

## NEWS IN CORRECTIONS

Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian has appointed **Jessica M. Symmes** as acting warden of the Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-Oak Park Heights.

Symmes' career with the Minnesota Department of Corrections began 30 years ago. She started in a support position at the Stillwater facility in 1975 and was later hired as a corrections officer at Oak Park Heights where she rose through the ranks to Watch Lieutenant. In 1993, Symmes began her management career at the MCF-Oak Park Heights as Assistant to the Warden. She also served as a cell hall director and Associate Warden of Administration.

In 1999, Symmes was named Associate Warden of Operations at Oak Park Heights, and later transferred to Stillwater where she has been Associate Warden of Operations for the past five years.

"Jessie Symmes is an exceptionally talented individual who possesses the vast range of experiences and management skills crucial for this job," Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian said. "I'm delighted she has accepted this new challenge."

Symmes' appointment is effective August 15, 2005. She succeeds **Lynn Dingle**, who became warden at Stillwater Prison on August 2, succeeding Dan Ferrise who resigned to accept an opportunity outside state service.

The MCF-Oak Park Heights, opened in 1982, is the state's highest-security facility for adult males. ■

Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian has announced that August 25 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year of operation for **Thistledeew Camp**, a unique residential facility for youth experiencing failure in the school, home, and community. The department will honor the anniversary with a recognition event.

Thistledeew opened in 1955 as a forestry camp for young offenders. Today, Thistledeew Camp serves as an early intervention program for up to 80 boys and girls ages 13 to 17. The program accepts referrals from all counties in Minnesota and works with adjudicated and at-risk youth. A 1995 legislative audit rated Thistledeew as one of the most successful delinquency prevention programs in the state. The facility is located 50 miles northeast of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, in George Washington State Forest.

Thistledeew offers a variety of programming, including a three-week adventure therapy program; a three-month residential treatment program; chemical dependency treatment; and aftercare and transition services. School credit is provided. Girls and boys are programmed separately.

Student activities in Thistledeew's forest setting include education, therapy, and physical activities designed to develop self-confidence, leadership abilities, and teamwork such as backpacking, canoeing, cross-country skiing, rock climbing, a high-ropes course, and a four-day solo.

Thistledeew Camp is also the phase 1 site of the department's **Challenge Incarceration Program** (CIP) for up to 24 adult female offenders. This "boot camp," operated separately from the youth programs, includes education, critical thinking skills development, chemical dependency programming, and rigorous physical exercise. Currently, the program houses many of Minnesota's adult female meth offenders.

The recognition ceremony will be held August 25 at Thistledeew. Registration and tours begin at 9:30, with a program at 1:00 p.m. Former staff and their families are invited, but should RSVP by calling 218/376-4411 by August 18. Media wishing to attend the August 25 event should contact Liz McClung, DOC Communications Director, at 651/642-0514. ■

**Gary Johnson** has joined the Minnesota Department of Corrections Community Services Division to coordinate the transitional housing program funded by the 2005 Legislature. The program is designed to provide a continuum of housing options to assist offenders who do not have stable housing upon release from incarceration in a state prison. Johnson can be reached at grjohnson@co.doc.state.mn.us or 651/642-0450. ■

The Department of Corrections has redesigned its **Web site** to allow a more user-friendly experience. The new design was based on staff input and features a search function; department history, including historical photos; virtual tours - a 360-degree view of a prison cell and cell block; tour reports - a daily inmate population report for each facility; and printer-friendly pages. The site can be viewed at [www.doc.state.mn.us](http://www.doc.state.mn.us). ■

Minnesota Department of Corrections Special Investigator **Kris Rish** has successfully completed the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's Police Forensic Pathology Program through the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office. Rish is now certified to conduct incarcerated death investigations for the State of Minnesota. She is one of five DOC investigators to complete the program. ■

Institution/Community Work Crews (ICWC) recently received citizen recognition for their work. The MCF-Stillwater ICWC was acknowledged for clearing brush and overgrowth along Highway 36 in Roseville. In Chisago County, the MCF-Lino Lakes ICWC was praised for assisting the County Historical Society in rehabbing historical sites. ■

### UPCOMING EVENTS

*Growing the Connections: Restorative Philosophy and Practices* is planned for October 14-15, 2005, at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The conference provides workshops on a variety of topics from the areas of criminal justice, education, family services, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. For registration information and other training opportunities offered in conjunction with this conference, visit [www.mnmrsc.org](http://www.mnmrsc.org). ■

Registration materials are now available online for *Clearing the Path for Girls & Women – A Call for Action*, the 11th National Workshop on Adult & Juvenile Female Offenders to be held October 15-19, 2005, at the Mariott Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota. This conference will provide a forum for those who work with girls and women in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Participants from around the nation and Canada will be able to meet one another, exchange ideas, deepen alliances, celebrate successes, and promote promising practices on behalf of women, girls, and communities. Visit [www.ajfo.org](http://www.ajfo.org) to find out about pre-conference workshops, keynote speakers, lodging, and registration. ■

### OPENINGS

**Director of Community Relations and External Affairs**, Ramsey County Community Corrections. This unclassified position reports to the Director of the Community Corrections Department and manages a comprehensive program of community relations, public and media affairs, and governmental liaison activities. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in correctional administration, political science, public administration or

affairs, government or public relations, or a closely-related field plus seven years of professional experience in community or intergovernmental relations or public affairs in state, county or municipal government (a master's degree in the areas listed above may be substituted for two years experience). Interested candidates should contact the Ramsey County Human Resources Department at 651/266-2700 for application and information materials or visit [www.co.ramsey.mn.us/hr/hrjobs.asp](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/hr/hrjobs.asp). Resumes will be accepted until August 31, 2005. An initial screening of applicants will commence on or about September 15, 2005. Salary is \$67,260 to \$100,020 D.O.E. Minorities and females are encouraged to apply. ■

### OTHER NEWS

The **15th Annual Minnesota Corrections Association (MCA) Golf Tournament** is set for Monday, September 19, 2005, at Pebble Creek Golf Club in Becker, Minnesota. This event is a four-person scramble, with a 9 a.m. shotgun start. Tournament fee is \$56 per person, which includes green fees, cart, lunch, awards, and prizes. Registration deadline is August 29, 2005. Tournament sign-up forms can be found on the MCA Web site at [www.mncorrections.org/mca/golf.htm](http://www.mncorrections.org/mca/golf.htm). For additional information, contact Chris Jahnke, Wright County Court Services, at [christopher.jahnke@co.wright.mn.us](mailto:christopher.jahnke@co.wright.mn.us) or 763/682-7862. ■

The **Minnesota Correctional Education Foundation's (MCEF) First Golf Open** was a huge success! Held July 28, 2005, at the Majestic Oaks Golf Course in Ham Lake, the event attracted 72 golfers and grossed over \$25,000 for the Foundation. Prizes were awarded to Dan Storkamp for the longest drive for men, Shelly Gilk for the longest drive for women, Billy T. for the longest putt prize, and Randy McAdam for the closet-to-the-pin prize. The DOC facility that won top honors and will showcase the new MCEF DOC Traveling Plaque was the MCF-Shakopee. The Second Annual MCEF Golf Open is tentatively scheduled for July 27, 2006. For information on 2006 corporate sponsors or other ways to provide support, call Curt Peterson at 651/642-0285. ■

The **Minnesota Community Corrections Association's Third Annual Fun on the Fairways Golf Tournament** held recently at the Ponds at Battle Creek was again a success. The first place team was made up of Josh Erickson, Tom Feddema, Chris Jahnke, and Todd Gau. Next year's tournament is tentatively scheduled for July. ■