



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

3200 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-3478
Fax: (605) 773-3194

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Contact: Michael Winder
(605) 773-3478

Parole, Community Corrections Employees Honored

(Pierre) - The work of parole, probation and community corrections employees is being recognized this week.

July 13th through July 19th 2003 is "Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Officers' Week" across the country.

In South Dakota, parole is a function of the Department of Corrections while probation falls under the supervision of the Unified Judicial System.

A system of paroling prison inmates to supervision outside the prison walls was created by the Dakota Territorial Legislature in 1888, a year before South Dakota was granted statehood.

"Parole agents wear many hats and juggle the role of counselor/case manager, resource provider and compliance manager," said Ed Ligtenberg, Executive Director of the South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles. "One hour they may be an employment counselor assisting in a job search. The next hour they are enforcing the rules of a parolee's supervision by issuing a violation report and sending the parolee back to prison to complete his/her sentence. They are problem solvers, crime prevention specialists, motivators, educators, facilitators and often times they are the only support system an offender may have."

As of June 30, 2003 there were 1,455 people on parole and suspended sentence supervision in South Dakota.

The average caseload for a parole agent in South Dakota is 61.

"The work they do is often unnoticed, yet it is one of the most important jobs in public safety," said Ligtenberg.