

DOCS



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New York State Department of Correctional Services

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Inmate decline drives drop in bed needs



Commissioner Goord is seated at table with other criminal justice leaders in the cavernous hearing room of the Legislative Office Building as they detailed the Governor's budget proposals to members of the fiscal committees of the Senate and Assembly. The Department's initiatives are fueled by a population decline of 6,600 inmates to date, expected to drop by another 1,000 in the next fiscal year.

Downsizing changes how we look at prison system

I want to assure all of our employees that we will protect their rights under their union contracts and Civil Service law as we continue to downsize the inmate population.

As we point out in the cover story beginning on page 4, our population has declined by 6,600 inmates in the past four years. We predict a further decline of 1,000 inmates in the coming fiscal year.

The majority of the double bunks scheduled to come down were part of the takedown that we announced in 2000.

The takedown proposes the closing of the Fulton work release facility in the Bronx. The 2001-02 budget called for the reduction of hundreds of work release beds in New York City.

While the budget did not specifically identify Fulton, its closure has been an open secret in recent years: Its population has declined from more than 700 to 200 today, we have allowed line staff to attrit out of the prison without replacing them and it has one deputy superintendent where there were once three.

The third and newest component is our proposal to close Camp Pharsalia and Mt. McGregor camp.

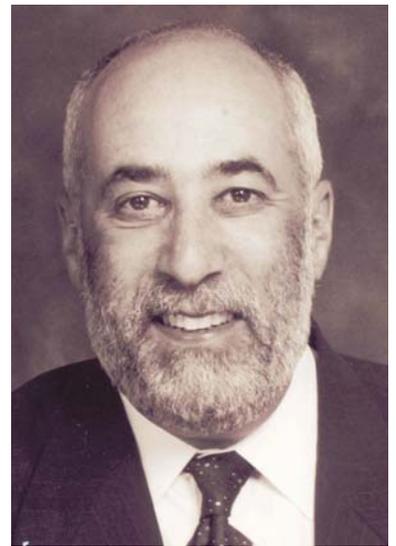
Just as with the work release reduction, the camp closures

are related to this central fact: the number of inmates eligible to be housed in minimum security has declined by 40 percent since 1994, from 9,759 to 5,852.

At the other end of the spectrum, the number of inmates released and then returned for committing new crimes is down by a third from 1995. That means the programs that we mandate for nonviolent offenders are having the desired effect of reducing crime on our streets and recidivism among offenders.

This month's articles

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Commissioner Goord

While that is good news for the general public, it is a mixed blessing for our employees.

No one likes the prospect of being displaced from their jobs and their communities for new positions.

I know that from first-hand experience. Early in my DOCS career, I was force-transferred and, on another occasion, laid off.

I do not expect employees to like having their lives and families disrupted today by reassignment any more than I did back then.

That's why I decided to delay facility reassignments and closures until the budget is enacted. Then, all affected staff will know the final plan and can make their reassignment decisions based upon the same information. If necessary, we may delay the security assignment list revision scheduled for May.

But as we discuss our plans to downsize the system with the Legislature, we must remain mindful of one central fact.

And that is this: As the population decreases, we must accept the changes that occur and find new ways of doing business.

When our need for medium-security space grew in the 1980s, we responded by building thousands of beds in dozens of new prisons.

When our need for maximum-security space expanded in the 1990s, we responded by building Upstate, Five Points and nine S-Blocks.

We do not know how our discussions with the Legislature will conclude. We also don't know the budget that will be finalized by the Governor and Legislature.

But we do know that the system is changing as it downsizes. We must manage how that downsizing will occur to safeguard our facilities. I will be equally concerned with the impact upon our employees and their families.

The challenge before us will be to ensure the prison system acknowledges the effects of downsizing – in a manner that maintains the security of our prisons for staff, continues appropriate program levels for inmates and safeguards the communities in which our prisons are located. 📖

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ON THE COVER: The masthead brings DOCS|TODAY together with its past via "Copper John," the Colonial soldier who has stood atop the front gate of Auburn, the state's oldest prison, since 1821. The American flag was affixed to his bayonet in memory of those who lost their lives during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks upon the United States. The flag itself was taken from a photograph of it flying above Ground Zero.

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Pataki presents award to DOCS' hero's family



Michael L. Williams

Insp^ector General's Investigator Michael L. Williams, who was killed in action in Iraq Oct. 17 while on duty with the Army National Guard, has been honored posthumously with the Governor's Tribute to African American Leaders of Excellence in State Service.

Governor Pataki presented the award Feb. 3 to his widow Carolyn, daughters Nicole and Minique and his step-daughter

LaToya Underwood at the annual New York State African American History Month Kick-off Celebration in Albany.

Mr. Williams' citation proclaims: "His life serves as an excellent example of the caliber of employees that work for the state of New York and has truly demonstrated an exemplary commitment and outstanding service to this great nation."

In nominating him in December for the honor Commissioner Goord noted that Mr. Williams, who was born in Buffalo and grew up in Lackawanna, enlisted in the Army following graduation from high school and served in the Army Reserves in Kuwait during the Persian Gulf War.

After terrorists struck on September 11 – his birthday – he felt duty-bound to reenlist in the armed forces. He was activated by the Army National Guard Feb. 4, 2003.

Mr. Williams died near Baghdad while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom as a Specialist in the Buffalo-based 105th



Governor Pataki embraces Mrs. Williams.

Military Police Company, attached to the 220th Military Police Brigade. He was 46 years old.



Governor Pataki presents award to Carolyn Williams, Investigator Williams' widow. Standing to her left are daughters Minique and Nicole Williams and step-daughter LaToya Underwood. To their left are Commissioner Michelle Cheney Donaldson of the state Division of Human Rights and Commissioner Goord.

Investigator Williams began his career with DOCS in 1984 and worked at Sing Sing, Attica, Collins and Wyoming prisons before transferring to Gowanda in 1994, where he was active in the facility's honor guard. He joined the Inspector General's office in 1999 and was assigned to the Buffalo office.

In a special message of condolence following Mr. Williams' death, Governor Pataki said, "We will be forever thankful for Michael's life and his contributions to our State and the security of our nation.

