



An employee publication of the
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

November/December 2015
Volume 23 Issue 2

Board Bulletin

Holiday greetings and accolades from the Chairman

By Dale Wainwright, TBCJ Chairman



Dale Wainwright

With the holiday season upon us, I want to take this opportunity to urge each employee of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to take

some time to relax and enjoy the holidays with your family and friends. You should be proud of your accomplishments of the past year; your hard work has built a strong positive reputation.

Over the years this agency has transformed in many ways. Looking back, the Texas prison system began in 1848, when the legislature created a penitentiary oversight board. In 1849, the Huntsville Unit received its first inmates. The focus at that time was solely on punishment through confinement. Today, the state's criminal justice system has evolved to include parole, community supervision, and the responsibility for supervising more than 148,000 incarcerated offenders. We have agency-wide accreditation from the American Correctional Association.

The focus has shifted to rehabilitation, with diversion programs and programs to help offenders reintegrate into society through education, treatment and faith-based values training. The staff's devotion to fulfilling the agency's mission has led to many new and innovative programs.

There has been an ongoing enhancement of correctional officer training, with the most recent expansion increasing the number of hours devoted to mental health and crisis intervention training. TDCJ implemented a new system-wide uniform risk assessment tool, the Texas Risk Assessment System or TRAS, designed to help community supervision, prison, reentry and aftercare professionals create custom case management programs for individual offenders. The agency's Safe Prisons Program is consistent with the National Prison Rape Elimination Act standards, evidenced by the fact every TDCJ facility examined to date by independent auditors has met or exceeded PREA standards.

The efforts of 20,000 TDCJ volunteers and the agency's rehabilitative programs are making a difference in the lives of offenders.

The InnerChange Freedom Initiative program, 88 faith-based dorms and the prison seminary at the Darrington Unit are prime examples. These programs have been proven successful in reducing recidivism. In fact, the state has reached a recidivism rate of 21.4 percent, which is among the lowest, if not the lowest in the nation.

Whether you supervise offenders on the street, walk the runs on a unit, or coordinate administrative tasks in an office, your job is important to this agency and the state. Your work ultimately helps make Texas a safer place to live. On behalf of the Governor, the Board of Criminal Justice, and the citizens of this state I thank you for your dedication and performance.

You have my warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful holiday. Merry Christmas and happy holidays! ●