

Peoria Adult Transition
Center

Public Comments

As of 04/29/2012

Sirs:

I started working at the Peoria ATC in 1997, when it was opened at the current address. I have seen many inmates come and go since then. The one thing I have noticed from my time working here is that is a helpful tool, a good business, and an alternative to the warehousing of offenders that closing the work release centers will add to.

In 2010 the Peoria ATC inmates returned approximately \$600,000.00 to the General Revenue Fund. In 2011 the ATC at Peoria returned approximately \$700,000.00 to the fund. This is one figure that fails to appear in the closure statement presented to the committee. Where else in the Department of Corrections are the inmates offsetting the cost of their incarceration? These same inmates are paying taxes, boosting sales at local businesses, and gaining practical work experience that they can take with them to the "free" world. For many inmates this is their first working experience and when they depart the facility they leave with a chance to stay away from the life that led them to the Dept. of Corrections.

The Peoria ATC has continually maintained a 90 % or better employment rate at a time when the national averages are much lower. The inmates at the ATC also participate in volunteer activities throughout the Peoria area (from working with the AM-Vets, Springdale cemetery, the Food Bank, etc.) They have a requirement to get a job, maintain it, stay drug and alcohol free, pay back child support, etc.. Basically they are taught the rules of society and with that they can return to the streets with the foundations of a positive citizen.

Closure of the PEORIA Adult Transitional Center would have a ripple effect not accounted for by the case study in ways that aren't seen and can't be graphed on a 8x10 piece of paper. It will affect many smaller businesses that employ the inmates as well as their families that rely on the inmates for the family income that they (the inmates) generate.

Sincerely,
Bryon Johnson
(Correctional Resident Counselor, PATC)

My name is Korby Schail. I am a Correctional Residence Counselor 1 at Peoria ATC. I have worked for IDOC for approx. 18.5yrs. Four years at Pontiac C.C. and the remaining 14.5yrs at Peoria ATC. I never thought I would be in the position I am in today, along with hundreds of others, of having a chance of losing my job. The Governor speaks of creating jobs here in Illinois but yet he is trying to close state facilities and create more unemployment in effort to fix mistakes on the backs of state workers. All the facilities listed to close serve a purpose.

Our facility has had great success in Peoria. It has been here since 1972. 40yrs. of service to IDOC and the Peoria area community. Peoria and the surrounding communities have embraced the work release program and it's offenders for many years. We provide a great opportunity and service for both employers and soon to be released offenders. The employers get a guaranteed and dependable workforce for jobs that others might not want to do. For example, chipping and grinding Caterpillar engine blocks to filling dishwashing positions at local restaurants. These are just two examples of the approx. 67 employers that utilize Peoria ATC for their workforce. Some of these businesses have entire shifts made up of our offenders. What economic impact or effect will this have on these businesses when they lose that workforce?

And what about the offenders? These guys come to us both skilled and unskilled. The skilled offenders get back into the community and get a good job, pay their bills, fines, etc. and support their families because of the opportunity an ATC provides. The unskilled get the opportunity to either learn a trade at a job for the first time, or go to school and study for one in order for them to learn an honest way to make a living and not return to what got them in trouble in the first place. Then they can also save money, pay bills, fines, and pay child support if need be and support themselves and their families honestly. Their education in the work force and school is yet another success they achieve in this program by completing it.

In closing, you show Peoria ATC has 30 employees to relocate to another facility if possible. But those employees all have families that depend on them. It just doesn't just affect only 30 people. Those families live and work in this community. By closing this facility, it will force families to leave and relocate causing yet another economic impact on this area. Not to mention the social impact on the family itself. Recently I had to sit down and tell my 11yr and 13yr old boys that there is a chance I could lose my job and that we might have to move to another town in order for me to work and support them. That did not go over well. Both my boys were upset thinking about having to leave their friends, school, and church that they have grown up in since they were born.

