

CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISORS ORGANIZATION

April 10, 2009 - Weekly Update

Two Veteran CDCR Officers Died in Del Norte County: CCSO was sad to hear that two PBSP veteran correctional officers died on April 6th while fishing on the rocks behind Battery Point Lighthouse in Crescent City when a wave hit them. The strong waves engulfed them. The coast guard recovered the bodies of Hoyt Walker and Troy Kuykendall. On behalf of the CCSO State Board and staff we send condolences to the families of Hoyt Walker and Troy Kuykendall. May they rest in peace.

CCSO Scholarships: CCSO will stop accepting scholarship applications on April 30th. Apply now if you have a high school senior with a 3.5 GPA. CCSO will give away three \$500 scholarships. Go online to ccsonet.org and check out the Member Benefits page to download an application and obtain details. Hurry before you miss the deadline. To date CCSO has not received any applications.

Phone-Sniffing Dog Unleashed on Vacaville Prison Inmates: CDCR officials have launched a demonstration project to see if dogs can help stem the flow of smuggled cell phones. Cell phones create a security problem both inside and outside the institutions because inmates are able to communicate without using monitored prison landline phones. A five-year-old dog named Caesar has completed training to become the first phone-sniffing dog in CDCR. Caesar's handler, Sgt. Wayne Conrad, said cell phones emit an odor distinct from other electronic devices. Conrad planted several phones in a prison building and in an individual cell, and Caesar found all of them. Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland and Virginia are also using dogs to detect cell phones in prison. At CSP, Solano more than 2,000 cell phones in the past three years, have been confiscated, according to Lt. Robin Bond of the prison's security and investigation unit. Lt. Bond says the officers themselves, who face no harsher punishment, if caught than termination, bring many of the phones in. One officer who was fired admitted making \$100,000 in a single year by smuggling cell phones to inmates. Corrections officials are seeking to criminalize the possession and smuggling of cell phones in prison. There will be a legislative hearing on the issue scheduled for April 14 at the state capitol. Associate Director Richard Subia said he would seek funding for additional search dogs if the experience with Caesar proves worthwhile.

CCSO's legislative position is to support CDCR's legislation that would exact a law that makes bringing a cell phone into a prison, with the intent to give to an inmate, a criminal offense. The use of cell phones by inmates endangers the lives of all staff.

Lancaster Says No to CDCR Long-term Facility: Lancaster officials are fighting the state's plans to convert a local prison reception center into a long-term facility that could house up to 1,500 "sensitive needs" inmates. The state's proposal calls for housing hundreds of inmates who could be at risk living in the general prison population, such as sex offenders and former gang members. The new accommodations, located on the prison campus, would be equipped to provide ongoing rehabilitative services. CDCR officials said converting the transition center in Lancaster into a long-term facility is critical to addressing a statewide backlog of 1,500 "sensitive needs" inmates who need appropriate housing. They said the inmates need to be living in a regular prison yard where they can go to school and attend substance-abuse programs and other rehabilitation courses. "It's not just something we're doing on a whim," said Scott Kernan, CDCR Undersecretary. "There is no other facility in the entire state system that could house this population."

The reception area was a prison yard until two years ago, so a conversion would simply restore the facility to its original state, Kernan said. But Lancaster officials argue that the Antelope Valley is already home to some of the highest per-capita concentrations of parolees, juvenile probationers and federal Section 8 housing recipients in Los Angeles County. They fear that establishing a long-term facility for "sensitive needs" inmates would encourage more transfers from other prisons and make it easier for families and

associates of inmates to visit or relocate to the valley. Once released, the ex-convicts would probably choose to remain in the area, said Lancaster Mayor R. Rex Parris. "It's a tremendous risk to the community," he said.

Kernan acknowledged that transfers from other state facilities were possible, but said most of the "sensitive needs" prisoners would be from the L.A. County prison system. He met with Lancaster officials Monday and said their concerns would be taken into consideration before a final decision was made. The Lancaster prison is currently home to 4,800 inmates, according to the state corrections department. Of these, 600 are categorized as "sensitive needs" prisoners. Roughly 2,800 prisoners living in the reception center have yet to be classified. Lancaster officials said the city saw a 10% drop in crime last year, and they believe the city's efforts would be threatened by the state's plans for the new prison facility.

California Transfers More Inmates: As many as 1,000 California inmates could be sent to a private prison in Sayre, an Oklahoma corrections official said Tuesday, April 6th. Oklahoma already has approved more than 300 California inmates for transfer and expects to review hundreds more prisoner files over the next several days, said Renee Watkins, administrator of private prisons and jails for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. Watkins said the mostly medium-security inmates are scheduled to begin arriving at the North Fork Correctional Facility April 16. Officials from Nashville, Tenn. based Corrections Corporation of America, which owns the Sayre facility, and CDCR would not confirm the transfer of inmates from California to Oklahoma. Of the more than 170,000 California prisoners, about 6,100 currently are housed out-of-state at private prisons in Mississippi, Arizona, Tennessee and Oklahoma, said Gordon Hinkle, a spokesman for CDCR. Under California law, as many as 8,000 California prisoners may be housed out of state, he said.

Chapter Presidents Gather in Sacramento: CCSO is preparing to bring together Chapter Presidents and designees from every prison in California to meet on April 24th and 25th in order to discuss the various issues facing CDCR currently. This is the time to seek out your Chapter President and let him/her know your concerns. CDCR Secretary Matt Cate and DPA Director Dave Gilb will be present on Saturday, April 25th to address your representatives.



Happy Easter!

Take Care and Be Safe!