



**NEW JERSEY STATE PAROLE BOARD  
2007 ANNUAL REPORT  
PETER J. BARNES JR., CHAIRMAN**

The State Parole Board (SPB) achieved real successes in Fiscal Year 2007, consistent with Governor Corzine's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods.

**Effective Partnerships for Reentry**

**Launch of Governor Corzine's Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods.** Governor Corzine launched his Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods in October, demonstrating his focus on the reentry of ex-prisoners as a vital public safety matter. Reentry programs are designed to break the cycle of crime by helping former prisoners become law-abiding, productive citizens. Governor Corzine's public safety strategy includes Another Chance, a pilot project that will include a total of 1,282 inmates and parolees in Camden, Newark and Trenton. The State Parole Board and partner agencies connect each offender with job training, education, psychological or other programs as needed, and will track those offenders to evaluate their successful reentry.

**Launch of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP).** In March, after an intensive period of planning and development, New Jersey's parole officers began the statewide launch of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) for supervision. EBP uses the best, research-driven supervision methods used in New Jersey and other states. Most importantly, it gives parole officers the flexibility to spend a greater degree of their time with the highest-risk offenders on their caseloads. EBP also holds offenders accountable for taking the steps necessary to successfully reenter society as law-abiding citizens. Supervision begins with an objective assessment of each parolee's specific risks and needs. The parolee signs a case plan agreement that outlines short-term and long-term reentry goals, addressing those specific needs. The parole officer uses targeted sanctions and rewards, to encourage the parolee's progress. Persistent failure can lead to more intensive supervision, or a referral to specialized programs under the State Parole Board's Division of Community Programs. When warranted, persistent failures result in the parolee's arrest and return to custody.

**Partnerships for Juvenile Reentry.** The State Parole Board's Juvenile Unit has launched a collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Commission, to create a juvenile reentry initiative in Mercer County. This initiative will be entirely community-based, using donated services, and will not create any new costs to the State of New Jersey. As the result of a series of meetings launched in late 2007, individuals from local government, community and faith-based groups have eagerly agreed to volunteer their services free of cost, for juvenile parolees in Mercer County. These services will include job readiness, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and outreach to local employers; mentoring; educational assistance; mental health and substance abuse counseling; life-skills training, parenting education and financial literacy education; transportation; and other services. The State Parole Board's Juvenile Unit and the JJC will work with these partners to develop a unified effort whereby juvenile parolees and other juvenile offenders will be able to access and fully benefit from these programs.

**Agreements with US Department of Veterans Affairs and US Social Security Administration.** As part of its reentry mission, the State Parole Board connects parolees with services for housing, healthcare and other needs. It was noted that many parolees were eligible for Veterans or Social Security assistance, but were unable to obtain the documents needed to prove their eligibility, due to incarceration and other factors of instability in their lives. The State Parole Board, in conjunction with the Department of Corrections, launched partnerships with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration. This joint effort will help ensure eligible parolees apply for and receive Federal assistance, resulting in efficiencies for the State of New Jersey.

**Law Enforcement Partnerships.** Led by Chairman Barnes, the State Parole Board's Division of Parole has created new partnerships for intelligence sharing and joint field operations with the FBI, State Police, County Prosecutor's offices, and municipal police departments including the Township of Irvington and the City of Camden. These partnerships allow police agencies to benefit from parole officers' expertise and street-level intelligence, and gives both police and parole officers "better eyes for investigation and longer arms for enforcement," at no new or additional cost to taxpayers. The State Parole Board will continue to make these partnerships a statewide model for New Jersey's public safety.

**Gang Awareness Training.** The State Parole Board's Street Gang Unit members supervise about 500 parolees statewide who are identified as gang members, and use the insights gained supervising these individuals to conduct gang education and recognition training for municipal police departments, healthcare professionals, universities and public schools. This year the unit partnered with the New Jersey Hospital Association to launch a statewide violence prevention effort for emergency room professionals. Participants learned to read tattoos and other signs of possible gang membership, and determine whether individuals should be separated within the hospital due to possible membership in rival gangs. The training allows hospital officials to prevent violence and address the street gang presence in New Jersey, while continuing to provide for all patients. Also in 2007, the Street Gang Unit provided Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) for elementary school students.

