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MEXICAN OFFICERS RECEIVE TRAINING AT NM CORRECTIONS ACADEMY

--NMCD helps Mexico establish first federal corrections academy--

Santa Fe- It's a first. Twenty-four federal correctional officers from Mexico are attending the New Mexico Corrections Department's (NMCD) Training Academy in Santa Fe. The officers will return home, and serve as the first cadre of instructors at Mexico's first-ever corrections academy in Xalapa, Veracruz.

NMCD and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs have a Memorandum of Understanding that allows the Corrections Department to train and mentor prison staff from Mexico and Central America. "It is a compliment to our Training Academy and overall prison system, and we are pleased that we can help other nations professionalize their prison operations," said Secretary of Corrections, Joe R. Williams.

Prison administrators from El Salvador and Honduras have also received intermittent training from NMCD. The U. S. State Department contacted the New Mexico Corrections Department to enlist training support for Mexico and Central America, because of New Mexico's solid performance in corrections over the last 20 years and its location as a border state with similar cultural and law enforcement interests. New Mexico is one of only a handful of states to have all applicable operations accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA). NMCD's Training Academy was the nation's first state corrections academy to become accredited by the ACA in 1993.

The Mexican correctional officer cadets began their six-week training class at the NMCD Training Academy on March 16. The cadets will receive basic instruction for the first four weeks, then they will move on to the defensive tactics instructor course for one week, and during the final week, they will receive train-the-trainer instruction. Graduation is scheduled for April 24 at the Training Academy gymnasium.

In June, the freshly trained instructors will begin teaching their first basic academy class of 200 new cadets. In Mexico, there are six federal penitentiaries, operated by the Secretariat for Public Safety, with a federal inmate population of approximately 50,000. Mexico has approximately 168,000 prisoners under state jurisdictions.

The Mexican cadet class is NMCD's first international academy class.

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