

**REENTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MINUTES**
Thursday, July 10, 2014
9:30 a.m.

Members Present

Whalen Gibbs, DPS&C Designee
Mike Cazes, La Sheriff's Association
Lydia Scales, Designee, DCFS

Joseph Ardoin, LBCTC
Trish Felder, LCTC Designee
Charles Habig, Jr., AFL-CIO Designee

Members Not Present

Elbert Guillory, Senator/Chairman
Steve Pylant, State Representative
Donald Miller, La. Chaplain's Assoc.
Sue Austin, DHH

Dale LeBlanc, Assoc. Builders & Contractors
James Landry, LABI
Curt Eysink, LWC

Others Present

Rita Thomas, Office of Reentry
Tammy Jetson, Office of Reentry
Rhett Covington, DPS&C

James Windom, CAPARC
Alexandra Priebe, LPHI

Item #1: Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. at DPS&C Headquarters in Baton Rouge by DPS&C Designee Whalen Gibbs.

Item #2: Approval of the Minutes of the Advisory Council Meeting of December 5, 2013

No Quorum for the minutes to be approved.

Item #3: Introduction

Everyone introduced themselves that was in attendance at the meeting. Please see the attendance list above indicating who were present.

Item #4: Election Chair and Co-Chair

This matter was passed until the next meeting when there is a quorum.

Item #5: 2014 Legislative Session

Whalen Gibbs indicated in the folder that was provided to the members, contained some legislation that passed in this legislative session.

HB 16 & HB 467 – Legislation which added Reentry Courts in the 15th JDC and 24th JDC.

Mr. Gibbs provided a brief synopsis on the establishment of Reentry Courts, stating that in 2010, the Legislature established Reentry Courts in Orleans, East Baton

Rouge (19th JDC) and 22nd JDC (St. Tammany). In 2013, the Legislature established Reentry Court in the 11th JDC in Sabine Parish and in the 2014 legislative session, the 15th JDC (Lafayette) and the 24th JDC (Jefferson Parish) were added. He indicated an offender is sentenced for up to 10 years at hard labor. Someone that is sentenced to 10 years of hard labor through the parole process would have to serve 1/3 of their sentence before becoming eligible for parole but with this program, it's an accelerated possibility for release and the program is allied with Workforce Development. Once an offender is sentenced, they are transferred to Angola in a special camp where they receive Workforce Development training and other Reentry programming.

Mr. Gibbs indicated the program is unique because most of the training that is being provided to the offenders in the program is being provided by other offenders who have certifications and licenses in various trades that they have acquired since they have been at Angola. Additionally, offenders that are graduates of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary are moral and social mentors to the participants.

Mr. Gibbs indicated that, since the inception of that program, we have had about 54 offenders to actually graduate from the program and return to the community. Thus far, it has proven to be successful. We've only had about seven offenders to recidivate and be returned to incarceration...

We are bringing on the Reentry Courts very slowly because we don't have the capacity at Angola. We have 120 slots for this program and of course they get filled up very quickly. As I'm speaking, 110 slots are filled out of the 120 slots we have for the program and there are offenders on the waiting list. With the addition of these two new Reentry Courts, we expect that we are going to reach capacity quickly.

Trish Felders asked if she could add something to this topic. Ms. Felders stated that she didn't know if the Council was aware that LCTCS get federal funding called the Carl-Perkins Funds and with these funds, they use one percent of it towards Corrections programs.

Ms. Felders stated that they just finished writing a manual for corrections facilities that LCTCS help support. Once these offenders that have their credentials, they will be able to work under a teacher that has a correct certification. The offenders in these classes, once they have completed the course, can actually get dual enrollment so that they can go on and work on a degree if they would like too.

Ms. Felders shared a success story of a young man out of Morgan City that was an offender. He was in a reentry program. He came to one of their colleges and is working in welding. She stated that they just used him in a video that is going to promote skilled craft areas to tell his success story of how, while he was incarcerated, the programs that was there lead him to continue his education. When he got out and he saw that he could have a job that paid a livable wage if he applied himself. It's a real heartwarming story and just to let everyone know what the Department of Corrections is doing here actually is working. Out in the community there are people taking advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. Gibbs stated that the manual that Ms. Felders spoke about is definitely huge for the program. As we started out, we had to make up rules, policies and procedures as we went along. We

wanted to make certain that they had certification and also the individuals that were receiving these certifications would receive appropriate certification when they completed the trade.

