

NCIA NEWS

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WORKING ON THE INSIDE – SUCCEEDING ON THE OUTSIDE



Why I Work in CI



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person and see that person take off and excel it makes what you do seem worth it. It makes you realize that you are not just doing a job, but you are making a difference. And if you just reach one incarcerated individual, you have been successful.

Ron Hudson

Texas Correctional Industries



Since October 2017, Ron Hudson has served as the Deputy Division Director for the Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) Division within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). In February 2020, Ron's area of oversight was transferred from Agribusiness, Land and Minerals, to Texas

Correctional Industries (TCI) and Transportation and Supply. In this capacity Ron oversees all operations for TCI including the furniture, garment, graphics, metal and marketing divisions. He is a graduate of Sam Houston State University, with a Bachelor of Science in general business.

Ron has spent most of his career preparing for the unique challenge that overseeing the moving components of TCI presents. In fact, he has over 28 years of service with the TDCJ, including 15 years with TCI. During his tenure with TCI, he has served in several capacities other than his current role, including accountant, division accountant, assistant division manager and manager of the garment division.

While Ron began his career with the TDCJ as a correctional officer, he describes the initial motive to pursue a career with TCI as the opportunity to make a positive impact on an incarcerated individual's life. He was inspired to apply for an accountant position within a TCI factory because he says, "It struck me to my very core that I could have an impact like this on a human being."

Working in TCI factories allowed him to interact with numerous workers and help refine skills that could later be used by these individuals after their release from prison. Reflecting upon his years working with the incar-

cerated population through CI, Ron recalls the very first incarcerated clerk he worked with as an accountant. This former clerk recently reached out to him to thank him for the experience he gained through TCI. During the call, the former clerk relayed that upon his release from TDCJ, he was able to obtain two jobs using the work history he accumulated while incarcerated. This individual expressed at one point, he did not think he would even be eligible for release, and now, he was working, living his life, and succeeding. He attributed this success to the life-lessons he received and the skills he learned while he was assigned to a TCI factory.

Ron says, "To be able to meet an inmate, who knows very little, if anything, about the work they've been assigned, and watch them progress as their skill set enhances, knowing what you are teaching them can forever change their life, that's something."

Mark Riel

Corcraft (New York)



Is it a job or is it a career choice? That's the question that I am sure most people have pondered a few times throughout the span of their work experiences. For me, the answer is easy—definitely a career! By the strictest definition, a career is an occupation or profession requiring special training which follows as one's lifework. Within the context of that definition, I am very fortunate to work for the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) as an Assistant Director for Operations of Correctional Industries (Corcraft).

In my previous employment in the private sector, specifically manufacturing, I acquired a broad range of skill sets that enhanced my academic background to provide a solid base in systems, processes, industries, and customer-based solutions. Further work and acquired expertise in the field of Lean Process Improvement as well as Six Sigma methodologies led me to a position in New York State Government, which eventually opened the door into a career in DOCCS.

The opportunity to apply my academic background and professional work experience to Correctional Industries has proven to be the most rewarding time of my work life. Our mission statement is:

“To employ incarcerated individuals in real work situations producing quality goods and services at competitive prices, delivered on time as required by its customers at a minimal cost to the taxpayer. Corcraft provides the necessary resources for a real work environment where opportunities are available for the incarcerated to learn marketable skills and work habits, including the soft skills necessary to achieve success and enhance their employability upon release. Corcraft strives to develop a work ethic in incarcerated workers, to motivate each to seek and maintain employment, and become productive citizens upon re-entry into society.”

The crux of this statement is providing opportunities, skill sets, and a chance for redemption to individuals in need. The benefit pool is deep and the consequences are enormous as our work has a direct impact on people, families, the community, and society in general. This impact continues to provide me with an enormous feeling of satisfaction knowing that I contribute to this worthy cause. This past year as the world faced the worst pandemic in over 100 years, I was both proud and honored to be part of a State effort aimed at defeating this deadly virus. In March of 2020, in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Corcraft responded to a request from the Governor’s Office to produce and distribute various forms of PPE to the citizens of New York. Relative to this request, the first item produced was hand sanitizer, followed shortly thereafter by face masks and protective grade gowns. At the onset of this all-hands-on-deck initiative, I recall a conversation I had with an incarcerated worker at one of the correctional facilities during the hand sanitizer

startup. This individual was performing the labeling operation prior to the bottling operation on the assembly line. As I was checking in with this person, they conveyed to me a great sense of urgency and pride as they knew that this emergency-level initiative could help stem the tide in the fight against this deadly virus and also support their communities.

These stated actions and events clearly demonstrate the versatility, dedication, and resourcefulness of Corcraft staff. As always, and consistent with our mission, incarcerated workers continue to respond accordingly when called upon by the citizens of New York as well as engage in further self-development, and this...“Is Why I Work in Correctional Industries.”

Francisco Pinales

Rhode Island Correctional Industries



Rhode Island Correctional Industries (RICI) is a rehabilitative program founded in 1934 with the purpose of providing marketable job skills for incarcerated individuals and is now a thriving local business that employs approximately 130 incarcerated individuals who will use those skills to lead productive lives upon their re-entry to society. Here at

RICI, our mission is to produce quality, salable goods and services for all state agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations, while remaining financially self-sufficient, and creating a resourceful atmosphere training and employing incarcerated individuals. Currently, RICI offers employment and training to incarcerated individuals in our furniture, upholstery, license plate, print, garment, and autobody shops. We also train incarcerated individuals for work crews and ground maintenance service.

Francisco Pinales, RICI’s Garment Shop Supervisor, has been with the program for twenty-one years. Originally from the Dominican Republic, he has over 65 years of experience in tailoring. Francisco began his career at the

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