

MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS

# MONTANA STATE PRISON

Warden Jim Salmonsens



# MONTANA STATE PRISON

- Secure male facility located in Deer Lodge, Mont.
- Operational capacity – 1,607
- Employees – approximately 700
- Goals:
  - Public safety
  - Prepare offenders to be successful, productive members of the community.



# MARTZ DIAGNOSTIC INTAKE UNIT (MDIU)

- 200 beds used for the intake/admissions process at MSP.
- Arriving inmates are assessed, assigned to appropriate living areas within the facility.
- Also, 10 beds are used to temporarily house inmates being moved to longer-term placements.

# “LOW SIDE” -UNITS A, B, C, D AND F

Comprised of 859 beds, housing inmates in lower-risk custody levels.

Each unit has a different area of focus:

- Unit A – inmates participating in chemical dependency group programming
- Unit B – inmates working in industries compound or within the prison compound
- Unit C – inmates working in the industries compound
- Unit D – inmates who require ADA accommodations
- Unit F – inmates participating in sex offender programming



# **“HIGH SIDE” – UNITS 1, 2, RESTRICTIVE HOUSING UNIT, SECURE ADJUSTMENT UNIT**

Comprised of 592 beds, housing inmates in lower-risk custody levels.

Each unit has a different area of focus:

- Unit 1 – inmates known to be in a security threat group (STG). STGs are often gang members and demonstrate predatory or assaultive behaviors that place other inmates and staff at risk.
- Unit 2
  - Inmates who are in higher-risk custody levels.
  - Inmates who have mental disorders and are transitioning into general population.
  - Inmates designated as vulnerable who need additional observation and support from staff.

# RESTRICTIVE HOUSING UNIT (RHU)

- HB763 – passed by 2019 Montana Legislature, defined procedures and placed limits on secure housing for inmates who pose a severe risk to the security of the institution, themselves or others and require separation from the general population.
- The bill also decreased allowable in-cell time from 23 hours/day to 22 hours/day, allowing for more opportunity to participate in programming and social interaction.
- Houses inmates designated as Maximum Custody Level, detention status, pre-hearing confinement .
- Inmates are placed on a “step-down” program using incentives allowing them to earn privileges and placement in general population.

# SECURE ADJUSTMENT UNIT (SAU)

- Created as an offshoot of HB763.
- DOC recognized that while inmates with severe mental illness may pose a severe risk to the security of the institution, themselves or others, their needs are different from inmates housed in RHU.
- Closely monitored by qualified mental health professionals and receive appropriate programming.
- Inmates are placed on a “step-down” program using incentives allowing them to earn privileges and placement in general population.

# INFIRMARY

- 18 beds located inside the MSP compound.
- Serves inmates with medical needs that can't be provided in a housing unit.

# RIVERSIDE SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT

- Special Needs Unit
- 27 beds located in Boulder, Mont.
- Dedicated to male inmates with serious, long-term medical conditions





# DOC SECURE CONTRACT FACILITIES

- Overseen by Contract Placement Bureau Chief Pat Smith.
- Include Crossroads Correctional Center (Shelby, Mont.), Dawson County Correctional Facility (Glendive), and Great Falls Regional Prison.
- Budget of \$20 million annually for the care of 900 inmates.

# CHALLENGES

- Reconciling available beds while maintaining proper security, custody levels.
- Coordinating policies and operations among different facilities.
- Ensuring continuity of evidenced-based inmate programming among facilities.
- Monitoring and managing inmates affiliated with security threat groups (STG).
- The maintenance, expansion of inmate work opportunities among facilities.
- Reconciling MCA 53-30-507 (which addresses per diem rates in regional prisons) with current costs associated with care at secure contract facilities.
- COVID-19.

# MONTANA STATE PRISON: CHALLENGES

## COVID-19

- Primary goal has been keeping staff and inmates healthy through a number of precautionary measures (daily screening of staff, sentinel testing, reduced movement of offenders, etc.).
- Oct. 12, 2022 – first case in inmate population, escalated to outbreak status.
- Staffing was significantly impacted – DOC requested Montana National Guard deployment.



# MONTANA STATE PRISON: CHALLENGES

## Aging inmate population

- More than half the offender population (about 1,000) are ages 45 and up .
- As the population ages, medical and mental health needs increase.

## Maintaining an aging facility

- Can't get parts to fix antiquated equipment.

## Security

- Facility infrastructure doesn't easily accommodate new correctional technologies, philosophies.

# CHALLENGES, cont.

Recruiting, retaining staff

- Limited
- Wages are not competitive

**CONSEQUENCES:** Staffing shortages require use of overtime to staff mandatory posts, closure of posts not vital to security (Rec Yard, Gym, programs, visitation).

**SOLUTIONS:** Increased recruiting efforts including strategic advertising, attendance at job fairs, sharing stories about inmate success and staff accomplishments.

# MONTANA STATE PRISON: SUCCESSES

- Communications system replaced, connection established with DOJ, state system.
- Restrictive Housing.
- Electrical upgrade.
- Boiler replacement scheduled.
- Infrastructure repairs to one of prison's original structures.
- Purchase of body scanner, mail scanner.
- Increased communications opportunities for inmates including email.



**QUESTIONS?**