Mr. Gibbs asked Ms. Felders to thank Mr. Sawtell and LCTCS for reviewing and compiling the manual that's about to go into effect. It's a big shot in the arm for the program.

HB 55 – Concerns Expungements, Mr. Gibbs stated that basically this bill would clean up information regarding Expungements. He further stated that there was information regarding Expungements that was on the books but it was very cumulative. The new legislation puts some very good information in place where it relates to expungements of records. It still may need some tweaking, but nevertheless there are now clearer procedures on how one goes about applying for an expungement.

HB 196 - Provides provision for Habitual Offenders to participate in Work Release. Mr. Gibbs stated under the current law, habitual offenders are eligible for work release whenever they are within six (6) months of their earliest release date. What we have done here with the expansion of twelve (12) months, some habitual offenders would be eligible to go to work release within twelve (12) months of their earliest release date.

He further stated that when we look at habitual offenders, we get a notion that it's somebody who has committed some violent offense and sometimes they have; however, as it relates to the multiple billing of offenders, an offender could have two felony convictions and could be a habitual offender. It could be a theft charge or it could be a burglary charge. These are the offenders we are looking at that this new law is going to affect being eligible for work release in twelve (12) months, rather than six (6) months out from their release date. Some of those individuals have very good skills as they are coming back into our society. We want to give them as much time as we can in the transitional work program prior to returning to society

HB 505 - provides for civil immunity in certain instances for employers who hire employee who has been convicted of certain offenses. Mr. Gibbs stated that what we are finding and it maybe more excuses sometimes with employers who don't want to hire ex-offenders because of the labeling. What this law is attempting to do was provide them some immunity from hiring ex-offenders so long as it's not negligent hiring, something you should have known or foreseen regarding hiring a high risk in a certain job, for instance, if a sex offender was hired to work in a daycare. Well there is no immunity for that because you should have known better if you did the proper research and background and that person was a sex offender. You shouldn't have hired him in a daycare. Some of these other offenses give those employers some latitude not to be criminally liable or civilly liable for offenders that they hire that might commit some crime.

HB 1157 - Intensive Incarceration Program

Mr. Gibbs stated that the Intensive Incarceration Program has been in Corrections since 1986. It was previously referred to as our IMPACT or Boot Camp Program. The program began at Hunt Correctional Center and then it was expanded to David Wade Correctional Center at some point with additional eighty (80) beds. So at some point we had 280 beds as it related to the IMPACT Program or Intensive Incarceration Program.

Mr. Gibbs further stated that in 2013, the Department revamped the program. The Department no longer refers to it as a boot camp. We now refer to it as an Intensive Incarceration Program. What was happening with those individuals that were sentenced to the intensive incarceration program, the law required up to 180 days of incarceration. We are realizing that we didn't have a lot of programs that an offender can complete in 180 days. So we expanded the program out to twelve (12) months thereby we would be able to role offenders into additional programs that they will be able to complete and work on such as the High School Equivalency, GED or trades as well.

Mr. Gibbs asked the Council if they had any questions regarding legislation presented. He also suggested that if they want to review the bills in their entirety, they could do so by login onto the Louisiana State Legislature's website...

Item #6: Reentry Conference November 2014

One thing about Reentry, as I've been on the reentry trail now for about almost ten (10) years as Assistant Secretary, one of the things early on that we talked about with then Secretary Stalder was collaborating and the closed system that we had in place at the time. At one point, we definitely were a closed system. We basically felt that we were the experts. We knew what to do with our population. For too many years success was basically locking them up and at some point releasing them and giving them \$10 and a bus ticket. Telling them to go out there and be successful. We recognized along the way with the push for reentry nationally, that we needed to do better. So we began to collaborate with other organizations. We needed partnership, such as the partnership that we have with LCTCS, DCFS, and other state agencies as well as faith and community-based organizations. We had a Reentry Conference in 2008 in Shreveport which brought in some of the faith-based community and other providers as well. It was a sort of spring-board to reentry back then. Now we are having a Reentry Conference in Baton Rouge and Mr. James Windom and Ms. Priebe will speak on the conference.

Mr. James Windom stated that he would give a brief understanding of where we are right now.

