

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
AND THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY/NATURAL
RESOURCES/TRANSPORTATION**

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 16, 2007**

The Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance, Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety/Natural Resources/Transportation was called to order by Chair Morse Arberry Jr. at 8:10 a.m., on Friday, March 16, 2007, in Room 3137 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman David R. Parks, Chair
Assemblyman Morse Arberry Jr.
Assemblyman Tom Grady
Assemblyman Joseph Hogan
Assemblywoman Ellen Koivisto
Assemblywoman Kathy McClain
Assemblywoman Valerie E. Weber

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Bob Beers
Senator Dean A. Rhoads
Senator Dina Titus

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark W. Stevens, Assembly Fiscal Analyst
Steve Abba, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Tracy Raxter, Senior Program Analyst
Barron Brooks, Committee Secretary
Patricia Adams, Committee Assistant



Howard Skolnik, Director, Department of Corrections, began by discussing the topic of illegal immigrants in the prison system. The Department had a number of meetings with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and ICE had identified 47 individuals who were eligible for immediate removal from the prisons. Those 47 individuals were not eligible for hearings and would be deported upon their removal from the prisons. There were another 80 individuals that were likely to be deported but may request a hearing. The individuals who requested hearings would be released upon their own recognizance, because ICE was short of detention space, and whether or not the individuals would end up showing up to the hearings was in question. There were another 30 individuals who had green cards and status in the country and would require hearings as well. The Department of Corrections would be continuing to work with ICE in regard to the issue. Mr. Skolnik added the Department had met with the Mexican consulate from Las Vegas and would be working with him on the issue.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ELY STATE PRISON (101-3751)

BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-27

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3751 and questioned why the utilities costs were projected to be higher in Fiscal Years (FY) 2006 and 2007 than in each year of the 2007-2009 biennium. Darrel Rexwinkel, Deputy Director, Support Services, Nevada Department of Corrections, responded that there was a supplemental appropriation bill slated to be heard to pay for the increased utility costs. Rate increases for utilities had caused the costs to rise substantially. Mr. Rexwinkel noted that the Ely State Prison's costs had not risen as much as costs in other prisons. There had been inflationary increases built into the budget; however, the increases from utility companies far exceeded the budgeted inflation.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks in regard to decision unit E720, Mr. Rexwinkel responded that the phone systems had been replaced at Ely, Lovelock, and a couple other locations. The Department was requesting a service agreement to be funded in order to maintain proper functioning communications systems.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Rexwinkel replied that computer replacements were built into each budget, but there were not many replacement computers in this budget because of the Nevada Offender Tracking and Information System (NOTIS) project. Mr. Skolnik added that there were replacement computers in a number of the budgets, but the bulk of the equipment was either in the process of being replaced or had already been replaced.

In response to a question from Assemblyman Grady, Mr. Skolnik stated there was legislation pending to make the possession of a mobile phone illegal inside of the institutions. The inmates were allowed outbound collect calls through pay phones in each of the cell houses. Mr. Skolnik explained that the prisoners had adequate access to the telephones.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman McClain regarding the Department's offender tracking system, Mr. Skolnik replied that the system was expected to be functioning before the end of this fiscal year. He added that the Department would probably be using some parallel systems while the implementation process was occurring. Additional information would be

provided to the Subcommittee regarding the issue.

In response to an additional question from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Skolnik replied that there was a Management Information System Division within the Department.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
HIGH DESERT STATE PRISON (101-3762)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-32

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3762 and asked the Department to comment on the staffing of the new housing units. Mr. Rexwinkel stated decision unit M201 was the Phase IV 560 bed unit expansion. The Department was asking for five additional custody officer positions for FY 2008.

Mr. Skolnik added that the Department had requested the ancillary staff required for the mailroom and property room in Phase IV. The Department currently had three officers who were handling intake, property, and mail.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik stated that there was currently one facility in the State, the Ely State Prison, which handled close custody inmates. Cells had to be doubled up which was a dangerous practice with higher security inmates. The High Desert State Prison had been built to a maximum-security standard and the medium custody beds could be easily converted to close custody beds. Staffing changes were all that was needed for the conversion.

Assemblywoman McClain questioned when the projected numbers for inmates were made. Mr. Skolnik replied that the numbers were made in October 2006. He added that new projections had come out, but he had not yet seen them. The new numbers were supposedly in line with the October projections.

