

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
WORK ETHIC CAMP
LEGISLATIVE REPORT
NOVEMBER 1, 2012



PAMELA MORELLO
WARDEN
2309 NORTH HIGHWAY 83
MCCOOK, NE 69001
308-345-8405

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
REFERRALS, ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES AT WEC	2
PROGRAMS AT WEC	5
Work	5
Education	5
Substance Abuse	6
Cognitive Programs	7
Rewards Program.....	7
Trust Program	7
Recreation / Religion	7
Regimented and Structured.....	8
OFFENDER DISCIPLINE ACTIVITY.....	8
PROBATION RELEASE DECISION MAKING	9
PAROLE RELEASE DECISION MAKING	9
COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION	9
IMPACT ON PRISON COST	10
ISSUES	11
SUMMARY	12

PURPOSE

The Work Ethic Camp (WEC) was authorized by LB882, which was signed into law by then Governor Ben Nelson on June 10, 1997. State Statute 83-4,147 requires an annual progress report to the Legislature beginning on November of the year following implementation. The WEC began taking offenders on April 10, 2001. On July 9, 2007, WEC began accepting inmates into the program due to the passage of LB83. Inmates transferred to WEC under this law are paroled pending successful completion of the Work Ethic Camp program. On August 30, 2009, LB274 was passed, allowing the Director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services discretion as to the placement of inmates at WEC. Inmates transferred to WEC under this law will be promoted to community custody upon successful completion of the Work Ethic Camp program.

INTRODUCTION

The Work Ethic Camp, originally designated as an incarceration work camp, was designed to reduce prison overcrowding and make space available for violent offenders. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) changed the name in December of 1998 to more accurately reflect the programmatic emphasis of the facility. The mission of the Work Ethic Camp is to provide an integrated program in partnership with the Probation and Parole Administrations that combines evidence based practices within a highly structured treatment environment. The overall goal is to reduce the risk of recidivism through offender behavioral change and assisting them back into the community under close supervision.

It is the philosophy of the WEC that behaviors and attitudes that reflect positive work ethics can be learned and transferred to other areas of an individual's life. The WEC offers short-term residential substance abuse treatment along with work experience, education, cognitive restructuring and life skills programs to enhance positive work ethics. The WEC emphasizes job preparation such as teamwork, filling out resumes and applications, understanding how to interview, and how to accept criticism, etc. Also, through vocational offerings such as Welding, Carpentry, and Business Technology, specific job skills are taught to qualified applicants.

The WEC is for male and female offenders, housing both Intensive Supervision Probation Offenders and minimum security NDCS Inmates. They cannot have any sexual assaults or Part I violent offenses on record, and they must be convicted as an adult of a felony offense (such as drug offenses, burglary, theft, etc). The facility does not accept referrals from juvenile courts or county courts in Nebraska. The offenders must be physically and mentally fit to participate, with reasonable accommodations made whenever possible.

The Probation Offenders admitted to WEC are referred by Community-Based Intervention Officers through the sentencing District Court. The NDCS Inmates are classified to minimum custody and paroled by the Nebraska Parole Board pending successful completion of the WEC program. Most of the staff members at the WEC are NDCS employees but, at the recommendation of NDCS, State Probation Administration placed two Probation Case Managers at the facility to provide intake and discharge services. Prior to placement at WEC, both offenders and inmates are screened, utilizing the Level of Service - Case Management Inventory. This tool identifies each offender's criminogenic needs in order to individualize each case plan for targeting the specific needs of each offender/inmate. The partnership between Probation, Parole and NDCS has fostered this process to ensure seamless transition between both agencies, which is critical to the success of the facility.

The WEC program is based on a 180-day, 5-phase stay. Offenders may successfully complete the program in 154 days. The facility, which now has 200 beds, operates on a fourteen (14) to fifteen (15) hour day schedule, seven (7) days per week. Because it is a short-term program, few personal possessions are allowed. The offenders do not have access to compact disc (CD) players or cash while at the facility and tobacco products are prohibited. During their initial phase, offenders are restricted to work on-site only, working jobs such as laundry, kitchen, maintenance, etc. Only approved visitors are allowed to visit once a week and phone calls are restricted to fifteen minutes per day. As they progress through the program, more responsibility is expected.

