

NCIA NEWS

FALL 2023

WORKING ON THE INSIDE — SUCCEEDING ON THE OUTSIDE

What CI Means to Incarcerated Individuals.....



Showing Success while in CI and Post-Release



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About The National Correctional Industries Association

The National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) is the only association solely dedicated to advancing the unique profession of Correctional Industries. For more than half a century, NCIA has operated as an international, non-profit professional organization of individuals, agencies and companies, both public and private, who are committed to:

- Promoting excellence and credibility in the field of Correctional Industries through the professional development of its members
- Increasing public awareness of the benefits of Correctional Industries as work/training programs funded in part or whole by the sale of goods, services and commodities produced by incarcerated individuals
- Supporting innovation in and the development of work programs for incarcerated individuals
- Promoting reentry and reducing recidivism by providing incarcerated individuals with real-world work experience that teaches transferable job skills, life skills and work ethic to prepare them for post-release reentry and employment

NCIA's Mission Statement

The National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) is an international nonprofit professional association whose mission is to promote excellence in Correctional Industries through professional development and innovative solutions that improve public safety, business operations and successful reentry.

NCIA Members

NCIA members represent state Correctional Industry agencies, Federal Prison Industries and numerous county jail work programs, as well as private sector companies that work in partnership with Correctional Industries, both as suppliers/vendors and as partners in apprenticeship and work programs.

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What CI Means to Incarcerated Individuals ... Showing Success while in CI and Post-Release.

This issue of *NCIA News* will highlight success stories from both formerly incarcerated individuals and those still working in your CI program. You will hear from incarcerated individuals on what CI means to them, as well as how CI has positively impacted their lives.

NOTE: Statements contained in *NCIA News* are the personal views of the authors and do not constitute NCIA policy unless so indicated. NCIA does not assume responsibility for the content of *NCIA News* as submitted by contributors.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Bobby Lumpkin
President, NCIA

I hope you all had a great Summer and are looking forward to a productive Fall. Fall is the season that has been traditionally associated with reaping the rewards from the harvest, homecomings, and celebrations ... so it's fitting that this Fall Issue of NCIA News celebrates the development of incarcerated individuals while they work in Correctional Industries, as well as showcases the formerly incarcerated individuals who reap the rewards of post-release success.

This issue will be one of my favorites during my term as President of NCIA. The volume and depth of these stories submitted by CIs both large and small across the country clearly show that reentry is not just the mission of a few of our state members, but that all NCIA members clearly practice NCIA's Vision of **Working on the Inside – Succeeding on the Outside.**

And while I know that you are all extremely busy, I encourage you to take some time to read these inspiring stories. We as an industry can talk about the benefits of CI all day long, but these stories are told from the perspective of the incarcerated individual ... **we will learn what CI means to them.**

You will see within these stories that often the incarcerated individual came to a point in their life where they experienced an awakening, a rebirth, or a moment of clarity which led to a life changing decision. This decision led them to CI where the opportunity to learn skills (both technical and soft) in a work setting gave them the focus they needed to set themselves up for reentry success. In other words, it was a conscious, deliberate decision to work in CI ... each of these individuals didn't want to be the person they were before. They wanted to change, learn, and achieve with the ultimate goal of being released and ensuring they are never incarcerated again. They knew that CI would give them the tools, resources, and means to someday reap the rewards of reentry success.

You will also experience, through the eyes and voices of formerly incarcerated individuals, what post-release success actually looks like. I think we are often so caught up in the daily operations within our shops that we forget about the product and service that we provide ... a trained, capable person with the skills, resources, and tools to succeed on the outside. Hear firsthand what CI means to them ... let it be a constant reminder that the work we do every day has value and means something to someone else.

These stories are personal ... they are inspiring ... they are the proof that what we in CI do every day means something. These stories clearly show what CI really means to the incarcerated individuals who we serve day in and day out, as well as those released individuals who we hope to never see again inside our correctional facilities. •



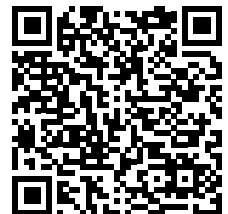
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2023 CATALOG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

**Amy Pataluna**

Executive Director, NCIA

As I continue through my first year as Executive Director, I'm amazed at all we as an association are able to accomplish to further our vision of **Working on the Inside – Succeeding on the Outside!** I'd like to share some of those recent accomplishments and also provide you with an update of some of the exciting projects underway here at NCIA.

I'd like to first introduce NCIA's new Administrative Assistant, **Jenn Manor!** Jenn came onboard with NCIA the first week of July and has already dived in to assist in the areas of managing the membership portal, preparing materials for the Board of Directors meeting at ACA, and learning about Correctional Industries. You can learn more about Jenn on page 13.

NCIA conducted a successful election for the four open At-Large Board seats. Join me in congratulating these leaders in CI who will start their two-year terms on January 1, 2024 ... **DeLana Bellville Powell** (GA), **Paul Campbell** (FPI), **Ann King** (OH), and **Justin Winters** (SD). For a full list of your 2024/25 Board of Directors along with a recap of the Board of Director's Meeting held last month at ACA, please go to page 34.

Speaking of ACA, I was honored to partner with **Pat Taylor** from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and NCIA Past President **Karen Brown** on an interactive workshop presented during the ACA meeting held in Philadelphia, PA last month. Titled *Workforce Development: Assessing the Risk ... Meeting the Needs*, this well-attended workshop provided attendees with the components of an effective workforce development program and discussed the benefits of correctional industries programming.

Your Scholarship Committee continued the annual tradition of awarding the Robert Grieser Memorial Scholarship to **Melissa Bryan**, who is not only a student at Waldorf University, but is also a CI Supervisor Assistant with Washington State Correctional Industries. Find out more about Melissa on page 37.

As we move into Fall and Winter, the NCIA staff, the Board, and the host committee will be hard at work planning the 2024 National Training Conference. Be on the lookout for future e-mails that will announce that registration is open, hotel information, the exhibit hall, workshop and roundtable topics, as well as provide details for the CI tour. We are excited to be in **Dallas, Texas at the Hyatt Regency Dallas from April 29–May 2, 2024** and hope to see you there! •



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What Correctional Industries Has Done for **ME**

MANO F. GONZALES



**May 16, 1996, is a date
*I will never forget.***

Looking back, I've identified who I was ... immature, reckless, full of anger, and misguided by gang influence and culture. I was on a path of self-destruction. It was my actions that had placed me in prison where I sat in an isolated cell, segregated from the rest of the population. I was surrounded by turmoil, chaos and the same familiar cultural environment that landed me in prison. While sitting in I.M.U. – "The Hole" – I was triggered with conviction and the realization that I needed to do some serious soul searching and change the course of my life.

