

NC Labor

LEDGER

March/April 2005

Prison Apprenticeship Programs on the Rise

Growing programs provide valuable skills for N.C. inmates

By Keith Acree
N.C. Department of Correction

At state prisons across North Carolina, apprenticeship programs are becoming an increasingly popular and effective form of job training for inmates.

At Nash Correctional Institution near Rocky Mount, Correction Enterprises operates a printing plant that handles much of our state government's printing needs.

Apprenticeships have been in place there for about a decade. Apprentices can work in 12 different jobs within the plant, including press operation, bindery, graphic arts, print estimation and shipping.

Apprenticeships consist of extensive classroom learning along with 4,000 hours to 6,000 hours of on-the-job training, where inmates work and learn under the supervision of professionals in their trades. Upon completion of the program, inmates receive a journeyman's certification from the N.C. Department of Labor.

"Employers who are familiar with apprenticeship understand the value of that certificate," said print plant manager Phil Rowe, who manages apprenticeship programs for Correction Enterprises. "They know about the thousands of hours of learning and experience that go into it."

"It's an incentive to the inmates, because they can earn their educational certification," Rowe said. "For us, it keeps inmates in their jobs longer."

Since most apprenticeships require three years to complete the thousands of hours of on-the-job training, the plant has fewer problems maintaining a steady, well-trained workforce.

Keeping an inmate in one place long enough to complete an apprenticeship program can sometimes be difficult in a prison

system that routinely transfers inmates between prisons.

"It's a three-year commitment, so that makes it a logistical challenge," Correction Enterprises director Karen Brown said. Her managers must coordinate closely with the Division of Prisons, so that inmates are able to complete their classroom learning and on-the-job training before a custody change or transfer occurs.

Apprenticeships in welding and metal work are a new endeavor for Correction Enterprises. Inmates learn welding



N.C. Department of Corrections Secretary Theodis Beck presents an apprenticeship certificate to Jerry Maness, a worker in the Inmate Construction Program at Warren Correction Institution during graduation ceremonies last year.

skills in vocational classes at Harnett Correctional Institution, satisfying the classroom portion of their training. They are then transferred to Brown Creek Correctional Institution to work in the metal products plant, which produces a large line of stainless steel kitchen equipment and other metal products. The plant currently offers apprenticeships only for welders but is developing apprenticeships for metal fabricators and brake press operators.

A similar "feeder" system is being developed in food service technology. Inmates who graduate from one of the 12 community college food service programs offered in state prisons

will be able to apply for apprenticeships in the test kitchens the Department of Correction operates at its office complexes in the Raleigh area. Journeyman certification is earned after 4,000 hours of on-the-job training. A master's program is also planned with an additional 2,000 hours of training. If the program proves successful, the division hopes to start apprenticeship programs in most of its prison kitchens.

Correction Enterprises is also developing apprenticeships in sewing and apparel manufacturing. Inmates at the sewing plant at Pender Correctional Institution will soon be able to enroll in an apprenticeship program. Sewing classes offered



**From
Commissioner
Cherie Berry**

The N.C. Department of Labor is gearing up to kick off the department's 59th year of safety awards for exemplary safety and health programs at work.

We have 30 safety awards banquets scheduled across the state, from Asheville to Elizabeth City.

Two criteria must be met to receive an award. The company must have had no fatalities at the site for which the award is given. The lost workday case rate for the company also must be at least 50 percent below the statewide average for its industry group.

Awards also are given to companies that accumulate 1 million employee hours with no case of injury or illness involving days away from work.

It's quite an honor to be eligible for a safety award, considering we give out fewer than 2,000 awards and we have more than 230,000 places of business across North Carolina.

Take a few minutes to look on the Bulletin Board page for a schedule of remaining spring banquets. I have had the pleasure of attending many of the banquets in the last few years, and I'm looking forward to meeting many more of my fellow North Carolinians this year.

Cherie Berry

Have labor-related questions?

