

Prison Issues Board (MCA Section 2-3-103-(1))
Glendive on September 24, 2019
c/o pksmith@mt.gov

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Prison Issues at Deer Lodge and Shelby:

1] Visitation: how does the new visitation program meet the mission of DOC? Imagine you drove 200 miles to visit and you can only stay for 2 hours and you have to take a day of vacation because visitation "days" are your scheduled work days, what if you drove from California? If we want to reduce recidivism we must keep the family unit glued together as strong as possible.

2] Hobby Store: inmates have to order supplies from a catalog. The problem is that catalogs are so 1950's. How do you order supplies? Hobby supplies need to be ordered off of the internet [many prisons allow this.] A] the internet tells us if the supply is in stock. Most hobby supplies are re-sold by vendors NOT manufactured by the vendors. Supplies are often out of stock. The inmate thinks he has ordered supplies just to discover that he is not. B] Hobby inventory needs to be displayed on line. DOC is charging the inmates for on-line services but all that is delivered is a web page that says: come to our store. <https://cor.mt.gov/MCE/ProductsServices/HobbyStore> If we keep the inmates operating in the 18th Century then we are naïve to expect them to function in the 21st century - when they get out.

3] DOC does not honor court orders which send inmates to Warm Springs for psychological evaluations. I can send you the case notes: just reference Enzler.

4] The public should be able to get sample blank MORA evaluation forms.

5] DOC does not honor FOIA requests. I have been waiting 8 months. [Freedom of Information Act]

6] It can take up to 6 weeks for an inmate to get a medically ordered cane or other mechanical assistance. How long do you wait for a pair of crutches or a cane.

7] Inmates cannot leave phone messages with prospective landlords and psychologists when making arrangements for parole. When was the last time you wrote a letter to make an appointment with a physician? When was the last time your physician sent you a letter?

8] Transcription of books into brail is a very good job, paying a living wage, and a perfect occupation for parolees who have residential restrictions. These transcription jobs can be done from home. The warden shot down the program. No employment training program should be shot down by a warden. This program was proposed by the book company.

9] If the rumor is true that inmates will no longer be able to receive Christmas Cards, Birthday Cards, etc. Then this policy needs to be reversed.

10] Since inmates cannot receive calls, inmates should be able to leave voice mail OR to send text messages. This shows respect for the value of the time for those of us on the outside who are trying to help those on the inside.

11] A person should be able to visit as many inmates as he/she desires. There is tons of research on the necessity of human interaction and human development. In children this is called detachment syndrome. Currently, non-relative Montanans can visit only one inmate across the entire DOC system. This is a crazy policy in light of the fact that DOC conducts background research on visitors.

12] The policy that visitors with sandals cannot visit is crazy as well. Many people with foot problems cannot wear closed toed shoes.

13] DOC is abusing HB 426, by Representative Jean Price. How much do you pay per minute to use your phone? Inmates are paying more than 10¢ per minute. I have not paid 10¢ per minute for many years. You can only put \$50 on a calling card at a time AND there is a \$5 administration fee each time you load the card. Why not load \$100 or more on a card and reduce the impact of the \$5 fee. Inmates do not get itemized phone statements. Inmates need to receive itemized phone statements so they know how much phone service is.

14] Inmates need access to word processors. Most courts require that documents be submitted via email or downloaded onto a web site. When inmates are handling their own legal issues they need to be able to comply with the requirements of the court. Currently inmates can only use a manual typewriter and purchase a ribbon that only types about 10 pages. How does using a manual typewriter prepare an inmate for release?

15] We keep people in prison for decades and then we wonder why inmates have so many medical problems. We all have more medical problems as we age as do our pets. The longer we keep inmates the higher our medical bill will be. Delaying medical treatment only makes the final bill higher. There is lots of deferred medical treatment throughout DOC.

16] We must constantly remember that 10% to 20% of inmates are innocent. For this reason putting "felons" back on the street with a leg bracelet and parole officer AND spending the same daily amount on them as incarceration, would be a better option. An innocent person who spends 6 months incarcerated and 23 years on parole is going to be more understanding of the process and human error.

17] Prison should not be the place we send people with addiction to recover.

18] Due to prison policy and procedures an inmate may have to chose between getting his medications OR finally seeing a dentist, who is running late. I want inmates to take all of their prescribed medications as prescribed. The prison pharmacy should be able to accommodate inmates, they are not going anywhere.

19] why is it necessary to serve breakfast at 4:30 am? Are the inmates going hunting?
Shelby.

Sincerely,

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