

Correctional Redevelopment

Towards a new correctional system

SEPTEMBER 2007

Welcome

to our first newsletter on correctional redevelopment in the Yukon. This newsletter will be published on a regular basis by the Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office. Our goal is to keep Yukoners informed of the actions taken to improve correctional programs and services and change the territory's correctional system.

During the public consultation on corrections, Yukoners told us that the correctional system needs to change. They also said they want to hear about our progress, programs and plans on a regular basis. This newsletter is one of the ways we will keep Yukoners informed. We look forward to working with Yukon First Nations, non-government organizations (NGOs), community groups and government departments to make the changes that Yukoners have said are desperately needed. We also look forward to reporting these developments to you.

Do you have comments or questions? See the back page for contact information. Please stay in touch!

Vision, Mission and Values

The foundation for the new correctional system has been established with vision, mission and values statements. They will guide the Department of Justice's Community Justice and Public Safety Division in leading changes to the correctional system.

In the winter of 2006–07, Sandra Bryce and Joanne Lewis from the Department of Justice facilitated discussions with department employees, other government departments, NGOs and First Nations organizations. In group discussions and individual meetings, participants provided their views on the draft statements, which were finalized in April, 2007. The statements will guide policy and our interactions with clients, colleagues and the community.



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Vision, mission and values statements can be useful when we face difficult choices or decisions. They can help answer the following questions: Does this decision move us closer to the vision? Does it support the mission? Does it confirm the values?

Vision

The vision of Community Justice and Public Safety is to contribute to community safety by offering opportunities for healing and hope for change.

Mission

The mission of the Community Justice and Public Safety Division is to contribute to public safety by working collaboratively with First Nations, other government departments and non-government

organizations (NGOs) to accomplish these goals:

- offer support to victims and families;
- hold offenders accountable while encouraging healing and their successful reintegration into the community; and
- build capacity in communities to prevent crime and foster healthy and safe communities.

Values

Community Justice and Public Safety holds the following values:

- We believe in the possibility and power of change.
- We value a collaborative approach with First Nations, other government departments and NGOs.
- We value a client-focused and integrated approach to delivering services that address the strengths and needs of victims, offenders, families and communities in a holistic way.
- We value staff and encourage and support their growth and development.
- We value integrity, respect and professionalism.
- We value the rule of law.

From consultation to action

The activities reported in this newsletter are part of correctional redevelopment. Many of them reflect initiatives in the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan.

Redevelopment started with a territory-wide public corrections consultation. This phase concluded in March 2006 with the Corrections Action Plan (CAP). The CAP and Implementation Framework were approved by the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation

Chiefs at the Yukon Forum on April 3, 2006. Work then began on planning options for a new correctional centre and a Strategic Plan to guide all areas of correctional redevelopment. The Strategic Plan was approved at the Yukon Forum on December 8, 2006.

The Strategic Plan is based on working collaboratively with First Nations, NGOs and government departments. An Oversight Committee is co-chaired by the Government of Yukon and CYFN, and subcommittees include representatives of these groups. If you would like a copy of the Strategic Plan, please contact us (contact information is provided on page 8) or go to our web site at www.correctionsconsultation.yk.ca.

Moving forward

Corrections Act consultation

A territory-wide public consultation begins in fall 2007 on the major components that could be included in a new *Corrections Act*. Information on the process and ways to participate will be advertised. A consultation document will be available for review prior to the consultation.

Healing in Corrections Conference

A conference will be co-hosted by Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Government of Yukon, with a focus on healing in the correctional system. Conference dates are September 25 and 26, 2007.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Work is underway within the Department of Justice to prepare an Offender Program Model, followed by a Victim Services Program Model. The intent is to ensure that correctional programming reflects

the diverse needs of offenders and that services for victims meet the needs of victims, families and communities. Work will continue through the summer and fall and will be discussed with the Program and Services Advisory Committee on an ongoing basis. The committee membership includes First Nations, NGOs, Yukon government departments and Yukon College.

Work is underway to develop an Integrated Offender Management Model that provides a seamless and responsive approach to case management.

