring Program.

Ms. Maddy has taught in both juvenile and adult prisons for more than 10 years. Not only has she excelled as an educator while at Buckingham Correctional Center, but also she has gone out of her way to work for the betterment of the agency.

Please join us in congratulating Ms. Maddy on such a major accomplishment!

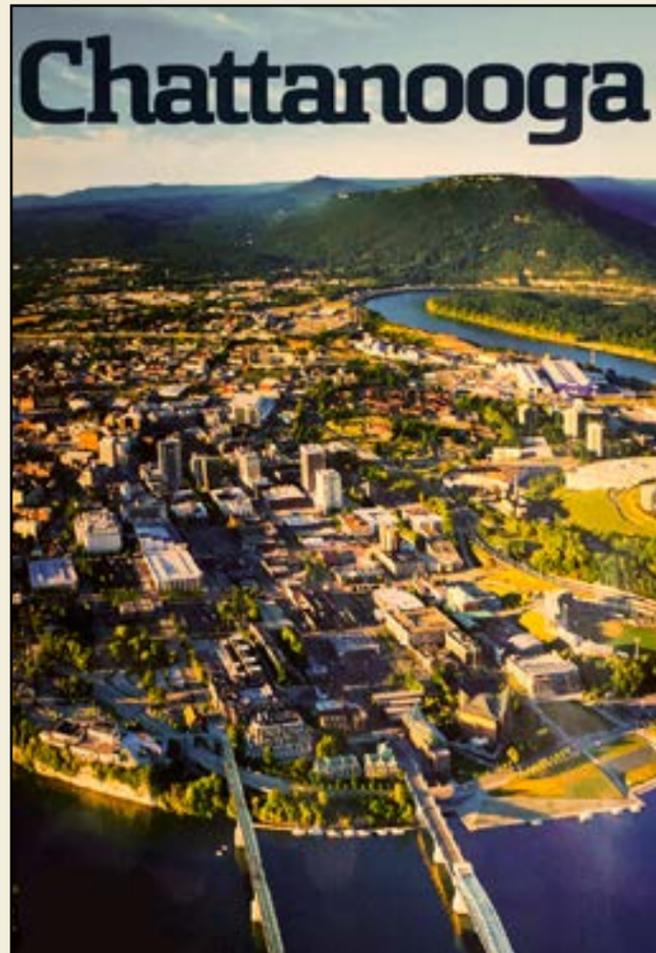
The Southern States Correctional Association Wants YOU!

Join Now to Attend the SSCA Summer Conference in Chattanooga

The Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA) 2016 Summer Conference will be held in Chattanooga from July 24-27. SSCA is a membership association for corrections professionals in fourteen states. The Virginia chapter has 180 members across many institutions, districts, jails and partner agencies.

Virginia will be hosting the 2017 mid-winter planning and summer conferences in Norfolk. Join and participate in chapter activities, including the June 8 [SSCA Golf Tournament](#) in Powhatan.

For more information about Virginia's SSCA chapter please visit www.virginiassca.org or contact Lois Fegan, Virginia Chapter Representative, at lois.fegan@vadoc.virginia.gov.



Six current employees and one retired VADOC employee traveled to Chattanooga on February 18 to attend the Southern States Correctional Association mid-winter conference. **Back Row (L to R):** Bill Stapleton (VCCW), Joanne Bryant (Eastern Regional Office), Mark Engelke (Atmore), Buck Rogers (retired), and Lois Fegan (Atmore). **Front Row (L to R):** Karen Stapleton (Atmore), Diane Rogers (associate member), and Linda Joyner (Eastern Regional Office).



Designed by TownMapsUSA.com



VCCW Celebrates Kates Day!

VCCW's annual Kates Day event May 4 was a resounding success! Everyone appreciated the contributions of the offenders in the Horticulture and Commercial Foods programs. Special thanks go to the Recreation program under the direction of the Recreation Supervisor Matthew Forbes where offenders created fiber crafts for sale. Offenders and staff pitched in, donating their time and talents to help the fund-raising effort for all of the Elizabeth Kates Foundation programs.



On the Road Again With Ride-To-Work

One roadblock to reentry success, quite literally, is the inability to get on the road.

Randy Rollins, an attorney and former Secretary of Public Safety, understands the important link between employment and reentering society successfully.

For that reason, he founded the non-profit Drive-To-Work, the mission of which is to help low income and formerly incarcerated individuals restore their driving privileges.

