

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
SENTENCING TO SERVICE PROGRAM REVIEW/ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**January 2003**



# Sentencing to Service Program Review/Assessment

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Cover: Crow Wing STS crew picking up block debris on west shore of Mille Lacs Lake after ice out April 2001

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## **Introduction**

Today Minnesota is facing an enormous projected budget deficit, and it is critical to fund cost-efficient and effective programs. The Sentencing to Service (STS) program has proven to be both efficient and effective with long-term benefits for the state and the offenders it serves. This report examines the STS program, its history, operations, current status and benefits through statistical data and the results of a recent survey of program partners and participants. Information contained in this report provides policy makers with a better understanding of the use of STS as an alternative to traditional sentencing practices and as a restorative justice program that partners directly with the community in holding offenders accountable.

Since 1986, the STS program has supervised over 9,000,000 hours of offender labor in our communities. STS projects for state, local and non-profit agencies include: park and trail maintenance, highway litter pick-up, labor for school district projects, playground installation, construction of monuments, cemetery maintenance, senior citizen center and nursing home maintenance, snow removal, construction of access ramps for the disabled and natural disaster response and cleanup. While many of these projects are not highly visible they all contribute to the quality of life in Minnesota.

The state of Minnesota benefits from this program in several ways. Benefits include providing an alternative sanction to the courts, a positive impact on offender behaviors, labor for state agencies to complete projects that otherwise would not be completed and positive recognition from local government and citizens for investing in this joint venture program. The benefit to cost ratio for taxpayer money invested is estimated at 3 dollars in benefits for every dollar invested.

Benefits from the STS program go well beyond the value of offender labor and the projects they complete. In addition to the return on investment measured in dollars, a survey of program partners and participants overwhelmingly demonstrates the importance of the STS program to communities. Each of the groups surveyed has a different perspective and a unique way of benefiting from this program.

County government benefits from this program in multiple ways including reduction in jail overcrowding; reduction in delinquent fines thus reducing sentence violations, and the benefits of crew labor. Each county has many responsibilities to their citizens ranging from maintaining highways, parks and public facilities to recycling. The STS crew is able to assist in providing some of these services to free up county employees to perform other more important tasks.

Each county jail that has a STS program receives numerous benefits. Having the crew return to jail physically tired, emotionally expended and satisfied by their contributions reduces the amount of conflict amongst inmates. Several jails also directly benefit from the STS program by using crews for general maintenance and janitorial services in the jail.

Public and non-profit agencies clearly benefit from this program. In fact, several agencies have become so dependent on the STS program that their operations would be negatively impacted without STS. Recent high profile projects such as natural disaster response has greatly benefited local communities.

Offenders also have high regard for the STS program and the benefits it provides. From a crewmember perspective, the most obvious benefit is the reduction of jail time and fines. From a corrections perspective, this program promotes productive engagement between offenders and community, which includes learning practical new skills, improving work ethic and emotional health.

STS crew leaders appear satisfied with their employment but several did express that this profession can be tiresome. Working with offenders with a variety of backgrounds, work skills and personalities, continually being concerned about personal and community safety, and to complete projects in a quality and professional manner is a huge responsibility.

Corrections professionals expressed the importance of the STS program as an alternative sentencing sanction and Restorative Justice option for offenders. It appears that most have regular contact with the STS crew leader to discuss adjustment/supervision issues on a regular basis. Some corrections professionals feel that because of the STS program probation violations are reduced.

Efficient and cost effective are not terms typically associated with correctional programs. With shrinking resources and ever growing jail and prison populations it is critical that the STS program continue to be funded and utilized as a means of reducing the burden placed on taxpayers and to hold offenders accountable. The following recommendations should be considered:

- Increase funding of the STS program so that new programs can be developed in areas of greatest need. (88% of county board members surveyed indicate an interest to expand if state matching funds become available)
- When considering future legislation on mandatory minimum sentencing, include funding to expand STS programs to assist county jails to deal with overcrowding concerns. (Of the 63 surveys received from jail staff, 35 indicated they are currently experiencing overcrowding issues.)
- When making decisions about the location of STS programs, remember the importance of this program as a positive sentencing alternative for rural less populated counties as well as more populated areas of the state.
- Consider implementing a consistent jail and fine credit system statewide.
- Recognize that the STS program is clearly a restorative justice program that partners with communities in addressing criminal behavior.

## **Background**

STS provides a sentencing alternative for courts throughout the State of Minnesota. Established in 1986 at Governor Perpich's urging, Minnesota Statute 609.135 Subd. 1 permits a judge to order "Intermediate Sanctions" when appropriate. As a result of this legislation, the program was developed to place carefully selected, non-dangerous offenders under close supervision of a crew leader to work on community improvement projects in our parks or projects for our public schools, county, state, local governments and other non-profit agencies. (Minnesota, 1990, p. 4)

It was critical a sentencing alternative be developed during this period of time. Several county jails throughout Minnesota were experiencing overcrowding problems and were desperately in search of other sentencing alternatives to help alleviate this crisis. Legislation mandating minimum jail sentences for certain offenses such as Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) and community expectations to get tough on crime were having a major impact on local jail resources.

Initially funded with the assistance from the Blandin Foundation and a smaller grant from the Ordean Foundation, it was developed primarily by the Departments of Corrections and Natural Resources. In 1987, the MARDAG Foundation and the Southeast Initiative Foundation provided small grants, which assisted with expansion. The 1989 legislature provided the first legislative appropriated funds allowing the program to expand to its current level.

Other important legislation, Minnesota Statute 3.739, provides that the State of Minnesota accept responsibility for the cost of medical care if a crewmember is injured while working on an STS crew. This statute also offers protection for project supervisors and/or crew leaders from liability or punitive damages if a crewmember is injured or accidentally causes damage to property while working on the STS crew.

While the STS program in Minnesota has legislative support, it would not be so widely recognized as successful correctional programming without local government and community support. If the court fails to recognize the STS program as effective and does not include this sanction as part of the sentence it imposes, this program will not succeed. It is equally important to have the support of each sheriff, prosecuting attorney, county government, corrections leaders and communities. If the county sheriff does not support the release of offenders from the jail, the program will likely have insufficient crewmembers. If the prosecutor does not offer the STS program as a recommended sentence, the court generally will not impose this sanction. If the county does not financially invest in this program, there will be no program. Most important, the community must support and have confidence with the crew leaders and managers of this program for it to succeed

During the 16 year history of the STS program, many in the criminal justice community believe that the STS program has exceeded all expectations having benefits for: 1) the court by creating a needed sentencing alternative; 2) the county jail system by reducing

jail crowding; 3) the offender by teaching new work skills and providing a positive way to pay back the community and 4) the taxpayer by completing public work projects that otherwise would not be completed. (Minnesota, 1990, p. 4)

It is understood that conventional incarceration will continue to be necessary for the violent, predatory or unmanageable offender. This population, while highly visible, represents only a minority of offenders entering the criminal justice system. The vast majority of offenders, STS has demonstrated, can and should be managed within the community. Utilizing this program for the non-dangerous offender will allow reserving costly jail space for the more dangerous offenders.

