

# Colorado Correctional Industries' Connections Newsletter



Dairy does look up from their grain breakfast at the goat milking parlor at the East Canon Prison Complex in Canon City

## DOC goat dairy marks a year of success

Story by Tracy Harmon of the Pueblo Chieftain

**Canon City** - The state's largest goat dairy just got a whole lot bigger, welcoming more than 350 newborn kids to the herd in the past month. Colorado Correctional Industries had doubled its goat milk production since the fledgling dairy was started a year ago at the East Canon Prison Complex. That's good news for its Longmont, Colorado-based goat cheese producer, Haystack Cheese Factory, which is buying every bit of the average 500 gallons of goat milk produced each day. "We finally have about 1,000 goats and we are regulating their freshening (the time when babies arrive) so we can produce milk year-round for our customer," said Steve Smith, Colorado Correctional Industries agricultural division manager. The plan calls for 500 goats to be milked around the September birthing and the other 500 to be milked around the February birthing. "For our customers, the problem with the goat cheese business has been that there was no stable year-round milk supply and we've been able to provide that," Smith explained. Each goat produces between three-fourths of a gallon to 1 gallon per day. Goats are milked twice daily. "I can't even get enough milk, but I am planning to start learning to make cheese. We want to be able to supply good cheese for the Department of Corrections because right now, all the prisons use imitation cheese because cheese is so costly," Smith said. With 362 new mouths to feed in the month of February alone, dairy manager Mary Provost had to come up with an easy way for inmates to feed the kids. She invented a feeder that can provide milk to 10 kids at once—a 5 gallon bucket equipped with nipples, each of which has a straw attached inside the bucket. Provost and two other dairy supervisors, Joe Granato and Henry Nordlou, help her oversee a 45-inmate work force. Newborn does will be raised for use in the dairy operation, while the male bucks go to sale for the food market, which really booms around Easter time, Smith said. Improved breeding had led to less fatality among the newborns and those that struggle get extra attention from the inmate workers. "They kind of grow on you," said inmate Jerry Kilby, who wakes up at 5 a.m. every day so he can be to work by 6 a.m. "You care more for them than you do yourself." A living example is kid No. 940, who was so feeble when she was born that she couldn't stand up for a week. Smith was convinced she would die, but Kilby and other inmates took extra care of her and now she follows them around the dairy like a pet puppy. "We are able to accomplish a lot with the dairy business with the support of the Canon Minimum Center's Warden Ron Leyba. Correctional Industries Director Giles Spaulding has been very instrumental in developing new programs that employ inmates and teach them a work ethic," Smith said.



With 350-plus mouths to feed, dairy manager Mary Provost came up with the idea to outfit a 5-gallon bucket with 10 nipples and straws.

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Razor wire, a stone fence and a manned guard tower at Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility are common sights around Fremont County where prisons have a huge economic impact.



Inmates weld the inside of a cell in the metal shop at the Fremont prison in Canon City where more than \$300,000 in supplies are purchased from local businesses.



Inmates work among rows of sweet corn during a recent summer at the East Canon Prison Complex in Canon City where Correctional Industries expenditures for supplies help boost the local economy.