Under Nebraska law, successful completion of the Work Ethic Camp would allow the sentencing court to modify the offender’s conditions of probation, place the offender in an aftercare program or discharge the offender. If the offender does not complete the WEC program successfully, the court may impose the original sentence with credit for time spent in the Work Ethic Camp program. For inmates, successful completion of the WEC results in the inmate’s release on parole at their earliest parole eligibility date, or custody promotion to community corrections. Inmates who do not complete the WEC program successfully will be transferred to other NDCS institutions with their parole status determined by the Nebraska Parole Board and/or they may be demoted in custody to the appropriate level.

REFERRALS, ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES AT WEC

One of the major issues referenced in previous WEC annual reports to the Legislature is continued underutilization of the Camp. As illustrated in Table 1.0 – Number of Offenders/Inmates at WEC, June 30th, Each Year Since 2001 the facility remained below capacity (100) since opening, until November 5, 2008:

Table 1.0 – Number of Offenders/Inmates at WEC, June 30th, Each Year Since 2001

<u>Year (as of June 30th)</u>	<u>Number of Offenders</u>
2001	26
2002	72
2003	92
2004	75
2005	85
2006	73
2007	66
2008	68
2009	100
2010	174
2011	178
2012	148

As Table 1.0 indicates, these efforts have resulted in an increase in numbers of inmates at the Work Ethic Camp in the past few years. The increase in numbers in general after 2009 is due to the implementation of LB83, which allowed the placement of inmates at the WEC, and LB274, which expanded the population base to over 180.

As indicated in Table 1.1 - Number of Admissions per Year to the WEC – From April 30, 2001 Through September 30, 2012, a total of 3,457 offenders/inmates have been admitted to the Work Ethic Camp.

**Table 1.1 – Number of Admissions per Year to the WEC –
From April 30, 2001, Through September 30, 2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average Per Month</u>
2001	98	10.9
2002	209	17.4
2003	267	22.3
2004	244	20.3
2005	250	20.8
2006	225	18.8
2007	225	18.8
2008	237	19.8
2009	289	24.1
2010	439	36.6
2011	537	44.8
2012	352	39.1
TOTAL	3372	23.9

According to WEC’s records, 4,063 Probation Offenders have been referred to the facility for intake, but only 2,228 (54.8%) were actually admitted into the program. From July 2007 through September 2012, 1194 inmates have been admitted to WEC.

**Table 1.2 – Number of Discharges per Year From the WEC
April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average Per Month</u>
2001	58	7.3
2002	174	14.5
2003	252	21.0
2004	261	21.8
2005	256	21.3
2006	222	18.5
2007	202	16.8
2008	212	17.7
2009	281	23.4
2010	414	34.5
2011	506	42.2
2012	381	42.3
TOTAL	3219	22.8

As illustrated in Table 1.2, of the 3,372 offenders/inmates admitted, a total of 3,219 have, to date, been discharged from the facility. However, not all of these discharges were successful.

Table 1.3 – Number of Successful Discharges per Year from the WEC – April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012, looks at the number of discharges that were successful. During the time period under review, 81.5% or 2,622 offenders/inmates were successfully discharged from the Work Ethic Camp.

**Table 1.3 – Number of Successful Discharges per Year from the WEC
From April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average Per Month</u>
2001	41	5.1
2002	147	12.3
2003	205	17.1
2004	214	17.8
2005	220	18.3
2006	200	16.7
2007	171	14.3
2008	174	14.5
2009	231	19.3
2010	305	25.4
2011	395	32.9
2012	319	35.4
TOTAL	2622	18.6

Table 1.4 – Number of Unsuccessful Discharges per Year from the WEC – April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012, is shown below. A total of 588 offenders/inmates were not successful during the time period under review. This represents 18.3% of the total number of discharges.

**Table 1.4 – Number of Unsuccessful Discharges per Year From The WEC
April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average Per Month</u>
2001	17	2.1
2002	27	2.3
2003	47	3.9
2004	47	3.9
2005	36	3.0
2006	22	1.8
2007	31	2.6
2008	38	3.2
2009	50	4.2
2010	109	9.1
2011	111	9.3
2012	53	5.9
TOTAL	588	4.2

PROGRAMS AT WEC

Work

Programs available at the WEC include supervised work crews, in which offenders/inmates are taken to work for various government agencies throughout Southwest Nebraska. Those agencies and organizations include the Department of Roads, Nebraska Game and Parks, and county and city governments. The presence of the Work Ethic Camp through its supervised work crews in Southwest Nebraska has been a significant benefit both to the individual offenders/inmates and to the surrounding communities. Offenders/inmates leave WEC with a positive work ethic and a new beginning in their home communities.

