responsible for the overall monitoring of the
Safe Prisons Program at the facility and works
directly for the facility administrator responsible
for the safety and security of the facility.

Specific initiatives were identified
and implemented that impact the issue of prison rape
through the efforts of the Safe Prisons Program
Management Office and the Safe Prisons Council. The
initiative centered on education, training,
prevention, reporting, investigation, prosecution, and
data analysis.

Effective June 1, 2006, TDC was awarded
a subsequent one million dollar Federal grant on
protecting inmates and safeguarding communities
through the Office of Justice Programs, to enhance the
existing initiatives and initiate a comprehensive
intake orientation process.

While this opening statement is meant
to be a brief overview, I would like to re-emphasize
that TDC's mission has been and will continue to be
one of zero tolerance of sexual assaults. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you.

Mr. Bales.

MR. RALPH BALES: Thank you.

What I would like to do is begin with
going to talk about some of those initiatives today. You know, a significant key to ending sexual assaults in prisons is to concentrate on prevention through offender education and awareness initiatives, staff training, the use of technology, and establishing comprehensive policies and procedures. You know, a key component to increasing offenders' awareness on preventing sexual assaults is to provide information to offenders upon their processing into the criminal justice system.

In 2005, the Safe Prisons Program Management Office initiated procedures to provide sexual assault awareness information and brochures to offenders every time they participated in the intake process, to ensure that newly-received offenders are educated on the risk of sexual assault and the ensuing prosecution process. In addition, the offender orientation handbook, which is provided to offenders during the intake process was modified to address the issue of offender sexual assaults. Consequently, all offenders participating in the initial intake process or participating in an intake process in a new unit of assignment receives information pertaining to sexual assault prevention and the steps to report allegations of sexual assaults.
Several years ago, the TDCJ partnered with several community-based organizations to pilot an HIV offender peer education program. The program concept provides for offenders being trained as peer educators to share information to their counterparts on such topics as infectious disease, sexually transmitted disease, and other health related topics. Due to the positive results that were received with the offender peer health educator concept, TDCJ initiated the Sexual Assault Awareness Peer Education Program, as a component of the Safe Prisons Program. The objective of the program is to change certain perceptions among the offender population regarding their attitudes toward prison sexual assault. TDCJ contracted with local community-based organizations to assist with the development of the curriculum, printing of attendant training materials that will be used for peer educators on the topic of sexual assaults, and to provide initial to peer educators. The curriculum, entitled Sexual Assault Awareness, was completed by the grant-funded contractor in fiscal year 2006, and more than 300 offender peer educators from 40 prison facilities have participated in the initial training. The peer educators began presenting the
curriculum to the offender population in September of 2006, which has resulted in over 1,000 classes being conducted with approximately 20,000 participants in attendance.

In January of 2007, TDCJ initiated an enhanced intake orientation process, which includes a five-hour video on issues related to incarceration, a two-hour peer education presentation on health issues, and that three-hour sexual assault awareness peer education curriculum.

Lastly, offenders in Texas published a newspaper called The Echo, which serves as another vehicle to inform the offender population about sexual assaults, prevention strategies, processes for reporting, and the agency's philosophy on the subject. The Safe Prisons Program Management Office submits annual articles to The Echo to assist in the educational process.

Integral to the success of the Safe Prisons Program is training opportunities for staff that provide direct supervision of offenders. The Safe Prisons Program Management Office, the Department of Correctional Training and Staff Development have implemented a comprehensive training program designed to educate employees on the Safe Prisons Plan.
Currently, TDCJ is experiencing a staff shortage in correctional officer positions. However, in order to minimize the impact of staff shortages on offender safety, the CTSD is providing the current employees with extensive training on the Safe Prisons Programs, both to heighten awareness of in-prison sexual violence in general and improve our ability to identify and respond to these incidents that occur on our facilities.