(Mr. Windom handed out a tentative schedule of the upcoming Reentry Association of Louisiana Help Conference – see attachment)

Mr. Windom indicated that first and foremost like Mr. Gibbs has said, one of the things we recognize is that when it comes to reentry most of us has been doing this work and have been doing it unaware of who's around us and the resources possibly available to us as well as the returning citizens. In 2008, I attended the conference in Shreveport and it was great. It gave us an opportunity to put names with faces. Unfortunately however, it just wasn't enough and it wasn't continued. So with the creation of the Reentry Advisory Council (RAC) according to their strategic planning, we want to partner with you to make sure that we can help you meet your strategic goals as well as meeting our own.

Mr. Windom referred the Council to the first page of the tentative schedule of the Conference, pointing to four (4) particular goals and objectives that were trying to be accomplished, namely:

1. To identify and build a State-wide Coalition of all Reentry entities.

He stated there are a lot of people who are doing reentry work and unfortunately they are not aware of who all the parties are. Most of the time, because of their unawareness of whose out there and what resources are available, they are doing their work on a shoe-string budget. We want to see if we can bring to bear the powers there are to make sure that somehow or another we can change that scenario.

2. To develop legislation reflective of collective concerns with first legislation ready for next year's (2015) fiscal legislative session.

Mr. Windom indicated a couple of the reentry groups in outlining areas had to close up operation simply because they were trying to do reentry work while upholding a full time job. It's very difficult to do that. To inform and educate all about the Reentry Advisory Council's Statewide Strategic Plan.

He stated most people that he has talked to about the Conference were not aware of the existence of the RAC. Part of our conference is to educate all of the coalitions statewide about the advocacy of this group and how important it could be as a major player in the statewide reentry efforts.

3. To develop Statewide Standard Operating Procedures for Reentry based upon best practices and evidence-based models relating to reentry

Mr. Windom indicated that we want to create more of a systematic approach to reentry. Every grant whether it be a local foundation or federal grant, one of the things they talk about is evidence-based and best practices. Unfortunately, a lot of our participants across the state are doing some great work but they are not always best practices and evidence-based. We want to make sure that everyone within reentry committee has these credentials because when it comes to funding, we want to make sure that we are putting the money where we are getting the most effect. If the program is not working then unfortunately, it's not doing us any good neither is it doing any good for those individuals returning from incarceration. We need to make sure we have a common language, common operating procedure and according to the strategic plan that is working well laid out. With the RAC, we can pass information on to all of our coalitions as well.

Also with that, I have given a tentative Agenda of courses that are still up in the air as far as some of the things we are going to be discussing. But, you get a flavor for what we are going to be addressing at the conference. As of right now, we have an agreement with Healing Place Church to hold the conference in their arena. It's a very wonderful facility. It is capable of holding 3500 – 4000 people. We have adequate parking. They are going to provide all the technical assistance for us as far as recording and videos. So, we should have a good array of technology available to us so we can capture the conference on video. It won't be captured just for that day; it will also be put on the website. It will be used for other training and other information dissertations later on. We are going to be keeping this information going throughout the rest of the year. We hope to be able to have the website up and running by September so everyone can register. There will be a \$45 fee. For that fee, you will get an array of information and food. I think it will be well worth your time and effort to be a part of the conference.

Mr. James Windom turned the topic over to Ms. Priebe for her comments.

Ms. Alexandra Priebe stated that she has been working with Rhett Covington and James Windom on the planning of the conference. In addition to the planning, she is also working on the implementation grant. One of the things that she is in charge of along with Tulane University is to do coalition building and to support the coalitions that exist as part of the Regional Reentry Strategy.

Ms. Priebe further stated that they are currently working with the Northwest Region, the Capital Area and are in discussion with James Logan, City of New Orleans. They are rolling out a workforce initiative and they have been building a coalition around NOLA for Life. Part of what we've done under this grant, is leverage some funds to bring in Corey Sparks from LANO (La Non-Profit Organization). He has done a great deal of work in reentry coalition building and building nonprofits copying them for strategic planning. In fact, he helped to get the strategic plan to facilitate the Strategic Planning Retreat for the RAC's Strategic Plan. So, we are trying to put together a session to help build out the real Statewide Coalition. We welcome your participation in all of this. It's very important to have the RAC as a driving force in moving the local office statewide. Any questions?

Mr. Joseph Ardoin commented that he has been working with Mr. James Windom to try and keep some of his people. He stated that we can help some of his people and get them future training because he brought several people to different training centers that the AFL-CIO provides. The deal is that, we run into the transportation problems. They were trying to help him by bringing 15 to 20 of his guys. It was a pretty big project for awhile. We have so many big projects in Lake Charles that we need to see if we can find between Corrections or some other organization with some type of bus transportation. You have to have transportation to work.