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Prison Apprenticeship Programs on the Rise

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by the local community college will make up a portion of the required classroom training, with Correction Enterprise employees providing the remaining instruction and supervising the on-the-job training. The Pender sewing plant produces inmate and employee uniforms for the Department of Correction and uniforms for some other state agencies.

The Inmate Construction Program operated by Central Engineering is one of the longest running and most successful apprenticeship programs in the Department of Correction. Inmate construction workers have recently completed major additions to Warren Correctional Institution near Warrenton and continue working on renovations to a building near the prison that will become Correction Enterprises' new janitorial products plant. Inmates are also beginning to upfit prison industry plants at three new 1,000-cell prisons in Scotland, Anson and Alexander counties. Central Engineering continues to develop work and apprenticeship opportunities for inmates as it carries out the department's 10-year capacity growth plan.



What's Wrong With This Picture?

The picture shows an electrical hazard that represents the fourth most frequently cited violation in general industry in 2004.

A continuous path to the ground was not maintained, and multiple cords were used for fixed equipment.

To abate the violation, fixed wiring should be installed.

Labor Officials Emphasize Safety at Golf Courses

By Heather Crews
Public Information Officer

When you head out to the golf course for your first 18 holes of spring, you'll see perfectly mowed fairways, manicured sand traps and lush, rolling greens. But what you might not think about is the crew that made all that possible.

Golf course maintenance at first thought may not seem dangerous. As superintendents at a recent Triangle Turfgrass Association meeting in Cary learned, however, there are several safety and health precautions they should take to keep workers safe.

About 40 golf professionals gathered at Prestonwood Country Club in March to hear labor officials speak about N.C. Department of Labor regulations. The information is not just for the golf course but most other work sites as well.

The first topic was the dangerous equipment the crew uses. "Seat belts must be on the equipment, but more importantly, you've got to use them," bureau chief Tom Hayes said. "It's best to use mowers that have a roll-over protection system."

Last year a golf course employee was killed when a front end loader tipped over and killed him. The fatality was the third at a golf course in the last four years.

A workplace hazard assessment also is required to determine if things such as personal protective equipment are needed. Golf courses can be loud, and hearing protection may be required. If the crew is using a chain saw, crew members also need special equipment such as chaps and hard hats.

Hayes' next topic covered an issue that every workplace faces: electricity.

"Electricity is something you can't see, but it will kill you," Hayes said. "We most commonly find violations with missing grounding pins on power cords."

Golf course employees who use temporary wiring should make sure the system is protected with what is called a ground fault circuit interrupter, or GFCI. GFCI circuit breakers save lives because they cut off the power as soon as there is an interruption in the circuit, Hayes said.

The Prestonwood safety meeting included discussion of hazard communication. Failure to have a written hazard communication program was the most frequently cited violation in general industry for fiscal year 2004, according to compliance officer Scott Mabry.

"We always ask to see your hazard communication program, regardless of the reason for the inspection," Mabry said. "Every employer has to have one, from golf courses to construction to fast food restaurants."

Required elements of the program are material safety data sheets, labels, training and a written program. Employers must have an MSDS for every hazardous chemical in the workplace readily available to employees.



Compliance officer Scott Mabry discusses health standards with Triangle area golf course superintendents. In the past four years, there have been three fatalities on golf courses.

21st Annual Apprenticeship and Training Awards Ceremony



May 26
9 a.m.-2 p.m.



Kerr Scott Building
N.C. State Fairgrounds, Raleigh

\$15 registration fee.

For more information, contact Shirley Barnhill at (919) 733-0328.

30-Hour Workshop Scheduled for June

By Heather Crews
Public Information Officer

Employers in the Raleigh area can take advantage of a free workshop to create a safer and healthier workplace for employees.

The 30-hour workshop helps employers understand necessary occupational safety and health requirements and programs under the Code of Federal Regulations for general industry.

