

For Immediate Release
Date: February 10, 2009

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Prison Inmates Graduate from Construction Training

CALPIA and Union Partnership Leads to Jobs and Lower Recidivism

FOLSOM - Today, 69 inmate workers at Folsom State Prison and California State Prison Sacramento received diplomas and certificates during graduation ceremonies at California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) facilities. Each graduate completed all or portions of a program that ultimately will lead to apprenticeships in construction when they are paroled. As part of the training, all inmates must complete a GED within two-years of beginning the program.

"CALPIA's pre-Apprenticeship Program is a leading example of how effective rehabilitation reduces recidivism," said Kathy Jett, Undersecretary for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "These men have worked hard to prepare themselves to earn a living, lessening their chances of returning to prison."

Inmates in the program receive training from journeymen craftsman in various construction skills, ranging from welding and ironwork to finished carpentry. CALPIA and three trade unions representing industry workers, act as partners in the program. Once released from prison, ex-offenders are then eligible for placement in apprenticeship jobs.

Unions that participate in the program include the Northern California Carpenters Local 46; the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Local 118 and the Laborers Local 185.

In addition to the valuable training, upon parole CALPIA provides each graduate with tools, a tool belt and pays their union dues for one year so that they are ready the first day of their new job.

"These graduates are ready to work," said Chuck Pattillo, General Manager, California Prison Industry Authority. "With the skills they have learned and the personal confidence they have built, these inmates are more likely to find jobs and provide for themselves and their families."

Many of the graduates are working in the new CALPIA Modular Building Enterprise, a 30,000 square foot facility located at Folsom State Prison, which provides rehabilitative work assignments for inmates in building modular structures. These ISO 9001-2000 certified portable structures are manufactured, sold and subsequently transported for use at various prisons, juvenile centers and State agencies throughout the State.

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CALPIA's primary function is to facilitate inmate job skill training in a business environment. CALPIA is a self-financed state agency that receives all of its revenue from the sale of products it manufactures. Recent research shows that the recidivism rate among CALPIA inmates is 25 percent lower than the general prison population, a success attributed to the job skills that they receive by working on the assembly line.

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For more information on CALPIA visit: www.pia.ca.gov