

## Prison

(continued from page 1)

from the prison," said Pat Rusiloski, president of the SCID Concerned Citizens. "We were completely taken aback. What will they do if a fight breaks out in the yard? Getting a patrol there could waste valuable time. Neighbors and employees are very worried. I've had more calls than ever before."

"We have a double electric fence equipped with an alarm that sounds if the fences are touched," he said. "The alarms are very sensitive - animals can set it off. We also have a very strong lighting system that can be seen from the valley."

Under the new plan, guards would be posted part-time in only three of the prison's eight watchtowers: one near the main entrance until 6 p.m. to monitor traffic, a second when inmates are in the exercise yard and a third in the middle of the prison compound between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

"If a fight breaks out between prisoners, the corrections officers in the yard can get help within minutes," Figmick said.

The staffing and housing changes at SCID will bring the prison into compliance with federal guidelines which call for mobile perimeter patrols instead of manning watchtowers round-

the-clock, he said.

Guard union leaders don't agree.

"This shouldn't happen," said Sgt. William Lewis, AFSCME Local 2496 president. "It's a rash, stupid plan. These recommendations are based on the staffing needs of the superjails - the newest facilities equipped with state-of-the-art surveillance systems, cameras all over the place and personal alarms for the guards. There's no way that they can do it here and make it work."

Lewis and union executive board member George Vodzak called Lehman's staffing plan a delaying tactic in a labor arbitration case.

"We have worked two years to get SCID properly staffed," Vodzak said. "We filed a grievance, which was sent to arbitration. One week before the arbitration hearing, they announced a new staff pattern, which they say will free 18 men on three shifts to supervise inmates. Every bed here is filled and there's more double-celling (housing two inmates in a cell originally designed for one) than ever before."

The union filed the grievance last year, charging the department of corrections with staffing the prison without concern for the safety of employees after corrections officer Howard Rice was

assaulted and badly injured by convicted murderer Tracey Marrero, who also opened the cellblock's doors before guards subdued him.

Vodzak said that only two cellblocks have one-man cells, a special needs unit for inmates taking certain prescription medications and another unit for

two-way radio and a phone."

The union wants at least two guards assigned to each housing unit.

The unwritten rule of thumb for prison staffing is a ratio of at least one guard for every 50 inmates, Vodzak said.

Although three guards are assigned to SCID's larger housing

authorized the continued use of the watchtowers, Lewis said.

"Now the department has done an abrupt about-face," he said. "They now contend that the towers are obsolete and redundant and we need fewer guards, not more. They can't even staff the roving patrols that they set up."

The department received a \$125 million increase in its budget this year, but only four percent was spent on hiring more corrections officers, Vodzak said. The balance was spent on hiring clerical workers for the cellblocks and counselors, he said.

"They're trying to delay the inevitable for another year," Lewis said. "They're going to have to hire more corrections officers."

Lewis said that the union hasn't decided yet whether to request another arbitration hearing or to file charges of unfair labor practices.

The SCID Concerned Citizens will hold a public meeting October 20 at 7 p.m. at the Jackson Township fire hall to discuss the new staffing plan.

**"Neighbors and employees are very worried. I've had more calls than ever before."**

Pat Rusiloski  
SCID Concerned Citizens

inmates found to be too aggressive to have cellmates.

Inmates are doubled up in most cells in all the other blocks, Vodzak said. "A lot of the guards are concerned," he said.

Originally designed for 1,457 inmates, the prison houses 1,975, Figmick said. Last year it housed 2,122 men.

Closing three housing units would decrease its capacity by 84 men, who could end up either doubled up in another cellblock or transferred to another facility.

"We rely on the guards in the towers for preventing fights from breaking out in the exercise yard," Lewis said. "They're the only ones allowed to have rifles and shotguns. Our only weapons are a

units, the third guard is often called to do other work away from the cellblock, the union said.

When one of the two remaining guards goes on a break, he leaves one guard alone on the block - the same situation in which Howard Rice was involved the day that Marrero assaulted him.

The department of corrections had done two studies, in 1990 and 1993, which determined that more guards were needed and

## State Park to host Frances Slocum Days

Frances Slocum State Park announces its schedule of events for Frances Slocum Days:

OCT. 8, noon to 4 p.m. The Visitor Center will be open to the public throughout the weekend. All programs will begin in the Center.

12:30 - 1:45 p.m., "Native Americans of Frances Slocum" A guided hike to the Historic Rock Shelter and a discussion on the lifestyles of the Lenape people.

2-4 p.m., "Native American Awareness Program" will be conducted by local Native David Two Wolves Smith & Family and members of the Eastern Inter-Tribal Alliance.

