



News Release

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Deer Ridge Post 131 Charter Presentation

The American Legion Department of Oregon presented the charter and installed the officers of Deer Ridge Post 131 on Saturday, February 7 at Deer Ridge Correctional Institution (DRCI.) Deer Ridge Post 131 is the first American Legion Post in an Oregon correctional institution and only the fourth post nationwide in a correctional facility. American Legion District 5 Commander Eugene Hellickson and 2nd Vice Commander Keegan Hodges presented the charter to Post 131 Commander Theodore Aguirre. The officers and general membership were installed during a ceremony held in the DRCI Chapel.

The charter was presented to 15 of the original 19 inmate veterans who initiated the formation of Post 131. Tom Weiss, Jefferson County Veteran's Service Officer, presented the idea of forming an American Legion Post at DRCI in July of 2014. The founding 19 members worked diligently to create the constitution and bylaws, raise funds for membership fees, and elect officers for the post. The Oregon



Department of Corrections was in full support of this endeavor, and the level of support was expressed by the attendance of Deputy Director Kim Brockamp, Assistant Director Mike Gower, Chief Administrator Nancy Howton, and Operations and Policy Analyst Parrish VanWert.

Deer Ridge Post 131 will follow the guidelines set by The American Legion. They will hold regular meetings, pay membership dues, hold fundraisers, and give back to the community and fellow veterans in need. American Legion membership will not only provide the veterans with connections to fellow veterans while incarcerated, but will provide connections upon release to help them reunite with their respective communities. The adults in custody participating in The American Legion Post 131 will learn valuable life and job skills such as organization, budgeting, communication, and much more.

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

DRCI is a minimum security facility located four miles east of Madras in central Oregon. This men's prison houses approximately 770 inmates who are within four years of release. The minimum facility began receiving inmates in September 2007. DRCI provides a range of correctional programs and services including, education, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, cognitive programs, and inmate work crews.

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