

DOCS



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New York State Department of Correctional Services

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Cook/chill expands to serve all 70 prisons



The Department last month extended the cook/chill operation (shown above) to serve all 70 prisons. That will save taxpayers \$3.4 million annually in a process that provides all inmates with consistently nutritious meals. The Department is open to extending that savings to local taxpayers by looking at the possibility of using excess production capacity to serve county jails and other facilities around the state.

Staff efforts key to making programs effective

Cook/chill, Shock and inmate phones maintain quality while cutting expenses

This month's edition features several programs that are designed to maintain the quality of our operations while reducing the cost to deliver them.

A common theme runs among all of them: to the extent that we can maintain safety and security while delivering innovative programs at reduced costs, we avoid being forced to make personnel and other cuts as the state faces fiscal challenges.

Pivotal to making those programs work is the professionalism, dedication and loyalty of our 30,712 employees: in simplest terms, you make these programs work.

While Shock Incarceration programs like Moriah's have been with us since the conversion of Summit in 1987, Governor Pataki bolstered the program in 1995 by approving physical requirements allowing participation by the physically challenged and in 1999 by raising the age limit up to and including age 39.

More than 29,000 inmates have completed the program and earned early release. That has meant a whopping \$925 million in taxpayer savings by decreasing construction and operation costs.

At the same time, the public safety is served by the fact that the recidivism rate for this six-month program is lower than among inmates who spend a much longer period in prison.

Our decision to replace 126 separate phone rates with one is making the Inmate Call Home Program fairer for the inmate loved ones who pay the bills.

The commissions contribute to financing a host of programs of interest to inmates and their families that

might not otherwise be funded by the Legislature. Those include nursery programs, family reunion visits, free visitor buses and cable TV for inmates.

As this column is written, we have won a trifecta of court cases on this issue – in federal bankruptcy court in New York City, before the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court in Albany and in state Supreme Court in Albany County. Each court ruled that the program is operated fairly and within the law, and the rates were properly set.

The hydroponics effort at Otisville is an example of a modest program that suggests a major impact for the future. It offers the possibility of providing more of our own food production needs while reducing our costs.

Our cover story on the cook/chill operation is another example of a program that started out as a modest one that grew into a system wide effort with substantial savings for taxpayers.

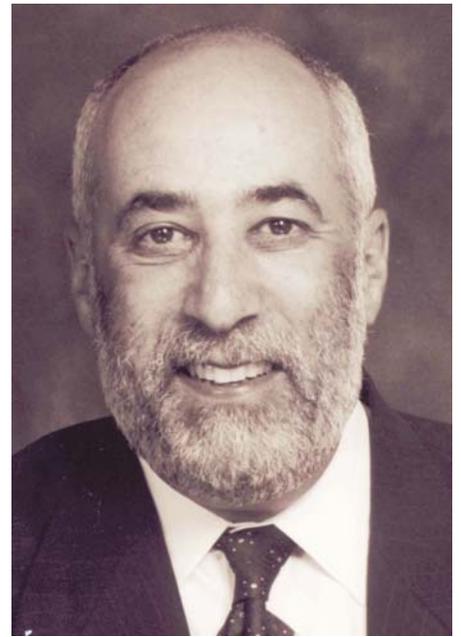
In fact, I remember the discussions then-Commissioner Tom Coughlin and I had in the early 1990s, trying to convince people in government that, yes – our employees were up to this major undertaking. We said our employees would provide the hard work and talent to implement a food production project unheard of in this state for its scope, size and complexity.

Less than 20 years later, that project has been expanded from the original four facilities to serve all 70 of them. In fact, we are now considering making more of our excess capacity available to other state agencies and local governments.

All these programs confirm the skill and ability of our work force.

Each of these projects, like countless others that I could list except for the lack of space here, demonstrate that DOCS employees always rise to the challenges before them.

Once again, you confirm that our work force is the best in the state and the finest in the nation. 



Commissioner Goord

This month's articles

- ***New inmate phone rates offer fairness: Page 3.***
- ***Cook/chill expands to serve every prison: Page 4.***
- ***Moriah benefits inmates, general public: Page 6.***
- ***Otisville growing plants without soil: Page 10.***
- ***Albion inmates help peers with legal work: Page 11.***
- ***Beacon honored to care for 9-11 memorial: Page 12.***
- ***CO still enjoying her job after 31 years: Page 13.***
- ***Staff changes: Page 14.***
- ***Employees march to honor Puerto Rico: Page 15.***

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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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Inmate families see cost of prison long-distance calls fall under new rates

Reducing costs for 83 percent of calls makes charges fairer, easier to budget

Most loved ones began paying lower Inmate Call Home Program phone bills after new revenue-neutral rates took effect on August 1 that dropped the cost for long distance calls.

“The goal of the new rates is increased fairness that also allows recipients to know in advance the cost of these calls,” Commissioner Goord said.

Virtually all inmate calls fall within three groups: intralata (within a local calling area), interlata (between calling areas) and interstate. International calls account for fewer than one percent of volume.

Under the new rate structure, charges paid by recipients of inmate collect calls will drop 6 percent for interlata calls that represent 70 percent of inmate calls. Interstate calls, which represent 13 percent of calls, will decline 9 percent. Intralata calls will double in cost. They represent 17 percent of inmate calls.

Commissioner Goord said, “Implementing fairness and equity has a cost: those who have the benefit of being most able to visit incarcerated loved ones – because they are housed closest to home – will see their telephone charges rise. But 83 percent of call recipients – whose loved ones are incarcerated furthest from home – will see rates drop. Whether the contact is by phone or personal visit, these rates reflect the Department’s continuing commitment to fostering the family ties that most agree are important to helping offenders succeed upon their release from prison.”

The statewide average per minute rate today for all inmate-generated calls is 16 cents – which now becomes the flat rate per minute standard for inmate-generated calls. At the same time, the Department equalized the connection fee paid by all inmates each time they use a phone. To accomplish those goals and make the changes revenue-neutral required:

- Raising the cost of intralata calls from an average of nine cents to a flat rate of 16 cents per minute.
- Raising the current intralata connection fee from \$1.58 to the \$3 charge already being assessed on all other calls.
- Reducing the varying per-minute ranges for interlata and interstate calls by two and three cents per minute, respectively, to a flat rate of 16 cents per minute.

Commissioner Goord said, “Every inmate who picks up a phone and completes a call will now be charged the same connect fee. Fairness dictates they should be, regardless of where they are calling. And as telecommunication advances reduce the size of our world, there is no longer a need for long-distance charges to vary based upon time of day or distance.”

He noted that “Standardizing charges allows the recipients of calls to budget them because there will be one rate: Three dollars plus 16 cents per minute.” There were 126 separate per-minute rates under the prior system, based upon area dialed (intralata, interlata or interstate) plus time of day and mileage distance.