Some assessment tools for determining offender risks and service needs, and the appropriate programs and services for meeting those needs. These tools are being piloted in the new Community Wellness Court initiative that was introduced this spring.

A working group has been formed to develop a recruitment and retention strategy that focuses on attracting and retaining qualified staff throughout the correctional system.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan is taking place throughout the Department of Justice. Within the Community Justice and Public

Safety Division, Deborah McNevin has been seconded as Director of Strategic Planning and Special Projects, reporting to the Assistant Deputy Minister as an additional resource to help with implementation of the Strategic Plan.

New correctional centre

Planning option and location

On May 11, 2007, the Yukon government announced that the Building Advisory Committee (BAC) had recommended a planning option for the new correctional centre. The BAC includes the Government of Yukon, the Council for Yukon First Nations (CYFN), Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the RCMP.

On the same day, the government announced that the new correctional centre would be built in the same location as the existing facility. This will allow the use of services already in place. Site preparation will start early in 2008; the goal is to have the facility open in 2011.

Designing for change

Now that the planning option and location have been selected, Functional Programme planning is underway. This will guide schematic

Strategic Plan goals

The Strategic Plan has two goals:

- to substantially improve the quality of correctional programs; and
- to fundamentally change the operation of the correctional system.

design work. No matter which design is selected, the new correctional centre will be a purpose-built facility with these objectives:

- to be client-focused;
- to protect the public, staff and inmates;
- to reflect the cultures and needs of Yukon First Nations clients;
- to support client accountability, motivation, rehabilitation and healing;
- to support collaborative efforts with First Nations, other government departments and NGOs to deliver programs and services;
- to provide programs that meet the needs of a diverse inmate population, who have multiple challenges and varying risk needs; and
- to provide, along with the community and places of transition, one component of correctional programs and services.

Changes at Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC)

Meeting interim space needs

While the new correctional centre is being designed, staff and inmates continue to use the current facility, which has several limitations. An Interim Space Plan



Whitehorse Correctional Centre

has been developed to meet the immediate needs of programs and operations. The Interim Space Plan also forms the basis for the transition to a modern supervision model and a new correctional centre. Work will start in late October 2007.

Training

As part of the Strategic Plan, new training is being provided for staff and managers at the correctional centre. This will support the focus on security, client accountability, motivation, rehabilitation and healing. Training courses are intended to develop skills and leadership, and include Correctional Officer Basic Training, Respectful Workplaces, Personal Accountability, Verbal Intervention, and First Nation Traditional Knowledge. Current sessions include Code of Conduct and Mission, Values and Vision. Future training will include Yukon First Nations cultures. Elders will be included in developing and delivering these courses.

WCC shift schedule change

Longstanding concerns about the Correctional Officers' work hours were addressed November 6, 2006, following discussions with union and government representatives.

Hiring at WCC

A temporary position, Manager of Program Development, was created as part of the correctional development process. Simone Arnold is filling this position (see *Profile*).

Auxiliary positions

As decided by the collective bargaining process, four auxiliary positions will be used as full-time auxiliaries. This will help stabilize

How many people does it take to change a correctional system? The answer is, "quite a few." Staff and managers in the Community Justice and Public Safety division of the Department of Justice are actively involved in making changes. They work in the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Adult Probation Services, Victim Services/Family Violence Prevention Unit, and Community Justice, Crime Prevention and Policing. Here is a profile of one of them.

PROFILE: Simone Arnold

Bringing healing to WCC

A broad smile crossed Simone Arnold's face on Friday May 11, as Department of Justice Minister Marian Horne announced that the government would be building a new correctional facility. The good news was a long time coming for the staff and inmates at the 40-year-old correctional centre in Whitehorse.

"It's starting to become an actual reality and not just rumours and gossip or a political achievement," she said. "I really believe it's going to happen. Now it's in the press and in the legislature."

In July 2006, Simone signed an agreement with the Yukon government and the Correctional Service of Canada to assist with the territory's correctional system. That meant leaving an 11-year career as a federal Correctional Manager in Hobbema, Alberta, to return to her childhood home of Whitehorse. Simone began her work as a Project Manager with the Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office (CAPIO) team and recently accepted the position of Manager of Programme Development at WCC.

