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Roger Werholtz Wins Award as Outstanding Corrections Commissioner in the Nation

At its annual awards dinner on December 5th, 2009, the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) honored Roger Werholtz, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Corrections as the outstanding Director of Corrections for 2009.

The award is presented annually to recognize the outstanding ASCA member, and that member's dedication and achievements. ASCA established the award in 1992, to celebrate Michael Francke's contribution to the field of Corrections and his support of ASCA. In 1989, while Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections, Michael Francke was murdered as he left his office in Salem. In 1991, a former Oregon inmate was convicted of his murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Roger joined the Kansas Department of Corrections in 1982 as a Community Corrections Specialist after being the first director of the Wyandotte County Community Corrections Program. He has supervised all three divisions of the Department and has served the people of Kansas in the areas of community mental health, child protective services, and substance abuse prevention and treatment.

Roger holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Kansas and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts from Washburn University. He has also served as a graduate level instructor in the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

Making the award announcement, Morris Thigpen, Director of the National Institute of Corrections and recipient of the first Francke Award in 1992, described Secretary Werholtz as a quiet, reserved and influential member who has made major contributions on a state, regional and national basis. He

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has served as both moderator and instructor for ASCA's All Directors and New Directors Training Programs where he shared his knowledge, experience and insights. Morris further described him as patient, thoughtful and even-handed and credited him with having a wry and dry sense of humor that helps bring difficult issues into perspective. Mr. Thigpen said that as a major player in ASCA's performance based measures project he has worked tirelessly through controversial issues with the committee parsing measure after measure without taking sides and gaining consensus among members about how to measure performance.

In nominating him, Governor Parkinson wrote, "under Roger's leadership, there has been seven percent reduction in the state's inmate population since February 2004 as well as a 53 percent reduction in the rate of monthly parole revocations in Fiscal Year 2009 compared to FY 2003. Kansas has also benefited from Roger's leadership evidenced by a 69% reduction in average number of parole absconders in the last decade." Governor Parkinson said, "these dramatic improvements are just a few of the impressive outcomes achieved by the Department under Roger's leadership which has focused not only on the safe and effective containment of inmates, but has also contributed to public safety by encouraging and assisting offenders to become law abiding citizens."

Roger chairs the Kansas Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; is a member of the Kansas Sentencing Commission; the Kansas Reentry Policy Council; and the Kansas Sex Offender Policy Board. He has been a member of the Governor's Mental Health Services Planning Council; the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council; the Information Technology Executive Council; the Criminal Justice Recodification, Rehabilitation and Restoration Committee; and chaired that State's Community Corrections Board. He was a recipient of a Garvey Memorial Scholarship and a Charlotte Leavitt Scholarship. In 1998, he was recognized as the outstanding alumnus of the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare and is a member of the school's Advisory Board. The Council of State Governments named him a 2005 Toll Fellow. He serves as the Midwest Regional Representative on the Executive Committee of the Association of State Correctional Administrators. He has been a volunteer in scouting and youth athletics.

The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) is a national organization representing the Directors of Corrections for the 50 States, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and four large urban jail systems. Members also include the Directors of the Correctional Service of Canada, the Administration of Corrections in Puerto Rico, Guam, Saipan, the Virgin Islands, and the Ministry of Corrections in Ontario Canada. The Association's major goals are to influence and shape correctional policy, to identify and serve as a clearinghouse to share with its members proven correctional practices, standards, and performance measures to ensure the furtherance of successful state-of-the-art activities; and to support its membership through a regimen of training and professional development programs designed to enhance member's professional skills and awareness on advancements in the profession.

For more information, please contact George or Camille Camp, Executive Directors.