WEC would like to expand the services of its work crews to include non-profit organizations, so to have a greater benefit to both the work crews and the surrounding communities. This would necessitate exploring the language of State Statute 83-183 during the next session.

Table 1.5 – Total Offender Labor Hours at the Work Ethic Camp From April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012 summarizes offender labor at WEC since the facility opened.

Table 1.5 – Total Offender Labor Hours at the Work Ethic Camp
April 30, 2001 to September 30, 2012

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Number of Hours</u>
2001	12,484
2002	34,406
2003	44,050
2004	44,091
2005	37,696
2006	32,413
2007	27,039
2008	37,369
2009	32,455
2010	23,519
2011	13,163
2012	8,630
TOTAL	347,315

It should be noted that the total number of work hours in 2011 and 2012 are lower than in previous years. This is due to budget modifications which reduced the Road Crew Corporal positions at WEC from eight to four.

Education

Another main program component of the WEC is education, which offers General Education Development (GED) and Adult Basic Education (ABE), for those offenders/inmates who are not high school graduates or who have education deficits. All offenders entering the program undergo a test of Adult Basic Education to determine their education needs. The Department of Correctional Services employs two full-time teachers to provide educational instruction for WEC offenders/inmates.

One of the primary goals of the Education Department is the obtainment of a GED, which in some cases has been court-ordered as a condition of probation, but is otherwise viewed as enhancing an offender's employability upon discharge. Of the 3,372 offenders/inmates admitted to the Work Ethic Camp, 1,439 (43%) were identified as needing ABE or GED instruction upon admission. To date, 533 (37%) of these offenders/inmates have received their GED while at the WEC. Due to the short-term nature of the program, no college classes are offered.

During 2012, WEC continued to partner with Mid-Plains Community College, Nebraska Workforce Development, Valmont Industries, and McCook Public Schools in the vocational program offered to the offender/ inmate population. This program consists of a nine-week welding course for which each participating offender receives college credit upon successful completion. The courses are taught off-site at the Center for Applied Science and Technology (CAST). To date (through September 2012) fourteen classes have completed instruction and several students graduated with certifications. Ninety-eight offenders/inmates have participated in this program since March 2009, with 79% of the students graduating from the program. The fifteenth welding class began instruction on August 27, 2012 with eight students.

Beginning in April 2010, another vocational program was offered to offenders/inmates at the Work Ethic Camp. This program is a nine-week Business Technology class, which is instructed by teachers at Mid-Plains Community College at their campus in McCook. Three classes have completed instruction since April 2010. Of the three completed classes, twenty-one students participated in the program, with fifteen of those receiving certificates for completion. Another class is scheduled to begin on October 29, 2012 with six students.

A beginning Green Construction vocational class was held during the summer of 2012. The students in this class built two storage sheds, which were sold after completion. This course is set up to teach construction skills, safety regulations, tool usage, and green industry. We hope to offer this class again during the summer of 2013. Three hours of college credit is offered for successful completion of this program and thanks to a grant, students completing this course were given a basic tool set to take with them.

The Director of the Department of Correctional Services requested that the Work Ethic Camp offer services to Probation Offenders and Parolees who are not confined at WEC. Beginning on September 1, 2010, WEC began offering services through a Reporting Center to Probation and Parole offenders within a 60-mile radius of McCook. Since September 2010, there have been 39 referrals for 50 classes to the WEC Reporting Center; with 31 referrals for Anger Management classes, 6 for Think class, 5 for Life Skills classes, 3 for Substance Abuse Treatment/Relapse Prevention, and 2 for Victim Impact class. Thirty-five of these referrals were from Probation and four were from Adult Parole.

Substance Abuse

Every offender/inmate who enters the program is also given a substance abuse assessment, and those with treatment needs enter the substance abuse treatment component of the WEC, which includes substance abuse education, individual and group counseling, and attendance at self-help groups, facilitated by local volunteers. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the offenders/inmates at the WEC have been identified as needing substance abuse treatment.

The substance abuse program at the Work Ethic Camp is at present a Short-Term Residential Treatment program. Offenders/inmates assessed as appropriate for substance abuse services are referred to the substance abuse program for regularly scheduled sessions. An individualized treatment plan is completed on all offenders/inmates. The intensity of each individual's treatment will be based upon his or her level of need. These sessions, including group, individual and educational, focus on the impact of substance use and abuse. The groups will use an educational approach to substance use and abuse that covers topics including the biomedical effects of drugs and alcohol on the body, general health risks, the effects of substance abuse on decision making, the effects of substance abuse on interpersonal relationships, and especially the relationship between addiction and delinquent lifestyles.

