

The Green Sheet

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Michael C. Potteiger
Chairman

CENTRAL OFFICE PHONE
717.787.5699

INMATE INQUIRY
717.772.4343

WEB SITE
www.pbpp.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole

www.pbpp.state.pa.us

Two Parole Agents Awarded Medal of Valor

The Federal Bureau of Investigation held its Honorary Medals Ceremony on Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2012 at the J. Edgar Hoover Building in Washington, D.C.

Parole Agents Thomas J. Pekar and Bruce D. Schmolke were two of this year's award recipients along with two Pittsburgh Police Detectives who earned the Medal of Valor.

The FBI Medal of Valor is presented in recognition of an exceptional act of heroism or voluntary risk of personal safety and life. This act must have occurred in the direct line of duty or within the scope of FBI employment and in the face of criminal adversaries.

As described by the FBI event program: "While serving a federal arrest warrant for a dangerous drug trafficking suspect in November 2008, a multi-jurisdictional arrest team encountered gunfire upon entry into the subject's residence. Shots from a resident inside the house fatally wounded FBI Agent Samuel S. Hicks. Without concern for their own safety, Parole Agents Pekar and Schmolke and the Pittsburgh Detectives

pulled SA Hicks from the foyer and carried him to a position of cover to administer first aid and call for assistance."

Agents Pekar and Schmolke were included among 26 award groups recognized in four award categories: FBI Star, Medal of Valor, Shield of Bravery and Meritorious Achievement. Congratulations again to Parole Agents Pekar and Schmolke for their honorary service.



With their images on screen, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III presents Parole Agents Pekar and Schmolke with their awards.



Prior to the awards ceremony, Chairman Potteiger (far left), Pittsburgh District Director Larry Ludwig and Parole Agents Pekar and Schmolke pose before the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives wall.



A nation-wide day of recognition for America's Veterans is officially celebrated each year on November 11th

Focus on Veteran offenders year-round effort

The goal of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole's reentry program is to provide individually tailored continuity of service for each offender, thus maximizing their ability to succeed in the community.

Getting offenders who have veteran status on track with the services they need is crucial to their reentry success. That's where Parole Agent Paul Wehrman of the Board's Lancaster Sub-Office comes in.

Agent Wehrman has been an agent for nearly 18 years. After starting with the Board in the Reading Sub-Office, he transferred to the Lancaster Sub-Office in 2000. Following this move, he assumed a caseload in Lebanon County that included the Lebanon VA Medical Center, which has several units available to address behavioral health issues.

When asked about his work with veterans, Agent Wehrman explained that he supervises a general caseload that includes veterans at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. "I don't necessarily consider myself a 'specialist' [in veteran issues]; just an agent who happens to cover a program that specializes in services for veterans."

Other agents throughout the state also cover similar programs, such as: Coatesville VA, Supervisor Tom Laysen's unit; Butler VA, Supervisor Mitchell Swanger's unit; and the Pittsburgh VA, Supervisor Tim Wolfe's unit.

"The Lebanon VA just happens to be the entry point for incarcerated veterans," Agent Wehrman explained.

"The other offices have approved a streamlining effort in order to have offenders transfer from Lebanon to their respective VA so that there is a continuity of services and bed dates are coordinated. This has greatly improved the process and has allowed veterans the ability to work on their recovery without the anxiety of wondering if parole will allow them to transfer. These offices and supervisors have been instrumental in the process."

Agent Wehrman works closely with staff around the state on veteran's issues. "I routinely assist institutional staff and field staff with placing veterans," Agent Wehrman said. "Our institutional staff is aware of the veterans. I send them emails on what is needed in order for an incarcerated veteran to enter the VA. Field agents have assisted offenders with admittance to the substance abuse unit at the VA. Some are aware that we have a designated agent and others find out after I notify them that I have seen their offender. I will then make contacts for that respective agent until it is known what the offender will be doing - either staying in their long term program or transferring to another program after the 21-day drug and alcohol inpatient unit."

On the offender side of the process, Agent Wehrman conducts a quarterly presentation on supervision for



veterans in the reentry program. "I cover a variety of aspects that pertain to them once they move into the community, such as fines and costs, domestic relations, outstanding warrants, driver's license suspensions, as well as other topics.

"Aside from the obvious regarding compliance with supervision, I assist them in identifying an appropriate plan prior to completing the VA's Reentry Unit, which is up to 9 months long," Wehrman continued. "Being familiar with many of the VA affiliated alternatives, I can provide insight as to which ones may fit their needs. I then facilitate the transfer to our appropriate office once the VA staff has completed their referral and approval."