## Benefits

Public and/or non-profit agencies including county and local government have recognized the benefits of crew labor with minimal risk and cost to complete public works projects that would otherwise not be completed. Currently STS crews are involved in projects ranging from building and remodeling homes for affordable housing initiatives to working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in a variety of ways. The STS program was set up not to compete with private sector employers. Examples of precautions taken to prevent unfair competition or displacement of workers are projects completed for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Union officials, prior to the start of the project, review all project proposals.

Comparing the cost of administering an STS program to the value of donated STS labor arguably justifies this program as an effective use of public money. Almost every county in Minnesota has a STS program in one form or another with strong support. Skeptics may argue, however, that this program may not be fiscally justified especially in some rural areas that have lower population and crime rates. If a program has a smaller average crew size, of only 2 members (11 is capacity), does it meet the requirement of “Best bang for the Buck”? However, there usually are very limited resources available for sentencing including limited or no jail resources. STS may be the only option.

In FY 2002 approximately 140 STS crews operated throughout the state. Fifty-eight of these were state run and the remainder, were county run crews. Page 10 displays a chart describing the increase of offenders served and hours of labor completed. In FY1990, 1,881 offenders were served completing 171,549 hours of labor. In just 12 years (FY2002), the number of offenders increased to 25,546 completing 1,241,492 hours of labor. For FY 2001 we experienced a slight reduction in offenders served which might be explained by a reduction in crime and low unemployment rates. This same year, however, the number of hours of labor increased from the previous year, which indicates that crewmembers served longer periods of time on STS crews.

Jail days saved by this program steadily increased from FY1990 with 14,078 days saved through FY2000 with 63,849 days saved. In FY 2001 and FY 2002 there was a drop in jail bed days saved. This is possibly due to more counties requiring offenders to work off fines prior to earning any jail credit. These figures are for incarcerated offenders only and do not include the jail beds saved when STS is ordered as an alternative to jail.

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\*Each individual county determines the rate of jail credit earned by offenders. Over one half of counties participating in STS allow one day of jail credit for one day of work on STS. Some counties require that an offender work two or three days on the STS crew to earn one day off a jail sentence. The value of a jail day is calculated by each county based on their jail costs, which range from \$45 to \$75 dollars per day. A value of \$52 was used for STS statistical purposes. In FY 2001 the STS program implemented a web-based data reporting system recording STS hours worked and credited to jail sentences. The figures shown for jail days saved in FY 2001 and 2002 are estimates based on information provided by participating counties.



Satisfaction of imposed fines through the completion of STS is also significant. The first year that this data was recorded was in FY1996 with \$1,052,588. This amount increased significantly to \$1,714,182 in fines satisfied in FY2002.\*\*

The Pine County STS program is a classic example of the STS program and the return/benefit it provides to a community. The cost of the Pine County STS program for fiscal year 2002 was \$62,600 split evenly with the State of Minnesota and Pine County. During this year, the Pine County STS program completed 8,602 hours of STS Labor. Of those hours, 4,018 were for county projects, 2,344 were for state projects, 1,544 were for non-profit agencies and the balance for municipalities in the county. The total return to this community for just the labor at a conservative \$6.00/hour totals \$51,612. A more accurate tabulation of the value of the completed projects is an estimated market value determined by the crew leader. For the projects completed during this fiscal year it totaled \$64,649. A critical additional benefit to Pine County was the reduction of 908 days in jail at a rate of \$52.00, which saved them \$47,216.

In summary, for the public money investment of \$62,600 the residents of Pine County and State of Minnesota received an estimated \$111,865 return calculated by adding the estimated market value and jail days saved. Nearly a 2:1 return.

On a statewide basis, FY 2002 the State of Minnesota invested \$3,059,561 which this same amount was matched by individual county contribution whom has either a state operated program or entered into a Joint Powers agreement with the state. During this same year, 1,241,492 hours of supervised STS labor was completed. When you consider the estimated market value of the projects completed (\$8,161,785) added to estimate value of jail days saved \$1,944,748 (37,399 days at \$52/day), the benefit to cost ratio exceeds 3:1.

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\*\*\$5.00 hour rate has been an item of discussion for the past year as being very conservative. However, the STS program looks to the MARS (Minnesota Association of Restitution and Services)) organization to determine this rate. At an organizational meeting held in November 2000, they recommended this rate continue until the Federal Minimum wage increases.

## **STS Program Operation**

Counties have two options in partnering with the state. Counties may operate their own programs with the state providing matching funds or counties may contract with the state to provide STS services.

If a county chooses to administer its own program, the state provides funds to the county under a joint powers agreement. This agreement outlines expectations of how the program shall be administered. Each county is expected to report quarterly statistics to the STS regional supervisor. In return for state matching funds, it is expected that up to one-half of the work completed by a county crew will be on projects for state agencies.

Counties that choose a state administered program enter into a contract with the state providing one-half of the cost to the state to administer the program. The crew leader is a state employee and reports to a state regional STS supervisor. Up to one half of the work by state STS crews is also available for projects referred by state agencies.

Each year the department of corrections receives requests for additional matching funds from many counties that would like to expand their STS programs. Due to the lack of funds, some counties have fully funded their own STS programs, many to provide juvenile STS services. In some cases counties have entered into contracts with non-profit and local government agencies to help pay for program expansion.

STS crew budget for fiscal year 2003 is:

Crew leader salary and fringe	\$52,900
Repair services	\$ 400
Prof. & Tech Services (training)	\$ 500
Communications	\$ 1,000
Travel/vehicle	\$ 7,100
Supplies/equipment	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,900</b>

- Crew leader salary and fringe is negotiated between AFSCME union and the state labor relations board with final approval by the legislature.
- Repair services are used to repair equipment assigned to each crew leader.
- Professional and technical services are primarily training costs. Each crew leader is expected to complete 40 hours of annual training. Training topics include OSHA regulations, working with resistive offenders, de-escalation techniques, driving safely and chainsaw safety.
- Each crew leader needs to have communication devices available should they experience an injury, escape and in scheduling of projects. Primary communication is with mobile phones.
- Travel and vehicle expense is required to transport the crew to the jobsite. The STS program leases vehicles from Travel Management and owns several vans.