Chairman Parks questioned whether the 70 new additional positions in the High Desert State Prison were for the converted close custody beds. Mr. Skolnik replied that they were. He added that the Department had exceeded their capacity for close custody inmates.

Chairman Parks asked the Department for justification for the additional floor officers for housing units 7 and 8 considering these units were proposed to remain as medium custody units. Mr. Skolnik replied that the working inmates currently housed in units 7 and 8 would be moving into the new phase, and higher security risk inmates were being moved into units 7 and 8.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik replied that the additional culinary staff was needed for two new culinary areas. Four of the six existing culinary areas were presently being used, and the addition of staff would allow all six to be in use. The feeding would be occurring in the units, and the additional staff would help move the food from the culinary areas to the units.

Chairman Parks asked Mr. Skolnik to comment on the need for additional staffing for the central control, mailroom, and property posts. Mr. Skolnik replied that those areas were in the intake unit and were currently understaffed. The three current officers were performing other tasks in addition to the intake functions and were being stretched thin.

In response to question from Assemblywoman McClain, Mr. Skolnik stated the Department would provide the Subcommittee additional information on the exact dates of the phase openings and the staffing needs associated with them.

In answer to a question from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Skolnik replied that the Department provided staff \$7.50 per day to assist personnel with transportation costs to the workplace. He added that the Department's primary difficulty with personnel retention would probably be competing with the expansion in Metro and the criminal justice system expansion that was taking place in Clark County; however, there was a substantial difference between working in a prison and working in a jail, so the Department felt that it could be successful in retaining workers.

Chairman Parks asked Mr. Skolnik to comment on the need for the additional Lieutenant and Sergeant positions and explain how it was proposed to split shift supervisor duties between the two Lieutenant positions assigned to each shift. James Cox, Deputy Director of Operations, Nevada Department of Corrections, stated that because there was going to be a new facility, the positions were needed to staff the new areas. Mr. Skolnik added that in general, the Department was not a well-staffed agency.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to indicate how the recommended number of custody positions that were to provide construction site security was determined and to clarify the funding source for the construction costs of the temporary sally ports at the institution. In addition, he asked the Department to indicate why the personnel costs for the five temporary positions providing security at the construction site at this institution was recommended to be funded through General Fund appropriations in the operating budget and not funding through the respective CIP projects. Mr. Skolnik replied that he would have to consult with staff prior to being able to answer the questions properly. Mr. Skolnik mentioned that there would be a requirement for additional staff to man a secondary sally port so that the Department could continue to run the main institution while the construction was being completed. Mr. Skolnik was not sure whether temporary staff had been previously funded under CIP funds or under the Department's budget.

Chairman Parks asked the Department whether it would consider a second entrance as a possibility during the construction phase. Mr. Skolnik replied that there would be a second entrance.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks in regard to funding for expanded facility operations, Mr. Skolnik stated he would be providing the information to the Subcommittee.

In answer to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik confirmed that the installation of concrete pads, shower cages, and window tinting were not deferred maintenance but rather new construction.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NORTHERN NEVADA CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3717)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-38

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3717 and asked the Department to provide an update on the construction of the modular housing units. Mr. Skolnik stated that if the Department was fully funded, it should be able to complete the construction of the four modular housing units in time to handle

the expected population growth. The Department was exceeding all projections and prior averages of inmate numbers, and the only way the Legislature could reduce the numbers would be to award a "good time" credit. There was going to be a population explosion in the near future unless the Legislature retroactively gave "good time" credits to a large number of inmates. The Department had to prepare for the population explosion by planning the construction of the modular units.

In answer to a question from Senator Rhoads in regard to the continuous problems with underestimating numbers, Mr. Skolnik suggested establishing something equivalent to the Economic Forum that would look at the entire correctional system in the State. He suggested that the current use of a national model was contributing to the problems with estimating the numbers.

Senator Beers asked whether the current process of estimating the prison population was free of political influence. Mr. Skolnik replied that he honestly did not know. He expected that there had always been some level of pressure to minimize the number of inmates being projected, because the Department was so expensive to the State.

Chairman Parks asked Mr. Skolnik to confirm that the modular units were going to be 240 bed structures and that 11 additional positions would be required to provide custody for the facilities. Mr. Skolnik replied that the information was correct.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks regarding the utility costs of the new modular units, Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the utility costs had been inadvertently omitted and the Department was trying to rectify the omission through a budget modification.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department was understaffed in maintenance positions, which caused problems with them being able to provide preventative maintenance on the Department's facilities.