### **Leadership and Core Results**

**Appointment of Yvette C. Ross as Vice Chairwoman, May 23, 2007.** Vice Chairwoman Yvette C. Ross plays a leading role in the SPB's Female Offender Reentry Group Effort, or FORGE, which provides direct links to employment training, counseling and other services to meet the specific needs of female ex-offenders and their families. FORGE began with a pilot program in Newark, and Ross is working with State Parole Board staff to expand the program in southern New Jersey. Ross' public service career began in the community-based corrections field in 1980 when she became Salem County's first African-American probation officer. She has served as a State Parole Board member since December 29, 2005. Ross is actively involved in developing the State Parole Board's Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE), and its successful expansion from a pilot program in Essex County to include new FORGE programs in Camden and Union counties. She has discussed the successes of FORGE and the State Parole Board's other reentry initiatives in media interviews and public forums.

**FY 2007 Operations.** In Fiscal 2007, the Parole Board Members and Division of Release conducted parole hearings for 13,696 State prison inmates and 1,302 county jail inmates. The Parole Act creates a presumption of parole for inmates who have served enough time on their sentence to become eligible. For cases in which the crime was committed before August 19, 1997, the Parole Act requires that an adult inmate shall be paroled unless the Board Panel determines there is a substantial likelihood the inmate will commit a new crime if released. Also in Fiscal 2007, the Revocation Unit initiated 3,619 revocation hearings, and 387 rescission hearings. The Juvenile Unit conducted quarterly reviews for 2,322 juvenile residents, and initiated 296 juvenile revocation hearings. On the last day of Fiscal Year

2007 there were a total of 14,770 individuals under State Parole Board supervision, including individuals released on discretionary parole, those sentenced to a term of Mandatory Supervision (MSV), sex offenders sentenced to Community Supervision for Life (CSL) or Parole Supervision for Life (PSL), and sex offenders subject to Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring. The Division of Community Programs provided rehabilitative programs to 6,200 individuals under State Parole Board supervision. These programs, including Day Reporting Centers, Halfway Back programs, the Mutual Agreement Program, the Reentry Substance Abuse Program and others, are designed to promote successful and sustainable reentry and ensure public safety.

**Successful GPS Monitoring of Sex Offenders.** New Jersey's Sex Offender Monitoring Act replaced the earlier pilot program in August 2007, empowering the State Parole Board to subject the State's highest-risk sex offenders to round-the-clock Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring. The initial data suggests the State Parole Board's GPS monitoring has contributed to a significantly lower recidivism rate for high-risk sex offenders. The State Parole Board is New Jersey's lead agency for sex offender supervision, with a caseload of more than 4,400 sex offenders – one of the largest in America. Prior to the advent of Supervision for Life sentencing, sex offenders made up less than 5 percent of the agency's caseload. Today, due to laws mandating lifetime supervision, sex offenders make up nearly a third of the caseload, with a net increase of about 45 new sex offenders each month. GPS monitoring is just one aspect of the State Parole Board's containment approach to sex offender supervision.

**Sex Offender Internet Restriction.** The State Parole Board voted unanimously to prohibit 4,400 sex offenders under supervision from using the Internet to socialize. Chairman Barnes proposed the new restriction after law enforcement officials working for the Board reported to him that data received under subpoena revealed that sex offenders under State Parole Board supervision had created profiles on social networking sites, which could be used to lure new victims.

**New Police Academy Class.** The State Parole Board has overhauled the training provided to new parole officer recruits, by moving training for its 2008 recruit class to the prestigious Somerset County Police Academy. For the first time, the new parole officer recruits are being trained alongside municipal police officer candidates during a 24-week training program that will culminate in June. Reflecting the increasing demands placed on the Division of Parole in areas such as criminal investigations, gang suppression, sex offender supervision, homeland security and various task force assignments, the parole officer recruits are being trained to secure crime scenes, secure and transport evidence, prepare criminal complaints and testify in criminal proceedings. Each of these new training components has been provided to New Jersey's current parole officers in in-service training. The agency will reap great dividends by providing this training to new recruits and all future parole officers at the academy level.