- Supplies and equipment items include basic tools to complete basic projects. Tools include chainsaws, basic hand tools, enclosed and flat bed trailers, general workshop tools, landscaping tools, safety equipment and other necessary items such as work gloves and bug repellent.

Each of these line items is affected by inflation so this program is getting more expensive to operate each year. An increase of six percent each year appears to be the average the past four years.

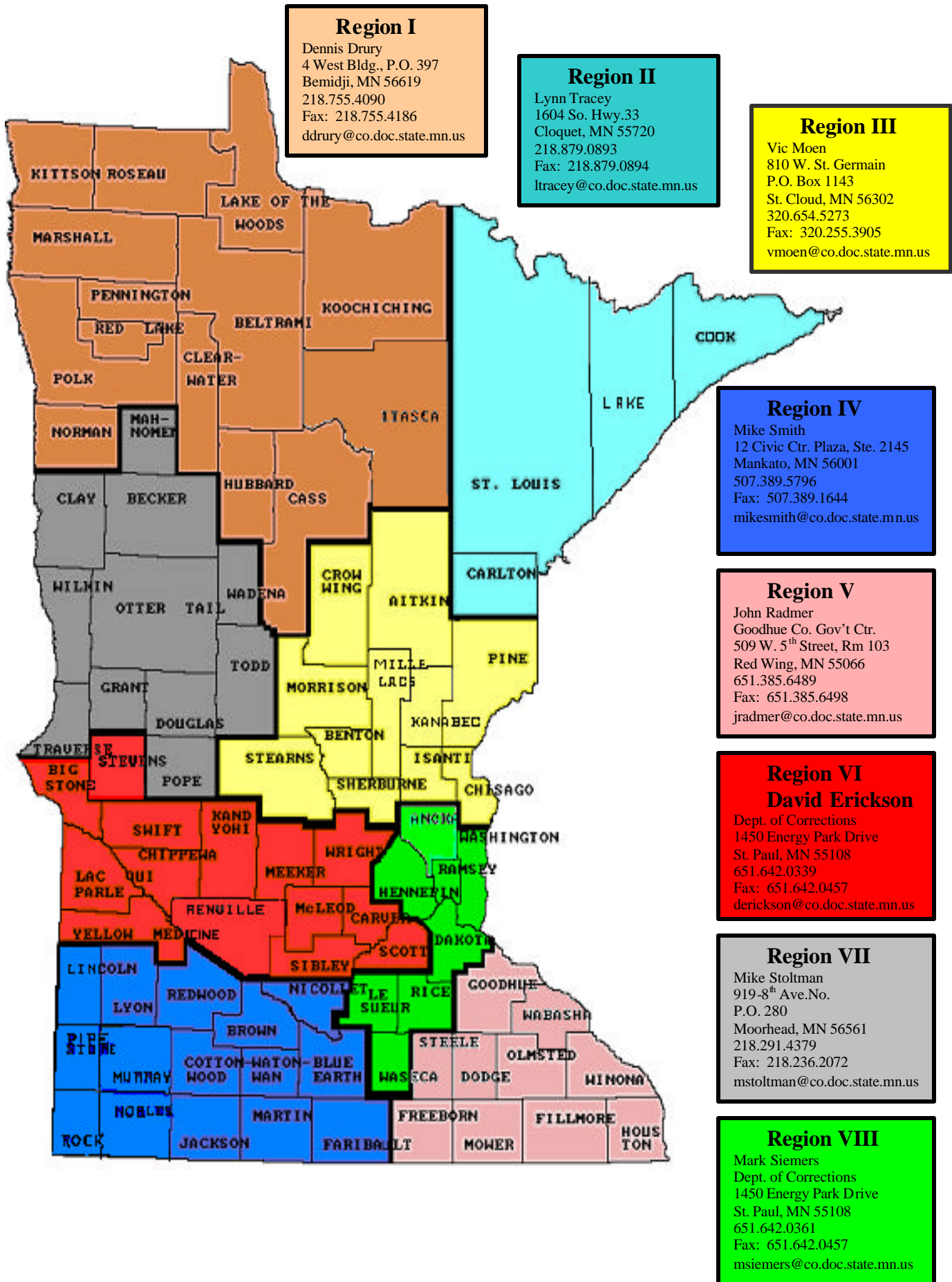
The common strategy of the STS program in Minnesota is to reserve the program for the lower risk, non-dangerous offenders. Each county has the ability to establish parameters for the type of offender that should have the privilege of STS in consultation with STS regional supervisors. When a defendant enters a plea of guilty to an offense, a judge normally gives that person and/or attorneys involved in the case the opportunity to offer an explanation for the offense and any recommendations for an appropriate sentence. The court also considers any pre-sentence information available from other sources such as corrections agents/probation officers' sentence recommendations, and victim input. At this point, the sentencing judge considers imposing the option (most courts consider it a privilege) of STS. STS is ordered in lieu of fines, jail time or as a condition of probation. STS is also used by jails to reduce the amount of time a person actually serves. Through participation on STS offenders reduce their jail sentence as approved by the courts and county sheriff. If the defendant fails to comply with any condition(s) imposed, including STS obligations, the defendant has exposed himself/herself to further sanctions by the Court.

When the Court orders a defendant to complete STS, a referral is made to the STS crew leader in the county to make arrangements to begin the program. The jail administrator, jail programmer, corrections agent or some other designated person determines the offender's eligibility and completes the referral. The crew leader receives this referral, completes a final evaluation and establishes a starting date. It is important for the crew leader to have authority to challenge the referral if it is determined the offender may pose risk to the community or has a history of non-compliance on previous STS placements.

Figure 2 (page 11) is a map of Minnesota showing how the state is divided into 8 regions with each region having a STS supervisor. Figure 3 (page 12) is a map designating state or county and/or community corrections act operated programs and counties with no STS program.

