

Louisiana Department of Corrections

INSIDE OUT

Keeping Loved Ones Informed



A Message from the Secretary



Summer's here and it's a new season at the D.O.C. After two years of COVID-19, we're returning to normal. Non-contact and contact visitation have been reinstated because personal communication is critical to an inmate's success. Now, incarcerated people are able to see loved ones in person. If active COVID cases at a prison exceed .5 percent of its population, visitation will be suspended immediately until the rate falls back under .5 percent.

It's been a long road, since the 2016 flood, for both the staff and the females located at Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women "LCIW". The exciting news is that the contract for the new prison facility was recently approved and construction is tentatively set to begin in September of this year. The design for the new LCIW facility features expanded medical and mental health treatment areas, open-concept dormitories, training spaces for skills like welding, and a postpartum wing so that mothers who give birth while in prison are able to bond with their babies. The estimated timeline for the building project is two and a half years.

In other exciting news, our air conditioning project is moving forward. This past session, we were able to secure 26 million dollars in capital outlay funds to bring air conditioning to every state prison facility. We recently installed AC units in the assisted living dorms at LSP, an addition which will improve the living environment for some of our most vulnerable/elderly inmates who range from 60 to 85 years old.

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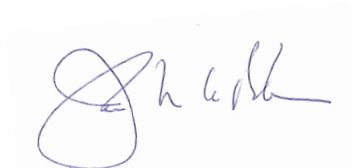
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Message from the Secretary

Now that visitation has fully reopened, I encourage you to take the time to visit your loved one in person as much as possible. Your in-person support means the world to them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jimmy Le Blanc", enclosed within a light gray rectangular border.

Secretary James “Jimmy” Le Blanc

Legislative Session Recap

2022 Legislative Session:

Act No. 450 by Representative Denise Marcelle.

Representative Marcelle filed this bill at the request of the Department of Corrections and many of the Judges who operate a Reentry Specialty Court Probation program in their respective jurisdictions. The purpose of this Act 223 is to expand eligibility for those who qualify to participate in the Reentry Specialty Court Probation program.

Specifically, **Act No. 450 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session** expands eligibility to include persons convicted as a habitual offender, and given sentences longer than 10 years, and additional crimes previously not eligible for consideration.

Background on Reentry Court Specialty Program:

In an effort to combat recidivism, reduce crime, and enhance public safety, Louisiana has implemented Re-Entry Courts. This multifaceted program combines the supervision of the courts and correctional system, the economic opportunity of Louisiana's business community, and the guidance of mentors and social service organizations to reverse the effects of Louisiana's high incarceration rates. Based on various tests and assessments, a determination is made as to whether someone is appropriate for, and has the most probability to benefit from the Re-Entry Court program.

Once accepted into the program (District attorney and judge approval and defendant agreement) the participant spends at least two years at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP) where he receives intensive workforce development training, substance use therapy, educational resources, and vocational and rehabilitative training. The Re-Entry program at LSP utilizes outside professional help along with Angola "mentors;" sentenced to life imprisonment who work with Re-Entry participants to assist in their rehabilitation. Upon successful completion of the program, the participants are placed on probation under intensive supervision.

LSP Inmates Train Dogs for Vets



Inmate trainers live with service dogs 24/7

About 500,000 U.S. troops from recent wars live with PTSD. Many of them find relief in service dogs. Since 2017, PAWS (Prisoners Assisting Warriors Service) has trained those animals to help vets live normal lives. Most pups are adopted from the Pen Pals Animal Shelter at Dixon Correctional Institute, but canines from other shelters are chosen if DCI is overcrowded.

The donated dogs save vets a fortune. A service animal can cost \$45,000.00 or more, but PAWS veterans get them for free. However, low price doesn't mean low quality. The program is very selective and every pooch can't make the cut. Dogs are chosen based on their temperament and must learn 37 commands over 14 months of training.

Their trainers are also vetted thoroughly. First, interested inmates undergo a conduct review. Anyone with animal cruelty charges will be rejected, but those with clean records move on to an interview. Candidates then become back up trainers while they learn the PAWS training manual and graduate from the program after a probationary period.

After graduation, canines use their skills to help vets perform tasks like retrieving objects, picking up medication and waking them up during an emergency. Those skills may be a blessing for a new owner, but separation can be tough for trainers because they live with their dogs 24/7. Some even admit to shedding tears when their pups leave, but the hounds must assume their new role as a soldier's best friend.



