

Spring/Summer 2004

## Prison apprenticeship programs on the rise

More inmates earning journeyman's certification in a growing number of fields and trades



Secretary Theodis Beck presents an apprenticeship certificate to Jerry Maness, a worker in the Inmate Construction Program at Warren Correctional Institution during graduation ceremonies March 25.

At prisons across North Carolina, apprenticeship programs are becoming an increasingly popular and effective form of job training for inmates.

Apprenticeships consist of a defined amount of classroom learning in conjunction with 4000-6000 hours of on-the-job training, where inmates work and learn under the supervision of professionals in their trade. Upon completion of the program, inmates receive their journeyman's certification from the North Carolina Dept. of Labor.

At Correction Enterprises Nash Print Plant, apprenticeships have been in place for

about a decade. Apprenticeship opportunities are available in 12 different jobs within the print plant, from press operation to bindery, graphic arts, print estimation and shipping.

"Employers who are familiar with apprenticeship understand the value of that certificate. They know about the thousands of hours of learning and experience that go into it," said print plant manager Phil Rowe, who manages apprenticeship programs for Correction Enterprises.

"It's an incentive to the inmates, because they can earn their educational certification," said Rowe. "For us, it keeps inmates in their jobs longer."

Since most apprenticeships require three years to complete the thousands of hours of on-the-job training, the plant has fewer problems maintaining a steady and well-trained workforce.

Keeping an inmate in one place long enough to complete an apprenticeship program can sometimes be difficult, in a prison system that routinely moves inmates around. "It's a three-year commitment, so that makes it a logistical challenge," said Correction Enterprises director Karen Brown. Her managers must coordinate closely with the Division of Prisons, so that inmates are able to complete their classroom learning and

on-the-job training before a custody change or transfer occurs.

Apprenticeships in welding and metal work are a new endeavor for Correction Enterprises. Inmates learn welding skills in vocational classes at Harnett Correctional Institution, satisfying the classroom portion of their training. They then are transferred to Brown Creek Correctional Institution to work in the metal products plant, which produces a large line of stainless steel kitchen equipment and other metal products. The plant currently offers apprenticeships for welders only, but is developing apprenticeships for metal fabricators and brake press operators.

Inmates at the sewing plant at Pender Correctional Institution soon will be able to enroll in their own apprenticeship program. Sewing classes offered by the local community college will make up a portion of the required classroom training, with Correction Enterprises employees providing the remaining instruction and supervising the on-the-job training. The Pender sewing plant produces inmate and staff uniforms for the Department of Correction and uniforms for some other state agencies.

*"Employers understand the value of that certificate, They know about the thousands of hours of learning and experience that go into it."*

- Phil Rowe

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# Inmate construction apprentices graduate at Warren



*Sixteen graduates earned certifications as journeymen in their construction trades from the NC Department of*

**MANSON** – For 16 inmate construction workers, March 25 marked the end of a long road. After more than three years of work, the inmates in the Inmate Construction

Program earned their apprenticeship certifications by completing almost 500 hours of classroom learning and more than 6,000 hours of on-the-job training. Having satisfied the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Labor, the inmates are now certified as journeymen in their respective construction trades, including carpentry, electrical, concrete finishing, masonry, pipe fitting and HVAC.

“You can serve time, or you can let time serve you,” Secretary Theodis Beck told the group. “You have built structures that the state will use for years to come. But more importantly, you have worked to build your lives.”

“You’re learning a trade, and you’re learning it under skilled master craftsmen,” Brenda Saunders of the NC Dept. of Labor Apprenticeship and Training Bureau, told the graduates. “Your apprenticeship certificate can mean a lot more than a two-year degree. It says you haven’t just sat in a classroom, but you’ve been on the jobsite and you’ve actually done the work.”

Apprenticeship, simply defined, is working for an employer and being trained in skills in a certain occupation, Saunders explained. Inmates in the Inmate Construction Program work under the supervision of Central Engineering employees on construction projects throughout the Department of Correction.

Currently, the program is involved in several projects at Warren Correctional Institution, including a new single-cell housing building and renovations to an existing building which will become the Correction Enterprises janitorial products plant. Inmates completed additions to the

prison's administration building and constructed a maintenance building.