We are not just numbers or statistics, we are real people with families to support and provide for with this job. This work release provides a service to the employers in the area and to the offenders that come to us to utilize this program. We need programs like this to continue. I believe that closing this facility and it's programs will adversely effect the staff, future eligible offenders, and the Peoria area community.

Korby Schaill CRC1

Please keep the mental health centers and IDOC transition centers open. The transition centers are necessary to help prepare people so they can stay out of prison.

Robin Kaufman
Chicago

Peoria Adult Transition Center

Yes, this center should remain open.

I own Peoria Staffing, Inc. on North University Street in Peoria and the inmates of the Peoria Adult Transition Center help our local economy by working in positions local companies cannot fill and I could not otherwise assist them with. Companies have previously experience a loss of productivity when they were unable to find personnel with proper interest and attendance and in several cases the Peoria Adult Transition Center became the only option.

There are also added tax dollars I am aware of to the state of Illinois as family and friends of inmates visit as well as inmates that are allowed to work outside The Center build ties and stay in the communities where they meet people and build ties that assist them in staying out of trouble long after release from incarceration.

Building skills through the center offers a path for the inmates who have made mistakes that cannot be duplicated though in cell rehabilitation efforts or if released with ankle bracelets as the structure is what offers the stability for the greatest benefit.

Please keep the Peoria Adult Transition Center open as it is an outstanding benefit for this community.

Guy B. Nickelson

To whom it concerns,

I am aware that the date of the hearing for this facility is over, however it has taken an extraordinary amount of time and effort to get the information that allowed me to get to this point. I also have a very deep personal concern for the potential effect this closure may have on my family and for countless number of others in the area. I certainly realize the fiscal situation the State of Illinois is in and there is no painless answer to the problem. I also am not only a taxpayer, but a business owner, and understand all too well how difficult it can be to make budgetary cuts in order to remain solvent. I have been in business 31 years now and when it was necessary we made those cuts and have been able to remain in business and in fact increase our size nearly every year. We worked with our employees and suppliers etc. and did not have to let anyone go and no one was financially ruined in the process, although it was none the less painful for all of us. What we did not do was harm anyone in any way.

My business deals with the State of Illinois and the Federal Government on a daily basis along with hundreds of private insurance carriers. While the vast majority of individuals are doing their best to do a good honest job, I see numerous instances of fraud and waste in the system that by the states' own estimate amounts to millions of dollars. I would think that cleaning up the low lying fruit would be so much more beneficial to the taxpayers than closure of a facility that has many positive benefits. There are several studies showing how much more expensive it is to keep someone incarcerated that to have them in the community working, being productive, and paying taxes.

If financial concerns are not enough, there is the issue of fairness. Over the past 2 years we have had the unfortunate opportunity to become intimately aware of the inner workings of the Department of Justice. I have also been in contact with numerous other families caught in similar situations and they have the same concerns that I do on the long term effects of this potential closure. We as a society tend to classify all offenders into one group and somehow have little concern for their situation. Many of them are just good people who made a bad mistake. They have not harmed anyone and have not caused a loss to anyone but in any regard there was a mistake made and they know it and have accounted for it. We place them into the system and give them a set of rules to follow and tell them that if you do A, B, and C then you will be rewarded with early release etc. Many of these individuals do everything asked of them, complete all the necessary tasks and do the extra work required of them and are entitled to the reward. However with this potential closure we pull the rug out from under them and essentially say "sorry we lied". Is it any wonder why some individuals may become hardened and

recitivism is a problem? Regardless of the situation they are people too and deserve to be dealt with honestly and most of all fairly.

I respectfully submit to you that there are numerous places in the budget of the State of Illinois to shave millions off the expense column simply by cleaning up the system. Going after individuals who are knowingly and intently stealing from the taxpayers of Illinois would seem to be much more beneficial to all concerned, and while I do not have the actual numbers I am reasonably sure the dollar amounts are much higher than the total necessary to keep the ATS open in Peoria. We should not need to further harm individuals who are sincerely trying to become honest working TAXPAYING citizens.

Thank you for your concern.

Kevin Brattain