Ride-To-Work relies on volunteer attorneys to visit soon-to-be-released offenders and review their Department of Motor Vehicle records.

Most often offenders face suspension due to fines, court costs or drug charges, which bring an automatic license suspension.

“We strive to get people in facilities to know what to expect and what they need to do to get back their licenses,” explained Chris Poler, a client manager with Drive-To-Work. “If you have a strategy, you can deal with your situation. If you don’t, you can be overwhelmed,” she added.

Drive-To-Work trained 17 local, volunteer attorneys at VADOC Headquarters March 2-3 and seeks to expand its efforts and serve a total nine different facilities.

At present, Drive-To-Work assists offenders at Deep Meadow Correctional Center and the Virginia Correctional Center for Women.

With the new crop of attorney volunteers, Ms. Poler said, Ride-To-Work hopes to expand by October to:

- Indian Creek Correctional Center
- St. Brides Correctional Center
- Coffeewood Correctional Centers
- Brunswick Women’s Pre-Release Work Center
- Deerfield Men’s Diversion Center
- Deerfield Women’s Diversion Center
- Brunswick Women’s Pre-Release Work Center

To learn more visit the Ride-To-Work website: <http://www.drivetowork.org/>



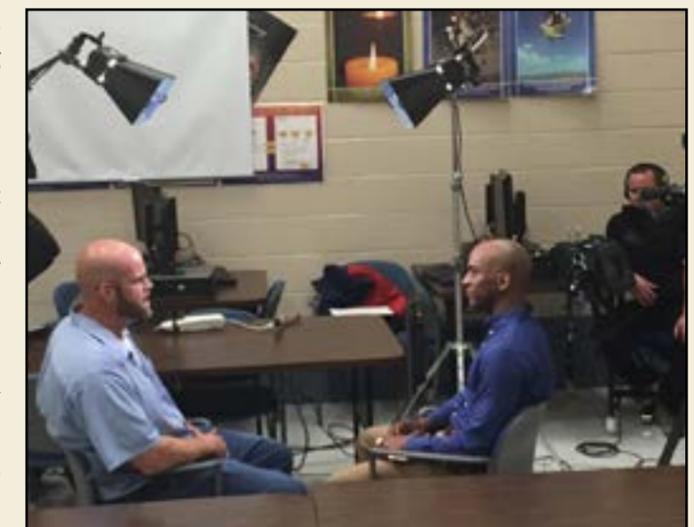
Randy Rollins of Ride-To-Work

CNBC Checks Out the Darden Program at Dillwyn



A CNBC news crew visited Dillwyn Correctional Center in early April to gather interviews and footage for an upcoming documentary on the facility’s partnership with the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business. Offender students join second-year University of Virginia MBA students in prison classrooms to learn entrepreneurial skills and best practices for starting and operating a successful business. The program is also offered at Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women.

CNBC elected to profile a few offenders who are set to be released soon. Their goal is to follow these men once they leave Dillwyn Correctional Center to see if they’re able to put to use the education they received through the Darden partnership.



Haynesville Unit 17 Holds Its First Reentry Resource Fair



On Thursday, March 3, Haynesville Correctional Unit 17 held its first reentry resource fair, welcoming a variety of local resource providers to meet soon-to-be released offenders.

Offender Workforce Development Specialist Debbie Howard organized the event. "If these returning citizens work hard, the opportunities are there when they return home," she said.

Representatives of the following organizations participated:

- Reentry resource providers VA Cares of Fredericksburg and Goodwill Industries of Richmond
- Northern Neck Regional Jail Counselor Jamie Segar, who provided small business information
- Probation & Parole District 21, Fredericksburg
- CDS Tractor Trailer Training of Fredericksburg
- Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA) program
- The healthcare initiative Enroll Virginia

Reentry Summit in Abingdon Focuses on Women's Transition to Success

Two justice-involved women took center stage at a recent reentry event and praised VADOC efforts to prepare them for return to their communities. They discussed the highs and lows of their experiences during “Women’s Transition to Success: Gender-Responsive Strategies to Reentry.” The April 11 event attracted more than 150 corrections professionals to the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center where they learned and shared about various topics including risk and needs assessment, family reunification, and trauma-informed care.

The day-long event focused in particular on the issues of women returning home and ways to better address their needs. But the highlight was the Women’s Panel, as two justice-involved women took the stage with two reentry resource specialists to discuss the struggles and joys that come with returning home.

For one of the former offenders, accessing available resources made a huge difference.