Mr. Windom stated that it is a major issue. He further stated that they are working on a proposal, right now, to pay one of the churches a fee to provide their transportation like what we are talking about; as so far as having a drop off location where these individuals can be picked up by your guys.

Mr. Ardoin stated that like work release, they provide transportation. They bring their people to work and pick them up and they are there.

Mr. Windom stated that something like that would work but unfortunately what we've seen in our talking with Pastors and churches, they are reluctant to do it for many reasons. So what we are doing is writing a grant for us to buy a used van that one of our partners can use. They are already providing some transportation resources. But we want to buy a bigger van so that they can hold 10-12 people and transport them to different work locations. Once again, the issue is money. Then it's buying the van, paying for insurance and paying for a driver as a part-time employee will be costly. So we are writing a proposal for that and hopefully we will get it through.

Mr. Rhett Covington commented that three major issues that we tend to see is over and above the type of treatment this particular individual need over time is the transitional housing. How they get out when they are first released. If they have a stable place to go to sleep lay their head and take a shower. The transportation issue and them being able to get a job in whatever trade they

were in. So if you get them a trade in the prison and they end up going out working at McDonalds, you hadn't really accomplished a whole lot with that. So, there's a threefold problem and it's a long term situation. Work Release is great but at the end of the day, the Sheriffs are being compensated out of the offender paycheck. Ex-offenders out on the street now need to understand that this is something that needs to be budgeted. What the transportation is going to cost? All of us pay for transportation out of our budget in order to get ourselves to and from work. What does that represent? That's part of the education process we need to go through and figure out how we can do that. It shouldn't be something that we are going to provide for free because once a person gets out, when does he take over doing that himself.

Mr. Windom stated that it actually wouldn't be free.

Mr. Ardoin stated that once he gets his check, he reimburse you.

Mr. Windom stated that the challenge was that once we got that individual on that van to work and he gets his paycheck, how do we mandate or how do we force an individual to actually pay. He further stated that was the biggest challenge that they had because the same thing applies to transitional housing. We get him into a transitional house and we are fortunate enough we have some people who are compassionate enough to allow this individual to come in for two weeks until he gets a job or whatever. But once he gets his first paycheck, then he is gone. So it puts a more challenge upon us to find resources that we can pay for that individual for the first thirty (30) days. At least so that housing service provider isn't left holding the bag. So transportation is an issue but we can't necessarily say that we just not going to help because that individual due out of incarceration, a lot of times, doesn't have any resources at all. So how do we do it in a responsible manner where we are providing a service but we are not necessarily paving a pathway that says that everything is free in life?

Mr. Covington commented that as it relates to the Agenda topic with the Conference itself, this is a chance for us to reach out and let the community at large know what we are about. How they can get involved. How they can coordinate on local levels as well as pushing the state level. Because at the end of the day, we are having these meetings quarterly and wouldn't you like to be able to have something actually to deal with rather than a report? Wouldn't you like to have something that actually challenges you with trying to figure out how we solve this problem? Transportation may be one of those issues.

How do we do that? So if there is a way y'all can contribute or have any ideas about the conference and what you think should come out of this conference please let us know. Like Mr. Windom said, this is not set in stone right now. We are still developing this Agenda and we want to have your input and feedback. So we can make it a successful program. We have a lot of moving parts in reentry.

Mr. Windom stated that one of the things that have come out of the planning stages is the idea that we are in Baton Rouge and you got New Orleans and Shreveport. A lot of times we are talking from the perspective of where we are but we don't recognize the challenges that are different in places like Lafourche or Carroll parish. Those entities are struggling in ways that we can even conceive. So it's great to have that person there to communicate to us but at the same time, we need to have everyone at the table to be able to devise methods to identify and deal with the challenges they face. Also because of what we are trying to do, we want to have what we

call a "Coming Home Sunday". We want to do that the First Sunday right after the conference because we recognize that once again we've done a masterful job of painting a very bleak picture of these individuals returning to our communities to a point where most people don't want to have anything to do with them. So if we can get the Church to buy in, that's what we want to do. We want the church to cooperate with us in having this 'Coming Home Sunday' so that these individuals now become people because they are already there. They are already in your churches. They are already in your neighborhoods but you just don't know their background. What we want to do is change their narrative. Change their image from one of being someone who is to create havoc to a person who is really struggling but really trying to live a good life and give them an opportunity. If all of us, not just the Department of Corrections and the ACLU, get all of the employers, churches, moms and dads in the community to really embrace these individuals and recognize that they are just people, we can make a difference.