Chairman Parks questioned why additional caseworker staffing was not recommended to coincide with the additional inmate capacity and population of the facility. Mr. Rexwinkel replied that the Department had done comparisons between all the institutions, and the Department was actually short one or two caseworkers. The plan was to wait for the new population projections and then redistribute the caseworkers based on the revised population plan.

Assemblywoman McClain asked Mr. Rexwinkel to clarify his previous response. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the Department had added caseworkers in the budget as additional beds dictated, but in total, the Department was still short caseworkers. There was presently a ratio of 125 inmates to one caseworker. Mr. Skolnik added that if the Department did not have an adequate number of correctional officers, the caseworkers would not be able to function and that the institutions would be locked down.

In response to questions from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department currently had 121 caseworkers. There were a small number of caseworkers that were specifically trained to handle reentry procedures. He would like the Department to be able to spend more money on cross training and cross experience staff development for all of the staff. The only substantive training currently provided was initial and annual training, which

was repetitive in nature. There were approximately six or seven reentry oriented caseworkers in the southern part of the State and none in the northern part. Mr. Skolnik added that approximately 3,000 to 4,000 individuals were released from prison per year.

Chairman Parks asked whether any of the recommended funding for cleaning of air handling units was for units that were recommended to be replaced in the CIP project. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the money was for cleaning the air handling units. Mr. Skolnik clarified that there were air handling units being replaced, but the funding in question was for cleaning the ductwork.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Rexwinkel responded that funding for the water circulation pumps and water heater storage tanks under CIP 07-M14 could possibly be duplicated funding. He added that there might be a couple other duplications in the budget, and the Department would work with staff to identify them.

Chairman Parks questioned whether the paving project was done. Mr. Skolnik replied that the paving was not completed, but he hoped it could be completed in the very near future.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NEVADA STATE PRISON (101-3718)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-45

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3718 and asked the Department to explain building maintenance decision unit M750. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the culinary tables would be replaced for \$47,000; culinary floors would be replaced for \$63,000; the facility would be connected to an emergency generator for \$36,000; the windows in towers one and two would be fixed for \$75,000; the gymnasium would be renovated for \$55,000; a vehicle sally port would be installed for \$62,500; and a rusted water line would be replaced for \$70,000. Mr. Skolnik added that the Department would provide staff a prioritization list.

In response to the additional question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik replied that funding from the inmate welfare account had been used in the distant past to pay for facility renovations.

In answer to Senator Rhoads, Frederick Schlottman, Administrator, Offender Management Division, Nevada Department of Corrections, stated that emergency capacity was the threshold at which the Department went beyond safe operation of a facility. The facility was generally at emergency capacity when two out of every three cells were double-bunked. For camps, it was when every cell was double-bunked. The Department was currently operating at emergency capacity.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Schlottman replied that the Nevada State Prison currently had an emergency threshold of 926 inmates. The current population was 956.

In answer to a question from Chairman Parks regarding the emergency threshold numbers, Mr. Skolnik apologized for any incorrect numbers that may have been mistakenly given to staff.

In regard to a CIP request that had been removed from the budget, Mr. Skolnik

stated it had been removed because the warden's staff had made the repairs.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
SOUTHERN DESERT CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3738)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-51

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3738. Senator Titus questioned how the Department was handling the sexual offender issue. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had identified 23 Tier III offenders that were under supervision of Parole and Probation. There were an additional 150 individuals who were registered in the State but were not under supervision. Mr. Skolnik discussed the possibility of establishing trailers near one of the Department's facilities. Senator Titus added that she had a bill to establish halfway-houses to address the issue with sexual offenders and hoped she could work with the Department and the Subcommittee on the issue.

In answer to a question from Chairman Parks regarding Prison Industries, Mr. Skolnik stated that Prison Industries at the Southern Desert Correctional Center did not have space to expand operations. Prison industries had been working with State Purchasing Division and the Division of State Lands regarding the establishment of an industrial park in the vicinity of the center. Conceivably there could be as much as 700,000 square feet of space for the development of an industrial park which could employ approximately 1,000 inmates.

