



Impact Georgia

April 2012 Newsletter

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A Message from Commissioner Brian Owens



In November 2011, the Council supplied the Governor and lawmakers with the recommendations to review for the upcoming Legislative Session.

In February 2012 during the Legislative Session, these recommendations were incorporated into House Bill

• Cap Probation Detention Center sentence at 180 days

• Require Systematic Performance Measurement and Auditing of Departmental supervision, programming and treatment

Since the Joint Committee is comprised of both Senators and Representatives, HB 1176 was not bound by Cross-Over Day. Cross-Over Day is Day 30 of the legislative session and is the day bills must pass from one house to the other in hope of becoming legislation.

On March 27, 2012, HB 1176 was approved by the Senate by a 51-0 vote. On March 30, 2012, HB 1176 was approved by the House with a 162-0 vote. The passing of this bill will

provide changes to the Georgia criminal justice system that will in turn save taxpayers millions of dollars projected in future prison spending

Georgia has shown our citizens we can be tough on crime, but now we need to prove that we can be smart on crime. Georgia can begin achieving this starting as soon as fiscal year 2013 with the implementation of HB 1176.

Throughout the changes within our criminal justice system, the 13-member Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform will remain in place with the sole purpose of continuously reviewing and developing new ways to safeguard Georgians, save tax dollars and lower our recidivism rate.

The 2012 Legislative Session has ended and the Criminal Justice Reform Bill has passed.

As state employees and citizens of Georgia, I believe it is important to understand the actions taken to turn the recommendations created by the Special Council into House Bill 1176 and the steps taken to gain approval during the 2012 Session.

The process began in June 2011, when the Special Council was advised on the nature and complexities of the criminal justice system and was asked to determine the goals that must be met to reform the existing system. Once established, the Council was divided into three work groups. These groups focused on the following:

1. Admissions and Sentencing Reform
2. Length of Stay in Prison and Parole Release Processes
3. Community Supervision

1176. HB 1176 is a broad ranging bill encompassing everything from sentencing reform to community supervision.

Highlights of HB 1176:

- Increase Thresholds for most Theft offenses to \$1,000
- Establish degrees of Burglary and Forgery with corresponding penalty structures
- Distinguish Possession of Controlled Substances offenses by weight of corresponding penalty structures
- Implement Evidence-based Practices
- Expand Accountability Courts
- Establish Prison Diversion Pilot Projects in two judicial circuits
- Require the use of Graduated Community Sanctions by Probation and Parole Officers



Did You Know..House Bill 1176 was approved by the House by a 162-0 vote and by the Senate by a 51-0 vote!

Georgia DOC Vision & Mission Statements

VISION

The Georgia Department of Corrections is the best corrections system in the nation at protecting citizens from convicted offenders and at providing effective opportunities for offenders to achieve positive change. We are a leader and partner in making Georgia a safer, healthier, better educated, growing, and best managed state.

MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects and serves the public as a professional organization by effectively managing offenders while helping to provide a safe and secure environment for the citizens of Georgia.



GPA Mid-Winter Conference

Contributed by Admin. Ops. Manager Nancy Jackson



Tom and Maureen Bishop accept a crystal memorial for their daughter, Tiffany, from GPA President Scot Mullis and Rome CPO Chad Dabbs



Commissioner Owens, PO III Hooks and Director of Probation Operations Cooper



Commissioner Owens, Atlanta Circuit Coordinating Chief Rittweger and Director of Probation Operations Cooper



Commissioner Owens, PO II Martin and Director of Probation Operations Cooper



Commissioner Owens, PO II Brock and Director of Probation Operations Cooper



Commissioner Owens, CPO Pitts and Director of Probation Operations Cooper

The Georgia Probation Association held their Mid-Winter Conference March 14th through 16th in Helen, Georgia.

Over 250 people attended this year's GPA Conference, which turned out to be the largest ever in Mid-Winter Conference history!

