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PRESS RELEASE

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HILAND MOUNTAIN EDUCATION COORDINATOR NAMED OUTSTANDING BUSINESS/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

JUNEAU -- R.C. Fisher, education coordinator at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center, is determined to see his incarcerated students learn to the best of their abilities. He calls it his "No Prisoner Left Behind" initiative.

Fisher was named Outstanding Business/Information Technology Teacher of the Year (2005-06) by the Alaska Career and Technology Education Program at its annual Professional Development Conference Awards Luncheon in Anchorage on October 13. The Department of Education program recognizes individuals and their programs for contributions in the field of career and technical education.

"The reality in my eyes is that one day the prisoner will be released back into our neighborhoods and society," Fisher said. "If I can equip that prisoner with viable skills and certifications to land them a good job, maybe we can assist in stopping the revolving door syndrome."

"This is a well-deserved honor," said Corrections Commissioner Marc Antrim. "Under Fisher's guidance, Hiland Mountain Correctional Center has one of the most aggressive Information Technology training programs of any prison facility in the nation. It's really quite impressive."

Inmates in the prison's IT program learn to repair computers, set up networks, and design and manage databases. Hiland Mountain offers inmates courses and certifications in a number of IT programs and is an authorized Microsoft Office Specialist Training and Testing Center. HMCC is also an authorized Certiport IC3

Training and Testing Center and is certified as a CompTIA A+ Computer Repair Service Center.

The program has become a template for similar efforts at other correctional facilities in Alaska.

“The public should take notice that prisoners are not just doing time at our facilities, but some are choosing to make their time work for them,” Fisher added.

In the awards presentation speech, Fisher was described as “one of those perpetually upbeat people who really and truly loves his job. He has a great passion for what he does and he believes his student can achieve great things.”

In a letter nominating Fisher for the award, a former student and inmate wrote: “I wanted you to know that people like you in the Department of Corrections really do make a difference, and I am the proof. Please encourage the others with this information: if a three-time felon can get out and live the life I now have, then surely everyone there can do it.”

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