## Bars of gold

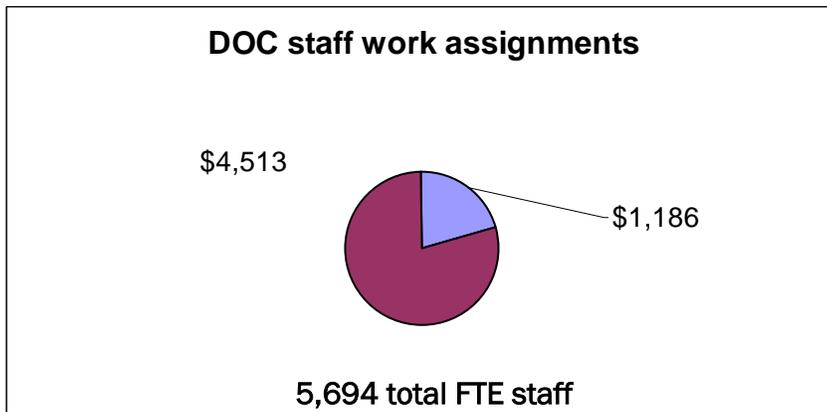
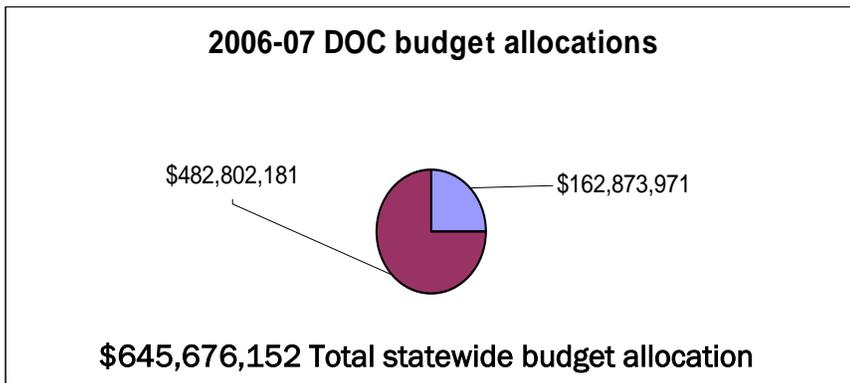
Story by Tracy Harmon of the Pueblo Chieftain

**CANON CITY** - No county in the state benefits more from the criminal element than Fremont County. Fremont County is home to eight of the Colorado Department of Corrections' 28 prisons. "Since day one in 1871 when Territorial became the state's first prison, we've been in partnership with Canon City and Fremont County," said Ari Zavaras, executive director for the DOC. The counties DOC prisons house 4,685 of the state's 22,000 total inmate population. The economic benefit of housing prisoners has rippling impacts that go far beyond the obvious salaries that employees make. According to statistics amassed by DOC spokeswoman Alison Morgan and Kathy Church, the state's total operating costs of its prisons in Fremont County this year will be \$49.2 million. The eight prisons employ 2,100 staffers who are paid \$113.6 million in total salaries. The average annual salary is over \$54,000. Of that total, 56 percent—or 1,181—of those corrections staffers live in Fremont County, so an estimated \$63.6 million in salaries stays in Fremont County. "State corrections staff make more than \$20,000 above the average annual wage in Fremont County when you consider benefits," said Bruce Redus, Fremont Economic Development Corp.'s executive director. "There always has been a comfort level that those government wages are coming into Fremont County and that certainly insulates us during down times." "From day one it has been an advantage to us with a bunch of facilities together like they are in Fremont County. It helps from an emergency standpoint and even beyond that with a consolidated administration," Zavaras said. For example, several Canon City-based wardens oversee more than one prison. "It works very effectively to do it that way. Even though the Department of Corrections is a large budget item in the Legislature, it is very efficient," Zavaras said. So even though Fremont County prisons make up 29 percent of the state's facilities, it only accounts for 25 percent of the budget. Zavaras said part of the reason for that is Fremont County's concentration of Correctional Industries programs which are all cash-funded and not reflected in the budget. Zavaras is optimistic the DOC and Fremont County partnership will continue to blossom. "In the economic downturn (of 2003) it was difficult for the DOC to have inmate work crews out in Fremont County. That is one thing I plan to get back into Fremont County," Zavaras said. When the dollars are all totaled, DOC operating costs and staff salaries account for \$112.8 million annually, but that is just the beginning of the economic dollars that the corrections industry circulates in Fremont County. Examples of other impacts that go beyond that are the \$1.35 million paid during the past year to St. Thomas More Hospital in Canon City where a recent expansion included special secure facilities for inmates, and \$225,000 to the Canon City physicians who treat the prisoners transferred to the hospital for care. Utilities such as electric, gas, water and sewage for the eight prisons added up to \$5.8 million during the past year. Other expenditures last year included supplies for Correctional Industries' businesses that operate out of Fremont County. A total of \$900,000 was spent on feed mix for the dairy, which was a cooperative purchase with the local Nichols dairy—a practice that keeps costs down for both businesses; and \$300,322 in purchases were made through Penrose Steel where supplies for the Correctional Industries metal shop are obtained. Small local businesses benefit from a myriad of purchases from corrections, such as \$122,745 in expenditures at Sonny's Ace Home Center, a local hardware store. The prisons also make thousands of small purchases at stores such as Wal-Mart, equipment rental companies, contractors that help with everything from electrical to concrete work, and even veterinary services for the Correctional Industries' inmate-trained canine companion program. Recovery programs that serve primary prison inmates employ roughly 60 workers in Fremont County. Another boom to Fremont County is the DOC Training Academy, which operates at the Holy Cross Abbey campus in Canon City and trains all of the state's new correctional workers. The DOC leases an Abbey building for \$158,000 annually in addition to paying for lodging, meals and gym rental to the Abbey. Another business that benefits from having the training academy here is Rick and Shelley Smitley's Dress Code at 132 E. Main St. in Florence, where correctional workers can purchase uniforms, patches, coats and other accessories. "I would say 60 percent of our business is state employees. Every time the training academy has a graduating class, we feel the economic benefit because their employees purchase accessories, additional clothing and other things," Shelley Smitley said. The Smitleys add the personal touch with amenities such as free shipping, embroidery work, tailoring and all the rank insignia patches state corrections workers need stitched onto their uniforms. In exchange for their customer service during the past three years, the Smitleys are