My initial prison experience placed me into a position of making critical decisions for my future. To continue to be part of the "gang culture," or separate myself entirely and commit to a life of positive change? I tried to choose the latter. By requesting a transfer, I removed myself from the toxic culture and environment, and then placed myself in a different surrounding so I could make the necessary changes in my life that I was seeking.

I was transferred to the North Dakota State Penitentiary (NDSP) and upon meeting the administration, I was told that I only had "one chance at my new start in life." Although, I didn't know what the future looked like, I was certain I was finished with my prior way of life. I set my mind to make the most of every

**“one chance
at my
new start
in life”**

opportunity I was given. In my initial arrival at NDSP, I learned from several adults in custody (AIC) about **Rough Rider Industries** (RRI), North Dakota's correctional industry program. I was Impressed and inspired by all it had to offer.

Correctional industries (CI) provide trade skills in furniture, metal fabrication, welding, CNC lathe operator, fiber laser cutter operator, AutoCAD, drafting design, machinist, ERP software, forklift operator, tool management and repair, shipping and receiving, powder and paint coating applications, license plate production, and canteen. CI also teaches facilitated training, accountability, responsibility and mentoring on-the-job, leadership roles, and career development skills.

I began my official employment in October of 1999. Welding was my initial placement and that set the ball in motion for preparing me for my leadership role I currently hold today. I am currently a production team lead within our metal fabrication area, and I lead tours for outside groups through our production area. I am also a

mentor in our Restoring Promise Unit and work with our 18–25-year-old population in developing work and life skills. Throughout the years I've learned the value and responsibilities of self-discipline, trustworthiness of which I hold myself to a higher professional standard. One of being committed to progressive change with the understanding that my choices evolved into my own personal growth and self-regulation. I feel that no one should pass up the opportunity of employment in CI. The greatest investment an AIC can make for themselves is to take advantage of a CI opportunity that will assist or tailor them to self-development ... as well as help equip them on a path towards re-entry. I can attest to this fact because I now have a solid plan in place upon my upcoming release in February 2024. Prior to my employment in CI, that was not the case!

There are no words that can express my gratitude for my life changing opportunity Rough Rider Industries has provided for me. I am extremely grateful. •

What Correctional Industries Has Done for **ME**

DAVID SISSON



My incarceration began in January of 1996 when I was only seventeen years old. At the time of my scheduled release, November 2025, I will be forty-seven. During my first eleven years of incarceration, I lived a problematic life by always

being in the middle of the prison nonsense, chaos, drama, and violence. It was difficult for me to stay out of trouble for more than a year or two, and my actions revolved around fighting and assaults. Over the years I had multiple opportunities of working in our correctional industries program, but I couldn't stay out of trouble and would lose my job due to disciplinary reasons. In 2007, I asked for yet another opportunity but was denied. That denial was a hard reality check since I had begun to see the error of my ways and I finally wanted to begin making changes in my life. I fought hard for one last opportunity and to my surprise it was eventually granted. I understood that there would be no further chances if I did not make the most of this one.

The opportunity I was given was in our furniture factory. I knew my attitude, behavior and life outlook would have to be different and I knew that I had to make the most of it. Starting as a janitor, I worked and promoted my way from one position to the next, from assembly to final finish. I learned how to use various tools and equipment throughout the shop, including table saws, planers, edge banders, and the CNC router. I was eager to learn and master everything hoping that building my skills would someday help me upon my release.

In 2011 I was offered the opportunity to work in the highly coveted CAD furniture designing area. I was chosen to work in this area even though I didn't have any computer or design experience. When I entered prison in 1996, society was not as reliant on computers as they are today. I had never had the opportunity

or desire to use a computer and found them very intimidating. On my first day in the CAD room, I had to be shown everything ... including how to turn the computer on. My training mentor made the comment that teaching me how to use a computer was worse than teaching a child –simply put, there were doubts as to whether I could succeed. Having to learn everything, I focused to understand the programs that we used daily such as AutoCAD, office programs, and image manipulation software. I adapted to my new position better than anyone anticipated and had the urge to learn even more. Over the years and with little help, I taught myself how to create custom programs to help improve our use of CAD. This helped increase productivity, accuracy, and improve general workflow in our furniture department.

Since my last “second chance” with **Rough Rider Industries** (RRI), I’ve had amazing opportunities and made the most of them in helping turn my life

around. These opportunities were not given to me but rather earned. For me it wasn’t just about the CI work of learning and mastering assigned duties, but rather about reshaping myself and the way I perceived the world. Correctional industry programs such as RRI exists to help teach and train individuals much like myself whom have little to no real-world employment experiences. RRI creates pathways with external employers who can offer potential career opportunities. They help provide the tools be productive members of society and become good citizens. For my future, I hope that I can continue to be a positive role model for other incarcerated individuals and prove that there is a different pathway. As my sentence expiration date grows nearer, I have set a personal goal of becoming a full-time Rough Rider Industries staff member. With my knowledge and almost 30 years of CI experience, I feel I can be a valuable resource to RRI, the State of North Dakota, and be a valuable resource in helping guide other incarcerated individuals down a better path. •

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Gayle Butler

NCIA Celebrates Gayle Butler's Retirement

After almost 26 years of service, **Gayle Butler** retired from the **Montana Department of Corrections** on August 11, 2023. She led Montana Correctional Enterprises as **Administrator** since 2004 and worked as both **Accounting Supervisor** and **Fiscal Director** prior to that time.

With Gayle's amazing leadership, MCE expanded from 14 work programs to 26 work programs. Through her tenure at Montana Correctional Enterprises, she was active with the state legislature, local chamber of commerce, service organizations and educating the public about the benefits of Correctional Industries.

She oversaw the traditional Correctional Industries programs in Montana, as well as a large agriculture program, vocational education, and general education throughout the Montana Department of Corrections. She loved making a difference in the lives of the staff and incarcerated individuals she worked with every day, and she will leave behind a lasting legacy that will always be remembered. Her strong work ethic, can-do attitude, and enthusiasm will be deeply missed.

An active member of NCIA, Butler has served in numerous leadership roles on the **NCIA Board of Directors** including **Regional Appointee, VP of Program Development, Treasurer**, and was the **NCIA President** for **2013 & 2014**. Butler was also a member of the team that developed and presented the **CI Best Practices** in 2015. For her leadership and commitment to NCIA and Correctional Industries, she was awarded NCIA's highest honor, the **Rodli Award**, in 2015.

NCIA wishes Gayle all the best in her retirement!

NCIA Welcomes Jenn Manor



NCIA is pleased to welcome Jenn Manor as the new Administrative Assistant for the NCIA National Office!

