

# *Going Green*

**Growing Sustainability**

in the

**Illinois Department of  
Corrections**



Jen Aholt

CEO, Illinois Correctional Industries

*In accordance with 20 ILCS 3954*  
**The Green Governments Illinois Act**



*The Department Of Corrections has launched a multi-faceted initiative aimed at growing the sustainability of the agency.*

*This initiative has created positive environmental and economic impact and will ultimately effect nearly every aspect of the Department's operations.*

# Herculean Task



- 🌱 35 facilities spread across the 57,914 sq. miles of Illinois
- 🌱 Multiple buildings associated with one facility
- 🌱 The oldest facility was built in 1878
- 🌱 Varied power sources of electric, coal and natural gas
- 🌱 Some facilities have no top soil
- 🌱 Some facilities have acres of timber and farmland
- 🌱 The facilities have varying architectural designs
- 🌱 Over 48,800 inmates
- 🌱 Over 10,000 employees

# Sustainability Planning at IDOC



## ***Sustainability Mission Statement:***

Reduce the environmental, economic, and human cost of prisons while involving our staff, offenders and the local communities in both the public & private sectors in achieving this mission.

## ***Vision Statement:***

To become as environmentally responsible as possible while educating our staff and offender population to create new stakeholders in the effort of reducing our waste stream as a Department.

# Goals of the Sustainability Plan



- ❁ Efficient use and conservation of energy, water, and other resources
- ❁ Minimizing solid waste production & creating a recycling infrastructure throughout the Department
- ❁ Sustainable construction, operations and maintenance projects
- ❁ Developing baseline data which will be used to gauge the department's progress towards sustainability goals
- ❁ Reducing recidivism through sustainability by leveraging these initiatives to provide vocational and job training opportunities for incarcerated offenders

# Sustainable Structure



## Department's Sustainability Committee

Creates, manages and tracks the metrics of the *Sustainability Plan*



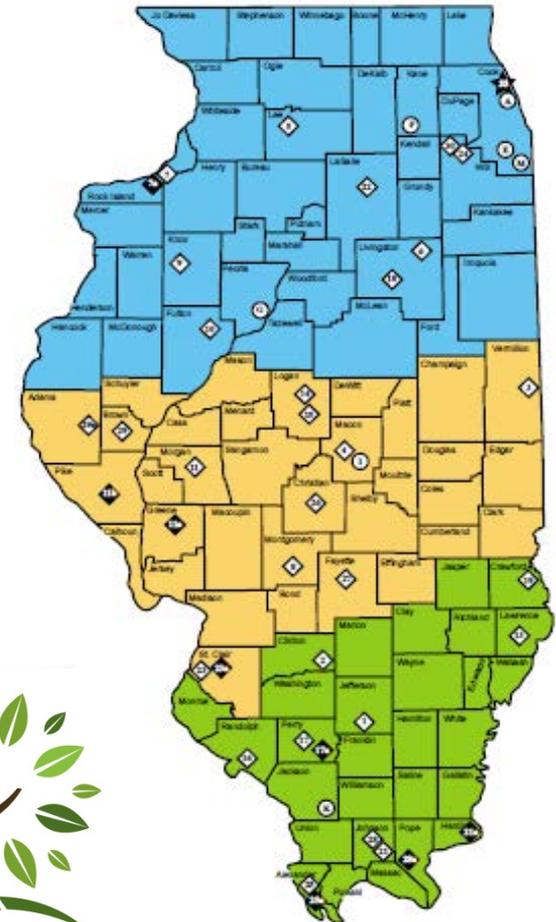
**35 Facility Coordinators** meet monthly to get the latest sustainability information and coordinate our activities



**35 Sustainability Committees** meet on a regular basis to identify and implement sustainable initiatives at their facility



**Information is shared** at all levels about all things sustainable with everyone all of the time...





**Cost Savings Drive  
the  
Environmental Wheel**

# Innovative Sustainability



We catch the water sprayed over the cooling tower coils and use it for watering our garden. If we do not need it then it goes to our storm water retention pond. Any facility like ours that has a retention pond could utilize the water for watering purposes.

--Big Muddy River Correctional Center

# Innovative Sustainability



Since the establishment of the committee,

-  the facility has had the steam traps repaired in four buildings and expects large savings in the cost of natural gas,
-  is looking into replacing the use of paper towels with hand dryers and rags for cleaning,
-  has implemented a laundry porter program to cut electric and water costs and wear and tear of the machines,
-  is researching the benefits of LED lighting,
-  has built a manual cardboard baler and can crusher,
-  has a Master Gardener visiting and teaching a class on composting to staff and offenders

**--Dwight Correctional Center**

# Innovative Sustainability



Our Steam Power Plant produces all of the water for the institutions (Stateville proper and the NRC). During the water softener recharge, a brine solution is injected then a “slow” rinse cycle begins and finally a fast rinse. What we’ve done is instead of letting the slow rise water go into the sewer, we run it into a drum and pump it back into our brine (salt) tanks to be re – used. This slow rinse water contains about 40% salt which we now saved because we reprocess it. This; of course, saves our institution 40% in salt cost per year. This adds up to a reduction of about 97.5 tons of bulk salt and \$14,000 yearly.

