

January 4, 2008

DIRECTOR'S NEWS UPDATE



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DOC AUDIT RESULTS – A JOB WELL DONE

Well...after six months of auditing, the results of the legislative mandated top to bottom performance review a.k.a. audit...of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections has concluded.

A sincere and hardy THANK YOU goes out to all the employees of the department who make our agency one of the best in the nation. I believe that our BEST IN THE NATION STATUS is confirmed by this audit process. Also, a thank you must be given to our predecessors who have retired etc., as we did not become one of the best without their efforts. I know many employees had an opportunity to visit with auditors as you have shared some of the auditors' comments with me. Auditor comments as summarized ranged from their amazement of how much we do with so little...how innovative the department is...high degree of dedication and level of professionalism at all levels of the organization...how cooperative and helpful staff were...the productive interaction of staff and offenders...and many more superlatives and compliments too many of which to mention in this short writing. Suffice to say that I did not hear one negative comment from any of the array of auditors utilized in this process.

I also would like to take a moment to thank the auditing firm of MGT as they were professional, objective, comprehensive and had a vast body of knowledge in our profession which was clearly demonstrated by not only the manner by which they conducted the audit but by the final audit product report.

The department provided the auditors a self analysis of weaknesses and strengths in preparation for the audit. Also, results from our Quality Assurance process were shared. This was all prepared in an effort to increase transparency and to assist the auditors with this monumental task. If we receive permission to do so, the complete audit will be indexed and placed on our website. This will be in keeping with our goal of transparency and open government operations.

The core issues of the primary audit focus were:

- Population and Capacity
- Capacity Management
- Community Programs
- Institutional Operations
- Administrative and Support Services

Of course there are many sub-categories under each one of these headings and there was also some review of the parole process, the Criminal Justice Resource Center, diversion programs and population projections.

Rather than to go into a number of specific details on the audit, as mentioned earlier, hopefully the audit will be available on our website or at least linked to MGT or the State House of Representatives or State Senate websites if they also post the audit report.

However, in summary I was extremely pleased with the audit. There were no surprises and no major weaknesses identified that were not previously mentioned in our self analysis or otherwise aware of. The audit includes an assortment of recommendations small and large, simple and complex. Some recommendations can be accomplished with policy changes and others will require legislation and or legislative funding. There are some recommendations that are outside of the purview of the department. Also there are some recommendations that will require further data collection, bench marking and gap analysis before decisions can be made.

There will be some recommendations that it may not be in the best interest of the state to implement. There may be some items in the audit that we in the profession would say are insignificant but external stakeholders may see them differently. The audit does an excellent job demonstrating the complexity of an evidenced based comprehensive correctional system.

There are many role models in life and in our current world, most attention gravitates toward the media and/or sport personalities. True role models are those that have impact in ones life whether it is as a mentor or some other type of positive influence. Role models can also be groups of people who provide an invaluable service. Such is the case with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. Not that anyone required confirmation, but the employees of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections serve as a role model for public safety, public efficiency, dedication, and being the best in the profession. So congratulations on an excellent audit and keep up the great work.