



## **IDOC brings Summit of Hope expo to Marion**



By Multimedia Journalist - Kathryn DiGisi

Tue Mar 11, 2014

MARION, Ill. - The Illinois Department of Corrections hosted a Summit of Hope expo in Marion on Tuesday.

Landing a job, enrolling in health care, even finding reliable transportation can be a challenge for parolees.

At the Summit of Hope, parolees visit booths that offer ideas on how to smooth the transition back into society.

At 29 years old, Joseph Swift is starting over; he has been in the penitentiary twice.

"A lot of things, burglaries, drugs...a lot of stuff," said Swift.

Now, he is collecting pamphlets on health insurance, finding reliable transportation while he finishes his house-arrest sentence and getting resume help.

"I've been looking for a job for ten months," said Swift. (continued next page)

Illinois Department of Corrections Outreach Coordinator Marcus King has been organizing Summit of Hope expos for two years.

He says he has seen them work first-hand.

"When you actually watch someone become a productive citizen and lead a wholesome, prosperous life...it's beyond rewarding," said King.

While Swift shakes hands with potential employers, he thinks about his friends and family in East St. Louis.

"Stay in school and be a leader and not a follower," said Swift.

He left for a better life, and he says he can do it with a little nudge in the right direction.

There is no money in the Department of Corrections' budget for the Summit of Hope expos.

The money is raised by the director and venues are typically donating by the hosting community.