Manor started with NCIA in early July and will be assisting with managing the member portal, responding to member inquiries, and working on the National Training Conference for next year.

Prior to NCIA, Manor owned and operated a successful photography business. In operation for thirteen years, she photographed over 200 weddings, was ranked as one of the Top 10 wedding photographers in Ohio, and had her work published in three magazines.

She is looking forward to utilizing the administrative and customer service skills that she has developed over the years as a business owner here at the NCIA National Office.

Manor studied Portrait Photography and earned an Associate of Applied Science at The Ohio Institute of Photography & Technology in Dayton, OH. ***Please join us in welcoming Jenn Manor!*** •



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North Carolina

‘Wonder Woman’ Makes History

By **Martin Kish**, Deputy Director, North Carolina Correction Enterprises



Wonder Woman is a famous and beloved superheroine appearing in comic books published by DC Comics. **Jessica Trevena**, however, is also a famous and beloved *“superheroine” Wonder Woman* to her customers

as a sales and customer service representative at **North Carolina Correction Enterprises** (NCCE) headquarters in Raleigh. But there’s one thing the comic book Wonder Woman can never claim: To be the first-ever formerly incarcerated individual in North Carolina state history to win the coveted **“Governor’s Award for Excellence”** in customer service.

“If someone had told me when I went to prison that I’d be compared to Wonder Woman and win a Governor’s Award, I would have laughed in their face,” Trevena said. “But God had a plan for me ... and it just goes to show that anyone serving time can have hopes and dreams that can come true.”

Trevena started working for **NCCE’s Quick Copy Center** in 2011 shortly after being incarcerated at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women. After being promoted to minimum custody in 2015, she began working in the nearby NCCE showroom where she assisted dozens of customers daily.

Upon her release in 2018, Trevena was hired by NCCE as an entry-level Customer Service Representative. A year later, she was promoted to her current position as a full-time sales and customer service representative.

“I’m grateful for the NCCE staff who believed in me, invested their time in me, and pushed me to achieve things beyond my wildest dreams,” Trevena said. “I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to use my God-given people skills in a sales and customer service role.”

So, how did Trevena win the Governor’s Award of Excellence in Customer Service award? Well, as they say, *“The devil’s in the details”—and there are a lot of them!*

Here are a few:

1. Earns High Customer Satisfaction Scores:

Compared to all other sales and customer service representatives, Trevena earned two times more “satisfied customer” survey ratings and unsolicited emails. Here are some examples of the positive customer feedback that she has received:

- ▶ “Whenever I reach out to Jessica, she is immediate in her response with a resolution. She has the best customer service skills I have ever encountered!!!”
- ▶ “Jessica was pleasant and helpful answering all my questions. Kudos for her customer service. I hope Correction Enterprises realizes what a gem then have with Jessica.”
- ▶ “I just wanted to reach out to you to let you know how amazing I think Jessica Trevena is. She is truly a great asset to your organization and should be awarded for her continuing excellent customer skills. She is one in a million and I’m thankful for her.”

2. Handles a Heavy Workload:

Trevena does two jobs at once. She agreed to take on the open print/framing and matting sales representative position while continuing to do the print customer service job. Since then, Jessica was instrumental in re-establishing NCCE’s lost relationship with the NC State Board of Elections (BOE). She was also able to recover the lost NC Zoo account in Asheboro and most recently sold a \$500,000 print job to the North Carolina Department of Transportation. She also repaired and restored a damaged relationship with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

3. Continually Models Teamwork:

Trevena constantly thinks of and supports her fellow team members. As busy as she is just handling and coordinating her hundreds of printing customers and thousands of orders, she also finds time to be one of NCCE's best team players by cross-promoting thousands of other products. Here's an example of a recent interaction between Trevena and a customer:

- ▶ "Hello Marlene, it was so nice speaking to you this week at the DMV office. Thank you for being so helpful and allowing me to tell you about our new product here at Correction Enterprises! Please see the attached flyer for pricing and pictures of different designs. If you have any feedback for us, we would love to hear it! Also, I wanted to share our website link with you so you could have an overview of the different products and services that you can purchase as a North Carolina State Employee.

4. Strong Business Acumen:

Trevena often acts as a strategic "business manager" for NCCE's \$5 million printing business.

- ▶ When the business recently had a down year, she led a "Get Back to Black" campaign to drive higher sales and profitability. The campaign exceeded its revenue target by \$500,000 and more than doubled the operating profit goal.
- ▶ She often works with her print estimating and customer service and operations management leaders to watch margins and improve processes at the plant.



5. Exceptional Communication and Personal Relationship Skills:

- ▶ Trevena is an excellent writer and speaker, often asked to speak in correctional facilities, as well as to employee and customer groups. Shortly after her release she was invited to accompany NCCE's HR team on a trip to California to study how CALPIA conducts its training of staff and incarcerated individuals. She mesmerized the CALPIA team who was amazed at her incredible "Wonder Woman" journey.
- ▶ She is a very popular and widely known representative of NCCE not only to customers but also to state agency executive leaders. For example, Department of Public Safety Secretary, Eddie Buffaloe, asks for her by name whenever he has any printing needs.

There are 80,000 full-time employees who work in North Carolina state government. But only a handful of individuals—usually fewer than 30—earn a Governor's Award for Excellence in any category in any given year. Only one earns the award in the customer service category. 2022 will forever stand out because that's Jessica Trevena made history and won the award.

"Hearing my name called at the awards ceremony with my dad and sister beside me was the highlight of my life," she said. "Only God knows what the future holds for me, but whatever it is, *I'll never forget how NCCE changed my life and gave me the opportunities to be where I am today.*" •

Jessica Trevena (center) is presented with the Governor's Award for Excellence by **Barbara Gibson** (left), Secretary, North Carolina Office of State Human Resources and **Todd Ishee** (right), Secretary, North Carolina Department of Adult Correction

More Shining Examples of REENTRY SUCCESS in NC!

By **Michael Lockamy**, Transition Resource Specialist, North Carolina Correction Enterprises

C. Forward, Paralegal

North Carolina Correction Enterprises (NCCE) is an entity of the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction. It is comprised of nearly 30 correction industrial plants within our 52 state correctional facilities. We are very mission-focused, providing inmates with marketable skills and transitional services in a professional and safe work environment, while we produce quality goods and give outstanding customer service to the citizens of North Carolina ... at a discounted rate.

We also support our formerly incarcerated individuals with transitional services to help eliminate barriers and stigmas that follow serving time and having a past criminal record. Our goal is to prepare them for successful reentry, curb recidivism and promote restoration back into their communities.

