

# Correction News

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## ACA officially awards DOP accreditations

Ten of North Carolina's largest high-security prisons received accreditation in August from the American Correctional Association (ACA). The accreditation awards presented at the ACA convention in New Orleans mark the culmination of a year-long process for these prison facilities.

The 10 close-custody prison facilities receiving accreditation are: Alexander Correctional Institution, Taylorsville; Bertie Correctional Institution, Windsor; Central Prison, Raleigh; Foothills Correctional Institution, Morganton; Lanesboro Correctional Institution, Polkton; Marion Correctional Institution, Marion; Maury Correctional Institution, Maury; North Carolina

The Division of Prisons has announced that 10 more facilities are slated to seek ACA accreditation. Those correctional institutions are Avery-Mitchell, Brown Creek, Craven, Eastern, Lumberton, Mountain View, Piedmont, Polk, Southern and Warren.

Correctional Institution for Women, Raleigh; Pasquotank Correctional Institution, Elizabeth City; and Scotland Correctional Institution, Laurinburg.

"These are the highest standards that American prisons can achieve, and striving to meet them has made our operations safer and

more consistent with national best practices," said **Boyd Bennett**, director of the Division of Prisons. "I'm extremely proud of our employees who have worked so hard to ensure compliance and make this a reality."

The ACA accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards developed by leaders from the field of corrections, law enforcement, architecture and health care. Standards set by ACA reflect practical up-to-date policies and procedures and function as a management tool for more than 1,200 correctional agencies in the United States.

Teams of ACA auditors visited

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A ribbon is cut, symbolically representing the opening of Tabor Correctional Institution in Columbus County. Participating in the cutting are, from left, **Boyd Bennett**, Division of Prisons director; NC Rep. Dewey Hill; NC Sen. R.C. Soles; **George Kenworthy**, Tabor CI administrator; **Pat Chavis**, director of the DOP South Central Region; and **Theodis Beck**, secretary of the Department of Correction.

## Community, staff welcome Tabor CI

TABOR CITY | Hundreds of staff, community leaders and residents poured into Tabor Correctional Institution for its dedication on Aug. 18.

The staff and its leadership had worked hard to showcase the state's



Visitors tour one of the segregation units.

newest prison to local residents and government officials, who had longed for the 515 jobs that the 1,500-bed prison provides in Columbus County. The arrival of the first inmates was expected in early September.

Correction Secretary **Theodis Beck** joined legislators and local officials celebrating the opening.

"This new prison will provide relief from a growing jail backlog and a crowded prison system, Beck said. "To the community, the prison will mean new jobs and economic opportunities."

The prison will have an estimated annual operating budget of approximately \$28 million including more than \$20 million in employee salaries each year.

The close and medium custody prison for adult males is on NC 904 just outside Tabor City. Construction began in June 2006.

"I am confident it will be a good employer, it will be a good neighbor and it will help make the people of this community and our state feel safer," Beck said.

Tabor Correctional Administrator **George Kenworthy** praised the staff for having the

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## New prison proved valuable for staging inmate crisis training

TABOR CITY | More than 300 prison and public safety employees participated in a training scenario at Tabor Correctional Institution (TCI) in Tabor City on Aug. 20 to test the skills and judgment of the staff.

Using a realistically enacted prison emergency they could potentially face, the training honed the skills of prison special response teams as they worked to resolve the crises presented



An officer posing as a blood-stained revolting inmate peers out a passthrough.

to them.

Division of Prisons staff played the role of inmates and evaluators while Tabor staff and special teams were placed in a response position to react to unfolding events of the exercise.

The scenario had two major components, both of which played out simultaneously. A small group of staff members were taken hostage in a housing unit

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## Trio helping baby beat bad odds

After reading about the plight of a baby boy fighting to survive beyond his first birthday, **John Sherman**, **Dennis Smith** and **Danny Creech** decided to do something to help.