Cognitive Programming

The WEC also offers a cognitive restructuring program entitled "Think", which examines thinking patterns and their effect on criminal behavior. This component of the program is utilized in conjunction with Probation, so the offender begins the process at the WEC, and continues after discharge. The "Think" program was updated from the original "Thinking for a Change" program. This update focuses more attention on the age of the offender and the specific needs of younger offenders. A job preparedness program entitled "Work Attitudes" is also presented at the WEC as part of the Life Management programming. It includes information on how to obtain and maintain steady employment after having been convicted of a felony. After completion of all of these components and, as favorable progress measured by daily evaluations given by all staff is shown, an after-care plan is developed with the offender/inmate and sending Probation staff or Parole, so that when the offender/inmate leaves the facility, he/she is able to re-integrate into the community and have a plan tailored to their needs in place to assist in the probation/parole process.

Rewards Program

One of the goals at WEC is to create an environment that encourages positive change. Every offender/inmate at the facility will have the opportunity to earn rewards for positive behavior and for demonstrating progress on the Individualized Treatment Plan. Each offender/inmate that meets established criteria may select up to three (3) rewards corresponding with their assigned phase. The offender/inmate must maintain his/her positive behavior in order to keep the rewards throughout their phase, as determined by the Institutional Treatment Team. A referral to the Disposition Treatment Team, IDC or UDC will not automatically disqualify an offender/inmate from the Rewards Program.

Trust Program

The Trust Program allows Phase 3, 4 and 5 offenders/inmates to have an opportunity to work offsite with intermittent supervision and also allows them to work onsite jobs within the Trust Program. The trust positions available on site are in the kitchen, warehouse/laundry, zone porter, and maintenance departments. In order for an offender/inmate to be eligible for the Trust Program, he/she must meet the same criteria as those in the Rewards Program, and have the support of their work supervisor.

Recreation / Religion

In the spring of 2010 a full time Recreation Specialist was added to the staff at WEC. The benefit of this position is to aid in the positive use of free time, physical exercise and development of positive social interaction. This is accomplished through organized sporting activities, board games, tournaments, and special activities on certain holidays. Since the arrival of the Recreation Specialist, WEC has added several new sporting supplies and equipment.

Improvements have been made in the Religion program at WEC with the implementation of an organized Religious Library, with designated times available for use. In addition, new efforts have made in working with religious volunteers to meet the needs of the expanding religious affiliations represented in the inmate population.

Regimented and Structured

Nebraska State Statute, section 83-4,142 mandates that the WEC provide regimented, structured, disciplined programming. Offenders/inmates begin their day at 5:30 AM with personal hygiene. Offenders/inmates are then assigned to jobs at the facility, or on work crews, and attend program and education classes until 9:00 PM, with lights out at 10:00 PM. Visiting is allowed on Saturday and Sunday for those offenders/inmates with approved visitors. Religious programs are provided for those offenders/inmates who wish to participate. Some free time is scheduled to allow offenders/inmates time to complete homework assignments, clean their bunk area/dorm, manage personal hygiene, or write letters. There are guidelines for how offenders/inmates are to move from class to class, how they are to address staff, visitors and other offenders, how they are to wear their state issued clothing, and how they are to maintain their bunk, locker and dorm area. It is believed that the daily schedule, the work crews, and the expectations regarding appearance and behavior meet the statutory requirements for “regimented and structured”.

OFFENDER/INMATE DISCIPLINE ACTIVITY

There have been 525 releases from WEC during fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012). Within that same time period, 107 offenders/inmates have been removed prior to successfully completing the program. It should be noted that the individuals could be removed via two mechanisms. First, they can be determined to be a threat to themselves or others, or threaten to abscond, and as a result be removed by Probation staff. The second mechanism is through serious or repeated violations of WEC rules, where a Disposition Treatment Team recommends removal of the offender. The offender can appeal that (or any) decision of the Disposition Treatment Team to the Warden’s Review Committee. NDCS inmates can be removed for the same issues; however, the inmate disciplinary and appeals process shall be utilized. Inmates must also demonstrate adequate institutional adjustment as well.

