

NEWS IN CORRECTIONS

The **Minnesota Corrections Association (MCA)** announced its 2004 awards at the Annual Fall Training Institute held October 27-29 in Duluth, Minnesota.

Minnesota Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian was named *Corrections Person of the Year*. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of Corrections in Minnesota.

Commissioner Fabian began her corrections career in 1966 as a group supervisor at the Hennepin County Detention Center. She joined the Ramsey County Community Corrections Department in 1970, serving as a probation officer; Domestic Relations Division director; Juvenile Division director; and ultimately department director for 14 years. As director, Fabian initiated and implemented a visioning process for all employees that defined and established agency goals and values. She increased employment of staff of color by 12 percent. She oversaw construction of a 100-bed Juvenile Detention Center and security additions at Boys Totem Town and the Workhouse. During her tenure, production also started on the Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course, a joint effort of Ramsey County Community Corrections and the Parks and Recreation Department that uses inmate labor for ongoing maintenance of the facility grounds and buildings.

In 2003, Governor Tim Pawlenty appointed Fabian to her present position as State Corrections Commissioner. She has been faced with managing the state's prison crowding problem and a serious budget shortfall. As commissioner, Fabian also serves as a member of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, CrimNet Policy Group, and the Supreme Court Drug Task Force.

Commissioner Fabian has been involved in many associations, including serving as past president of the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties. She has also served on the MCA Conference Planning and Winter Training Committees, Alternatives to Incarceration Task Force, Ramsey County Model Employee Leadership Team, and many other committees.

In announcing the award, MCA said, "There is not much in corrections that Commissioner Fabian has not experienced firsthand. She's experienced, bright, and knowledgeable - and a true leader. She clearly understands the issues, asks staff for input to which she truly listens, and makes sound decisions."

The *MCA Professional Achievement Award* honors an employee in a federal, state, county, or community corrections facility whose abilities, reasoning, judgment, and communications have made a positive impact on offenders, staff, residents, or the general operations of his or her community/facility. This year's recipient is **Lieutenant Joan Thorsten** from the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Willow River/Moose Lake. Lt. Thorsten was recognized for her work with sergeants, helping them identify and address facility issues. She played an important role in development of an informal offender discipline system at the institution.

The *MCA President's Award* is presented to programs, resources, or facilities in corrections and the criminal justice system that have documented creativity, resourcefulness, and innovation. The 2004 recipient is **Thistledeew Camp**, a program of the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Thistledeew began operations in 1955, working with serious youthful offenders from all over Minnesota. In 1970, the camp began working with a wide variety of male adolescents who have committed crimes. As of this year, Thistledeew has provided programming to over 8,000 children. Thistledeew is known for top quality, effective programming using best practices, restorative justice, and cognitive tools.

Thistledeew is well respected in the field of corrections. According to the MCA news release, a 1995 legislative audit rated Thistledeew as "one of the most successful delinquency prevention programs in the State of Minnesota." This success is attributed to nearly 50 years of innovative programming and dedicated staff committed to working with youthful offenders. With recent budget cuts affecting many counties, Thistledeew staff created a three-week endeavor program for adolescent girls and boys. This new program has proven successful and a necessary addition to current programs.

Mailing list inquiries 651/632-5062.

Phone (651/603-0142), fax (651/642-0414), or email (shari.burt@state.mn.us) correctional news.

Therese McCoy from Scott County Court Services received the *MCA Board of Directors Award* for exemplary service to MCA members through participation in association activities. McCoy has held significant positions on the board, including serving as president in 2000. She has also served on other committees and is regarded as an expert within the association on legislative matters. McCoy was cited for exemplifying the meaning of dedication and commitment to MCA. ■

The **Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater** celebrated its 90th anniversary at an event on October 15, 2004. A historical collection of prison memorabilia, including items from the Washington County Historical Society, was on display, which also featured issues of the *Prison Mirror*. Established in 1887, the *Prison Mirror* is the oldest, continuously-published penal newspaper in the United States. It was founded by inmate Cole Younger, of the infamous Jesse James Gang.

“For nearly a century, Stillwater Prison has been a large part of Minnesota’s history,” said Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian. “The dedicated, professional staff ensures a safe and humane environment for offenders and enhances public safety.”

The MCF-Stillwater opened in 1914 and replaced the Territorial Prison at Stillwater, thus eliminating problems concerning space and living conditions. At the time it opened, the new prison was considered by experts to be one of the most modern penal institutions in the world. An industrial prison, it provided work and educational opportunities for inmates. The facility has been renovated several times and currently is the state’s largest close-security prison, housing nearly 1,400 adult male felons.

Fifteen wardens, including current Warden Dan Ferrise, have served at Stillwater during its 90-year history. Former wardens Jack Young (1968-1971), Bruce McManus (1971-1976), Frank Wood (1976-1980), Robert Erickson (1980-1993), Dennis Benson (1993-1996), Erik Skon (1996-1997), David Crist (1997-2003), and David Corbo (acting warden 2003-2004) attended the event. ■

The Minnesota Department of Corrections is pleased to announce the following events and achievements by staff, offenders, and programs:

- Nearly 50 staff at the **MCF-Rush City** participated in a blood drive.
- **Central Office staff** organized a Diversity Potluck to recognize and celebrate diversity in the workplace.

- The **MCF-Stillwater**, in partnership with the Council on Crime and Justice, is educating offenders on voting rights. Once an offender has completed his/her sentence in its entirety, he/she is eligible to vote, according to Minnesota law. ■

Information on the **Governor’s Commission on Sex Offender Policy** is available through the Department of Corrections website at www.doc.state.mn.us/commissionsexoffenderpolicy/default.htm. The site describes the purpose of the commission and provides meeting agendas and recaps. ■

The **2002 Probation Survey** is now available on the Department of Corrections’ website at www.doc.state.mn.us/publications/pdf/Rev.D.FINAL_draft_2002ProbSurvey.pdf. The survey presents statewide data collected from agencies that provide probation services. ■

TIMELINE — 30 years ago:

- Transition of the **MCF-Lino Lakes** from a juvenile to adult facility began. The facility currently houses 1,240 adult male offenders.
- The **Minnesota Program for Victims of Sexual Assault** was legislatively created in the corrections department. State agency programs for crime victims were eventually combined into the Center for Crime Victim Services in 1998. ■

OPENINGS

The United States District Court for North Dakota is seeking a qualified individual for the position of **Chief Probation Officer**. The position is responsible for administration of federal probation and pretrial service operations within the district. A bachelor’s degree appropriate to the position and five or more years of related experience are required. A full vacancy announcement is available by calling 701/297-7213. Interested persons should submit a letter of application and resume to Human Resources, U.S. Probation Office, 655 First Avenue North, Fargo, North Dakota 58102. Application deadline is November 15, 2004. ■