SUBJECT	FY1990	FY1991	FY1992	FY1993	FY1994	FY1995	FY1996	FY1997	FY1998	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002
<b>Total # of Offenders Served</b>	1,881	3,915	6,940	7,459	9,771	11,698	13,027	14,548	23,523	25,878	27,478	25,422	25,560
<b>Total # of Offenders Completing STS</b>	1,418	2,423	5,177	5,341	7,502	8,446	9,633	10,997	13,465	13,645	14,560	16,963	17,834
<b>Total # of Offenders Exiting Prematurely</b>	246	504	848	795	1,170	1,436	1,470	1,716	1,722	1,811	1,939	2,346	2,879
<b>Total Hours Worked by STS</b>	171,549	281,110	454,200	531,476	636,724	763,473	789,518	887,928	961,493	1,031,124	1,079,789	1,173,612	1,237,558
<b>Total Dollar Benefit of STS Labor</b>	\$857,745	1,405,550	2,271,000	2,657,380	3,183,620	3,817,365	3,947,590	4,439,640	4,807,465	5,155,620	5,398,943	5,868,060	6,187,790
<b>Estimated Market Value of Completed Projects (Labor)</b>	\$198,071	299,700	521,600	1,893,161	3,100,575	5,306,161	5,467,051	6,156,198	7,504,413	7,651,447	8,000,176	9,296,361	9,620,342
<b>Total Fine Amount Worked Off Through STS</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,052,588	1,220,628	1,362,130	1,128,437	1,005,995	1,728,474	1,714,182
<b>Jail Days Saved</b>	14,078	20,979	31,200	32,556	41,573	50,738	51,196	52,924	55,352	60,396	63,849	53,307	56,211
<b>Benefit of Jail Days Saved (\$)</b>	\$492,730	734,265	1,092,000	1,465,020	1,870,785	2,283,210	2,483,006	2,566,814	2,684,572	2,929,221	3,320,164	2,771,964	2,922,972
<b>Jail Days X Per Day Cost</b>	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$450.00	\$45.00	\$4850	\$48.50	\$48.50	\$48.50	\$52.00	\$52.00	\$52.00

NOTE: Jail Days Saved for FY 2001 and FY 2002 is based on the average number of hours worked by offenders to save a jail day. This is due to the implementation of an automated data reporting system.





## **STS PROGRAM SURVEY**

The purpose of this program assessment is to determine and attempt to quantify both the subjective and objective benefits of the STS program for the offender, criminal justice system and community beyond the simple cost and hourly labor return analysis that historically has been made in Minnesota. The chart on page 10 of this report outlines the data tracked by STS to determine the benefit of the program measured in dollars.

In an effort to quantify the more subjective benefits of the program surveys were distributed and data collected from six different groups of participants involved with or who benefit from the STS program including:

- 1) County board members
- 2) Jail administrators
- 3) Project site coordinators-agencies who benefit from the labor of STS crews.
- 4) Crewmembers (offenders)
- 5) STS crew leaders
- 6) Corrections/probation agents

Survey packets were provided to each STS regional supervisor (8 regions) for distribution. Each supervisor distributed the surveys to the above noted groups to be administered June 17, 2002 through June 28, 2002. All of the surveys were to be returned directly to project chairperson, Victor A. Moen in St. Cloud, MN who tabulated each survey.

The number of surveys distributed to Greater Minnesota was 1,011 (adjusted for crew size by what crew leaders reported) excluding metropolitan counties of Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota and Washington. The number of completed surveys returned from this group was 684 resulting in a return rate of 68%.

The number of surveys distributed in the metropolitan area was 237 (adjusted for crew size by what crew leaders reported), which included counties of Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota and Washington. The number of completed surveys returned was 90 resulting in a return rate of 38%.

The combined number of surveys distributed was 1,248 with 744 completed surveys being returned resulting in a 62% return rate. Survey results reported in this report is the combined results of Greater Minnesota and the Metropolitan area since the survey results from each group was similar.

Observation, interaction and conversation with STS crewmembers working on projects throughout the State of Minnesota, demonstrates that these individuals, at a minimum, are learning new skills. The communication and relationships that develop between crew leader and crewmember has the potential to improve offender attitude, promote positive work ethic and possibly improve the crewmember's view of himself/herself. This would not likely happen if they were simply serving a jail sentence. Crewmembers have reported that by participating in the STS program, they experience accomplishment and self-satisfaction, which has helped ease

their depression, which is common in jails. To have project managers express appreciation to crewmembers for a job well done by saying thanks and providing beverage and snacks during a break creates a positive atmosphere for constructive personal change by crewmembers. Many project managers take the time to explain the reasons for the project to crewmembers and the positive effects the project will have.

Jail administrators appreciate the fact that having inmates return to the jail tired after accomplishing a productive day's work may reduce jail problems. Inmates on STS crews are generally housed in the same unit so by working and living together, conflicts between crewmembers and with jail staff are reduced when compared to the inmates in other units of the jail. Frequently STS crewmembers discuss the current day's project and create new ideas about how to complete the project in a more efficient and professional manner the next day.

Public and non-profit agencies also benefit from the STS program by having projects completed and they assist in the re-integration of inmates in the community in a much more positive way. Agencies are able to observe what skills and abilities inmates have and recognize that when supervised they can be contributing members in their community. These agencies in turn often express satisfaction to other community leaders, which builds grass root support for this program to continue.

Additional benefits consistent with the Department of Corrections Strategic Plan 2000/Resorative Justice initiatives include offender accountability, shared responsibility by working with offenders in the community, providing a humane and positive environment for offenders, proven operational effectiveness and based on feedback from residents, sound public policy.

A long-term benefit of the program might be reduction in recidivism rates. The positive personal and interpersonal experiences on a STS crew may be a springboard for some offenders to avoid return to the criminal system. A study of the prison industries program in Wisconsin found that recidivism rates after three years were 15% lower for inmates who worked than for those who did not. (Broward County, 1998, p. 3)



## **Appendix I Survey of County Board Members (61 surveys received)**

Response to the survey of county board members was overwhelmingly positive. Seventy seven percent (77%) rated the STS program as being most important for their county. Further, one hundred percent (100%) of county board members who responded indicated that constituents in the district they represent support this program.

Consistent with the positive responses, eighty eight percent (88%) indicated that should resources become available, their counties would be interested in expanding their current STS program.

### **Sample of general comments made by county board members:**

- I hope the state legislature realizes that this STS program is a great program and funding should not be cut. Some individuals that work on the STS crews are highly skilled individuals; some local constituents told me that the STS crew was very helpful on building a home for habitat for humanity.
- One of the greatest things about STS is that a lot of inmates keep their sanity by staying busy. It makes them feel useful.
- This is basically the only positive part of corrections. I support making this program the best it can be.
- Non-profit or civic groups as well as townships have a need for service, but can't get on schedule because of long-term commitment to 1 or 2 organizations.
- Currently the program is less effective due to fewer prisoners.
- Good program but would like to see the state pay more of the cost.

## **Appendix II Survey of Jail Programmers (63 surveys received)**

Seventy one percent (71%) of the jail programmers responded that the STS program is most important in their county. Sixty five percent (65%) indicated their community would benefit from an additional STS crew.

A concern is that county jails are operating at or near capacity. Fifty-five (55%) of the jail programmers indicated they are currently experiencing jail overcrowding problems. With more mandatory minimum sentences being implemented, economic recession, increasing unemployment and crime rates, jail overcrowding will likely continue to grow.

Jail programmer response also supports the idea that inmates working on crew are much easier to manage than inmates who are not working on crews. Fifty six percent (56%) of the survey respondents indicated that the STS program has very positive influence on the management of the inmates.