Agent Wehrman estimated that approximately 15% of the offenders under Board supervision are veteran offenders, and their offenses run the gamut of crimes committed. One of the most pressing issues for veteran offenders is homelessness. "It's a large one," Agent Wehrman said.

However, after working with offenders for so many years, Agent

Focus on Veterans

Wehrman does have some positive stories to share about some of his veteran offender cases – these two in particular.

The first story: “I supervised an offender who successfully completed parole (after a few sanctions). He is now employed by the VA and doing well. I see him regularly and he enjoys his role with the VA working in their food service. He owns a boat and routinely goes fishing off the New Jersey coast with other veterans.”

The second story: “I currently have an offender who was employed by the VA before being incarcerated for aggravated assault. He was paroled to the Lebanon VA Reentry Unit, successfully completed it after nine months and has since been reinstated by the VA. He is well respected by staff as a Certified Nursing Assistant.”

An offender with veteran status who is on parole may be eligible for services through the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These services include:

- Help with obtaining another copy of the DD-214 discharge papers if they have been lost or destroyed. The DD-214 papers allow a veteran to receive VA services no matter where he is located
- Substance abuse treatment
- Vocational and independent living skills programs
- Community Transitional Residence Programs
- A supportive and structured community placement to help veterans live and work successfully outside of an institution
- Ongoing support and case management, including reentry group and individual counseling sessions
- Coordination of treatment with local, state and federal probation and parole agencies to ensure seamless services and support to veterans
- Hospice Care
- Mental health treatment

VA Medical Centers	Altoona	Butler	Coatesville	Erie	Lebanon	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Wilkes-Barre
Outpatient Services								
Doctor Visits	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Preventive Care	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Routine Immunizations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Routine Gynecological Exams	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Inpatient Services								
Medical Care	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Surgery	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Transplants								
Mental Health Services								
Psychiatric Outpatient	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Psychiatric Inpatient								
Substance Abuse Outpatient	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Substance Abuse Residential/Inpatient								
Long-Term Care Services								
VA Nursing Home Care	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Adult Day Health								
Home Health Care								
Other Services								
Hospice Care	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Overnight Lodging (Hoptel)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Pharmacy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Dentistry	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Physical Therapy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Audiology	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Speech Pathology	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Radiation Therapy								
Special Eligibility Exams	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Women Veterans Services	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) / Intensive Therapy (IT)
- Grant per diem housing
- HUD-VASH (VA Supported Housing)

To be eligible, an offender must:

- Be eligible for VA care
- An honorable or general under honorable conditions discharge from the military after 24* consecutive months of active duty (*Exceptions may apply)
- Special benefits for returning Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) combat veterans
- Willingness to participate in all aspects of treatment and programming by adhering to all policies, rules and regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Approved for release on parole. The VA cannot provide custodial care.

Lastly, Agent Wehrman had these final words to share. “The VA is willing to assess any veteran offender and will make the appropriate referral in order to address the specific needs of the offender. Their Reentry Unit is a great resource providing housing, employment, and/or counseling specific to what their needs are.”

Corrections II Connections:

Offenders attend 1st Annual Career Fair 2012 in Berks County

U.S. Corrections statistics support the concept: recidivism rates are nearly cut in half for offenders with full-time jobs compared to those who are unemployed.

Knowing this, the Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) of Berks County created an offender-friendly career fair: Corrections II Connections.

OWDS reached out to numerous employers across Berks County as well as service providers and brought them together to reach their target audience: unemployed or underemployed individuals on state parole, county probation/parole, juvenile probation and domestic relations.

The goal of the program is to provide a venue for individuals in the criminal or civil justice system with networking opportunities with potential employers and service providers. At day's end, 170 individuals attended the employment fair.

Parole Agent Lisa Cope of the Allentown District Office was the key organizer of this event for the Board. "OWDS was a wonderful experience. If any Board staff has the opportunity to take the course, I highly recommend it. It was 180 hours, a lot of work and a great learning experience, especially with all of the networking opportunities that emerge from it.

"Team Berks really came together today," Agent Cope stated. "I am so excited for this job fair

and the great community relationships that we are building. This is the start of a program that we hope to build and grow over the years to come. I am really having fun with this today."

Allentown District Director Christy Ulrich echoed Agent Cope's sentiments. "I support this program 100%. Our ASCRA's [Assessment, Sanctioning and Community Resource Agents] are invested in this program and it is great community relations," Ulrich said.

"Lisa has done a great job. She took this program and ran with it and I am riding her coattails. Hopefully, with this great turnout today, other employers will see the benefit and it will grow next year."



