

CHARD NAMED DIRECTOR OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS

Jennifer Dobner

The Deseret News. Salt Lake City, Utah: August 18, 2000

Copyright The Deseret News August 18, 2000

The Utah Division of Youth Corrections is about to get a new boss. Blake D. Chard, a former cop and a current state representative, will take over the division Aug. 28.

And although he was unanimously approved to the post Wednesday by the Board of Youth Corrections, the appointment was "no rubber stamp," one board member said.

Initially, board members expressed concern about Chard's lack of youth corrections and administrative experience. And there was word that some Youth Corrections staff members were unsure if Chard's years as a Davis County sheriff's deputy would mean he would move the division away from restorative justice programs and back to more punitive approaches.

But after a regional search for a director and some strong lobbying by Chard himself, the 47-year-old Layton legislator emerged as the best person for the job, board chairwoman Lois E. McArthur said.

"His initial resume was a just little bit weak," board member James L. Earl said. "But he talked with me about his experiences on various boards and committees and in the Legislature. He sought letters of recommendation from many people that said, 'Yes, he had never (been an administrator) before' but that he has other experience and attributes that well served the division. The fact is that when the vote was taken, all those concerns were resolved."

Gov. Mike Leavitt also called some board members and spoke on Chard's behalf.

Chard said he recognizes his lack of experience in some areas and said he will rely on the Youth Corrections staff. He said he will ask assistant division director Dan Maldonado, who was also a candidate for the director's job, to stay on. He also said he has no immediate plans to take the division in a different direction.

"I'm not going in there with an agenda to make any sweeping changes," he said. "I firmly believe in the restorative justice model. One of my concerns has been that we have so many programs, we are not really sure how effective they are. So I hope to put a plan in place to evaluate them using sound business practices."

Chard replaces Gary Dalton, who retired from the division in June after more than seven years as director and 30 years in state government. Dalton is now the Director of Criminal Justice Services for Salt Lake County. Dalton is credited with developing Youth Corrections programs that were not solely punitive, but focused on rehabilitation and accountability.

Board members say Chard's seven-plus years as a Republican state legislator will be an asset to the division. Chard served as the co-chairman of the Executive Offices, Criminal Justice and Legislature Appropriations Subcommittee, which determines funding for Youth Corrections. He will officially resign from his legislative seat Aug. 27.

"His legislative experience will be an attribute," Earl said. "He knows the people, he knows the system. Many of the letters of recommendation I got were from legislators who said he was trusted and ethical and well-balanced. That's only going to help."

Currently, Chard is the vice president of SmartUTAH, Inc., a nonprofit foundation that promotes Internet use to provide government services and encourage electronic commerce. Prior to working with SmartUTAH, Chard, who has a bachelor's degree in political science from Weber State and a master's in public administration from Brigham Young University, was employed by an aerospace company.

In June, he lost a bid for a Davis County Commission seat in the GOP primary to Michael Cragun.