The three DOC pharmacy staff members read about Ethan Benoit of Zebulon in the Raleigh News & Observer. He has a rare skeletal disorder, metatropic skeletal dysplasia, and he relies on a machine to

help him breathe and eat.

Ethan's parents, Shane and Sherree, couldn't accept prognoses that the toddler would not survive until Christmas even though they'd already purchased his tombstone. He was sent home from a local hospital with a "Do Not Resuscitate" order in December 2007. They discovered that the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in

See *Baby*, page 6



From left, **Danny Creech**, **John Sherman** and **Dennis Smith** review the newspaper column that told them about the plight of Ethan Benoit and his family.



# Spotlight

## Anson Correctional Center

Anson Correctional Center, near Polkton, was one of 61 field unit prisons renovated or built during the late 1930s to house inmates who worked building roads.

The minimum custody prison houses approximately 310 adult males and has staff of 63 correctional officers and administrative personnel.

**Robert Harden** is the superintendent, named to the position in 2002. His assistant superintendent for operations is **Lawrence Parsons**.

Inmates work in a several types jobs. They may be assigned to Department of Transportation road crews or to maintenance or kitchen duties at the prison. Inmates nearing release may participate in work release, leaving the prison for the part of the day to work for a business in the community.

Anson Community College works with the prison to provide vocational classes in carpentry, cooking and brick masonry. Classes for adult education and for GED tests preparation are also available. Inmates may participate in life skills classes, religious or substance abuse treatment programs.



**Robert Harden**, superintendent, and **Becky Warwick**, administrative assistant.



**Lawrence Parsons**, assistant superintendent.



Above, **Jean Tyson**, processing assistant IV.

Right, **Wilson McCall**, correctional officer.



Left, **Daniel Gathings**, correctional officer.



Front row, correctional officers **Kristen Armstrong** and **Margaret Littles**. Back row, **Curtis Tillman**, correctional officer; **Terry Harris**, sergeant.



Community work crew officers, **Leonard Little** (No. 1), left, and **Randy Steele** (No. 2), right.



Front row, correctional officers **Berkley McDuffie**, **Karen Perhealth**, **James McRae** and **Robin Anderson**. Back, correctional officers **Norman Magee**, **Lewitt Melton**, **Jessie Williams** and **Robert Mitchell**.



**Justin Burr**, correctional officer.



**Paul Tuttle**, clothes house supervisor.



Sergeants **Crystal Allen** and **Donna Smith**.



Above, Sgt. **Teresa Rivers**. Right, **Rodney Mungo**, mail room officer.



# Spotlight



**Stella Wall**, food service manager.



Correctional officers **Mitchell Evans** and **Marvin Marshall**.



Left photo, front row, Correctional Officer **Otis Chambers** and Sgt. **Donna Smith**. Second row, Correctional Officer **Teresa Rivers** and Sgt. **Chris Waldron**. Third row, correctional officers **Betty Cox** and **Aurelious Bass**.



Case managers **Adraina Goodwin** and **Cory Smith**.



**Stacey Huntley**, programs director I; and **Monica Brooks**, programs supervisor.



Correctional officers **Dalton Stroman**, above, and **Mary Hill**, right.



**Sybil Gatewood**, processing assistant III.



**Janet Propst**, staff RN; and **Iris Gines**, contract medical records IV.

Staff not available for a photo were: Sgt. **Jessie McDonald**; correctional officers **Winston York**, **Jonathan Broom**, **Walter Gaddy**, **Terry Johnson**, **Charles Wilson**, **Larry Baity**, **Charles Brewington** (transportation), **Robert Allen**, **Michael Almond**, **Michael Austin**, **Timothy Bruton**, **Shirley Clark**, **Patricia Little**, **Carol Wall**, **Daryl Walters**, **Wesley Beachum**, **Thomas Watson** (food service), **Rhonda Pilkins** (food service) and **Crystal Raffaldt** (food service). Also, **Mike Pittman**, programs supervisor; and **Sandra Williams**, case manager.

