



For the Record

National Association of Correctional Record Administrators & Supervisors

Volume 1, Issue 2
December 2007

P.O. Box 8893
Springfield, IL 62791

Dear Fellow Record Officers:

It's been a little over two years since the first memo was mailed regarding the formation of a national association of correctional record officers. I am proud to have been a part of the development steering committee and am extremely pleased with our accomplishments thus far. In a short time we have already met some of our primary goals. We have promoted the profession of records management by receiving the endorsement of our organization by our agency directors. We were able to share new and existing technologies at our September Recruitment Retreat. And best of all, we have successfully developed a network of record office professionals for consulting, networking, and knowledge enhancement. Of course, our mission is not complete. There is a lot more to accomplish, but with our strong group of members I am confident that we will reach our objectives.

If you have not done so already, please share information regarding NACRAS with your fellow correctional record officers – both at the state, county, and federal level. Our membership is increasing, but we are counting on everyone to help make NACRAS a vital link for all states.

On behalf of myself and all members of NACRAS I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to Glenn Jackson and his staff for the September Recruitment Retreat. We recognize the efforts extended by the Illinois Department of Correction to ensure a successful retreat and they are much appreciated. If you missed the retreat, please see the pictures and comments on page three. We are in the initial planning stages of next year's conference and will provide more information soon.

In closing, I thank you in advance for your anticipated support of NACRAS. Clearly, the time is right for the expansion of our association and your support will assist in the development and our future success.

Best Wishes & Happy Holidays !!

Karen Sorrell
NACRAS Vice-President Elect

ACA Affiliation

The American Correctional Association is the oldest and largest international correctional association in the world. ACA serves all disciplines within the corrections profession and is dedicated to excellence in every aspect of the field. Professional Affiliates of ACA are national or international organizations that represent a major professional discipline engaged in corrections or a related field.

NACRAS has submitted an affiliate packet and will be put on the Committee for Membership's agenda at the 2008 Winter ACA Conference at which time Glenn Jackson will be representing our organization before the ACA Board. Affiliation status with ACA would help to promote NACRAS credibility and would open many doors for our organization.

For more information about the ACA Winter conference:

www.aca.org/conferences/Winter08.

Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success.

~ Henry Ford



Best Practices

The Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) established a Records Intake Specialist Unit in December of 2004. The unit was created in an effort to assist

the department in receiving accurate sentencing documentation, to institute a system of auditing practices for all newly sentenced prisoners, to establish liaisons between the courts, prosecutor's office and probation department and to ensure consistency throughout the department with the manner in which sentencing documentation was processed.

The unit spent a great deal of time the first year visiting all the county courts and probation offices giving presentations to introduce themselves and discuss the most common errors found in sentencing documentation and pre-sentence investigation reports. These efforts, along with becoming the sole contact between these offices and the MDOC, have proven very successful and reduced the error rate from close to 30% the first year to 15% in 2007.

This unit's review of all sentencing documentation processed by facility record office staff has eliminated misinterpretation, established consistency in how sentences are processed and release dates are initially calculated and identified training needs. Because of the success in this area the MDOC is in the process of establishing all sentence processing and time computation in one unit.

September Recruitment Retreat

WOW . . . If you missed the NACRAS September Recruitment Retreat in Springfield Illinois you missed a magnificent event. Over one hundred and thirty people representing twenty-eight states were in attendance and excited about the workshops and future of NACRAS. The retreat was a fantastic opportunity for networking and sharing best practices.



Workshops:

- ◀ Courtroom Protocol
- ◀ Motivation/Team Building
- ◀ Walsh Act
- ◀ Sex Offender Registry
- ◀ Detention and Deportation Procedures
- ◀ Extradition Procedures

Panel Discussions:

- ◀ Pros & Cons of Centralization
- ◀ Improper Releases
- ◀ Victim Services Discussion

Comments from the conference

- Excellent Conference
- For the first workshop, it was very well put together, informative, and a pleasure to attend.
- Just an overall positive experience!!!!
- The workshop more than met my expectations!
- The presenters were very interesting and knowledgeable.
- Breakout sessions – Great job!
- Great program. Can't wait until next year. Joining immediately!
- Great networking opportunity and learning how other states handle same type issues.
- Well organized.
- Great participation, organized and informative.



Let's not forget the talent of our fellow record officers. An evening of karaoke revealed that not only are we dedicated professionals, but we can sing and dance with the best of them !!!

We'd also like to thank our vendors who demonstrated their sentence computation & scanning technologies: X-Wave, Active Data Systems, FileNet Corporation, Terra Firma Technologies, SYSCON Justice Systems, Perceptive Software, Marquis Software Development, Inc.

News from Ohio:

Article published Nov 14, 2007

Ohio prison population tops 50,000 for the first time

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) --The state's prison population has topped 50,000 for the first time, in part because of an influx of nonviolent offenders, most of whom do a short amount of prison time on drug charges, officials said.

The state reported a record high 50,016 inmates on Tuesday and is projected to have more than 52,000 a year from now. Female short-term prisoners are pushing capacity more quickly than male prisoners, said Terry Collins, director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. About 70 percent of women are in prison less than one year, and half stay less than six months, according to department figures.

