



*James
"Jim"
Baiardi*

A Message From the President of the **SCO Chapter**

Suwannee CI Opens Despite Intense Lobbying By Private Prison Industry

Jwas very happy to visit Suwannee CI after it recently opened as a PUBLICLY RUN PRISON. In the most recent legislative session, a battle between the PBA and the private prison industry's high paid lobbyists took place over Suwannee CI. In one heated Senate committee meeting, I debated the industry's hired guns over the fact that government run institutions are better for public safety and that the privately run prisons don't save the funding they claim to.

In other meetings, the PBA's legislative team fought the industry push to privatize the new institution. The private corrections companies wanted another free ride at the cost of Florida's taxpayers by getting Suwannee Correctional Institutional as a turn key operation that was completed with State resources and funding. When it appeared they were not going to get their way, the private prison lobbyists then attempted to get an institution in Miami-Dade County.

The PBA led the battle against the private prison industry with them coming

up short again. The industry was thrown a bone by the 2009 legislature by receiving a \$9 million cost of living increase while programs to children, the elderly, and public safety were cut and there were no pay raises for state correctional and law enforcement officers.

I am sure the private prison industry will be back again this upcoming session looking to get their hands on another cash cow (institution) at the cost of Florida taxpayers and public safety. Public safety should not be for sale: NOT DURING GOOD ECONOMIC TIMES OR BAD ONES.

The Florida PBA team and I will be at the Capitol daily during the 2010 session to protect public safety by fighting

against the private prison industry and making sure that no current institutions are turned over to the private prison companies. We will also be working to ensure that there will be no position reductions to the Department of Corrections budget and we'll work for a pay raise for all state correctional and law enforcement officers.

Stay safe and may God bless you. ●



SCO Chapter President Jim Baiardi (left) and PBA Staff Rep Chuck Clyatt (right) with officers at Suwannee CI.



*Mark
Altieri*

A Message From the President of the **CPO Chapter**

Teamwork At PBA

As we are well into the second half of 2009, I think back to the battles that were fought in the first half of this year: the defeat of a 2% pay cut for state employees earning \$45,000 a year and above, the prevention of any further probation officer position cuts, and the passage of an updated version of the Law Enforcement and Correctional Officer's Bill Of Rights, which provided additional safeguards for officers during internal investigations. These victories were especially important in a brutal budget year, as your PBA fought long and hard in every public forum to secure the political support that was critical to protecting our ranks. While some may consider what was accomplished as only holding on to what we have, that is true; but the mood and attitude in Tallahassee was to cut deep and to cut everywhere, but the unity of state law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers prevented the worst scenarios from happening.

The second half of 2009 will most certainly bring new challenges to probation officers across the state, as we are seeing a critical rise in caseloads and offender supervision demands that follow. Even with these new challenges, I am confident that **Secretary McNeil** and **Ms. Jenny Nimer** as head of Community Corrections are committed to getting back to the basic supervision of offenders, as basic supervision is what most protects the public. The PBA played a critical role in helping the Department of Corrections draft the Comprehensive Review Of Community Corrections

Report, which will be finalized in the next several months, and then presented to Secretary McNeil for final approval. During this drafting process, Ms. Nimer demonstrated her support for probation officers and was always receptive to proposals to enhance offender supervision while reducing or eliminating tasks that detract from that supervision.

I began by noting the important victories that we accomplished in the first half of this year. What we must not forget is what made those victories possible: the unity of state law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers. The leadership shown by **State Correctional Officers Chapter President Jimmy Baiardi**, **State Law Enforcement Officers Chapter President Matt Tyre**, **FDLE Agents Association Chapter President Telly Sands**, and **FHP Chapter President Bill Smith**, combined with the tireless efforts of the CPO Board of Directors, were the keys to protecting our ranks this year. We have to maintain and increase this unity as we close out the year and prepare for what will be another very tough legislative session in 2010.

As always, please know that your CPO Board of Directors will continue to fight on behalf of all probation officers, whether it be in the form of representation of individual officers in internal investigations or wearing out the carpet in the halls of the Capitol Building in Tallahassee. If I can be of help in any matter, please don't hesitate to contact me at the Gainesville West Probation Office or you can reach me at 352-281-6223. ●