Service dogs learn up to 37 commands over 14 months of training

Women Build Careers in LCIW's Heavy Equipment Program

Construction has been dominated by men, but women are breaking into the industry. Four women housed at the Louisiana Correctional Institute of Women gained skills through HEO (Heavy Equipment Operator) classes and a CAT heavy equipment simulator. They also gained hands-on experience by working with real heavy equipment like backhoes and a Bobcat skid steer.

The program aims to make students marketable job seekers after release and equips them with an NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) certification, which allows them to train new pupils. If offenders are interested in another career, LCIW has several options including cosmetology and coding classes.



HEO classes give women hands-on experience with construction equipment

Frequently Asked Questions

What Happens when an Individual First Enters Prison?

New prisoners go through a Reception Diagnostic Center where they are searched, given a haircut, shower, clean clothes, a photo ID and phone sheet. Intake officers also inventory property (inmates can send banned items home) and fingerprint each prisoner. Then, inmates are placed in a temporary dorm assignment after they complete mental, medical and education evaluations. The process wraps up 3 to 5 weeks later after prisoners receive their property bags containing t-shirts, boxers, socks and assigned dorm locations.

How can I stay in touch with an incarcerated person?

The D.O.C. encourages positive communication between prisoners and family. Avenues of communication include mail, secure telephones and secure electronic communication (JPAY). Families may also send money to prisoners.

Each inmate can have an approved call list of 20 numbers, which can be updated quarterly, for family, friends and legal calls. Personal calls may be monitored and / or recorded for security purposes, but legal calls are not. If a prisoner attempts to dial a number not listed on his / her list, the call is automatically blocked. Also, prisoners can only make collect calls and phones are limited to out-going calls only, usually limited to 15 minutes. No one can make a call to a prisoner telephone.

The South's Wildest Rodeo Roars Back into Action

The wildest rodeo in the south returned on April 23, 2022. For the first time in two years, inmates strapped up and competed in country sports. 24,000 fans watched events like "The Bust Out," which pitted six bull riders against each other until the last man riding won. Others competed in "Wild Cow Milking," where inmates try to milk animals as they run away and the world famous "Convict Poker" game where four inmates play cards at a table while a bull is released nearby. However, Guts and Glory takes the cake as the toughest game of all. An inmate must be agile enough to snatch a poker chip from the forehead of the meanest bull around.

The rodeo's roots date back to 1965. That's when the inaugural event occurred in Angola's first arena, built by inmates and staff. It began as a small affair for the prison, but grew to attract crowds of viewers. Now, the event is a professionally produced rodeo which employs rodeo stock contractors and judges who serve as officials for the games. Rodeo clowns and emergency services teams are also present at all times.



24,000 fans attended this year's rodeo



Wild bulls challenged riders



The world famous convict poker game



A Horse Speeds Across the Arena

Mardi Gras Comes to LSP

Mardi Gras is a distant dream for most prisons, but the Krewe of Angola brought the celebration to their facility. The parade rolled on March 1, Mardi Gras Day, and featured a King (Larry Harris), Grand Marshall (Kenneth Hill), about a dozen hand-crafted floats, live band, second-line dancers and spectators.

The krewe's design was traditional, but their floats referenced incarcerated life. The Krewe of Re-entry float was decorated with a Saints helmet, Bourbon Street sign and a bronze replica of LSU Heisman trophy winner Billy Cannon. The Krewe of Sobriety's motto was "Make a difference one day at a time, with a stuffed figure wearing a "drug-free" shirt. The Krewe of New Destiny's float included photos of newly released longtermers like Henry Montgomery, who was Louisiana's longest-serving juvenile lifer and one of the longest serving prisoners in America.

"I've seen more people today smiling and having a good time than I think I've ever seen," said Assitant Warden Carlton Nettles. "Especially people that never really seem to enjoy stuff on the yard. It's really great to see this, because this is why we do these things. With any luck, things will work out where we can do this again next year."

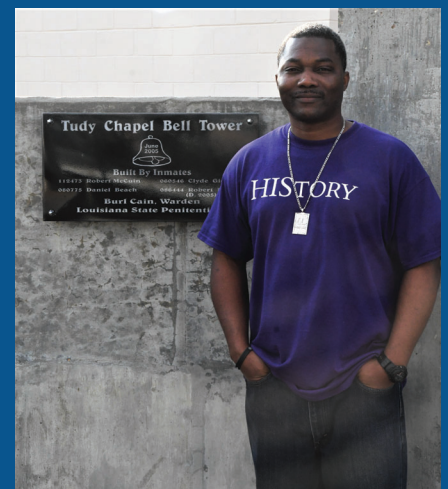


Krewe members turned their living areas into a Canal Street scene

A New Leader Arrives at New Destiny Church

The road to leadership was long for Cedric Scott. He entered Louisiana State Penitentiary after his second degree murder conviction, but has been on a spiritual journey for past 16 years. After joining LSP's New Destiny Church in 2010, he became a deacon and rose to minister in 2012.