The mood at the WCC was murky at best when she first arrived, and she described it as "disheartened

and disgruntled," as a result of the government's delays in announcing the new facility.

Making changes

Even when the potential for change was shown to staff in the Corrections Action Plan, they were wary. "Everybody thought it was just another document," said Simone. "But the recommendations included things such as staff training, and some of the operational issues, such as hours of work. Those changes have been modified and other positive changes are occurring. They are seeing this gradual improvement."

After several months working away from the centre, Simone has now begun a review and eventual implementation of new programs and operations. They don't need rocket science, she explained.

"Consultations showed that First Nations are all about getting back



to the land and being in the bush and learning about traditions and culture." Simone is also doing her own ground work by talking with First Nation elders she meets with casually every day.

"I have been talking with them and getting their feedback just in my daily walks, going to bingo and talking to the ladies. They know what I do and they know who I am." The elders' suggestions are simple: "they say, 'You know what you should do there? You should have a moccasin-making class.'"

That's a perfect suggestion, said Simone, "for a couple of elders to come in and make moccasins and talk – bring them back to their grandmothers."

Pê Sâkâstêw

If anyone is qualified to know what will work, it's Simone. In Hobbema, she was specially trained for and worked within Pê Sâkâstêw, Canada's first aboriginal healing centre. There, she played a role in developing and monitoring programming and operations at the centre. Much of this type of programming can be used at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, she said.

"There is standard programming that is required, like substance abuse and anger management and education. The basics that people need to address – there is a lot of substance abuse in the Yukon, and most people are incarcerated with that problem."

When asked if Hobbema was tough, Simone said, "ooooof. Both inside and outside. I felt safer inside than I did outside. That's only because I knew who I was dealing with and we had good communi-

cation." Hobbema struggles with gang wars, drugs, violence and general dysfunction any time of the day. "Within the centre, it is somewhat peaceful and we all did our part to ensure that it maintained a healing environment for the residents and a healthy environment for the staff," she said.

Simone worked within the facility and was the operational manager after hours. That's when she gained inmates' trust by maintaining a consistent environment with the rules carefully outlined and explained.

"They knew they were there for a reason and this is the way we were going to operate. They knew they were safe. They would never have to sleep with a knife under their pillow. They could be free to be who they are."

Programming ranged from teaching cooking skills, resume writing, meal planning, budgeting and learning how to respect other cultures. It also involved learning how to make appropriate decisions at the right time.

"When they get out, they don't know what to do. We encourage them to get groceries, get set up in an apartment, learn how to cook and have social activities, which could mean going bowling rather than going to the bar." These choices are not easy for many people, particularly those who are struggling to change their lives, re-enter society and not to go back to old friends and old ways of living.

I'm a survivor of the same struggles that these people have to deal with, but I made a choice in my life, which way I was going to go.

"The idea is to build somebody's self-confidence to realize that those aren't friends, and that they need help themselves but they are not there yet, so you are stronger. You are a better person for realizing this is not the life to lead."

Simone is the youngest of 11 children and was raised in a somewhat dysfunctional, inconsistent environment. She knows from personal experience how important it is to make the right choice when it matters most. "I'm a survivor of the same struggles that these people have to deal with, but I made a choice in my life, which way I was going to go." Like her mother, who lived at a residential school, Simone was sent away to an outreach school in British Columbia, where she made some bad choices. "Then I moved to Calgary and I ended up on the honour roll in Grade 12. It's all a matter of friends, environment and making choices. I was never dumb, but it was just not cool to be smart."

Now, Simone is using her life and work experiences to make a difference in her hometown of Whitehorse. She is meeting new people and doing new things through the friendship of family, friends, her mother and a trusted companion, a three-legged dog named Flower. "I spend a lot of time with my mom. We are discovering new things and sometimes just hanging out getting reacquainted. I have a lot of other family here, too. I'm pretty well related to the entire Yukon."

