



## AROUND THE NATION: NORTH CAROLINA OFFICER AND STAFF MEMBER DIE THURSDAY; DRF CO PUNCHED

**A North Carolina corrections officer and another staff member died after a fire and escape attempt Thursday.** It isn't clear exactly how they died.

According to media reports, inmates started a fire in the sewing plant at the Pasquotank Correctional Institution at about 3 p.m. as part of an escape attempt. No inmates were able to escape.

Officer Justin Smith and sewing plant manager Veronica Darden died. Darden had previously been a CO.

At least 10 staff members and four inmates were treated for injuries.

Smith was a member of SEIU Local 2008, also known as SEANC. SEANC lost member Meggan Callahan, a prison sergeant, in April. Read more about Callahan's death in the [May 4 KYI](#).

Please keep our brothers and sisters in North Carolina in your thoughts, and pray

for peace for Smith's and Darden's families. Rest in peace, Justin Smith and Veronica Darden.

### **A Carson City officer was punched several times Oct. 5 after asking an inmate to quiet down on the phone.**

The CO was working in an office in the 900 unit (Level II) when he heard an inmate shouting into a pay phone. The officer came out and asked him to lower his voice.

A few minutes later, the officer came out of the office and sat his coffee on the CO's desk. The prisoner walked by and picked up the cup. He threw the coffee at the officer and started swinging, hitting the CO in the head. Officers immediately responded. The officer suffered bruising. The inmate was transferred.

*Please watch your back and your partner's back. Stay safe.*

## IN MEMORIAM: CO BEAUCHAMP



IBC Officer Jason Beauchamp passed away unexpectedly this week.

Beauchamp (known as Beau to his coworkers and friends) was the third-shift electrical monitoring officer. He had about 17 years with MDOC.

Visitation is from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 14 at Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home, 406 N. Bridge St., Grand Ledge, MI 48837. The funeral will follow at 2 p.m. at the same location.

Please keep his family and friends and the IBC staff in your thoughts during this time. Rest in peace, CO Beauchamp.

## MCO TAKES DRONE CONCERNS TO GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE

Michigan Corrections Organization made comments this week to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force laying out corrections officers' concerns about drones over prisons. MCO also issued a formal position statement to the task force, alerting them to the dangers drones pose, and will share the statement with legislators.

"We believe that proper defenses need to be implemented immediately to prevent future incidents from taking place and ensure the safety of institutional staff and those incarcerated," said MCO Executive Board Member Brent Kowitz, who is also co-chair of the MCO/MDOC joint Health and Safety Committee, which has discussed

drones. [Read the full statement here.](#)

The ultimate concern of corrections officers is that a weapon will be dropped into a prison. The statement asks for more equipment and training for corrections staff on drone detection.

The Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force was convened by Gov. Rick Snyder. The task force is scheduled to wrap up its work and present its findings in a report due Nov. 20.

Corrections officers are very concerned about security threats presented by drones. At least five drone incidents have been reported at Michigan prisons this year, including the most recent last week at Bellamy Creek Correction-

al Facility in Ionia.

"The threats are not threats any more. Drones have been dropping contraband in prisons across the country, including Michigan," Kowitz said.

MCO will continue to advocate for solutions that protect the safety and security of Michigan prisons.

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