OCT. 9, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m., "History of Frances Slocum" will cover the very beginnings of Frances Slocum State Park, including the legends surrounding Frances herself.

2-4 p.m., "Colonial Life" members of the Denison Advocates will give us a glimpse of life in the early American Colonies.

OCT. 10, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. "Habitat Walk", join the Park Naturalist as he guides you through the many habitats which make up the Park. Please dress for 1 1/2 mile hike in varied conditions.

2-4 p.m., "Raptors" Naturalist Randy Neyer will conduct this program on the group of birds known as raptors.

If persons with a disability who wish to participate in any of the programs should contact Jerry Kozlansky at 696-3525. Pennsylvania AT&T Relay Service 1-800-654-5984 (TDD).

## Bank to open in market

Donald A. Hoyle, Jr., President and C.E.O. of Pioneer American Bank, N.A., announced that during November the bank will open a new supermarket branch in the Mr. Z's market, Dallas.

The bank also has an existing office in the Price Chopper Supermarket at the East End Shopping Center in Wilkes-Barre.

Pioneer American Bank is celebrating its 130th anniversary during 1994 and that the Board of Directors' decision to open more offices in Luzerne County at this juncture is a strategic move aimed at solidifying the bank's position as one of the foremost community banks in the region.

Of special pride is Pioneer American's distinction as the first bank in the region to initiate the concept of supermarket banking by entering the Scranton market in 1987 with supermarket branches.

## Meet us at McDonald's

As part of the United Way campaign, two members of the staff of *The Dallas Post* will man the counters at the Shavertown McDonald's Friday. Jill Urbanas, office manager, will be there from 11 a.m. to 12 noon, and Peggy Young, advertising account executive will take over from noon to 1 p.m. Each year, McDonald's sets aside a day when the restaurant contributes \$25 for each volunteer from area businesses and institutions who work an hour at the store. Many other volunteers will be there as well. Stop by and say hello.

## Chase prison by the numbers

These facts about the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID) were provided by prison media officer Tom Figmick and AFSCME Local 2496 executive board member George Vodzak.

• Population: 1,975 men, down from 2,122 in February, 1993.

• Capacity: 1,457 inmates. SCID is presently operating at 36 percent over capacity.

If three modular units housing 84 inmates are closed down, the prison's capacity will drop to 1,370 inmates. Unless the 84 inmates from these units are transferred to other prisons, SCID will then be operating at 44 percent over capacity.

• Housing units: 22 cell blocks, including four modular units, one cell block housing about 80 older, ill or handicapped inmates and five restricted housing units, in which inmates are locked in their cells 23 hours a day. Three of the four modular units are scheduled to be closed within the next six months.

Inmates live two to a cell (doubled up) in all but two housing units, one of which is a special needs unit for inmates taking certain prescription medications. The other one-man cell unit is

reserved for inmates who are too aggressive to live with a cellmate.

• Inmates serving life sentences: 425.

• Racial mix: 65 percent black, 25 percent white, ten percent Hispanic, one Native American.

• Corrections officers: 392 commissioned and noncommissioned. An average of 75 officers per shift work on the housing blocks, with others manning the towers, exercise yard, gym, main gate and dining hall.

Hourly wages range from \$9.28 for new officers to \$17.50 for those at the top of the pay scale. Corrections officers who have worked at SCID for at least five years earn an extra one percent of the base wage for every year over five years, a statewide compensation plan for working in overcrowded conditions.

• Other staff: 216 in clerical and other positions.

• Corrections industries on site: Inmates may earn nominal wages working on the prison farm or in the metal shop or on-site factories which produce mattresses, cardboard containers, pajamas and garments for other government facilities.

• Educational programs: In-

mates have access to tutoring for a GED (high school equivalency diploma), adult literacy programs, a law library, college courses and vocational training in welding, electronics, plumbing, HVAC (heating and air conditioning), automotive mechanics, auto body work, printing, office practices, carpeting and linoleum laying, cabinet making, barbering and computer technology.

Inmates in some of these courses use their skills to repair and maintain the prison and its vehicles.

• Recreational facilities: Inmates have access to TV programs from three satellite dishes and the cable for a monthly fee, movies, family picnics and activities of special interest to different ethnic or religious groups.

Sports include a gym, weight training and intramural sports.

A chapel serves four religious denominations: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim.

The Lifers' Club, Jaycees, Spanish-American club and other prison organizations help to raise money for charities, sell Girl Scout cookies, etc. Community volunteers also work with inmates in several outreach programs.

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