

Corrections Connection

A large, weathered piece of driftwood, possibly a tree stump, stands prominently on a sandy beach. The wood is bleached and shows signs of significant weathering, with a mix of light and dark brown tones. In the background, the ocean waves are visible, and the sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds. The sun is high in the sky, creating a strong glare and casting a long shadow of the driftwood onto the sand.

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Second Quarter 2023

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Corrections Connection is a publication of the Office of Public Information and Communications. Story ideas, feedback and comments can be submitted to Lisa Gass at GassL@michigan.gov. Like MDOC on Facebook or Twitter.

The image on the cover was taken by Alger Correctional Facility Warden **Catherine Bauman**. For the chance to have your photo featured on the cover of the newsletter, email a high-resolution version of the image and a description of where it was taken to Lisa Gass at GassL@michigan.gov.

Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success



Fiscal Year '24 Budget Supports Staffing, Technology, and New Programs

Each year, the MDOC works with the State Budget Office and the Legislature to develop an impactful budget that supports current operations, while targeting key new initiatives. This process takes several months, but is critical to advancing our department's mission, supporting staff, and achieving our goal of preparing the individuals under our jurisdiction for success. Working with our legislative budget chairs—Representative Amos O'Neal (Saginaw) and Senator Sue Shink (Ann Arbor)—the department's leadership and budget team were able to finalize a budget that maintains all current operations, while making several new and historic investments.

Key Investments Impacting Staffing:

1. The budget includes \$12 million in one-time funding to provide recruitment bonuses to new corrections officers hired in FY '24, as well as retention bonuses for all current officers with a focus on those that are earliest in their careers to promote retention. The final distribution is subject to approval by the Office of the State Employer and Michigan Corrections Organization, but the budget includes funding for the following bonuses:
 - a. New recruits hired in FY '24 will receive \$3,000, split between 3 payments (hire, completion of on-the-job training, and completion of 1 year of service).
 - b. Current officers hired between January 9,

2023 and September 30, 2023 will receive \$2,000.

c. Current officers hired before January 9, 2023 with less than 3 years of service will receive \$1,500.

d. All other current officers will receive a retention bonus of \$1,000.

2. Establishment of a centralized Discriminatory Harassment and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Investigations Unit. This will allow for more consistency in investigations between worksites and will reduce the time burden of PREA investigations on front line supervisors at the facilities, so they can instead focus on working with staff. The Legislature provided authorization for 23 new FTEs for this unit.

3. Enhancement of current MDOC Intelligence operations through the addition of 30 new FTEs and funding for Intelligence tasks to be shifted away from the phone contractor and to the MDOC. This will allow the MDOC to continue to develop and strengthen its intelligence capabilities with a steady state funding stream. This will also lead to a renegotiation of the current phone contract to further reduce the cost of prisoner phone calls.

Key Investments in Technology:

1. The budget includes one-time and ongoing funds to deploy body-worn cameras for use in facilities and during offender transports. In states where this technology has already been adopted there has been a reduction in incidents due to its deterrent effect, as well as the ability to use the video for misconducts, criminal prosecution, and to resolve grievances. A group of MDOC staff from around the department began meeting earlier this year and have continued to do so to develop a policy for body-worn cameras that is based on the policy and program that has been successfully implemented in the Ohio Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. More information about this technology, related policies, and the new unit that will support this program will be shared in the future.

2. A new \$1 million-dollar contraband prevention program has been created in the new budget. These funds will be used each year to target new technologies to reduce the introduction of contraband into the facilities. In the first year, these funds are expected to be used to purchase package scanning devices that can identify drugs/contraband.

Key Investments in Success:

1. Recognizing the significant challenges posed by substance use and the increased overdose risk that exists for those returning to the community, the budget includes a historic investment in the expansion of Medication Assisted Treatment. This investment, which totals \$11.2 million and 57 authorized positions, will allow for MAT clinics to be launched at additional facilities while supporting the cost of staff and various medications.