## Hoke Correctional gets new leader

RAEFORD | **Lynn Summers Jr.** is the new superintendent at Hoke Correctional Institution, a medium custody prison that houses 535 adult male inmates and employs a staff of 245.

He succeeds the retired John "Terry" Bullock.

Summers, who had been assistant superintendent for custody and operations at Morrison Correctional Institution since 2006, began his career as a correctional officer in 1979 at the now-closed Sandhills Youth Center. He rose through the ranks in programming there and McCain Correctional Hospital and Hoke and Harnett correctional institutions and in the Division of Prisons' South Central Region Office.

A graduate of UNC-Charlotte, Summers earned a bachelor of science degree with honors in law enforcement and administration. He is a graduate of the Department of Correction's Correctional Leadership Development Program, a former McCain Correctional employee of the year and a member of the team that developed and implemented the agency's offender data base.

Summers and his wife, Sharon, have six children and nine grandchildren. His parents are Lynn and Joyce Summers of Statesville.

He enjoys spending time with his grandchildren, reading history and being active in his church.



**Lynn Summers**

## Huggins new administrator at Morrison CI

HOFFMAN | **J.C. Huggins Jr.** is the new administrator for Morrison Correctional Institution, which houses 805 male inmates, in medium custody for adults and in minimum custody for youthful offenders. The prison employs 373 officers and administrative personnel.

Huggins was previously operations manager for the Division of Prisons' South Central Region. He succeeds the retired Ronald Jones.

Beginning his career as a correctional officer at Hoke Correctional Institution in 1986, Huggins advanced through the ranks at the Robeson, Columbus, Lumberton and Morrison facilities. He was promoted to superintendent at McCain Correctional Hospital before being appointed to the South Central Region.

Huggins has an associate degree in law enforcement technology from Robeson Community College and has completed the Department of Correction's Correctional Leadership Development Program.

He and his wife, Donna, have been married 25 years. They have three daughters, one son, three granddaughters and two grandsons.

Huggins is active in his church and is a member of the West Robeson Camp of the Gideons International. He also enjoys spending time with his grandchildren, cooking outdoors, camping and riding his motorcycle.



**J.C. Huggins Jr.**

4,000 copies of this publication were produced for a total cost of \$796.45, or 19.9 cents each.



## Isaacs named assistant chief in Division II

SMITHFIELD | **Diane Isaacs** is the new assistant administrator for Community Corrections Division II. She succeeds the retired David McDuffie.

Isaacs will be helping Division II Administrator **James Fullwood** manage the operations of the 21-county area, where more than 31,350 offenders are under the supervision of 691 probation/parole officers and office staff members.

Beginning her career in 1982 as a parole officer in Cumberland County, Isaacs transferred to Harnett county in 1989. She was promoted to chief probation/parole officer in Hoke County in 1997 and judicial district manager for District 16A (Hoke and Scotland counties) in 2006.

Isaacs graduated in 1982 from East Carolina University with a degree in criminal justice. She has completed DOC's Correctional Leadership Development Program.

The Robeson County native and her husband, Terry, reside in Fayetteville. She enjoys going to the beach and antique auctions, collecting cookbooks and spending time with her dog.

Isaacs is also active in the N.C. Association of Probation/Parole Officers.

### Accreditation, from page 1

each prison facility to ensure compliance with more than 500 standards in areas such as administration, training, records management, information systems, citizen involvement, physical plant, safety, security, emergency procedures, inmate rights, medical care, educational programs and sanitation.

The accreditation is awarded for a three-year period, after which auditors will return to re-evaluate the prisons. The Division of Prisons Central Office in Raleigh received its three-year accreditation in January 2008.