The average length of inmate calls varies: 18.05 minutes for intralata calls, 18.60 minutes for interlata calls and 18.69 minutes for interstate calls. Like all phone companies, the Inmate Call Home Program rounds any fraction to the next highest minute for billing purposes. Thus, those average calls were all billed as 19 minute calls. Under the new flat rates, the billing cost for a 19-minute inmate conversation will be \$6.04 across the board – the \$3 connect fee plus 16 cents per minute. That’s compared to a current average 19-minute phone call cost of \$6.44 for interlata calls, \$6.63 for interstate calls and \$3.02 for intralata calls.



Inmates completed nearly 7 million collect-only calls between September 2001 and August 2002, the base year used when computing the rate change plan. Those calls totaled more than 124 million minutes, generating gross revenues exceeding \$39 million. The Department’s commission rate is 57.5 percent on those revenues.

More than \$5 million in commissions is being spent this year on inmate family-related programs, including \$1.1 million for children and nursery programs at Bedford Hills and Taconic prisons for women, \$414,000 to support the Family Reunion Program at 16 prisons, \$809,540 to provide free buses to transport inmate visitors to prisons across the state, \$494,000 for various prison visitor centers, \$550,000 for a domestic violence program at

Eastern and \$81,000 for the medical parole program allowing terminally ill inmates to be released to die at home with their loved ones. Nearly \$18 million in additional commissions anticipated this year are targeted for inmate medical care, tests, vaccines and pharmaceuticals.

Unlike residential phone users who pay roughly \$30 per month in charges just to have a telephone, the Inmate Call Home Program pays all such charges for today’s 65,909 inmates. In addition, restrictions and monitoring required on an inmate phone system incur charges that do not exist for residential phone customers.

“The security measures attached to the inmate phone system have two purposes,” Commissioner Goord said. “To increase prison security and to enhance public safety.”

A position paper – outlining the inmate phone program and the impact of the rate changes – is available as a PDF in the press release section of the Department’s website. ☎

Cook/chill providing meals to every prison, weighing outside contracts

Saving taxpayers \$3.4 million annually by standardizing meals, nutrition content

Thanks to an ongoing \$19 million expansion, the Oneida Food Production Center (FPC) is now providing three cook/chill meals a day to all inmates at each of the state's 70 facilities – meaning an annual savings of nearly \$3.4 million for state taxpayers.

Besides the monetary benefit, the expansion has led to greater efficiencies, better food quality and enhanced inventory controls as compared with the past practice of inmate meals being prepared from scratch at individual facilities.

The massive expansion project is scheduled to be completed in the fall. It is one of the largest that the state Office of General Services (OGS) has under construction.

It also entails comprehensive improvements and an expansion at Central Pharmacy. Central Pharmacy, which is located above the FPC, purchases, stores and distributes all medications needed throughout the state prison system.

As of August, the center was providing daily breakfast, lunch and dinner meals – along with accompanying beverages and desserts – to approximately 66,000 inmates. Those 198,000 meals a day equates to a daily savings of \$9,240, a weekly savings of \$64,680 and an annual savings of \$3,363,360. That's calculated by using a cost of \$2.10 per inmate per day for food prepared at the cook/chill operation compared to a per-day cost of \$2.24 per inmate for food prepared at individual facilities.

Additional future savings are also expected as a result of ongoing and scheduled food preparation enhancements and other related efficiencies.

Under the cook/chill process, bulk quantities of food are cooked to a just-done state, then chilled rapidly and stored under tightly controlled temperature conditions. Shipped in large, sealed plastic bags, the food then only has to be reheated.

The pasteurization associated with cook/chill process affords most of the prepared products a shelf life of up to six weeks. But food is produced and used quickly

to ensure freshness, prevent spoilage and cut down on costly refrigeration space. Typically, products prepared at the center one week are shipped to facilities the next week for consumption the following week.

The expansion project will increase the size of the FPC by 50 percent, from 30,000 square feet to just over 45,000 square feet.

That expansion, along with other enhancements to the existing facility and new state-of-the-art cooking equipment, may also permit the Department to sell meals to other county jails in the future, translating to an additional savings for local taxpayers.

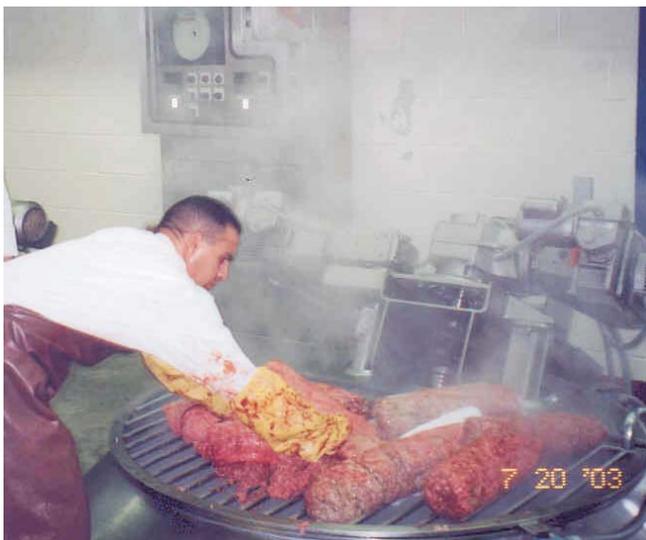
The Department has been contacted by a number of county jail administrators throughout the state regarding the possibility of their purchasing cook/chill meals for their inmates. That could result in a substantial savings at the county level, as some counties now pay as much as \$4 per inmate per day for meals. The Department already has such an agreement in place with Oneida County regarding its inmates.

“We are saving substantial state taxpayer dollars through this initiative. If we are able to provide for additional savings at the county level we would certainly take a look at doing that,” said Commissioner Goord. “The Food Production Center has worked very well for us, and now that we're feeding all of our inmates cook/chill meals, we'll review the prospects of expanding elsewhere.”

Once the expansion is completed, the center will be providing a total of 3½ pounds of processed food and drink per inmate per day. That translates into 231,000 pounds a day and more than 84 million pounds of processed food and drink per year – or more than 42,000 tons.

The project is indeed a massive one. The OGS Division of Design retained the services of five design consultants to complete the complex project design. Roughly a dozen OGS architects and engineers headquartered in Albany coordinated the efforts of the consultants with multiple on-site meetings and review sessions with cook/chill staff. That ensured that the various cooking systems to be installed worked in conjunction with one another to allow cooks to prepare the menus they wanted on a large scale.

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Inmate cooks beef at the Food Production Center.



Cook Anthony Gurdo checks food temperature.



Refrigerated trucks are ready to roll across the state.

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The project includes approximately \$5 million in new equipment needed to produce massive quantities of food and drink. This consists of items such as an ice building system capable of producing enough cold water to rapidly chill the hot processed food to a near-frozen state; juice production equipment capable of pasteurizing and bottling more than 11 gallons of juice per minute; five tanks with the individual capacity to cook one ton of product at a time and eight large kettles having a total capacity of 2,800 gallons.

Four-hundred-gallon steam kettles – which are used to prepare soups, sauces, casseroles and other menu items – have replaced the 200-gallon steam kettles that previously were used in preparing the meals. New processors also prepare vegetables much quicker.

