



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

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George Little, Commissioner

The Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) has emerged as a model in the nation for its management practices and cost-saving measures since becoming one of the first correctional systems in the country to be fully accredited in 1994. Since that time, each component of the system has been reaccredited in a three-year cycle by the American Correctional Association.

The department's mission is to enhance public safety in Tennessee through incarceration and rehabilitation of felony offenders. The challenge of housing an increasing inmate population is being met by double-celling, expansion of current facilities, consolidation of other facilities under one management structure, and the planning of new facilities.

Since 1995, the department has increased its bed capacity by 2,151 beds through double-celling and 3,552 beds by contracting with Hardeman County at the Hardeman County Correctional and the Whiteville Correctional Facilities. New housing construction has added a net of 1,914 new beds (742 beds in obsolete units were demolished), including a 1,536-bed facility in West Tennessee, which opened in March 1999. The department increased the number of beds for females by converting the Mark Luttrell Correctional Center to a female facility in 1999. A net increase of 410 beds at the Tennessee Prison for Women, completed in 2001, more than doubled that facility's original population capacity. In 2004, the department announced two prison expansion projects to existing facilities in East Tennessee: Morgan County Correctional Complex and Southeastern Tennessee State Regional Correctional Facility. The projects will bring a net increase of approximately 2,300 beds once completed.

The department manages and operates 13 adult facilities, contracts with a private prison management company for the operation of another state facility, and leases two facilities owned by a county government (Hardeman County), collectively housing slightly over 19,000 inmates. The department has more than 5,200 employees, including over 3,000 security personnel. The Tennessee Correction Academy in Tullahoma is the department's training facility. The facility also trains personnel for the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole and the Department of Children's Services. During fiscal year 2006-07, the academy trained over 6,000 personnel, including 1,448 newly hired employees.

Like other correction departments nationwide, one of Tennessee's most pressing challenges today is escalating health-care costs. In 2007, the average annual cost per inmate was \$3,478. To address this issue, the department has secured contractual agreements for medical and mental health services. These contractors have assisted the department with implementing managed care strategies to control medical costs while ensuring quality of care. These strategies include preauthorization for specialty services and inpatient hospital care, concurrent review of inpatient care to assure timely discharges, retrospective review of bills for accuracy, and negotiation of "usual and customary" rates for services such as pharmaceuticals, hospitals,

physicians, dentists, specialists, equipment, and ancillary services. In addition, when inmates initiate a “sick call” visit to the health clinic, they are charged a co-payment of \$3.00 for the initial encounter. This system has significantly reduced the number of unnecessary medical encounters, thus providing greater efficiency in operations. It is important to note that health care is provided regardless of the inmate’s ability to pay the co-payment. Also, co-payments are not charged for inmates segregated for medical or mental health reasons.

Currently, the department continues to place strong emphasis on the inmate community work program. Offenders under this program provide the labor and skills for projects of various types: litter pickup, brush clearing, maintenance of state and local parks, construction of senior citizens centers, and assistance to many local governments across the state. During fiscal year 2006-2007, these crews performed 1.1 million hours of community service work, resulting in a savings of over \$5.6 million.

The department has been recognized nationally for its cost-saving measures in recycling. In 1999 and 2000, the department won the Environmental Protection Agency’s National Energy Partnership Award for its recycling efforts, the first prison system to receive such an honor.

In addition to its mission, the department is committed to serving the public by providing a 24-hour toll-free telephone line for victims of crime. Called the Victims Offender Information Caller Emissary (VOICE), the phone line allows registered victims and/or their immediate family members access to information about an offender’s current location, release eligibility dates, and any scheduled parole hearings. Since its inception in 1996, VOICE has served almost 11,000 registered victims and/or their immediate family members. Currently, more than 8,500 victims and/or their immediate family members are registered to use VOICE.

The department continues to initiate policy measures making inmates accountable for their behavior. Visitation, recreation, and other routine events in the prisons are considered a privilege and can be suspended or revoked when rules are broken.

The department re-established the Division of Rehabilitative Services in 2004. Rehabilitative Services covers education, substance abuse, victim services, inmate jobs/programs, volunteer services and pre-release and transition service. Since the division has been re-established, it has added many new initiatives to the department. A few examples are the two transition centers, NewStart and Genesis, a parole technical violator diversion program and developing a Transitional Assessment Plan. Tennessee Re-entry Collaborative was formed to focus on improving re-entry: thereby improving public safety. There are currently 53 members representing 24 state agencies and community agencies across the state.

As indicated by its many initiatives, the department continues to be committed to ways to operate its prisons in an efficient and effective manner while maintaining the safety of the public, its employees, and the inmates in its custody.

In 1999, as a result of increasing gang activity in the prison population, the department created the position of Security Threat Group (STG) Coordinator. In an effort to stem the tide of gang or STG-related activity within its facilities, the department has developed and implemented several initiatives. Those include separate housing units or STG members and a four-month rehabilitation program.

In 2002, under the supervision of TDOC and the Board of Probation and Parole (BOPP), an on-line service was created that provides users with the status of convicted felony offenders who are, or have been, under the supervision of TDOC or BOPP. Information such as an individual’s current status (e.g., inmate, probation, parole) or parole eligibility is available to citizens free of charge. Any individual, who has been in a county or city facility, but not state custody, will not appear.