We have been very successful in assisting hundreds of men and women find sustainable employment, decent housing, mental, medical, and veteran services for many years in North Carolina. Here are just a few personal stories shared by individuals describing how NCCE propelled them into successful reintegration back in society. **NCCE was a building block for where I am in life today.** It was more than a job assignment. I woke up



C. Forward

every day with a purpose and determination to be successful. I discovered I had the ability to do multiple assignments and there were no limits to what I could become. In prison, it can oftentimes be a place of hopelessness. By going to work each day, I was able to set goals and feel good about my accomplishments. NCCE taught me skills that allowed me to walk out of prison mentally prepared with inner confidence to find

and maintain employment. My fellow peers depended on me to be a team player and I was encouraged by staff on a daily basis.

By staying busy at work, it helped me mentally escape the reality of prison life. NCCE gave me hope for life after prison. The NCCE staff did not treat us like criminals who could not be trusted or did not deserve the opportunity to find redemption for their past choices and decisions. Our jobs were like the real-world. We all worked together to complete the set production goals at the beginning of each day. The staff were just as much a part of this work setting. It gave me a sense of pride and a feeling that I was valued. Each day at work, I felt like an employee and it made my transition outside of prison much easier.

I still recall on the day I was released ... a member of the Reentry team gave me an encouraging phone call. This let me see and know they were serious about helping me and others gain stability back in society. It has been five years since my release, and I am thankful to

say I have been successfully employed as a paralegal. Of course, it would not have happened if I were not focused and determined taking every program offered in prison. NCCE helped me to become that person in prison, by making me accountable and continuing to provide me with support, today. *I know I have value and I am so much more than the worst thing I may have ever done.*

A. “Smiley” Willis, Entrepreneur & Motivational Speaker

In 1996, at the age of sixteen, I was incarcerated and spent the next 26 years of my life in the North Carolina prison system. When the cell door slammed behind me and reality set in that I would never go home again, it was like hanging from a ledge by my fingertips and holding on for dear life. I knew if I gave up and let go, I would fall to my demise. Something inside me would not allow me to let go. **It was called HOPE.** That same HOPE motivated me to earn my GED, five college degrees (including a Master’s) and receive approximately 65 awards, certificates and published articles recognizing my participation in various classes and programs.

When I started working for **NCCE**, it helped me to apply what I learned from my academic achievements. NCCE not only taught me marketable job skills but also gave

me a much-needed boost in confidence. The day I was hired, I immediately noticed how different their work environment was compared to every other prison job that was offered. The NCCE staff were professional and treated us as if we were employed in society. I began as a sewing machine operator but was later requested to become their Office Clerk. In 2016, I began a master’s program and NCCE staff were a constant source of encouragement.



A. “Smiley” Willis

While multi-tasking for my supervisors, I gained a broader perspective of the business world. They urged me to learn new things and reminded me that my academic achievements were preparing me for a successful career in society. Even in prison, I wanted my life to matter. Holding on to HOPE allowed me to mature and develop into a living testimony that success is possible if one is given “a fair chance.” NCCE gave me resources and skill-building opportunities to prepare me for a successful reentry into the workforce. While serving a life sentence, I did not know that in March of 2022 my sentence would be commuted by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, and I would be granted release from prison. My accomplishments behind prison walls were preparing me for the day when helping hands would reach out and pull me up from that ledge of hopelessness. Today, I now know those hands were those of **Governor Roy Cooper, NCCE, friends and family, and never losing HOPE in God.**

Continued on page 18

More Shining Examples of REENTRY SUCCESS in NC!

A. Mayes, Production Worker, American Printing House for the Blind

I spent almost 20 years of my life in and out of trouble and prison. I was classified as a habitual felon. When I received my last 7-year prison sentence at Scotland Correctional Institution, I was able to find my purpose and calling. I started working for **NCCE** in Braille Transcription. Every day, I pushed myself to learn new things and accomplish everything I possibly could. I was able to obtain four national Braille certificates in: Literacy, Textbook Formatting, Unified English Braille, and Nemeth Braille (which is a coding system that allows you to transcribe math and science into educational books for children who are blind).

Growing up, I never really liked school or reading books. My family was dirt poor and I grew up on the streets. My mother did the best she could, but my real education came from street life and gangs. It was not until I came to prison did I return to school and graduate with a high school diploma. When I returned to prison the last time in 2011, I started working for NCCE and my life changed for the next 7 years. I found joy in waking-up early every morning to learn new skills in Braille transcribing. The routine of getting up and going to work created major discipline and focus in my life. I looked forward to seeing the NCCE staff and my fellow incarcerated workers. We argued daily about how we should be transcribing the Braille work assignments. It was these moments that taught me how to become a team player from the many discussions and debates among each other.

NCCE also helped me discover my hidden passion to help blind people all over the world read the books that I could transcribe into Braille. I kept this job until my



A. Mayes

release in 2018 and I am grateful for being afforded this opportunity. I hold a special place in my heart for NCCE and the staff who encouraged me, daily. I found a joy and inner peace knowing I was doing this work for individuals who were blind.

It made me work extra hard to do my best work for people who were receiving the books.

I cannot thank NCCE enough for changing my life. Because my work skills were in great demand, I was offered a two- to six-month apprenticeship program upon my release in 2018 with the American Printing House for the Blind (APHB) in Louisville, Kentucky. A short time later, it was approved by the NC State Probation Office and to this day, I'm still working at APHB.

As I reflect upon my life accomplishments, getting married and raising a family, I realize there are so many others in prison who should also be given an opportunity like mine. First, they must allow their minds to escape from their past, be willing to self-improve and achieve higher skills and not settle for the normal routine of coming in and going out of prison. Change is possible, but it must begin with the person who wants change before things will change around us. ***Thank you, NCCE, for helping me find that change. •***



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Formerly Incarcerated Individuals Find Employment Success

Thanks to Correctional Industries

By **Michele Kane**, Assistant General Manager–External Affairs, CALPIA

The National Correctional Industries Association's (NCIA) motto, **"Working on the Inside – Succeeding on the Outside"** holds true for many formerly incarcerated individuals who now have meaningful careers. They have received real-world job training while participating in Correctional Industries.

Louis Frazier

Louis Frazier graduated from the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) Metal Fabrication and Computer-Aided Design (Auto-CAD) programs at Folsom State Prison.

He now works for Siemens Mobility, manufacturing light rail vehicles. Frazier learned Auto-CAD through CALPIA and worked side-by-side with engineers.

"I am so grateful," said Frazier. "I got a full-time career with Siemens Mobility as soon as I came back home and then I was able to get housing on my own."

While in CALPIA's Metal Fabrication, he learned metal sheeting along with operating and programming the Turret Punch Press, brake presses and laser cutting systems.



Frazier also completed CALPIA's Essential Skills for the Workbook program and said it was beneficial to his success.

