

## Kudos to Jefferson County in first Civil Service Rally

The Pine Bluff/Jefferson County Regional Park was the site of the first ever Civil Service Rally sponsored by the Jefferson County Drug Court on Saturday, May 15, 2010. The rally was a successful effort to educate the community on the work of the drug court program and also raise much needed funds to support the drug court program. Daryl Taylor, special projects coordinator for the adult drug court, stated that many drug court participants are homeless and lack money for clothing, food or medicine. The funds raised will be used to take care of these needs.

The day-long rally included soft-ball competition between teams organized by the Pine Bluff Police Department, the PB Fire Department, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Tri-County Drug Task Force, the Adult Detention Center, the Arkansas Departments of Correction and Community Correction and a team of current and former drug court participants who called themselves the "Drug Court All-Stars." Four teams entered the barbeque cook-off contest. Teams were asked to donate their finished products to be sold to raise money for the drug court.

County Judge Mike Holcomb and his wife, Dee, were among the local dignitaries attending the event. Judge Holcomb stated that he admires the work of Judge (Berlin) Jones and the other drug court team members who often work on their own time to provide the program to the community. In addition to educational exhibits, activities included a climbing wall sponsored by the Arkansas National Guard, the smoke house from the fire department, clowns, food concessions, and music.



*Happy Fourth of July!*

## Arkansas's First Veterans Treatment Court Opens

The first Veterans Treatment Court in the state has begun operations in the 23rd Judicial District (Lonoke) with Judge Philip Whiteaker presiding. The court meets on Friday afternoons following the regularly scheduled drug court docket. Judge Whiteaker and various team members have been working with Toby Lambert, Veterans Treatment Court Liaison, since last winter to develop the criteria for entrance and to educate the community on the new court. The team travelled to Tulsa, OK, to observe the Tulsa County VTC in operation prior to implementing the program in Lonoke County.

Judge Whiteaker presented the concept to the Drug Court Judges Committee of the Arkansas Judicial Council during their semian-  
nual meeting in June. (cont. on page 5)

## K2/Spice Banned by Local Jurisdictions, State Health Board to Consider Action

In the absence of state or federal legislation, many local jurisdictions in Arkansas have now passed ordinances prohibiting the sale and possession of the chemical compound commonly called K2 or Spice. On Friday, July 2, during an emergency meeting, the State Board of Health will consider whether to enact a regulation that would have statewide impact on the substance. As drafted, the regulation would make sale of the substance a misdemeanor punishable with up to a \$500 fine and possession of the substance a violation that could result in a \$1000 penalty. Governor Beebe has already signaled his approval of the measure.

In a recent article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, K2 was described as synthetic marijuana, frequently used with incense and inhaled by users. The chemical was developed by a Clemson University undergraduate student in 1995 as part of an organic chemistry class of professor John W. Hoffman, whose research includes the properties of the main active component of marijuana. According to the Alpena police chief, Mark Bailey, who tried K2 after purchasing some at the town's Red X convenience store, the effects of the substance are similar to those of LSD. Alpena is one of the first local jurisdictions to ban K2 through a city ordinance.

To date, there is no known drug test that will show abuse of this substance by drug court participants. Some courts have amended their court handbooks by prohibiting the possession and use of the substance by participants. Professor Hoffman told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in an e-mail that it should "absolutely NOT be used as a recreational drug."

The 3rd Judicial District prosecuting attorney requested an Attorney General's

Opinion on the legality of local jurisdictions enacting legislation that in the past has been the purview of state or federal jurisdictions. Because the request came after enforcement and arrest under some local ordinances prohibiting K2, the AG's Office declined to issue an opinion.

State Senator David Johnson, (D-LR) is currently working with the Arkansas Department of Health to address this issue during the next legislative session that will convene in January 2011. A sample copy of a K2/Spice county ordinance can be found on the Drug Court web-page of the Arkansas Judiciary web-site.

## Treatment Funds Suffer Blow During State Budget Cuts

State Drug Court Judges were told during the meeting of the committee at the Arkansas Judicial Council in Hot Springs, that funding for treatment for FY 2011 will be short \$1 million due to cuts taken in the Department of Community Correction budget beginning in the new fiscal year.

Ms. Anne Geddings, who met with the judges, shared the information with the judges during the routine treatment funding update that DCC provides during committee meetings for the courts. Several courts have already exhausted or are near exhausting their treatment funds for FY 2010. The committee voted to ask DCC to continue paying for treatment submitted from these courts utilizing funds not being spent in other drug court programs. The judges decided not to trigger the reallocation process designed under the approved formula. Drug courts will be expected to operate within a treatment fund of \$2 million beginning July 1, 2010. Ms. Geddings told the judges that if the state revenue projections improved, there could be money restored by DCC to the account. (cont. on page 3)

### (Treatment Funds from page 2)

During a meeting of the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Substance Abuse held June 23rd at the State Capitol, Director of DCC, David Eberhard confirmed the loss of funding for the courts. When asked about "the cut" from Chairman Bill Pritchard, Mr. Eberhard responded that the decision to reduce treatment permits the agency to continue to fully support the personnel needs of the drug court program. He stated that while his agency has over 80 vacant personnel slots, only 10 are in the drug court program and those should be filled in the near future. He also indicated that upon reviewing the past treatment funds usage, it appears that the \$2 million will be sufficient to meet the needs of the courts.

