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Governor Sisolak Discusses Education and Workforce Development at Nevada Prisons

Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak recently visited Northern Nevada Correctional Center (NNCC) and Ely State Prison (ESP) to discuss educational and workforce opportunities available to inmates.

"The results we are seeing from educational and vocational programs within our state prisons are incredible," said Governor Sisolak. "Past mistakes brought these inmates to prison, but now they are seizing opportunities to earn an education and learn work skills. This knowledge is transforming them into better people and preparing them for re-entry into our communities – leading to a safer Nevada for everyone."

At ESP, Sisolak met Warden Bill Gittere and his staff, and learned about vocation and education programs that help prepare inmates at Nevada's only maximum security prison for successful reintegration into society.

At NNCC, he met Warden Isidro Baca and his staff, and spoke with five inmates who explained how taking college classes and learning skills through Silver State Industries is changing them for the better.

Governor Steve Sisolak discusses education and work opportunities with inmates enrolled in college classes at Northern Nevada Correctional Center in Carson City, NV.

Inmate Michael Cu told the governor he used to be a gang member who wanted nothing to do with education. "Now, I'm receiving straight A's for classes I'm taking at Western Nevada Community College," Cu said, listing Business 101 and 108, Communication 101,

The Nevada Department of Corrections is committed to building a safer community by striving to incorporate progressive best practices in all aspects of corrections. NDOC houses nearly 14,000 persons with felony convictions in 18 facilities statewide. For more information visit www.doc.nv.gov.

Math 101, and Welding 211 and 212. "I never did anything on the streets to make my family proud, but it's at NNCC that I'm finally doing something they can be proud of."

NNCC launched its education program in 2019 by offering two classes in welding during the first semester, and eight classes covering a variety of topics during the current second semester. More classes will be offered to more inmates during the third semester which is slated to begin in 2020.

"An inmate who re-enters society with a college degree or a specialized work industry certification is more likely to secure employment paying a livable wage," said Charles Daniels, NDOC Director. "The residual impact of earning a college degree or trades certification greatly reduces the probability of the recidivism."

The inmates expressed similar sentiments during their discussion with the governor.

"NDOC's college programs are working," said Inmate Jesus Mena, who is enrolled in business, film, financial literacy, and literature classes. "It is providing us tools that help correct our thought process, change our behavior for the better, and offer opportunities to apply ourselves."

"I didn't know I had a talent and love for welding until I started working at prison industries," added Inmate Jared Wagner. "Thanks to NNCC's college program, I'm building on those skills by taking an Associate of Sciences Welding class. I'm moving closer to earning a welding certification."

Joining Governor Sisolak during his January 4, 2020 visit to ESP were Kathy Sisolak, Nevada's First Lady; Charles Daniels, NDOC Director; Harold Wickham, NDOC Deputy Director of Operations; and William Gittere, ESP Warden.

Joining Governor Sisolak during his December 10, 2019 visit to NNCC were Thom Reilly, Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education; Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education; Craig Von Collenberg, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovations; Vincent Solis, President of Western Nevada College; Kim Thomas, NDOC Deputy Director of Programs; and Isidro Baca, NNCC Warden.

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