The first phase of the ongoing upgrade and expansion project was completed in early 2000. That entailed a \$1.5 million renovation of Building 50 on the grounds of Oneida, a vacant building which formerly housed an OGS laundry. That building was renovated for cook/chill storage space and offices for administrative staff, who were moved from the primary cook/chill building, Building 55, directly across from Building 50. The ongoing second phase of the project entails work at Building 55.

One staff position – that of a Grade 9 storage clerk – has been added at the FPC as a result of the expansion. Thirteen other existing positions have been upgraded to accommodate the increased duties associated with the expansion. For instance, five tractor trailer operators have been upgraded from Grade 8 to Grade 12 because they are now operating tandem units as more food is now being shipped throughout the state.

An additional 24 Oneida inmates have been assigned to work assignments in the cook/chill operation to handle the increased output, bringing the total workforce to 110 inmates.

From its modest beginnings as a pilot program serving four central New York facilities in 1992, cook/chill has grown rapidly. As a result, fresh, quality food is produced on a consistent basis and it takes less time for individual facilities to prepare meals.

Money is saved when food is purchased in large quantities, and there are “opportunity buys” of discontinued items to large buyers, like the FPC, that save even more money. There’s also been a reduction in waste and pilferage because of enhanced inventory controls.

One of the big advantages of cook/chill is that a centralization of menus, recipes, sources and supplies of raw ingredients, and labor posts enables the Department to have products specific to its needs. Food content and nutritional content can be better monitored and controlled if foods are produced in a central production center rather than at

individual facilities.

There are other benefits as well. Inmates who work at the center are acquiring marketable job skills and a work ethic which hopefully will assist them in their eventual reintegration into society. Several parolees who worked at the center have since found jobs at similar facilities throughout the state. 📖

Prison’s menu very appealing

Editorial from the Utica Observer-Dispatch of August 7:

The menu at the Oneida County Correctional Facility looks pretty appealing – at least it should to county taxpayers.

For the last five years, the state correctional system’s Cook/Chill meal-service program plant, which is located between Whitestown and Rome, has been supplying the Oneida County jail with three meals a day for each prisoner at a daily cost of \$2.43.

Whether the food is tasty is another matter, but the price is certainly right. The deal is saving the county as much as \$40,000 a year.

Kudos to the county Board of Legislators for renewing the agreement. So far our county jail is the only one to make such a deal with the state, but other counties have begun to make inquiries. Good idea.

The Cook/Chill plant serves all 70 of New York’s state prisons. The location of the state prison system’s meal preparation facility is a happy coincidence for the county, but this is exactly the type of cooperative effort we should emulate whenever it’s practical. It just makes sense to utilize an existing facility rather than seek “lo-

cal control” and create one of our own that would do exactly the same thing only at a higher cost. This is, for all intents and purposes, consolidation – a word that seems to be unreasonably scary to local communities. But money talks, as they say, and the results of efforts such as this one speak for themselves.

Another aspect of this cooperation that should please everyone is the support given to local produce farmers – a number of area producers supply the facility with sweet corn. The plight of small family farms is not lost on anyone in Central New York. It is easy to believe there’s little we can do to change that. But we all can do our part to support local growers. One of the many advantages of living in the Mohawk Valley is bountiful, fresh produce – right next door. The state is wise to take advantage of what has to be cheaper (without shipping costs) and certainly fresher and tastier produce.

And it seems the menu really is more than just thrifty according to Legislator John Smith, who sampled a meal. “I was impressed,” he said. “I ate the whole thing.” 📖



Where men still toil in search of a better life

Moriah

Every day at 5:30 a.m., the North Country hills are alive with the sound of ... reveille. That's when 233 Moriah "Shock" inmates, like their 900 counterparts in three other such programs across the state, begin another day of intensive programming, grueling physical training and work assignments until "lights out" at 9:30 p.m. But those long days will end with the opportunity to shorten their prison sentences, through a program that has shown itself equally beneficial to the public – by reducing crime and prison costs.

The day begins with the shouted commands of Moriah's seasoned Drill Instructors – Correction Officers with additional training who go by a different moniker at Shock facilities.

After the early-morning awakening, inmates are accorded a brief period to shower, dress and stow away their areas. Now they are ready to begin a long day of physical exercise, work assignments plus academic programming and counseling.

Nothing appears normal to the young men in the newest of the six platoons at Moriah who, like their counterparts in the other, more advanced platoons, are in the process of rebuilding their lives under the guidance and supervision of Department security and civilian staff. Their full day will go non-stop until "lights out" at 9:30 p.m., when they get their needed sleep to prepare them for tomorrow's repetition of today's schedule.

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This schedule will repeat itself for 180 days until those who can complete the demanding program graduate from this minimum-security facility nestled in the wooded hills above Lake Champlain in the Adirondacks.

Existing iron ore mining buildings and grounds were converted at Moriah in 1989 to house a maximum of 250 nonviolent inmates as part of the Department's growing Shock Incarceration program. The program uses a para-military approach to assist inmates with changing their thinking, addictions and lifestyles to eventually lead a productive and law-abiding life in society.

Joining the already opened Monterey and Summit Shock facilities, Moriah accepted its first platoon of inmates on March 27, 1989, with that inaugural platoon graduating on September 21 of that year. Through August of 2003, 168 graduation classes have been held for the more than 6,200 Moriah inmates who successfully completed the intensive six-month program.

An area rich in history

The Adirondacks region where Moriah is situated has roots that go deep into the area's past. The shores of Lake Champlain and the surrounding territories was an area of conflict for 200 years following its "discovery" by Samuel de Champlain in 1609. Indian tribes, French, English and, finally, American colonists, fought to control the lake as an avenue for transportation

and commerce. The now-tranquil valley has often been referred to as "The Warpath of Nations."

On the grounds of the present-day Moriah, there once existed one of the most modern and significant iron ore mining operations in America. For 250 years, iron ore was mined in the town of Moriah. From the capture of Fort Ticonderoga and the early pre-revolutionary naval battles of Valcour Island on Lake



While Counselor Debbie Henry talks with an inmate, the program also includes group and peer counseling as well as academic studies.

Champlain to the war in Vietnam, the ore in the surrounding hills supported the domestic and war industries of this country.

Iron deposits were first noted in early French and British documents in the 1740s. The infamous Benedict Arnold of Revolutionary War fame used ore from deposits along the shores of Lake Champlain to

outfit the first American Navy vessels, which were constructed on Lake Champlain for use in fighting the British.

The property known as Fisher Hill, on which Moriah is sited, is boarded on the east by Lake Champlain and on the west by the high peaks of the Adirondacks. The first permanent settlement in the area was established in 1785. Iron ore became the staple of the local economy in the early 19th century. Port Henry, located on Lake Champlain five miles from the facility, became the main line of transport for the ore that was mined in the nearby villages of Witherbee and, appropriately, Mineville.

The year 1820 saw the beginning of the first mining on Fisher Hill. The property changed hands several times. It was not until 1872 when the Port Henry Iron Ore Company acquired the property and dug three operating shafts or slopes to a depth of 500 to 550 feet.