Attendees get a 30-hour general industry card after completing the workshop. The workshop satisfies the entire 30-hour requirement for manager of environment, safety and health (MESH) certificate.

The workshop will be held June 27 to July 1 at the Wake Technical Community College Business and Industry Center in Cary. Registration is limited to 70 people and is offered at no charge. To register, visit our Web site at <http://www.nclabor.com/calendar.htm>.

New Initiative to Stop Struck-by Fatalities

By Heather Crews
Public Information Officer

Nearly half of the 37 construction fatalities the N.C. Department of Labor investigated this past fiscal year resulted from “struck-by” accidents, with most fatalities caused by vehicles on construction sites.

The department is stepping up efforts to curb struck-by fatalities by beginning a new safety initiative called “Take Five to Save a Life.”

The initiative revolves around training and awareness of vehicular hazards on a construc-



To Save a Life

tion site. Construction sites will be safer places to work if employees take time to think about easy-to-follow safety precautions.

Workers that operate construction vehicles should read the “Take Five to Save a Life” safety brochures and display the accompanying stickers on their dashboards. The stickers remind workers to be aware of their co-workers and take appropriate safety precautions.

To learn more about the “Take Five to Save a Life” initiative, call the Education, Training and Technical Assistance Bureau at (919) 807-2875 or 1-800-NC-LABOR (625-2267).

DEADLY Mistakes

By Steve Sykes
State Plan Coordinator

Fatal Event: On Sept. 16, 2004, a 39-year-old construction worker was

working on a paving crew when he was struck and killed by a dump truck. The truck was delivering asphalt material for a road widening project. The general contractor on this project experienced another “struck-by” fatality Oct. 21. Neither victim was an employee of the general contractor.

Investigation Results: Three companies were on site at the time of the accident, including the general contractor and paving and trucking subcontractors. The victim worked for the paving subcontractor who prepared the road for paving and distributed asphalt material for the road surface. On the day of the accident, the victim was standing behind the dump truck. The driver of the truck initially saw the worker in his left side truck mirror motion for him to back up. Other employees on the site confirmed that the truck’s back-up alert was working properly. As he backed up, the driver lost sight of the victim and had no verbal contact with him. He felt a bump and realized he had struck the victim.

NCDOL officials were unable to determine the exact cause of the accident. Interviews indicated the truck driver and the victim were aware of one another. However, as the driver backed the truck, the victim may have been moving a barrel from the path of the truck. It is also possible the victim turned his back to the truck while maneuvering the barrel or stumbled and fell in the path of the truck. Employees previously were seen moving barrels when trucks were backing, and employees often worked around moving vehicles. It is also possible the victim was distracted while attempting to use his cell phone. The cell phone was found about 3 feet from the victim.

No evidence was available at the time of the investigation to indicate that either the victim or the truck driver had been adequately trained to recognize the hazards associated with moving vehicles. The NCDOL investigator determined that employees routinely moved around backing vehicles. The driver also continued to back up the

dump truck, even though he had lost visual contact with the victim.

Discussion: In North Carolina, more fatalities occur in construction than any other industry. Struck-bys were the leading cause of construction fatalities in 2004, accounting for 36 percent of fatalities. The trend continues in 2005. Historically, falls were the leading cause of death on construction sites before 2004. The continuous emphasis on fall protection and adherence to proper safety practices has no doubt contributed to the drop in fall fatalities, leaving struck-by deaths as the current leading cause of death at construction sites. As emphasis is placed on struck-by fatalities, new technology in collision warning systems and video equipment could drastically reduce blind spots and the resulting tragedies. Similar technology already is available on some passenger vehicles.

Recommendations:

☠ Employees should be trained in the hazards associated with operating and working in the vicinity of construction vehicles, including knowledge of the vehicle’s blind spot.

☠ Vehicle operators should know the location of other employees, and drivers should stop when they lose sight of a signaling employee. Only essential employees should be in the vicinity of a construction vehicle.