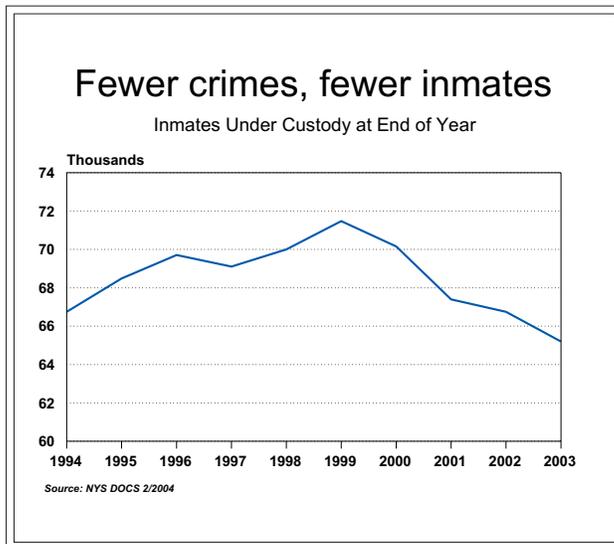
"It is a legacy in which his family and friends can take great pride." 

45% crime drop fuels 9% inmate decline; fewer prison beds needed

“Fewer crimes mean fewer inmates,” Commissioner Goord said on Jan. 23 as he announced projections showing the prison population is expected to drop by 1,000 inmates in Fiscal Year 2004-05.

While that decline in the prison population comes among nonviolent offenders, violent felons are serving longer sentences and being denied parole. In fact, that growing percentage of inmates serving prison sentences for violent crimes is the highest in 15 years. The increase required a record-setting construction program to build the 5,000 prison cells to house them to protect the public and prison staff.

Those prison cells for violent offenders are necessary because FBI statistics show New York’s criminal justice policies



have contributed to a 45 percent decline in index crimes in New York State between 1994-2002, with a 49 percent drop in violent crime. Nationally, FBI data show a more modest 23 percent decline in index crimes, with a 31 percent decline in violent crimes.

The prison population is expected to decline to the Fiscal 2003-04 target of 65,100 inmates by March 31, 2004. Commissioner Goord projects a further decline in Fiscal 2004-05 that will bring the prison population to 64,100 inmates by March 31, 2005.

Should that occur, it would mark the fifth year in a row in which the Department saw a decline in the inmate population. Due to the decline to date, the Commissioner has proposed reducing capacity by 1,114 excess beds.

Please turn to page 13

State to vacate 892 excess medium-security beds targeted since 2000

The 892 top double bunks coming down as part of the next round of downsizing include:

Cape Vincent will net 242 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 79) and 882 beds (a decrease of 240 beds). It will also lose three civilian jobs: a teacher, a chaplain and a senior drug treatment counselor.

Riverview will net 242 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 71 jobs) and 882 beds (a decrease of 240 beds). It will also lose six civilian jobs: a chaplain, a teacher, a counselor and three vocational instructors.

Watertown will net 244 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 18 jobs) and 670 beds (a decrease of 83 beds.) It has a higher inmate-to-staff ratio than neighboring Cape Vincent or Riverview because it is not a purpose-built prison. Its layout requires additional officers to provide proper security coverage. Watertown will also lose two civilian jobs: a teacher and a recreation program leader.

Orleans will net 275 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 34 jobs) and 1,082 beds (a decrease of 150 beds). It will also lose one civilian job: a vocational instructor.

Marcy will net 315 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 33 jobs) and 1,281 beds (a decrease of 120 beds). It will also lose three civilian jobs: a teacher, a recreation program leader and a counselor.

Collins will net 403 uniformed jobs (a decrease of 10 jobs) and 1,253 beds (a decrease of 59 beds). Collins will not lose any civilian staff under this initiative. 📖



Photo above shows a double bunked dorm, where sight lines from the officer’s station become even worse when inmates fill the unit. Photo below shows a dorm with vacated beds, restoring sight lines across the unit.



Minimum-security inmates down 40%; 'max' inmates up by 23%

The state's plan to close the camp adjacent to Mt. McGregor prison in Saratoga County reflects New York's success in reducing crime by 45 percent since 1995.

From 1994 through 2003, the number of minimum-security inmates declined by 40 percent, from 9,759 to 5,852. Over the same period, medium-security inmates declined by 6 percent, from 36,594 to 34,245. The number of maximum-security inmates increased by 23 percent, from 20,397 to 25,100.

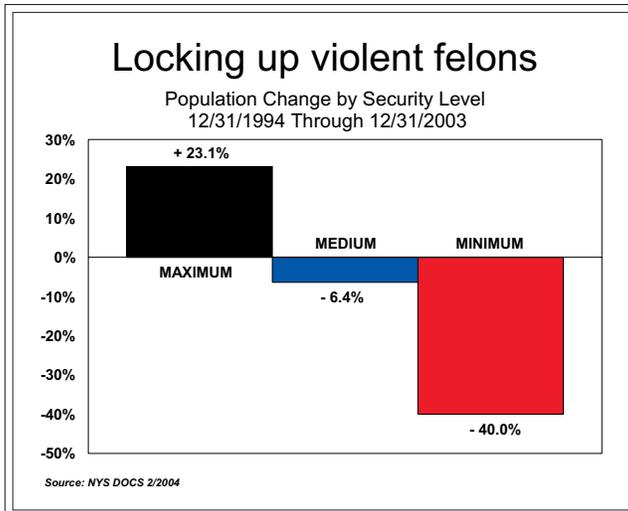
The decline in inmates eligible for minimum-security placement has led to the decision to phase out:

Camp Pharsalia has 105 employees, including 71 uniformed and 34 civilian. Closing it will save \$6 million in annual operating costs. In addition, \$4 million will have to be spent on capital projects in the next two years to continue operating the camp at its capacity of 258 inmates. Those projects include a new sewage treatment plant and rehabilitation of the electrical system.

McGregor camp has 300 beds and operates from within the budget of the adjacent 544-bed, medium-security Mt. McGregor prison. While DOCS identifies the final number of employees apportioned to the camp, the total is expected to be approximately 84, including 74 uniformed and 10 civilian personnel. Closing it will save \$5 million in annual operating costs. That will avoid the need to spend \$400,000 in the next two years for necessary capital construction projects. They include such projects as fire alarm systems, masonry repair projects and electrical system upgrades.

Many communities in Saratoga and Chenango counties rely upon supervised inmate work crews from the two camps to perform civic projects for local government and non-profit organizations.

The success rate and the general absence of any incidents involving the crews has generated positive records of safety and security. That leads communities to support the crews.