Ore was hoisted by horsepower, loaded in wagons and transported down to the shores of Lake Champlain to be shipped south. Dirt roads were used at first for the trip to the lake. Later, a road was constructed of hemlock planks which were four inches thick and between eight and 10 feet in length. Known as the "plank road," it was replaced by rail lines in 1873.

The local mines provided the iron used for the construction of the Union's iron-clad vessel, the Monitor, famous for its late Civil War battle with the Confederacy's Merrimac. Ore and pig iron (developed in local furnaces) were shipped to Troy for construction of steel rails and iron plate in support of the growing American industrial machine and for construction of the vast railroad system.

The mines in the area would be renowned for the high quality of the ore and the whole region became known as the Mineville Iron District. Other than two deposits in Sweden, the Moriah deposits were the largest developed magnetic ore concentrations in the world.



Drill Instructor Art Dickerson "greet" Shock recruits.

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In 1941, the Fisher Hill came under the management of the Republic Steel Corporation, which invested \$14 million in improvements to increase output. The site was in high production during World War II, producing almost 2 million tons of ore. The high quality of the ore made it especially desirable for the construction of aircraft engine parts. The ore from the mine played a major role in keeping the production of aircraft at a high rate in support of the war effort.

With the drop in demand for ore, the mine operated sporadically from 1949 to 1961, when it closed for good. Its impact on the country cannot be disputed, and its place forever etched in the history books.

The property remained dormant until 1987, when it was transferred to DOCS. Construction of the present facility began in 1988 and was completed in March of 1989 at a cost of \$13 million.

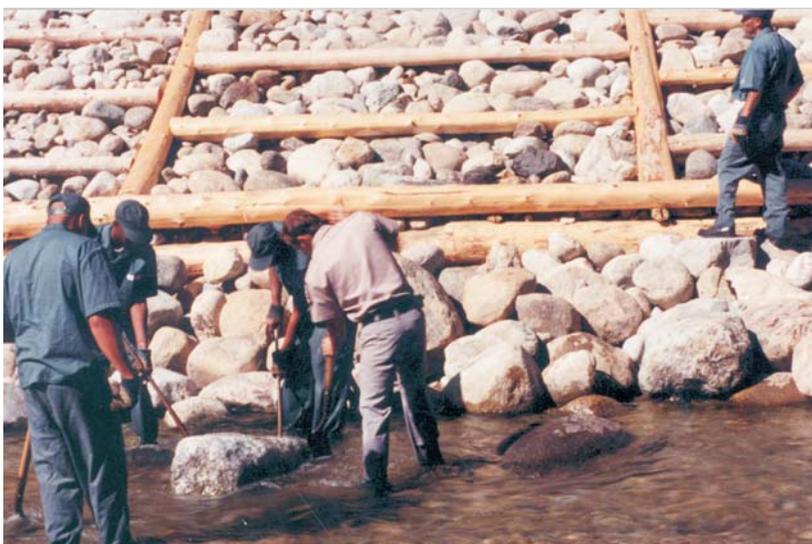
A structured environment aimed at prompting change

It seems only fitting that on a site where men once toiled in search of a better life, the employees at Moriah work hard at providing a generation of troubled young men the opportunity to change their lives for the better.

The Department's Shock Incarceration program – similar programs in other states are more commonly known as “boot camps” – has been deemed the largest and most comprehensive program in the country.

Developed in 1987 with the opening of Monterey, the program has provided thousands of inmates with the opportunity to live clean and sober and change their lives for the better. Inmates who arrive at Moriah are immersed into an environment of rigorous discipline and physical exercise, concentrated education programs, intense Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (ASAT) counseling, therapeutic community living (Network) and hard work. The six-month program focuses on change of the whole person, using a time-tested disciplined framework to allow for the effective delivery of the entire program.

Staff development is also essential in ensuring inmates experience the full impact of the Shock program. The belief is that staff cannot demand high standards from Moriah inmates if they do not expect the same from themselves. To that end, all staff at Moriah receive either two or four weeks of intensive Shock training, depending on the level of contract that they will have with inmates; they also have regular in-house training. Moriah's Drill Instructors can also receive specialized DI training from the U.S. Army's Rehabilitation Training Instructors Course (RTIC). Moriah's DIs also are versed in non-security matters to assist in the facility's mission.



Drill Instructor Rich Beebe works with inmates on erosion control.

They run Network programs, teach Drill and Ceremony and are expected to maintain a high level of physical fitness in order to conduct inmate physical training sessions.

Further testament to the expertise, dedication and professionalism of Moriah's staff is the fact that the facility is accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA) affirming that it meets nationally-acceptable standards in its management and operations. It was first accredited in 1993 and has been reaccredited triennially since then.

Additionally, in 1996 Moriah became the first Shock Incarceration facility in the United States to be accredited under the new ACA Boot Camp Standards.

Inmates who meet the eligibility standards for Shock are processed at the Lakeview Correctional Facility in Brocton, where 539 of 992 beds are now occupied by Shock inmates. Inmates who do not volunteer for Shock either serve their sentences at Lakeview or some other appropriate facility.

Inmates can volunteer for Shock if they are between the ages of 16 and 39, have a minimum sentence of not more than three years, are serving their first state prison sentence and were convicted of a nonviolent offense.

Those who volunteer are formed into platoons of up to 50-60 inmates. They either remain at Lakeview to complete the program or are transferred to Summit, Monterey or Moriah Shock.

A new platoon arrives every month at Moriah on the day the senior platoon graduates. There are six platoons active in the program at a time.

On the day of arrival the new platoon begins the Shock program immediately with a security orientation, closely-cropped haircuts and delousing; they also are issued their inmate clothes and related items.



Inmates sandbag to combat flooding.

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“Given the location of the facility, the long bus ride and the uncertainty of what is facing them, the new inmates that arrive here at Moriah are often confused and anxious,” said Superintendent Bruce Olsen. “Staff are very effective in communicating what is required to successfully negotiate the intensive program. The inmates clearly realize what we expect from them and, more importantly, what they should expect of themselves.”

The first two weeks for a new platoon at Moriah are called “zero weeks.” It’s primarily an orientation that includes physical training (PT) sessions twice daily and introductions to programs like Network, ASAT, education and Drill and Ceremony. The platoon also receives an orientation from officials with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), who use supervised Moriah community service crews to perform various projects throughout the area, such as clearing campgrounds and fighting fires.

During an inmate’s ensuing stay at Moriah those without a high school diploma will go to school for 12 hours a week to prepare them to take the GED exam; before doing so, they must attain at least a ninth-grade proficiency in both reading and math skills. Inmates with a degree tutor those without.

At the core of the treatment model at Moriah are the ASAT and Network programs. The inmates receive a minimum of 200 hours of ASAT programming and live in a Network or therapeutic community environment.

“These programs are the key to effecting meaningful change in inmate behavior,” said Mr. Olsen. “The disciplined environment that staff creates allows our programming to work more effectively and efficiently. The programs are designed to foster a long-term, life-altering change in behavior that hopefully will remain with the inmates for the rest of their lives.”