### **Sample of general comments made:**

- The STS program can be an integral control tool if kept in context.
- STS program is the most positive program in the judicial system.
- Unless the STS crews follow the same rules as other work programs, STS does not help the jail out and causes more work and supervision issues.

### **Appendix III - Survey of project site coordinators - labor recipients (81 surveys received)**

Over fifty percent (50%) of the organizations utilizing the STS crew for completion of projects become aware of the program from crew leaders. When a crew completes a project, the person making the project proposal often times will share the details of the program with other organizations. However, media, corrections staff, county board members and others are supportive of this program and continually are advocating utilization when appropriate.

Over ninety percent (90%) of the survey responses rated the work completed by the STS crew as very satisfied.

The preferred projects are those projects that would not get done without the STS program. The STS program is not to compete with private sector contractors or local business. Nearly seventy percent (70%) of the survey respondents indicated that if it were not for the STS program, the project likely would not have been completed in the near future.

So many agencies are becoming aware of the program making project proposals that it takes several days or weeks before the STS crew is able to complete the project, which is a cause for concern. However, the survey results indicate that this is not a serious problem. Over fifty percent (50%) of the projects were completed within six days of the project proposal being completed. Twelve percent (12%) indicated they had to wait between one and two weeks. Twelve percent (12%) responded that they had to wait two weeks or longer. Nineteen percent (19%) had no response.

Of the project site surveys returned, all of them report the STS crews worked safely at all times and all of them would recommend this program to other agencies.

### **Sample of general comments made by project site coordinators**

- Wonderful work! Pleasure to work with them.
- Some of the crewmembers are coming to visit me after their release. We couldn't physically do the work and couldn't afford to hire it done. Thank you very much. This program is very helpful to our organization, without it a lot of important work wouldn't get done due to lack of funds.
- They took a personal interest and we tried to explain the historical purpose of our efforts. Many have said they will be back to visit us. Their leader does an exceptional job with these people and everyone involved feels it is an exceptional program not only for us but also for the participants. We highly recommend it the way we have experienced it.
- We have had some problems with theft by program crew.

**Appendix IV - Survey results of Crewmembers (403 surveys)**

Sixty two percent (62%) of the STS crewmembers that responded to the survey report being incarcerated at local county jails and being released to participate on the STS crews. The balance (38%) of offenders report to the crew from home. Jail reduction was the initial primary goal guiding the development of this program, which is consistent with the survey results.

Of these offenders, forty four percent (44%) report the primary offense for which they are on the STS crew was for a Gross Misdemeanor offense. The survey was not specific requesting the offense, but it is probable a vast majority of these offenders are Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) offenders. This was followed by thirty one percent (31%) felony, which are classified as non-dangerous property offenders and eighteen percent (18%) misdemeanor. See diagram 1-1.

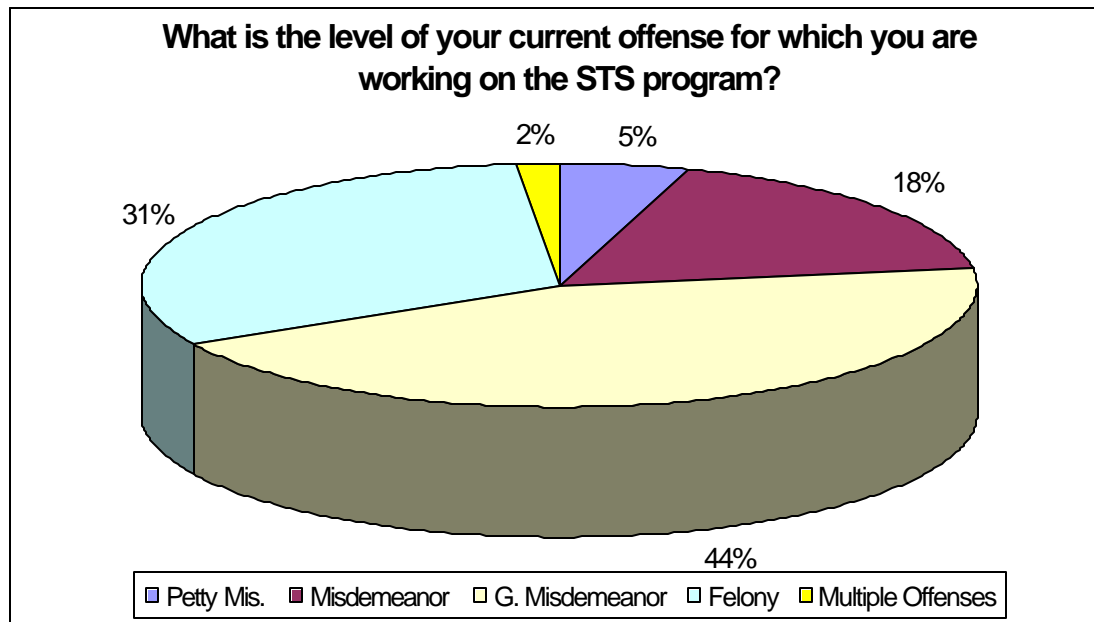


Diagram 1-1

Of the offenders working on the STS crew the day the survey was implemented, thirty four percent (34%) report that they were currently reducing the amount of jail time ordered by the court for the current offense. Approximately twenty four percent (24%) of the offenders reported reducing fines on the current offense or prior offenses, and thirteen percent (13 %) reported participating on STS as a condition of probation. Also, several counties have the general understanding that offenders shall first satisfy any outstanding delinquent fines and then reduce their jail time. Of the crewmembers surveyed, twelve percent (12%) reported they were doing both. See diagram 1-2.

## Why are you on the STS program?

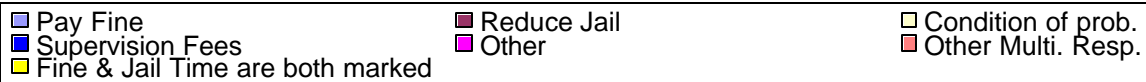
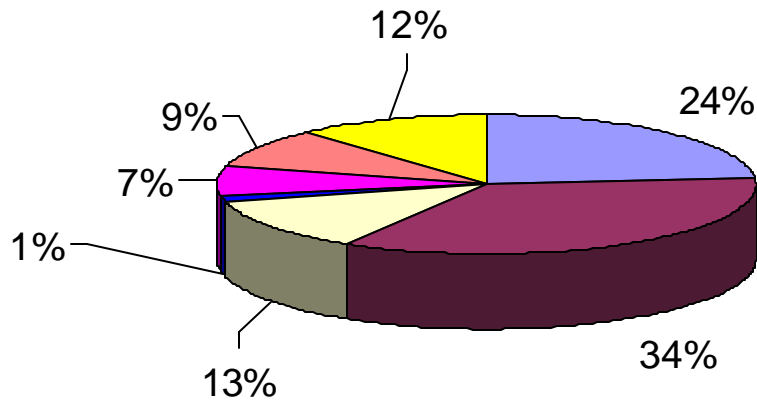


Diagram 1-2

Eighty five percent (85%) of crewmembers rated their current experience on the crew as mostly positive. Only 1 of 403 surveys returned by crewmembers reported a negative response. Ninety five percent (95%) of the survey respondents reported the community benefited by his/her participation on the STS program.