Then, he earned a bachelor's degree in Christian ministry from the prison's seminary and he became an assistant for former pastor Jimmy Robinson in 2019. After Robinson was paroled in 2021, he passed his authority to Scott. Now, Cedric aims to develop LSP's worshipping body, not just preach. He even wants his members to evangelize around cellblocks and serve the general population.



Cedric Scott

Henry Montgomery's Long Road to Freedom

It was a different world when Henry Montgomery entered prison in the 1960's. There was no social media, smartphones, or mercy for young people in Louisiana courts. After shooting a police officer while skipping high school in 1963, he was convicted and sentenced to death. The conviction would be overturned in 1966 after a judge ruled Ku Klux Klan activity disturbed the case, but Henry was retried in 1969 and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Henry made the best of his sentence over the next 46 years. He became a model citizen and inmate counselor, boxing trainer and silk screen plant worker. Freedom, however, seemed like a distant dream until 2016 when his case was reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. The *Montgomery V. Louisiana* ruling stated no juvenile offender, including those already serving time, could automatically be sentenced to mandatory life without parole.

However, the victory was short lived and Henry was denied parole in 2018 after he fell one vote short of a unanimous approval by parole board due to strong law enforcement and victim opposition. A second hearing would result in more rejection after a committee requested Henry complete more classes and programs. "I have tried everything I can think of," Montgomery told *The Angolite* that year. "For the longest, lifers either wasn't allowed in classes or got kicked out if short-timers needed the class." Subsequently in 2017, as a part of the justice reform package, those laws were changed to allow for the possibility of parole for juveniles serving life sentences.

Despite his struggles, Henry pressed on to a third hearing. This time around he received the help of Andrew Hundley, the first juvenile lifer to be released from Angola under the Montgomery ruling. Andrew explained how hundreds inmates benefited from the ruling, but Henry himself was left behind. Hundley's support and Henry's apology to his victim's family were enough to earn him a unanimous approval.

"Never really thought this day would come," said Henry when he left prison in November 2021. "I'm finally going to be a free man. I really appreciate all the people here who stood by me, especially all of those out there who have helped me over the past few years. This is just unbelievable." Henry re-entered society with help from the Louisiana Parole Project, which gave him housing, mentoring, transportation and skills development. He also learned how to use a cell phone, open a bank account and became familiar with modern-day social norms. A 76th birthday celebration was also held at Henry's assisted living apartment. It was his first adult birthday as a free man.



Henry Montgomery was released in 2021 after he served 57 years in prison

T.E.A.M. CPR Trains Lifesavers at LSP

350,000 Americans die from cardiac arrest every year. LSP Inmates Charles Lindsey and Ernest Allen joined that number in 1991. They were surrounded by inmates, but none of them knew CPR, the emergency procedure performed when the heart stops beating. This lack of knowledge sparked inmate Joel Vernon to propose CPR classes for his peers. The request was approved by emergency medical supervisor Captain J. Lee Walker and classes started a few weeks later.

The first class featured seventeen graduates who became A-Level Basic Life Support practitioners. Some of them grew into certified instructors and taught their skills to inmates around the facility. Classes featured preventative lifestyle tips to help inmates avoid cardiac arrest altogether.

The CPR Team instructed thousands of inmates over the next thirty years. The six hour classes require each student to continuously practice the technique and demonstrate their knowledge through written exams. After completion, students receive their Level A certifications, but that's just the start of their journey. Graduates must update their credentials every year with additional training and instructors must be fully recertified every three years.

T.E.A.M. CPR graduate Jerry Ward was the first inmate to use his skills in real life. In 1995, inmate Marcelino Diaz began experiencing chest pains and tingling in his arms. EMTs were called, but the 10 to 12 minute response time may have been too long to save Marcelino's life. Jerry sprang into action, started CPR and kept his fellow inmate alive until help arrived.

Today, Jerry is the club's longest serving member and works alongside four certified instructors. Each instructor teaches 6 people and 24 men are currently enrolled every week. COVID-19 halted their progress in recent years, but the current rise in prison overdoses has proven their work is more relevant than ever. With lifted COVID restrictions, Jerry hopes to expand his core group of instructors to reach a new generation of lifesavers. The team has saved many lives over the years and recently seen a rise in overdose events.



