

Joe Schmidt

Commissioner

P.O. Box 112000

Juneau, AK 99011-2000

www.corrections.state.ak.us



Richard Schmitz

Special Assistant

907.465.4640

cell: 907.723.1031

richard_schmitz@correct.state.ak.us

Press Release

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INMATE COMMUNITY WORK SERVICE TEAM CLEARS 5.2 TONS OF TRASH FROM MAT-SU ROADSIDES

JUNEAU – In five weekends, a team of inmates from Palmer Correctional Center has cleared 10,470 pounds of trash from roadsides in the Mat-Su Valley. The program began July 14.

A Department of Corrections Community Work Service team from Palmer Correctional Center – comprised of 11 inmates under the supervision of Correctional Officers – has worked the past five weekends alongside the Glenn Highway from Sutton to the Parks Highway interchange, the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and the Parks Highway frontage road south of Wasilla.

The CWS team is also working with the Knik Tribal Council to provide cleanup, brush cutting and fence repairs at the Council's cemetery located at Mile 15 of the Knik-Goose Bay Road. In addition, the crew cleaned the Moose Creek campground.

"This program allows minimum custody inmates to give something back to the community," said Commissioner Joe Schmidt. "Inmates are not paid for their time, they do not get credit for court-ordered CWS, and are not compelled to take part. This is an opportunity for an offender to help the community in which they have caused harm."

The CWS crew is deployed on weekends, and some recyclable materials are separated from the collected trash. Inmate volunteers may not be sex offenders and must be minimum custody.

The department may expand the program to other communities, after assessing public input, the Commissioner said.

Work service programs have a fairly significant history in the department. Beginning in 1992, Palmer, Wildwood, Spring Creek and Lemon Creek correctional centers – working with local governments and non-profits – cleared trash from roadsides, state parks, campgrounds and trails, cut firewood for seniors, built portable wheelchair ramps and public viewing stands along the Kenai River.

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