



## Executive director's update

By Bryan Collier



Earlier this year the Texas Department of Criminal Justice was honored by the American Correctional Association with the prestigious Lucy Webb Hayes Award. The award is given to correctional agencies that have achieved full compliance with ACA accreditation standards and federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, and is named in honor of the first lady and wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes, who served as founding president of the ACA in 1870.

Only three other correctional agencies in the United States have earned this award recognition, which underscores TDCJ's commitment to providing public safety by ensuring that all of our operations meet nationally recognized industry standards.

Every day, the men and women of this department are committed to providing excellence in corrections, while keeping the public safe and ensuring the well-being of those in their care. Achieving full accreditation for meeting ACA standards and PREA compliance across the system would not have been possible without your hard work. This award is a testament to your perseverance, integrity and commitment to public service.

There are more than 500 ACA and nearly 200 PREA standards, and the audit process requires significant coordination among many agency divisions and departments. Audits begin when a team of independent

corrections professionals visits a facility. Auditors review files, interview offenders and staff, and prepare a preliminary report describing any areas of noncompliance which must be addressed. Facilities go through the review process every three years.

In 1998, the Boyd Unit became the first TDCJ correctional facility to receive ACA accreditation. Since that time, every TDCJ facility has been reviewed and received ACA accreditation, and many have been audited multiple times. In August of 2014, TDCJ was recognized with the ACA's Golden Eagle Award for achieving full accreditation for every aspect of the department's operations.

In the same year, the auditing process for PREA began at TDCJ facilities. By December of 2017, 133 facilities including halfway houses, transitional treatment centers, parole facilities, and private and state-run institutions were reviewed and found to be fully compliant with the federal standards.

While the department did not pursue system-wide accreditation or compliance with PREA standards for accolades, the thousands of correctional professionals who make up the TDCJ earned this honor through hard work and professional dedication. I congratulate everyone on this outstanding accomplishment. ▲