T.E.A.M. CPR was founded in 1991. They currently train 24 inmates every week

The New Men Program Changes Lives at LSP

Research shows 65 percent of U.S. prison inmates suffer from substance use disorders. That figure may be daunting, but the New Men program at the Louisiana State Penitentiary is working to shrink it. Founded in 2020, the group allows substance users to change their behavior through a faith-based curriculum geared toward education, personal growth and sobriety.

The program's mission revolves around strength in numbers. They work in a family environment and sixty members recently moved into the same cellblock. "I've done many years in the block, locked up in a cell," said Darrell "Brutus" Durand. "But this is very much different now, due to the presence of God being here." The effects can also be felt on inmates like Gavin Galjour, who struggled with a heroin addiction for years. His breaking point came after an overdose, which led to cardiac arrest and resuscitation by medics.

"I knew I wanted to make a change in my life. I wanted to stop getting high," Galjour said. His desires eventually led to his selection by New Men co-founder Walter Goodwin. Galjour struggled, but managed to complete the six-month program, repaired his family relationships, and will be up for parole in about four years.

New Men want to help everyone, but you must help yourself too. "There's a screening process. You've got to be ready to change. There's not going to be a half-in, half-out situation," stated Assistant Warden Casey Rosso. "You've got to be 100 percent in. We're not going to do anything that's going to jeopardize the guys who really want to change."



Department Regulation No. PE-2, "Prison Enterprises Inmate Canteen Packaging Program"

The Prison Enterprises Inmate Canteen Packaging Program allows eligible inmates and/or inmate's family members and friends to order packages of pre-approved products (food and hygiene related and personal property or clothing). Inmates' family and friends may place orders via the internet, telephone, U.S. mail, or fax and can track their orders and inquire about orders and/or the program through the contracted vendor. Increased the monthly purchase allowance of food and hygiene products from \$150 to \$200 per inmate. For more information, go to: www.louisianapackages.com or call 1-800-546-6283.

Noteworthy Accomplishments of People in Prison

Terrell Menard



Terrell Menard entered prison like many others, struggling with substance use. His battle led him to the Transition Program at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center. The organization helps inmates overcome addiction through mentorship. Each group member is paired with an incarcerated mentor who lives with him 45 days. That period is spent on programming which covers topics like anger management, substance use and parenting.

Menard says the program changed his life and mindset. He learned how to motivate himself and stay drug-free, but his emotional needs were also met. Menard believes the Transition staff genuinely cared for him and shared his pain. Their support led to his graduation and promotion to mentor on May 9, 2022. Now, Menard aims to give back and help the next man find his way to redemption.

Danena Williams

Danena Williams never let prison define her. "The gates may confine me physically, but there are not limitations on the power of my mind," said Williams. That attitude led her to several academic achievements during her sixteen years of incarceration. She earned an accounting degree from Stratford Career Institute, a Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology license plus ServSafe and IC3 Certifications. She also enrolled in college courses through Tulane and Ashland Universities.

Her academic passion also led her to give back. She worked as an educational tutor for many years and helped inmates earn their High School Equivalency Diploma. Williams also co-founded the Euphoria Wellness Program, which was created to give women at LCIW a chance to become a better version of themselves.

Now, her academic journey continues with theological studies thorough Nations University. She also plans to become an author after her release and publish titles like The True Vine Series: a Daily Devotional and Reflection Journal Set. When asked about her future plans, Williams said, My future is as bright as the light that shines from within me!"



Helpful Resources

LA Informational Handbook for Friends and Families of People in Prison



The Louisiana Department of Corrections, with the help of many organizations, creates handbooks to offer advice on navigating the difficulties associated with having a friend or family member who is in prison. You can find them on the DOC website.

[Learn More](#)

You can follow the Louisiana Department of Corrections on YouTube to see helpful information regarding the imprisonment of a loved one, updates from Secretary Le Blanc, success stories of formerly incarcerated individuals, and much more!

[Watch Now](#)



Emergency Resources

If you or a loved one has been impacted by the recent weather events, you can find a helpful list of emergency resources, which includes information on FEMA Federal Disaster Assistance, Mutual Aid Disaster Relief Network, SNAP and DSNAP, HUD Disaster Assistance, HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and much more on the DOC website.

[Learn More](#)

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Louisiana Department of Corrections

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To find more resources that could be beneficial to previously incarcerated individuals or friends and family members of currently incarcerated individuals, you can visit:

doc.la.gov

lareentryguide.com

reentryprograms.com/in/louisiana

reentryessentials.org