Some of the Community Corrections officers who assisted in the marijuana eradication: Front, **Carrie Wallace** and **Linc Vance**; middle, **Brandi Renfro** and **Cody McKinney**; back, **Joey King**.

## District 24 officers help eradicate marijuana plants

During the week of July 28, Community Corrections District 24 probation officers helped the Madison County sheriff eradicate two marijuana farming operations, destroying plants that had a street value exceeding \$20 million.

Also participating were the SBI and Highway Patrol. Madison County Sheriff John Ledford said the seizure was the county's largest in more than a decade.

More than 13,000 plants valued at \$20.4 million were destroyed at one location, which was tended by a crew living on-site. At another location, some 500 more plants were destroyed.

Chief Probation Officer **Susan Maney** said it was an honor to be involved in a cooperative, inter-agency operation.

"The fact that our assistance was requested speaks volumes about our relationship with local law enforcement and the community," she said.

Madison County probation officers participating were **Melissa Bartlett**, **Brandi Renfro**, **Carrie Wallace** and **Mark Higgins**. From Yancey County were **Jim Edwards**, **Robin Hodshon** and **Nathan Bennett**. Mitchell County officers involved were **Joey King**, **Cody McKinney** and **Linc Vance**.

## Biking officer does 'well'

MOUNT AIRY | Probation Officer **Gary Golding** of Surry County in Community Corrections District 17B is giving a new meaning to employee wellness.

Golding recently won the 2008 Mountain Bike Southeastern Regional Championship. The event is a nine-race series that ran in Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama.

The series is broken into skill levels with beginner, sport, expert and professional. Golding competed in the sport level.

Using a point system, racers accumulate points throughout the season. Golding had several top threes and won the last two races of the series.

Two businesses sponsor him.

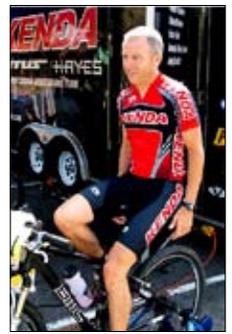
Golding started biking eight years ago, and typically will ride about 200 miles a week. He said that, during his first year, he lost 30 pounds through exercise alone and has been the same weight ever since.

First competing in local road races that would cover over 100 miles, Golding began winning most of the local races after a few years.

During the past two years, he concentrated on mountain bike races and quickly started excelling. He is currently ranked 4th in the state and 46th in the nation at the sport level.

Biking has been a great way to relieve the stress that sometimes accompanies supervising criminal offenders, Golding said. Having the flexibility of working nights during the winter months allows him to train in the day time, and that gives him a advantage over some of his competitors he said.

Also, Golding's chief, **Martha Norman**, and judicial district manager, **Brian Gates**, have been very supportive of his biking. When asked if he was going professional anytime soon, Golding laughed and said that he couldn't keep up with the young guys and he wouldn't be quitting his day job.



**Gary Golding** prepares for another race.

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**Administration**  
**Michael Easley**  
Governor  
**Theodis Beck**  
Secretary of Correction  
**Keith Acree**  
Public Affairs Director