Inmate graduations are the culmination of six months of hard work designed to change the whole person. Twelve percent “wash out” before then and are removed. Inmates who do successfully complete the vigorous program graduate with their platoon and leave the facility under state Division of Parole supervision to complete their sentences. The Division of Parole runs an “After Shock” program designed to reinforce the Shock philosophy and support the inmates when they return to society.

Providing vital service across the North Country

The quality of life in the Adirondacks has definitely changed for the better since Moriah received its first platoon of inmates in 1989.

For most residents of the area, the most visible component of the all-encompassing Moriah program revolves around the 10 supervised community service crews that venture into communities facilities throughout the region every weekday, even on weekends if there’s a pressing need.

Besides their DEC duties the crews work for area municipalities and not-for-profit agencies. Their tasks are varied; at any give time they could be fixing up a Little League field or righting felled cemetery headstones, clearing debris from area highways, painting churches or senior citizen centers and helping New Yorkers recover from disasters like forest fires, flooding and snow and ice storms.

“Our crew Officers and inmates provided over 113,000 hours of community service work in municipalities in the counties of Essex, Warren and Clinton in 2002,” said Moriah crew Sgt. Peter Besson.

He added, “Most notably was our response to a request from the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) that our crews be dispatched to fight a rash of forest fires last year in the Adirondacks.”

For a grueling five-week stretch in the summer of 2002, supervised Moriah inmates and security staff battled many fires in remote, hard-to-reach locations in the Adirondacks, helping to prevent property damage and the possible loss of life. The demand was so great that at any given time as many of 120 inmates and 14 security staff could be on the job.

Just as Moriah staff members are dedicated to helping inmates turn their lives around and become law-abiding citizens, they, like the inmates, have also become vital components in the North Country fabric.

They serve as Little League and soccer coaches, sit on community and municipal boards, hold various fund-raisers in the event someone in the community is in need and volunteer their time at local houses of worship and community agencies.

Staff and inmates at Moriah, like their counterparts at other prisons throughout the state, are also key players when it comes to annual Make a Difference Day activities to assist their needy neighbors.

In 2002, supervised community service crew inmates from Moriah teamed with inmates from nearby Adirondack to complete a dam restoration project for the upstate waterway that provides water to both Adirondack and the neighboring Ray Brook Federal Correctional Institution. 📖



If it's 0530 Hours, it's time for DIs to lead physical training here at Moriah and in New York's three other Shock facilities.

Facility Highlights

Like at Disney World, hydroponics grows food in Otisville without soil

The Department has entered the high-tech agricultural era and that is expected to translate to a substantial savings in state taxpayer dollars.

Earlier this year, employees at Otisville set up a hydroponics greenhouse on facility grounds as part of a pilot lettuce growing program.

Similar in concept to the massive greenhouse that's a favorite family attraction at Walt Disney World's Epcot Center in Florida, soil is not required to grow vegetables, flowers or other plants. Rather, seedlings raised at the facility from scratch are planted in long rows that resemble a series of parallel plastic gutters. There, the lettuce plants are fed a steady diet of water and precise liquid nutrients through an exposed root system until they reach maturity, at which time they will serve as inmate meals.

As of the middle of July, more than 1,700 heads of healthy, vibrant bib lettuce had been harvested by Vocational Instructor Robert Hansen and inmates enrolled in his horticulture program. The reviews from inmates have been glowing, as the bright leafy lettuce seems to have a better taste than its garden-grown counterpart. And that's not surprising, considering that hydroponics does not use any pesticides and the plants require just one-tenth of the water when compared to conventional outdoor growing in soil.

"For the most part it's worked out pretty well so far," said Otisville Food Service Administrator David Schor. "The quality is better, it's a healthier product. Growing lettuce this way is going to save us money. How much it will save we don't yet know, but we will be monitoring that on a regular basis."

The pilot program has not been without its hitches. In January, the greenhouse's furnace went out for a while, and some 200 heads of bib lettuce were lost to the harsh winter elements.

"We referred to that as our murdered iceberg lettuce," recalled Otisville Deputy Superintendent of Administration Russell Miller.

The hydroponics greenhouse currently has the capacity to grow up to 640 heads of bib lettuce, at varying degrees of maturity, at any given time. So far, the average time between seed and harvest has been about 35 days, although during the harsher winter months with little sun that sometimes stretched to almost 50 days. Otisville officials had hoped to get the growing cycle



In front of and behind David Schor, Otisville Food Service Administrator, are the rows of plastic gutters that allow plants to grow without soil.

down to about 30 days or less this summer but to date have been unable to do so because of frequently overcast skies.

With Mr. Hansen and his horticulture inmates hoping to harvest close to 8,000 heads of bib lettuce this year, the savings could be substantial. Mr. Schor says the facility now pays 65 cents for a pound of processed iceberg lettuce under its food services contract with Sysco. Including start-up and other associated costs, he said he's hoping that the facility will be able to produce lettuce at a cost of around 25 or 30 cents a pound.

Besides helping conserve water and saving taxpayer dollars, the pilot program could offer some other benefits. Depending on how smoothly everything goes over the next few months, the program could be expanded at Otisville to perhaps include other menu items now purchased under state contract like tomatoes and cucumbers. And the program could eventually be expanded to other facilities in the Sullivan hub and throughout the state, leading to more dollar savings.

With the help of a PEF grant, Mr. Schor and Mr. Hansen recently attended a hydroponics school in Ohio to learn about the new growing concept. The union paid for the course while the two men paid for their lodging and travel.

Other hydroponics options in the future at Otisville could include additional lighting at the greenhouse to enhance output by cutting back on length of the growing season. 

To meet court mandates, inmates taught to help peers with legal work

The Department's Legal Research Course – which has permitted DOCS to meet its requirement to assist inmates with access to the courts – continues to grow.

Graduates of the program – which runs between 10 and 12 weeks – receive certificates attesting that they are qualified to assist other inmates with legal work and related research. Their certificates could also someday enable them to become paid law clerks in prison and perhaps obtain a good-paying job in the legal field upon their release.

Each year, between 325 and 400 inmates pass the Legal Resource Course, which has been offered since the mid-1970's. More than 2,500 current inmates have certificates; thousands of other former inmates also have certificates.

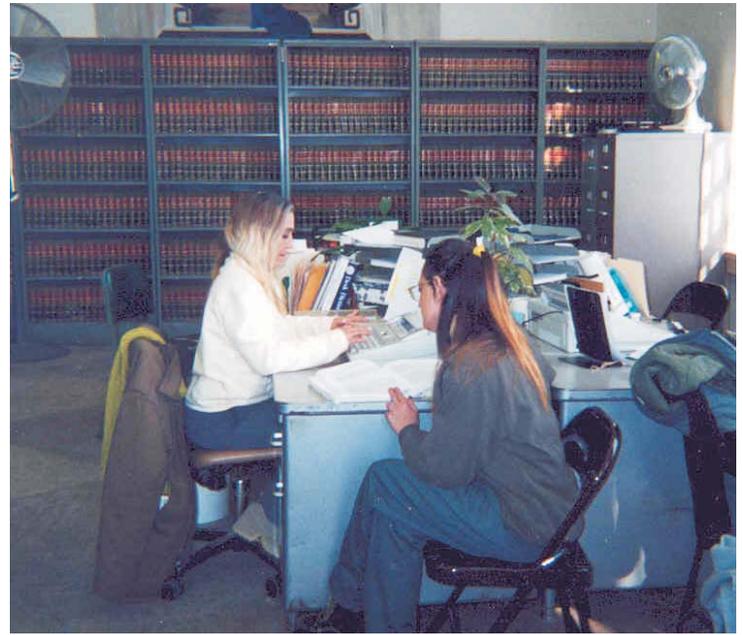
The Department is required by law to provide inmates with access to the legal system. This Legal Research Course, coupled with the regularly-updated law libraries that are in all prisons, helps attain that goal in a cost-effective manner. While this by itself meets the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions on providing inmate access to the courts, New York taxpayers also fund Prisoners Legal Services that also provides inmates with lawyers.

