



SPECIAL EDITION

The Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) has finalized the list of facilities slated for closure over the next several months. This announcement comes as Michigan employees and their families face an economic crisis. The Department is very sensitive to the difficulties affected employees will face in the coming months and will do what it can to assist those employees who are facing employment uncertainty.

The following camps and correctional facilities will be closed between now and the end of this year:

- Camp Cusino, Camp Kitwen, Camp Lehman, Camp Ottawa, and Camp White Lake. These closures signal an end to the MDOC Camp Program.
- Muskegon Correctional Facility, Hiawatha Correctional Facility, and Standish Maximum Correctional Facility.

All of these facilities were chosen for closures based on a variety of factors including:

- The age of the facility,
- The cost to operate the facility,
- The need for additional improvement or renovations to the facility,
- The operational needs for each custody level at the facility,
- The number of prisoners housed at the facility,
- The proximity to other prisons so that opportunities for staff who are displaced is maximized, and
- The need for bed space in specific security classifications throughout the prison system.

Recent actions taken by the MDOC, starting with a new prisoner reentry policy in 2004 and continuing with the adoption of recommendations in a non-partisan study by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, are starting to gain momentum with regard to how we control our prison population. Because of the steps we have taken in recent years, and the actions we continue to take today, Michigan is one of the few states nationally that has a declining prison population and a lower recidivism rate among parolees under supervision in the community.

Today, MDOC administrators are meeting with employees at the facilities identified for closure. To meet a \$120 million savings goal in the FY 2009-10 corrections budget, and to face the difficult reality of a state government facing budget a \$1.4 billion deficit next fiscal year, the MDOC believes the responsible course of action is to close prison facilities that will no longer be operationally necessary.

These closures will impact employees throughout the department. The Reduction-in-Force could result in nearly 1,000 employee layoffs. Employees willing to transfer or take other positions, as well as the retirement of eligible employees, could mitigate the number of potential layoffs. We will also work with other state departments, such as the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth and Michigan Works! Agencies across the state, to take advantage of each agency's ability to assist with displaced workers.

The prisoner population continues to decline. Parole rates are up and recidivism, especially among higher risk offenders who are receiving more intense supervision, is down. The current prison population is now at its lowest point since January 2002. As an agency, we should be proud of those facts because we are doing our job well. The consequence of that success is a smaller prison system that allows tax dollars to be spent to help Michigan be successful in the future.

I understand how difficult these closures are for each of our employees. We have tried to minimize the impact these decisions will have on staff, but tough times and more difficult decisions lay ahead for the MDOC and the State of Michigan. Many affected employees will be making life-changing decisions about their future with the MDOC in the coming months. I am asking each employee to provide support for one another as we navigate through this process. I value your dedication and hard work even in the face of such daunting circumstances and I urge each of you to continue carrying out the difficult work of keeping Michigan's citizens safe.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Caruso, Director