He is grateful for the real-world skills he learned from CALPIA's staff and the seven years of job training he received before heading back to his community in 2022.

"All the skills I learned through CALPIA are being utilized in my job," added Frazier. "I have incredible benefits and the possibilities of climbing up the career ladder are endless."

Bill Davidson, CALPIA's General Manager, emphasizes that Correctional Industries is about rehabilitative job training.

Continued on page 22



"We want people who leave prison to be successful. We want them to provide for themselves and their families," added Davidson. "When we get a call from a former graduate who has benefited from our programs and now has a career, it's a morale booster not only for staff, but other incarcerated individuals."

Inez Suarez



Inez Suarez graduated from CALPIA's Pre-Apprentice Construction Labor program at Central California Women's Facility in 2022.

She now works for **Overaa Construction** in the Bay Area. When she returned to her community, Suarez was supported by CALPIA through the Labor Union enrollment process and was able to find employment through the Northern California Training Center, Laborers Local 270.

"We want people who leave prison to be successful. We want them to provide for themselves and their families..."

—**Bill Davidson** General Manager, CALPIA

This mother of four is proud to be working in the construction industry and her superintendent says Suarez is a hard worker with a great skill set.

"I am thankful to CALPIA, my union instructors, and my employer for helping me with this incredible opportunity," said Suarez. "CALPIA helped me with the job training I needed while paying for my union dues when I got out and buying me a new set of tools."

Robert Castaneda



Robert Castaneda received his Optician certification while working for CALPIA's Optical Lab at California State Prison, Solano. He worked in the program for seven years.

When he returned to his community in 2021, he filed with the State Board of Optometry and started working at **Eyeglass World**. Castaneda now works as a

Licensed Optician at **Lens Crafters** and is thankful for the job training, he received while incarcerated.

"The job training in prison gave me a foundation that I could use in society. I am a licensed Optician and have been able to buy a home and a car because of the skills and training I received," said Castaneda. "I am grateful for CALPIA's Optical program especially the staff who supported me along the way." •



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Partnership between OCE and ALSCO

Provides Released Adults in Custody with HOPE and a FUTURE

By **Dawn Eden**, Production Coordinator, Oregon Corrections Enterprises

Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) has been around for almost 25 years in partnership with the Oregon Department of Corrections and shares a common goal of providing adults in custody (AICs) with work and training opportunities.

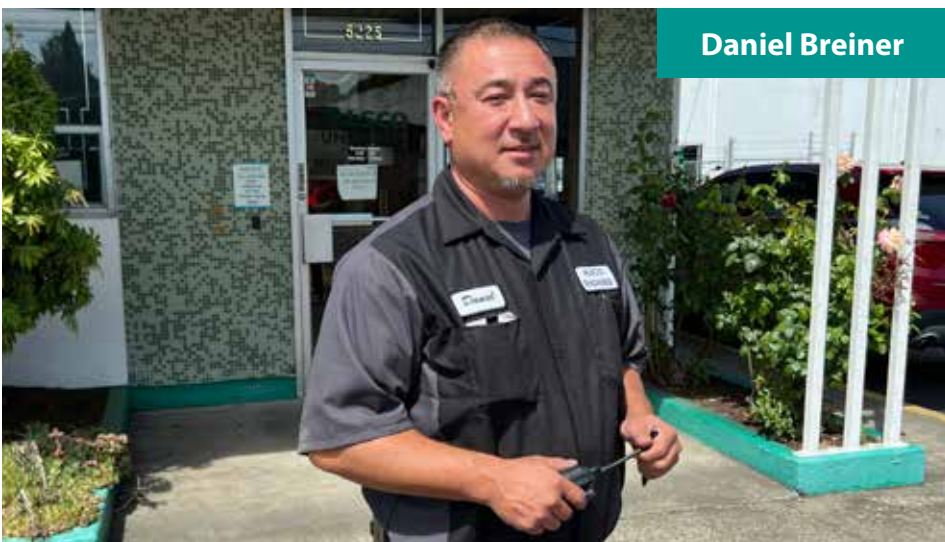
The programs are designed to support individuals in building the skills and confidence they need to succeed in their personal and professional lives. OCE's team is committed to helping people achieve their training goals and make a positive impact in their communities after release.

OCE runs laundry facilities in multiple correctional settings throughout the state of Oregon—empowering AICs by providing them with pre-release job offers and establishing a dependable flow of employment when they reintegrate back to the community upon release.

“By providing AICs with job opportunities prior to their release, we can help them smoothly transition back into society and reduce the likelihood of re-offending,” said **Melanie Doolin**, OCE Administrator.

OCE offers 29 programming opportunities within 10 correctional facilities throughout the state of Oregon to more than 2,600 men and women in custody each year. OCE's programs are focused on offering skills for workplace success and has partnered with Second Chance employers to create direct pipelines to immediate employment after release.

One such employer is with Utah-based company **ALSCO Uniforms**, with locations in Portland, Eugene and Medford. ALSCO Uniforms is a 135-year-old privately held, family-run industrial laundry that primarily serves industrial customers.



Daniel Breiner

Today, Breiner is told he's being groomed to take over as Chief Engineer when the current person retires at ALSCO Uniforms.

"If you work as hard as you do in there, you can do it out here and get what you want," Breiner said. "If I can do it, then anybody can do it."

A representative of ALSCO said he didn't know anything about the program when ALSCO Uniforms became a partner with OCE about 4 years ago.

ALSCO Engineer **Daniel Breiner** is a true success story. A formerly incarcerated individual for 16 years, Breiner said working for OCE while incarcerated was a priority to him because it was one of the higher paying jobs, and he didn't have to rely on his family for assistance while he was incarcerated. *"You need to learn that for the real world, too,"* said Breiner.

After prison, Breiner accepted a job with ALSCO Uniforms as a temporary solution because realistically he knew he couldn't live off of a minimum wage job, and also didn't think he could afford to get an apartment.

"I had the opportunity to come to the maintenance department, and a year and nine months later I own a house, I have a brand new truck, and I make over \$65,000 a year," he said. "There are people in this world who have never been to prison at all and don't even own a house or a car, and I did it all in a year and a half. I can probably thank OCE and the prison because it made me focus on work ethic, structure, and it probably made me more determined than anything."

"After an overview of what the program offered and what the candidates offered, we decided to give it a shot," he said. "The applicable skills are incredibly similar. I was a little surprised that they were so qualified and the training time was really short for most of them. Our normal training period is four to six weeks and a majority of the candidates we've gotten have taken two weeks at most, just because they were familiar with the program and they needed to learn the way we do it."

To date, this ALSCO Uniforms site alone has hired six AICs from OCE, and three are still working for them today.

"The partnership has been fantastic. I would hire every person you send me. I could use them all," the ALSCO representative said.