An important component of the STS program is to teach new job skills that may be utilized upon completion of the STS program. Please review diagram 1-3.

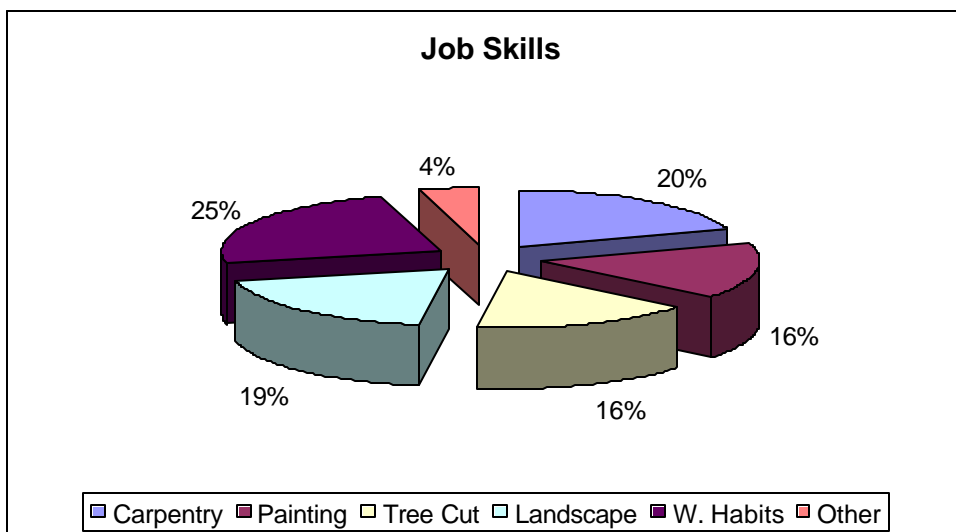


Diagram 1-3

The amount of time a crewmember spends on the STS crew was separated in to four different groups with thirty three percent (33%) reporting being on the crew no longer than seven days. The second most common response was twenty six percent (26%) reporting more than 31 days. Please see diagram 1-4 for more detail.

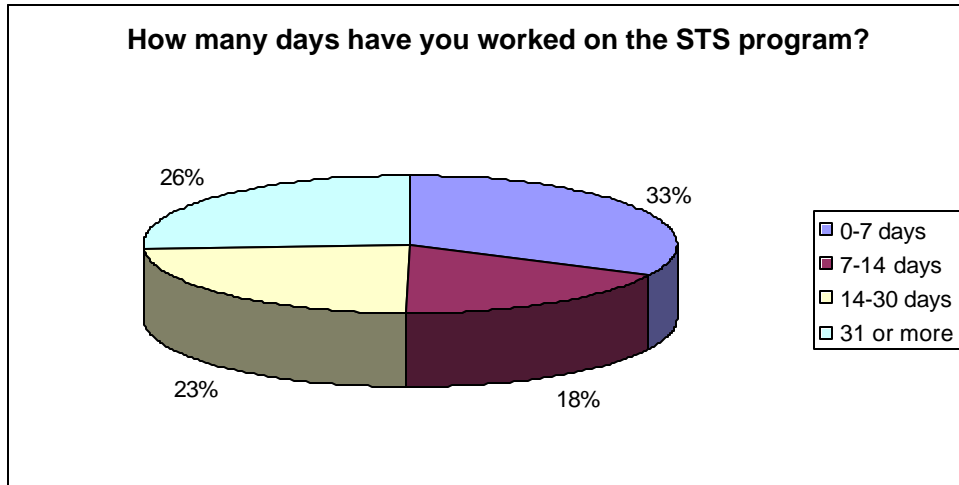


Diagram 1-4

Who the STS program serves is important information. Please refer to diagrams 1-5, 1-6 and 1-7.

