



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Graduation Marks First Year of MCE Re-entry Program

Continuing Allocation of RE-entry Services program
offers in-depth preparation for offenders returning to society

TOWSON, MD (June 24, 2009) – On Monday, June 29th, 18 men who have completed the Maryland Correctional Enterprises' (MCE) Continuing Allocation of RE-entry Services (CARES) program will graduate at the Central Maryland Laundry Facility in Sykesville, MD. The graduation marks the completion of the first year of this one-of-a-kind program developed by MCE.

CARES is offered to DOC inmates who are within two years of their release date and have had at least one year of employment with MCE. Participants work full time at the MCE Laundry Plant and take evening classes that consist of decision making guidance and employment readiness, while also focusing on identifying barriers to employment and community services that can address those issues. Additionally, they receive referral information for Maryland's One Stop Career Centers and private employers known to hire ex-offenders.

In July of 2008 the first class began as a pilot with just eight inmates. The 18 men recognized at this one year mark of the program are the first official graduates. The event includes guest speaker Ms. Patricia Taylor, a specialist with the Transition and Offender Workforce Development Division of the National Institute of Corrections who has many years of experience with re-entry issues facing the nation's ex-offenders.

MCE is the industry arm of the prison system, providing employment to Maryland's offender population through business settings that mirror private sector industry. Not only do inmates learn a valuable skill or trade such as furniture construction, metal work, graphic design, meat cutting and much more, but they also learn basic employment skills like responsibility, leadership and teamwork. In FY2008, MCE operated over 30 business units and employed a record 1,486 inmates per month on average for a total of 2.3 million hours of training.

Employment is a key factor in the successful re-entry of an ex-offender. Studies have shown that offenders with at least one year of MCE employment are over 50% less likely to recidivate than general population inmates. CARES was created to extend the employability of these offenders through their final years in the correctional system, resulting in a smooth transition into the workforce upon release.

The media is invited to attend the graduation ceremonies of this important program on June 29th at 6pm. Please RSVP to Danielle Lueking to gain entrance.

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