Other projects include construction of Dan River and Tyrrell Prison Work Farms, dormitories at North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women and a tailoring plant for Correction Enterprises at Columbus Correctional Institution.

The sixteen inmate graduates are listed here:

Daniel Armijo, Carpentry  
Paisi Paisi, Carpentry  
Frederick Saunders, Carpentry  
Mark Schneider, Carpentry  
Hubert Best, Concrete finishing  
Steven Cheek, Concrete finishing  
Ralph Clark Jr., Concrete finishing  
Waylon Benson, Electrical  
Jerry Maness, Electrical  
George Crites, HVAC technology  
David Byrd, Masonry  
Antoine Johnson, Masonry  
William Garner, Pipe fitter  
James Russell, Carpentry  
Edmond Ford, Electrical  
Cal Rogers, Painter

Inmates Daniel Armijo, George Crites and William Garner received their second apprenticeship certificate, having completed the program in another trade in December 2000.

## APPRENTICESHIP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Division of Prisons is currently developing apprenticeships in food service technology at its three test kitchens; the Randall Building, Yonkers Road and OSDT in Apex. If this proves successful, the division hopes to eventually offer apprenticeship opportunities to inmates working in most of its prison kitchens.

In Central Engineering, the jobs keep coming for the Inmate Construction Program. Inmates pursuing apprenticeship certification currently are at work on additions to Warren Correctional Institution and on renovations to an existing industrial building near Warren which will become Correction Enterprises new janitorial products plant. Inmates will also upfit the prison industry spaces at the new 1,000 cell prisons and work on future projects in the department's ten-year growth plan.



## Transition Aftercare Network continues statewide expansion

The Transition Aftercare Network (TAN), the department's largest faith-based initiative, is on its way to reaching its goal of expansion into all 100 North Carolina counties to provide transitional services for offenders leaving prison.

Chaplain Melvin Solomon, the program's director, is working to place more county coordinators, who can then train volunteers in their home counties. Trained TAN teams are already at work in at least 27 counties,

**Mark your  
calendar:  
Statewide  
TAN Celebration  
July 15, 2004  
11:30 am  
Capital Church  
Garner**

helping offenders transition back into their families, communities and the workforce. Solomon hopes to reach a goal of 3,000 trained TAN volunteers by the end of this year.

Plans are underway for a statewide TAN celebration to be held July 15. The event will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Capital Church, 1308 U.S. Hwy. 70 in Garner.

For more information contact Chaplain Melvin Solomon at 919-838-3612.

## JobStart II enters second year

JobStart II, a prison-to-work project operating at 10 sites throughout the Division of Prisons, from Pender to Avery county, is in the process of completing or starting its second cycle of programming at each site, while a third cycle of inmate pre-release preparation is ready for startup at two sites.

The goal of JobStart II as a pilot project is to identify and field-test practices that effectively prepare offenders to secure and retain employment following release. Based on the project's experience so far, 40 recommendations for strengthening reentry planning and preparation were recently presented to Division of Prisons administration. These included such basic requirements as ensuring inmates are released with their Social Security card and DOC ID as well as the other documents needed for interviewing and starting work.

JobStart II staff members are also collaborating with the Community College System's Human Resources Development (HRD) program at each of the pilot sites to develop an offender-specific HRD course that would incorporate many

of the best practices of JobStart II and that could be conducted throughout the prison system as part of each facility's Standard Operating Procedure for Transition Services.

An assessment of legal, regulatory and policy practices that inhibit the ex-offender's access to certain job markets is also being undertaken in conjunction with the project's Offender Workforce Development Advisory Board, which consists of representatives from public agencies having a stake in the success of offender reentry, including the Veteran's Administration, Division of Social Services and Employment Security Commission. The results of the assessment will be used to identify barriers that may be removed or modified.

As the project prepares to enter its second year, there are plans to add two new employees to the JobStart II team to expand capacity for implementing all phases of the initiative. The current Job Start II staff members are Community Development Specialist David Eubanks and Project Manager Arthur Clark.

