

ATTACHMENT F



Date: Sunday, January 11, 2009 6:55 PM
From: Curt Thomas <tinchef@charter.net>
To: tcreon@charter.net
Subject: Copy of IFC letter

Hello, my name is Curt Thomas. I have been a Correctional Officer at Nevada State Prison for over 11 years. For the last few years I have been happy to stay out of the spotlight because I realize the Administration can sometimes be retaliatory to staff that speak out against them. This has been confirmed by the recent awarding of \$350,000 to an ex Officer for retaliation by the administration. But there comes a time when you have to stand up for what is right and I am at that point.

The first point is about the possible closure of NSP. If what Supreme Court Justice Hardesty stated at the Oct.14 Prison board meeting is accurate, the NDOC is at more than 140% capacity. There are also a large number of state prisoners housed in county jails waiting to go to state prisons. Considering these circumstances, where is the logic in closing any institution or units? The special session of the Legislature in June directed the Director NOT to close NSP until the legislature in 09 has a chance to deal with it, but he systematically began closing units. Unit 5 was closed in August, unit 8 in early November. These unit closures appear to me to be just a tactic to convince the Legislature in 09 to close NSP entirely. It is easier to close a prison with a lowered inmate population. Justice Hardesty also stated that it is more cost effective to hire Officers than it is to use existing Officers on overtime as is the case now.

There are other ways the NDOC can save the state money besides closing an institution when bedspace is so desperately needed. For example, Assemblyman Settlemeyers proposed bill of providing inmates only cold breakfasts. This could be taken one step further by providing them sack lunches at breakfast to be eaten at the inmates convenience. This would eliminate the lunch feeding altogether. It would also allow Officers more time to perform other tasks. We could also increase prison industries. Many inmates at NSP are practically begging for jobs. There is a lot of manpower there that could be put to use producing goods that could help defray some of the costs of running a prison.

The NDOC could return to 12 hour shifts. There are proposals made by Officers that could improve the previous system of 12 hour shifts. The 8 hour shifts we are currently on has seemed to increase overtime dramatically.

These are just a few ideas, I am sure there are many more but the department doesn't seem willing to look beyond closing NSP.

Additionally, it doesn't seem logical for the Department to ask for money to build a new Prison in southern Nevada at the same time they are trying to close an existing well established prison up here.

A few months ago the staff at NSP signed a letter of no confidence against the Warden. The director has taken NO action or advised us of any outcome. ~~The director stated to Dennis Mallory of SNEA, that part of the reason he wants to close NSP is because of the contentious staff. Spite, in my opinion, should NOT be a reason to close a major institution.~~ ~~IT'S A STRONG BELIEF~~

There is reason to believe the Dir. wants to close NSP because of the strong B New AFSCME presence.

The other point is that here seems to be somewhat of a misrepresentation of the actual age of NSP.

Although there has been a prison at the current site since the 1860s none of the buildings or housing units is over 100 years old as you may have been led to believe. Unit 3, the old cell house, where I am currently assigned, is the oldest. The first half was built in the 1920s, the other half in 1947. I have researched this at the State Archives. Unit 5, recently closed, was built in 1948. Units 6 through 11 were constructed in the 1980s, units 12 and 13, our lockdown units for housing higher risk inmates, were built about 1986. So as you can see NSP is NOT as old as it might seem. As a matter of fact most NSP units are newer than the original units, which are still in use, at Northern Nevada Correctional Center. They were built in the 1960s.

The morale at NSP is extremely low. Staff is very concerned for their jobs because of the instability in the NDOC. The role of a Director should ideally be leadership, but this does not seem to be what we have now. Correctional Officers are not asking for favors or special treatment. The department is in desperate need of leadership, not a dictatorship. There are a lot of decent, professional, dedicated people working at NSP and it would be a shame to lose any more of them. A number have resigned or retired earlier than they had planned due to these circumstances.

I respectfully ask that you seriously consider directing the NDOC to let Nevada State Prison remain open and re open units 5 and 8.

C/O Curt Thomas

C/

O Curt