### Recent graduates of Basic Probation Officer Training

The Division of Community Corrections had a graduation ceremony on July 24 for students in its Basic Probation/Parole Officer Training. Shown are, from left, front row: **Terri Dorsey**, probation/parole officer (PPO) II, District 14, Durham; **Keeza Williams**, PPO I, District 12, Cumberland; **Valerie Ward**, PPO I, District 19C, Rowan; **Chastity Barden**, PPO I, District 29B, Henderson; **Jennifer Banas**, PPO I, District 27A, Gaston; **Patrice Broxton**, PPO I, District 14, Durham; **Lakeisha Johnson**, PPO I, District 14, Durham. Middle row, **Joshua Meyers**, PPO I, District 10, Wake; **John Hauser**, PPO I, District 10, Wake; **Timothy Grigg**, PPO I, District 3A, Pitt; **Jennifer Woodson**, PPO II, District 10, Wake; **Shanna Knowles**, PPO I, District 10, Wake; **Yolanda Dunn**, PPO II, District 8A, Lenoir; **Eric Erickson**, PPO I, District 26, Mecklenburg. Back row, **Reginald Thompson**, PPO I, District 10, Wake; **Kevin Whitfield**, surveillance officer (SO), District 20B, Union; **Garron Rogers**, PPO I, District 15A, Alamance; **Hunter Gray**, PPO I, District 5, New Hanover; **Rodney Smith**, SO, District 26, Mecklenburg; **Daniel Bertsch**, PPO I, District 26, Mecklenburg; **Christopher Trexler**, PPO I, District 27A, Gaston; **Robert White Sr.**, PPO II, District 18, Guilford; **David Francis**, SO, District 26, Mecklenburg; and **Eric Massey**, PPOI, District 3A, Pitt.

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Go to:  
<http://www.doc.state.nc.us/NEWS/Cnews.htm>



**Correctional Leadership Development Program Class 9 completes training**

Correctional Leadership Development Program Class 9 recently completed its year-long training. Class members shown are, from left, front row: **Mark Crabtree**, Alcoholism & Chemical Dependency Programs (DACDP); **Barry Robbins**, Correction Enterprises (CE); **Joan Walker**, Division of Community Corrections (DCC); **Marc Edwards**, Division of Prisons (DOP); **Belinda Dudley**, DOP; **Nancy Pritchard**, DACDP; **Charlotte Williams**, PREA; **Robert Newman**, DOP; **Mary Harrop**, Parole Commission; **Landon Charles**, Management Information Services (MIS);

**Karen Bozard**, DCC; **Miranda Richardson**, Central Engineering; **Marna Noe**, DOP; **Sandra Shearin**, DCC; **Gwen Norville**, Office of Staff Development & Training (OSDT); **Shelia Mitchell**, DOP; **Tarquintas Walser**, DOP; **Gail McLamb**, CE; **Crystal Lupton**, DOP; and **Jack Clelland**, DOP. Back row, **Randy Register**, DOP; **Tracy Lee**, DCC; **Mike Ball**, DOP; **Chris Oxendine**, DCC; **Mike Evers**, CLDP manager; **Anthony Florence**, DOP; **Dallas McMillan**, DCC; **Malcomb Stout**, Central Engineering; **Michael Bridges**, DACDP; **James Holmes**, DOP; and **Joey Bullock**, Controller's Office.

**Securitysense**  
Securitysense is a news subscription the state has purchased. The intent is to provide to you easy-to-read articles that relate to current information security threats. Armed with this knowledge, you can begin to defend yourself against the growing number of threats from hackers and information thieves seeking to compromise our computer systems.

**New Ways ID Thieves Target Your Information**

Identity thieves are a crafty lot. Each time they devise a new way to steal your identity, some technogenuis finds a way to protect it. But that doesn't deter the crooks; they just find a new workaround. Here are some of the latest tools identity thieves are using:

*Online job hunting.* People in job-search mode are flocking to mega job boards and online application processes.

When considering job opportunities at these sites, it's important to check out the company and read its privacy policy word for word. Some policies are so "open," experts say, that they should be called un-privacy notices, as the companies effectively reserve the right to sell or rent any information they receive.

*Marketing venues.* It may seem like no big deal to fill out that "join our mailing list" card in the local boutique or gourmet grocery store, but it's best to avoid providing anything more than what the company needs to send offers. Likewise, don't provide more than the barest details on product warranty cards; the product identification number, place of purchase, and your name should suffice.

*Computer files.* Many people are storing all sorts of personal data and credit card numbers (a dangerous practice even if certain numbers are transposed) on their computers at home or at work. Sure, it's handy for ease of access, but it's a dangerous proposition in a time when sophisticated hackers use technology to get behind weak firewalls.