2. The funding that is available to support success in the community will also increase in this budget. Funding for the contracts that support parolees will increase by \$1.95 million, while funding for Community Corrections (probation), will increase by \$1 million. The department will also be piloting the provision of certain services that have helped the parolee population, such as focused employment support, to the probation population.

3. With Pell grant eligibility reopening for most incarcerated students, the MDOC is actively working to partner with additional Michigan colleges and universities to offer post-secondary programs within the Department. To help launch and support new programs, the budget includes \$1.5m in new funding that will be used to support and expand these programs. This funding will directly assist with the launch of new college programs in FY '24.

4. The budget also includes funding to several organizations that will be integrated into the MDOC's Offender Success efforts for the next year. This includes funding for peer-supported reentry providers, funding for a trauma-focused pilot in southeast Michigan, a pilot reentry program serving the greater Saginaw area, as well as an expansion of Goodwill's Flip the Script program to an additional community.

The FY '24 budget is unique in terms of how many new proposals to advance the MDOC's mission were supported by the Legislature in the final budget. This reflects both the great work that MDOC staff have been doing and that the Legislature has confidence that each of these investments will be well spent and have a positive impact on our state. As October 1st approaches, the department will be sharing additional information about these investments and how they will be integrated into its operations.

PRISON MATHEMATICS PROJECT

The Prison Mathematics Project came to Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility in March to celebrate Pi Day (3.14.) The event came to fruition from a prisoner at IBC, who, in his own right, is a mathematician. He is a part of a group that provides different math problems and scenarios for incarcerated individuals around the country. The group's goal is to provide others with a different way of thinking, improving their critical thinking, problem-solving, and mathematics skills while also allowing them to pass the time with a positive activity.

The volunteers worked with the group on



different problems, asking them to think differently. Some of these problems ranged from easy to extremely difficult, resulting in groups working together to solve the problem. The Prison Mathematics Project also provided the attendees with coffee and pie to celebrate the occasion, which was very well received. The event was a huge success, with the IBC staff and offenders learning from it. The volunteers were also grateful for the time spent at IBC being able to share their knowledge and expertise.

CHEF JIMMY HILL RECEIVES 2023 GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE TOURISM COLLABORATION



culinary industry.

The curriculum aims to develop a peaceful and welcoming learning environment that will allow the students to graduate as state-certified sous-chefs, sommeliers, and in several cases, successful restaurant proprietors.

The MDOC is grateful for Chef Hill and congratulates Chef Hill on this well-deserved award.

On April 11, Lakeland Correctional Facility Chef Jimmy Hill was awarded the Governor's Award for Innovative Tourism Collaboration for his efforts to educate or offer training to the tourism industry to elevate levels of customer service/hospitality, achieve economic success, or encourage non-traditional training partnerships or opportunities.

Over the past 30 years, Chef Jimmy has developed and implemented a culinary training program that offers prisoners a second chance, one dish at a time. Inside the Lakeland Correctional Facility in Coldwater, Michigan, inmates have the opportunity to learn new life skills in the

WELLNESS APP

Download the Michigan Department of Corrections Wellness App



- Confidential
- Accessible 24/7 Helpline
- Wellness Unit, Peer Support and Chaplain Support
- Available for you, your family members and MDOC retirees
- Self-Assessments PTSD, sleep, stress & more
- Wellness Toolkit videos & articles on 60+ topics
- CrisisAlert® one-touch dialing

CORDICO

Thank you for your service and the countless sacrifices you make on behalf of others.

Scan the QR code to install the wellness app.
Username: MDOC
Password: Wellness

Download on the App Store
GET IT ON Google Play

Have you downloaded the MDOC Wellness app yet?

The Wellness app provides MDOC staff, their family members and retirees confidential, 24/7 access to a wellness toolkit and gives them the ability to connect directly to the MDOC Wellness Unit, Peer Support, the Employee Chaplain Program, as well as other specialized support resources.

To download the free Wellness app on your personal device see the flyer which has the QR code or search MDOC Wellness on your device's app store. With the generic username (MDOC) and password (Wellness), passwords are case sensitive, the app can be downloaded confidentially to access information.



