



ACA celebrates historic international accreditations in a historic year

BY FLOYD NELSON

For people and organizations everywhere, the year 2020 will mark a year of great challenge. But for the American Correctional Association, 2020 will mark much more than that, because this is the year ACA's ongoing global accreditation efforts achieved what are considered "historic milestones in two important countries."



Colombia

About 2,380 miles from the ACA offices in Alexandria, Virginia, lies a South American nation that is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. With a population of 48.2 million people, Colombia is home to cities like Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Cartagena. A diverse mix of languages, cultures and people continue to lead the country to embrace and manage its own unique diversity. And like many countries around the world have come to realize, a key ingredient of a successful, prosperous and safe civil society is to make sure systems are in place that ultimately foster respect, value and appreciation for all of its citizens.

With that forward-thinking clearly in the mind of ACA's leadership, the organization started carrying out training in Colombia more than 10 years ago. Those successful training sessions led to even more successful training sessions. Reciprocal visits, meetings, Congress of Correction and Winter Conference attendance resulted in the establishment of genuine

partnerships, and important Colombian correctional facilities were accredited. This year, a National Bureau of Colombia Prisons (INPEC) facility became accredited – *Cárcel y Penitenciaría de Media y Mínima Seguridad de Espinal*. This facility met 100% of ACA's requirements, an outstanding accomplishment for any facility anywhere. Three other accredited correctional facilities in Colombia are:

Cárcel Distrital de Varones y Anexo de Mujeres — Secretaría de Seguridad, Convivencia y Justicia de Bogotá

Accreditation: August 5, 2018

Cárcel y Penitenciaría de Media y Mínima Seguridad de Facatativa — INPEC

Accreditation: August 4, 2019

Escuela Penitenciaria Nacional — INPEC

Accreditation: August 4, 2019

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Photo courtesy American Correctional Association

*This certificate of accreditation was given to a National Bureau of Colombia Prisons (INPEC) facility, *Cárcel y Penitenciaría de Media y Mínima Seguridad de Espinal*, for meeting 100% of ACA's requirements.*

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

ACA created and refined performance-based standards that represent fundamental correctional practices that ensure staff and inmate safety and security; enhance staff morale; improve record maintenance and data management capabilities; assist in protecting the agency against litigation; and improve the function of the facility or agency at all levels. This stands true for the ACA accredited facilities in North America, South America and around the world.

With the needs of Colombian society ever growing and with their government ultimately forging an even deeper commitment to its people, ACA anticipates accrediting many more facilities in this incredible country in the coming future.

United Arab Emirates

If you leave Bogotá, Colombia and fly 8,421 miles in a northeasterly direction, you will arrive in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE is made up of seven states or Emirates – Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, Umm al Quwain and

Dubai. And it is Dubai that represents another historic ACA milestone, because it has become the first in the Middle East to achieve ACA Accreditation.

There is no doubt that ACA is a global organization with work and influence that has stretched over the years to every major part of the world. From North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, ACA has worked with and/or influenced correctional facilities and correctional professionals everywhere. The international professionalism ACA has brought to the field of corrections continues to propagate. Dubai's historic accreditation represents one more important example of this.

The General Department of Correction Institution's Dubai Central Male Prison, a maximum-security facility, is approximately 25 minutes from downtown Dubai. Dubai Police, under the direction of Brigadier General Ali Mohammed Shamali, is responsible for the facility comprised of 247 acres, five housing units, medical, and program buildings. Opened in 2006, the Housing Units 1, 2, and 4 have multi-occupancy spaces, allowing with up to six individuals.



Photo courtesy American Correctional Association

Members of the General Department of Correction Institution's Dubai Police, Dubai Central Male Prison accepted ACA's first accreditation for a middle eastern facility.

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Accreditation going forward

In coming issues of Corrections Today, you will hear a lot more about Dubai and this unique correctional facility. In many ways, Dubai's accreditation is the perfect place to begin what ACA hopes will be a cascade effect of activity resulting in ACA accrediting facilities everywhere in the Middle East. What accreditation of the various facilities means for this part of the world is inestimable. Whether in the UAE or USA, ACA accreditation is a system of verification that correctional

agencies/facilities of all sizes comply with performance-based standards put forth by the ACA. Through a series of reviews, evaluations, audits and hearings, accreditation can be achieved successfully. Colombia continues to prove this fact and Dubai is well on its way to be a model for the entire Middle East.

Floyd Nelson is the director of Communications and Publications for the American Correctional Association.

American Correctional Association Setting a NEW Standard in Jails!



- Enhance professionalism
- Improve conditions of confinement
- Enhance operations
- Improve public credibility
- Increase morale

Accreditation: Excellence in Jails

"The ACA accreditation process is a mechanism of checks and balances, and causes correctional systems to assess all facets of their organization. When we take a critical examination of our organizational processes, it offers an opportunity for internal oversight. Correctional systems can identify challenges, discover solutions and implement operational best practices which will significantly improve organizational efficiencies."

—Tony Wilkes, Chief of Corrections, Davidson County Sheriff's Office (TN)

American Correctional Association
Standards and Accreditation Department

Phone: (800) 222-5646
Email: davidh@aca.org • Web: www.aca.org