



## DIRECTOR WASHINGTON LAYS OUT VISION FOR MDOC FUTURE

Heidi Washington spoke with Senators on inmate and staff training, recidivism and hospice care Wednesday, in what was her first legislative hearing as MDOC director.

The Senate appropriations subcommittee on corrections held the special “advice and consent hearing.” Washington started by talking about some of her goals, including more vocational training for inmates and decreasing the recidivism rate.

As the former RGC warden, “I know the importance of starting reentry on day one,” Washington said. “If we don’t fundamentally change the prisoner’s behavior, we can’t change the outcome.”

To that end, vocational training must be improved, she said. The flood of staff being hired should be trained early

in their careers to focus on offender reentry and success.

Sen. Marty Knollenberg asked several questions about prison closures.

“I can’t give you a time frame for when that might happen,” Washington said. She went on to talk about her hope to bring down the rate of recidivism and probation violations, which would decrease the prison population and could lead to a closure sometime in the future.

Knollenberg said he wants MDOC to show him a benchmarking plan on when prisons could close. He also cited a report calling for an immediate reduction of 10,000 inmates. MDOC has data on the number of probation violators and the potential population drop if they aren’t incarcerated, but first, programs must be successful, Washington said. Still, closures could be on the horizon in the next several years, she said.

Staffing shortages also came up. Washington said MDOC loses 65-70 employees a month, and there’s “a continual and constant need to bring people

on board.” Community colleges just couldn’t keep up with officer demand, but now the Department has a plan in place to hire all the employees needed.

Washington said she’d like to introduce hospice care for inmates.

The director also described plans to address the rising number of female inmates. Since many of them are non-violent drug offenders, Washington suggested inpatient treatment centers.

Comments on the food service contract were minimal. MDOC went with Trinity because it was the only company besides Aramark that put in a food service bid in 2013, Washington said. MDOC has several contracts, and the Department is exploring a more coordinated approach to monitoring them, she said.

Washington also said she hopes to strengthen MDOC’s relationship with judges, police and employee unions.

**Aramark out, Trinity in**  
MDOC announced Monday the Aramark contract will end early and Trinity Services Group will take over food service. Read our bulletin at [mco-seiu.org](http://mco-seiu.org).

### It’s time for the Ionia Free Fair!

It’s that time of year again! C.O.P.S. Day at the Ionia Free Fair is July 22.

All law enforcement officers, including corrections officers, are welcome to come out and get free snacks, toys, MCO gear and discounted ride wristbands. The fun starts at noon. Visit the hospitality center in the Administration Building to get your swag and wristband.

The fairgrounds are located at 317 South Dexter Street in Ionia.

Officer’s participation in this great event has helped portray a positive representation of prison employees to the Ionia community.

## AROUND THE NATION: TEXAS CO KILLED; LMF FIGHT

**A Texas corrections officer died Wednesday after an inmate attacked him with an iron bar, according to media reports.**

Timothy Davison, 47, had just started working at the Barry Telford Unit in New Boston, Texas in December. Davison was attacked as he was bringing a prisoner back to his cell. The prisoner assaulted him with a bar used to open food slots in cell doors.

The prisoner accused in the attack is Billy Joel Tracy, 37. He is serving a life sentence for aggravated assault charges.

Please pray for peace for Davison’s family and friends. Rest in peace, Officer Davison.

**No staff members were hurt in a six-prisoner gang fight Wednesday at Alger.**

Five prisoners were Tased to end the altercation, which happened in the Level IV Maple unit. All of the inmates were sent to segregation.

The prison was locked down Wednesday afternoon but was back to normal operations at 9 p.m.