

IOWA PRISON INDUSTRIES INFORMATIONAL SPEAKER

- 7:41:54 – IPI: We are here to talk on our interactions with the University and how we are utilized. So my job at IPI is to help people that are incarcerated develop skills and do work. Every year, we have about 5000 people released every year. We track them after that, and we see that 34% of people return to prison within 3 years. We train 1400 people every year. This program is self sustaining and self funded. This program has no cost to the citizens. We sell the things that our offenders make. Our goal is for successful re-entry. We want them to get out there, get a job, and have a life. Legislators have created a statement of intent. It is to develop positive attitudes. We want them to understand and follow the rules. We want them to develop a better way of thinking. If we give them work, then we give them a chance to be better, and do better. A lot of people come to prison who have never had a regular job. This helps them to develop skills that are normal. For a lot of people, doing the functions of a job are not normal. We are here to develop skills to normalize them. The legislature has also asked us to foster marketable skills that can lead to gainful employment. We certify welders at two places. Trade skills are needed. People work on skills that help them, when they get out, they can use.
[Shows First Video]
These two guys would be right back in at prison if they weren't learning skills. We divide those skills in different sections. Education. Soft Skills. Hard Skills.
- 7:51:48 – IPI: This gives people something to do. It beats getting hassled, kicking around rocks in the yard. We require the GED which encourages people to seek more. If they get out without something like that, they're gonna have a hard time finding work. We also are looking into healthpayer. They do many apprenticeships. HVAC. Woodworking. Electricians. We also help people learn specialized skills. Such as Adobe Illustrator to make brochures. CAD Software to do that as well.
[Second Video]
So for a program, you have to do a few thousand hours to get that. There are also about 18 exams and chapters to follow. This program is run by Federal Labor. You can work across prisons and transfer it around. Offenders love it because it helps them land jobs. We are all about helping people not come back. We produce a lot of things there. Soft Skills - These are the interpersonal skills that people pick up throughout life. I know y'all hate group projects. But these things help develop these skills. We help them develop that. We also help them care about the customer. Meet Deadlines. Speak with partners. This program helps the offender when they get to an employer, talk to them about what they did.
- 7:59:48 – IPI: Hard Skills: There is a need for these "middle skill" workers who are out of highschool, but not through college. Plumber, Welders, Warehouse/Distribution. Those people in the prisons are able to fill those needs. The people in prisons want to get out and go on to their lives. Get out and be done with prison. Here are some testimonies from people that were offenders and were grateful for it. We do plastic bags, we have textiles. These people have no skills. They were a drug addict. We help develop skills that are able to help people get jobs. This woman was able to get a job because of the skills we trained her.

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Taken by Jacob Zirkelbach

- 8:03:50 – IPI: Every year we bring people down from an MBA program that helps us help you. We have 9 paid interns with Graphic Design, Furniture, and Apparel Design. All from Iowa State. They help us design stuff that gets built. We have done a number of class projects. AMD 431 class would bring in 21 folks that help to design and implement pants that would be worn by officers. Classes have designed lab coats, uniforms, gowns. Another project we cover is the TreeCYcle Program. Iowa State will fell trees, then turn it into benches and wall art for places like Geoffroy. There is a lot of talent. We want those men and women to develop that talent. www.iaprisoinind.com is a place where we have had people develop that.
- 8:08:40 – Jackson: Anything that helps offenders on the internet?
- 8:08:58 – IPI: So internet is restricted, but we are looking to get internet in prisons to ensure that they are developing that. It is a huge risk, but we are moving in that direction. We have self-contained networks. It really is limiting and is an issue for us.
- 8:10:05 – Araceli: How long do you stay connected with people outside of Prison? Any checkups?
- 8:10:27 – IPI: Once they are out, we lose track of them. If they come back, then we know. The standard measure is 3 years. Other than job recommendations, we don't really have too much contact from them.
- 8:11:16 – Sarah: Will the wages ever go up?
- 8:11:25 – IPI: On average, it is a dollar. When you join IPI, most jobs are .58/hour. People want to work here. We try to make it as much like the private world as possible. You get promotions and merit increases. You can move up. The most you can make is 1.92/hour. I don't see that changing. The people in prison have to work to get into state prison. The people in there have had a long history of bad choices. We are helping them get on the right track. We are paying about \$30k/year. People get diabetes, cancer. We have to get these people a place to live, healthcare, and so forth. Offenders do get an allowance to purchase things that they want like cookies and chips and so forth.
- 8:13:58 – Francis: Do you know what percentage get a steady job after prison?
- 8:14:13 – IPI: Everyone has an IPI. If you work at IPI and you get out, you are much more likely.
- 8:14:38 – Francis: Rates of returners decreasing?
- 8:14:44 – IPI: It is 34% outside of IPI. We are 8% lower than that if you are in IPI. That rate is really low across the university.
- 8:16:01 – Francis: Work with other business?
- 8:16:12 – IPI: We work with Schools, Agencies, and Non-Profits.
- 8:16:39 – Francis: I'll come back to my question.
- 8:17:29 – Katie: What kind of stuff do they spend money on?
- 8:17:46 – IPI: First, almost everyone will have to pay restitution. Almost everyone is required to pay back \$12,500 to victims. We have a canteen and commissary. They can order songs, TV, MP3. The law is to save \$100. We want to increase that. Some people are more diligent and will save more.
- 8:19:22 – Dee: Does your program allow re-entry?
- 8:19:30 – IPI: DoC has a policy that once you are off of supervision for 18 months, you are able to come back. Even once people are outside of prison, they go on parole. We are aware that prison doesn't work the best. We have found that giving back freedoms gradually is better.
- 8:20:55 – Claire: GED is required. How do you apply for IPI?
- 8:21:25 – IPI: We look into reports from the prisons to see the behavior that they have done. Working for IPI is a very positive reward.

