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For Immediate Release

Erie County Department of Corrections Earns Accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA), Commission on Accreditation for Corrections

ERIE - The Erie County Department of Corrections, including the Erie County Prison and the Erie County Community Corrections Center, was awarded Initial Accreditation by the American Correctional Association, Commission on Accreditation for Corrections, following a panel hearing in front of the Commission in Tampa, Florida on Sunday, January 24th, 2010. The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections, awarded a three-year Accreditation, and determined Erie County Department of Corrections to have satisfied safety, security, health care, administrative, legal, and quality of life conditions established in American Correctional Association Performance Based Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities, 4th Edition, 2008 Supplement. Erie County Department of Corrections is now one of only two County Jails accredited in Pennsylvania.

County Executive Barry Grossman stated that he is, “proud that the professionalism and dedication of Warden Jim Veshecco and his staff at the Erie County Prison is being recognized by this great award. Being one of only two prisons in the state accredited is a distinct honor and certainly distinguishes Erie County and our fine prison system.”

Warden Veshecco established accreditation as a goal of the Erie County Department of Corrections and felt that to be recognized by federal, state and local criminal justice agencies as the national leader for providing incarceration and treatment to criminal offenders, accreditation by an external authority was a must. “A primary advantage of being accredited is adopting standards that require performance based

accountability for all levels of staff. We are now required to look at everything we are doing and hold ourselves accountable for adhering to policies and procedures that will ultimately enhance consistency and professionalism in all our operations. Accreditation provides the Erie County Department of Corrections with credibility among its criminal justice peers, the courts, law makers, and the public whom we are entrusted to serve” said Veshecco.

The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections is responsible for rendering accreditation decisions based on results of a Performance Based Standards Compliance Audit conducted at the Erie County Department of Corrections from November 15 -19, 2009. The presiding panel chairperson and members discuss issues and raise questions relative to all aspects of Erie County Department of Corrections operations and participation in the accreditation process.

James Veshecco, Director of Corrections/Warden of the Erie County Department of Corrections, David Sanner, Director of Support Services/Accreditation Manager, and Selena Panetta, Prison Health Services Nurse Manager, represented the Erie County Department of Corrections at the panel hearing. David Sanner, agency representative and spokesperson for the accreditation process, presented information on the Erie County Department of Corrections and responded to the standard by standard review by the panel. Based on the results of the accreditation compliance audit and additional information provided to the commission during the agency presentation, final deliberations by the commission panel determined Erie County Department of Corrections to be in compliance with 100% of 60 Mandatory Standards and 99.7% of 322 other performance based standards.

During the accreditation period Erie County must maintain the level of standards compliance through documented outcome measures, self-evaluations, and regular contact with the Standards and Accreditation Department of the American Correctional Association. Annual reporting of compliance levels and significant events will be reviewed to determine if an on-site monitoring visit to verify continued compliance is necessary prior to the Re-accreditation Audit now anticipated for November 2012.

Approximately 120 agencies nation wide, of more than two thousand Adult Local Detention Facilities (local jails) in the country, are accredited through the ACA, the most professionally recognized correctional accreditation process.

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