



**Opening Statement of  
George E. Snyder, Warden  
Rivers Correctional Institution**

**Before**

**The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the  
District of Columbia**

**Regarding**

**Pre-Release Program Offerings at Rivers Correctional Institution**

**Chairman Davis and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:**

My name is George Snyder, Warden of Rivers Correctional Institution, Winton, North Carolina. On behalf of The GEO Group, Inc., I thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the various pre-release programs offered to inmates housed in our facility.

Let me first provide you with an overview of our company and the history of how Rivers Correctional Institution came into existence.

The GEO Group, Inc. is a world leader in the delivery of correctional, detention, and residential treatment services to federal, state, and local governmental agencies around the globe. GEO offers a turnkey approach that includes design, construction, financing, and operations. GEO represents government clients in the United States, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and the United Kingdom. GEO's worldwide operations include 68 correctional and residential treatment facilities with a total design capacity of approximately 59,000 beds.

The National Capital Revitalization Act of 1997 mandated that the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) house District of Columbia sentenced felons in private contract facilities. The BOP subsequently adopted a course of action that included soliciting bids for contract facilities, closing the existing Lorton, Virginia facility, and transferring inmates to contracted facilities.

On March 7, 2000, the BOP signed a contract with The GEO Group, Inc. to design, build, finance, own, operate and manage a low security, adult male facility in Winton, North Carolina. We received our first DC inmates in March of 2001. Located on a 257-acre tract in rural Hertford County, the facility is a campus design with four housing buildings, indoor and outdoor recreational areas, a central programs building, a prison industries building, and an administrative building. The design enables cost-effective utilization of security staff supplemented by modern electronic surveillance, which in turn allows enhanced programmatic activities without significant budgetary implications. Our average inmate population is 1350, with approximately 65 percent (667) of the inmates coming from the District of Columbia. Rivers Correctional Institution is 226 miles from Washington, D.C.

## **Psychology:**

The Psychology Department provides individual and group psychotherapy to those inmates who are court-ordered to participate in treatment, who are referred for treatment by facility management staff, or who volunteer to participate in treatment.

In January of 2008, RCI began preparation for implementation of its nine-month residential drug treatment program. The program will provide a continuum of treatment services to inmates with a documented history of substance abuse problems, and will be conducted within a highly structured regimen of a modified therapeutic community comprised of inmates with similar problems living and working together. In addition to programming incentives, eligible inmates will receive up to one year off of their sentence for successful completion of the program. The following actions have been taken toward implementation of the program:

- Approval and budgeting by the Bureau of Prisons for the program.
- Vacancies for three Drug Treatment Specialists and one Drug Abuse Program Coordinator have been advertised in a variety of formats, i.e., radio, internet, and newspapers, in Virginia and North Carolina. Offers have been made and accepted for two Drug Treatment Specialists.
- Training has been conducted for facility staff regarding the drug abuse programming and inmate eligibility requirements.
- Approximately 25 inmates from the general population have completed application for entrance into the program.
- Expansion of office space for the drug treatment staff in the inmate housing unit is nearing completion.

Full implementation of the program is scheduled to begin May 1, 2008.

## **Unit Management**

Upon entry into the facility, inmates are assigned to a housing unit and, once in the unit, assigned to a unit team. These unit teams manage the inmate's needs throughout his stay at the facility. In unit management, release preparation begins the first day of incarceration and continues until the inmate is released or transferred.

## **VOCATION/EDUCATION**

### **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**

This course is designed for non-English speaking and English speaking persons who are not fluent in the English Language, with a goal of enabling inmates to function at the equivalent of the eighth grade level.

## **ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE)**

This course is designed primarily for adults whose basic skills are below the ninth grade level.

## **PRE-GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (PRE-GED)**

This course is designed to meet and increase the educational needs of inmates who comprehend on or at least a fifth grade level.

## **GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (GED)**

This course is offered as a means for adults with educational skills at the high school level to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma by passing the GED examination.

## **KEYBOARDING**

Keyboarding instruction is designed to teach basic keying skills/procedures, skill building and basic formatting.

## **COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY I AND II**

These programs are designed to teach students how to create, edit and format documents.

## **LIFE SKILLS/PARENTING**

Life Skills focuses on basic motivation-building skills and money management.

## **RELEASE PREPARATION PROGRAM (RPP)**

This program provides life skills that prepare inmates to re-enter the community. The core curriculum is organized into six broad categories: health and nutrition, employment, personal finance/consumer skills, community resources, release requirements, and aspects of personal growth and development. The intensive 10-hour course covers a variety of topics, each chosen to strengthen the individual's chances for successful reentry.

## **VOCATIONAL WOODWORKING TECHNOLOGY**

This course includes instruction in using hand tools, operating portable power tools and stationary power woodworking machines, and focusing on transferable skills.

## **HEAT, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC)**

- This course introduces the student to the basic refrigeration process used in mechanical refrigeration and air conditioning systems.

## **WORKFORCE TRANSITION**

In collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia, this is a work readiness program that prepares the individual inmate to address workforce needs and marketable skills.

## **WHEELS FOR THE WORLD**

The program is designed to help inmates build the necessary skills to master the basic concepts of wheelchair repair.

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY**

Scheduled to begin in May of 2008. The Building Trades Program will be certified through the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), using the nationally recognized "Wheels of Learning" instructional materials, and will be taught by certified instructors from Roanoke-Chowan Community College. The program will accommodate 45 inmates per a 16-week semester. At the completion of this program, inmates will be NCCER certified, and will qualify for entry-level employment in the construction industry.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my summation of a few of the programs offered at Rivers Correctional Institution. I look forward to answering any questions the Subcommittee members may have.