

## **Training links paroling inmates to union jobs**



**Mavis McAllister, a Community Outreach Representative for the NCCRC, speaks at the press conference announcing the NCCRC/PIA partnership.**

The Northern California Carpenters Regional Council (NCCRC) and the Prison Industry Authority (PIA) have launched a collaborative pre-apprenticeship program that teaches inmates construction skills that can assist them in obtaining employment upon parole. After completing the training, parolees will be eligible for an apprenticeship program run by the Carpenters Training Committee for Northern California. In addition, the PIA pays the initial union dues and provides a full complement of tools to program graduates who enter the union.

The six-month PIA/NCCRC program combines classroom instruction with hands-on training. Inmates learn various skills from math and blueprint reading to pouring concrete, framing, drywall, taping and texturing, painting, roofing, and finish carpentry techniques.

As part of their training, inmates are refurbishing and converting the previously vacant Green Valley Fire Camp 12, located on the grounds of Folsom State Prison, into a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations/PIA training center.

The program offers benefits for labor, the prison, and inmates. The Union receives trained candidates; the institution has its depreciating structures repaired; and inmates get valuable preparatory training for entrance into the labor market.

"The Prison Industry Authority and Northern California Carpenters Regional Council have developed this innovative partnership to rehabilitate inmates and prepare them for successful re-entry into society," said Matt Powers, PIA's General Manager. "One of the primary obstacles for parolees is their inability to obtain meaningful employment. This program helps paroling inmates overcome this barrier by providing a bridge to jobs on the outside. This is truly an investment in public safety, because employed parolees mean safer communities."

PIA provides productive jobs for inmates in California's adult correctional institutions in factories that produce a variety of goods from flags, shoes and clothing, to printing services, binders, eye wear, office furniture, and license plates. PIA has also established the Inmate Employability Program, which provides training, certification, and job placement assistance, to improve the

inmates' employability upon parole.

Speaking at a PIA event in Folsom on June 28, NCCRC Community Outreach Coordinator Mavis McAllister said, "There is high demand in today's construction industry for skilled craftspeople. This program helps answer that demand while giving people a chance to successfully re-enter society."

Today's building industry demands a significant investment in time and energy to master construction skills. The required training requires a high degree of dedication—and for those who have that dedication, this program is a great introduction into the building trades.

"We are pleased to partner with the PIA," NCCRC Executive Officer Bob Alvarado told the *Sacramento Business Journal*, "and extend an opportunity to people who are ready to make a commitment and are serious about re-entering society as productive citizens."