The theme for this year's conference was, "We are Stronger Together". An appropriate theme since there were more than 40 employees from Parole in attendance.

Guest Speakers included the Honorable Judge Jason Deal

of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, Director of Parole Michael Nail, Deputy Director of Probation Mark Morris, Research Evaluation and Assessment Unit Manager Robert Kiedinger, and Developmental Consultant Gary Bell.

Topics discussed included Accountability Courts, Criminal Justice Reform, Dynamic Risk Assessment, Texas Christian University Drug Screen, and Radio Communications Rollout.

During the conference, Commissioner Owens and Director of Probation Operations

Cooper presented five GDC employees with Commissioner's Coins. Brunswick Circuit CPO Jimmy Pitts was recognized for his 34 years of outstanding leadership and service to the Department and GPA. Atlanta Circuit Coordinating Chief Pam Rittweger was recognized for her outstanding leadership to the Atlanta Judicial Circuit and the great strides she took in improving the largest judicial circuit in Georgia. Macon Circuit PO III Nakesha Hooks was recognized for her leadership and commitment to the Agency as a PO III and in her developmental assignment as

the New BPOT Coordinator. PO II Tina Brock of the Clarkesville Probation Office, was recognized for her contributions to her community with coordinating and spearheading activities with local law enforcement in order to enhance public safety and for her role as Adjunct Instructor for the PO Safety Training. LaFayette Probation Office PO II Brett Martin was recognized for his efforts in recapturing two escapees from Walker State Prison.

On the last day of the conference, a Remembrance Ceremony was held in honor of PO Tiffany Bishop. GPA President Scot Mullis and

Rome Circuit CPO Chad Dabbs presented Tom and Maureen Bishop, Tiffany's parents, with a crystal memorial. In addition, Commissioner Owens and Director of Probation Operations Cooper presented Tiffany Bishop's parents with a Commissioner's Coin.

Augusta Community Impact Program Holds its First Community Resource Fair

Contributed by Administrative Assistant Sharon Davis



Augusta Day Reporting Center and Community Participants

On February 29th, the Augusta Community Impact Program held its First Community Resource Fair at the Augusta Day Reporting Center.

Stakeholders from the community joined in to provide information to Probationers, Parolees, and Offenders recently released and that are not under supervision.

Stakeholders from the

community included Easter Seals of East Georgia, GAP Ministries, Helping People Start Over, Garden City Rescue Mission, Head of the Giant Ministries Inc, Department of Labor, Hope House, The Counseling Group, Faith Outreach Christian Life Center, The Goodwill Job Connection, Evangelist Gerald T Williams, and Mercy Ministries.

In addition, the Department of



Community Participants providing information to DRC participants

Motor Vehicles, Social Security Administration, Augusta Public Transit, NAMI, Child Support Recovery, Golden Harvest Food Bank, and United Way 211 provided information to the participants.

Thank you to Probation Officers Deborah McDonald, Bill Hatley and PO III Robby Hardaway for their assistance during this event.

We would like to give a special thank you to Counselor Roxanne Williams and CIP Officer Maegon Tyree for their time and dedication to this event.

We all, in the Augusta Circuit would call this event a huge success and look forward to the next Community Resource Fair.

Major Carolyn Liggins Receives Patriot Award

Contributed by Special Operations/1st Sergeant and Georgia Army National Guard Major Paul Locke



L to R: ESGR Volunteer Terry Haught, Program Manager BCOT Major Carolyn Liggins, Special Operations/1st Sergeant and Georgia Army National Guard Major Paul Locke and ESGR Volunteer Tucker Haught

On March 7th, Tucker and Terry Haught, a husband and wife team of volunteers representing the Employer Support of The Guard and Reserve (ESGR) arrived at State Offices South at Tift College to present the Patriot Award to Major Carolyn Liggins.

"Major Liggins who has been my supervisor from July 2006 until January 2012 has consistently supported the military by allowing me to serve

this country and state by carrying out my oath and obligation. She has supported me during my monthly weekend drills as well as my deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Major Liggins epitomizes true patriotism," said Special Operations/1st Sergeant and Georgia Army National Guard Major Paul Locke.

