

COVID-19 Update - November 25, 2020

Hi All-

I don't have a ton of COVID updates today. Cases continue to rise across Idaho, and the same is true for us. We've seen an increase in cases in our correctional facilities and among staff. For updated testing figures, please visit [here](#). Mass testing is taking place this week for staff and residents at CAPP, SICI, and all incoming/outgoing RDU's. Because of the holiday, we're expecting some delays in test results.

**Leadership Townhalls:** On December 7<sup>th</sup> at 1pm and December 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am, we will hold all-staff townhalls with leadership. Links to the meetings will be forthcoming. These sessions will be held to address questions that you have for the leadership team. You can ask us anything – project progress, agency direction, or my favorite color – and we'll use the time to respond to those questions that seem to have the most interest. To submit a question, please email [BrightIdeas@idoc.idaho.gov](mailto:BrightIdeas@idoc.idaho.gov) and use the subject "Question for leadership." Attendance isn't mandatory, but we really could benefit from knowing what's on your mind. If you can't attend one of the sessions, we hope to record at least one of them and put it on EDOC so you can view it at your convenience. Travel restrictions and COVID protocols have changed things up for us, but I'm really looking forward to these sessions.

**Sad News:** I'm so sad to share that Terry Tharp, ICI Sales Manager, unexpectedly passed away last Friday. My heart just aches for Terry's family and his friends and coworkers at ICI. I hope you'll keep them in your thoughts and prayers, and they could use our compassion and support during this incredibly difficult time. We'll share more details when they are available about how we plan to honor Terry's life and contributions to ICI and IDOC.

**Happy Thanksgiving!** I'm thankful for dirty dishes. Growing up, my grandma had a poem hanging above her kitchen sink expressing that sentiment. I saw it so often, I can still recite it from memory. The long and short of it is to be thankful for dirty dishes because it means you had food. I will occasionally remind my wife of that poem, but generally it's because I'm trying to avoid doing dishes. "I'm gonna leave them," I'll say, "as a reminder to be grateful." Strangely, she doesn't find it as funny as I do. But that sentiment has taken on renewed meaning for me this year. With so many people struggling and enduring hardships, it's been a constant reminder to take inventory of the many blessings, often taken for granted, and give thanks.

I've also experienced the sentiment in reverse. At various times over the last 8 ½ months, I've struggled. . . a lot! I suspect I'm not alone. But it's for those struggles that I'm also grateful. It sounds so cliché, but it's true. Those struggles were opportunities to grow. They gave me opportunities to learn to be a better husband, father, son, brother and friend. The struggles gave me opportunities to gain a little more wisdom and compassion at work. And every struggle came with a healthy dose of humility to help me better understand just how far I still have to go to be the person the people I love and care about deserve. I'm thankful for all of it!

I can't tell you enough – I'm thankful for all of you. I hope you have occasion to give thanks for your many blessings, reflect on the growth this challenging time has prompted, and – with the people you love most – create some dirty dishes.

Stay safe, take care of each other, and have a happy Thanksgiving!

Thanks-  
Josh