## RCCW graduates 7th JobStart class

**RALEIGH** - Raleigh Correctional Center for Women held graduation ceremonies June 1 for seven new JobStart graduates. JobStart teaches job seeking skills like interviewing and resume writing while incorporating a strong faith-based foundation. Inmates are paired with volunteer mentors, many of them from local churches, who serve as coaches, counselors and role models to the inmates. Each of the inmate graduates spoke at the ceremony.

"I never knew how to create a resume," said Diane Hensley. "Now I know, and I can't tell you

how much confidence that gives me."

"When I came to JobStart, I thought I knew how to communicate," said Nicole Pridgen. "Actually I only knew how to talk."

JobStart is in place at several North Carolina prison locations but only the RCCW program partners with local churches and the Presbyterian Chaplaincy Coordinating Committee to create a strong faith-based program.

Since JobStart's inception, RCCW has graduated more than 70 inmates from the program.

*Inmate Kimberly Stone  
gives a hug to RCCW  
Superintendent Joyce  
Kornegay at graduation.*





# Going Home works to find transition solutions

by **Roshanna Parker**  
**Director, Going Home Initiative**

## Going Home

North Carolina's  
serious and violent  
offender re-entry  
initiative

The Going Home Initiative (GHI) has experienced some key successes during its first year. The program's theme, "Changing the Odds," speaks specifically to the emphasis that has been placed on reducing and/or eliminating barriers that ex-offenders face when returning to the community.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce, one of the major state agency partners involved in the Going Home Initiative, has hired six dedicated staff members, located at local JobLink Centers, to serve as offender employment specialists for the Going Home Initiative. These individuals will work directly with the GHI participants and the cluster members on all issues regarding employment.

The offender specialists will assess work skills of each participant and develop individual strategies to secure and maintain gainful employment. The offender specialists also will serve the crucial role of educating potential employers about the benefits of hiring applicants with criminal backgrounds.

The Department of Correction hosted a two-day training session for these offender specialists April 14-15, 2004. The training was designed to bring in the major JobLink partners to discuss the role/services of various agencies in the JobLink Centers as well as to provide specific training on assisting ex-offenders in securing gainful employment.

The Going Home Initiative currently has 65 participants in thirteen counties. One of the

major challenges the project has faced is the lack of suitable housing options for ex-offenders, especially sex-offenders.

For several reasons, many offenders in the program are not able to return to their prior residence. They often have strained relationships with family, issues with victims' location and a lack of money to obtain/maintain a private residence. Affordable housing options are very limited and waiting lists are very long. Offenders returning to rural areas are faced with additional barriers such as lack of public transportation to help them get to and from work.

Much of Going Home's effort has been dedicated to identifying additional resources in the Going Home cluster communities to address these barriers. Housing, employment and transportation are significant problems we continue to struggle with statewide. State and local partners are willing to assist in these areas, however, limited resources of most of our partner agencies, particularly community and faith-based partners have not allowed for expansion of services.

A group of State Planning Team members and local cluster leaders attended a training workshop for the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative Grantees entitled "Enhancing the Effectiveness of Collaborative Teams in Alexandria, VA on May 25-27, 2004. The workshop was designed to strengthen organizational capacity, develop strategies for increasing capacity for leveraging resources, and strengthening existing collaboration among the SVORI stakeholders while identifying new partners to respond to the needs of the offenders in our program.

## New transition services web information now online

The Department of Correction Public Affairs Office has recently added a new section to the DOC website on transition services. This new web content includes information on new and existing transition programs and an extensive section on offender workforce development, including information on

apprenticeships, the Inmate Construction Program and educational opportunities for inmates, as well as links to resources for employers and

ex-offenders seeking employment. A special thank you goes out to Arthur Clark for his help in developing this web content.

### Transition Services

[www.doc.state.nc.us/transition](http://www.doc.state.nc.us/transition)

### Offender Workforce Development

[www.doc.state.nc.us/transition/workforce](http://www.doc.state.nc.us/transition/workforce)

*To suggest or contribute  
items for Transition  
News, please contact  
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