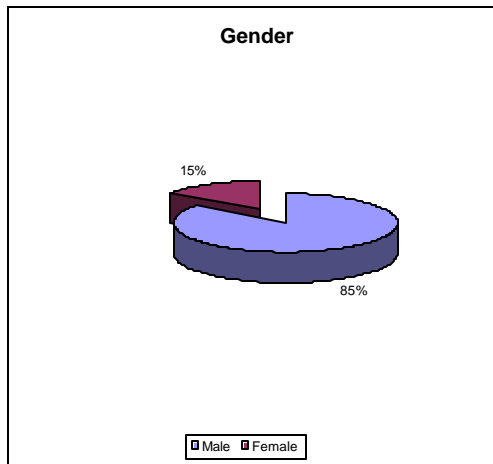


Diagram 1-5

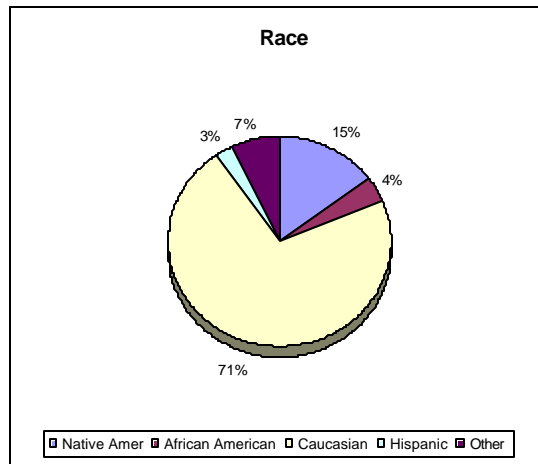


Diagram 1-6

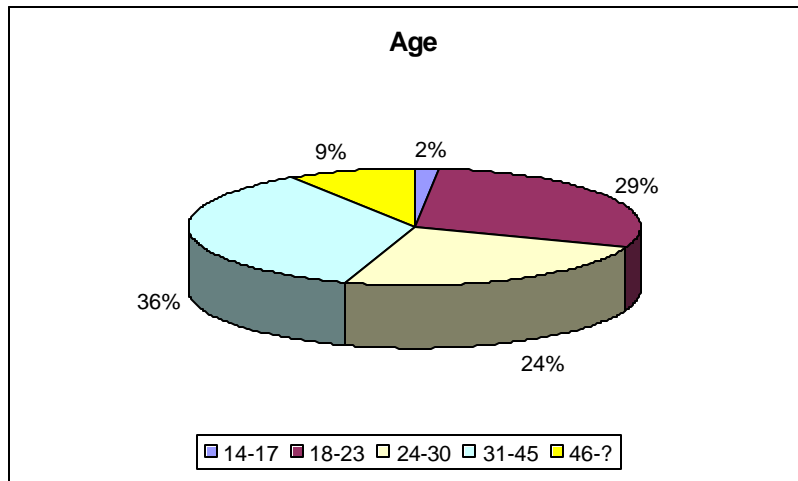


Diagram 1-7

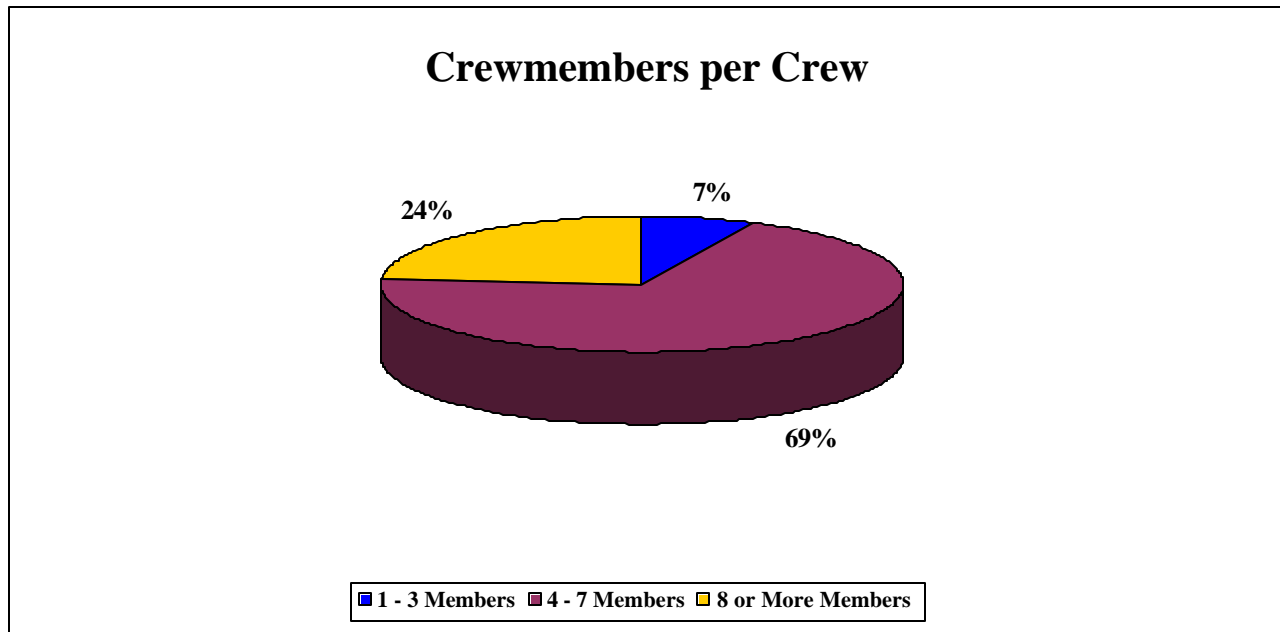
**Sample of comments made by crewmembers:**

- I think that more states/counties should have beneficial programs like this to offer. It gives a person a sense of stability and responsibility also helps in physical fitness.
- STS is a good program. The community and myself have benefited in more ways than one.
- I have enjoyed working with crew leaders and my experiences have been good. I think the program is a good one and teaches people to see their wrongs in what they did and never to repeat the offense again.
- Have enjoyed working and learning things with crew leader and other workers. Very good program.
- This program is beneficial to the community and as an inmate it creates a sense of positive thinking and self esteem toward law enforcement.
- I feel this is a very good program cause it benefits us and also we can help the community by us working out there on things that need to be done and most of all we get the chance to help others and give back to the community.
- STS benefits everyone, the community and the prisoner.
- I feel this is an excellent program; people who have been convicted of a crime should be given an opportunity to repay society rather than sit in jail 24-7 and cost the taxpayers even more.

The only negative comment made was from a crewmember who complained that no pop machines or microwaves were available, water was sometimes unavailable, and it takes a long time to get hours in.

**Appendix V - Survey of Crew Leaders (79 surveys received)**

The average crew size reported by sixty nine percent (69%) of the crew leaders who responded to the survey was four to seven crewmembers. Twenty four percent (24%) reported eight or more crewmembers average and the remaining seven percent (7%) reported a crew size average of one to three members. Please refer to Diagram 1-8.



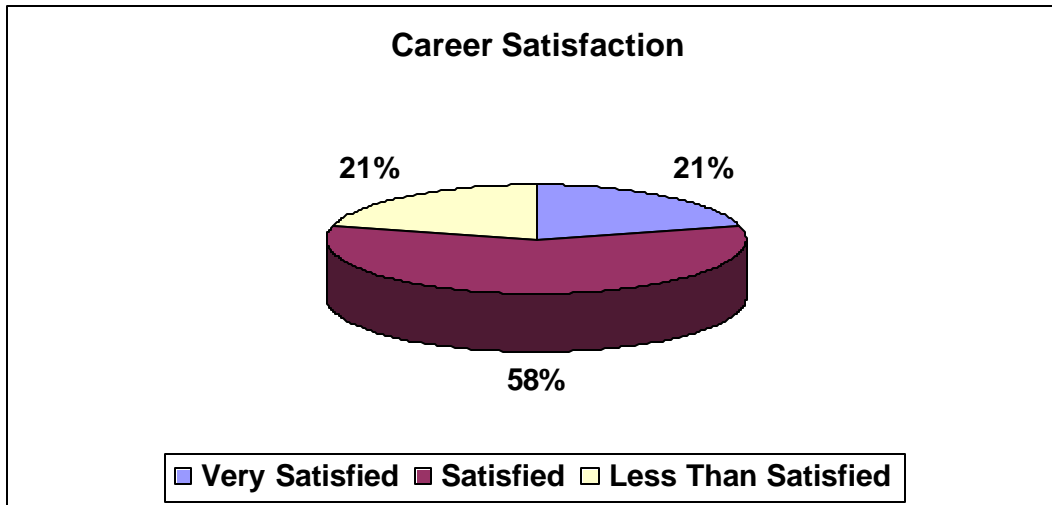
**Diagram 1-8**

When one observes the interaction between crew leader and crewmember many crewmembers seek general counsel/advice from crew leaders about problems they are experiencing in jail and community. Crew leaders feel that approximately fifty percent (50%) of the crewmembers come to them to talk about problems.