Job fair attendees fill out applications and meet with potential employers and service providers.



Team Berks OWDS

Board personnel involved with this event were: Agent Lisa Cope, Deputy District Director Rich Dreisbach, District Director Christy Ulrich, Reentry Specialist Luis Rosa, Reentry Director Rich Podguski, Philadelphia Parole Agents Cedric Smith and Chris Stephens, Altoona Parole Agents Joseph Gaut and Mike Corson, Central Region Director Kelly Evans and Chairman Michael C. Potteiger.



Corrections II Connections: Nicholas

Meet Nicholas. He is 23 and lives in Berks County. At age 18 he committed his first crime: criminal trespass. At age 22, he committed his second crime: DUI. He is a two-time offender before the age of 25. But his past wasn't his focus on the afternoon of August 22, 2012 – his future was.

Nicholas was one of the first individuals to walk through the doors at the Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Sinking Spring to attend the Corrections II Connections Offender Friendly Career Fair. The event was hosted by the Offender Workforce

Development Specialists (OWDS) of Berks County.

And he was the very first one to receive a job offer that same day.

"I am stunned," Nicholas said just minutes after he secured his new employment. "I can't believe it. I am so excited. I wanted to get here early and see what was here and meet and talk with people. I wasn't even here 30 minutes and I got the job offer." His new job is working for a local Dairy Queen franchise.

"I have been looking hard for the last two weeks



Nicholas talks with his new employer above. At right, Nicholas prepares for his future.



since I was released (from Berks County Prison)," Nicholas said. "My new boss told me to be there at 5 o'clock. I plan to be there at 4:30. This is a new start. I want to get my life back on track."

And Nicholas has definite plans for his future. "I have great family support. I am enrolling in a 1-2 year HVAC trade school program. Friends of mine went through the program and started their own company. After I finish the program, they have offered me a job with their company. I like it much better on the outside, than in. It is legit that today is a new beginning for me."

Corrections II Connections: Fred

Meet Fred. He is 47. He lives in Berks County. He has been locked up for most of the last 12 years. Most recently, his last stint inside was 32 months. Fred will tell you – his past bad decisions revolved around drugs and alcohol. Fred just started the Berks County Reentry Program.

"This last time I was in, I finally woke up," Fred stated. "In all my years before, I was all about not working with my PO, avoiding the truth at all costs and just making bad choices and decisions. Now, I have finally turned it around. I am open. I am

honest. I work with my PO and I see that she is trying to help me. It's amazing the good things that can happen to you when you are open and honest."

"This last time I was in, I did my programming and made it mean something. I didn't just breeze. I worked and not because they asked me to, but because I wanted to," Fred said. "I have learned a lot about myself in recovery and most importantly, the work has to come from within."

Fred talked about the importance of the job fair to him. "This was a great

Below, Fred talks with one of the service providers. At right, Fred discusses his future.



opportunity. Going in I felt more at ease because I already knew the employers knew I have a past. I did a mock interview and learned from that. I found a service provider who is going to help me with the ups and downs in my new relationship so it works out. I was able to talk to a lot of people in there who really care about me and want to help me get back on track and be successful. Life is good when you are open and honest."

Corrections II Connections: Peter

Meet Peter. He is 36. He has a criminal background that includes robbery, drugs and DUI. His most recent offense was a 6-12 year sentence for burglary. He will be on parole until 2026.

Peter’s thoughts on the job fair: “I want to get steady employment and be more responsible than I have been. It was easier to come in here today knowing that I don’t feel like I have to hide anything. The employers in there know I have a past.

“After being in [prison] for a while, I came out feeling kinda lost,” Peter added. “I have been working really hard to get a job, and I actually had two job offers but they were at the same time as when I am in school for machine tool technology so I couldn’t take them. I had an interview here (at the job fair) and it went really well so I am hoping it will work with my school schedule. This event has been very helpful by getting me to talk and interview with employers. I was a member of Agent Cope’s last employment group and she was very helpful in giving me guidance, support and where to look for a job.”



From left to right are: Deputy District Director Rich Dreisbach, Agent Lisa Cope, Peter and District Director Christy Ulrich.

Board staff participate in National Night Out

Tuesday, August 7, marked National Night Out across the country. Historically, the event is meant to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, town watch, neighborhood watch, and other anti-crime efforts. The event also allows interaction between law enforcement officials – including parole agents and staff – and the community. Photos of Board staff from across the state are featured here.



Allentown National Night Out
Above, Deputy District Director Dreisbach poses with law enforcement officials.