MDOC RECIDIVISM RATE DECLINES FOR FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW

For the fourth year in a row, the recidivism rate in Michigan has declined and now stands at 22.1 percent, again making it the lowest rate in state history.

The recidivism rate measures the percentage of individuals who return to prison within three years of release. The new rate places Michigan fourth best in the nation.

Last year, the department's recidivism rate stood at 23.6 percent. The year before that it was at 26.7 percent.

"This is yet another sign of the great work our staff do every day. Our dedicated employees are focused on delivering results and ensuring we are doing all we can to set people up for success when they leave prison," said Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington.

The department's leadership under Director Washington utilizes research, data, and evi-

dence-based practices is delivering results. A sharper focus on educational and vocational training and core programming in the prisons, providing job training, addressing substance use, and providing vital documents before release so those going back to the community have the tools they need for success are vital steps.

And then, once paroled, moving away from simply monitoring compliance and instead taking a more active role in helping those under supervision be successful by understanding their risks and needs and helping them build new skills to change behavior.

All of these efforts coming together are leading to positive results and creating safer communities. Fewer people coming to prison means less crime and fewer victims, but it also means more people at home with their families and breaking the cycle of inter-generational incarceration.

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IONIA COUNTY AGENT ABIGAIL GAINNEY SELECTED AS MDOC's 2023

CANDICE L. DUNN PAROLE/PROBATION AGENT OF THE YEAR

Abigail Gainney is the Michigan Department of Corrections' 2023 Candice L. Dunn Parole/Probation Agent of the Year for being a leader and consistently promoting offender success.



"Agent Gainney aligns with the Department's mission and serves as a coach to those she supervises," Michigan Department of Correc-

tions Director Heidi Washington said. "Her ability to connect with her peers, those she supervises, and her community partners make her a tremendous asset to the Department. Agent Gainney continuously uses her training to make informed decisions, and I am proud of the difference she is making in people's lives."

Gainney, who began her career with the MDOC nine years ago, is a leader with the supervision of Sex Offender Case Management and Interstate Compact. Gainney also manages the Swift & Sure and Mental Health Court programs and serves as an Ionia County Community Corrections Advisory Board member.

Gainney consistently goes above and beyond, serving as a coach for the offenders she supervises. Gainney utilizes tools to assist offenders, keeping them from high-risk behaviors and providing additional resources to address their individual needs. There are numerous examples of her positively impacting the lives of those she supervises through her coaching techniques, including assisting an offender to negoti-

ate a \$7 pay raise at their place of employment.

Gainney is highly regarded by her peers and community partners. Gainney works with her community partners to find solutions and has been described as inspiring and encouraging.

"I enjoy having an impact on my community," said Gainney. "Seeing people doing well after supervision is so rewarding and benefits our whole community."

The award was named to honor the legacy of Candice L. Dunn, who was an Oakland County probation agent and was the Department's 2017 Parole/Probation Agent of the Year. She was killed in a car accident the night she was recognized for the achievement at an MDOC Employee Appreciation Banquet.

Other nominees for Parole/Probation Agent of the Year included: Sex Offender Management Unit Agent Katie Davis; Kalamazoo County Agent Cody Deutsch; Macomb Probation Agent April Griffin; Monroe Probation Agent Travis Sharp; Wexford County Parole and Probation Agent Lindsay Simon; Ingham County Parole Agent Ashley Smith; Wayne County Parole Agent Lavonda Sterdivant; Genesee Probation Agent Kenyatta Sumpter; Lahser District Probation Agent Tracey Till-MacLachlan; G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility Institutional Agent Dylan Whitten; Pontiac Parole Agent Heather Zimmerman.



With Thanks

The Upper Peninsula Honor Flight sent a thank you card to Alger Correctional Facility for the donation of \$465, which was raised from the Prisoner Benefit Fund fundraiser.



Thank you for your donation
to the U.P. Honor Flight.
We appreciate your support
which helps these flights
of honor to continue for
our deserving Veterans.