It is Commissioner Goord's intention to continue some of Pharsalia's crew work from neighboring Georgetown. McGregor main will be assigned inmates approved for outside crews to perform much of the work now completed by camp inmates.

Fulton in the Bronx, has seen its work release population drop from 741 inmates in December 1994 to 222 in January. A total of 35 staff have already attrited voluntarily from its work force. That leaves a total of 107 staff, including 59 uniformed and 48 civilian, to be re-assigned as the facility is closed. The

inmates can be accommodated at the Edgecombe and Lincoln work release prisons in Manhattan.

That declining pool of minimum-security inmates is the source for inmates eligible for such prison programs as community work crews, the Shock Incarceration boot camp-style

program that is a national model, work release programs that generally operate in New York City which is home to 60 percent of inmates and drug treatment programs needed by three-quarters of the inmate population. Those programs have already been reduced across the state because of the decline in minimum-security inmates.



This housing unit at McGregor camp is slated to close.

mates.

The decline in minimum-security inmates has already led to:

- Eliminating 24 community crews at 17 prisons.
- Converting Butler's 240-bed drug treatment component to a general confinement prison.
- Reducing Summit's Shock Incarceration beds from 250 down to 100.
- Closing minimum-security camps adjacent to two medium-security prisons – 156 beds at Groveland and 188 more at Mid-State.
- Shutting down the 84-bed annex at Wyoming.



Providing a link to the community

Edgecombe

Edgecombe is nestled in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, home to the Algonquian Indians until the 1626 sale of the island led to farms replacing the wilderness. Wealthy merchants eventually began building estates in the area in the 1800s, stately edifices which remained for more than a century. It became home to working class immigrants from western Europe, followed by more recent migrations from Cuba, Puerto Rico and South America. Housed in a facility that once met the medical needs of the community, Edgecombe now addresses the social needs of inmates preparing to rejoin New York City's communities.

With the passage of time, the persona of the area was to change again. In the 1920's and 1930's, the area surrounding Edgecombe was rapidly developed to provide housing for working class families, many of whom had just arrived in this country from overseas. In the 1920's the demographics were primarily Irish Catholic. In the 1930's and 1940's the demographics changed, with Jewish immigrants arriving in droves from Germany and Austria. In the 1940's and the 1950's the demographics changed once again, as a large Puerto Rican com-

munity became established in the area. In the 1950's Cubans moved into Washington Heights followed by Dominicans in the 1970's, as it remains today.

Different missions in bygone eras

Edgecombe, at 611 Edgecombe Ave. between 163rd and 164th Streets, was built in 1936 as Mother Cabrini Hospital. It remained a community hospital until 1966, when it was converted by the state into a drug rehabilitation center.

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The drug rehabilitation facility opened on April 1, 1967. It was known as the Edgecombe Rehabilitation Center, which operated under the auspices of the state's Narcotics Addiction Control Commission (NACC). NACC was created to curb heroin use and drug trafficking and was New York's way of addressing the ongoing problem with drugs that had started to rise in the 1950's.

Placement at the center was optional. Drug users were afforded hearings at Edgecombe which were conducted by the NACC. Violators were given the choice of entering the drug rehabilitation center or serving a jail/prison sentence.

NACC rehabilitation centers were staffed by civilian treatment personnel and narcotics Correction Officers who wore civilian clothing. Edgecombe residential clients were involved in full-time programming designed to break their drug habits and prepare them for a law-abiding return to their communities. Programs included automobile and television repair shops. Educational programs, job placement and recreational activities were also available.

In the 1970's, the state began to phase out its NACC facilities. In 1974, Edgecombe became a prison.

Providing the tools to succeed

Edgecombe is classified as a minimum-security correctional facility for male inmates aged 16 and older. The facility provides for work release, day reporting and community residential treatment programming.

Edgecombe was first accredited by the American Correctional Association in 1991, affirming that it meets and in many cases exceeds acceptable industry standards in all facets of its daily operations. The facility was most recently accredited in 2003. It will seek to be re-accredited in 2006.

Edgecombe's principal function is to provide inmates nearing their release with a physical, motivational and supportive setting for meaningful work, educational release and substance abuse programs. The vast majority of Edgecombe's inmates are within or in close proximity to the communities in which they plan to reside upon release.



Sgt. Ronald Bolt, the assistant Watch Commander, at work.

Edgecombe's mission, like that of the Department's other work release facilities, is to serve as a bridge between incarceration and success on the outside.

The thrust of the programs at Edgecombe is on individual and family counseling and upgrading marketable job skills and personal abilities. And thanks to the continued dedication and diligence of staff, licensed treatment personnel and volunteers from the local community, it's a mission that has been successful since the facility accepted its first inmates in 1974.

Edgecombe has an in-house bed capacity of 413. DOCS also has a contract for an additional 100 beds at Phoenix House in the Bronx. Inmates housed there are on Edgecombe's count. Phoenix House provides a residential drug treatment program with Edgecombe that entails a variety of support systems like medical services, individual and group counseling and education on the dynamics of addiction.

The Phoenix House program is considered vital in the successful rehabilitation of chemically-addicted inmates. And that's a key when one considers that 82 percent of Edgecombe's inmates, as of late last year, were incarcerated for drug offenses.

Before being transferred to Edgecombe to continue to participate in the Department's Comprehensive Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (CASAT) program, the inmates must complete an initial six-month phase of treatment at Marcy.

That treatment program in central New York is also overseen by Phoenix House staff. After that program, the inmates are sent on to Phase II at the Phoenix House program in the Bronx, which also lasts six months.

Upon successful completion of the Phoenix House program at Phelan Place, the inmates are transferred to Edgecombe. There, they will continue participation in the work release program, where they will remain until paroled.

While in work release, inmates at Phoenix House participate in its outpatient program located on Northern Boulevard in Long Island City.

Participants start with three meetings a week in an effort to ensure a continuum of care. As they progress, the number of meetings they are required to attend is reduced.



CO Brian Burford processes an inmate out of the facility.

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The Department's temporary release programs, which include work release, have proven to be a cost-effective means of housing select non-violent felony offenders in a secure environment without jeopardizing community safety.

The primary mandate of the Department's temporary release programs is to transition inmates from prisons to the streets by enabling them to obtain gainful employment and find residences during their incarceration.

