

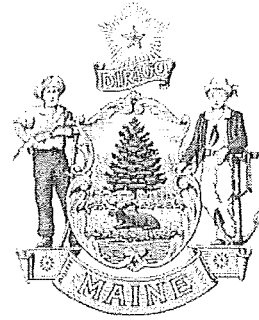
# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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PRISON INDUSTRIES ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Findings and Recommendations

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a report to the  
Commissioner, Department of Corrections  
and the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public  
Safety  
from the  
Prison Industries Advisory Council

MAR 25 2010

## Prison Industries Advisory Council Members

John E. Nale, Chair  
Ed Ludwig  
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Deborah Elliott  
John DelVecchio, Alternate  
Tom Levine, Alternate

## About the Prison Industries Advisory Council

The Prison Industries Advisory Council (PIAC) was created by statute 34-A M.R.S.A. § 3002-B, (2008). The statute calls for a six-member council appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections (DOC). Three members shall be from the private sector, two members from state government and one DOC employee to serve as a non-voting member.

## Purpose

The council is directed to work in cooperation with managers of prison industries programs, prison security staff and the business community to identify methods to enhance programs and improve efficiency of operations, including development of a business and marketing plan and to improve advertising and retail sales with a more diversified product line.

The council is also directed to review financial reporting and accounting systems and to make recommendations for creating an industries program under the federal Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program.

The council shall meet at least quarterly and make recommendations annually to the Commissioner, with copies sent to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

## Scope and Method

The council held ten meetings over the past eleven months. Five meetings included a visit to the industries program in operation at each of the five Maine State Prison facilities.

Three council meetings were open to the full public and the council received information and data from numerous people in and out of state government and the Department of Corrections. The council held two members-only workshop meetings for the purpose of reviewing information and drafting this interim report.

The council also reviewed documents, including financial and accounting data and systems now in place, inmate wage schedules, Maine Crime and Justice Data Book (2008), Maine State Prison Industries Showrooms and Wood Shop Operations (John Rust December 2006), DOC Industry Program Policy and Procedures (as amended), Bureau of Justice (PIECP) Program.

The council acknowledges the cooperation of the Department of Corrections, all industries program managers and personnel, prison security staff and inmates.

## Industry Program Background

The Maine Department of Corrections has operated an industries program for inmates for more than 50 years. Beginning at the Maine State Prison in Thomaston, inmates crafted items for sale in the Maine State Prison Showroom and did harness and leather repair.

Today, each of the Maine's five correctional facilities has an industries program. Work in industries gives the inmates an opportunity to earn a minimal hourly wage while learning a skill and work ethics that can be transferred to a job in the community. Funds that an inmate earns are used to pay obligations such as victim restitution, child support, and other items ordered by the courts. Over 250 inmates are kept busy with industries work and another 40 inmates are kept busy with craft programs.

Today, the DOC has two locations in which to sell products to the public: the Maine State Prison Showroom in Thomaston and the Industries Outlet at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

## Findings

In its research on Prison Industries over the past year, the Council identified a number of key issues and actions which are highlighted in the recommendations below. Related to all of our recommendations is this one over-arching conclusion: the value of the Prison Industries Program is multi-faceted and extends far beyond what can be accounted through simple financial accounting. To the Council's knowledge, no in-depth analysis accounting has been conducted for all benefits derived from the Prison Industries Program, in part because many of the benefits are not immediately apparent and often represent "avoided costs". Nevertheless, these benefits are very significant.

Benefits of the prison industries programs which help to save money include:

- Income from the sale of prison-made goods not only offsets Program costs, but also provides child support and restitution payments diverted from workers' wages,
- job and skills training—critical to preparation for successful workforce re-entry;
- Savings to the State General Fund from making products and providing services in-house such as inmates clothing,
- Savings to the General Fund from making products and providing services to other State agencies,
- Savings to local taxpayers in communities benefiting from Prison Industry products and services,
- Savings to the General Fund resulting from incentives for good behavior which directly translate into cost savings associated with security staffing,
- Savings from keeping inmates busy—less boredom/better behavior,
- Savings resulting from decreased recidivism attributable to the employment skills and work ethic fostered through inmate participation in the Prison Industries Program,

The Council believes that a careful and full accounting of all Prison Industries Program benefits will show a very positive benefit-to-cost ratio and reveal that several dollars are saved for each dollar spent in support of the Program. For this reason, the Council cautions against reducing the Prison Industries Program budget as this action is likely to end up causing the un-intended consequence of increasing overall cost to the State at a time when we can least afford it.

## Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a “business” ethic into the industries program, thereby providing opportunities for inmates to participate in planning, ethical and entrepreneurial decision making.
2. Develop and implement work performance incentives that enhance product quality and a more consistent production schedule.
3. Integrate the vocational program into the industries program.
4. Wherever possible, upgrade and update product line to maximize a “production line” process as opposed to a “small batch” or “job shop” process.
5. Develop and implement a working relationship between all state, county and local governments regarding products and services that can be provided through the industries program and county jail community service programs.
6. Develop and implement a uniform financial tracking and reporting system, with individual department/program accounts for each production and retail facility, in order to provide better data for management and marketing decisions.
7. Develop and implement a uniform system to account for time and value of community service provided by inmates in community service work projects.
8. Develop and implement a uniform system to account for value of products used within the Maine State Prison system, such as inmate clothing, furniture, cleaning products, etc.
9. Develop and implement a uniform system to account for value of products and services provided to State departments, such as autobody repairs for the State Police and Warden Service, signs and campsite materials for the Bureau of Public Lands, skidder bridges and fire truck tanks for the Forest Service, materials and manpower for the Dept. of Transportation, and construction materials and manpower provided to the Dept. of Inland Fish & Wildlife.
10. Develop and implement a standalone web presence for informational and retail sales purposes.
11. Develop a working relationship with an outside private business.

## Looking Ahead

In the upcoming year the council will work with Department of Corrections and prison industries management, staff and inmates to more fully develop and implement these recommendations. The council will continue to look for other ways to fulfill the legislative mandates set forth in the enabling legislation.

Respectfully Submitted By:

/s/ John E. Nale  
Prison Industries Advisory Council  
John E. Nale, Chair