

OER NETWORK NEWS



WHO WE ARE

**PRISON BUILD PROGRAM
PRISON EDUCATION
MICHIGAN STATE INDUSTRIES**



The Office of Employment Readiness (OER) was created in the summer of 2007, bringing together Michigan State Industries, Education and the Prison Build Program. These three divisions within the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) are devoted to training prisoners for employment upon their return to society. The goal under this new office is to improve academic opportunities and vocational skills for prisoners preparing to return to the community. It was only logical that these three programs work together under one roof to achieve their goals collectively.

Office Of Employment Readiness Vision

“The Vision of the Office Of Employment Readiness is that every prisoner returning to a community is prepared for work upon release. Prison Education, the Prison Build Program, and Michigan State Industries will integrate services to provide strategic training programs that will assist inmates with acquiring employment skills, and a positive work ethic to be successful upon reentry.”



**Strategic
Planning
Underway!!
Inside....**

OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT READINESS AN OVERVIEW

Michigan State Industries

Michigan State Industries provides a wide range of products and services to meet the needs of government agencies and nonprofit organizations. With 27 factory operations, MSI can employ more than 1,700 prisoners at any given time to work in 1,200 various job assignments.

Prison Education

The MDOC education program is the largest provider of adult education in the state of Michigan. It provides academic instruction at grade levels K-12, culminating in a GED for those who are able to obtain it. Adult Basic Education is designed to raise the basic functional literacy level of the prisoners. For those prisoners functioning at a level sufficient to complete the curriculum, there are 11 vocational programs delivered across the state. These vocational programs provide state and national certifications. On any given day, more than 9,000 prisoners participate in academic and vocational programming.

Prison Build Program

The nationally recognized Prison Build Program uses a systems approach to train prisoners in the construction and horticulture trades to build housing components, complete houses, and provide landscaping services for low-income Michigan citizens.

Currently, 17 correctional facilities participate to either build interior and exterior wall panels, kitchen and bath cabinets, sheds, complete houses or provide horticulture products. Since its inception as a pilot project in late 1998, the Prison Build Program has assisted in building more than 2,000 homes for Habitat for Humanity families. The Prison Build Program has also worked with state and local units of government to provide housing and other projects designed for private use.





OER RACES FORWARD ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR MSI

In July of 2007, William D. (Bill) Wilson was hired to bring the OER together as its Administrator. Bill comes to the OER from the private sector business community where he spent more than 20 years as a business owner and association executive. Under Bill's leadership, MSI hosted a two day strategic planning and leadership workshop to move the OER into the 21st Century.

On April 30 and May 1 2008, MSI superintendents, assistant superintendents, engineers, supervisors and union staff met in Lansing to concentrate on what we do, how we do it and how we plan to work in the future. The intensive two day workshop was led by Larry Collar, Office of Great Workplace Development, an expert on facilitating goal oriented planning for state departments.



Prior to the start of the workshop Mr. Collar sent each participant a confidential survey asking for responses to the following questions:

1. **What does MSI need to start doing?**
2. **What does MSI need to do more of?**
3. **What does MSI need to stop doing?**

The answers to those questions were not surprising:

- “We need to market new products aggressively. ”
- “MSI needs to have long range plans and goals,” and “measurable goals that are attainable.”
- “Better communications between factories and Lansing,” and “Listen to staff suggestions.”
- “Need Accountability in MSI overall at all levels.”
- “Clear objectives and goals to keep the factories open and profitable.”
- “Identify products our customers need and want.”
- “Improve quality.”
- “Develop training requirements.”
- “Create new products that are needed.”
- “Ensure that the Department of Corrections is aware of MSI capabilities.”

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OER RACES FORWARD ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR MSI

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The topics of discussion centered on three themes: Past, Present and Future. It also included a detailed analysis of our Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats to our industry. At the conclusion of two full days of strategizing, six (6) objectives surfaced. Committees were formed and chairpersons assigned to tackle the objectives. The six committees and the respective chairpersons are as follows:



1. **Maintain Self-Sufficiency** - (MSI is required by law to pay it's own way):

- Sales and Marketing: Sub-Committee Chairperson – Cary Adragna, MSI Sales & Marketing Manager. Phone: (517) 241-6288
- New Products & Production Design: Sub-Committee Chairperson: Trever LeBarre, MSI Engineer. Phone: (616) 527-2510 ext. 1401
- Correctional Act and the Prisoner Industry Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP): Sub-Committee Chairperson: Michael Green, Prison Build Administrator. Phone: (517) 335-1390

2. **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):**

To improve the quality process into all areas of MSI (production and administration). Committee Chairperson: Greg Dancer, MSI Print Shop Superintendent. Phone: (517) 780-5806

3. **Create External and Internal Public Relations Campaign:**

To create a positive image of MSI with state agencies, the legislature, and the general public as well as improving the internal communication. This will include an understanding of networking, relationship building, customer relations, and written / verbal communication skills. Committee Chairperson: Tujauna White, MSI Marketing Specialist. Phone: (517) 373-4299

4. **Develop an Alternative/Renewable Energy Business:**

To use alternative energy for savings within MSI operations and to develop new business opportunities in the alternative/renewable energy area. Committee Chairperson: Dale Baum, MSI Agribusiness Superintendent. Phone: (517) 780-6224



OER RACES FORWARD ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR MSI

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5. Staff Training and Career Development:

To provide for specific job training and career development for MSI employees. Committee Chairperson: Heather Gay, Macomb CF, Principal. Phone: (586) 749-4900 ext. 350

6. Prisoner Training and Skill Development:

To integrate education and vocational training in MSI.

Committee Chairperson: Julie DeRose, MDOC Education Manager. Phone: (517) 335-1388

Each of these committee leaders will be reaching out to our employees for participation, input, ideas and heavy lifting. As Bill Wilson, OER Administrator stated at the start of this process:

“MSI employees are the backbone for the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative and MPRI cannot be successful if we are not successful. This is an opportunity for us to become more visible and more valuable to MDOC leadership. I want us to make changes not for change sake, but to become more innovative. No one knows how to become more innovative than our employees who know the day to day work processes.”

William D. Wilson Jr., OER Administrator



OER Strategic Planning Committee members discuss future plans for MSI

**News and updates on this
important initiative will be forthcoming!**

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