Thank you for the beautiful
printed note, your heartfelt
sentiments are what is
the core value of Honor
Flight. Thank you.

Together we
thanked them,
now we want
to thank you.

U.P. Honor Flight

With Thanks

The Michigan Department of Corrections was recently thanked by the FBI - Detroit Field Office, and the U.S. Attorneys from the Eastern and Western District of Michigan for assisting in the search for 2-year-old Wynter Cole-Smith.

July 17, 2023

Dear Director Washington,

The week of July 2nd was profoundly difficult here in Michigan as law enforcement raced to save the life of 2-year-old Wynter Cole-Smith, only to learn several days later that her life was brutally taken. These efforts unfolded before the eyes of a watching public, whose support was felt at every turn. While we were denied the outcome we all so desperately sought, we want to recognize the extraordinary effort of law enforcement – including your agency – to save the life of Wynter and secure a measure of justice.

From the moment the first call arrived late Sunday evening, law enforcement mobilized. The collective effort to save Wynter was breathtaking: a statewide, all-hands-on-deck, exhaustive response we have rarely witnessed in our careers. The week this tragedy occurred, of course, spanned the 4th of July. Your law enforcement personnel – like people all across America – were celebrating the holiday with families and friends, many on personal leave at campgrounds and cottages. It didn't matter. As those pledged to protect and serve, they dropped everything to help save the life of this precious girl. They raised their hands to help, even when not required. And their families, as they so often do, sacrificed and supported them at every turn.

Your team did whatever they were asked to support the mission, with relentless determination and painstaking thoroughness to chase down every lead, gather every piece of evidence, and leave no stone unturned. From Lansing to Detroit and everywhere in between, law enforcement courageously apprehended the suspect; knocked on doors; conducted interviews; recovered and reviewed surveillance videos; scoured alleys, fields, lakes, and rivers; obtained and exploited cell site information; and piloted drones, fixed wing aircraft, and helicopters. Chief Ellery Sosebee of the Lansing Police Department eloquently captured what drove you, your team, and everyone who participated in this effort: "Wynter is one of our kids, and we won't rest until we find her."

We also want to recognize what all of us experienced: the tremendous support of people everywhere. In direct ways, the public contributed to this effort, sharing their tips and staying alert for anything that might assist. And at every turn we felt overwhelming support from people across Michigan and across the nation. Their prayers, well-wishes, and shared determination carried us forward.

So often we talk about the importance of collaboration, the value of partnerships, and the fact that as law enforcement agencies we all share a fundamental mission to protect the public. But for a week with little sleep and dogged determination, we watched these talking points become reality. Every partner, including your agency, was indispensable to this effort. Thank you, thank you, for the part you and your team played.

No doubt we all wanted a different ending to this story. But in the months ahead, we will do everything in our power to seek a measure of justice for little Wynter and her loved ones as the investigation continues and the prosecution takes shape.

With deep gratitude,



Mark A. Totten
United States Attorney



Dawn N. Ison
United States Attorney



Devin Kowalski
A/Special Agent in Charge

PROJECT CLEAN SWEEP AT IBC

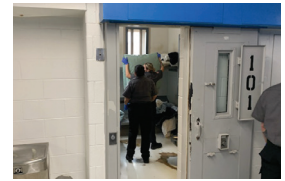
On March 23, Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility Staff conducted a Project Clean Sweep in a coordinated effort with the Ed Vallad Officer Recruit Training Academy and The Emergency Response Team.

Warden Macauley would like to thank everyone for helping make the operation successful. The Clean sweep exercise was an opportunity for IBC to look into many areas that, without the assistance of the Training Academy, as well as the ERT Teams from Regions 1,2 &3, the Intel Unit, and Emergency

Services staff, the facility would not usually be able to take such an in-depth look.

New Employee Administrator Chris Schweikert and ERT Emergency Section Chief Brent Travelbee commented on how cooperative and helpful the IBC staff participation in the event was in its success.