"We're seeing so many people churning in the system," Collins said. "Some of them are coming into the system and being released in two weeks." The state's 32 prisons — including two that are privately run — are built to hold 37,610 beds. Cells have more people than they are designed for, and thousands of inmates bunk in unusual quarters, like recreation rooms and dormitory common areas.

The most crowded prison is Lorain Correctional Institution, at 263 percent capacity. The state also has fewer guards. Last month, there were 7,195 corrections officers, almost 500 fewer than in 2001. "It's becoming a health and safety hazard," said Tim Shafer, president of the officer's union. "If the state of Ohio continues to pass laws and lock people up, then the state of Ohio is going to have to write the check to pay for putting more people behind these walls."

Collins said he doesn't believe any of the state's prisons are at a "boiling point" that could lead to a riot like the one in 1993 at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility near Lucasville. Ten inmates and a corrections officer were killed in the turmoil. The state Legislature is considering several options to deal with the influx of prisoners, including the possibility of reopening or reusing the Lima Correctional Institution. The prison was closed in 2004 as a cost-cutting measure by then-Gov. Bob Taft. Collins said he isn't interested in building more prisons. "We have tried that," he said. The state spent \$800 million over the past 20 years on 23 new facilities, which soon filled to capacity.

Collins has lobbied the Legislature to fund more alternative-sentencing ideas, like halfway houses, and to better support programming inside the prisons to cut down on recidivism rates.



New Board of Officers

A new Board of Officers was elected at the September Recruitment Retreat. The interim Board will remain in place until April 2008 at which time the new Board will officially take office.



The new Board of Officers pictured from left to right is Pam Reyes, Second Vice-President (Secretary); Glenn Jackson, President; Melinda Johnson, Third Vice-President (Treasurer), Karen Sorrell, First Vice-President, and Sherry Robinson, Fourth Vice-President.

Get Involved with a NACRAS Committee

The following committees need committee members and committee chairs (if vacant). If you are interested in assisting with or chairing a committee, please contact a Board Member.

Education/Training:	Judy Sills, South Carolina
Membership:	Sherry Robinson, Mississippi
Constitution and By-Laws:	Vacant
Communication & Technology:	Caroline Sawyer, Massachusetts
Awards:	Vacant
Law & Legislation:	Diana Judge, Michigan
Strategic Planning & Budgets:	Vacant
Public and Private Corrections:	Vacant
Record Liaisons:	Vacant
Financial Review:	Ron Riethumuller, Nebraska
Conference:	Vacant



On the Lighter Side:

I once oversaw the management of a small correctional record office located in a desert area. The staff kept complaining of scorpions in the building. Desert scorpions are small critters with a nasty sting, much like a bee sting. As the record officers would sit on the floor to go through bottom file drawers they would sometimes get stung on the behind.

So the building manager called the pest control company and they sprayed the building. Still got complaints -- sprayed again -- still complaints.

Clearly another strategy was needed. The pest control contractor pointed out that scorpions are unusual in this area and that no other tenants in the building were complaining. Therefore, he concluded that we were bringing the scorpions into the building from our records center warehouse. Our office refused to take this explanation and continued to complain that it was a building problem.

After several more sprayings, we started to get concerned about the risks of putting more insecticide into the building. So I asked the pest control contractor and the building manager to look into the possibility of environmentally safer biological controls such as natural enemies of the scorpion.

A few days later I received a copy of a memorandum from the building manager. He had also posted a copy of this memo on the office bulletin board:

Building management recognizes recent employee complaints of scorpions in the records management areas. We have attempted to use pesticides but fear that increasing the level of pesticide could pose a health risk for some employees.

Because scorpions are native to our desert country and appear to be entering the building in the storage boxes delivered from the records warehouse, we have researched safer natural biological controls. We have found that scorpions have only one natural enemy.

Should there be any further complaints from the record office or its employees on this matter, building management will be pleased to introduce rattlesnakes into the records management areas.

We had no more complaints.

Sentence Computation in the News

The state Department of Correction, staggered by a string of disclosures about its wrongful confinement of at least 14 inmates, said yesterday it is scrapping its system for calculating inmate sentences and is devising new methods to make sure prisoners serve only their legal terms. At the same time the department also revealed that an inmate previously described to the Globe as having been held 34 days too long was actually released more than two years -- 790 days -- after he should have been.

Asked whether any manager had been fired or demoted because of the errors, the department said it would not discuss "personnel issues." It has blamed the errors on the complexity of court decisions governing the terms of sentences. "A team approach to review all date computation makes sense at this time," the department's statement said.

13 other inmates had been imprisoned beyond their release dates. They were notified about the mistakes in letters that were mailed late last month. In those 13 cases, the length of time of the wrongful confinement ranged from one day to 515 days.

Reprinted and edited to maintain anonymity

Support your National Organization

Join us for our monthly teleconference held the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 1:30 central time. Please contact an Executive Board member for dial-in information.

Interim Executive Board Members

Glenn Jackson, President
Illinois Department of Corrections
gjackson@nacras.org

Vacant
First Vice-President

Karen Sorrell, Second VP/Secretary
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction
ksorrell@nacras.org

Melinda Johnson, Third VP/Treasurer
South Dakota Department of Corrections
mjohnson@nacras.org

Sherry Robinson, Fourth Vice-President
Mississippi Department of Corrections
srobinson@nacras.org

We're on the Web

www.nacras.org