### **Efficiencies and Quality Assurance**

**Statewide Audit of Sentencing Data, Parole Eligibility Data.** The Information Certification Unit (ICU), within the State Parole Board's Division of Release, completed its unprecedented audit of sentencing and parole release data in 80,000 inmate cases at 13 institutions. The audit included a thorough review of inmates' Parole Eligibility Dates, and the various types of data supporting the calculation of those dates. This included information in several databases related to many inmates' concurrent and consecutive sentences, and the changes in sentencing guidelines that have taken place since many were first incarcerated. With this audit complete, the ICU will serve as the centralized unit assigned to verify all parole eligibility data in New Jersey. The unit will verify and certify Parole Eligibility Date calculations for all inmates; will clarify sentencing information; and will monitor the accuracy of information in databases including the Parole Board Information System (PBIS) and iTAG, the inmate information and financial system.

**Improvements in County Parole Process.** In November 2007, the State Parole Board launched a pilot program for changes and new efficiencies in the county parole process. The pilot program gives county inmates the ability to voluntarily waive their initial Parole hearing, and proceed directly to a final Parole hearing. These changes have reduced the waiting period between the initial and final panel hearings. As a result, the State Parole Board is able to conduct hearings and render final decisions on county inmates 20 days earlier, on average. By most measures the pilot program has been a success. The State Parole Board continues to monitor the impact and efficacy of this program.

**Cross-Training for Release, Revocation Officers.** Hearing officers in the State Parole Board's Division of Release conduct preliminary reviews of each inmate's appropriateness for parole release, and review professional reports on the inmate's history and background. They conduct initial parole eligibility hearings, and provide case summaries and recommendations for the Board Members who will make the final decisions. Revocation officers conduct hearings when parolees are charged with violating the conditions of parole. They determine whether by clear and convincing evidence the charged violations were found to have been committed, and whether any sustained violations were serious or persistent enough to warrant the revocation of parole. Though release and revocation hearing officers fulfill distinct roles, the State Parole Board began cross-training these officers as a vital cost-saving effort, as well as an addition to the agency's overall expertise. The officers' ability to fulfill dual roles will enhance the State Parole Board's efficiency, and the timeliness with which parole hearings are provided under State law.

**Improvements in Document Retrieval.** Prior to holding an inmate's required parole eligibility hearing, the State Parole Board must receive reports from county prosecutors and county jails, including judgments of conviction, pre-sentencing investigation reports, rap sheets and other documents related to the inmate's offense. In May, the State Parole Board implemented an electronic tracking system whereby each county provides these reports. Prior to the development of this system, the process of requesting and receiving county reports required the postponement of about two to three hearings each month. The new system allows for far greater efficiency in the way documents are requested and received, and has reduced parole hearing delays.

**Additions to Parole Board Information System (PBIS).** The Parole Board Information System (PBIS) is the central database for the tracking of parole-related information for State and county inmates, and for offenders released to State Parole Board supervision. In 2007, the State Parole Board's IT unit developed new applications that ensure PBIS accurately tracks offenders along every stage of the parole continuum, starting prior to the initial parole eligibility hearing, to include the inmate's release, supervision, assignment to community programs, through to completion of the offender's criminal sentence. The State Parole Board initially created PBIS to help eliminate backlogs in the parole eligibility hearing process. The program now provides efficient data access for virtually every function of the State Parole Board.

**The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB)** is New Jersey's lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, appointed Parole Board Members and staff conduct more than 20,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims and decide parole matters. SPB sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, SPB is New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. SPB officers are also active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, SPB's Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime.

**For more information about the New Jersey State Parole Board, its Hearings, Supervision and Community Programs functions, and its public safety mission, please visit our website:**  
[www.state.nj.us/parole](http://www.state.nj.us/parole)