



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

To promote a safer Idaho by reducing recidivism

C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor

KEVIN H. KEMPF
Director

July 30, 2015

To all Idaho Legislators,

I hope this letter finds you well. Having served in the Legislature for a number of years, I'm all too familiar with the routine during the session – you get a whirlwind of information thrown at you in what you hope will be a short amount of time. While the length of the sessions will vary, the amount of information in the form of bills, hearings and agency updates is a lot to digest.

I wanted to take this opportunity—outside of that environment—to give you a quick update about some exciting things happening with the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC).

Last winter, after 8 years of leading IDOC, Director Brent Reinke stepped down from his position. His able leadership helped IDOC weather some tough economic times and positioned the agency well to move forward. The Board of Correction appointed Kevin Kempf in his place, and he has hit the ground running.

➤ ***Department Reorganization***

Director Kempf immediately began assessing the agency's operations and compared the current organizational structure to the resources needed to enhance public safety. As a result, the department reorganized starting with headquarters. The reorganization included:

- Eliminating the hierarchy of an entire division, moving the important functions to other divisions to establish clear lines of reporting and accountability.
- 15 total positions were repurposed and moved out of headquarters to the front lines where they were needed most.
- Created an evaluation and compliance unit that reports directly to him. The unit tracks performance measures to facilitate constant organizational improvement.

➤ ***Unit 24 Closure***

Unit 24 initially was created to be "temporary" inmate housing at the Idaho State Correctional Institution (ISCI). The 204-bed unit posed a significant danger to staff and inmates. In late May, the last of the inmates were moved out, and the unit was permanently closed.

➤ **Security Retention Plan**

Last year, the Governor recommended and the Legislature graciously appropriated resources to increase pay for correctional security staff to help stem the dangerously high turnover rate. We continue to monitor and measure the turnover rate, but the anecdotal evidence suggests the added pay had a positive impact! Still, pay is only one of the factors affecting turnover. Morale is another. To that end, IDOC just launched the first of what will be a quarterly employee survey to measure morale. The results will be used to identify worksites with high morale and model their efforts elsewhere.

➤ **Transparency and Accountability**

With over 22,000 convicted felons in our charge, corrections had adopted a mantra of “no news is good news.” The reality is we’re proud of our public safety mission and the people we have carrying out that good work. As a Board, we have high expectations of Kevin, and he has committed to holding himself to the same level of accountability to which he holds his managers. He’s made clear the best way to maintain accountability and showcase IDOC’s efforts is to pull back the curtains for all to see.

Here are four examples:

- Kevin has extended an open invitation to every Legislator to tour any of our facilities, at any time without prior notice. We hope you’ll take him up on the opportunity to see with your own eyes what happens in our prisons.
- Kevin recently gave the ACLU a tour of IDOC facilities including the department’s administrative segregation, death row and execution unit. Kevin told the group IDOC is committed to the humane treatment of all inmates and wants to partner with the ACLU instead of facing off in court.
- Kevin has started a process to give IDOC staff the opportunity to offer feedback on the performance of their work group and the agency. The Employee Satisfaction Survey will be conducted quarterly. While the survey will be conducted anonymously, the results will be shared with staff throughout the agency.
- Underway right now is an independent review of IDOC’s treatment programs. The review was sought by Kevin and is being conducted by the Council of State Governments. The independent review will identify what is working and what isn’t, uncover efficiencies and redundancies, and provide a roadmap for better preparing inmates for release. We expect to receive the results of that review in September, and we look forward to sharing that information with you.

Thank you for your service. Our door is open to you at any time. Please let us know how we can help you serve your constituents or provide information to help you make decisions as a lawmaker.

I hope you have a great summer and I look forward to visiting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Field

Debbie Field
Chairman, Board of Correction