INTERVIEW WITH JUSTICE MINISTER MARIAN HORNE

Healing and reintegration critical to reformed correction system

There is a dramatic need for change in the Yukon correctional system. That is what Justice Minister Marian C. Horne has learned since last October, when she was voted into government from her Pelly-Nisutlin riding for the first time.

"The *Corrections Act* was written in 1973 and is outdated. This government recognizes the need for change and we are making the necessary changes," she said in a recent interview.

The Whitehorse Correctional Centre, built in 1967, also needs a complete overhaul, she said. "It served the purpose of incarcerating offenders, and that was the main issue of what we once called a prison, but it did not consider the underlying issues that brought the people into the corrections system, and therefore, has not been effective."



This lack of effectiveness has resulted in high rates of recidivism for Yukon's First Nations, as more than 70 per cent of Corrections clients are of First Nation descent. "The Correctional Centre served its purpose for punishment, but not for wellness. And therefore, we have had people back into the system over and over, and not getting to the root of the problem."

Finding the roots to each person's problem is critical to an effective corrections system, says Horne, who is a Teslin Tlingit citizen.

The Tlingit have a long history of dealing with justice problems by council, she says. "Punishment had a role, but they also believed in rehabilitation – bringing them back. I think the First Nation culture has always leaned towards healing and reintegration whenever possible. That will be incorporated."

The government's four-pillar approach – harm reduction, prevention-education, treatment and enforcement – will be incorporated in the new correctional system implementing the Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan.

"The main emphasis is on re-integration for people that go into our correction system – on the programming – to bring them back into our community healthy and to be able to contribute to our community, to make family units stronger, to get to the social problems the individual has coming in." Future corrections clients will have the opportunity for personalized programming so they can return to their community physically, mentally and emotionally healthier than before they entered the correctional system, she says.

Rewriting the *Corrections Act*, which will begin this autumn through community consultations, is a major first step in recognizing the problems of First Nations in the outdated correctional system. "The existing *Act* has no mention of First Nations in it. We need to use the First Nation culture to heal offenders. We are part of the land, part of the water, and we have to give back to the land and the water, to nature, to heal. It's innate in us that we use each other to heal."

Working with Department of Justice staff and listening to the public through ongoing consultation will ensure change is both swift and proper, she added. "We are all working in the same direction, so things are happening quickly. Especially with the Department of Justice staff, I'm always impressed with how efficient and fast they work. They are incredible."

staffing on the floor of WCC, which will support consistency in programming.

WCC recruitment and retention

A working group has been created to develop a formal Recruitment and Retention Strategy for WCC.

WCC Human Resources Advisor

A Human Resources Advisor has been dedicated to WCC to provide support and assistance with recruitment and personnel issues.

Tours of WCC for job candidates

As a result of recent changes, frontline staff now conduct tours of WCC for prospective job candidates. The staff answer questions and have input in the selection process.

Program Supervisor positions

Two supervisory positions have been created in the programming area at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The positions have been filled and will be responsible for researching, coordinating and implementing programs within the centre. They will also work with First Nations communities and the Elders Advisory Group.

Recognizing dedication

Sharon Van der Meer, Sentence Administration Assistant at WCC, received an award in recognition of her dedication and exemplary efforts over the years. The award acknowledged her willingness to help in any position when there was a need, even when it meant working late or making personal sacrifices.

Career Fair at Yukon College, Whitehorse, November 8, 2006

WCC policy review

Whitehorse Correctional Centre policies are being reviewed in order to more effectively address client and community needs and program, security and operational requirements. The changes will also bring the policies up to date with current practices and developments in the field of corrections.

Programs and Services Advisory Committee

The Programs and Services Advisory Committee will provide the Department of Justice with advice on correctional programs and services. It is co-chaired by the Yukon government and CYFN. The Department of Justice hosted an information session for the new committee on June 15, 2007. The committee includes representatives from First Nations, non-government organizations, government departments and Yukon College. The immediate focus is the development of an offender program model, followed by a victim program model.