“They had many different things that they offered, depending on what you needed,” said Alicia Hibbitts. She praised VADOC’s numerous programs, especially educational opportunities and efforts that helped her stay connected with her children, including video visitation.

After release there are often many resources for promoting reentry success, she added, especially aid with housing, schooling, job seeking and transportation - all important for a person returning home. Because of the aid she received since her release, Ms. Hibbitts said she has bought a home and reconnected with her family.

Afterwards, event organizers were pleased. “This is unique in its focus on women; however, what these women shared is valuable to anyone working with returning citizens,” said Administrator for Reentry Services Dudley Bush. “If a justice-involved person succeeds, we all win.”

VADOC sponsored the event with the Office of the Attorney General and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services under a 2nd Chance Act Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction Strategic Planning Grant.



At top left, Alicia Hibbitts discussed her reentry journey as part of a four-person panel. Top right, Monique Williams of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Development Services presented on trauma-informed care.

Activities held the interest of a packed audience at the Virginia Higher Education Learning Center, lower left, and attracted several members of the local media including the Bristol Herald Courier, WCYB NBC Abingdon and WJHL ABC/CBS Johnson City, lower right.



Probation and Parole: Exploring the Future of Reentry to Make Communities Safer

Manassas Probation and Parole Chief, Peggy Anthony, right, speaks on a panel at the “Future Directions in Reentry: Collaboration for Safer Communities” Conference sponsored by the Office of the Attorney General.

The conference was held May 2-3 at Great Wolfe Lodge in Williamsburg. Chief Anthony addressed the audience about how to rejuvenate local Reentry Councils. She spoke about the great working collaboration between community stakeholders in Prince William County. Prince William County Reentry Council sponsors quarterly Family Orientation Workshops to offer returning citizens and their families an opportunity to meet with agencies in the area to find out what services are available to assist them in a stable return to the community. Also present on the panel were (seated from left to right), Faye Knight, Senior Reentry Probation and Parole Officer from Petersburg; Madonna Flores with the Norfolk Department of Human Services; and Katherine Hall, Chief Probation and Parole Officer in Norfolk.



Northern Virginia Probation and Parole Officers Tour Coffewood Correctional Center



On Thursday, April 21, District 35 Manassas Probation and Parole sponsored the second “Oneness” tour at Coffewood Correctional Center. Senior Reentry Probation and Parole Officer Cassandra McKoy coordinated a tour of the facility with other probation officers from District 29, Fairfax and the Prince William Manassas Adult Detention Center. The tour of the facility included attending an early meeting with offenders currently participating in the Cognitive Community. Members of the Cognitive Community’s Structure Board discussed the purpose of the early meetings and the Cognitive Community and shared their experiences working within the program.

The tour ended with a dialogue between participants about the importance of community and facility staff working together and how they can use their experiences from the tour to enhance case management and rapport building with offenders once they return to the community. The tour was led by CWCC Reentry Counselors Darrell Estes and Myra Fields.

It's What You Answer To

One Man's Journey to Reentry Success

Eugene Porter learned one of the most important lessons of his life at an unexpected moment.

In prison, he fretted that after his release he might be defined by his prison sentence.

A friend and fellow inmate listened and then asked him simply, "What is your name?"

Mr. Porter hesitated then replied, "Some people call me by my nickname, Smokey, and other people call me Eugene," he said.

"Well," the friend asked, "Would you answer if they called you Fred? Would you answer?"

"No. That's not my name," he replied.

"Exactly," his friend said. "It's not what people call you. It's what you answer to."

From that point on, Eugene Porter, 40, stopped fretting and committed to being successful after his release. When it came in February of 2012, he had served more than 18 years.

Most important, he said, were his family and friends. They sustained him.

In 2008, he met his future wife and for four years until his release they maintained a bond that became marriage. When he left prison, Porter, who attended high school in Hopewell, moved to her hometown, Emporia. Today he runs a successful small business at 407 Halifax Street, not far from the local Chamber of Commerce.



His life has not been easy, but with work, others like him can be successful, he says. While incarcerated, he worked to remain positive and improve himself. He served time in several different prisons: Greensville (twice), Lunenburg, Haynesville, Lawrenceville (twice), Dillwyn (twice), Buckingham and Southampton. He spent much of his time learning and reading. He took advantage of the many different educational classes available: auto body, commercial cleaning, heating and air conditioning, data entry. He took college courses, including some from Southside Community College. All those classes helped him do more than just pass the time.

He studied many religions and says that some years before his release he turned his life over to God, striving to live by the Golden Rule and find relief from his situation. He kept up his outside reading, especially about business and related subjects like the stock market.

