



## DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** November 23, 2005

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### **Penitentiary Braille Unit adds tactile graphics**

Pierre, S.D. – Pheasantland Industries at the South Dakota State Penitentiary is now offering comprehensive services in tactile graphics design and production for the blind and visually impaired.

The prison's Braille Unit has produced Braille textbooks, including graphics, for twenty years. Pheasantland Industries recently began accepting contracts with individual Braille transcribers, Braille production centers, schools and agencies for the production of tactile graphics.

Braille is a system of writing in raised dots and is read with the fingers by persons who are visually impaired. Tactile graphics are the raised line drawings of the charts, graphs, maps and other visual textbook materials used by students who are blind or visually impaired.

Visually impaired students often do not receive their classroom materials at the same time as their sighted classmates because the resources they need are not readily available.

"There was a need across the country for a wider availability of graphics," said Bob Rae, Director of Pheasantland Industries. "We had the ability to produce this type of graphics and provide this service for those who need it in South Dakota and elsewhere."

Pheasantland Industries and the South Dakota State Library, Braille and Talking Book Program supported and funded the new project.

Twelve inmates completed tactile graphics specialists training this summer. Their training consisted of design and production of tactile graphics, collage, foil, microcapsule paper and Tiger production and work with CorelDraw graphics software. A national trainer in tactile graphics provided this training.

Earlier this month, fifteen educators from across the state attended training at the Penitentiary in Sioux Falls to learn how to produce daily classroom materials at their school for their visually impaired students. The training consisted of the basics of creating Braille literary and textbook formats, Nemeth code for mathematics and graphics production.

"The training received by the fifteen Braille instructors provided them with hands on training in the creation of tactile graphics using different materials and also a review of the Braille and

formatting rules," said Dan Boyd, Director of Information Services at the State Library. "This training will ensure that visually impaired students receive the same quality of Braille and graphics for the daily work as with their Braille textbooks."

In the process of producing masters for the graphics, a graphics repository will also be established. Boyd feels that will be very beneficial in getting the books to the students in a more timely manner.

"An example would be no matter what publisher produces the print biology book, most of the graphics will be the same or at least the outline will be the same," said Boyd. "Use of these masters will speed up the production on Braille textbooks since the most labor intensive part of the production are the graphics."

Pheasantland Industries consists of several shops including upholstery, printing, sign, decal, bookbinding, Braille unit, license plates, cabinet, custom furniture, garments, screen printing, data entry and wheelchair refurbishing. All of the shops operate at the State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls, with the exception of the garment shop located at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield and the data entry project located at the Women's Prison in Pierre.

For more information on Pheasantland Industries, see the Department of Corrections website at <http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/PheasantlandIndustries.htm>.

More information on the Braille and Talking Book Library is available on the State Library website at <http://www.sdstatelibrary.com/talkbook/index.htm>.

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