In that regard, Edgecombe has forged close ties with a variety of community-based agencies to find jobs for its inmates. One of them is Wildcat Services, an outside contractor paid to provide job development and placement for the facility's inmates. Wildcat staff meet with inmates during their orientation phase upon arrival at Edgecombe. Their goal is to enroll the inmates in their job placement program. Wildcat Services has a performance-based contract with Edgecombe, which means the company is paid according to the number of inmates it enrolls and places in jobs.

More than just the inmates benefit when they are placed in work release jobs, where inmates pay taxes and prison boarding fees to offset the cost of their incarceration. The inmates are learning a valuable work ethic by showing up to their jobs on time each day and taking pride in their work. They are also learning valuable job skills that will help provide for themselves and their families.

The Department's temporary release programs have indeed proven to be successful. Repeated studies by New York, other jurisdictions and outside agencies have confirmed that inmates who successfully participate in these programs return to prison at lower rates than those who have not.

Also playing a role in the lower recidivism rate: Work release tends to make inmates more financially stable at the time of their release than inmates who did not participate in the program. Most have also been able to develop a broad-based community support system during the time they're out of the prison, and hopefully permanent employment. Many inmates who have participated in the Department's temporary release program call it "a second chance at life."

To be eligible to participate in the temporary release program, inmates must be within 24 months of earliest release eligibility. They also must have never been convicted of absconding or escape offenses; have no outstanding warrants, and be physically, mentally and emotionally capable of seeking and

maintaining steady, gainful employment. Participants also cannot be convicted of a homicide, sex crime or most other violent felonies.

Under temporary release, eligible inmates may be granted the privilege of leaving their respective facility for a period not exceeding 14 hours a day, with the exception of those inmates who may be on furloughs. Inmates assigned to temporary release participate in work release, educational release, furlough and a rehabilitation therapy program.

The majority of Edgecombe's inmates, like inmates at other similar facilities, are assigned to work release.

Work release inmates typically work 40 hours a week. On their off hours, they do what any average New Yorker would do. They attend self-help meetings and counseling sessions in their continuing efforts to get their lives on track, seek a job, go to school, church or run errands.

They also return to the facility at night to attend programming under the oversight of staff and community volunteers.

While there are no structured programs at Edgecombe, AA and NA meetings, HIV/AIDS counseling sessions and Prison Ministries Fellowship seminars are regularly provided to the facility's inmates.

Inmates who are assigned to work release see Social Security payments as well as federal and state income taxes withheld from their paychecks, like any other wage earner. The net earnings for work release inmates totaled \$5,765,851 in 2003 and they paid \$1,724,166 in taxes. They also paid \$2,162,906 in room and board charges and saved \$3,289,200 to help provide for themselves and their families. They also paid \$313,744 in family support, reducing the need for or the amount of public assistance.

Inmate wages earned through an inmate's outside employment must be surrendered to facility staff, who then deposit them into the inmate's

account. Money the inmates accumulate in their accounts allows them to begin transitioning into the community, often a step ahead of other inmates from non-work release facilities.

Inmates aren't the only winners under the Department's restructured temporary release program. Communities throughout the state have also benefitted thanks to Governor Pataki's 1995 Executive Order that barred from temporary release any inmates convicted of committing violent acts. (*For a summary of how the Executive Order affected work release, see this month's Cover Story.*)



Nurse Janet Fritz conducts sick call.

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Making an impact in the local community

Unlike many other minimum- and medium-security facilities throughout the state, Edgecombe no longer offers any supervised community service crews to work on behalf of area communities and not-for-profit organizations. Nonetheless, Washington Heights residents and those New Yorkers who live in the surrounding neighborhoods have come to regard the prison as a welcomed and appreciated neighbor, someone who consistently helps out in a time of need.

Security and civilian staff members at the facility have joined forces to contribute significantly to the New York City community over the years. Since 1994, staff members have been involved in an ongoing project to feed the hungry and homeless in neighborhoods throughout Manhattan. The idea was developed when several staff members noticed all the hungry and homeless people in local neighborhoods as they traveled to and from work each day and decided to try to do something to alleviate the problem. They discussed ways of having a positive impact on these needy individuals besides giving them money, which wasn't only used strictly for food. After much brainstorming, the employees decided to provide the area's needy with free meals once a month. Initially, the employees provided the needy with sandwiches and cold drinks. Later, the menu was expanded to include chili and rice or spaghetti with meat sauce and a cold drink.

In this project, the employees meet with inmate volunteers on a Saturday morning to prepare the meals for distribution later that day. No state funds are involved; all the food for this endeavor is donated by Edgecombe staff.

The usual sites where food is delivered in the Manhattan community include a park located at 52nd Street and 10th Avenue; the St. Nicholas Hotel at 155th Street and Nicholas Avenue; a men's shelter near 42nd Street and 9th Avenue; a park located at 9th Street and 12th Avenue, and Tompkins Square Park from 7th to 10th Streets between Avenues A and B.



Jaik Schubert from Community Resources conducts inmate orientation.

Depending on need and the amount of food prepared by staff volunteers and inmates, Edgecombe employees may also scour other Manhattan neighborhoods until all the freshly-prepared meals and accompanying beverages have been distributed. On a typical Saturday, as many as 150 meals and beverages are given out by Edgecombe employees to needy New Yorkers.

The facility also takes part in other community-oriented projects like the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Food Drive and Make a Difference Day (MADD) projects to help out the needy in the community. For its 2002 MADD activities, Edgecombe elected to recognize homeless people with mental illnesses by donating non-perishable food items and used but decent clothing to an agency involved in assisting those types of individuals.

The Corner House, a part of the Goddard Riverside Community Center located at 131 Edgecombe Avenue, was the site chosen to receive the donated food and clothing items for eventual distribution to the needy.

“Our employees here at Edgecombe have always gone above and beyond when it comes to helping the needy and for that all of us in this Department are grateful,” said Edgecombe Superintendent Eduardo Nieves. “They epitomize the family that is corrections and their dedication has helped hundreds in local Manhattan neighborhoods over the years.” 📖



Edgecombe's recreation area is on the facility's roof.

Facility Highlights

CERT completes special assignments that followed 9/11 attacks

COs train successors to protect Capitol, join watershed crews back at their posts

The Department's longest special operation, launched in the terrible, anxious aftermath of the September 11 attacks, ended quietly on January 31, nearly two and a half years after it began.

At 7 that evening, after spending the past two weeks helping their successors with on-the-job training, Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) officers finished their last 12-hour shifts providing security and screening at the state Capitol and Empire State Plaza in Albany, completing a detail that started October 10, 2001. Their duties were assumed by civilian employees of the State Police.