Assemblywoman McClain asked where the industrial park would be located. Mr. Skolnik stated that it would be on a square of land off of Coal Creek Road, directly across from the sally port road at the Southern Desert Correctional Center.

In answer to a question from Senator Beers regarding the replacement of the head of Prison Industries, Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had been interviewing a number of individuals.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had been talking to the Bureau of Land Management about the possibility of establishing a wild horse program at the Jean Facility. The primary issue would be the availability of federal funding.

In answer to a question from Assemblyman Hogan, Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department would be looking at their caseworker redistribution once they looked at the new population projections.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
LOVELOCK CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3759)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-57

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3759. In response to questions from Chairman Parks regarding the supplemental appropriation for utility costs, Mr. Rexwinkel explained that the Lovelock facility was also affected by energy cost increases. Lori Bagwell, Chief of Fiscal Services, Nevada Department of Corrections, stated that the Department was in the process of updating all of the figures for the supplemental appropriation, and the Lovelock Correctional Center request for personnel costs would be reduced.

In answer to a question from Assemblywoman McClain, Mr. Skolnik stated that

recruitment of personnel was difficult in certain remote areas, but that the staff and facilities in the remote areas were operating well.

Chairman Parks asked why the construction of a new maintenance storage building, at a cost of \$150,000, was not part of the recommended 2007 CIP program. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that a lot of items over a certain dollar amount ended up in the CIP program, but over the years it seemed that some items ended up in the budget. Whether the project was funded through the CIP program or the budget depended on the avenue it came through. In this particular case, the recommendation came from facility condition reports.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
SOUTHERN NEVADA CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3715)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-63

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3715. In response to questions from Chairman Parks regarding the youthful offender concept, Mr. Skolnik stated that the youthful offender concept was no longer exclusively for youthful offenders. The Department had added a core group of older inmates to add stabilization to the institution. He stated that the staff was beginning to make the program work, and the inmates were beginning to partake in the programs available to them. The vehicle restoration program and horticulture program were initially slow to get off the ground, but were now beginning to successfully operate. Mr. Skolnik stated there had been 30 individuals who had received their high school diploma.

In response to a question from Senator Beers, Mr. Skolnik stated that it was common practice in other states to group younger inmates together.

In response to questions from Assemblywoman Weber, James Cox, Deputy Director of Operations, Nevada Department of Corrections, explained that with the introduction of the older inmates, the Center had reduced the number of lockdown days and violence. Mr. Cox noted the bracelet system used at the Center and the number of women housed at the facility. The women were going to be moved back to the women's prison when the new modular unit was completed.

In response to questions from Assemblywoman McClain, Mr. Cox stated that between 80 and 120 inmates were in the high school program and approximately 150 were in programs not related to the high school. There were enough youthful inmates that could be moved to the center to fill the new modular unit. Mr. Skolnik added that most other states had a separate agency within state government to handle the youthful offender population. Youthful offenders were not typically included in the Department of Corrections as part of the adult operations.

In answer to a question from Chairman Parks regarding the new modular unit, Mr. Skolnik stated that the unit would be located behind unit six.

Chairman Parks asked Mr. Skolnik to comment on the inmate tracking system and the reported problems associated with it. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had been working with the Israeli vendor to address some of the issues.

In answer to question from Senator Beers, Mr. Skolnik stated that he felt there was sufficient staffing to operate the inmate tracking system despite the

problems with the system.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to explain why the heat pumps and evaporative coolers recommended to be replaced were not included in the capital improvement project (CIP). Mr. Rexwinkel responded that it was a small item that came through the facility condition reports.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
WARM SPRINGS CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3716)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-69

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3716 and questioned why the paving project under maintenance unit 750 was not included in the Statewide Paving Program CIP project. Mr. Rexwinkel replied that there were several projects included in maintenance unit 750: \$24,570 for the paving project, approximately \$25,000 for replacing floor tiles, \$36,493 for replacing and adding water softener systems, approximately \$60,000 for replacing floor tiles in the culinary area, approximately \$24,000 to replace countertops in the serving line, and \$34,559 to replace walk-in refrigerators. Mr. Skolnik added that the Department would have the warden create a prioritization list.

Assemblywoman McClain questioned the status of the horse-gentling program. Mr. Skolnik replied that the gentling program continued at the Warm Springs facility, and the holding facility continued to operate at the Stewart Camp. The program had been well received, and 15 to 20 horses per quarter were auctioned off. The program was somewhat subsidized by the holding facility, but there were many benefits of the program that made it well worth continuing.

