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**State of Missouri**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
*Improving Lives for Safer Communities*

**NEWS ADVISORY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Corrections Day at the Capitol:** 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Feb. 27, 2018, Missouri State Capitol, Third Floor

## **Department of Corrections Connects Missouri Employers with Skilled Labor**

Tracy and Shirleen Dieleman were floored by job candidate [Robert Bush](#)'s work experience. Bush reported he had spent a quarter of a century running the particular type of printing press they operate in their North Kansas City business. In the local labor market, workers adept at producing labels and stickers on hot stamp presses were few and far between. They hired him immediately.

Bush had worked on perfecting print processes while incarcerated in Missouri Department of Corrections facilities, running hot stamp presses in on-site [Missouri Vocational Enterprises](#) factories. From the start of his sentence, Bush was thinking about the future — how he would support himself post-release. "You can't just walk out the door without a plan," he says. So he committed himself daily to doing the best job he could.

Now the work has paid off, both for Bush, who runs two printing presses in his job at Impres Labels & Sales, and for the Dielemans, who were able to find reliable, skilled labor in a tight market.

"We just clicked. He knew what we wanted from him, and he was bound and determined to give it to us," Shirleen Dieleman says. Former offenders can be valuable employees, she says. "If you give them a second chance, it could be great. It was for us. We're happy to have him."

See how the Missouri Department of Corrections shapes the state's workforce during [Corrections Day at the Capitol Feb. 27](#).

About 96 percent of people who enter the prison system ultimately are released into Missouri communities. We want to make sure they're good neighbors and good employees. Here are some of the ways the Missouri Department of Corrections **trains and educates Missouri workers**.

## **We're an employment powerhouse.**

As the state's largest agency, the Missouri Department of Corrections employs **11,000 Missourians** from every part of the state — residents who contribute to our communities and economies. The department provides training. Staff provide a heart for service and a commitment to improving lives.

## **We prepare Missourians to reenter the workforce.**

Each year Missouri Vocational Enterprises factories train 1,350 offenders, and our career and technical programs train 2,000, preparing them for jobs upon release. In 2017, Missourians in our facilities earned more than **1,550 professional certificates**. Employment reduces the recidivism rate from 69 percent to 23 percent, making Missouri safer.

## **We connect employers with workers.**

We help Missouri businesses find the skilled labor force they need in areas such as manufacturing, construction, auto mechanics, truck driving, heavy equipment operating, health care, food service, cosmetology and more. Employers recruit trained laborers pre-release through resource fairs or talk with them through our new **video chat job interview** program.

## **We foster learning.**

Each month more than 5,000 Missourians take academic classes in our facilities. In 2017, 1,592 offenders took the high school equivalency test with a 94 percent pass rate, and 1,273 completed the National Career Readiness Certificate program with a **93 percent pass rate**.

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## **Corrections Day at the Capitol**

The Missouri Department of Corrections presents [Corrections Day at the Capitol](#) **8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27**, on the third floor rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol, 201 W. Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, Missouri. Featuring two dozen displays, the event highlights how Department of Corrections people and programs affect the day-to-day lives of Missourians. We'll show you how we train and educate Missouri workers, support statewide health and wellness, give back to Missouri communities, and facilitate transitions that make Missouri safer.



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