



# INSIDE CORRECTIONS

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## New Technology to Provide Enhanced Safety & Security

By Mackenzie Fitchett

The introduction of synthetic drugs through mail poses a threat to staff and incarcerated persons inside correctional facilities. In order to combat this problem, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) is introducing mail-screening and -scanning technology into institutions.

Correctional agencies across the country are discovering contraband entering facilities at an increasing rate. The United States Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs reported that people are employing a variety of sophisticated methods to smuggle contraband in through physical mail items. While processes for finding drugs in mail can be labor-intensive, the use of technology makes the job easier and more efficient. Many correctional agencies, including the NJDOC, are beginning to use mechanisms to help detect illicit substances in mail.

"We want to stop the flow of contraband for the safety of our officers,

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## Serve with Honor. Protect with Pride.

*NJDOC Launches First-Ever Recruitment Campaign*

By Patrick Lombardi

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) launched a recruitment campaign last May in search of individuals with dedication, honor and integrity. The new campaign—entitled “Serve with Honor. Protect with Pride.”—highlights the significant work of the Department’s sworn staff while calling upon those who are passionate about law enforcement and are looking to make a difference in their communities.

The NJDOC has begun recruiting both on and offline, with posts running on social media as well as con-

tent featured on streaming radio and on billboards. So far, the campaign has generated more than 4,500 new responses from interested candidates.

The Department also launched its brand-new recruitment website: [JoinNJDOC.gov](https://JoinNJDOC.gov). The site provides information about qualifications, physical requirements, salary and benefits, potential career paths, the application process, and the Correctional Staff Training Academy (CSTA).

“The NJDOC is one of the country’s leading correctional agencies, offering advanced training and incredible

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# Departmental Employees Recognized by State for Hard Work and Dedication

By Mackenzie Fitchett


Five outstanding staff members of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) were honored at a statewide event for their continued hard work and dedication.

The 2024 State Employee Recognition Day Awards Ceremony, held on May 9 at the War Memorial in Trenton, celebrated state employees during Public Service Recognition Week. The event was hosted by the Civil Service Commission, which presented awards in a variety of categories. Among the winners were five of the NJDOC's own custody and civilian staff members.

To dually recognize the incredible work done by staff of the NJDOC, the agency's Workforce Well-

ness Committee held multiple Public Employee Recognition Day celebrations throughout the month of May.

During the month, various units and locations, including Central Office and DEPTCOR, held events to commemorate hard-working staff. South Woods State Prison hosted an event with donuts, cookies, muffins, pretzels, and chips. Each food item had a positive saying, and there were thank-you cards and stickers to show appreciation.

These events aligned with National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, which enables citizens across the country to take time to recognize the professionalism, integrity and commitment of correctional staff at all levels. 



The NJDOC congratulates the following staff for their continued dedication to the Department and the State of New Jersey:

**Correctional Police Major James Forbes**, Division of Operations

**Dr. Dawn McRae**, Division of Programs & Reintegration Services

**Director Selma Morris**, Community Engagement & Reentry Initiatives

**Senior Correctional Police Officer Churchill Nwachuku**, New Jersey State Prison

**Senior Investigator Dominick Puzio**, Special Investigations Division



**Serve with Honor,** *continued from page 1*

career advancement opportunities,” said Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq. “When you join NJDOC, you are becoming part of the largest law enforcement agency in the state while protecting your community as a correctional police officer.”

The NJDOC counts more than 4,390 custody staff members in their ranks who supervise the care of over 13,600 incarcerated individuals in nine correctional facilities throughout the state of New Jersey.

The Department has been actively recruiting in recent years. Officers from the Custody Recruitment Unit attend career fairs as well as events at schools and colleges throughout New Jersey and the surrounding states. These efforts have helped to increase CSTA class sizes, and current Academy Class 256 is the largest since before the pandemic. However, the NJDOC still is experiencing a shortage of more than 500 officers.

“We recognize the hard work of our correctional police officers and staff members,” said Commissioner Kuhn. “Through this campaign, we will broaden our outreach and expand the pool of candidates, attracting new recruits with a passion for law enforcement. This will help to alleviate the burden on our custody staff, reduce mandatory overtime, and enhance the range of programs and services available to those under our care and custody.”