Jim Thorpe National Night Out

National Night Out (continued)

At left, Philadelphia District ASCRA Agent's Smith and Stephens along with the residents of the 24th Police District participated in this anti-crime community based fellowship.



Philadelphia District Office National Night Out



McKeesport National Night Out



Northside Pittsburgh National Night Out



At left, Agents Anderson and Parson talk with a Harrisburg City police officer. Below, Chairman Potteiger talks with neighborhood children.

Harrisburg National Night Out



Altoona National Night Out



At left, Altoona District Office Parole Supervisors Makin and Weller man the information table at their NNO event in Altoona.



Franklin Sub Office National Night Out



Franklin Sub-Office Agents Breth, Coslett, and Oberlander partnered with the Franklin Police Department in an effort to build police-community relationships. This effort included visiting the 11th Street playground in Franklin (where an increasing amount of drug paraphernalia was discovered recently), the Arbors in Franklin (which is a low income housing unit in a high crime area with heavy drug activity), Pacific Street in Franklin (a high crime area), and a trailer court in Cooperstown (also is a high crime area). While working at National Night Out, agents found evidence of drugs and drug paraphernalia during their visits and arrests were made by the police.

Newest Board Member sworn in

On Monday, October 15th, Randy Feathers was sworn in by Blair County Judge Daniel J. Milliron to become the newest Board Member. Mr. Feathers has over 30 years of progressive law enforcement experience beginning as a police officer in Washington, D.C. in 1981. Much of his work has focused on drug investigation and enforcement starting with the Altoona Police Department's Narcotics and Vice Unit from 1982 until 1988. Since 1988, he worked for the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General Bureau of Narcotics where he held positions of increasing responsibility. In 2005 he was appointed the director of the State College regional office of the Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigations and Drug Control. As director, he oversaw investigations in 15 of Pennsylvania's counties and supervised over 5,000 drug investigations, including the arrest of approximately 1,300 subjects. Mr. Feathers was unanimously approved by the Senate on October 3, 2012, to begin his term as a Board Member.



From left: Judge Milliron, Board Member Feathers and Chairman Potteiger.

Agent recognized for a rescue as a Boy Scout leader

Late in the morning of June 16, 2012, a group of Boy Scouts and their leaders – one of whom was Parole Agent Aaron Forringer of the Philadelphia West Office – were hiking on the Falls Trail at Ricketts Glen State Park. As they were hiking, the group was approached by a young man who told them his father had fallen into the gorge and needed help. While the young man ran to the top of the trail to call for help where he could receive cell phone service, two Boy Scouts and leaders descended into the gorge and located the injured hiker, who had landed in a sitting position about 5 feet from the water's edge.

Because of a possible spinal cord injury, the hiker was stabilized in the position he was in and wrapped in

emergency blankets and the rocks around him were removed.

The other troop leader was able to access 911 and informed them of the hiker's condition, location and that a Stokes Litter and full rope rescue would be required. The EMTs and rescue personnel arrived on the scene 2 hours and 45 minutes later with a Stokes Litter and equipment to extricate the victim. The Scouts and Agent Forringer assisted the EMT in securing the victim to a back board and into a Stokes Litter, and then helped carry the victim up the 35-foot gorge. Rescue personnel carried him down to an ATV and later airlifted him to a hospital.

A medical report on the hiker received later by the Boy Scout troop conveyed that the hiker suffered 10 broken ribs, a collapsed lung and every vertebra was cracked. But the good news is that he was able to stand up in the hospital three days after his fall.

The Boy Scouts and troop leaders who helped to perform the rescue were honored by State Senator John Rafferty and State Representative Matthew Bradford on Wednesday, October 17 at the Capitol in Harrisburg. The Scouts also were nominated for an award from the Boy Scouts of America, Cradle of Liberty Council located in Wayne, PA.

Agent Forringer has been an Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 313 since 2004. "That year, my wife was leading my daughter's Girl Scout troop. The husband of the woman assisting her was the Scoutmaster in the local troop," Agent Forringer explained. "We became friends and he discovered that I was an Eagle Scout and asked me to help out with his troop. I have been there ever since. I am still there because I enjoy it immensely. I am just giving back from the great things I got from Scouting as a kid."

While he has never personally met the hiker, Agent Forringer said that they have received emails of thanks and appreciation from his family. He has heard that the hiker has been able to resume bike riding and has suffered no permanent disability from his fall.

Agent Forringer has been with the Board since April 2005. Congratulations Assistant Scoutmaster (and Agent) Forringer and the Boy Scouts of Troop 313!



From left: Sen. Rafferty and Agent Forringer

Members of Troop 313 and Sen. Rafferty

