



An employee publication of the  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

January/February 2015

Volume 22 Issue 3

## Agency News

# Legislative update for TDCJ employees from the executive director

By Brad Livingston

The versions of the General Appropriations Bill recently filed in the House and Senate were identical in regards to the funds appropriated to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. In general, agency operations and programs were funded at the fiscal year 2014-2015 levels, but please see the Summary of the FY 2016-17 General Appropriations Bill as Introduced for additional information.

As always, the appropriations bill as filed is only a starting point for budget deliberations during the next five months and, as usual, most of the agency's requests for pay raises and other increases above the previous biennium, typically referred to as "exceptional items," were not included in the bill as filed. Additional funding for various purposes, to include pay raises for state employees, will be considered later in the legislative session.

Final decisions regarding the budget will be made no earlier than May 2015.



Since the Texas Department of Criminal Justice participated in the Sunset review process just last session, TDCJ will not be among the agencies reviewed by the 84th Legislature. There will, of course, be other legislation impacting the agency and our employees and we will monitor those bills as they progress through the legislative process. Once again,

a subject of particular interest to the agency and our workforce will be maintaining the long-term fiscal stability of the employee pension program.

I look forward to working with state policy-makers on the important fiscal and policy decisions impacting the agency and our employees. Through the agency website and the *Connections* newsletter we will provide periodic updates regarding the proposed TDCJ budget for fiscal years 2016-2017 as well as any actions impacting the retirement system and those who contribute to or receive benefits from the pension program. Upon the conclusion of the legislative session we will prepare summaries of the new TDCJ budget, any decisions affecting salaries and benefits, and many of the criminal justice bills that were enacted into law. ●