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**State of Missouri**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
*Improving Lives for Safer Communities*

**NEWS ADVISORY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Corrections Day at the Capitol:** 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Feb. 27, 2018, Missouri State Capitol, Third Floor

## **Prison Program Transforms Inmate into Entrepreneur**

When upholsterer [Mike Smith](#) reflects on his path to becoming a successful business owner, he's eager to credit the people he met in prison.

Smith spent 18 years incarcerated in Missouri Department of Corrections facilities. While working in the [Missouri Vocational Enterprises](#) chair factory at Tipton Correctional Center, he found himself drawn to furniture repair, to the transformative process: "You take something old and not any good," he explains, "and when you get through with it, it's brand new." Fostering this passion for craftsmanship, factory manager Steven Martin gave Smith a chance in the re-upholstery unit. There Smith honed the skills that would shape his career.

After his release, at a construction job his parole officer helped him find, Smith's entrepreneurial spirit took over. Noticing the sad state of the forklift seats on the site, he offered to take one home and work his magic. Wowed by the transformation, Smith's boss hired him to re-upholster all the seats — and recommended him to other clients. Now Smith is his own boss, owner of Smith's Upholstery in Kansas City, where he employs a staff of five in making old things new again.

Meet Mike Smith during **Corrections Day at the Capitol Feb. 27.**

About 96 percent of people who enter the prison system ultimately are released into Missouri communities. We want to make sure they're good neighbors. Here are some of the ways the Missouri Department of Corrections helps make **smart transitions**:

### **We provide the tools for success.**

Every year nearly **20,000** people are released from our institutions. In 2017 we supervised **58,000 Missourians** on probation or parole and partnered with dozens of community groups in addressing employment, housing and treatment issues. This support reduces crime and makes Missouri safer.

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## **We're updating urban services.**

In 2017 we transformed an aging community release center into the remodeled **Transition Center of St. Louis**, providing housing and programming to men under community supervision. In a four-phase program, residents work on employment readiness, education, parenting and life skills.

## **We honor veterans.**

About **1,900 U.S. military veterans** are in our prison population. In 2017, Moberly Correctional Center piloted a program in which 50 offender veterans live in a platoon system, raise and lower a flag daily, carry out work assignments, and take part in therapy together. With peer support, they leave better equipped to reenter the community.

## **We address spiritual needs.**

Our Office of Religious and Spiritual Programming oversees chaplain services, religious studies, prison ministries, and meetings. The department also fosters partnerships with **faith-based organizations** that guide justice-involved Missourians on probation and parole.

## **We partner with police.**

Our Division of Probation and Parole collaborates with law enforcement organizations to **reduce violent crime** in Missouri. We share information and resources to prevent and respond to crime. We also connect parolees with social services and lead them on a path to success.

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## **Corrections Day at the Capitol**

*The Missouri Department of Corrections presents **Corrections Day at the Capitol 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27**, on the third floor rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol, 201 W. Capitol Ave, Jefferson City, Missouri. Featuring two dozen displays, the event highlights how Department of Corrections people and programs affect the day-to-day lives of Missourians. We'll show you how we train and educate Missouri workers, support statewide health and wellness, give back to Missouri communities, and facilitate transitions that make Missouri safer.*



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