While recruitment is the main goal, the Department seeks to ensure that the campaign celebrates the vital role correctional police officers play in our state’s safety and security.

The NJDOC recently has taken a number of steps to support its officers. In November 2023, a new four-year agreement for correctional police officers was finalized, providing an across-the-board salary increase of 3.5 percent each year, with the possibili-



ty of additional annual salary adjustments. The new agreement also implemented a revised salary schedule that will allow for increased take-home pay.

In 2022, a law was enacted that exempted new officers from the civil service examination requirement. This component will aid in opening the pool of potential candidates during the course of this comprehensive campaign.

“Our ‘Serve with Honor. Protect with Pride.’ campaign will help to raise awareness of career opportunities within NJDOC, while highlighting the dynamic duties and unique benefits of becoming a correctional police officer,” said David Scott, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Training, Recruitment & Professional Development.

Individuals interested in becoming NJDOC correctional police officers can visit [JoinNJDOC.gov](https://JoinNJDOC.gov) for more information and to apply today. Such a career opens doors to a wide range of opportunities. The NJDOC boasts a number of divisions and specialized units operated by law enforcement officers, including the Special Operations Group, the Special Investigations Division and Central Transportation.

“A career in corrections is one of the most rewarding in law enforcement, as there are a variety of avenues for a correctional police officer within the Department,” explained PBA Local 105 President William Sullivan. “We are thrilled that the NJDOC has launched this campaign, which will bring even more qualified recruits to the frontlines and strengthen the agency from the inside out.”





Correctional Staff Training Academy Class 256 joined the New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run in support of the **41st Annual New Jersey Special Olympics** on the morning of June 7, 2024. The group ran through the streets of Sea Girt, home of the Training Academy, proudly displaying the Flame of Hope.



Later that day, the New Jersey Department of Corrections and multiple NJ-based law enforcement agencies participated in the New Jersey Special Olympics Opening Ceremonies at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in Ewing Township. In attendance was the Ceremonial Unit consisting of staff from all nine NJDOC facilities as well as the Color Guard and Pipe Band. The event, held in Lions Stadium at TCNJ, welcomed more than 3,000 athletes from across New Jersey. The Ceremonial Unit, on behalf of Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq., accepted an award recognizing the continued support provided by the NJDOC to the New Jersey Special Olympics and its amazing athletes.









staff and incarcerated population,” said Patrick Miller, Director of the Division of Operations. “Our job is to keep the facilities as safe as possible, and combatting the introduction of controlled dangerous substances is one of the primary goals of the Department right now.”

The mail-screening system being introduced into the NJDOC uses image technology (T-Ray) to alert the Department of contraband in incoming U.S. mail, legal mail and publications.


A pilot program using this technology has been successful and has revealed presumptive testing for a multitude of drugs and other chemicals. This technology is safer for use by staff, does not require mail to be opened for detection of anomalies, can be used with legal mail that is not permitted to be opened by mailroom staff, and is portable for searches of other areas as needed.

“The technology detects anomalies on both regular and legal mail, alerting staff if the correspondence has been altered in any way,” said Miller. “These scanners can detect if the paper has been adulterated with any substance to include, but not limited to, liquids, powders, pesticides, or any other intoxicant. They can also alert to unauthorized materials, such as

SD cards, thumbtacks, tin foil, paper clips and razors.”

Another piece of technology being introduced is mail scanning, a tool that more than a dozen other states have embraced in recent years. The NJDOC has identified a vendor that provides off-site mail scanning of U.S. mail and photographs. The vendor uses a program that limits the ability of actors to pose as legal mail senders in order to manipulate legal access requirements and send dangerous drugs and chemicals into NJDOC facilities.

Detecting these controlled dangerous substances before they enter the facilities will reduce hospital visits and decrease overtime costs for officer escorts to the hospitals as well as increased costs in ambulance trips. Both pieces of technology are funded through Governor Phil Murphy’s fiscal year 2025 budget, which will improve security at all facilities.