ALSCO recommends businesses keep an open mind when considering a partnership with OCE.

"We didn't know what to expect. Who were these individuals? What's their experience? What's their history?" he asked. "It turned out, it doesn't really matter what their history is. It's what you have in front of you. Take a chance."

Continued on page 26



John Kim

Another success story is Assistant Production Manager **John Kim**. Kim worked for OCE laundry for almost three years while incarcerated at Oregon State Prison (OSP), and credits the OCE laundry staff for their coaching and encouragement. He says OCE prepared him for his job with ALSCO Uniforms.

"It helped me get a foot in the door," Kim said. "I want to do really well for them, because they gave me the opportunity. They have helped me out this whole time, and they have no judgement. They are really good people and so I do want to take it as far as I can with them and help the company grow."

Kim said he was not expecting to land where he is today.

"I didn't think I was going to come to this industry. It was the last thing on my mind. I would never have thought in a million years that I would be in this position or in the laundry industry," Kim said. "OCE prepared me, whether I knew it or not, it really did help me to get where I am."



Larry Bell

The same sentiment is shared with **Larry Bell**, a new employee for ALSCO. Bell worked for OCE for over 30 years while incarcerated at OSP and says his experience with the OCE laundry helped him prepare for this job today. Bell said he credits OCE administrators and laundry staff for helping him obtain employment with ALSCO Uniforms.

"I couldn't hold a job before. I learned stability and responsibility," Bell said. "If you're positive and work hard, people with connections will help you get to the next place you need to go. They help you find a job and that stability."

About 95 percent of currently incarcerated individuals will someday release back into the community. One such individual, **Cornelius Davis**, has been incarcerated since 1996 and has worked for OCE for the past 12 years. Davis started in the OCE furniture factory and now works for OSP laundry.



Cornelius Davis

"The main thing they teach here is teamwork, how to get the job done and how to meet goals," Davis said. "As I approach my release date, the knowledge that employment ... with opportunity for advancement ... awaits me. And this makes me very grateful and certain of my successful transition."

Deniz Aydiner has been working for the OSP laundry since 2009, working up to the lead in the chemical room, and hopes to work for ALSCO Uniforms after his release.

"I'm very proud of what I'm doing. OCE has allowed me to learn a lot of different skills in a lot of different areas that I can use in different sections of the businesses. I'm very proud to be a part of this," Aydiner said. "Beside the money, we take



Deniz Aydiner

pride at what we are doing here. *This has been one of the most emotionally rewarding experiences of my life.*

Korey Emerson at OSP Laundry said he began his employment with no knowledge or skill set pertaining to commercial laundry, but he's steadily gained a vast understanding of many areas of the high volume laundry industry and also hopes to work for ALSCO Uniforms after release.

"I am constantly grateful for my experience with OCE laundry, both for helping me attain my success while in prison and for

preparing me for more success once I leave prison. This opportunity has built within me a strong sense of responsibility, consistency and structure.



Korey Emerson

I thrive on doing the best job I can which has enhanced my work ethic," Emerson said. "The positive staff interactions have made this a pleasant work environment. It helped me see that work can be rewarding. This is galvanized by the fact that I have only seen personal improvement since I began at OCE laundry. *Every day I am doing a job that is purposeful and meaningful in the goal of being a better me every day as a person, coworker and employee.*"

Mercy Claudio is a production manager at ALSCO Uniforms in Portland, Oregon. Claudio has been with the company 20 years, working as production manager for the past 15 years.

"They are bringing their experience with them," Claudio said. "What they've learned in there, they bring with them out here. We see them come here and work and have other opportunities and other potential. They are going to succeed out here."

Claudio said she doesn't want them to be afraid of putting all their work experience

into their resumes, no matter where that experience was obtained or where they were coming from.

"It's about bringing your experience with you and wanting to work," she said. "That's what I want. We are working right now in the day—we're not working in the past."

"Give them that opportunity because they do have a lot of skills and they bring experience with them. Give them that opportunity and hire them and you'll see they work hard and want to do better," she said. "They have to start somewhere."

She said she has seen a lot of GOOD PEOPLE who have come to work for ALSCO Uniforms after working for OCE.

Continued on page 28

In Her Own Words

Lynda Taylor

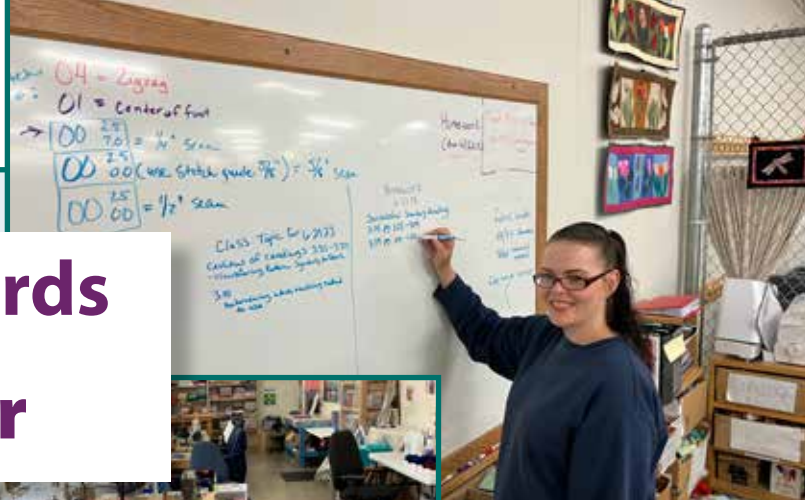
Before entering this facility, I had never sewn a day in my life ... well, not with a sewing machine.

I did however attempt hand stitching a silk shirt that I designed and cut out of an old sheet when I was 15 years old. The attempt was cute but absolutely not a success. My journey with Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) began as a volunteer making face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. It turns out sewing is a skill that came easily to me. Soon after, I was a successful applicant for a full time OCE position on the Watershed project (a company that made PPE gowns and head covers for hospitals) in which I gained experience in operating a welding press machine. I was soon offered a Section Lead position. As the project wound down, I transferred to the main sewing team. I completely fell in love with sewing when I was given a position on the PIECP team working for a customer who sold placemats, valences, pillows, and more. Eventually, I earned the title of PIECP Projects Lead.

There are many skills that I have acquired through OCE: design, layout, cutting, construction, QC inspector, warehouse, and shipping. I've been trained in inventory, scheduling, maintaining shop travelers, and job tracking. As an added



Lynda Taylor at her sewing machine



Lynda Taylor

benefit, I have gained exposure to the following industrial machines while becoming familiar with their maintenance and operations: Consew

and Mitsubishi single needles, Juki serger, Juki double needle, WMC, and an Avance' embroidery machine, just to name a few. More so, I've obtained leadership and team building skills.