Members of the Auburn, Clinton, Upstate, Coxsackie, Elmira, Mid-State, Great Meadow, Albany and Oneida CERT teams provided 24-hour coverage of 35 to 40 security posts at the government complex, screening employees, visitors, vendors and others who had business there. Albany team leader Lt. Roy Snyder said approximately 300 COs served on the mission at one time or another.

CERT teams from Bedford Hills, Eastern, Downstate, Fishkill, Green Haven, Sing Sing, Wallkill and Woodbourne worked after September 11 with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to secure the city's watershed. That detail ended last June.

The two homeland security missions cost a total of about \$38 million in personnel and other expenses, for which the Department received federal reimbursement.

Sgt. Pete Patti of Coxsackie was one of the CERT sergeants whose duties became a rotating assignment at the Capitol nearly two years ago. He said he and his CERT colleagues faced the

end of the detail with mixed emotions – grateful that the long absences from family and home would be over, yet reluctant to leave the professional bonds created within the Department and with other agencies during their long operation.

COs worked shifts beginning at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., with a CERT supervisor typically reporting at 5 a.m. to cover the shift change.

CERT responsibilities were coordinated closely with the State Police, and Sgt. Patti said a particularly strong relationship grew between the two security forces.

State Police Cpt. Patricia Groeber echoed that sentiment. "We're sure going to miss you guys," she said as officers from the two agencies

were bidding each other farewell. "Stay in touch."

Cpt. Mike Capra, CERT field commander, said the extended and very public Capitol detail presented both challenge and opportunity for the Department. "We don't usually get this kind of exposure," he said while making rounds and congratulating COs at the end of their mission. "We really showed everyone what we can do."

One of the CERT duty posts was an entrance to the state Health Department's Wadsworth Laboratory, whose facilities include a bio-terrorism unit to test for anthrax and other toxins. There, beneath the concourse of the massive Empire State Plaza, CERT screeners were critical in keeping the laboratory functioning efficiently, according to security director Debbie Izzo.

"You guys were godsend here," she said. 📖



CO Jacob Goodemote from Oneida at work on the Capitol detail.



COs Steve Williams of Mohawk (left) and Ray Quackenbush of Great Meadow were part of an inter-agency screening team with state Trooper Roger Allen.

McGregor CO becomes first in DOCS to earn ACA accreditation

Mount McGregor's Marie McCarthy has scaled a professional peak, becoming the first Correction Officer in New York to be certified by the American Correctional Association (ACA).

The certification means she has received national recognition by demonstrating her diligence, knowledge and professionalism in the field. ACA officials also said the additional knowledge gained during the accreditation process often gives correction professionals an advantage over similarly qualified but non-certified co-workers when it comes to promotional opportunities.

There are four ACA certification categories: certified corrections executive, certified corrections manager, certified corrections supervisor and certified corrections officer.

Applicants in each of the four categories are advised to pore through three volumes of ACA-generated materials on various issues pertinent to their respective positions. Successful candidates must score at least 75 on a 200-question, multiple-choice examination.

Although study prior to the exam is not required, answers to the test questions will be found in the ACA materials available for each of the certification categories.

"The education I received in preparing for the test and the certification is a 'win-win' situation as far as I'm concerned," said CO McCarthy, who joined the Department in 1988. "I



CO McCarthy at her post in the mess hall.

learned a lot and perhaps this will open some doors when it comes to promotions. I'm glad I took the test."

In preparing for the nationwide exam, CO McCarthy had to bone up on such issues as Special Housing Units, visiting, interpersonal communication skills and report writing. She estimates she spent some 90 hours studying the three volumes pertaining to her certification category to prepare for the comprehensive exam.

Five Department employees have earned certification since the ACA began certifying correction professionals several years ago. Besides CO McCarthy, the others are Superintendents Ronald Moscicki of Lakeview and Joseph Williams of Lincoln, who are both certified as corrections executives, and Butler Steward Gary Bacher and Green Haven Assistant Deputy Superintendent William Haggett, both certified as

corrections managers.

"I congratulate those employees who have been certified by the ACA, which attests that they are indeed true professionals in the field and assets to this Department," said Commissioner Goord. "I urge other employees throughout the Department, at all levels, to take advantage of this ACA certification opportunity. We're always working to properly educate and train our employees to ensure the safety of staff and others, and this ACA initiative seems to be a natural extension of that."

To take the certified CO exam an applicant must possess at least a high school diploma or a GED. For the three upper tiers ACA officials prefer that candidates possess at least a college degree, although they said appropriate work experience can sometimes be substituted.

Becoming certified by the ACA is the beginning, not the end, of a professional development process. Just as prisons are reaccredited by the ACA every three years, individuals who obtain their certification must be recertified every three years. To do so they must demonstrate they have enhanced their education and job skills in the period between examinations.

"We want people to keep up their skills in corrections and keep up to date as to what's going on in the field," explained Robert Levinson, the ACA's certification specialist. "We want to help ensure that those in the field are functioning at a high professional level." 

On the web ...

Readers with Internet access can obtain information on the world wide web from the offices of both Governor Pataki and Commissioner Goord. Their addresses:

Governor Pataki: <http://www.state.ny.us>

Commissioner Goord: <http://www.docs.state.ny.us>

Colorized editions of DOCS|TODAY, beginning with the January 2003 edition, now appear on the DOCS website. Editions are posted as PDFs when they are sent to the Elmira print shop for publication. 

Hudson saves dollars converting vehicles into firefighting apparatus

Saving taxpayer money while meeting the Department's special firefighting needs, staff and inmates at Hudson expect to complete delivery of three vehicles converted into fire trucks by mid-to-late February, bringing the fleet to 15.

Last year the Department purchased three medium-duty chassis trucks and sent them to Hudson to be transformed into fire trucks for use at Bare Hill (Malone), Wyoming and Elmira.

Under the supervision of Hudson Mechanic John Fabrizio, 10 inmates working in the facility's auto repair shop have been modifying the vehicles into rapid-response fire trucks that will enhance safety and security at the facilities where they are assigned.

Mr. Fabrizio said the Wyoming and Elmira trucks have been completed and delivered, while the vehicle headed to Bare Hill should be finished by mid-to-late February.

The project is both saving money and producing vehicles specially designed and equipped to work inside Department facilities, which face space and security challenges that ordinary fire trucks do not encounter.