“Staff loves the introduction of these scans on a number of different levels,” said Miller. “They are seeing less intoxicants inside the facilities, so they are being exposed to less fumes and working in a more optimal environment. The staff also appreciate the fact that the Department is making the effort to stop it to improve their working conditions by increasing efforts in drug interdiction.” 

## Take Your Child to Work Day 2024



The NJDOC welcomed more than 100 children to Central Office grounds for K9 and drone demonstrations, Special Investigations Division fingerprinting, pizza, ice cream and much more.

Other groups in attendance included 4BlueNJ and PBA Local 105. The NJDOC Pipes and Drums played for the attendees before a speech was given by NJDOC Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.





## Dozens of NJDOC Officers Participate in 2024 Police Unity Tour


By Mackenzie Fitchett

More than 30 members of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) joined thousands of riders from across New Jersey and the surrounding states in this year's Police Unity Tour.

"I didn't know what the Police Unity Tour was until someone asked if I wanted to buy a T-shirt to support their team," said Lieutenant Phil Woolson. "I started taking my daughter along the route of Day 1 and we would cheer on the riders as they passed. We did this for a few years and I talked about wanting to participate for quite a while before jumping into it and now I have participated every ride since 2020. I continue to support the Police Unity Tour to keep the fallen from being forgotten. Unfortunately, the Fallen Law Enforcement Memorial will continue to be expanded and it is up to us to maintain it."

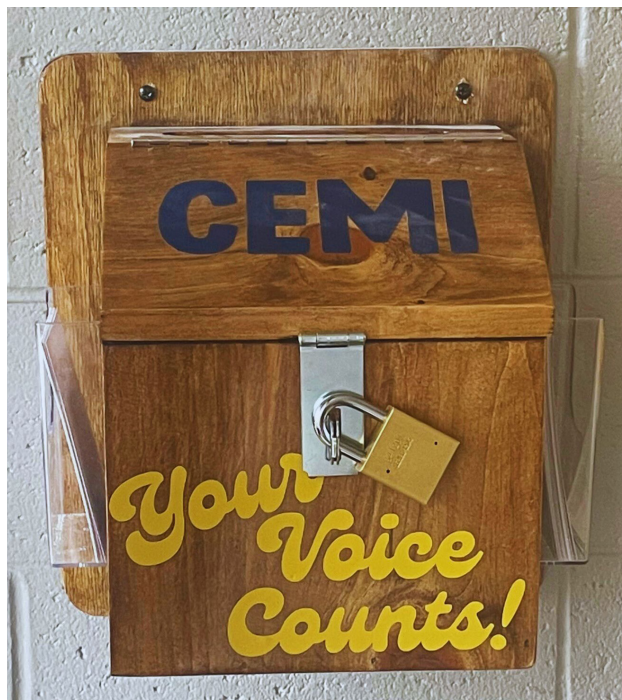


A send-off ceremony was held on May 9 at Central Office Headquarters to recognize all NJDOC riders for their dedication to such an important event. Each rider received a certificate and lunch from Bayside BBQ Crew, compliments of PBA Local 105.

The riders hit some rough weather along the way but persevered and made it from New Jersey to Washington, D.C. We are so proud to have such a large group of volunteers take this journey to remember those we have lost in the line of duty. 



Last year, more than 3,000 staff members from across all levels of the Department of Corrections came together to participate in the **Your Voice Counts** survey.



Now, the Committee for Employee Morale and Innovation (CEMI) invites you to continue to share your thoughts in a new way – through the feedback boxes located right in your facility.

**Simply fill out a card with your suggestion, question, or issue, and slip it into the box.**

Your submission will be anonymous, secure, and shared directly with Departmental leadership.

The CEMI Feedback Boxes are the next step in our continued efforts to maintain the Department's growth and development. They stand as symbols of a shared partnership between management and frontline personnel that is centered on your voice being heard and your investment in the changes that will build a better tomorrow.



**Who was the only United States president born in New Jersey?**

- A. Woodrow Wilson
- B. Grover Cleveland
- C. James Garfield
- D. James K. Polk



Check back in the next edition of *Inside Corrections* for the answer!

**Follow the NJDOC online**