Offenders/inmates during fiscal year 2012 have been removed for the following reasons:

<u>Reason for Removal</u>	<u>Number of Offender/Inmates</u>
Program Failure	77
Medical/Mental Health	14
Abscond / Walk Away	2
Voluntary Discharge	4
Other	10
TOTAL	107

Removals from the program have increased over the last fiscal year by a total of 5.9%. However, the total of admissions for the last fiscal year increased by a total of 5.5%, so the increase is proportionate. WEC staff continues to develop in effectively dealing with disruptive behavior. There do continue to be some referrals from the courts that have been deemed inappropriate referrals, as with some NDCS referrals. Many removals deal with the inappropriate conduct that comes with housing males and females together.

PROBATION RELEASE DECISION MAKING

Probation Administration has two on-site Community-Based Intervention Officers for intake, supervision and after-care referral. Because offenders are ordered to complete the WEC program as a condition of Probation, and because the WEC facility does not have a segregation unit nor does it deal with good time issues, probation release decision-making centers on the ability of an offender to finish the program in 180 days. The five (5) phase WEC program (each phase is divided into 28 days, there is a one to two week orientation phase, and up to four weeks at the end of the program to work on individual issues) would require that the offender complete all components of the phase and avoid any discipline issues that would result in a referral to the WEC Disposition Treatment Team. By statute (83-4,143, paragraph 2) an offender may not be kept longer than 180 days; however, the program can be completed in 154 days if the offender progresses through the program with little difficulty.

PAROLE RELEASE AND CLASSIFICATION DECISION MAKING

Some inmates transferred to WEC have been paroled pending successful completion of the 180-day program. The program can be completed within 60 - 90 days; however, inmates may not be released until they have reached their Parole Eligibility Date. Other inmates transferred to WEC will be promoted in custody to community corrections upon successful completion of the program. Inmates receiving serious misconduct reports may be transferred to DEC or NCCW. The Parole Board will be notified of such incidents for those who are pending parole.

COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

Because probation offenders are sent to the WEC as a condition of ISP, following their discharge from the facility they are on supervised probation for an extended period of time. Initially, offenders are supervised by a CBI Officer who makes contact with them several times per week, both in the office and in the field, and regular random drug testing is required. As the offender obtains employment and complies with probation conditions that supervision may be relaxed over the course of his/her probation until eventually he/she is rolled over to traditional probation, or given a successful discharge. NDCS inmates successfully discharged from WEC and released on parole are supervised in the community by the Adult Parole Administration. Conditions of parole are set by the Parole Board. WEC staff prepares a discharge summary for CBI and Parole Officers outlining the progress the offender/inmate made while at the WEC. Issues are identified that the offender/inmate needs to continue to work on, and the steps the offender/inmate needs to take immediately upon his/her discharge from the WEC are outlined. It should be noted that not only is the discharge plan prepared, but also regular monthly progress reports (or more often as needed) are submitted to CBI and Parole Officers by the facility staff. A discharge certificate is also sent to the sentencing judge for probation offenders. NDCS inmates successfully discharged

from WEC and promoted in custody are transferred to a community corrections center. The discharge certificate is still prepared and forwarded to community corrections staff for follow-up and pending discharge from NDCS.

IMPACT ON PRISON COST

The WEC cost approximately \$6.7 million to build, has 70 appropriated staff, and the facility operates on a \$4.5 million annual budget. The NDCS Central Office funded staff and two Probation Case Managers bring the total on-site WEC resources to 82.5 full-time employees for the reporting period. The average daily population for WEC in fiscal year 2012 was 167.

The data in Table 1.6 – WEC Admissions July 2011 to June 2012 shows the number of offenders/inmates sentenced to the Work Ethic Camp per month during fiscal year 2012.

Table 1.6 – WEC Admissions July 2011 to June 2012

<u>Admission Month</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Admission Month</u>	<u>Number</u>
July 2011	32	January 2012	44
August 2011	53	February 2012	33
September 2011	47	March 2012	34
October 2011	47	April 2012	54
November 2011	54	May 2012	37
December 2011	36	June 2012	27
TOTAL			498

During the same time period, there were a total of 525 offenders/inmates released from the Work Ethic Camp. As Table 1.7 – Work Ethic Camp Releases July 2011 to June 2012 shows, 79.6% or 418 offenders were released successfully.