Department of Correction Facilities



County	Facility	Abbreviation
1. Bledsoe	Southeastern Tennessee State Regional Correctional Facility	STSRCF
2. Davidson	Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility Charles B. Bass Correctional Complex Riverbend Maximum Security Institution Tennessee Prison for Women	DSNF CBCX RMSI TPW
3. Hardeman	Hardeman County Correctional Facility Whiteville Correctional Facility	HCCF WCFA
4. Hickman	Turney Center Industrial Prison and Farm	TCIP
5. Johnson/Carter	Northeast Correctional Complex	NECX
6. Lake	Northwest Correctional Complex	NWCX
7. Lauderdale	West Tennessee State Penitentiary	WTSP
8. Morgan	Brushy Mountain State Prison Morgan County Correctional Complex	BMCX MCCX
9. Shelby	Mark H. Luttrell Correctional Center	MLCC
10. Wayne	South Central Correctional Facility Wayne County Boot Camp	SCCF WCBC

History

The department's role and scope has evolved dramatically since the Tennessee State Penitentiary opened in 1831 with 13 prisoners. From 1871 to 1939, the department went through various name changes and reorganizations to become the modern-day Tennessee Department of Correction in 1955.

Various divisions were created, including one for juvenile probation in 1957 and the Division of Adult Probation and Parole in 1961. In 1979, the Adult Board of Paroles became an autonomous unit with probation remaining under the jurisdiction of the department. Legislation adopted in 1998, which became effective July 1, 1999, created the Board of Probation and Parole, a separate agency from the department. The legislation placed the Community Correction Division and the Probation Division under the supervision of the new Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole.

The juvenile division of the Department of Correction also underwent changes in 1989 with its separation from the department to become the new Tennessee Department of Youth Development, now a part of the Department of Children's Services.

In the 1970s, the department began a major building program to accommodate a growing inmate population. Over 3,000 beds were added to the system in regional prisons at Lake, Bledsoe, Morgan, and Davidson counties.

The 1980s ushered in a period of great change. A federal lawsuit filed by inmates complained of unfit and crowded conditions, and the demand for bed space surpassed the supply due to changes in the state's sentencing structure. Consequently, the department came under federal supervision. In October 1985, a special session of the Tennessee General Assembly was convened to address prison problems. The legislature approved the 1985 Comprehensive Correction Improvement Act that addressed these areas and funded over \$320 million to improve current facilities and build new ones.

From 1989 through the 1990s, the department opened Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, Lois M. DeBerry Special Needs Facility, Northeast Correctional Complex, Northwest Correctional Complex, South Central Correctional Facility, and West Tennessee State Penitentiary.

In November 1994, Tennessee's prison system was released from federal court oversight. Today, the American Correctional Association accredits all of the system's 15 facilities, training academy, and the central office.

The last execution by electrocution in Tennessee occurred on September 12, 2007, the first since November 7, 1960. Capital punishment remained in hiatus for nearly 40 years, until the first execution by means of lethal injection took place on April 19, 2000.

Related Boards and Commissions

Tennessee Community Resource Board. This board consists of 15 members and a chairperson. The Commissioner of Correction and the chair of the Board of Probation and Parole approve all positions. The board was created to coordinate volunteer activities in Tennessee's state prisons and community supervision programs, and to train a network of volunteers for offender programs. All members of the board are appointed for three-year terms.

Tennessee Rehabilitative Initiative in Corrections (TRICOR). Effective July 1, 1994, legislation removed the former Correctional Enterprises from the

department and created the independent TRICOR Board. The board consists of nine individuals appointed by the Governor, with the Commissioner serving as an ex-officio member. State statute requires that the board members consist of individuals with specific and varied backgrounds. Effective July 1, 1999, legislation was adopted that removed TRICOR from the Department of Correction for administrative and fiscal purposes. TRICOR continues to operate, in partnership with the department, in 10 prisons throughout the state, using inmates as its main workforce.

Tennessee Sex Offender Treatment Board. The Tennessee Sex Offender Treatment Board was created by statute and became effective July 1, 1995. The purpose of the board is to develop standardized procedures for the identification and evaluation of sex offenders and guidelines and standards for sex offender treatment and community monitoring. The board is comprised of 13 members who possess expertise in the areas of sex offender treatment, monitoring, and/or victimology.

Commissioner George Little
Tennessee Department of Correction

On September 8, 2005, Governor Bredesen appointed **George M. Little** to serve as Commissioner of Correction. Prior to his appointment, Little served as Director of the Shelby County Division of Corrections, where he provided oversight of the administrative functions of the division, including the preparation of the division's operating and capital budgets and general oversight of the division's day-to-day operations. From 1999-2002, Little served as the Assistant to the Executive Director of the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole, and from 1991-1999, he served as the Regional Director of the Delta Probation Region for the state's Department of Correction. Prior to that, he served as Assistant Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Correction under Governor Ned McWherter. Little's career in Tennessee began under the administration of Governor Lamar Alexander, where he worked as an Assistant to the Governor in the Office of State Planning. He holds a bachelor's degree in Economic and Business Administration from Morehouse College in Georgia. His academic history also includes graduate studies in Economics at the University of Texas at Austin.