But what really made the difference was, of all things, working out.

Every day he maintained a physical regimen, and when allowed, he became a gymnasium worker. Other offenders started to pay attention. Some joined him in his workouts.

His first days out of prison were not easy. He found a job as a carpenter; then he applied his commercial cleaning skills working maintenance in an apartment complex. For a while he delivered furniture, and then one day he was working at the local Boys and Girls Club and fell back into one of his old exercise regimens. That's when the idea hit. It was time for him to open his own gym.

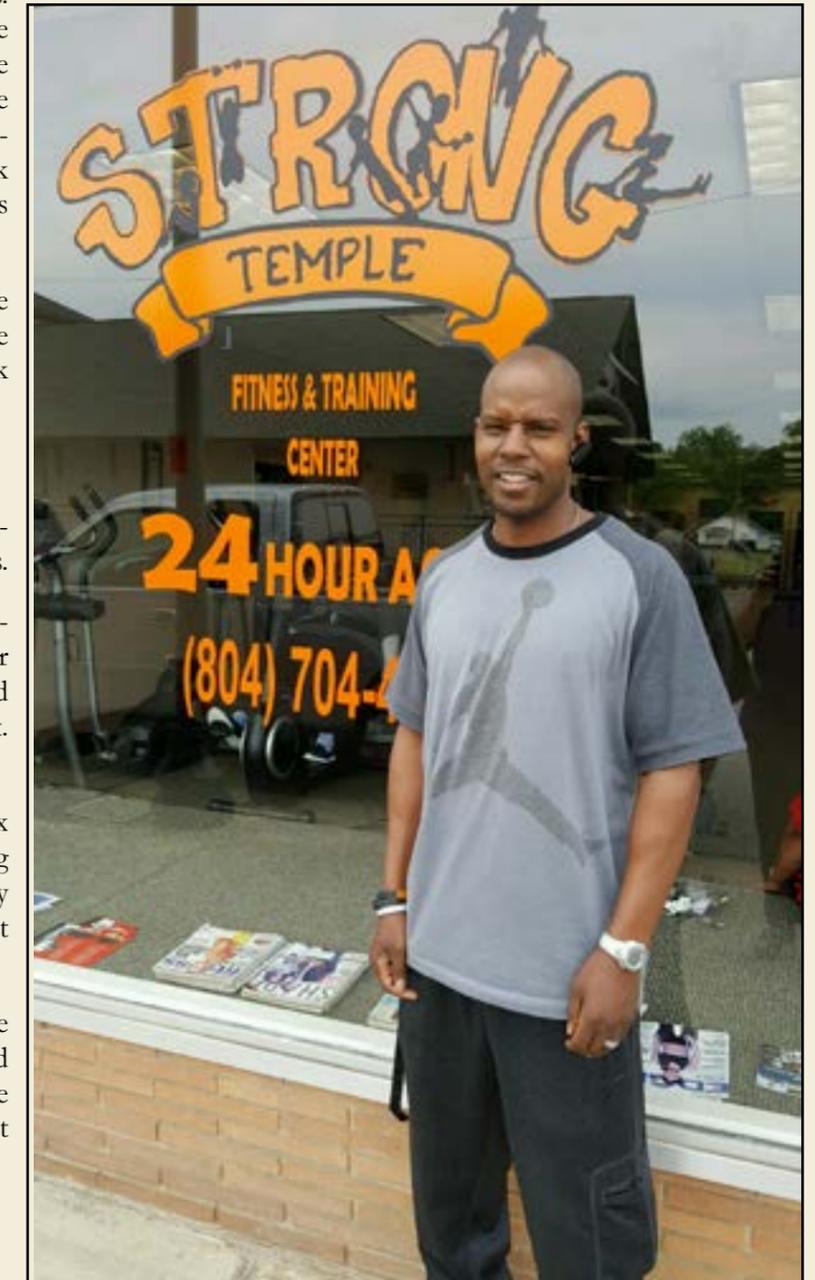
With very limited backing he opened his fitness business -- Strong Temple -- on Halifax Street in Emporia, which has been doing well for about one year. At present, Strong Temple boasts about 150 members and that keeps Mr. Porter busy Monday to Friday from early morning to evening. He spends Saturdays with his wife and Sundays at church.

He considers himself "blessed to have found many good things." The good people in his life include his family, his friends and his wife; a good business idea and a good opportunity to implement that business idea. Today, he maintains healthy habits he developed at a most trying time in his life. He stays positive and works to improve not only his business, but his body, mind and spirit.

