

State Representative
Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer)



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Thatcher Conducts Corrections Fact-Finding Tour

(Keizer) "I wanted a first hand look at the challenges facing our corrections system in Oregon," said State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer). In the past few days she toured the [Yamhill County Jail](#) in McMinnville and the [Coffee Creek Correctional Facility](#) in Wilsonville, both near her legislative district.

Thatcher served on the House Judiciary Committee last legislative session and is currently drafting several public safety measures to introduce next year. At the jail officials demonstrated security measures and explained some of the difficulties with limited resources. "I was impressed with how the county utilizes technology, cameras and other devices, to help save on personnel costs, but it is a crowded operation and clearly isn't getting the necessary support from the state.

At [Coffee Creek](#), Thatcher learned about how the facility operates as the [intake center](#) for every inmate entering the state corrections system, and accommodates all of the female prisoners in Oregon. The 1300 bed facility is currently being expanded to make room for another 200 beds for men and 100 beds for women. "It was interesting to see the level of community support for the programs inside the prison," noted Thatcher. "Hundreds of volunteers assist in a variety of ways and it's clear they are the key to the success of many programs including the one to help inmates stay connected to their children."

"The meth epidemic has taken its toll on our correctional institutions at the county and state level," Thatcher pointed out. She helped draft Oregon's new anti-meth laws last year and is already working on [legislation to help rehabilitate meth houses](#) for next year. Thatcher also wants to help the counties get the state resources they deserve for jail and community corrections.

Yamhill, like most other Oregon counties, are responsible for state inmates with less than a one year sentence. "That law dates back a decade, but the state has never fully reimbursed the counties to house those offenders as promised," explained Thatcher. A recent study conducted by the [Oregon State Sheriffs' Association](#) shows the average cost for one of those state inmates is \$103 per day, but the Association claims the amount the counties receive from the state is \$63 dollars per day.

One of the programs at Coffee Creek is called "[Turning Point](#)". It's one of the [Alternative Incarceration Programs](#) (AIP) that has recently generated controversy. AIPs help inmates overcome substance abuse problems and reduce time off their sentences. Thatcher is considering several reforms to the AIP programs and has communicated the [Oregon District Attorneys' Association](#) and [Crime Victims United of Oregon](#) about potential legislative changes. [Read more about AIP in the McMinnville News Register.](#)

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