CTSD provides initial training regarding Safe Prisons Program in the preservice training academy. This training includes instruction on three primary areas: Offender sexual assault, offender protection and investigations, and extortion issues. Trainees are introduced to PREA and are given detailed knowledge on the identification and staff intervention practices. In FY '06 alone, 23,184 training hours were presented to 5,796 cadets during the academy. To further reinforce the academy instruction, a one-hour block of Safe Prisons Program was added to on-the-job training program. This is conducted by the Unit Safe Prisons Program Coordination in coordination with the Field Training Officer, and covers unit-specific procedures and points of contact.
In FY '06, a total of 84,549 hours of recurrent training on the Safe Prisons Program was presented to 28,183 employees in both supervisory and line staff positions through the in-service training program. Refresher training covers signs and characteristics of victims and perpetrators, reporting procedures, and prevention techniques. CTSD provides training on Safe Prison topics to supervisory staff with the implementation of Sergeants Academy and The Retreat and the Lieutenant Command School. A total 3,571 hours of training on the sergeant's role in the Safe Prisons Program and how to conduct a thorough investigation have been provided to employees in the position of Sergeant of Correctional Officers, both veteran and newly promoted. An additional 211 hours of position-specific Safe Prisons instruction has been presented to staff in the position of Lieutenant of Correctional Officers. An annual training program for Majors and assistant wardens also includes a two-hour block covering the administration of the Safe Prisons Program. This training is provided to approximately 100 assistant wardens and 120 majors each year.

CTSD is in the earliest stages of development of a training course for agency Captains that will include instructions on advanced Safe
Prisons Program topics and, upon completion, training of the Safe Prisons Program will be provided to institutional staff at all levels.

Additional training -- staff training is provided on a daily and monthly or quarterly basis by the Unit Safe Prisons Program Coordinator or Shift Supervisors. Issues concerning the Safe Prisons Program are addressed with staff in turn on a quarterly basis, and Shift Supervisors provide remedial training monthly regarding the Safe Prisons Plan.

TDCJ is committed to providing enhanced sexual awareness training for medical personnel as well, and to improved medical examination services provided to offender sexual victims. Currently, all medical services provided to offenders are through the University Medical School healthcare providers under the contract with the Correctional Managed Healthcare Committee.

When there is an allegation of sexual assault, medical services personnel oversee the medical examination and administration of a forensic collection kit. Information obtained from the offender during the medial interview, evaluation, and examination are shared with the Office of the
Inspector General investigators. In order to improve these services and training, TDCJ employed a sexual assault examination coordination, who is a licensed register nurse and a certified sexual assault nurse examiner. The Office of the Texas Attorney General's Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Service coordinates that certification and training. The coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing training for unit level nurses, mid-level practitioners, and physicians. The training for clinical staff includes the proper techniques for performing the examinations, collecting samples, chain of custody procedures, and testifying in the court. The coordinator is also responsible for providing liaison functions with the nonhealth care departments in the TDCJ. Funding from the Federal grant enabled TDCJ to pilot initiatives that assist in the prevention sexual assaults. Specifically, TDCJ modified existing cell doors to provide enhanced visibility and installed digital surveillance cameras in high-impact areas. Okay.

TDC officials utilized data obtained from reported incidents to determine the most appropriate location to place digital video surveillance cameras. So video surveillance cameras...
are on of those. In addition, we were -- placed
visually-enhanced cell doors and 260 doors were
replaced in 200 -- I'm sorry. In ten of the
facilities. In addition to cell door modifications
and surveillance equipment, the Safe Prisons Program
Management Office implemented various database
components to assist in the collection and analysis of
sexual assault data. A sexual assault predator
database was developed in order to help in the process
of identifying potential predators and victims on the
facilities. The database is a collaborative effort
between the Safe Prisons Program Management Office,
the Classification and Records Department, and the
OIG. The Safe Prisons Program Management Office
documents offenders identified as potential predators
by the OIG on the TDCJ mainframe system. This
identification aids the facilities when considering
housing, job assignments, or programs for offenders.

A Safe Prisons Automated Management
System was designed to assist in collecting the number
of allegations of sexual assaults, offender
protection, investigations completed, and cell
searches completed due to extortion reports.
Lastly, an integrated database was
developed that maintains relevant data pertinent to
the allegations of sexual assaults reported to the agency.

In January of 2005, TDCJ implemented the Safe Prisons Plan, just as you -- Mr. Stacks discussed. Okay. It was a comprehensive plan, identifying specific policies and procedures for the prevention and intervention of sexual assaults. The Plan was revised in September 2005. It is in the process of undergoing its second revision.

In closing, I would like to quote from one of the opening paragraphs in the Safe Prisons Plan. I believe that it epitomizes the very heart of the Safe Prisons Program and the goal TDCJ hopes to achieve through its implementation.

That each offender deserves to complete their incarceration in safety. An offender does not have to prove his life is in danger to obtain protective custody, safekeeping status, or one of the other options available for protecting offenders. An offender does not have to go and undergo an assault before receiving protection, and an offender does not have to fight his predator in order to receive protection. Sexual abuse should not be a way of life in prison.

I would like to thank you for allowing