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## Bars of gold

Treated to a clientele that is very trustworthy. “They are a dream clientele because they’ve had background checks to get their jobs, so it is a lot easier to relax as a business person because we know we can take their checks. While the state corrections workers are here taking classes at the training academy, they use other local businesses, too—eat out at local restaurants, buy antiques—it is just good business,” Shelley Smitley said. Predictions are that the corrections relationship will continue to grow in Fremont County with the proposed 960–bed Colorado State Penitentiary II. It is tentatively scheduled to open in August 2009, and will employ an estimated 500 employees. The penitentiary will cost approximately \$143 million to build, and during construction will generate various jobs in the building industry in Fremont County.



Correctional Industries Statewide / 24%	\$34,869,167.00
Fremont Correctional Facility / 17%	\$27,731,033.00
Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility / 15%	\$24,760,479.00
Colorado State Penitentiary / 13%	\$21,127,055.00
Arrowhead Correctional Center / 10%	\$16,174,025.00
Canteen Statewide / 8%	\$13,553,675.00
Centennial Correctional Facility / 5%	\$ 8,151,906.00
Four Mile Correctional Facility / 4%	\$ 7,117,864.00
Colorado Women’s Correctional Facility / 3%	\$ 4,915,195.00
Skyline Correctional Center / 2%	\$ 3,179,513.00
Training Academy Statewide / 1%	\$ 1,294,059.00

## Inmates to fill the void in farm fields

Story by Charles Ashby of the Chieftain Denver Bureau

**Pilot program to help farmers replace workers driven off by state's new immigration laws.**



Farm workers were busily hoeing a field to remove weeds at a farm just west of Avondale last summer.

**Denver**—It may not be too long before Pueblo County residents start seeing inmates from state prisons working area farms. Rep. Dorothy Butcher, D-Pueblo, has managed to work out, at least in principle, a new program that would call on the Colorado Department of Corrections to supply inmates to work area farms. The new work program would operate under the department's successful Correctional Industries Program, which helps inmates obtain work while in prison and learn a skill at the same time, DOC Executive Director Ari Zavaras said Monday. "We have a lot of details to work out, but this probably will start as a pilot program in Pueblo County," he said. "Depending on how well it works, we'll see where it will go." Zavaras, the newly installed DOC director, said the program fits in with his and Gov. Bill Ritter's new emphasis on reducing recidivism in state prisons. Their thinking is that by reducing recidivism, the state can save money on having to build new prisons, which under current growth estimates will cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years. Butcher started the idea with a handful of area farmers who were complaining that new state laws cracking down on illegal immigration and the stringent document rules adopted by the Department of Revenue under Gov. Bill Owens, have left them short-handed in the field. Immigrant workers, legal or otherwise, are too afraid to come to Colorado because of the state's tougher immigration laws, Avondale farmers Joe Pisciotta and Phil Prutch told Zavaras and House Speaker Andrew Romanoff in a special meeting that Butcher had arranged. The two men said that because of the new law that the Legislature passed during a special session on illegal immigration—and the new documents rules that have frustrated several Colorado citizens who were trying to get driver's licenses and state identification cards—they and other farmers are having problems finding the workers they need. "We're aware there was a problem (with illegal immigrants), but you just created another problem," Prutch said. "They've just given up and gone to other states that don't have these new laws," Prisciotta said. "They just don't want to deal with it." Like others around the state, the two Pueblo vegetable farmers said they need from five to 20 workers and are willing to pay up to \$9.60 an hour, more than they've paid migrant workers in the past. But they can't find anyone to do the work. That's why they turned to Butcher, who in turn went to Zavaras. "The agricultural business will suffer and some could even go out of business if we're unable to provide labor for them," Butcher said. "They're not asking for something for free. They're willing to pay more than the minimum wage." Zavaras said it will take some time to work out the details to the new pilot project, but he is hopeful something will be done before the farmers need them in May and June, when the local growing season begins. Romanoff said many of the stringent documents rules are expected to be eased, but there's no guarantee on when or if that will happen. "It's something we tried to talk to the old administration about and didn't get very far," Romanoff said. "Now we're talking to the new administration."



