WELCOME TO THE COMMISSIONER’S CORNER: I hope you will continue to check in with this column. I will continue to feature information on department issues. If you have ideas, issues or suggestions from institutions or field offices, please submit them to Richard_Schmitz@correct.state.ak.us or call 465 4640.

GOVERNOR AT COMPLEX TO SIGN ‘TOUGH ON CRIME’ BILLS:
Governor Frank H. Murkowski will be at the Anchorage Complex Wednesday to put his signature on six ‘tough on crime’ bills passed by the legislature this year. These bills include:
- HB 54, by Rep. Samuels and Rep. Stoltze, will reduce strain on the court system by imposing three requirements in the bail hearing process. HB 54 also changes some court rules to allow a victim to be introduced to a jury.
- HB 88, a Governor’s bill, addresses school violence and weapons crimes by minors.
- HB 136, by Rep. Rokeberg, expands the scope of “wellness courts.”
- SB 135, by Sen. Dyson, provides additional protection for children in custodial interference cases.
- SB 154, by Sen. Therriault, streamlines aspects of juvenile justice proceedings.

Read an analysis of this legislation HERE.

ALASKA CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES FEATURED: The Summer, 2005 edition of the National Correctional Industries Association newsletter features an article by Dawn Mattson on Alaska Correctional Industries. Read the article at this LINK.

POINT MACKENZIE BARBECUE DRAWS 150: Grill meats, salads and deserts were featured at the annual Point Mac barbecue, which drew a record
crowd of about 150 including state legislators, local residents and department staff and their families.

Not too long after, Juneau corrections staff met for a lunch barbeque to kick off the July 4th holiday weekend.
SPRING CREEK HOSTS MOCK JOB FAIR: The correctional center’s Youthful Offender Program was the focus of a mock job fair that drew 65 inmates to a day of training and seminars, all designed to build preparedness for release. Business owners, representatives of service agencies, professional organizations and education providers provided expertise. Other volunteer participants included the Associated General Contractors, Alaska Operating Engineers, NANA management, Frostbite Builders, Safeway and National Bank of Alaska. An expanded job fair, designed to include actual employers, has been tentatively set for May 8, 2006.

CITY WRONG ON PRISONER TRANSPORT: Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bill Tandeske and I responded to news reports in the Anchorage Daily News. Here’s a link to the op-ed which appears in the VOICE OF THE TIMES.
**TRANSFORMATIONAL LIVING COMMUNITY RECEIVES AWARD:** The Transformational Living Community program at Palmer Correctional Center and Alaska Correctional Ministries was selected one of five semi-finalists in the national Partners in Transformation contest. Alaska was one of 10 states invited to participate in the contest, designed to identify, recognize and award faith-based organizations that effectively work with agencies outside the faith community to benefit those in need. Judges based their selections on a program’s positive outcomes.

The TLC celebrated its first year in February. Many inmates applied to take part in the program – 32 were accepted. Residents deal with life-controlling issues such as anger, substance abuse, criminal mentality and character development. Kudos to Chaplain Mike Ensch!

The contest, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Point of Light Foundation, was sponsored by the Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN). Thirty Alaska organizations were among the 470 total to take part in the contest. From these 30, five were selected as semi-finalists. Here’s this from Stephanie Wheeler, Executive Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: “Our heartfelt congratulations (goes out) to these winners and all of the organizations that are working in faith, community and government partnerships to improve the lives of all Alaskans.”

**EMPLOYMENT UPDATE:** Employment statistics for May are as follows:

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