Career fairs

With the assistance of Charles Stuart, Yukon College, the WCC Recruitment Team hosted a Career Fair for students and the public on November 8, 2006 at Yukon College. Approximately 60 people attended. Resumes were received, some individuals were interviewed and positions were offered.

Mark Daniels, Manager of Security at WCC and Catherine McCormick, Correctional Officer at WCC, shared their knowledge of corrections



and jobs in the correctional field. Probation Officers Andrew Hyde and Shayne King spoke about the work of Probation Officers in the justice system and in monitoring released offenders. Simone Arnold spoke of her experiences working in the federal government's healing centre, Pê Sâkâstêw, in Hobbema, Alberta. This was the first aboriginal healing centre in Canada.

Department of Justice staff from WCC and Human Resources also participated in youth career fairs hosted by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on April 20, 2007 at F. H. Collins Secondary School in Whitehorse and by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on May 17, 2007 in Haines Junction.

Presentations

In February, March and April, the Implementation Team made presentations on the Corrections Action Plan and the Correctional Redevelopment Strategic Plan to non-government organizations, First Nation organizations and government departments. More presentations are planned for organizations or groups interested in an update. See "How to Contact Us" on page 8.

Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC)

In February of this year, a Yukon delegation, led by senior B.C. government officials, toured the



Youth career fair hosted by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, April 20, 2007

regional correctional centre in Prince George. The delegation included Marian Horne, Minister, Department of Justice; Chris Young, Executive Assistant to the Minister; Dennis Cooley, Deputy Minister of Justice; Bob Riches, Assistant Deputy Minister; Norma Davignon, Chair, Building Advisory Committee; Peter Blum, Property Management Agency; and Bill Webber, Councillor, Kwanlin Dün First Nation. A follow-up tour included Bob Riches and Simone Arnold from the Department of Justice, CYFN Grand Chief Andy Carvill and CYFN Justice Programs Manager, Cathy Johnsen, along with Councillor Ann Smith and Community Support Worker Marion Fayant from Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

The PGRCC, which opened in 1996, serves the northern B.C. population. The Yukon delegation chose to visit the centre because it is relatively new and operates in an environment similar to the Yukon's. The PGRCC is different from other B.C. facilities in that it is a multi-level risk facility and accommodates both male and female offenders. The Yukon requires a similar facility.

The PGRCC offers programs that reflect the needs of its First Nation inmates. It also provides a variety of inmate work programs inside and outside of the centre

for inmates at all risk levels. The centre's programs and services also deal with some of the issues that were raised during the corrections consultation, and the tour provided an insight to program and service possibilities. Visiting PGRCC provided the opportunity for a firsthand look at the centre's building, operation and programs.

Core programs include Substance Abuse Management, Violence Prevention, Respectful Relationships, Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous, Drug and Alcohol Liaison, Release Planning, Native Brotherhood, Breaking Barriers (cognitive skills), and other programs including education initiatives. Inmates can develop skills through cleaning and maintaining the facility, the carpentry shop, farm operations,

the laundry, the tailor shop, the carpentry shop, kitchen food services, community work service, and forestry projects. Inmates also have opportunities to participate in recreation and religious and spiritual programs.

The centre is connected to the community through government departments and non-government organizations that provide programs and services.

Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office

The Corrections Action Plan Implementation Team includes representatives from the Department of Justice and CYFN. The team works with the Department of Justice and with advisory committees, which include First Nations, non-government organizations, and other government departments on various projects.

The Implementation Team includes Simone Arnold (Project Manager on assignment to WCC as Manager of Program Development), Hazel Buffalo Robe (Corrections Action Plan Implementation Officer, CYFN Justice Programs), Norma Davignon (Project Manager), Joanne Lewis (Project Manager), and Kait Dinunzio (Executive Assistant).

RESOURCES

The Strategic Plan and other documents released during the consultation and implementation are available on our web site or by contacting the Implementation Team. Other information on new developments, meetings, etc. will be provided on the web site and in this newsletter.

How to contact us

The Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office is part of the Department of Justice. You can contact us in the following ways:

mail	Corrections Action Plan Implementation Office c/o Department of Justice (J-11) Government of Yukon Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C6
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