I've also gained self-confidence that started with my supervisors pushing me to recognize my full potential, plus standing by my side and guiding me when I experienced self-doubt. I've learned about the importance of structure, organization, and understanding individuals' needs when leading a team. I've learned how to communicate amongst all personality types, finding what works best for each individual, even when learning curves present themselves. Two of my greatest achievements are earning my OCE Commercial Textiles Certificate, along with becoming the Facilitator of the certification program.

Professionally, I am now equipped with many skills and sets of tools that will aid in securing employment upon my release from DOC custody. With

my experience in developing healthy professional relationships with my supervisors, I know that sharing ideas, opinions, and thoughts have the potential to benefit any company. I am confident in sharing thoughts that will draw in revenue; and I can utilize each crew member effectively based on their strengths to advance the performance of each position, in turn helping improve flow and reduce costs.

I have been blessed to have spent the last three years working with OCE, having advancement opportunities from day one. As of today, my title is Shop Lead. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of a program that has so much to offer. I have worked with management and Production Coordinators who genuinely care about our

success. OCE has helped me become financially stable and self-sufficient, making it possible to extend support to my family when needed.

OCE provides an environment where individuals thrive and resilience develops. That in itself is a powerful fuel that feeds life into someone who once was destructive. The opportunities that each OCE program offers to incarcerated adults is admirable and provides a purpose for those of us seeking a positive change in life. OCE helps pave the way for a successful release, ultimately reducing the risks of recidivism. The growth I've experienced is tremendous, both on a professional and personal level. My new belief in my ability to succeed will follow me wherever I am led in life. •

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The Journey Home: The Other Side of RECIDIVISM

By **Michael Parker**, Joint Venture Manager,
Indiana Correctional Industries

Spend enough time interacting with the judicial system and correctional environments and the term recidivism becomes commonplace. The National Institute of Justice defines recidivism as *“a person’s relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person receives sanctions or undergoes intervention for a previous crime.”* Difficult to initially pronounce, this five-syllable word is a cornerstone of public and private sector reentry programs across the nation.

While “recidivism” is a word rarely taught in elementary schools, the word “success” has been taught for generations. Defined by Dictionary.com, as *“1. the favorable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavors; 2. the accomplishment of one’s goals (the attainment of wealth, position, honors, or the like.)”* the word “success” permeates our society and can be a synonym for socioeconomic status. Yet for previously incarcerated individuals, attaining success while not becoming a recidivism statistic is a daunting task.

As with all CI’s, Indiana Correctional Industries (ICI) is committed to addressing and supporting the difficult journey home for individuals incarcerated in the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC). Through new initiatives to “walk the talk,” ICI’s dedication to hire and/or provide post-release assistance or guidance exemplifies NCIA’s motto, **“Working on the Inside – Succeeding on the Outside.”**

For **David Renner**, the journey home has been fraught with challenges and barriers ... some of his own making and others not.

David’s road to **“success”** began as an adolescent. His normal childhood development was interrupted by multiple family relocations, physical and mental trauma, and a host of other things beyond his control. Given his experiences and difficult start to life, David admits that it’s not surprising he found his way to making detrimental and illegal decisions. Looking back, Renner says “I had great childhood experiences until we moved and bad people entered my life. I was being taught and exposed to things I didn’t understand. My mom taught me to do as I’m told ... and that’s what I did”.

Teen and adulthood brought more of the same for Renner. This included unwise decisions, detrimental social relationships, self-destructive behaviors, early involvement with the justice system, and incarcerated four times. “I had hit rock bottom and felt like I would never see my son and I would die in prison,” says Renner.



David Renner working at ICI Central Office

Then he got a job as a clerk in **ICI's Material Management Group** (MMG). Responsible for system-specific data entry and other aspects of MMG's role in ICI's garment production, Renner rapidly learned and excelled. After serving eight years, attaining his GED and earning sentence reductions for completing multiple programs, he was scheduled to be released from incarceration. Poised to go home. Poised for success.

ICI needed to fill an open Engineer E-6 staff position and the position called for many of the skills Renner learned and mastered while incarcerated. He applied and was selected

for the position. "It was a "no-brainer" to select David. He was the best candidate", said ICI Engineering Supervisor **Jim Minchin**. "He knows our system, has a great personality and is willing to learn. We could not have selected a better person."

When asked "What does ICI means to him?" ... David answers with joy and tears "ICI saved my life. They believed in me, gave me opportunities to learn, and now trust me as part of the ICI team. When asked "How has ICI positively impacted his life?" ... his answer was concise, **"I'm home and I have my son."** •



SHARING THE STORY OF SUCCESS IN WISCONSIN

By **Kelly Borde**, Marketing Specialist, Bureau of Correctional Enterprises

When Mitchell reflects on his path at his one-year anniversary as a CADD designer, he finds himself eager to credit the people he met and worked with at the Product Development Center within Wisconsin's Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE).



Upon transfer to Oakhill Correctional Institution, Mitchell applied to work as part of BCE's Product Development Center team.

He accepted the job and embraced the opportunity to learn and develop his product and graphic design knowledge, along with develop skills with Solidworks and Adobe software.

While working on the Product Development Center team, Mitchell earned recognition as a Certified SolidWorks Expert. His diligent approach to learning and designing products and marketing materials for BCE and its customers contributed to his early and ongoing employment success.

Mitchell was released and returned to the community ... and very soon earned a job with one of Wisconsin's largest sheet metal fabrication companies. His current employer provides in-house engineering support and complex sheet metal fabrication capabilities at a number of factories around the world to create custom sheet metal enclosures, kiosks, and more.

"It has been very busy. I've been training to be the Development Engineer Manager. I love to share the story of success, and help out," says Mitchell.

BCE recognizes that the incarcerated workers on its team strive for a second and fair chance when they return to the community. As part of the BCE team, they make the most of this chance to work, learn, and earn opportunities to succeed and contribute. •

Wes Ray, BCE's Director had this to say about Mitchell.

“BCE is glad to have workers like Mitchell on its team. The opportunities we provide help BCE workers better prepare themselves to succeed both while incarcerated and when they return to their families and communities. Former BCE workers have achieved a 90% rate of employment, and we are glad to be part of their success.”

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The advertisement features a collage of images: a red metal locker, a wooden desk with a lamp, a person working on a vehicle wrap, a black office chair, and a small award plaque. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice seal is in the bottom left corner.