Department officials say it costs about \$53,000 to convert each of the trucks. That includes both the cost of the vehicle and the required modifications – such as hoses, floodlights, a winch, self-contained breathing gear, a generator, a metal storage unit, a high-pressured water tank and security items not needed on a regular fire truck.

By comparison, Mr. Fabrizio said, a dealer would charge \$85,000 to \$90,000 for a similar vehicle, and it would not have the special features the Department needs. Cumulative savings are in the \$100,000 range.

“In these austere times, it's important that we look at ways of saving taxpayer dollars while at the same time addressing the needs of the Department,” said Commissioner Goord. “Programs like the one that's ongoing at Hudson help us achieve that objective.”

Mr. Fabrizio and the shop inmates undertook their first truck conversion in 2001. It is now at Eastern.

He said the new trucks are two feet longer than that prototype, made of heavier-duty construction, use four-wheel rather

than two-wheel drive, and carry 300-gallon water tanks in place of a 225-gallon tank.

The Department also has fire trucks stationed at Attica, Auburn, Bedford Hills, Clinton, Coxsackie, Fishkill, Gowanda, Great Meadow, Green Haven, Groveland and Willard.

The Department hopes ultimately to install retrofitted trucks in each facility hub, subject to available budget resources.

To accomplish the conversions, Hudson's assembly team relied on original plans prepared by DOCS fire and safety officials at Central Office in Albany. Those plans were tailored to the Department's needs, such as sometimes having to fight fires in confined and restrictive areas.



Hudson inmate applies finishing touches on fire truck destined for Wyoming.

Mr. Fabrizio, a volunteer firefighter for 28 years, said field experience was also a guide in making modifications.

Benefits of the conversion program will extend beyond facility gates. The new trucks mean more Department equipment will be available for deployment into communities –

such as Clinton, Willard and Attica – where DOCS is an integral part of the local on-call mutual aid response network.

The Department currently relies on its own equipment and that of local fire companies to respond to a facility fire. However, the Department's fleet is aging. And several trucks, primarily the oldest, are larger than ideal since they were designed for highway use, not for the close confines of a prison. The Hudson-modified vehicles solve the close-quarters problem while providing rapid-response capability.

Another advantage of having similar, standardized fire trucks at facilities across the state is that fire and safety personnel will already be familiar with the firefighting equipment if they are transferred to a new site.

Training for the 1,790 DOCS employees who are members of prison fire response teams will also benefit. The new trucks will allow hands-on training on a regular basis at a site close to an employee's home facility. That's a big advantage when it comes to refining skills and learning about new equipment and techniques.

Current Department regulations require at least eight hours of training each year for members of the fire safety teams. 

45% drop in crime contributes to 9% fewer DOCS inmates ...

Continued from page 4

“The decreasing inmate population is, in part, driven by Governor Pataki’s anti-crime agenda that has produced historic declines in crime on our streets,” Commissioner Goord said.

“At the same time,” he added, “the Governor’s prison policies have been effective in reducing inmate violence in prison. His policies also occupy more inmates than ever in productive programs. That contributes to fewer crimes on our streets and lower rates of inmates returning to prison for the commission of new crimes.”

New York’s inmate population decline is among medium- and minimum-security inmates who are housed in barracks and dormitories across the state. (See related story on page 5.)

It is driven, in large part, by the Governor’s “right-sizing” policy: Allowing 56,370 non-violent offenders to earn early release since 1995 by participating in rehabilitative programs, while building maximum-security prison cells to house the violent and predatory felons who are serving longer prison terms under his sentencing reforms. His construction of 2,475 double-occupancy cells is the largest maximum-security construction project in state history.

The Governor’s tough sentencing reforms have driven the number of inmates incarcerated for violent crimes up to 56 percent of the prison population, compared to only 52 percent in 1994. Today’s is the highest percentage since the 59 percent recorded in 1988.

His mandate that nonviolent inmates seeking early release participate in programs contributes to their increased success – and the commission of fewer crimes – once they are released from prison.

In 1995, more than 12 percent of inmates released from prison were returned within two years for a new felony conviction. That has since dropped to only 8 percent. This rate of return has declined steadily each year since 1995. It can be attributed to increased inmate participation in prison programs and improved community reintegration efforts.

When the Governor took office, 50 percent of inmates were assigned to academic, vocational and drug treatment programs. Today, two-thirds of inmates participate in such programs.

The number of inmates eligible for work release has also declined sharply, contributing to safer communities across the state.

In 1995, Governor Pataki barred from work release those offenders who committed violent acts. That resulted in a 77 percent decline in inmate participants, from an average of 6,300 inmates a day in 1994 to an average of 1,473 a day in 2003. It also led to a 93 percent drop in work release inmates arrested for allegedly committing new crimes, from 1,968 in 1994 to 144 in 2003.

Inmate-on-staff assaults occurred at a rate of 8.6 incidents per 1,000 inmates last year, the lowest rate since 1979, when the Department first began tracking such data. The declining incident rate is in part due to reducing idleness by programming more inmates in the academic, vocational, work and

drug treatment programs necessary for nonviolent inmates to earn early release.

The Governor’s anti-crime agenda and prison reforms have driven the prison population from a high of 71,898 inmates in December 1999 to 65,125 on January 23. The number of “state readies” in county jails awaiting transfer to state prison has also declined, by 96 percent, from 4,271 “state readies” in July 1999 to 188 on January 23. There were 1,100 empty general confinement beds on January 23 in prisons housing males.

To address the declining inmate population and the increasing number of excess beds in the prison system, Commissioner Goord has proposed four initiatives:

- Continuing a takedown plan begun three years ago, 892 top double bunks will be vacated by March 31 at the medium-security Cape Vincent, Riverview, Watertown, Marcy, Orleans and Collins prisons. Inmates in those beds will be housed in empty beds in other prisons. These 892 beds will be “vacated,” meaning they will remain unoccupied but left in place in case of emergency need. About 260 staff will be reassigned from these six prisons. This initiative will reduce costs as reassigned staff fill vacant posts at other prisons now being staffed with overtime.



The Fulton work release facility in the Bronx.