Deputy Director Bush addressed the staff involved and thanked them for their efforts. Assistant Deputy Director Brewer got into the action and assisted in instructing some new recruits on shakedown techniques.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS' DAY

On April 26 facilities and work sites across the Department celebrated their Administrative Professionals. We join them in thanking our exceptional support staff across the Michigan Department of Corrections. Thank you for all that you do to help keep Michigan communities safe.



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CENTRAL MICHIGAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY ACTING ASSISTANT DEPUTY WARDEN AND RESIDENT UNIT MANAGER NAMED THE 2023 MICHIGAN DE- PARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DIRECTOR'S AWARD WINNERS.

Resident Unit Manager (RUM) James King and Acting Assistant Deputy Warden Nicholas White at the Central Michigan Correctional Facility were selected as the 2023 Michigan Department of Corrections Director's Award winners for their efforts in assisting the facility with recruitment. The two planned and executed recruiting events in the community and hosted more than 200 interviews.



MDOC
Director Heidi
Washington
presented
RUM King
and A/
Assistant
Deputy
Warden
White with

the Director's Award at the Department's Employee Appreciation Banquet on Thursday, May 4, in Lansing.

The Director's Award is the highest honor awarded to employees of the MDOC. RUM King and A/ Assistant Deputy Warden White also received the Department's Professional Excellence Award for recognizing burnout among their colleagues due to working several hours of overtime each week and taking action to help relieve them. The two worked as a team, partnering with local agencies to bring awareness of careers at their facility and with the Department. They developed marketing material and organized volunteers for the events. They arranged for applicants to experience the whole

interview process at their recruiting events, even making sure each applicant had access to computers to submit their applications on the spot.

"Resident Unit Manager King and Acting Assistant Deputy Warden White's innovation and willingness to step up and help their colleagues in a time of need is an excellent example of teamwork," said Director Washington. "RUM King and A/Assistant Deputy Warden White's leadership relieved their colleagues and boosted morale at their facility. It is an honor to have them as members of Team MDOC."

RUM King has worked for the Department for nearly 20 years, and A/Assistant Deputy Warden White has worked for the Department for 23 years.

"It's a great career," said RUM King. "You have the opportunity to work with great people and be a part of the team while keeping the public safe."

The two's work has allowed their facility to drop its vacancy rate to only 5%, which has boosted morale in the facility.

"We can't do it all ourselves," explained RUM King. "We have a group of 12 that consistently volunteers to help us, and the support from the facilities administration has been a huge asset."

The Director's Award is traditionally awarded to a single person who displays excellent work ethic, leadership, and professionalism. This year is the first time the Director's Award has been awarded to two individuals.



EMPLOYEE REC DAY

This year's Employee Rec Days were held in the Lower Peninsula on June 2, and the Upper Peninsula on July 21. MDOC employees from across the state gathered to meet new friends, see old friends, and participate in several activities which included golfing, cornhole, painting, bingo, bowling, fowling, scavenger hunts, and more. Each day concluded with dinner, door prizes, and a 50/50 raffle.

Thank you to the Employee Engagement Committee who worked hard to put on these events for the department staff. We can't wait for next year's events.



MDOC WELCOMES NEW OFFICERS AND AGENTS

The Michigan Department of Corrections welcomed 109 new corrections officers as members of the Ed Mize Academy class. MDOC Director Heidi Washington and class namesake Ed Mize addressed the recruits and offered them words of advice during graduation ceremonies held on June 7 in the Upper Peninsula and June 23 in the Lower Peninsula. Graduating recruits earned awards for personal conduct and academic achievement.

Upper Peninsula Academy Award winners:

- Jack Budd Award, Corrections Officer Nichole Tyner
- Josephine B. McCallum Award and Academic Excellence Award, Corrections Officer George Richmond

Lower Peninsula Academy Award winners:

- Josephine B. McCallum Award, Corrections Officer Matthew Fletcher
- Jack L. Budd Award, Corrections Officer Terrell Owens
- Academic Excellence Award, Corrections Officer Theresa Moon

We also extend our thanks to the veteran and active-duty service members of both the Upper Peninsula and Lower Peninsula academy classes.



