

**Scott Walker**  
Governor

**Ed Wall**  
Secretary



Mailing Address

3099 E. Washington Ave.  
Post Office Box 7925  
Madison, WI 53707-7925  
Telephone (608) 240-5000  
Fax (608) 240-3300

## State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections

---

July 8, 2015  
By Brandon Best  
For Immediate Release

Contact: Joy Staab  
(608) 240-5060

### **FLCI Local Academy Graduates First Class of Officers**

**Fox Lake, Wis.** – The Department of Corrections graduated the first class of 26 officers from the new local training center at Fox Lake Correctional Institution (FLCI). The local academy utilized the Kolb Center, firing range, and FLCI as techniques to train the officers. This was the first training done outside of the DOC Central Office in an attempt to recruit more employees and fill vacancies in Region 7 to reduce the strain of staffing shortages.

Deputy Secretary Deidre Morgan, John Paquin, Assistant Administrator of the Division of Adult Institutions, and Randall Hepp, warden at FLCI, all addressed the graduates. The ceremony took place in the Kolb Center at FLCI on July 3.

Morgan noted the “vibrancy and energy” at the ceremony and welcomed the graduates entering into the history of the DOC. “Our new officers have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to the Department of Corrections throughout their training,” Morgan said. “Now you have earned the right to take the first step into a journey that started in 1851 and will continue long after you’re all gone”

Hepp also embraced the significance of the date and instructed all the officers to remember July 3, 2015. He said, “You will never again be known simply by your name. After your name will be ‘comma’ Correctional Officer. It will be reflected by your family, by your friends, and by people that you happen to meet.”

Hepp explained the being a correctional officer has many “unique aspects in how it will change your life.” As correctional officers, the graduates are entering into “a unique and elite group of people.” The graduates will also become “among the most interesting people at any social gathering you go to.”

Joan Gerl, Director of the Correctional Officer Pre-service program, recognized Officers Susan Mertha and Katie Schmitz for scoring the highest in the cumulative academic testing. Gerl recognized Officer Nathaniel Vogt for scoring the highest in firearms qualification among the class.

Mertha applied to be a correctional officer because she enjoys helping people and working as a part of a team. “We put a lot of effort into these last seven weeks,” she said.

Officer Melissa Lange, another graduate, said the training was “a big eye opener. The public doesn’t really know what goes on behind the doors of a prison.”

Lange added the local training “absolutely” gave her an opportunity to know more of the people she will be working with since she will be working at the same place she trained. “We’ve got each other’s backs.”

The Correctional Officer Pre-service Training Program is a seven week, 280 hour mandated, intensive training program which includes lecture, discussion, role-play, competency based performance and academic examinations. The objective of the program is to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of the trainee to effectively perform their official duties- the security, care, custody, control and rehabilitation of inmates.

In addition to the academic examinations, each trainee must also successfully qualify with the semiautomatic rifle and pump action 12 gauge shotgun, participate in incapacitating agent use and exposure and successfully complete the Principals of Subject Control (POSC) training. They are certified in CPR/AED and First Aid, have been trained in the use of electronic control devices, emergency situations, fire science, radio communications, key control, mental health issues, suicide prevention, restraints, transportation and managing manipulative inmates.

“Wisconsin has one of the greatest correctional systems in the United States and that is because of the people who are a part of the department now and who built the foundation we now stand on,” Hepp concluded. “Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and thank you all for being strong enough, courageous enough and willing to join us.”

The graduates will report to their assignments at Fox Lake, Waupun, Dodge, Kettle Moraine, and Taycheedah Correctional Institutions. The next Local Academy Preservice training will begin at Jackson Correctional Institution on July 27.

Elizabeth Tegels, Warden of Jackson Correctional Institution, said, “[The local academies] allow people who may not have an opportunity to travel outside the region to come into the field of corrections.” She added the local academies “generate a lot of positive talk and educates the community about what our agency does.”