Dorothy Butcher



Ari Zavaras



Andrew Romanoff

## Agribusiness offers opportunities for inmates

Story from News First 5/30

States around the nation are now hoping to model prison work programs after Colorado's. Colorado corrections runs one of the largest agribusiness programs for inmates in the country. The privilege of participating is earned. "You have to learn control over your own emotions," said inmate Eric Bramschreiber. At the state prison in Canon City, inmates raise livestock for a specialty market. They also work in a vineyard that supplies grapes to a local winery. There's also a wild horse program and a goat dairy. Agribusiness puts about 2,000 inmates to work. Not all love the job, but many do. Recent statistics show participants are 50 percent more likely to stay out of prison once released. Correctional Industries, which is a division separate from the prison, generated 38 million dollars in revenue last year.

## From prison, with love

Story by Andrea Brown of the Gazette

*Sex offenders, substance abusers from a Canon City prison are learning new life skills through growing, arranging flowers*

James Stoneking worked in finance in Douglas County. Now he's doing floral arrangements for the Valentine's Day rush. From behind bars. The flower shop is part work, part therapy for about 100 of the convicted sex offenders and substance abusers at Arrowhead Correctional Center in Canon City. This isn't a discount house; flowers are sold at market rate. Bouquets of lilies, tulips and snapdragons go to homes, shops, offices and funeral parlors, as well as local wholesalers. Its common for brides-to-be to meet with felons to talk wedding flowers. There are about 40 Correctional Industries enterprises, with prison sites producing and selling items from milk and eggs to license plates and furniture. Flowers are a specialty at Arrowhead. It might seem an odd therapy for people with harsh addictions and a high recidivism rate. They plant.

They pick. They paint pots. They make bouquets, boutonnieres and bows. "These are tough guys," greenhouse supervisor Dave Block said. Justin Lastra never imagined he'd be arranging bouquets. The brawny 33-year-old Colorado Springs man gets ribbed by the inmates doing "manly" jobs. "I take it with a grain of salt," he said as he put the finishing touches on a bouquet for a hospital gift shop. "You wouldn't think you can get that satisfaction in jail." The public can come to the prison to buy, or order by phone or online. "Everything is checked and double-checked, then triple-checked," Stoneking said. He spends Sundays working with wedding planners and helps train inmates. "This has provided me with a lot of skills I never realized I had," said Stoneking, 44. "I had no creativity on the outside. That just wasn't me." Inmates must exhibit good behavior to work here. They go through checkpoints inside the razor-wired Arrowhead complex. There are no cameras in greenhouses. Workers don't carry weapons. Inmates work with pruning sheers and other tools to fashion objects of beauty. That they are creating symbols of love and joy might seem an affront to those victimized by the acts that brought them here. What they did isn't the concern of the staff members; their concern is rehabilitating the inmates. "It is amazing once they get over that 'What am I doing in floral?'" Block said. "It encourages a lot more than arranging flowers, it is how to build something of their own." "They are taught to break that convict mentality," said Steve Smith, a Correctional Industries division manager. The repeat rate of offenders is about 50 percent, Smith said, but with treatment programs it is reduced to 25 percent. Prison industries are self-supporting. Standard pay for inmates is 60 cents a day with bonuses for production. Smith said the floral part of Arrowhead's greenhouse program, which includes raising and selling koi and tilapia fish, generates about \$150,000 in revenue a year. Products are competitively priced. "We don't want to go in and gouge the market," he said. "We want to be equal to what's being sold out there. We walk a real fine line. There are florists that say we are competing with them unfairly. It is one of those things of pay me now or pay me later. We have to train these guys, work them while they're here." Kenneth Hardesty runs the flower-shop sales desk, answering the phone, taking orders and talking delphiniums. "We got three different kinds of Valentine bouquets going out," said the 42-year old former restaurant manager from Durango. "It's a lot more like a real job. It's a new career-type thing for me to learn."



