

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT
ANNUAL REPORT
Year Ending December 2009

ACTIVITIES AND INTERACTIONS DURING 2009

Overview

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) continues to work with Oregon's tribes and tribal members toward identifying opportunities for partnership. Bobbi Burton and Jennifer Black are the agency's key contacts.

Director Max Williams named Carolyn Schnoor as the agency's new Cultural Awareness and Diversity Manager. In this role, Carolyn will also attend Public Safety Cluster Meetings.

Carolyn attended the 2009 Tribal Information Day at the Capitol, and was also represented at the 2009 Government-to-Government Annual Summit meeting. This year, the DOC will be represented at the annual summit by Bobbi Burton, Jennifer Black, and Carolyn Schnoor.

The DOC is a member of the Government-to-Government Public Safety Cluster group. Participation in this cluster continues to provide DOC with current information on public safety activities and concerns among the various tribes, as well as from other state agencies. Participation in the cluster provides an avenue for building on-going relationships with tribal representatives. These contacts have been critical for DOC as we implement internal training on tribal relations, develop statewide policies, and develop procedures that may affect tribal members.

In 2006, DOC received tribal input on determining Native American ethnicity within the Oregon inmate population. During 2007 and 2008, based on that input, DOC reviewed the way in which the Department determined the ethnicity of native peoples who come into DOC custody. Some discrepancies in reporting were found. In 2009, the DOC continued to examine the data received from self-reporting and outside sources and to resolve ethnicity information. Disclosure of ethnicity or tribal affiliation continues to be voluntary for incarcerated adults, which makes it difficult to collect data on all inmates. Inmates may also request a change to their ethnic designation. The agency intends to continue to collect this voluntary data.

Update on DOC's Native American Policy

- The DOC originally began working on a Native American spiritual and ceremonial policy in 2007, following discussions and correspondence with the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla. The tribe requested that the agency consider adopting a policy that would bring greater consistency and clarity to the various Native American programs offered in Oregon state prisons. DOC committed to developing such a policy. The

policy is now being revised, as a result of input from the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, and from the following groups: Native American Tribes in Oregon, individual tribal members, and Native American scholars from throughout Oregon.

- Armand Minthorn and the tribal council of the confederated tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.
- DOC Chaplains and other Religious Services staff.
- DOC Institution Security Managers from all institutions.
- A group of Native American volunteers who work in a variety of the institutions.
- A group of inmates who are members of the Lakota Native American club at the Oregon State Penitentiary.

Once revised, the policy will be presented to the policy DOC Policy Group for comment, and eventual formal adoption. Our goal is to complete this process by the end of 2010.

The DOC's Religious Services staff is developing a procedural guide that will describe many of the procedures and protocols for delivering Native American programs and ceremonies to inmates within DOC custody.

Religious Services

A wide range of Native American services were provided during the year at all 14 prisons located throughout the state. DOC's Religious Services Division continues to develop Native American spirituality and healing programs for incarcerated men and women in DOC custody who choose these practices. Once again this year incarcerated men and women attended Native American ceremonies and services; many attended multiple ceremonies. Each inmate in DOC custody has access to sweat lodges and other ceremonies.

DOC relies on many Native American volunteers to conduct Native American ceremonies in the prisons. The agency thanks these dedicated volunteers for their service; without whom these services and programs might not be available.

Spiritual events and ceremonies that were provided in DOC facilities during the past year included sweat lodges, drumming circles, pow-wows, talking circles, spirit runs, smudging, pipe ceremonies, language development, other cultural and spiritual development, and counseling. An extensive series of educational videos and seminars are given during the year to help people understand and heal from historical trauma, and to further develop healthy self and tribal identities. Religious Services has been developing and implementing healing ceremonies at multiple facilities over the past two years, and plans to expand the offering of these ceremonies during the coming year.

One of this year's highlights was a performance by Aztec dancers at Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. These dancers demonstrated cultural dancing that has been passed down for many centuries. A number of the Department's institutions continued to maintain direct contact with tribal representatives and tribal volunteers to develop and present special cultural ceremonies, promote inmate participation in cultural events and affiliations, and to recruit volunteers.

Conclusion

The Department appreciates the comments and concerns that have been shared by tribal representatives, and recognizes their contributions toward refining the department's draft policy. The DOC plans to continue working with tribal representatives throughout the state to maintain the cooperative relationships that have been built, and to continue to seek out opportunities to involve the Native American community in rehabilitative programs; policy development that affects tribal members; and the transition of inmates to communities.

KEY CONTACTS

Oregon Department of Corrections
Bobbi Burton, Manager
Community Development Program/Agency Tribal Liaison
1793 13th Street SE
Salem, OR 97302-2595
(503) 934-1014
Bobbi.Burton@doc.state.or.us

Oregon Department of Corrections
Jennifer Black
Public Affairs Administrator/Agency Tribal Liaison
2575 Center St NE
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: (503) 945-9225
Jennifer.Black@doc.state.or.us