In answer to a question from Vice Chairman Rhoads, Mr. Skolnik stated that certain requirements may have been changed during the budget process which could explain why the paving project was not included in the statewide paving program.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
SOUTHERN NEVADA WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3761)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-74

Chairman Rhoads opened the hearing on BA 3761. In answer to a question from Chairman Rhoads, Mr. Cox replied that the child reunification center was a 10-bed unit located in the transition center outside of the facility. The Department had not yet asked for staffing for the reunification center.

In answer to a question from Assemblywoman McClain, Mr. Cox stated that the 300 bed addition inside the facility and 100 bed transitional center outside of the facility were being completed at the same time.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Skolnik stated that the design of the woman's facility was a poor design and that it would possibly make a good intake center or special-needs facility. Assemblywoman Weber hoped that 21st-century issues could be dealt with despite the outdated design of the facility. Mr. Skolnik stated he hoped the Department could change how the facility was being used.

In response to question from Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik stated that the current facility could be used in the future for intake or special-needs regardless

of whether there was a new facility constructed or not.

Chairman Parks asked Mr. Skolnik to comment on the reunification center and the staffing that would be necessary for the facility. Mr. Cox stated that the Department had been working with the Programs Division and talking about the social worker psychologists, childcare development specialists, and similar positions. The Department had not finalized what was needed in the unit yet.

Assemblywoman McClain asked whether the Department would have to come to the Interim Finance Committee in January 2009 when the reunification center was due to open. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the Department had put the budgets together in July, and at that time, the reunification center operating budget was not completed. There were changes that had to be made. Mr. Skolnik added that when the Department originally developed the budget, the reunification center was not part of it, and it was subsequently added upon request from legislators. He stated that the 10-bed reunification center was slated to open in January 2009, but it would be better for it open in July 2009 to coincide with the opening of the reentry center and additional units. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the staffing for the additional 390 beds was in the budget for January 2009.

Senator Beers questioned whether there was an amendment to fund all of the staffing. Mr. Skolnik responded that there was an amendment coming to provide funding for all 400 beds.

In regard to M202 and M204, Chairman Parks questioned why an additional correctional officer position was needed during the graveyard shift in the extended care unit. Mr. Cox responded that the additional staff in the extended care unit was to help with suicide watches, mental health issues, and safety.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to comment on the need for doubling the size of the maintenance staffing at the facility, including the need for a maintenance positions solely for the new modular housing unit. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department was understaffed in the maintenance unit and it was in the best interests of the State to provide the Department the necessary staff to keep the buildings in good condition so that repairs or replacement was less needed in the future.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to confirm that the recommended amounts for operating and utilities costs should be adjusted to reflect costs for the 400-bed expansion for six months in fiscal year 2008-09. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that there would be a few budget modifications coming. The utility costs would be reduced for the 400-bed expansion by six months.

Assemblyman Hogan questioned whether carefully selected inmates could contribute with building maintenance. Mr. Skolnik stated that the bulk of the maintenance is already performed by inmates.

Assemblyman Hogan asked whether there was a way for inmates with construction experience to be placed into construction jobs upon their release from prison. Mr. Skolnik stated that he was not sure whether that could be accomplished, but he would look into it.

Assemblywoman McClain asked when the electrician program would be started in the women's prison. Mr. Skolnik was not sure when that would be started.

Assemblywoman Weber questioned how many jobs there were for women at the Southern Nevada Women's Correctional Center. Mr. Skolnik stated that there were approximately 20 prison industry jobs. Approximately 7-8 percent of the prison population was engaged in Prison Industries.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
CASA GRANDE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (101-3760)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-80

Chairman Rhoads opened the hearing on BA 3760 and asked how it was determined which prisoners went to Casa Grande or an honor camp. Mr. Skolnik stated that the inmates that went to Casa Grande had a different set of criteria as established by the Legislature than honor camp inmates. Honor camp inmates must have one-year violence free, been within 36 months of probable release, and had no sexual offenses. The Casa Grande inmates must have been five-years violence free, within 120 days of probable release, and had no sexual offenses.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to comment on the inmate population level at the facility and why it had not been able to obtain full occupancy of the facility as budgeted for fiscal year 2006-07. Mr. Skolnik stated that Casa Grande had approximately 200 inmates that currently conformed to the criteria as established. The only way that the Department could fill the facility with inmates ready for transitional release would be to change the entrance criteria.