Mr. Gibbs welcomed Sheriff Cazes to the meeting.

Item #7: Child Support (Incarcerated Parents) PowerPoint

Mr. Gibbs stated that in the folders there is a handout power point showing basically a federal perspective on incarcerated parents and the challenges they face. We do have here today, a representative from Children and Family Services, Ms. Scales.

Mr. Gibbs further stated that what we know in corrections is that about 60,000 children have a parent that is incarcerated in our system. We are working on a Memorandum of Agreement with Children and Family Services that would possibly allow for a waiver of some of the state portion of child support. In no way would this affect the amount of reduction of arrears owed to the custodial parent but some states do have a mechanism where when offenders are incarcerated, some of them will stop the arrearage. From my understanding, this is based on a State by State on what they actually do regarding child support when an offender is incarcerated. Also whether or not some states would allow for the waiver of the part of the fees that could be waived. Perhaps Ms. Scales can speak on what Division of Children and Family Services do here.

Ms. Scales reported that in the Division of Children and Family Services, they try to work locally with some of the prisons or the institutions. She stated that DCFS have a program set up with Dixon Correctional Institute. They have one of their access and visitation attorneys and a representative from Child Support to go in and show them a PowerPoint. They talk about child support. What we are trying to do is let these men know that they need to talk to us once it's time for them to get out. In this program, we are going to them within six (6) months or twelve (12) months before they are released. We are just giving them information about child support and we are trying to get them to think more realistic. A lot of them have these myths that as soon as they get out, we are going to arrest them. We are trying to let them know that we are not trying to arrest you. We want you to come and talk to us so we can work with you. We don't have any funds or any money to give you but we want to talk with you. Right now, we are talking with other states trying to see what we can do. Maybe just have him to pay on his ongoing support and not have any money going towards the arrears.

Generally once a guy gets released, we know when he is getting released, first thing we are going to do is send him an appointment letter saying come on in and talk to us. If he doesn't show up, soon as he get a job, then we are sending an income assignment in. At one time, we could take

up to 50% of us income. Generally, these guys quit and they go underground and so we don't want that either. So we are saying "Hey y'all need to come and talk to us". We are going to work with you. We are just trying to come up with some kind of rule making or some kind of policy where we can just say "Hey work with us". We are going to try and work on your ongoing support. We may have to even go in and modify your Order and lots of them don't know anything about modifying their child support order. They may have gone in with a \$400 Order but now they are trying to find a job. If they don't have a job, then how they are going to pay a \$400 Order and that \$400 is added up each month.

So yes, several of the states are going along. We worked one time with a program called (inaudible) and what we did with them, they participated in the program. They went to parenting classes. They did everything they were supposed to do and at certain intervals, we would remove some of their AFDC arrears. I think a lot of our fatherhood programs are coming in and wondering can we eliminate some of their arrears. Then we discovered that there was a law that says we cannot do that. That's upon Legislation. So, some of the other states have gone in and changed some of their laws that would allow the State or the Department to help remove some of those arrears. These are the arrears that are owed the State not the custodial parent. So those are some of the things we are looking at to kind of help these guys realize that you still have the responsibility to support your child but come in and talk to us and we are going to try and work with you on getting your Order reduced, modified, not going after 50% of your income or twice the ongoing obligations to pay off those arrears. Nationwide, we are looking at incarcerated guys. What can we do to help them? Right now, I think we need to educate them. If we could get involved in more of these programs locally, that would help. Have someone going in talking to them; giving them the brochures; eliminating those myths that they still have in mind that we're out to arrest them and sending them back to prison. And educate them on some of the things they need to do to protect themselves. If they get an appointment letter, they need to go in a see them. Don't just disregard it because we get a lot of default judgments. That means you didn't show up for an appointment. This lady has named you as the father. We are going to go into court. You've been served. We did everything right and now you have a Child Support Order and as soon as you find a job and we hit you with it, then all of a sudden it blows your mind. It doesn't matter whether or not you are in jail or outside of jail.

One of the other things is in Louisiana, if he is incarcerated that doesn't mean that you should not pay child support. What the law is saying 'that's on you'. You went to jail. It was something that you done. You've been convicted. It's voluntary. So that's another thing we are trying to work on. So we've been talking about it and having some discussions but I don't think it's gone up to legislation where it would make a difference. We are just talking and trying to streamline and to see what can we do and where can we be more beneficial to help these young men that's incarcerated.