Wilcox State Prison Medical Department Raises Money for HeartWalk

Contributed by Operations Analysis Tech Nikki Warren

On February 14th, the Medical Department at Wilcox State Prison held a bake sale to raise money for the American Heart Association *Heart Walk*.

Medical staff also sold tickets for a Valentine's Day basket filled with over \$250 worth of donated gifts. The lucky winner of the basket was Officer Ken Lowery.

Through these fundraisers, the Medical Department

raised \$1,000, which was donated to the American Heart Association. The donation will help fund projects like Pediatric heart and stroke research, will assist in the efforts of prevention and treatment of heart disease, and will help doctors provide life saving information to those in need.

The Medical Staff would like to give a big THANK YOU to Warden Toole and to the Administrative and Security Staff, for all of the help and support given.



L to R: Medical Administrator Terri Mullis with Officer Lowery

Calendar of Events

Thursday, April 12
Board of Public Safety
Joint Board Meeting

Monday, April 16
Georgia Law Enforcement
Memorial Wall Ceremony
Rome Probation Office

Tuesday, April 17
Quarterly Awards
Ceremony

Monday, April 23
HOLIDAY
Confederate Memorial Day
Observed

Tuesday & Wednesday,
April 24 & 25
Senior Leadership Off-Site
at State Offices South
at Tift College

Saturday, April 28
21st Annual Ride for
Fallen Officers at
Turner Field

Stay Connected
to GDC



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GACorrections

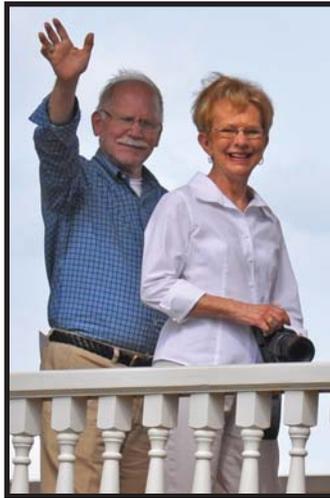
State Offices South Welcomes the Tift College Alumnae Association



On March 30th, State Offices South welcomed the Tift College Alumnae Association during their 2012 Tift

Alumnae Weekend!

The ladies of Tift College along with their families



enjoyed a presentation from Campus Operations Superintendent Tim Williams, a video presentation of interviews of



Dr. Cathryn Futral, Nell Bowen and Carey Allmon Russell and a tour of Tift College.

If you are interested in viewing the interviews, please visit the Department's Facebook page.

Macon Transitional Center Hosts Mentors Project Program

Contributed by Superintendent Terry Seltzer



Residents during Mentors Project Program at the Macon Transitional Center

During the first of the year, residents at the Macon Transitional Center celebrated National Mentors Month by hosting a Mentors Project Program.

Georgia Department of Labor TOPPSTEP Representative Ivey Webb served as the guest speaker of the event. Webb gave his personal testimony stating, "If I can do it, you can do it."

Webb has been employed with the DOL for 33 years.

Many of the residents participating in the Macon TC Mentor Project gave their testimonies and thanked staff and their mentors at the TC for helping them get on track with being successful in the Work Release Program.

Many of the mentees have had a 360 degree turn around since being placed in the Transitional Center's Mentoring Project, and are now Mentors to other residents at the center.

Georgia Department
of Corrections
Employee Assistance
Program

Contact Statewide
Coordinator at
478-992-5160
OR contact your
local
EAP Coordinator



EAP CONSULTANTS, INC.

1-800-869-0276
No referral is needed
Three free visits
www.eapconsultants.com



Commissioner Brian Owens
Public Affairs Director, Joan Heath; Managing Editor, Gwendolyn Hogan

We welcome all submissions. Please submit articles and photos to: Gwendolyn Hogan by April 19th
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