Table 1.7 – Work Ethic Camp Releases July 2011 to June 2012

<u>Release Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Successful	418	79.6
Program Failure	77	14.6
Medical/Mental Health	14	2.7
Abscond / Walk Away	2	0.4
Voluntary Discharge	4	0.8
Other	10	1.9
TOTAL	525	100

Table 1.7 also indicates that there were 77 offenders/inmates, or 14.6%, who could be considered program failures. Fourteen offenders/inmates (2.7%) left the program for medical/mental health reasons, two offenders (0.4%) abscond/walk away, four offenders (0.8%) voluntarily left the program, and ten offenders/inmates (1.9%) were removed from the program for other reasons.

Finally, as can be seen in Table 1.8 Average Cost Savings to the State for Each Offender Sentenced to the Work Ethic Camp, the basic concept behind the construction of the WEC continues to pay dividends for Nebraska. The WEC was established as an alternative to prison, to free up bed space in Nebraska’s prisons for violent offenders. To that end, the WEC continues to meet its objective.

Given that the judge must make a finding that absent the Work Ethic Camp the probation offender would go to prison, the State has, since WEC opened in April 30, 2001, successfully diverted 1,811 offenders from prison. In today’s dollars that would equal the following overall savings in Table 1.8:

Table 1.8 – Average Cost Savings to the State for Each Offender Sentenced to the Work Ethic Camp

<u>Fiscal Year 2012</u>	<u>Average Cost</u>
Average Cost per Offender in State Prison (Incarcerated)	\$36,115
Average Cost per Offender at WEC (Based on # of Admissions per Year)	\$15,741
TOTAL COST SAVINGS PER OFFENDER	\$20,374

Using the data from Table 1.8, the 99 offenders successfully discharged from the Work Ethic Camp during FY 2012 and thus diverted from prison, have saved Nebraska taxpayers a total of \$2,017,026. Another way to look at the impact of the Work Ethic Camp is to measure how it is impacting prison population. As of June 30, 2012, the State prisons held 4508 inmates in space designed to hold 3175. This represents a crowding index of 141.9% of design capacity. Had all 498 offenders and inmates who were admitted to WEC in fiscal year 2012 been housed in other NDCS facilities instead of WEC, the current prison population would be 5006 and the crowding index would be 157.7% of design capacity. Diversion of these offenders has worked effectively to help reduce crowded state prisons.

ISSUES

The number of Probation offenders admitted to WEC continues to decrease. In comparing Fiscal Year 2011 and Fiscal Year 2012, there is a little over a 10% drop. In FY 2011, Probation offenders were 45.92% of the admissions to WEC. In FY 2012, Probation offenders were 34.44% of the admissions. To date in the present FY, there have been a total of 7 Probation offender admissions, representing 5.9% of WEC admissions, which is a significant and drastic decrease.

Based on these numbers and the drastic downward trend in Probation offender admissions, it will be beneficial to reconsider how to best meet the interests/needs of the Probation Administration and the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, which would require a legislative change.

Due to the increase in the total population numbers and the physical layout of the housing units, the housing of both males and females at the WEC is often a distraction and is detrimental to successful completion of the program. This distraction prevents inmates from focusing on their program needs and it would be beneficial to consider how best to meet the program needs of the

males and females. Such consideration may necessitate serving the needs of males only at the WEC and allowing female program needs to be addressed through other program offerings throughout the department. Such discussions are underway.

The WEC is continually exploring avenues to expand its vocational and recreation opportunities for its population. Increasing both opportunities contribute greatly to occupational opportunities upon release and more constructive use of free time while at the WEC.

The WEC is in its eleventh year of operation. Through preventive maintenance and creativity, equipment and fixtures that have reached their maximum years of service are still in operation. This will continue to increase basic maintenance and replacement costs. It will be necessary to establish a replacement schedule based on priority needs basis as funds become available.

SUMMARY

Due to the changing makeup of the WEC population as reflected in the lower numbers of Probation offenders admitted to the WEC, and the implementation of LB 83 and LB 274, the original concept is evolving. The focus and goal of the Work Ethic Camp remains to reduce prison crowding and to provide quality programming.

At this time, the Work Ethic Camp is a vital component in the sentencing continuum available to the Courts of Nebraska and within the Department of Corrections for treatment. Because of the recent emphasis on community-based corrections, this type of program is more necessary than ever. It provides structure and programs necessary for offenders and inmates to gain the tools needed to lead a law-abiding life and to establish and maintain steady and legal employment. It is expected that the WEC will continue to provide significant cost savings to the taxpayers of the State of Nebraska.