

Message from the Secretary

August 1, 2022

One of the many things I love about my job is being able to get out into the community and meet with people. Strengthening relationships and engaging with the public is a top priority for this administration and for me, personally. I believe relationships and conversations drive change and make a positive difference in the lives of others and in our communities.

This summer, I've gotten the chance to meet with various people and groups around the state. I've been able to celebrate people's successes such as graduations, while also hearing about people's concerns and experiences.

I want to share with you some of the important events I've attended just this summer. While there were many more, these were some of the highlights:

June in particular was quite busy. We kicked the month off with the Progress Flag raising at our Central Office location on **June 1**. The following day, **June 2**, I met with WISDOM, an advocacy group for the persons in our care, to discuss their questions and concerns. WISDOM is a statewide network, whose members advocate for the rights of justice-involved individuals, and for change in the criminal justice system.

On **June 10**, I had the honor of attending Agent Basic Training Graduation at the Training Center in Central Office. I spoke to the new class of Probation and Parole agents, as they embark on their new journey as public servants.

Just a week later on **June 17**, in celebration and honor of Juneteenth, I attended the flag raising at the state Capitol. Later that day, I spoke to DOC staff at the flag-raising ceremony at our Central Office location.

On **June 28**, [Camp Reunite](#) was able to hold its first in-person event at Taycheedah Correctional Institution since COVID-19. I visited with mothers and their children as they reunited and enjoyed quality time together. The following day, **June 29**, I served as a keynote speaker at [Trinity's Graduation](#) for the persons in our care graduating with a four-year degree at Waupun Correctional Institution.

On the last day in June, **June 30**, I spoke at the Correctional Officer Pre-Service Graduation Ceremony and celebrated new officers joining our agency. I am encouraged by the high caliber of officers joining the different institutions across our state. I would be remiss not to recognize our staff across the agency for putting in countless hours of overtime and working tirelessly, despite significant staff shortages. I am excited to share with you that this summer, the number of candidates in training to become Correctional Officers has been increasing. Slowly, but surely, our efforts to increase recruitment, are paying off. For anyone curious about our staffing numbers, please be sure to reference our [staffing and vacancy dashboard](#).

July was another busy month. I had the pleasure of meeting with the Badger State Sheriffs' Association on **July 11**! The Association's mission is to continually improve law enforcement services to citizens. The collaboration between our agency and county partners is critical to the success of our state and the safety of its citizens.

On **July 26**, I attended and spoke at the [Madison College Graduation](#) for persons in our care receiving a degree in a remodeling and construction program. Just two days later, on **July 28**, I traveled to Moraine Park Technical College, where men at John Burke Correctional Center received certification through a welding program. Our agency is so proud of the partnerships we have with the Wisconsin Technical College System. I take great pride in helping folks get the training they need to earn a living wage upon release, while also helping our communities and employers tackle the staffing shortages statewide.

This **August** there's much more – like this week! I'm traveling to Camp Reunite at Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution for its first in-person camp for fathers. I'm looking forward to meeting with the fathers as they spend quality time with their children. The trauma-informed care Camp Reunite utilizes is highly impactful and healing for both parents and children involved.

August 4-7 I'll be rounding out this busy summer by attending the National Conference for Correctional Leaders Association. It's an opportunity for many of the leaders and staff in Corrections nationwide to meet, share best practices, ask questions and learn from one another. It is also a great opportunity for me to promote all of the great work done every day by the incredible staff within the Wisconsin Department of Corrections!

As always, it is a privilege to celebrate our people's successes, meet with various community members and listen to people's experiences and stories. Being engaged in the community in such a way helps foster change and impact lives.

It allows us to live out DOC's vision: To achieve excellence in correctional practices while fostering safety for victims and communities. Every Person – Every Family – Every Community Matters.

Kevin A. Carr, DOC Secretary