



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

3200 East Highway 34, Pierre, SD 57501

Administration

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Back to School Before Returning Back to Community

SIoux FALLS, S.D.- Some select state prison offenders are returning to school before they are released from prison and return to the community.

Twelve minimum-custody male offenders housed in Sioux Falls are enrolled in a semester-long welding certificate program through Southeast Technical College this fall. The program is funded in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Labor.

Career and Technical Education is a portion of the Supportive Approach for Fostering Education and Reentry (SAFER) South Dakota reentry program launched by the Department of Corrections (DOC) earlier this year.

“Statistics show that an offender can be even more successful with the proper education, giving them the opportunity and a new outlook on life,” said Scott Day, SAFER SD Program Manager. “Programs that can give them technical skills can give them an even greater opportunity for success.”

Participants also complete the PreP reentry programming offered by the (DOC) during their enrollment period. Upon completing the program, participants can become certified through the American Welding Society.

This is the fifth semester that state prison offenders have been approved to attend the welding class at Southeast Technical College. Past cohorts have had an average graduation rate of more than 80-percent and a similar job placement rate upon completion of the program.

Participants also attend a Job Fair on the SETC campus that allows them to meet with potential employers in the welding field.

The DOC also offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in precision machining for male offenders at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield through Lake Area Technical College. Offenders from the Rapid City Minimum Center can enroll in a plumbing course at Western Dakota Technical College.

DOC is exploring possible CTE programs for female offenders with their technical college partners.

"Our agency launched a comprehensive reentry initiative earlier this year to ensure that we are starting reentry on the front end of their sentence," said Secretary of Corrections Kellie Wasko. "Ninety-five percent of offenders will return to the community following their incarceration, and it's not only important but the right thing to do that we return them better than how we received them."

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