Chairman Parks questioned why the facility population was higher during the summer months of 2006. Mr. Skolnik replied that the Department had not properly been following the entrance criteria, and once the correction was made the population rapidly declined.

Senator Beers questioned the Department's opinion on what would occur if the criteria was backed off to 3 1/2 years violence free. Mr. Skolnik stated that the five-years violence free was established by the Legislature. Frederick Schlottman, Administrator, Offender Management Division, Nevada Department of Corrections, added the Department had looked at adding minimum custody inmates that were within one year of release. The Department would look at different ways of maximizing the population at Casa Grande upon request.

In answer to Chairman Parks, Mr. Skolnik stated that the criteria were specified in statute and the Department's own administrative regulations. If the statute changed, it would be very easy for the Department to change as well.

In response to a question from Assemblywoman McClain, Mr. Skolnik recommended changing the criteria for both violence-free time and the time to release.

In answer to Assemblyman Hogan, Mr. Schlottman stated that there were many inmates that were minimum custody that could not go to Casa Grande because of the nature of their offense and sentence lengths under five years. There was a very good candidate population for Casa Grande, but the nature of their convicted crimes excluded them.

Assemblywoman Koivisto questioned whether there had been escapees from Casa Grande. Mr. Skolnik stated that there had been a number of individuals

who had not returned from work, and the Department had recaptured all but three. There were inmates who did not return because of substance abuse after work.

Chairman Parks questioned whether any of the inmates who had escaped went on to commit offenses. Mr. Skolnik stated that there had been one individual who went on to commit a murder during a bad drug deal. The inmate had not had a violent history. The Department could not predict how inmates would behave once they were out in the community.

Assemblywoman Weber questioned whether there were any substance abuse programs at the facility. Mr. Skolnik stated that there was a contract with a private provider to provide substance abuse, anger management, and other programs to the inmates.

Chairman Parks asked whether the Department pursued a program to house parole violators and whether there was a mechanism for handling debt service. Mr. Skolnik stated that the facility was not staffed to handle parole violators, and there would have to be staff provided by Parole and Probation to effectively handle that population. If parole violators went to the facility they would need to be separated from the inmate population.

Assemblywoman McClain questioned what the Department's opinion was on putting parole violators in the Casa Grande facility. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department supported the idea. Additional staff would be needed for the facility, but it would be cheaper than placing individuals in the High Desert facility.

Chairman Parks stated that he favored the idea of changing the criteria for current inmates to enter the Casa Grande facility.

In answer to Assemblywoman Weber, Mr. Skolnik stated that there were 16 correctional officers at the facility, and the facility was fully staffed with a total of 22 personnel.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INDIAN SPRINGS CONSERVATION CAMP (101-3725)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-98

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3725 and questioned why an additional correctional officer was being recommended for the boot camp program when there was no increase in the size of the program itself. Mr. Skolnik replied that there would be an expansion in the number of inmates that would be participating in the boot camp. Additional information would be provided to staff.

Chairman Parks questioned the need for a new correctional officer for the gatehouse post. Mr. Skolnik stated that the facility would be a 600-bed facility, and without some kind of management at the front door, an unsafe environment could arise. Additional information would be provided to staff in regard to high-powered lighting, razor wire fencing, and an electronic detection system.

Chairman Parks requested the Department provide information to the staff in regard to staffing for the visitation area.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to comment on the recommended

classification of the clerical position and to describe the proposed duties and responsibilities of this new program officer position. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had the lowest ratio of support staff to inmates in the United States.

In regard to M202, Chairman Parks asked the Department to confirm that the recommended amounts for operating, maintenance, and utilities costs should be adjusted to reflect the facility expansion. Mr. Rexwinkel responded that the Department was reducing utilities costs. There was \$98,110 in the executive budget, and that would be reduced to \$8,229.

Chairman Parks asked the Department to confirm that sufficient work opportunities would be available for inmates housed at the expanded facility. Mr. Skolnik replied that the facility had traditionally been one of the highest revenue generating facilities for the Department of Forestry, and he expected additional work to be available.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
HUMBOLDT CONSERVATION CAMP (101-3741)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-108

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3741. In regard to M750, Chairman Parks questioned whether it was the Department's intent to replace the water tank at the facility. Mr. Skolnik stated that the water tanks would be refurbished, and he would provide additional information to the staff.