Mr. Gibbs commented that definitely it's a tough balancing act. What we are saying here is that we want to take the needs of the child first but also make the offender accountable while working out workable solutions for him to get where he need to be regarding child support.

Rhett Covington commented that he has previously worked on this issue and it's part of the Constitution that states we can't forgive any debts. I think there's an option where you can cease the accruing when you are not considered on a voluntary employment situation but as you said, that's a difficult conversation to have in this State. People don't want to hear that. That would

be the only way we could actually forgive because it never accrued to begin with. I believe there is some flexibility in there where y'all can backend some of that stuff. I think one other challenge is that they also have thousands and thousands of dollars they owe in child support and arrears. They also have criminal justice liabilities issues such as court cost, restitution, supervision fees, etc. that they have to pay. We may be able to help with probation and parole being an enforcement arm to make them get where they need to go or at least hold them accountable. One of the conditions of supervision is to support your dependant to the best your ability. Well, if you are not showing up for child support court, you are not supporting to the best of your ability. So those are issues that we can work on.

Ms. Scales commented that she think what it is that they would continue to pay their ongoing support but we wouldn't touch the arrears for about six months or a year until they were on their feet.

Mr. Covington asked that then they would then gauge based upon their income.

Ms. Scales agreed.

Mr. Covington stated that this is a conversation we should be having at this level as well what we can do to address these barriers as we find them. You know there's a barrier, so we bring it up and discuss it to see if we can actually make some difference.

Ms. Scales stated that in some of the local prisons, she thinks if some of the child support officers would make contact with them and talk to some of the counselors that the Department have so they will understand too what we have to offer to these young men and say "Hey, you need to go talk to child support". We left brochures and business cards but the thing about it is none of these guys got in contact with us. They get out and they go. So maybe that could be part of the training too when they are making their exit. If you have some debt or owe some child support, you need to go down there and talk to Support Enforcement...

Item #8: Workforce Development/TWP @ Phelps Correctional Center

Mr. Gibbs stated that we have had a standing agreement with DCFS regarding offenders that are in work release programs that they could do a wage assignment on some of their wages. That's one of our win/win programs. Whenever they are in a work release program, they begin paying restitution and part of that could also include child support payments.

As it relates to Phelps Correctional Center (PCC) I'm sure everyone is aware that we closed Phelps Correctional Center in DeQuincy about two or three years ago. We are reopening Phelps as a Transitional Work Program Center (TWP). Approximately 350 offenders will eventually be at PCC and this is designed to address that employment gap in that Calcasieu corridor. We have been made aware that there will be some 20,000 or so jobs in that area alone. What we were hearing early on was that they were bringing in migrant workers. They wanted to look at Phelps as a migrant worker camp. So the Secretary at that point said "why don't we look at reopening Phelps as a Transitional Work Program Center". It's a win/win situation when you have the offenders receiving training. Some of them will be working. As I said, whenever they are in transitional work programs, they are able to meet some of their financial obligations that are due such as child support and different restitutions. So we are looking at getting Phelps back up and

running sometime in the next sixty (60) days. It will purely be a transitional work program setting. Working with Technical College System prior to Phelps closing, they had a very good welding program there. The welding stations are still there but the equipment is no longer there. So we have to get that back up and running to get the training aspects for that program going as well. But, it's going to be a good situation for the offender to work in those high demands type occupations. As they receive their training, they will be able to go directly to that plant industry and make dollars that will help take care of them and eventually help support them whenever they are released...

Mr. Cazes asked how the Department will get around Transportation Worker Identification Card (TWIC).

Mr. Gibbs stated that TWIC, while it has been a challenge in some locations, we have work release facilities now that actually are able to obtain TWIC cards for offenders.

Mr. Cazes commented that it's has been very slim chance that offenders in his work release program were able to obtain a TWIC. He stated his TWP program has 200 offenders and he might have four (4) offenders that have obtained a TWIC card.

Mr. Windom commented that one of the things that we have noticed is that many people don't get their TWIC card simply because they are not filling out the applications correctly. Those first couple of questions, if they don't answer them correctly, it will categorize them as terrorist. Quite naturally, they are going to be denied. What we have been doing is having our case managers help these guys fill out that application and we have gotten great success. Mr. Cazes asked how he can get the application.