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8:21:58 – Gallery: Fair Labor and Standards Act.

8:22:09 – IPI: It does not apply to prisoners. It is more of a stipend in addition to the free room and board, dental, and healthcare.

8:22:59 – Trey: Is IPI the only thing they can do, or what else can they do with their time?

8:23:16 – IPI: Treatment for Anger Management. Cognitive Treatment. Drug Treatment. Library. There really is not enough work or money to have all kinds of classes and stuff for Prisons. We wish we could train as many people as possible. We get less funding every year. We wish there was more.

People get assessed on a bunch of different things happening.

8:25:06 – Trey: The way I understood Dee's question was about recidivism. So 24% come back? Do they have the ability to reapply.

8:26:02 – IPI: Yes. Good behavior.

8:26:13 – Gallery: There are some programs about GED and Welding. The statistics are in the private sector, not the farms and stuff. In your website, since '97, you have had a 5% increase for people going into the private sector. You have put on that you are investing in plastic bags, steel jail cells.

Iowa Agencies are required to purchase any surplus from you?

Is increasing growth in toilet paper better than expansion of tech expansion. Are these opportunities better?

8:28:27 – IPI: Just going to work. Team work. Basics of being in a job, OSHA safety. These are all helpful. These skills are applicable everywhere. We hope to have them learn that they can come in with little and show progress. These skills are useful to any job, and we don't really specialize. They learn to get on the right track. Work, and no matter what it is, is positive.

8:31:16 – Gallery: I guess it is better than twiddling the thumbs. What is the profit?

8:31:44 – IPI: \$20 million of sales. \$60,000 of sustainable income. We gotta buy everything. The money doesn't go anywhere else. Any money that goes into IPI, stays in IPI. When we have a good year, we are able to update our equipment and operation. I don't get increased pay. This self-funding means that we are self-funded. People over the state feels that they are doing a good thing. They have a responsibility to make good economical and financial decisions.

We have to be competitive. Unfortunately, we have to compete with other countries in SE Asia.

8:34:10 – Dee: Some prison systems have programs that offenders can participate in to get reduced sentences. Does IPI do that?

8:34:42 – IPI: So no. When you serve a sentence, the parole board will review a case to see if a person has been productive with their time.

The parole board will certainly consider it, but it does not directly reduce the time.

8:35:50 – Dee: Job retention is a goal. What does IPI do to develop those skills?

8:36:13 – IPI: When getting close to release, there are programs on life skills. Money handling, how to dress, how to interview. Department of Workforce Development will help to develop skills and be ready for the job market.

Please contact us if you want. We like to answer questions. If there is a group looking for a visit. We are having AMD 431 come in, and if you are looking to do a tour of the facilities, please contact us.