*Unwanted legal documents and account statements.* It's hard to believe that people still throw such identity-disclosing items in the trash, but they do. It's worth the investment to purchase a small home shredder. The safest type to use has a crosscut feature, which cuts paper vertically and horizontally into confetti-like pieces.

**Some of the latest cons**

*UPS and downs.* Emails with subjects like "UPS packet N3621583925" claim to inform recipients that it was impossible to deliver a package sent by them and advise them to print out a "copy of the attached invoice." But guess what? Victims who do so actually wind up introducing a copy of a malicious Trojan to their computer.

*"Vishing":* It stands for "voice phishing," and it's on the rise; you may have gotten a voicemail supposedly asking you to reactivate your credit or debit card. It's a scam, of course; if you call back, you'll be asked to divulge personal data, and you can wave bye-bye to your identity.

*Charity cheats.* There's an especially despicable type of con man who capitalizes on natural disasters with appeals that tug at the heartstrings. And lately there have been plenty of disasters, natural and otherwise, to keep these lizards busy. Never, ever donate money in response to an unsolicited email or phone call. Don't provide personal information, either; it may be used to steal your identity.



**Darius McLaurin**, Nash Correctional Institution administrative services manager; **Drew Stanley**, Nash CI assistant superintendent for programs; **Bill Stovall**, deputy secretary; **Cleo Jenkins**, Nash CI assistant superintendent of custody; Secretary **Theodis Beck**; **Butch Jackson**, Nash CI administrator; **Cherie Berry**, secretary of Labor; **Phil Rowe**, Correction Enterprises director I, Print Plant; **Michael Winstead**, MTATC chairman and supervisor, Print Plant; and **Robert Leon**, Correction Enterprises director of professional services.

**Apprenticeship program graduates 16 in printing operations skills**

Secretary **Theodis Beck** and N.C. Labor Secretary **Cherie Berry** headlined a graduation ceremony on Aug. 4 for 16 Nash Correctional Institution inmates who completed a Department of Labor Apprenticeship at Correction Enterprises' Print Plant.

Most of the inmates received certificates in offset press operation. Others received certificates for bindery printing, stripping, pre-press proofing, letterpress operation, photography/lithographics, data entry machine operation and office management/administration.

Called the Multi-Trades Apprenticeship and Training Committee (MTATC), the program offers 12 Labor Department apprenticeships, ranging to two to four years in training. An apprentice who completes the program becomes a journeyman, who is able to train other apprentices.

Including the 16 Aug. 4 graduates, 175 inmates have completed apprenticeships since MTATC's inception in 1983.

The Print Plant's MTATC coordinator is **Michael Winstead**, who spoke at the graduation, encouraging the inmates to continue training. He joined Labor Secretary **Berry** in presenting the certificates.

Secretary **Beck** also commended the inmates and emphasized the importance of having a marketable job skill in trying to successfully transition back into society.

Also speaking were **Phil Rowe**, Nash Print Plant director; and **Butch Jackson**, Nash Correctional administrator.

## Training, from page 1

by inmates, while two inmates managed to escape during the diversion created by the hostage situation. Individually, either of these occurrences is enough to test the resources and resolve of any facility, and when combined, pose a true test of staff training and preparedness.

Division of Prisons staff develop a wide range of skills to deal with emergencies. In this scenario, the resources of the DOP special teams were swiftly brought into action. The Prison Emergency Response Team (PERT), Special Operations Response Team (SORT), Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT) and Special Operations Target Interdiction Team (SOTIT) and Fugitive/Narcotics K-9 Unit each brought their significant skills to bear in the resolution of this emergency.

The escaped inmates were captured through the efforts of the Columbus County Sheriff's Department, DOP tracking dogs and numerous PERT members. The hostage situation was resolved through



SORT Bravo Team prepares for intervention in the training scenario. From the left are **Byron Carr**, Brown Creek CI; **Jason Hall**, Central Prison; **James McLain**, Scotland CI; **Michael Jones**, DOP South Central Region Office; **Robert Bilberry**, Sampson CI; and **Eddie Poole**, Security Services.

a combination of expert negotiation and deployment of SORT and PERT resources and the assistance of Tabor City Fire and Rescue units.