☠ Vehicles must be equipped with audible warning devices and reverse signal alarms.

☠ Visibility should be maintained in construction vehicles. A cracked or scratched windshield affecting visibility should be repaired or replaced. Items that block visibility should not be on or around the windshield, side or back glass.

☠ Construction employees required to work in the vicinity of construction vehicles should wear high visibility clothing.

☠ Attention should be given to the use of cell phones on construction sites where a minor distraction could result in a fatal accident.

☠ Required work outside of a vehicle should be scheduled at a time when construction vehicles are not operating in the area.

☠ Safety responsibilities must be coordinated and safe work practices should be followed, particularly on a multi-employer work site. Safety may be affected by the actions of an employee of another employer on such sites.



Vehicles like this dump truck pose a serious hazard on construction sites. Struck-by fatalities accounted for nearly half of construction deaths in 2004.



Q: My child plans to get a summer job, and I've heard he needs a work permit. Where can we get a youth employment certificate?

A: Youth employment certificates are required for all youths under 18. Certificates are issued by the county Department of Social Services

where you live or work. Contact information for local departments can be found at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/local>. To download a certificate, visit the N.C. Department of Labor's Web site at <http://www.nclabor.com/wh/ycertif.htm>.

If your family lives in Cumberland, Guilford, Mecklenburg or Wake counties, a pilot program is in effect that will allow the certificate to be submitted and approved online.

Governmental, agricultural and domestic employers are exempt from the North Carolina youth employment provisions, including the requirement to obtain a North Carolina work permit for youths under 18.

Q: Where can I find a list of jobs that youths under age 18 cannot work?

A: Laws were enacted to ensure that young people work in jobs that do not jeopardize their health, well-being or educational opportunities. Except for governmental, agricultural and domestic employers, the North Carolina youth employment provisions generally apply to all employers doing business in the state, regardless of size or number of employees.

Youths under 18 are not allowed to be employed in occupations considered hazardous or detrimental. For a list of these occupations or for more information, visit our Web site at http://www.nclabor.com/wh/joint_state_fed.htm.



Bulletin Board

10-Hr. Awareness Workshop

General Industry: May 11-12
Bladen Community College, Duplin

To register, contact Tim Nance at jnance@bladen.cc.nc.us

30-Hr. Gen. Industry Workshop

June 27-July 1
Wake Technical Community College
Business and Industry Center, Cary

For more information, visit our Web site at <http://www.nclabor.com/calendar.htm>.

Wage and Hour Seminars

April 21
Carteret Community College, Morehead City

June 8
Haywood Community College, Waynesville

For more information or to register, visit our Web site at http://www.nclabor.com/wh/wh_calendar.htm.

2005 Safety Award Banquets

- April 18Lumberton; *Adelio's Italian Restaurant*
- April 19Oxford; *Thorndale Country Club*
- April 21.....High Point; *Embassy Suites*
- April 25Sanford; *Chef Paul's*
- May 4Lexington; *YMCA*
- May 10Morganton; *Community House*
- May 12Clinton; *Sampson Agri-Expo Center*
- May 17Gastonia; *City of Gastonia*
- May 19Charlotte; *Holiday Inn, Woodlawn*
- May 24Rockingham; *Little Bo's House*
- May 25.....Statesville; *Holiday Inn*
- May 26Wilmington; *Coastline Convention Center*
- June 1.....Wilson; *Wilson Country Club*
- June 2Goldsboro; *Lane Tree Country Club*
- June 2Rocky Mount; *Holiday Inn, Gateway Centre*
- June 7.....Elizabeth City; *Quality Inn*
- June 9Mount Airy; *Cross Creek Country Club*
- June 14.....Durham; *Hilton RTP*
- June 15Kinston; *Vermillion's*
- June 16.....Asheville; *Deer Park Inn at Biltmore Est.*
- June 21Hickory; *Holiday Inn Select*
- June 28Shelby; *North Lake Country Club*