Continued on page 15

Transitions

January 2004

Name Title Facility

Promotions

Judy Malfi Senior Counselor ASAT Arthur Kill
 Heidee Schneider Secretary 2 Arthur Kill
 Mary A. Yando Keyboard Specialist 2 Bare Hill
 Abraham Philip Maintenance Assistant Bedford Hills
 Joseph G. Greenfield Ed Supr (General) Bedford Hills
 Jessen C. Alancheril Maintenance Assistant Bedford Hills
 Rosanne McConnell Counselor ASAT Butler
 Richard Heffron Senior Counselor ASAT Butler
 Wanda Merchant Clerk 2 Cape Vincent
 Richard P. Seeger Institution Steward Cayuga
 Lynn E. Forbes Calculations Clerk 2 Cayuga
 Bruce W. Poland Senior Filter Plant Operator . Clinton
 Thomas Raiman Recreation Program Leader 2 Collins
 James J. Gunsolus General Mechanic Collins
 Gregory J. Leonard General Mechanic Collins
 Rhonda S. Gominiak Calculations Clerk 2 Collins
 Rebecca D. Scaringi Payroll Clerk 3 Downstate
 William C. Vanaken Head Farmer Eastern
 Brenda Camilo Secretary 1 Edgecombe
 Tina M. Klein Institution Steward Elmira
 Janet O. Murphy Recreation Therapist Fishkill
 Constance Persson Nurse Administrator 1 Fishkill
 John J. Prebis Plant Utilities Engineer 2 . . . Five Points
 Thomas M. Napoli Recreation Program Leader 2 Five Points
 Michael Tavernia Plant Superintendent C. . . . Franklin
 William Close Counselor Trainee 1 Great Meadow
 Deborah S. Black Principal Stores Clerk Great Meadow
 Charles W. Pettit, IV Electronic Equip Mechanic . . Groveland
 Laurie Taylor Calculations Clerk 2 Hale Creek
 Lauren Hilton Calculations Clerk 2 Main Office
 Matilda Savoia Clerk 2 Main Office
 Michael J. Deck Facility Food Administrator 2. Marcy
 Kelli Buczek Commissary Clerk 4 Marcy
 Tammy L. Dulan Stores Clerk 2 Mohawk
 Wendy M. Van Wie Clerk 2 Mt. McGregor
 Christopher Criscolo Maintenance Supervisor 1 . . Oneida
 Carol J. Ayers Keyboard Specialist 2 Oneida
 Katherine D. Pernat Correction Counselor. . . . Oneida
 Deborah L. Fleury Institution Steward Queensboro
 Luis H. Moret Keyboard Specialist 2 Queensboro
 Roxann P. Creen Institution Steward Shawangunk
 Walter Rose Head Cook Shawangunk
 Richard Lincoln Plumber & Steamfitter Southport
 Lloyd Lamore Head Cook Upstate
 Fred Tripp Correction Counselor ASAT . Washington
 Laurie Sanford Correction Counselor ASAT . Watertown

Scott C. Chiari Plant Utilities Engineer 1 . . . Wende
 Henry R. Moore Plant Utilities Engineer 3 . . . Woodbourne
 Brad J. Meeks Correction Lieutenant Queensboro

Retirements

Patricia J. Wozniak Secretary 2 Albion
 Ellen B. Smith Pharmacy Aide Attica
 Robert Henry Industrial Training Supr 2 MPMAttica
 Eric E. Oshaughnessy Senior Mail & Supply Clerk . . Bedford Hills
 Ruth E. Felicia Principal Clerk Personnel. . . Cayuga
 Roger Miller Vocational Instructor 4 Clinton
 G. C. Gonzalez Dental Assistant Fishkill
 Frank R. Giering Carpenter Greene
 Daniel D. Shusda Cook Lyon Mountain
 Crystal Donahue Inmate Records Coord 1 . . . Mid-State
 John T. Normoyle Maintenance Supervisor 3 . . Otisville
 Nathaniel Green Cook Queensboro
 Ruth Ann Thomas Keyboard Specialist 1 Sing Sing
 Eva Bruce Keyboard Specialist 2 Taconic
 Nancy J. Tatro Keyboard Specialist 1 Upstate
 Constance S. Nealon Ed Supr (General) Washington
 Gloria Hultz Dep Supt Administration 3 . . Willard
 Mark W. Dunham Correction Lieutenant Clinton
 Wayne Carter Correction Lieutenant Bare Hill
 Lawrence Simmons Correction Lieutenant Butler
 Larry Brockway Correction Lieutenant Great Meadow
 Michael Barnes Correction Lieutenant Oneida
 Roger W. Wright Correction Lieutenant Upstate
 Charles Richards Correction Lieutenant Wyoming
 Ricky Bassett Correction Sergeant Adirondack
 Martin Iritz Correction Sergeant Bare Hill
 Andy Mattice Correction Sergeant Cape Vincent
 Barbara Charles Correction Sergeant Elmira
 James Race Correction Sergeant Gowanda
 Gerald J. O'Donnell Correction Sergeant Greene
 Michael Murray Correction Sergeant Groveland
 Francis McCoy Correction Sergeant Sullivan
 Ronald E. Hopkins Correction Sergeant Watertown
 Thomas Decker Correction Sergeant Willard
 Charles A. Tracey Correction Officer. Attica
 Curtis Brown Correction Officer. Bayview
 Alan J. Thibeau Correction Officer. Chateaugay
 Carl Ashline Correction Officer. Clinton
 Salvatore Mercurio Correction Officer. Clinton
 Robin R. Stein Correction Officer. Clinton
 Herman L. Boothe Correction Officer. Downstate
 Robert E. Curry, Jr. Correction Officer. Eastern
 George J. Caterinicchio . . . Correction Officer. Fishkill

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45% drop in crime contributes to 9% fewer DOCS inmates ...

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- Transferring the 222 inmates remaining at the Fulton work release prison in the Bronx to vacant slots in the closest work release prisons, Edgecombe and Lincoln in Manhattan. Completing a Fiscal 2001-02 initiative, the last 107 staff remaining at the minimum-security Fulton facility will be offered reassignment and the prison closed, saving \$7 million annually.
- In the 2004-05 fiscal year, half of a projected 1,000-inmate population decline will be accommodated by closing both the 258-bed, minimum-security Camp Pharsalia and the 300-bed, minimum-security camp attached to the medium-security Mt. McGregor prison. The 189 employees at the two camps will be offered reassignment. This initiative saves \$11 million in annual operating costs and avoids \$5 million in new construction necessary in the next few years to maintain these facilities.
- Negotiating a contract with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), allowing it to expand its detention space in New York by filling the remaining 500 projected empty beds. The beds would be used to house criminal aliens awaiting deportation proceedings. Those deportable aliens would come from among the 1,700 inmates DOCS now releases annually to ICE custody for deportation purposes. ICE would pay \$85 per diem for each detainee, generating a maximum annual payment to the state of \$15 million, offsetting bed costs. If a contract cannot be executed, 500 more beds will be vacated or closed. That would require a reduction of an undetermined number of staff depending upon which beds are affected.

