

## Prisoner reentry (continued from page 5)

• **Educating employers about hiring ex-offenders:** The Employment Work Group assisted with a special presentation in October to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) on the improved social and public safety implications related to successful offender reentry. The goal is to deliver presentations statewide by identifying regional reentry coalition members who could present at their local rotaries and chambers of commerce. The work group is exploring Ban the Box, a nationwide campaign that calls for removing the conviction history question from employment applications, and is also reviewing strategies from the recently released U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance report, *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness* (<https://www.bja.gov/Publications/CSG-Reentry-and-Employment.pdf>).

• **Sentencing options for misdemeanants:** The Misdemeanants Work Group is examining a deferred sentencing model for specific state cases. Included in the discussion are representatives from the Department of Law, the Public Defender Agency, Municipality of Anchorage Prosecutor's Office, Department of Corrections Electronic Monitoring, and the Alaska Court System Therapeutic Courts. The 2011 recidivism study by the Alaska Judicial Council, *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009* (<http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/reports/recid2011.pdf>), reported that the highest level of recidivism is found among misdemeanants 17–29 years of age. The

deferred sentencing program would focus on individuals in this group who are charged with property offenses. An assessment tool would be used to identify needs, including mental health/substance abuse treatment, education, and employment services. If the individual agrees to this intervention and completes the requirements within six months, the case would be dismissed. The major barrier to the implementation of this plan is the lack of low-cost or free services for this population. At this time, funds are prioritized for services for felons. The work group has collaborated with the Behavioral Health Work Group to explore requesting the use of alcohol tax funds to cover the costs of substance abuse assessment and treatment for misdemeanants at high risk of incurring a felony charge.

• **Behavioral Health:** In August the work group identified the need to update the behavioral health chapter (chapter 5) of the *Five-Year Prisoner Reentry Strategic Plan*. Co-chair DOC Deputy Commissioner Taylor indicated that the strategies and performance measures in the chapter would be updated prior to the completion of the current DOC needs assessment. A sub-group has been meeting to discuss using peer helpers to increase the number of offenders who are exposed to substance abuse programs in DOC facilities.

In addition to the specific activities noted above, other progress on the *Five-Year Plan* includes:

• **Fairbanks PACE Project:** The Fairbanks PACE (Probationer Accountability and Certain Enforcement) domestic violence program for repeat offender misdemeanants has been operating for over a year. This pilot

project has 18 offenders who have met the eligibility criteria and are in the program. A violation of the conditions of probation results in an immediate court appearance and the imposition of a jail sentence. The jail sentence is usually three days for a first violation; additional probation violations result in longer sentences. Based on program data, there appears to be a significant reduction in petitions to revoke probation for individuals in this program. The project also includes a survey of victims' perceptions of safety before, during, and after the offenders complete a batterers' intervention program. The UAA Justice Center is evaluating this project.

For information on the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Task Force and Alaska Department of Corrections Rehabilitation & Reentry, go to <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/rehabilitation-reentry>.

### Legislative Events — SB 64 Hearings

Senate Bill 64 Omnibus Crime/Corrections Bill is a bipartisan effort to deal with the increasing costs of incarceration and the need for alternatives to prison. Hearings have been held in Wasilla and Fairbanks. The July 25, 2013 hearing in Wasilla is available at [http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event\\_id=2147483647\\_2013111006](http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event_id=2147483647_2013111006).

The November 4 hearing in Fairbanks can be viewed in two parts at [http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event\\_id=2147483647\\_2013111006](http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event_id=2147483647_2013111006) and at [http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event\\_id=2147483647\\_2013111010](http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event_id=2147483647_2013111010).

For further reading, see [http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/a-z/o/offender\\_reentry.html](http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/a-z/o/offender_reentry.html).

## In Memoriam

Dr. Nancy E. Schafer, Professor Emeritus at the Justice Center, died September 26, 2013 after an illness. Dr. Schafer was on the faculty of the Justice Center from 1983 until her retirement in 2002, twice serving as acting director of the Justice Center, once as interim co-director, and once as acting dean of the School of Justice. Before joining the University of Alaska Anchorage she served on the faculty of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (1977–1983) and Trenton State College in Trenton, New Jersey (1974–1977). She received her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1977.

Dr. Schafer's principal teaching and research areas were in corrections, criminology, and juvenile justice. She was a prolific author and coauthor of journal articles and research studies including "Exploring the Link between Visits and Parole Success: A Survey of Prison Visitors," "State Operated Jails: How and Why," "Delivering Justice in Rural Alaska," and "Community Jails in Alaska." Research projects for which she was principal investigator included an evaluation of the pretrial intervention program conducted by the Alaska Department of Law in the late 1980s, monitoring Alaska's compliance with the federal Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, a study of disproportionate representation of minority youth in Alaska's juvenile justice system, and the Community Jails Statewide Research Consortium, a research partnership with fifteen community jails in Alaska. Dr. Schafer's professional affiliations included the American Correctional Association, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association, of which she was past president. She served on numerous community committees, boards, and advisory boards including the Alaska Women's Resource Center, the Subcommittee on Disparate Minority Confinement of the Alaska Supreme Court's Committee on Fairness and Access, and the Alaska Juvenile Justice Work Group, as well as on a variety of UAA committees. Dr. Schafer's contributions to the Justice Center were invaluable, and the university is grateful for her service and commitment.

Research publications and papers by Dr. Schafer can be viewed at <http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/publications/authors/schafer/>.

Condolences may be sent to her family c/o the Justice Center, 3211 Providence Drive, LIB 213, Anchorage, AK 99508.