His advice for others facing a situation like his:

- Stay committed to good people who want good things for you.
- When you are down, look for others to pull up with you.
- Never give up.

And he remembers the most important advice learned at a dark time deep in a long prison sentence, "It's not what people call you, it's what you answer to."



Three important factors in Eugene Porter's reentry success are: the support of family and friends, a constant pursuit of personal improvement, and a positive attitude. Upon release, Mr. Porter decided against returning to Hopewell, opting instead to move to his wife's hometown of Emporia. Today, he runs a successful personal fitness business there.

Columbian Government Officials Visit Chesapeake Prisons



Columbian government officials recently visited two Virginia correctional centers to learn about the Department's operations and programs. Their tours April 7 of Indian Creek and St. Brides correctional centers focused primarily on reentry initiatives and activities in the facilities' therapeutic communities.

The correctional centers entertained more than 20 Colombians; most represented their federal government's health, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.

Among many Virginians in attendance was Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Victoria Cochran.

Interpreters played a critical role in the day-long visit, easing communications between the hosts and their Spanish-speaking guests. They reacted warmly to a speech by VADOC Director Harold Clarke, a native of Panama, who addressed them in Spanish.



Governor Visits Indian Creek Correctional Center



On April 7, Governor Terry McAuliffe and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran visited Indian Creek Correctional Center in Chesapeake where they met staff and spoke to offenders.

Deputy Secretary of Technology Visits Headquarters



On May 4, Deputy Secretary of Technology Tony Fung visited the VADOC Business Intelligence & Data Analytics Team. His interest and presence meant a lot to our development team. His support is greatly appreciated.

When Tornadoes Strike VADOC Responds



When tornadoes struck Virginia in late February, many VADOC communities responded generously, especially in the counties of Sussex and Essex.

On March 2, Probation and Parole District 33, Warsaw sent several staff members to help with clean up in Kino, one of the hardest hit areas of neighboring Essex County.

Staff members at Haynesville Correctional Center (HCC) and nearby Unit 17 offered up non-perishable items in an effort coordinated by Counselor Tanya Lewis, Unit Manager Dennis Townsend and Assistant Warden Patrick Gurney. Crews from Unit 17 aided in clean-up efforts, and offenders at HCC also made donations, putting together care packages that were later distributed by local churches.

The Sussex I community responded as well, donating items to the victims in the area. At left, Major Tony Darden is pictured, upper right, with a Sussex tornado survivor.





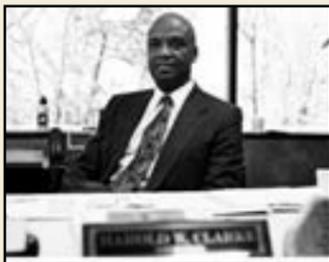
Catch VADOC in the News!



Elderly Inmates Burden State Prisons: As offenders increase in age, the costs associated with incarcerating them increase as well. Pew Charitable Trusts visited Deerfield Correctional Center recently to explore this issue.



Virginia Prisoners Can Earn College Credit: Offenders who successfully complete certain Career and Technical Education classes can earn college credit. The Virginia Department of Corrections is the only correctional entity in the nation to hold ACE CREDIT recommendations.



Richmond Justice - Harold Clarke: Virginia Department of Corrections Director Harold Clarke gives his story in a first-person account to Richmond Justice, a year-long media project that examines the people who shape Richmond's justice system.



Women's Transition to Success - A Reentry Summit Focused on Women: WCYB 5 NBC Bristol spoke with corrections officials and a returning citizen to learn about efforts to help women transition successfully back to their communities.



This Bakery Offers a Second Chance For Women After Prison: It's a bakery that makes granola, cookies and kale chips. It's also a job-training and coaching program for former offenders. Check out a report by WCVE 88.9 FM in Richmond.



Virginia to Shield Identities of Execution Drug Suppliers: WUSA 9 CBS in Washington, D.C. was one of many stations to post an Associated Press story about approval of a measure to keep information about execution drug suppliers confidential.



Wrongly Imprisoned Man Adjusts to Freedom, Family, Technology: After 33 years behind bars, Keith Harward, 60, begins a new life as a free man in North Carolina.



Darden Program Helps Inmates Plan for Successful Reentry: C-ville Weekly takes a look at a program that allows offenders to earn certificates for special entrepreneurship, financial capability and foundations of business from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business.



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.