

**REPORT OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**Interim Report:  
Southwest Virginia Satellite  
Training Academy**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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# **Study: Southwest Virginia Satellite Training Academy**

## **Interim Report**

### **Introduction**

The 2006 session of the General Assembly included a section in the Virginia Acts of Assembly, Item 387, Paragraph G, requiring that "The Department of Corrections shall provide a planning report on alternatives for developing a satellite training facility in Southwest Virginia. The report shall consider the potential for cost savings through the provision of training services on a regional basis. Copies of an interim report, including a scope statement and work plan, shall be provided by October 16, 2006, and a final report by April 30, 2007, to the Secretary of Public Safety and the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees."

A work group comprised of Department of Corrections' staff representing institutions, community corrections and administration was established under the direction of the Academy for Staff Development, to identify, gather and review the data, and to develop the proposal as directed by the General Assembly.

### **Background**

The Academy for Staff Development is the primary professional development and training center for DOC employees. Additionally, training is provided for some professional staff from affiliate agencies that work in partnership with the Department.

The Academy for Staff Development (ASD) is a full service residential training facility located on 73 acres of land on state route 6, adjacent to the DOC State Farm Complex in Goochland County. Operation at this location began in May 1993, upon completion of the new facility.

The Goochland academy, as planned in 1990, was comprised of five separate buildings plus a weapons training range:

- administration and classroom (8 classrooms, multi-purpose / large group training space)
- physical skills training center with mock cellblock
- 200 bed residence hall
- food service facility with dining for 157
- combined maintenance and bulk storage building
- a modern automated firearms and chemical agents training facility (located on the James River Correctional Center property adjacent to the Academy)

Later, a farm building located on the James River Correctional Center property was restored to use for simulation training.

The above requirements were based on the scope of services determined as necessary to meet current and projected future staff training needs at that time. This need was based on a projected inmate population growth in the 1990's that would require the building of new institutions and subsequent DOC staff expansion projected to occur into the new millennium. This expansion was predicated on the laws, philosophy and practices that were used to project future offender population growth at that time.

### **Current Condition**

In 1990 when the Training Academy was planned, the Department had a funded level 9,048 positions when adjusted for those which were later transferred to the Department of Juvenile Justice. For FY 2007, the Department has a funded level of 13,739 positions which includes the new and expanded facilities.

Prison expansion, particularly in Southwest Virginia, has led to a significant increase in Corrections' employees in that area. In addition to the five medium security dormitory facilities and seven 150 to 300 bed work centers built in the first half of the 1990s, five new facilities were funded and built. Two of these major prisons were located and built in Southwest Virginia. Presently there are two additional prisons under construction and a third one in the planning phase. Two of the three will be located in Southwest Virginia.

Along with the employee population growth, training requirements have increased due to:

- Legislatively mandated licensure requirements for various employee groups, e.g., substance abuse counselors, sex offender treatment providers, etc.
- The Virginia Board of Corrections has adopted nationally accepted ACA Accreditation training standards for all Virginia DOC employees whether or not their facility is ACA accredited
- Federal and State training mandates, i.e. on going Homeland Security Initiatives (NIMS, required for all employees designated as first responders)
- Compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act
- Continued high employee turnover rate will increase the number of employees requiring entry-level basic skills training as well as supervisory and management development due to projected retirements during the next four to eight years
- The Department's Strategic Plan includes succession planning and employee leadership development to prepare future DOC leaders to replace administrators who retire
- Increase in use of academy space for meetings for large groups such as wardens, P&P Chiefs, mental health professionals, security chiefs, and many others

Academy staffing has increased over the years to meet training increases brought about by Department expansion and new program initiatives. The Academy for Staff Development has been forced to take a number of steps to meet training demand:

- Convert storage, small group meeting space, to office space for training staff
- A third bed has, as a temporary measure, been added to each two-room suite to increase housing capacity from 200 to 246. (While this has been necessary at times, it creates an overcrowded condition disliked by employees in training and one that is not consistent with the Department's desire to provide a supportive and effective workplace)
- Expand mealtimes and stagger class mealtimes to accommodate the increase in attendance

- Utilize / restrict storage space due to accreditation / health and safety standards
- Deny requests for training and meeting space due to high occupancy

Tremendous growth over the past 10 to 15 years coupled with continued employee growth into the future and increased training requirements, dictate the need for additional training space. Given the distance between the Academy for Staff Development and the current and projected future DOC employee population in Southwest Virginia, consideration must be given locating a satellite training academy in Southwest Virginia to more efficiently meet the training needs of these employees.

## **Southwest Virginia Satellite Training Academy Proposal**

### Scope of Study

This study will gather and report information and present recommendations regarding establishing a satellite training academy in Southwest Virginia. The information provided will include:

- Information regarding the need to expand DOC employee training including the need to establish a satellite training academy in Southwest Virginia
- Options for establishing a satellite training academy in Southwest Virginia, including:
  - renovation of existing facilities available adjacent to the Marion Correctional Treatment Center
  - lease/purchase and renovation of existing facility in area identified as central to DOC employee population in Southwest Virginia
  - new construction of a facility on state or privately owned land

- The impact of increasing the use of distance learning technology on overall DOC training needs and establishing a Satellite facility in Southwest Virginia
- Location options for Southwest Virginia satellite training academy
- Projected staffing and operating costs of Southwest Virginia satellite training academy
- Impact on operating costs of the Academy for Staff Development in Goochland, County
- Impact on future expansion of Academy for Staff Development in Goochland County
- Other considerations and assumptions regarding the overall need and impact of establishing a Southwest Virginia satellite training academy

#### Study Work Plan

- A study work group representing Southwest Virginia institutions, community corrections, regional and central administration, and academy administration, was established to:
  - identify and review the scope of the study
  - gather and analyze information regarding need to expand training, current cost, size, training capacity and resource needs (including impact of increasing distance learning capabilities) of facility
  - gather and review overall cost data and impact of employee travel to Goochland Academy
  - identify geographic center of employee population and other factors that should be considered in determining location

- identify options for creating a satellite training academy, e.g. renovation, new construction, etc., along with associated costs
- identify projected operational costs for a satellite training facility in Southwest Virginia
- review short-term and long term-impact on DOC training, including projected future cost savings
- present recommendations regarding establishing a Southwest Virginia satellite training academy identifying the most effective and cost efficient option for doing so

### **Study - Current Status**

The Southwest Virginia Satellite Training Academy Study Work Group has been meeting since May 2006. Group members have gathered and analyzed information and met to review additional findings. Group members are continuing to gather data and are committed to identifying the most effective and cost beneficial option to recommend for consideration by the Department of Corrections, the Secretary of Public Safety, and the Senate Finance and House Appropriation Committees.