Staff vacancies will be sufficient to offer reassignment to the approximately 556 employees affected at these nine facilities. Due to a hiring freeze implemented three years ago, there are now approximately 360 uniformed and 580 civilian vacancies in the system. Approximately 30 uniformed and as many more civilian vacancies occur every bi-weekly payroll period, through normal attrition, as staff leave state employment.

At the same time, Commissioner Goord said, a statewide au-

dit is continuing to assess inmate-to-staff ratios, such as for teachers and counselors, as the system downsizes. Prison programming is also being audited to ensure each facility has the appropriate number of vocational instructors and other personnel. The audit process will ultimately lead later this year to a realignment of staffing. That will ensure all facilities have the appropriate staff to meet these goals in providing meaningful levels of programming for all inmates.

The plan to reduce the number of prison beds as the inmate population fell was announced in 2000-01 when Commissioner Goord publicly targeted a total of 6,600 beds in 36 prisons for takedown. "This takedown plan will make these facilities even safer and easier to manage while placing less stress on their physical plants," he explained in an April 24, 2001, press release. It added 22 targeted facilities to the original list of 14 targeted facilities included in his Oct. 20, 2000, press release that first announced the takedown plan. Both press releases are available on the DOCS website.

The beds fell into three categories: double bunks in mostly barracks-style housing units, "squeeze beds" that were added to mostly dormitory-style housing units and beds whose removal would improve operational efficiency, such as those obstructing doors or walkways or that obstructed officers' sight lines.

Since then, 5,500 (or 83 percent) of the targeted beds have already been vacated while 1,087 (or 81 percent) of the temporary jobs attendant to the targeted beds have been attrited voluntarily by staff. The lag in attriting jobs confirms DOCS kept its promise to only attrit staff after inmate beds were vacated.

Commissioner Goord said, "Our goals for the next 14 months begin with making our prisons even safer by vacating more double bunks in medium-security prisons. Recognizing the decrease in inmates eligible for minimum-security placement, we are targeting some of those beds as well. Throughout the process, our goal will be to reassign jobs to ensure full staffing that safeguards our employees and the inmate population.

"Both uniformed and civilian staff will be reassigned in accordance with their contractual agreements as well as Civil Service laws and rules." 

Continued from facing page

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Beverle Gilmore | Correction Officer. | Gouverneur |
| Richard Noecker | Correction Officer. | Gowanda |
| Robert W. Martel | Correction Officer. | Great Meadow |
| Perditha Jackson | Correction Officer. | Green Haven |
| Michael Laraby | Correction Officer. | Groveland |
| Clifford Smith | Correction Officer. | Groveland |
| Paul Zawadzki | Correction Officer. | Groveland |
| Angelo Rosado | Correction Officer. | Mid-Orange |
| Larry J. Mathy | Correction Officer. | Mid-State |
| Philip W. Simiele | Correction Officer. | Monterey SICF |
| Patrick Nolan | Correction Officer. | Mt. McGregor |
| Edward Calianese | Correction Officer. | Oneida |

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Sam Danforth | Correction Officer. | Queensboro |
| Dennis Jerry | Correction Officer. | Queensboro |
| Mark Chorney | Correction Officer. | Southport |
| Barry Fletcher, Sr. | Correction Officer. | Sullivan |
| Robert Munson | Correction Officer. | Ulster |
| Joseph L. Tremins | Correction Officer. | Washington |
| Roland D. Besimer, Jr. | Correction Officer. | Woodbourne |

Deceased

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Robert L. Connolly | Cook | Buffalo |
| William J. Luberda | Plant Utilities Engineer 1 | Greene |
| Moses Coard, Jr. | Correction Officer. | Bedford Hills |
| Mary J. Moore | Correction Officer. | Bedford Hills  |

Cardinal Egan visits, celebrates mass at Arthur Kill Catholic chapel

Becomes second cardinal to visit prison, Egan's visit follows one to Green Haven

Edward Cardinal Egan, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, lifted the spirits of inmates at Arthur Kill with an early holiday visit the Thursday before Thanksgiving when he celebrated Mass at the Catholic chapel of the Staten Island facility.

The Mass marked the second time the inmates have hosted a cardinal; John Cardinal O'Connor dedicated the Blessed Virgin chapel in 1998. It also marked Cardinal Egan's second visit to a facility in a year, having celebrated Mass at Green Haven the previous Thanksgiving time.

In his homily Cardinal Egan spoke on a letter of St. Paul to Philemon. In the letter Paul, awaiting sentencing in a Roman prison for spreading the Gospel, asks his friend Philemon to forgive Onesimus, Philemon's slave who was on the run after stealing from his master. And not only to forgive him, but to welcome him as a brother.

"Here we have two people in trouble – Paul's in big trouble, at the end of the trial he's martyred – and Onesimos," the Cardinal said.

"But Paul, filled up with the spirit of Jesus Christ, felt he should do all he can to help out a fellow prisoner."

Cardinal Egan urged the inmates to take careful note of how



Facility staff greeted Cardinal Egan at the front gate and escorted him through the prison during his recent visit. At left, the Cardinal concelebrates mass with DOCS chaplains as well as with Catholic priests from outside of Arthur Kill.



Paul spent his incarceration.

"Those of us who are prisoners have to have a very special understanding of commitment, compassion and love," he said. "He handled his imprisonment by helping out another prisoner."

The result, he explained, was that Onesimos, the one-time thief, later became the second bishop of Ephesus.

"You've got to watch out for these guys," the Cardinal joked about the inmates. "They can become bishops."

Attending the Mass and the lunch that followed were Commissioner Goord's representative John Nuttall, Deputy Commissioner for Program Services, and frequent chapel visitor Steven MacDonald, a former police officer who leads retreats at Arthur Kill.

The presence of Mr. MacDonald, a New York City Police detective who was paralyzed by gunshot wounds in 1986, is a reminder to inmates of the power of forgiveness.

At the conclusion of the Mass, Cardinal Egan presented Arthur Kill staff with a plaque, thanking them for their hospitality during his visit. 