



## Training All Locked Up

*It is a damp and dreary stone fortress. Its dank 5- by 7-foot cells, stacked four stories high, once held more than 2,500 maximum-security inmates. It was abandoned in 1995 when the West Virginia Supreme Court declared it uninhabitable. Today, inside the walls of the West Virginia State Penitentiary in Moundsville, paint peels, rust accumulates, and the only voices echoing off its walls are those of intrepid tourists who pay \$8 for a tour.*

During the past few years, however, the Moundsville Economic Development Council (MEDC) has been breathing new life into this gothic style prison, turning it into a training facility unlike any other.

Its new name is the National Corrections and Law Enforcement Training and Technology Center (NCLETTTC). And while some portions have been renovated to create classrooms, much of the facility remains untouched.

“We set off flash-bangs, we rappel off the tops of the buildings, we cut doors off with blowtorches. There aren’t very many facilities where you can get such realistic training,” says Steve Morrison, interim NCLETTTC executive director. Other types of hands-on training include scenarios involving cell extractions, prisoner restraint and control, evidence collection, command post operations, hostage negotiations, bomb/explosives detection, entry procedures, high-risk transportation, aircraft escapes, crowd control, and media interaction.

With Federal grant funding and a board of directors that includes executives from the National Institute of Corrections, American Correctional Association, and the American Jail Association, this nonprofit center has put together a roster of courses specifically for corrections personnel. Training takes place in three new classrooms, one of which doubles as a computer and crime mapping training lab.

The prison also offers a testbed and showcase for new and emerging technologies. Vendors are invited to demonstrate new products onsite, or they can loan them to the prison and let staff demonstrate them to incoming classes.

“In short, we provide four options,” Morrison says. “One, students can attend courses offered by the NCLETTTC. Two, vendors can rent the facility to provide a demonstration of their products to practitioners, with NCLETTTC assisting the vendor with marketing and advertising if needed. Three, technology developers can install their products, which are then evaluated by staff and students. And four, we offer facility rental only, where an agency can rent the facility to provide training to its own staff using its own trainer, course materials, and supplies.”

In addition, Morrison says, every spring for the last 4 years the penitentiary has been the site of the Annual Mock Prison Riot, hosted by the Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization, a program of the National Institute of Justice. This event gives corrections administrators and tactical teams from across the country an opportunity to use and evaluate emerging technologies in riot training scenarios. Ultimately the event helps determine the effectiveness of the technologies by employing them in realistic situations and then allowing for suggestions to modify them. The event also provides corrections personnel training on how to best approach and handle a riot situation.

“We’re now also expanding our scope from corrections and law enforcement to all public safety responders,” Morrison says. “We’re developing classes for EMTs, nurses, doctors in trauma units, and firefighters who respond to HazMat incidents.”

***For more information about the National Corrections and Law Enforcement Training and Technology Center and classes currently available, call Steve Morrison, 877-625-3882. For more information about the Annual Mock Prison Riot, call the Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization, 888-306-5382.***

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