In answer to Senator Beers, Mr. Skolnik confirmed that the refurbishment of the facility's water supply tank would cost \$350,000. The Department was also going to be completing work on the flooring of the facility and would be relocating inmates to an undisclosed location while the work was being completed. The Department would provide staff additional information.

In regard to deferred facilities maintenance, decision unit M425, Chairman Parks asked the Department to explain funding for lighting upgrades. Mr. Rexwinkel replied that older lighting was being replaced with energy-efficient lighting, but it had been removed from decision unit M425 because of a duplication of funding for the project.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
JEAN CONSERVATION CAMP (101-3748)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-118

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3748 and asked the Department to justify the need for the one additional correctional caseworker specialist position above the legislatively approved staffing ratio. Mr. Skolnik stated that the Department had exceeded the staffing ratio, but the position was needed. The same staffing ratio was applied to women and men inmates, but "it did not always work."

Chairman Parks questioned whether there should be separate ratios for males and females. Mr. Skolnik was not sure if that could be done because of court issues regarding parity. The Department was capable of looking at the specific needs of an institution to see whether something could be done locally.

Senator Beers asked whether the inmates at the facility were performing similar tasks to those in other conservation camps. Mr. Skolnik replied that they were.

Chairman Parks asked what specific activities the inmates were involved with. Mr. Skolnik replied that there were approximately 11 inmates that were classified as community trustees, which meant they were picked up daily by a business in Las Vegas and returned at the end of the day. The remainder of the women at the facility worked as much as any of the other camps around the State.

Senator Beers asked whether proximity to a large urban area changed the staffing ratio. Mr. Skolnik stated that he did not have an answer to that question, but the Department would get back with that information.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFENDERS' STORE FUND (240-3708)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-138

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3708 and asked the Department to comment on any impact that the replacement of the inmate banking system would have on the reconciliation process. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the Department had two technology investment requests, E514 and E515. One would replace the commissary system and the other was the inmate banking system. The commissary would cost approximately \$384,000. The banking system which would tie into the Nevada Offender Tracking and Information System (NOTIS) would cost approximately \$408,000.

Chairman Parks asked whether everything could be put onto one database server. Mr. Rexwinkel responded that the Department might be able to do away with the old system.

Senator Beers questioned the need for two servers. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that the Department planned to demobilize the AS-400 server.

In answer to Senator Beers, Mr. Rexwinkel stated there was a four-year lease on the AS-400, but he was not sure when the server would be decommissioned.

Chairman Parks questioned the Department on the need for the half-time storekeeper position at Ely State Prison. Mr. Rexwinkel stated that difficulties arose when the current storekeeper took time off, because the operations of the store became difficult to maintain. Mr. Skolnik added that the store needed to be mobile for the camp at Ely, so the additional half position was necessary for that purpose.

In response to a question from Chairman Parks regarding travel expenditures, Mr. Skolnik stated that the costs were associated with the mobility of the store.

PUBLIC SAFETY – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INMATE WELFARE ACCOUNT (240-3763)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-146

Chairman Parks opened the hearing on BA 3763. Mr. Skolnik stated that he had been informed that the Federal Communications Commission was reviewing regulations regarding inmate telephone systems. He suspected that there may be a limit put in place on the amount of revenue the Department could get from the phone systems. He added that the Department may not be affected because Nevada was not one of the highest ranked states in terms of revenue

per inmate from the phone systems.

Joseph Turco, ACLU, Nevada, stated that the operating budget, if administered correctly, could result in a smaller capital budget in the future. The lack of reentry training was a big problem. The Department was not well-staffed or trained, yet the construction of a gymnasium was characterized as a dire emergency, and the maintenance of storage equipment took priority over rehabilitation of inmates. Mr. Turco offered to answer any questions of the Subcommittee in the future.

Chairman Parks adjourned the Subcommittee at 10:59 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Barron Brooks
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:



Assemblyman David R. Parks, Chair

DATE: _____

Senator Dean A. Rhoads, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS			
Committee Name: <u>Assembly Committee on Ways and Means/Senate Committee on Finance Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety/Natural Resources/Transportation</u>			
Date: <u>March 16, 2007</u>		Time of Meeting: <u>8:10 a.m.</u>	
Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster