

Media Release

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NDCS Launches Initiatives Addressing Issues Raised in Culture Survey

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services announces, today, the implementation of initiatives aimed at addressing recruitment and retention challenges identified by agency staff in the NDCS Staff Culture Survey published May 2016.

The initiatives, a direct result of feedback provided in the survey, include areas concerning staffing, overtime, engagement, and safety, and should be in-place or near-completion by Fall 2016.

12-hour Shift Pilot Program at Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI): Central Office and TSCI staff will work together to create a pilot Protective Services staffing pattern that offers a combination of 8 and 12-hour shifts as requested by staff in the survey. This approach will give staff the flexibility to select work shifts that best meet their professional, personal and family needs. The 12-hour shifts will provide a combination of days off that include either Saturday or Sunday, and a reduction in the amount of mandatory overtime created by the current staffing pattern.

1st-Level Supervisors (Shift Sergeants) Pilot Program at the Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP): The current organizational “chain-of-command” for Protective Services staff has Correctional Lieutenants serving as the evaluating supervisor for more subordinates that can be managed effectively and efficiently. There are some lieutenants with more than 50 direct reports. This is an unmanageable span-of-control and has a direct impact on employee engagement. According to many modern organizational experts, about 15 to 20 subordinates per supervisor or manager is more ideal while being dependent upon a variety of factors. This pilot program at NSP will create a new supervisory job class for the Protective Services ranks: Correctional Sergeants who are responsible for direct-supervision and evaluation of staff. This new job class will receive additional compensation commensurate with the additional responsibilities.

Facility Security/Procedure Audits: The escape of two inmates from the Lincoln Corrections Center on June 10th led to the identification of areas of improvement regarding security practices and security hardware. The agency has completed thorough security audits at all 10 facilities and is completing corrective action plans to address deficiencies. Security practices and systems are foundational to keeping staff, inmates and the public safe. Due to operational security

sensitivities, specifics regarding these improvements will be withheld until they are completed. Upon completion, the agency will share the specifics with interested parties to include the public.

100-bed Temporary Housing Unit at Community Correctional Center – Lincoln (CCCL):

The FY2017 NDCS budget included a \$1.8 million allocation to construct temporary housing for 100 inmates aimed at alleviating population issues there. NDCS is partnering with the architectural firm of Carlson West Povondra (CWP) to design a structure that can be built quickly and will provide flexibility of use. The building will initially be used to provide housing for 100 community custody inmates, with the ability to convert it to programming space when it is no longer needed for housing. The target to complete construction and occupy the space is September 2017.

“Our agency is undergoing remarkable changes,” Scott Frakes, NDCS director, said. “The honesty, integrity and commitment to improving our agency is evident from the response to the survey and has directly-led to many of the initiatives we are undertaking. Employee engagement is contagious and the rates at which staff are implementing improvements is impressive and gaining momentum every day. We are on the right path as an organization,” Frakes said.