Legislative support for drug court programs remains high as lawmakers undertake various studies of the corrections programs in an effort to relieve overcrowding in state prisons. Senator Jim Luker was recently quoted in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette as not being interested in building any new prisons but rather would prefer to see more drug courts established in the state. DCC has included the creation of additional drug courts in the FY 2011 budget moving through the budgeting process.

## Judges Tasked to Provide Input to PEW Foundation Arkansas Prison Study

Nine circuit court judges have been asked by Chief Justice Jim Hannah to participate as a working group in the current study being conducted in Arkansas concerning prison overcrowding. The state was recently successful in securing the assistance of the PEW Foundation's Center on the States to provide technical expertise for the study. The judges, chaired by Circuit Judge Gary Arnold who also serves on the larger task force, met with representatives from PEW, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) and

JFA Institute (a provider who historically has provided the state with prison population projections for the past several years) during the Judicial Council meeting in June at Hot Springs.

Brian Elderbroom of the PEW Foundation noted that overall prison populations are decreasing in the country but such is not the case for Arkansas. PEW has assisted other states in "getting smart" on crime rather than just being tough on crime.

The three partnering entities (PEW, CJI and JFA) provided the committee with some data already collected for the study. Ms. Wendy Naro Ware, JFA Institute, noted that while entry into probation is decreasing in the state, admissions to prison is increasing. She stated that the tendency in Arkansas to have extended probation time increases the prison population. As an example, she stated an offender who was sentenced to 10 years might be released after having served only 2.5 years. However, the balance is served on parole. If, during the sixth year, the offenders violates with an additional charge, then they will most likely get extended time. In 2009, 32% of admissions were for parole violators.

Each year, over 2200 prison inmates are held beyond two months of their transfer date, with the average length of extended stay being six months. Much of this expense could be alleviated with reentry programs designed to assist returnees with assimilation into the community. This number of inmates cost the state \$132,000 per day at a rate of \$60 per day or \$5 million a year for incarceration in the state prison system.

The timeline for the work of the larger group is to complete data analysis and system mapping soon so policy recommendations can begin during the late summer/early fall. The report of the task force is expected near the end of November so draft legislation can be prepared prior to the 2011 legislative session. Ms. Krystal Mann, staff attorney, staffs the PEW Judges Work Group for AOC.

## ADCPA Board Meets, Establishes Working Committees

The newly elected members of the Arkansas Drug Court Professional Association (ADCPA) board were hosted for their first meeting by the Saline County Drug Court team in Benton, Arkansas, on Friday, May 28th. They immediately rolled up their sleeves and began working on several projects, including spearheading the next state-wide conference to be held next April in Fort Smith.

Five committees were established from the board members. These are: Budget, Conference, Public Relations, Membership, and Long-Range Planning. All committees met that afternoon and reported to the full group before the meeting adjourned. The group will ask a drug court participant from Walnut Ridge to assist in the development of an association web-site. Judge Gunn was asked to attend the State Association Officers meeting at the upcoming NADCP Conference in Boston on behalf of Arkansas since President John Dan Kemp was not able to attend.

The next meeting of the board will be in Russellville on Friday, August 27th with the 5th Judicial District drug court team as hosts. A copy of the application for membership to ADCPA can be found on the drug court web-page of the Arkansas Judiciary web-site.



**ADCPA Board members with staff Carol Roddy at their recent meeting in Benton.**



**Producer Carolyn Long addresses NADCP Conference in Boston with Washington/Madison Co. Drug Court Team in background.**

## Drug Court Team Receives National Award! Three Arkansas Teams Attend National

The Washington/Madison County drug court team was recently recognized with a National Media Award during the national convention of the NADCP in Boston, Massachusetts. Producer Carolyn Long of Jones Productions received the award on behalf of the entire team who were on stage at the closing ceremonies. NADCP invited the team to attend the meeting when they were notified that they were selected to receive the award.

Chris Deutsch, Communications Director for NADCP, explained to the attendees prior to the announcement, that when he first heard that an Arkansas drug court was broadcasting their proceedings over a local cable television channel, he became very concerned. Both he and NADCP Executive Officer West Huddleston traveled to NW Arkansas in February to witness a taping of the court proceedings. Afterwards, both were convinced of the educational value the program provides to the community. In addition, the televised program has garnered a groundswell of community support for the drug court program. (cont. on page 6)

### (VTC-cont. from page 1)

He stated that while the take-up had been slower than he would want, they are still in the process of working with local law enforcement officers to identify potential participants for the program. The key question for officers or judges to ask is, "Have you ever or are you now serving your country in the military?" It is estimated that over 1500 veterans reside in Lonoke County. The VTC is operated as a separate docket of the drug court docket in the 23rd Judicial District. Judge Whiteaker stressed the importance of providing a separate venue for veterans to appear with each other before the court and the need to provide some separation from the regular drug court participants. "The VA provides a vast array of benefits to veterans that are not currently available to regular drug court participants. It would be like some folks driving a Cadillac to court while everyone else is driving to court in Hugsos."