**Photos by David Bitton, The Gazette**—Inmates Justin Lastra, left, and John Schuler arranged flowers in January at the Arrowhead Correctional Center. About 100 inmates work in the floral program.



**David Bitton, The Gazette**—Inmates Edmund Kerstiens, left, and Dana Wagner, right, planted lilies in January in a greenhouse at the East Canon Complex. Some inmates work in the greenhouses; others learn to arrange flowers.

## Thanks to CCI Greenhouse Staff



Picture of bouquet that was sent FedEx to Mary Lawrence's parents in Iowa.

It's always nice to hear the compliments that customers make regarding our staff and/or programs. Here are a few recent kudos for the greenhouse staff.

"Thank you so much for the donation of the beautiful floral basket and casket arrangement for Christine's services. Peggy told us the flowers would be beautiful and they were—purple (one of Christine's favorite colors) and white roses (one of her favorite roses). Please thank the CI folks at the greenhouse for doing such wonderful work and thank you, Steve, for your support at this sad time."

Signed—Rebecca L. Rodenbeck and Jim Abbott

Dear Greenhouse Staff: On behalf of the Museum of Colorado Prisons, the Board of Directors and Staff, we would like to say THANK YOU for the donation of center pieces. They were used at the DOC Employee Council Executive Meeting that was hosted at the Museum. The flowers were absolutely gorgeous and they were given away at the end of the meeting and everyone wanted them, including myself. We really appreciate your generosity and hope that we will be able to have a working relationship with you in the future."

Sincerely—Pat Kant, Executive Director Museum of Colorado Prisons

"The wedding went absolutely wonderful! Thank you for asking. The flowers were beautiful! I was so happy with how they turned out. You did a wonderful job. We got many compliments on all of the flowers and how beautiful they were. Thank you again for all your help and you have made my wedding very special. Thank you again!"

Signed—Tara and Ricky Archuletta

"Stacy, the bouquet arrived at my parents today. They just love it!!! I'm so glad you sent me the photo so that I could see exactly what they were talking about. Mom was so pleased she just chirped like a little bird. They have been having some extremely difficult weather back in Iowa and the bouquet really gave them a burst of spring. GOOD JOB!!!"

Signed—Mary Lawrence

## Benefits of inmate farm labor



Editorial from the Denver Post

A plan to enlist prison inmates to work on Colorado farms that are experiencing a labor shortage has the potential to solve a host of problems at once. Last year farmers near Pueblo saw crops rot in the fields because, they say, the legislature's crackdown on illegal immigrants diminished the size of their traditional pool of migrant labor. Farmworkers avoided the state after the legislature passed a tough package of immigration laws. It included a bill that penalizes employers who hire illegals. State Rep. Dorothy Butcher, D—Pueblo, had heard about the labor shortage and a few weeks ago arranged a meeting between area farmers and the state Department of Corrections to broach the idea of tapping inmate labor. Farmers are looking for workers to plant and harvest crops and maintain fields. Colorado's prison industries system already employs inmates in a wide range of jobs, including growing hothouse flowers, operating a fish hatchery, running a dairy with 1,500 cows and 1,000 goats, and cultivating 28 acres of wine grapes. However, inmates working outside prison fences pose obvious security concerns. Corrections spokeswoman Alison Morgan said only low-risk inmates would be considered for a farm labor program. Assessing the suitability of a prisoner is a complex equation that begins with the person's crime and includes prison behavior and length of incarceration. No sex offenders or inmates sentenced to life without parole would be considered. The benefits of the opportunity to inmates can be substantial. Even if the farm skills aren't marketable outside prison, said Steve Smith, agriculture manager for Colorado Correctional Industries. "We want to send them home tired," he said. Details of the program have yet to be worked out, but authorities hope to get it off the ground within the next few months. Farmers would pay the cost of supervision, but since inmates typically make only a few dollars a day, the hourly rate is likely to be about minimum wage. About 4,500 inmates are eligible to work in the voluntary program, Morgan said, but it probably will start small. As the program takes shape, it's imperative the DOC ensure close supervision of inmates. If that can be accomplished, the program has the promise to help farmers and provide worthwhile experience for inmates who eventually will return to society.