This also keeps this amount of salt out of the State of Illinois’s water ways, helping the environment. If you figure in the saved water use and reduced trucking ect. This project has helped out in many areas.

This procedure can be retro fitted to all of the State’s institutions with large water softeners.

**--Stateville Correctional Center**

# Sustainable Gardening



- 🌱 A back to the basics component of the plan is to expand and/or re-establish produce gardens at local facilities for the use in their dietary lines.
- 🌱 The Department has received over a million donated seeds which are centrally located at Menard, requested through our SharePoint site and sent via the weekly transfer vehicles on Wednesdays.
- 🌱 An inventory of our greenhouse locations and ability to share or repurpose the structure has been provided to each facility.
- 🌱 About 10 years ago Vandalia spent \$2000 on seeds and that money was cut. Today they are spending \$2400 per week on produce. Since the spring Vandalia has produced 55,196 lbs of produce and has donated 9,250 lbs. There are 18 inmates working on the garden crew.
- 🌱 In 2012 the Department had 23 prisons and 3 ATCs create and harvest from a garden for totals over 275,000 lbs of sustainably grown produce

# Repurposing: A Step Above Recycling

The harvesting of rain water via low cost “Rain Barrels” and other systems will be incorporated as part of the garden projects to reduce the use of treated and purchased water.

However our employees are so innovative that this boring blue barrel was just the starting point .....



# Necessity is the mother of invention.....



Shawnee's broken gutter fix

SWICC has water monitors making sure the showers and sinks are turned off saving water and sewer costs



The Tubinator at Decatur



Pontiac's mobile water unit



SWICC's Water tank



DuQuoin's Water Brigade

# Composting



Composting food waste generated by our dietary departments and using that compost to amend the garden plots will help increase yields as well as reduce the amounts of these materials that are currently disposed of in landfills.

Danville CC along with the Education Justice Program and the Danville College Horticulture program is studying composting and will create a guide on how to compost in the prison environment. Currently they have 24 bins and are constructing 24 more.

As of June 2012 -13 correctional centers had a composting program.



# Menard ICI as the Template for Recycling



-  ICI receives no General Revenue funding and is mandated to be financially self sustainable.
-  Not only has the Department realized a savings by not paying to have this material disposed of in a landfill, the sales of this collected material helps fund the recycling efforts.
-  Each facility will need an ICI presence, a baler and inmate workers
-  Menard has 19 ICI employees working in recycling alone!
-  In FY2011 Menard ICI Recycling made \$133,483.35.

# Start Up Programs Growing



- ❁ The Centralia Program has already formed cooperative partnerships with the local community college and a DHS facility. There are 8 ICI recycling employees here.
- ❁ The Shawnee Program is poised to expand services to Vienna CC, the Hardin County Work Camp and the Dixon Springs IIP. Shawnee is currently the smallest ICI recycling industry with the greatest growth potential with Vienna as its neighbor and the relationship being built with Harrisburg. There are 5 ICI recycling workers.
- ❁ Vandalia started to process recyclables in May, 2012. they currently have 10 ICI recycling workers.

# Incentivizing a Sustainable Path



One of the key components of the agency's sustainability effort is to further leverage Correctional Industries existing green training programs to expand the utilization of Industry Good Conduct Credits. This program allows the department to award good conduct credits to offenders assigned to Industries vocational training and work programs.



For every 90 days an offender successfully completes their vocational training goals they are awarded 44/45 days of time off of their sentence. The eligibility criteria is very strict and among other things the program excludes repeat offenders, Class X, etc.



With a current department wide average yearly cost of incarceration of \*\$21,535.00 the department would realize an annual savings of \$10,767.50 per offender participating in the training.

\*Cost of incarceration as of February, 2012.

# Biodiesel Production



Waste Vegetable Oil from the agency's dietary departments is collected and taken to Menard where the WVO is used as a feedstock to produce 100% Biodiesel.



Locally produced fuel costs less than \$1.00 per gallon to make



Used to power the vehicles and equipment used in Menard's Recycling Program as well as fueling the reefer units used at ICI-Menard's Meat Processing Plant.

# Green Re-entry Opportunities



- ❁ A key component of the Agency's Sustainability Plan is to leverage these initiatives to provide vocational and job training opportunities for incarcerated offenders.
- ❁ The kind of marketable job skills that will allow participating offenders an opportunity to join the fast emerging "Green Collar" segment of the economy.
- ❁ It has been well documented that recidivism levels are substantially reduced for offenders returning to society with marketable job skills and training. Additionally a \*recent study conducted that project a healthy growth in the demand for entry level "Green Jobs".

*\*IDES Green Jobs Survey, September 2011*

# On a Final Note



Common definitions of “sustainability” include the conservation of resources, the repurposing or reusing of available resources and preventing waste.

As corrections professionals a statement we’ve often heard from many of the offenders we supervise is **“I’ve wasted my life.”**

The most important metric in evaluating the success of any sustainability initiative is ultimately the one measured in human capital.

Our efforts will help provide offenders with the skills they need to help “re-purpose” their lives. For those who truly want to make a change, our goal is to help those individuals “reclaim” that wasted life.