Tabor management staff played a crucial role in directing prison resources based on the scenario as presented. Superintendent **George Kenworthy** directed the response as incident commander and took responsibility for all decisions, just as he might in a real emergency.

Tabor Correctional Institution, which opened just two days prior to the exercise, will begin receiving inmates in September.



Smoke still lingers in the air in the Tabor CI blue unit, where "inmates" lay subdued on the floor (right) after the mock uprising was terminated.

## Prison, from page 1

prison ready for occupancy and ready for public viewing. Several staff members led news media and visitors on tours through the 413,000-square-foot facility.

In addition to Beck and Kenworthy, speakers were Division of Prisons (DOP) Director **Boyd Bennett**, DOP South Central Region Director **Pat Chavis**, Chief Deputy Secretary **Dan Stieneke**, NC Sen. R.C. Soles and NC Rep. Dewey Hill.

In addition to the housing areas, the prison contains the necessary support areas, including administrative, program and mental health offices; food preparation and dining hall; academic, vocational and religious program areas; visitation room; and warehousing and maintenance.



Describing the prison infirmary to visitors touring Tabor CI are, from left, **Kandy Harrelson**, nurse manager; and Columbus Correctional institution nurses **Laura West** and **Lisa Small**.

Tabor Correctional Institution is the last of six 1,000-cell high-security prisons that the state has contracted to build. Scotland Correctional Institution in Laurinburg opened in September 2003, Lanesboro Correctional Institution opened in January 2004, Alexander Correctional Institution opened in March of 2004, Maury Correctional Institution opened in March 2006 and Bertie Correctional Institution opened in May 2006.

## Baby, from page 1

Wilmington, Del., could perform surgery that could extend Ethan's life into his late teens or possibly into his 30s.

They even located a foundation that would pay for the surgery if they could just get Ethan up to Maryland. The motor in Shane's vehicle blew and he had no transportation.

That's where the trio from the DOC pharmacy stepped into the picture. Sherman sent a check to the family to help and, after reading that Medicare had refused to pay for the ambulance fees, he sent another check. Then he decided to contact Ethan's dad, Shane.

"We just had to get him there," Sherman said. "The family had no money, but Shane is mechanically inclined and he made the power adapter and harness device to haul Ethan."

The dad said he could make the mechanical device for transportation if Sherman could find a vehicle that could hold the device to hold Ethan for the trip.

Smith stepped in to purchase materials for the harness, and Creech worked with his church, New Jerusalem Free Will Baptist Church in Kenly, to raise money for the family. A trust fund has been established for Ethan: Ethan Benoit Trust Fund, c/o Liberty Alliance Federal Credit Union, 125 E. Gannon Ave., Zebulon, NC 27597.

Sherman drove Ethan and his dad through Washington, D.C., to Delaware, and they even had time to visit the Washington Monument during the trip in early June. He drove back to Delaware three weeks later to bring Ethan and his dad home.

"If John hadn't helped, we couldn't have made it," Benoit said.

Shane and Sherree have three other children, ages 13, 11 and 4. She schools the children at home. Benoit, a carpenter by trade, can't find work because employers aren't able to hire someone with such uncertainties that might prevent full-time attendance. So, the family depends on donations from caring strangers. They say they can't qualify for social services assistance because they can't work.

"We're scraping by," Shane said. He said he is willing to work if an employer could just work around the possibilities that he might have to miss work to attend to any emergencies that might arise from Ethan's illness.

Ethan has another appointment at the Maryland treatment center in September.

Ethan faces many uncertain times ahead for his young life. But, he definitely made at least three good friends along the way.