Inmates who obtain a legal research certificate are eligible to obtain a law clerk or paralegal assistant position in one of the system's law libraries. Those inmates assist in maintaining and updating the law book collection and provide free legal assistance services to other inmates under the supervision of the facility's law library supervisor.

To be eligible to take the course, inmates must possess at least a high school diploma or equivalent and have a good disciplinary record. Facilities are encouraged to recruit bilingual inmates who read and speak Spanish to address the needs of Hispanic monolingual inmates.

Inmates hired to work in the Department's law libraries are expected to adhere to a strict code of ethics.

Most legal research courses are taught by a facility's most experienced inmate law clerk. However, students from SUNY Buffalo School of Law and New York University also visit nearby facilities like Attica and Taconic, respectively, on a regular basis to teach the course.



Inmate legal research clerks assist fellow inmates in Albion's law library.

"This program is very important to those inmates who are appealing their cases, filing papers and doing other related legal work," said DOCS Supervising Librarian Jean Botta. "It's a successful program that benefits thousands of inmates throughout the system."

Over the past few years, the Department has significantly upgraded its Legal Research Course curriculum and classroom materials. Legal research instructional textbooks, used in entry-level paralegal and law school courses, are now used to complement class lectures. Required reading materials now include "A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual" from the Columbia University School of Law, "Prisoners' Self Help Litigation Manual" and "The Legal Research Manual: A Game Plan for Legal Research and Analysis."

At most maximum-security prisons, the course is offered two or three times a year. In medium-security prisons, it's usually offered at least once a year.

Inmates who earn certificates while housed at maximum- or medium-security facilities generally staff the law libraries at correctional camps and minimum-security facilities. 



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 at the middle of the month prior to the cover date. 

Beacon cares for memorial to 9-11 victims

Inmates assigned to a supervised community service crew out of Beacon have assumed the role of chief caretakers of a permanent tribute on the grounds of the Graymoor monastery in nearby Garrison created to honor the victims of the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

For the second straight year, Beacon inmates traveled to the monastery to plant a colorful garden at a memorial site that features a impressive cross fashioned from some of the steel beams of the felled World Trade Center. They will return occasionally to maintain the garden to ensure it remains a fitting tribute to all those innocent 9-11 victims.

The cross stands on a large base for which dust from Ground Zero was mixed with concrete. It is believed to therefore contain the remains of some of the World Trade Center victims.

It's obvious that the memories begin to flow when the Beacon inmates, many of whom are from New York City, travel to Graymoor to work in the shadow of the steel cross and the remains of some of the victims. But that doesn't upset them.

"The inmates and staff are extremely honored to tend to the Graymoor garden that pays homage to the innocent victims of September 11th," said Beacon Steward Cynthia Papo.

"We must never forget that day or the victims of that senseless tragedy. We take our planting and gardening responsibilities very seriously, and do all that we can to ensure that the garden affords the victims the respect they deserve," she said.

Graymoor is home to the Franciscan Friars of Atonement. The setting is serene, very impressive and moving. One feels an air of spirituality when strolling the freshly manicured grounds and speaking with the cordial Brothers who live there. The World Trade Center memorial, which visitors throughout the area feel compelled to frequent to gain some peace and inner

strength, has greatly amplified those feelings.

The cross is erected on a thick concrete base that contains four gallons of ash from the twin towers.

Brother Theodore Novak – known to the inmates and crew supervisor Correction Officer Al Tchorznicki as "Brother Ted" – stated, "we don't know who's buried there."

But Brother Ted added that thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Beacon inmates, the victims have a beautiful and tranquil resting place that's regularly maintained.

"The inmates have really done a great job," said Brother Ted. "There's so much warmth and peace when you visit that garden.

"You feel the presence of God. This truly is hallowed ground."



This Graymoor cross is fashioned from beams from the World Trade Center. The concrete base holds the remains of unnamed victims of the terrorist attack.



Beacon CO Al Tchorznicki and Brother Theodore Novak supervise inmates at Graymoor memorial.

Three small flowerpots that each have colorful flowers and a small American flag flank the cross, which was fashioned by members of Steelworkers Local #40 and erected at Graymoor last summer. The inmates planted the garden shortly thereafter.

"This is a very special assignment," said CO Tchorznicki.

"There's a feeling that comes over you that's hard to describe. The inmates have done a wonderful job in honoring the memories of the innocent victims of 9-11.

"This fitting tribute will live forever." 📖

After 31 years, CO Dixon-Palmer still enjoys her job – “so far,” anyway

Hudson Correction Officer Debbie Dixon-Palmer didn't hesitate when asked for her reflections on her 31-year career with the Department.

“I've really enjoyed it so far,” said CO Dixon-Palmer, who has proudly ascended the ranks after starting out with the Department as a typist at Coxsackie in 1972.

“One of the things I really like about working with the Department is dealing with my fellow Correction Officers and the other employees. I'm the type of person who can get along with anyone. As long as somebody respects me, I respect them.”

CO Dixon-Palmer became a Correction Officer in 1982 and has been working at Hudson since 1985. Along the way, she's had stints not only at Coxsackie but also at Bedford Hills and Fishkill.

For the past seven years, CO Dixon-Palmer has been supervising Hudson's Crew 8, more commonly known as the lawn and grounds crew. She typically supervises between seven to 10 inmates on any given shift.

On a recent hot June morning, while supervising a crew that was assigned to mow and collect debris from the entrance road leading to Hudson's secure perimeter, CO Dixon-Palmer frequently dabbed beads of sweat from her forehead with a white handkerchief. It was clear the summer day was only going to get hotter and create even more discomfort but she didn't seem to mind.

“It goes with the job,” said CO Dixon-Palmer.

“It can be a little uncomfortable at times but I really enjoy my outside crew assignment. It's a lot different than working on a housing unit. That's the same job every day, but, here, we do a lot of different assignments that helps make every day interesting.”

CO Dixon-Palmer, said she's grown into a proverbial jack-of-all-trades as a result of her seven-year crew

assignment. She takes a lot of pride in helping to ensure that the entire facility and accompanying grounds look presentable. She said her crew inmates feel the same sense of pride and that every day is a learning experience.

CO Dixon-Palmer: “[W]e do a lot of different assignments that helps make every day interesting.”

one of her crew inmates attempting to start a stubborn weed whacker.