The department's newest field agents participated in an oath of office ceremony on July 14.

The following agents took the oath:

- Megan Andrews - Lapeer County Probation/Parole
Jereme Bear - Clare County Parole/Probation
Libby Mikulski - Emmet County Parole/Probation
Blake Van Houten - Mason County Parole/Probation
Jessica Montague - Osceola County Parole/Probation
Kevin Lowery - Troy Probation



The Extra Mile

MDOC staff go beyond the call of duty to help others



Newberry Correctional Facility Warden Curley presented Mailroom GOA Cynthia Ellsworth with a Warden's Coin. Cindy has been involved in numerous incidents at NCF where she has successfully located and reported suspicious incoming mail, including discovering 31 suboxone strips concealed inside the binding of a book. As a result of her efforts, NCF is a safer place.

Shiawassee County Parole and Probation Office Secretary Dawn Lucas was presented with a Good Government Coin – Symbol of Leadership by Region Manager Heather Wayne. Dawn is a true leader in the office. She welcomes staff, clients, and community partners with a smile on her face. She is a genuinely kind person who will go above and beyond to help others. Over the past few months, Dawn has been asked to assist support staff in Region 6 with typing Presentence Investigation Reports. She not only offered her assistance with a positive attitude and smile on her face, but she completed everything efficiently while maintaining excellent quality. Dawn approaches her day with a “can do” and “will do” attitude. She truly loves her job, and it shows. Her energy and leadership within the office is contagious. Thank you, Dawn, for being an amazing leader!



Thumb Correctional Facility Corrections Officer David VanHorrick was presented with the MDOC Lifesaving Award by Director Washington in recognition of his actions which assisted in saving the life of a prisoner. Officer VanHorrick responded to a cell where a prisoner was found to be having trouble breathing. With the assistance of another officer, Officer VanHorrick placed him on the ground while awaiting emergency personnel to assist, made the call to lockdown the unit, and continued security rounds for the duration of the incident in which first-aid was performed on the prisoner. Officer VanHorrick's quick response was instrumental in the saving of the prisoner's life.

Corrections Quiz

Who was recently named as the 2023 MDOC Officer of the Year?

Send your answer to Lisa Gass at GassL@michigan.gov. The first person to answer correctly will receive a congratulatory shout out and the answer and winner will be published in the next edition of the newsletter.

First Quarter Quiz Recap

Where can you see photos from around the MDOC every week?

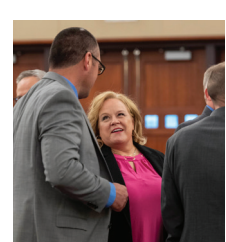
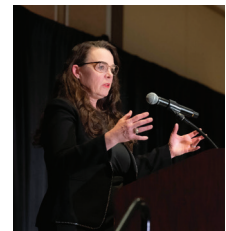
Answer: Flickr

Congratulations to **Randy Coyne**, Record Supervisor at Alger Correctional Facility for being the first to correctly answer the First Quarter Corrections Quiz. Great job!

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION BANQUET

The week of May 8 served as MDOC Appreciation Week and also National Correctional Officers Week and National Public Service Recognition Week, as well as Teacher Appreciation Week and National Nurses Week. On May 4, we celebrated a number of our great staff at our Employee Appreciation Banquet.

Thank you to all our staff for everything you do each day. You are appreciated.

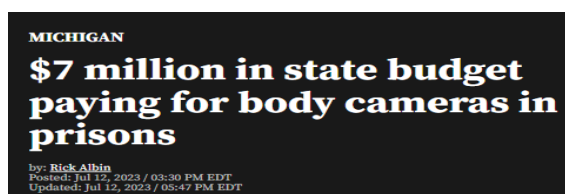


SNAPSHOTS

A LOOK AT LIFE AROUND THE MDOC



Corrections in the News



Spread the word about some of the great things happening at the MDOC and share these stories with friends, family and coworkers.

Seen on Facebook...



To see more, like the MDOC on Facebook

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