There are approximately 38 VTCs throughout the country. The first VTC was developed by Judge Robert Russell in Buffalo, NY. The Tulsa County VTC was recently named a "mentor" program by the National Drug Court Institute. The NDCI will be providing grants to interested courts to travel to Tulsa to observe the proceedings beginning this fall.

Funding to begin the VTC in Lonoke was from a Rural Health Office grant received by the Veterans Health Benefits Administration in North Little Rock. Mr. Lambert's salary is paid from the grant funds. There have been recent discussions with drug court judges in the 5th and 6th Judicial Districts to also begin VTCs in their areas. If you are interested in beginning a VTC, please contact State Drug Court Coordinator Carol Roddy at the AOC for further information. All programs must be developed in close partnership with the Veterans Administration that provides all treatment and services other than probation for the VTC program.

## Fran Flener Leads Effort to Reign in Prescription Drug Abuse



After receiving a report in October 2009 indicating that Arkansas teenagers are the worst abusers of prescription pain relievers in the entire United States, Fran Flener, State Drug Director, convened a task force to reign in the growing problem of abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. The group was comprised of many stakeholders, including law enforcement, prosecutors, Cooperative Extension, drug enforcement, judges, pharmacies, fast food, waste management and a marketing agency. The group built on the work of the Regional Prevention Resource Centers, who obtained some minimal funding under Acts 1028 and 1499 during the 2009 session to support the effort. In addition, Attorney General Dustin McDaniel provided \$10,000 to the campaign to offset printing costs and to provide newspaper coverage.

**Monitor, Secure and Dispose:** These three words have become the mantra for the campaign to eradicate prescription drug abuse in the state. Easy access to prescription drugs via friends or relatives indicates the need to monitor medicines inside every household. Seventy-one percent of teens who obtained prescription pain relievers and prescription stimulants were given them, bought them, or stole them from friends or relatives. In 2008, for the first time, teens reported that it is easier to get prescription drugs than beer. More than 3 of 5 teens report that prescription drugs are easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets. Arkansas ranked second in the nation in the per capita number of prescriptions written, a record 17.5 per person. For persons age 19 - 64, Arkansas ranks first.

Since the kick-off of the campaign in March, approximately 236,522 prescription and OTC drugs have been turned into law enforcement during "take back" events. One event noted medicines returned from the 1960s. There are five events now scheduled for Summer 2010. (cont. on page 6)

(National award cont. from page 4)

Appearing before the crowd of approximately 3600 drug court professionals, Judge Mary Ann Gunn thanked the association for the recognition and assured the attendees that no participants are filmed that have not agreed to be on camera in advance of the taping. She also stated that every one has indicated to the court that if their appearance will help just one person avoid the path they have taken, then they are very willing to participate.

The Washington/Madison County drug court team was one of three Arkansas drug court teams who were in attendance at the 16th Annual Drug Court Conference. Also in attendance were Judge Dennis Sutterfield and his team from the 5th Judicial District, and Judge Jay Finch, and his team from the 19th West Judicial District. Both the 5th and 19th West were recipients of federal BJA grants that included travel to the national meeting. However, Arkansas drug courts can use money collected as user fees and deposited in the drug court program fund of their county treasury to travel teams to the national conference. The conference for 2011 will be in Washington, D.C. on July 17-20.



Judge Mary Ann Gunn thanks the NADCP for the National Media Award given to her drug court during the recent meeting in Boston.

(Prescription drugs-cont. from page 4)

Parents and other adults are being urged to track the number of pills in each prescription bottle or packet and lock them in a safe place. If a teenager is prescribed medicines, the parent or guardian should keep track of refills compared to prescribed dosage instructions. Lastly, an inventory of all prescription drugs in the home should be kept. Unused drugs should be disposed of by mixing them with some undesirable substance such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter and placing them in an empty can or bag before throwing them in the trash. Most medications should not be flushed down the toilet since they can affect water quality.

Ms. Flener, who speaks frequently on this subject to civic organizations throughout the state, has reminded her audiences that this is one area of drug abuse where we can be the winners. By merely paying attention, we can stop the flow of prescription drugs out the doors of our homes. So often in the area of drug abuse, a person is overwhelmed and feels without sufficient resources to help. In this case, the resource to address this issue resides in every household in the state. More information concerning prescription drug abuse resources may be found at: [www.ioit2me.com](http://www.ioit2me.com).



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