“I learn from the inmates and they learn from me and we get along well together,” she said.

Hudson Superintendent Herbert McLaughlin called CO Dixon-Palmer a dedicated and professional employee.

“She does her job very well and is very enthusiastic about what she does, as are the inmates who are assigned to her crew,” said Mr. McLaughlin. “They help to make this facility look clean and presentable on a daily basis.”

CO Dixon-Palmer said she enjoys coming to her job for reasons other than the varied daily duties. She called her boss, Sgt.

John Reale, “a great supervisor” and she enjoys the camaraderie of her coworkers. “This is really a good place to work,” she said.

The duties of the inmates assigned to CO Dixon-Palmer's crew aren't solely confined to lawn and grounds chores at the facility.

When they're not battling the oppressive summer heat, they're dealing with the cold of a typical northeast winter, clearing snow from fire hydrants in Hudson to ensure the safety of area residents.

And CO Dixon-Palmer and her crew also help the community in other ways through an occasional assignment to the local food bank where they help sort and pack non-perishable food and other items for distribution to the area's needy.

“To me, it's gratifying to be able to help out the local community and the inmates also take great satisfaction in doing it,” she said. 📖



CO Dixon-Palmer supervises inmates in an outdoor crew.

Transitions

July 2003

Name	Title	Facility
Promotions		
Lynn S. Herman	Inmate Records Coord 2	Attica
John P. Oristian	Plant Utilities Engineer 3	Auburn
Ignacio A. Baez	Principal Account Clerk	Bedford Hills
Thomas Mathew	Calculations Clerk 2	Bedford Hills
Sonia H. Gregory	Stores Clerk 2	Bedford Hills
Yolanda L. Garcia	Health Info Mgmt Admin 1	Bedford Hills
Rebecca J. Lashua	Payroll Clerk 3	Ciinton
Mary Ellen Martin	Clerk 2	Coxsackie
Elizabeth Keeler	Counselor Aide Trainee	Downstate
Lawrence Zwillinger	Dep Supt Health Care Facility	Fishkill
Jeffrey A. Welk	Plant Utilities Assistant	Fishkill
Debra Vanni	Secretary 1	Five Points
Lisa Nichols	Clerk 2	Gouverneur
Carole Kozak	Senior Mail & Supply Clerk	Gowanda
Roger A. Benish	Plant Utilities Engineer 3	Great Meadow
Grover H. Greiner	Tandem Tractor Trailer Op	Green Haven
Daniel F. Cahill	Head Cook	Greene
Donald H. Oldenburg	Maintenance Supervisor 3	Groveland
Sally A. Thompson	Clerk 2	Lakeview
Ruth A. Musso	Principal Account Clerk	Lakeview
Mark E. Slavin	Tandem Tractor Trailer Op	Main Office
Susan J. Sheridan	Head Account Clerk	Main Office
Linda L. Budnick	Sentencing Review Specialist	Main Office
Angela R. DeForrest	Clerk 2	Marcy
Carol L. Doyle	Inmate Records Coord 2	Marcy
Sandra O'Connor	Principal Account Clerk	Marcy
Gloria J. Deyo	Inmate Records Coord 1	Mohawk
Roberta A. Greene	Clerk 2	Ogdensburg
Karen J. Bielak	Head Account Clerk	Orleans
Sheila Prisco	Head Cook	Otisville
Rajul V. Patel	Systems Support Aide	Sing Sing
Simon Onwe	Stores Clerk 2	Sing Sing
Diane Cassidy	Principal Account Clerk	Sing Sing
Maria Coutant	Head Clerk Personnel	Sing Sing
Elise R. Paine	Inmate Records Coord 1	Southport
Dale Rabideau	Maintenance Super 2	Taconic
Sherrri King	Library Clerk 2	Upstate
Elizabeth Hoffman	Payroll Clerk 3	Wende
Karen P. Metz	Correction Lieutenant	Bayview
George H. Underwood	Correction Lieutenant	Bayview
Craig L. Goodman	Correction Lieutenant	Bedford Hills
Michael A. Daye, Sr.	Correction Lieutenant	Downstate
Thomas J. Sirois	Correction Lieutenant	Downstate
James O. Hooge	Correction Lieutenant	Edgecombe
Scott A. Renshaw	Correction Lieutenant	Fishkill
Kevin R. Klein	Correction Lieutenant	Queensboro
David B. Wiernicki	Correction Lieutenant	Queensboro
Jeff D. Haines	Correction Lieutenant	Sing Sing

Kevin L. Signor	Correction Lieutenant	Sing Sing
Richard D. Goodman	Correction Lieutenant	Sullivan
Jeffrey M. Keenan	Correction Lieutenant	Sullivan
John R. Kurtelawicz	Correction Lieutenant	Ulster
Thomas Happell	Correction Sergeant	Arthur Kill
Thomas Robinson	Correction Sergeant	Arthur Kill
Anthony Volpe	Correction Sergeant	Auburn
Deborah Conroy	Correction Sergeant	Bayview
Richard J. Stay	Correction Sergeant	Bayview
Daniel Corter	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
Michael J. Kohberger	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
Michael J. McClatchie	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
C. Crispin Murray	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
Raymond Pabon	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
Brian Parkin	Correction Sergeant	Bedford Hills
David Kingsbury	Correction Sergeant	Cayuga
Jay Baisley	Correction Sergeant	Fishkill
Bruce C. Flynn	Correction Sergeant	Fishkill
Patrick Foley	Correction Sergeant	Fishkill
Timothy Smithers	Correction Sergeant	Five Points
Angel Espinosa	Correction Sergeant	Lincoln
Nicholas Vitale	Correction Sergeant	Marcy
John Dorsagno	Correction Sergeant	Queensboro
Terrance R. Gower	Correction Sergeant	Queensboro
Bryan Henderson	Correction Sergeant	Queensboro
Emil Mejia	Correction Sergeant	Sing Sing
Jurij Oracz	Correction Sergeant	Sing Sing

Retirements

William G. Roy	Teacher 4	Attica
Richard J. Gilbert	General Mechanic	Auburn
Robert P. Sweeney	Dep Supt Security 3	Bare Hill
Franklyn R. Russell	Chaplain	Beacon
Mary Ann J. Hughes	Dep Supt Admin 3	Bedford Hills
Clifton O. Bell	General Mechanic	Clinton
John K. Hoxie	First Dep Supt	Coxsackie
Robert G. Chaloner	Clinical Physician 2	Coxsackie
Csaba Bordas	Plumber & Steamfitter	Downstate
Lawrence J. Moore	Nurse 2	Downstate
Franklyn R. Russell	Chaplain	Eastern
J. Vangorder	Keyboard Specialist 1	Eastern
John Waite	Head Laundry Super	Elmira
Lois A. Stotz	Institution Steward	Elmira
Thomas D. Seyler	Teacher 4	Elmira
Joanne N. Reyome	Teacher 4	Franklin
Virginia B. Calkins	Clinical Physician 2	Gowanda
Don E. Kerr	Teacher 4	Great Meadow
Melody J. Eldred	Dep Supt Admin 3	Greene
William S. Mango, Jr.	Assistant Commissioner	Main Office
James E. Albrecht	Plant Utilities Engineer 2	Mohawk

Continued on facing page

Employees march in Gotham to honor Puerto Rico

For the eighth consecutive year, some 50 enthusiastic Department employees and other family members proudly strutted their stuff down Manhattan's bustling and famous Fifth Avenue during the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade.