Mr. Gibbs stated that actually we have developed a TWIC packet that we can provide to you that will help the offender navigate the TWIC process; however, as Mr. Windom stated, the biggest problem with the TWIC is the denial. Whenever they apply almost 99% of the time they are denied. But there is an appeal process and what is happening with the work release facility that has about a 90% rate success in obtain a TWIC card, staff is appearing with the offender is they initially complete the TWIC application . They complete the appeal process on the spot and in most instances they get a TWIC card or they leave with a letter allowing that offender to work until the TWIC issue is resolved. Mr. Ardoin commented that the Department needs to give it to all the work release programs. We know that the TWIC is an issue so we are going to try and work on the TWIC issue before release or prior to an offender going on a job. The thing about the denial is that it's time sensitive. Once you have been denied, you have an appeal process. If you wait too long and you go back and re-apply, guess what, you have to come up with another \$129/\$132 if you wait beyond sixty (60) days. But most of the time, whenever they are denied and they go through the appeals process, they receive a TWIC card.

Those offenses that brought this about, treason and sedition, terrorism, fortunately we don't have offenders in our systems that are convicted of those types of offenses. These offenses are currently considered to be permanently disqualifying offenses. We do have some that have been convicted of some the other offenses, what they refer to as interim disqualifying offenses. Those interim disqualifying offense, once they go through the appeals process as I said, they normally will be issued their TWIC card. It's just them knowing the process. If they don't know the

process, the first thing they see is denied. They figure they can't get a card and they give up. It's basically about educating offenders on that process.

Any questions concerning Phelps Correctional Center and what we are planning on doing with the transitional work program there?

No response. Moved on to item #9.

Item #9: Expansion of Regional Reentry Programs

Mr. Gibbs asked Deputy Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington to cover the expansion of regional reentry programs.

Mr. Covington stated that the Department was awarded a grant for expanding Regional Reentry and Data Reporting Programs.

He further stated that over half of the Department's population is serving their time in local jails. Hit or miss as far as whether or not there are any programs available largely depends on whether the Sheriff or local jail have the capacity and the will and want to provide those resources to the offenders in their custody.

Regional Reentry concept was put in place to try and find a way to leverage our resources in the HUB areas around the state. This would allow us to provide some basic reentry services, discharge planning, get them connected with family, get them a residence, get them an ID, get them ready to go rather than dropping them off at the bus station at 12 o'clock in the morning with \$10.

So the expansion is taking us into the Capital Region this year through this grant. We also have been authorized through the GEMS (Government Efficiencies Management System). An external company came in and reviewed our accreditation and to see how we can save money for the state. One way to save money for the state was to increase availability of the reentry programs in the local jails because of the credits that are awarded for the program completion. The Department is providing funding to invest in these programs on the local level. We are going to bring three more Regional Reentry programs on line this year. Probably Lafayette, somewhere in the northeast (we are discussing with the Sheriffs about program space and what they are signing up for to get an agreement in the northeast part of the State) and then Rapides Parish (Alexandria area) will be coming on this year.

We have intent to bring the remainder of the Regional Reentry programs on-board the following fiscal year. We will have a total of eleven (11) locations throughout the State. We already have one in place for the females in the northeast part of the state. Between that facility and Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women, the majority of women are pretty much covered from a statewide prospective. We are also plan to opening Day Reporting Centers (DRC). Half of the people coming back to prison each year are revocations. They are either on probation or parole. They mess up and they are back in prison... Half of those are revoked for technical violations meaning there are no new arrests. They may have changes addresses or employment without permission, failed to report as required.

We train our officers in graduated situations where they don't revoke them for the first late probation/parole fee. They work with them and slowly ramp the heat up to the point where they get to the message. But still about half of those that are being revoked are for technical violations. Day Reporting Centers are another link in that chain of graduated sanctions. You get some of those that are particularly high risk. They are having issues relating to dysfunctional families and inability to maintain jobs. We send them to a DRC to try and do intensive care management to get them back on track. Try to figure out what's going wrong that causing them to be on a path back to prison to divert them from going back.