Board of Director's Meeting Recap from ACA—Philadelphia

The NCIA Board of Directors met at ACA's 153rd Congress of Correction on Sunday, August 13, 2023 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, PA. The Board held a productive three-hour meeting with the following reports and accomplishments:

- ▶ The 2024-2025 Board Election Results were announced (please see page 35 for the election results)
- ▶ The winner of the Robert Grieser Memorial Scholarship Winner for 2023 was announced (please see page 37 for more on this year's scholarship winner)
- ▶ The FY 2024 Budget was approved and the current membership report was reviewed
- ▶ Virtual CI Director Networking Sessions will start again in September
- ▶ Jamie Dolan (WA) was sworn-in as an at-large member for the Board of Directors
- ▶ Updates for the 2024 National Training Conference were given ... everyone is excited to meet in Dallas, TX!

NCIA Partners with NIC on ACA Workshop

Amy Pataluna, NCIA's Executive Director, partnered with P. Elizabeth Taylor from NIC and Karen Brown, Former NCIA President, to present **Workforce Development: Assessing the Risk ... Meeting the Needs during the ACA Congress of Correction**. This well-attended, interactive workshop reviewed the components of an effective workforce development program, discussed the benefits of CI, and showed attendees how to navigate the **"Reentry Performance Excellence Guide."**



Amy Pataluna presents at ACA

Election Results!

2024–2025 NCIA Board of Directors

The NCIA Chairman of the Board, Danielle Armbruster, is proud to present to you the slate of officers and Board members for the 2024-2025 NCIA Board of Directors.

NOTE that those listed in **Bold/Purple** are the newly elected, re-elected or appointed Board members. Others on the list retain their seats to fulfill their unexpired terms.

Officers: Two-Year Term 2023-2024

Board Chair: Danielle Armbruster (WA)
President: Bobby Lumpkin (TX)
President-Elect: Jeremy Elder (NE)
Vice President of Marketing: Maria Shirey (UT)
Vice President of Program Development: Anthony Vann (NC)
Treasurer: Wes Ray (WI)

At-Large Board Members: Two-Year Term 2024-2025

DeLana Bellville Powell (GA)
Paul Campbell (FPI)
Ann King (OH)
Justin Winters (SD)

At-Large Board Members: Two-Year Term 2023-2024

Jimmy Bivens (TN)
John Coleman (NC)
Lindsey Ellison (IN)
Jamie Dolan (WA)

Regional Appointees to the Board: Two-Year Term 2023-2024

Central Region:
Lloyd Arnold (IN)
Northeast Region:
Russ Luthman (MA)
South Central Region:
Richard Cooper (AR)
Southeast Region:
Marie Vargo (VA)
Western Region:
Michele Kane (CA)
ACA Representative
to the Board:
Joe Page (AR)

Meet Corcraft's New Director — JP Behrle



JP Behrle

JP Behrle joined the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) in June 2023 as the **Director of Correctional Industries and Industrial Training**. In this role, JP oversees the Division of Correctional Industries (Corcraft) and is responsible for managing all business and programmatic aspects of the organization and pursuing the overall mission of training incarcerated individuals with meaningful job skills in anticipation of release.

Behrle began his career in New York State public service in 2001 as an intern and was Corcraft's Assistant Director in charge of Administration from 2015 to 2021. Prior to his appointment as Director, he was the Deputy Chief Procurement Officer for the NY State Office of General Services.

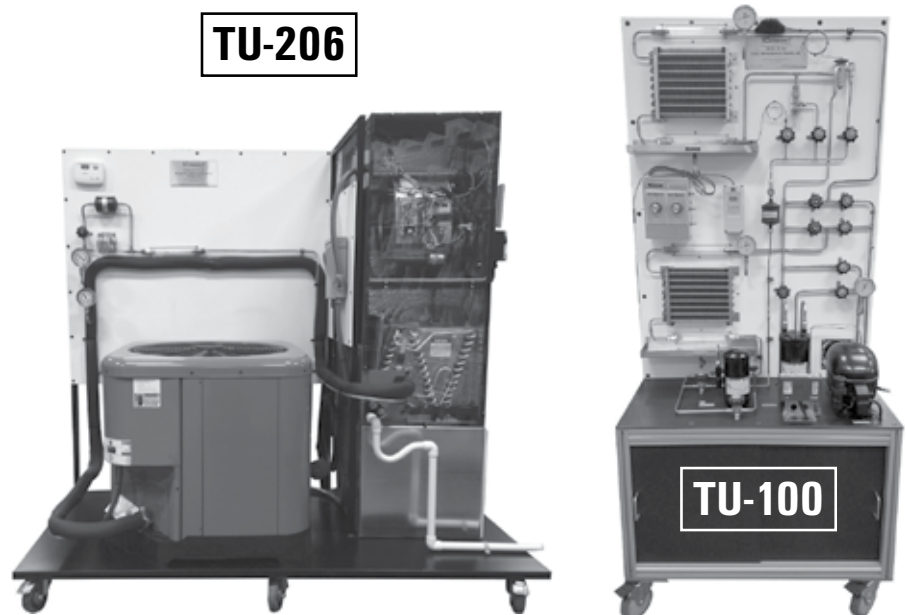
His initial focus for Corcraft will be meeting the challenges of staffing, supply chain disruptions, and increased expenses while operating as a business within state government. To meet these challenges, Corcraft will ramp up the recruitment and retention of both civilians and incarcerated individuals, invest in training and resources for the workforce, and modernize the manufacturing process through equipment and technology investments that enable higher outputs with higher quality and reduced labor.

Behrle is happy to be back at Corcraft because he loves the mission of our organization and the people charged with fulfilling it. He feels that CI is a very unique environment that blends private sector manufacturing with incarcerated individual training, all while functioning as part of the public safety entity within state government. He holds a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at New Paltz and a master's degree from the University at Albany both in Secondary Education with a concentration in mathematics. •

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2023 Robert Grieser Scholarship Winner — Melissa Bryan —



Melissa Bryan

This year's recipient of the **Robert Grieser Scholarship** is a CI practitioner from Washington State Correctional Industries (WACI) ... **Melissa Bryan**.

Since 2020, Bryan has served as a **Correctional Industries Supervisor Assistant** with WACI where she provides shop support, training, and safety & security support for several shops including the license plate factory, laundry, warehouse, and commissary. She also currently serves as the Chairman of the Washington State Penitentiary Safety Committee. Prior to WACI, Bryan had a varied career background including stops at the U.S. Census Bureau and has managed a local chamber of commerce.

Bryan will be starting her education this Fall at Waldorf University where she will be studying to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Occupational Safety, and she will use what she learns to further strengthen the safety program at WACI, as well as help further her career development in CI.

Congratulations Melissa! •

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Continued on page 40

CI PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



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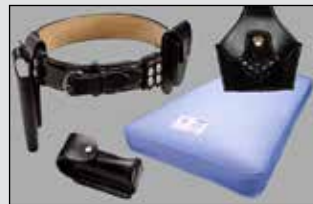
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