This year's event was one of the largest – and loudest – ever.

“The noise from the spectators lining the sidewalks was absolutely incredible,” said Terrance McElroy, Bedford Hills Deputy Superintendent for Security and one of the proud participants. “It was just deafening. The energy level was incredible, and it really seemed to get all the participants pumped up.”

This year's crowd was estimated at well over 3 million, with more than 100 parade floats depicting the Latino lifestyle.

The Department's contingent included members of the Latino Officers Association, which featured employees from established chapters at prisons throughout the state.

The national Puerto Rican Day Parade has long been a treasured New York City tradition. It recognizes the ongoing outstanding contributions of the Puerto Rican community. The parade is much more than that, however, as one witnesses the diverse crowd that transcends racial and ethnic lines and embodies the true spirit of all New Yorkers.

This year's parade theme – “Puerto Rico, its Music and Songs” – had participants marching to the vibrant, energetic beat of blaring Salsa music, much to the delight of the large viewing audience.

Sadly, one of the grand masters of this year's parade – Celia Cruz, the acclaimed “Queen of Salsa” – passed away a little more than a month after the festivities.

The other grand master at this year's parade was golf legend Chi Chi Rodriguez.

The 2003 Puerto Rican Day parade was dedicated to the Puerto Rican municipality of San German, which this year is celebrating the 430th anniversary of its founding.

As has been the Department's tradition in the past, the parade participants spent their own money to rent a community hall on 52nd Street for a lively post-parade gala. Some 500 marchers attended the post-parade bash that offered such Latino staples as beans and rice, plantains, roasted pork and stewed chicken.

In recognition of the Department's support of the event, employees marched right behind parade honorees New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Ms. Cruz, Mr. Rodriguez and the New York City Department of Corrections. 



Marchers of all ages included this group. More photos on page 16.

Continued from previous page

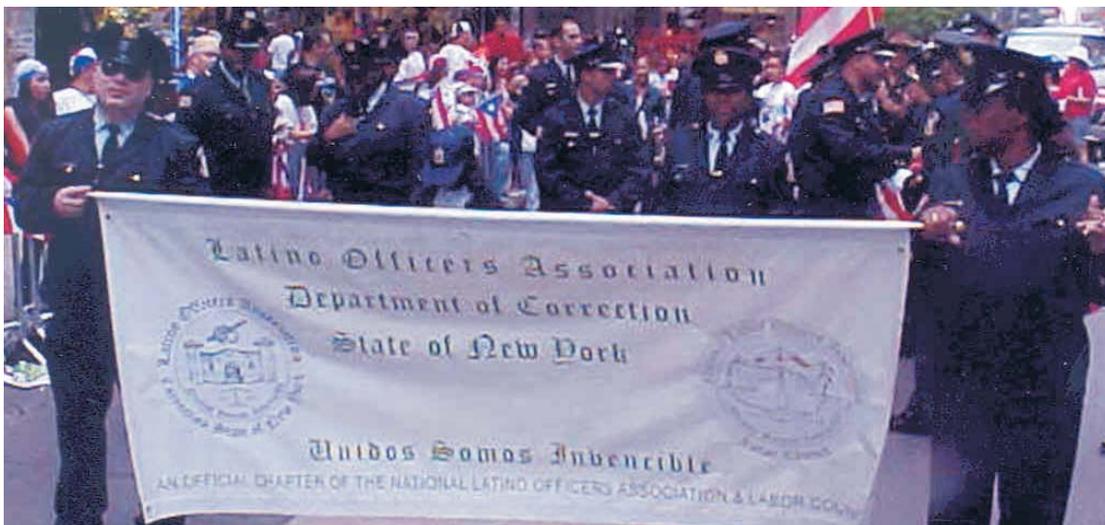
Hilda Mitjans	Counselor (Spanish Lang)	NYC Office
Fred A. Kurtz	Motor Equipment Mechanic	Shawangunk
Gary R. Stinson	Dep Supt Admin 3	Watertown
Albert S. Hall	Dep Supt Security 3	Wyoming
Norman Noack	Vocational Instructor 3	Wyoming
James E. Lee	Correction Lieutenant	Albion
David Benware	Correction Lieutenant	Bare Hill
Jane Delgado	Correction Lieutenant	Eastern
Steve Major	Correction Lieutenant	Gouverneur
Timothy Manzollilo	Correction Lieutenant	Sullivan
Alexander D. Campbell	Correction Lieutenant	Wyoming
Jacque Rabideau	Correction Sergeant	Clinton
Alfonso Yambay	Correction Sergeant	Shawangunk
David Voudren	Correction Officer	Adirondack
Gary Favro	Correction Officer	Altona
Bernard L. Brown	Correction Officer	Auburn
Donald Wright	Correction Officer	Butler
Garfield Barrett	Correction Officer	Clinton
Miles Huckeba	Correction Officer	Clinton
Byron E. Wing	Correction Officer	Clinton
John D. Leuallen	Correction Officer	Coxsackie
Marsha M. Hopkins	Correction Officer	Downstate
David A. Letersky	Correction Officer	Eastern
Hendrie Saymn	Correction Officer	Eastern
Richard Smith	Correction Officer	Eastern

Gary Southard	Correction Officer	Eastern
Nicholas L. Fierro, Jr.	Correction Officer	Elmira
Ramon Alonso	Correction Officer	Green Haven
Gregory W. Smith	Correction Officer	Greene
Robert Barnes	Correction Officer	Mid-Orange
Betty Mimms	Correction Officer	Mohawk
Richard Morris	Correction Officer	Moriah
John Jones	Correction Officer	Mt. McGregor
Mark P. Chabot	Correction Officer	Oneida
Paul Leno	Correction Officer	Orleans
Ann M. McWilliams	Correction Officer	Riverview
James E. Starks	Correction Officer	Sing Sing
James R. Hubert	Correction Officer	Sullivan
Wayne R. Griffin	Correction Officer	Sullivan
M. Sivilli	Correction Officer	Wallkill
William Carey	Correction Officer	Washington
J. R. Blackmore	Correction Officer	Wende
Dennis Lodestro	Correction Officer	Wyoming

Deaths

Linda Lafko	Nurse 2	Downstate
Elizabeth A. Amidon	Keyboard Specialist 1	Gowanda
W. Donald Carola	Senior Attorney	Main Office
Edgar Gates	Cook	Mt. McGregor
Monica S. Molina	Keyboard Specialist 1	Sing Sing
Robert Oney	Correction Officer	Auburn 

DOCS employees march in New York City to honor Puerto Rico, heritage



DOCS employees traveled to New York City recently to march in the Puerto Rican Day Parade that drew 3 million onlookers. See story, another photo on page 15.