Those programs have been widely successful in the two areas that we have them. Two-thirds of those that were sent there, that would have been revoked otherwise, end up completing their sentence without being revoked. We want to bring on-board additional locations in the urban areas of our state. We should be able to put in three (3) this year, two (2) of which are going to be assisting us with state match for grant applications. One of those grant applications, if it's awarded, would allow us work with LSU to develop a much more robust risk needs and responsiveness assessment for those in reentry. It's important because the first thing you need to figure out is what's the likelihood this person is going to go back to prison? If there is a low likelihood that they will be going back to prison based upon their background, we don't want to put a lot of resources into them because we are going to get in their way. We are going to trip them up because we are putting too much effort and time into them and we can better use those resources for someone who is more likely to go back to prison. We want to do an upfront assessment and determine how much effort we should put into making sure this person has the resources, intervention and treatment they need so they would be successful. That is one of our grants that would help us develop further our risk assessment (LARNA) tool. The other one will help with our program capacity. We still have a long way to go particularly in our local jails. This will provide us with training for instructors to go out to local jails and to our state prison and provide us with additional capacity for training. It's been a long time since we've had financial infusion to programs in the state. This is going to be worthwhile investment in resources to improve reentry...

Mr. Covington opened the floor for questions from the Council. No questions.

Mr. Gibbs stated about 17,000 offenders have been released annually over the course of the last three years. Of that 17,000, the vast majority of those individuals are being released from local jails. So it makes sense to put resources into the local jails because that's the 95% of the incarcerated population we hear about that are being released into our communities. Almost assuredly, those populations are coming out of the local jails sooner rather than later. So definitely, it's good news for reentry and we look forward to the opportunity to bring about programming to the local jails.

Item #10: Meeting scheduled calendar year 2014

Mr. Gibbs asked the Council to look over the proposed scheduled calendar for 2014 - 2015 (March, 2014 – December, 2015).

Mr. Gibbs stated that regarding the Federal Reentry Advisory Committee Myths and Fact, he would like to see the Council develop in Louisiana Myths and Facts relating to Reentry. Examples like mentioned regarding food stamps in the Federal Reentry Myth Busters.

Mr. Gibbs reported that we continue to have a very difficult time getting a quorum for our meetings and we definitely need to do better there. He commented that Council member should review the meeting is scheduled as the next meeting is set for September 11, 2014 here at the Mayflower complex. So, hopefully we can get better attendance at that next meeting. It's very difficult to get business conducted if you don't have a quorum. We don't have a quorum here today to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. So just be mindful of that. I definitely appreciate the ones that are here for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here.

Mr. Cazes commented that one thing you might want to do, like Steve Pylant, Representative; he has to come from Delhi. I don't know if he would want to drive down five (5) hours for a two (2) hour meeting. Maybe they can get someone from right here in Baton Rouge.

Ms. Priebe asked do the person have to be physically present or could it be possible for them to teleconference in where they wouldn't have to make that long commute. If it's the quorum issue, that might address some of it.

Mr. Gibbs stated yes, we did have a call in conference at one point but that worked out somewhat. As Mr. Cazes stated, a five (5) hour drive time is a long way to drive but I was just thinking that when he was appointed to this Council, he should have known what was required.

Mr. Cazes stated that you would be surprised that some of them get appointed and don't even know it.

Mr. Gibbs stated that hopefully we can do better there so we can get some business conducted. Nevertheless, I think we have discussed some good things here today. We have some good things coming up with the Conference in November and the information provided regarding the policy that is being developed. This is what the RAC was initially designed to do as it relates to work force development. That is the main thing that drives the Council is making certain we have work force development. Now, we added other reentry components but we are starting to improve on the work force development end of it. Sheriff Cazes is here today and we are getting ready to open up, as Mr. Covington indicated, a new reentry program which is going to take care of the offenders on the local level in Sheriff Cazes' area. We definitely appreciate it when sheriffs step up to the plate and work with us on those types of programs. It's so very important to the overall success of reentry.

Item 11: Transaction of such other business as may properly come before the Council

Mr. Cazes asked that he thought in our last meeting, part of our plan with the RAC was to lobby the legislature to help these offenders where they don't have all these old back fees, child support and everything else?

Mr. Gibbs responded that Senator Guillory had brought up that issue in a meeting about three (3) meetings ago and Ms. Matherne had to go back to DCFS and provide some information. He stated that he don't think she has completed it yet. It's still an agenda that is ongoing.

Mr. Cazes responded with okay.

Mr. Covington stated that it was his understanding that this body is an advisory board to the Department of Corrections and to the State Administration. He further stated that he thinks that if we have something like that that they would like to recommend, look at and taking action on it, it could be something we can definitely look at. We can put that together and have the Council sign off on it and send it up. Maybe that's the inferences they need to start beyond that road and actually take action instead of a legislator on their own doing it.

Sheriff Cazes move that the meeting be adjourned which was seconded by Mr. Ardoin. Meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.