## Don Willis Retirement

Story by Jennifer Zettersten

Don Willis started his career with the Department of Corrections on December 1, 1983. He was hired as a Correctional Support Lead Worker on the farm. In 1988, he became a Correctional Industries Sales Representative for Southern Colorado. Don developed a close working relationship with the state agencies he represented. He would go out of his way to accommodate any customer who needed assistance. Mileage was never an obstacle when it came to work. He made several trips throughout the year to Gunnison, Montrose, Grand Junction, La Junta, Ordway, Alamosa, etc. to check on his customers and see if they were in need of anything. He was a dedicated employee for his 23 years and 4 months of service. He will be missed. We wish him the very best on his retirement.



## CCi's Denver facility move

Story by Richard Curry

In September of 2006, Colorado Correctional Industries moved its sales, delivery/installation/customer service, state surplus property/surplus cars, and state forms/publications from 4200 Garfield Street to 4999 Oakland Street (go to [cijvp.com](http://cijvp.com) for location information and map). The new facility is about 10,000 square feet. Although it is smaller in comparison to the Garfield location, it is much more efficient in building design and layout. The building location combined with easy access to I-70 makes CCi's showroom and warehouse a very accessible and attractive facility. The interior offices and showrooms were designed by Beth Baumgartner with matching color schemes and furniture groupings. The warehouse is segmented into three distinct areas: new furniture, state forms and publication, and surplus property. With eight dock high doors, in and out access to the warehouse is quick and efficient. Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped with the move. We appreciate everyone's hard work.





## Direct from the Director



As we turn the final corner for this fiscal year, I am reminded of the dedicated staff of Colorado Correctional Industries and the tremendous number of offenders that have been placed in new work programs throughout this organization. I also want to remind everyone of the continuous need to manage your cost centers to the approved budget that was

set for this fiscal year. Our organization is experiencing tremendous growth over last year, yet we must be mindful of the costs associated with expansion and how best to manage these costs.

Recently several CCI staff attended the National Correctional Industries Association annual training conference in Jacksonville, Florida and assisted with the booth CCI displayed within the exhibit hall. This conference was a tremendous success and all in attendance gained additional knowledge from the numerous training sessions attended. As president of NCIA, I was overwhelmed by the amount of positive feedback I received regarding the conference and CCI's sharing of our goods and services to the rest of the correctional programs throughout the country. As employees of CCI, you should be proud of your accomplishments to date and for being one of the top programs nationally. Please continue to keep up the good work.

**Have an idea for a newsletter article? Please forward any ideas, pictures, website addresses, newspaper articles, etc. to Jennifer Zettersten. She can be reached by e-mail at [Jennifer.zettersten@doc.state.co.us](mailto:Jennifer.zettersten@doc.state.co.us) or by phone (719) 226-4200. You can also fax over any articles to (719) 226-4220.**

Story ideas and articles need to be submitted by June 15 in order to make the next newsletter.

## Thank You Inmate Quintanalelchuga and Inmate Darbe

Story by Richard Curry

After completing September's move to 4999 Oakland Street, Inmate Ruben Quintanalelchuga did a great job designing and sketching two separate walls displaying Colorado Correctional Industries' new logo and tag line. Inmate Andrea Darbe painted these walls and put on the finishing touches, making CCI's logo and colors stand out as one enters the facility. Inmate Darbe and her crew should also be recognized for their instrumental role in painting the entire office area and showrooms.