Crew leaders generally appear satisfied with their job. Fifty eight percent (58%) indicated they are satisfied with twenty one percent (21%) reporting being very satisfied with their job as a crew leader. Only twenty-one (21%) are less than satisfied with their position as crew leader. Please refer to diagram 1-9.

The two most common problems reported by crew leaders with their job include managing conflicts among crewmembers and equipment availability to complete projects. Crew leaders also listed a variety of other conflicts including such things as dealing with negative attitudes, too much work to balance, too many rules and regulations and locating winter work.





**Diagram 1-9**

Common projects for counties in Minnesota include county park maintenance, county building maintenance, landfill work, tree clearing and brushing, painting, fairgrounds preparation and litter pickup.

Common projects for the State of Minnesota including work for the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Corrections facility maintenance, and highway litter pickup.

The most common reason for terminating a STS crewmember prematurely from the crew was for failing to report to the crew as directed (63%). This was followed by failing to work as directed by the crew leader (14%).

**Sample of general comments made by crew leaders:**

- This job can wear on you, it's a lot of concentrated exposure to those people, and even some of our supervisors don't truly appreciate what we deal with. One thing that gripes me is the addition of email, computer data entry and soon computerized payroll, yet my supervisor feels I should be able to spend the same amount of time with the crew. Our duties have grown, it's time to accept that and don't make me feel guilty about trying to run this operation professionally.
- This is the most enjoyable and rewarding job I have ever had.
- Each county STS program should run the same across the state.
- It would be nice if they would do more surveys like this to show how much work that a crew leader does in their daily activities. That it is not just watching over individuals but it's teaching, counseling, maintaining relationships with the community and county workers, probation officers, judges and having a wide back ground to be able to do all the different kinds of projects that we are asked to do.
- Everyone tells us how great we are and what a great and important job we do; yet they are shocked that we don't make more money.
- Need to have equipment/and to be able to repair the equipment I have already!

## **Appendix VI - Survey of Corrections Professionals (84 surveys received)**

Seventy percent (70%) of the survey group responded that having an STS program in their county was most important. Of the corrections professionals, seventy-two (72%) indicated they have regular contact with the STS crew leader to discuss adjustment of probationers.

The responses did not reflect any strong indications regarding influence in the management of probation caseloads or reductions in alleged probation violations. (See diagram 6-1 and 6-2)

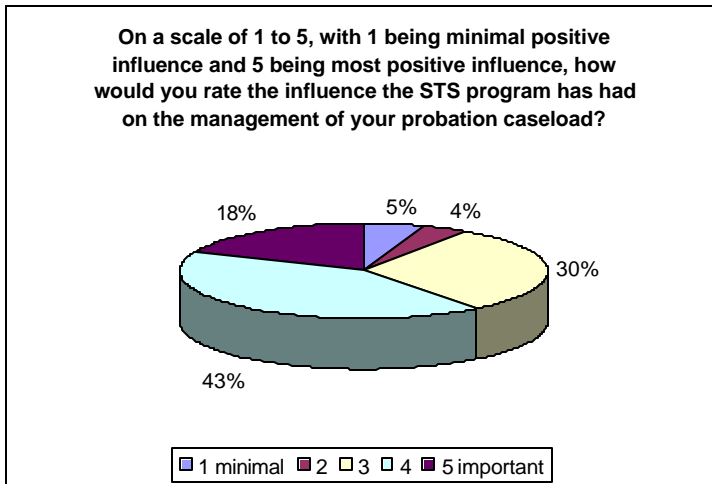


Diagram 6-1

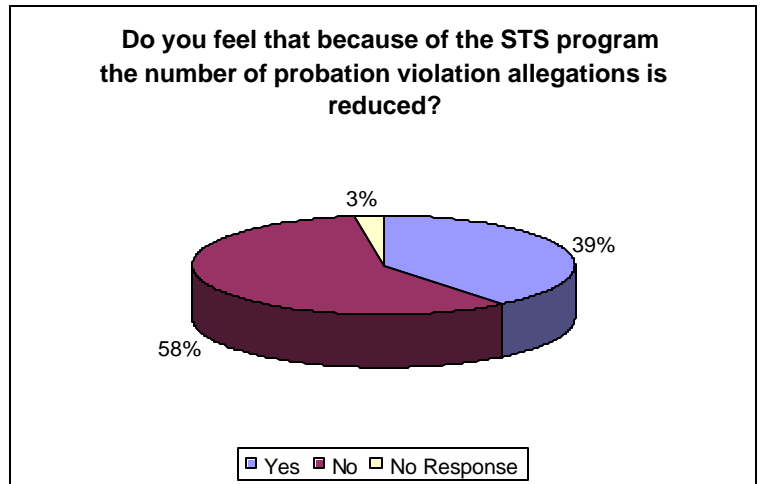


Diagram 6-2

Ninety six percent (96%) of the corrections professionals indicated that they routinely recommend STS as a sentencing alternative to the courts.

### **Sample of general comments made by corrections professionals**

- Best thing the DOC Offers
- I feel this is one of the best programs instituted by the DOC in the past several years. It reduces caseloads by providing an opportunity to repay fines and is also highly visible in the community.
- In my opinion this is the best sentencing alternative created. As your aware it holds offenders accountable and benefits the community.
- We would be lost without STS, it helps with jail savings, fine collection, good general consequences, and some return by offender to the community.
- Need to improve communication between crew leader and other correctional professionals.
- Due to limited space on the crew, almost all of the spots are used for “in custody” clients only.

## **Review of Other States**

### **South Dakota**

In South Dakota, more than 600 inmates are employed in community service work projects statewide. Inmates not only work side by side with state employees on the day-to-day activities in state government, but also are working in communities, with non-profit agencies, and with federal government agencies. On the South Dakota Department of Corrections web site, they report:

That through these work experiences inmates are gaining a work ethic and a sense of value and self worth. The work experiences have provided them with the tools and skills to make them productive members of the community when they are released. Inmates are becoming proficient in all facets of the construction trades, office skills, auto body repair, metal fabrication, building maintenance, heating and air conditioning, horticulture, welding, conservation and upholstery.

South Dakota reports this inmate work program has allowed the State to accomplish more with less. Using inmate labor has saved tax dollars and allowed projects that would have otherwise been deferred to reach fruition. The citizens also recognize that it is a good use of a valuable resource that would otherwise be a burden to society rather than an asset.

### **Oregon**

Measure 17- November 1994

Believing that inmates should work at least as hard as the law-abiding citizens who pay taxes for their support, Oregonians voted, through the initiative process, to require inmates to be at work or in on-the-job training programs 40 hours each week. 1994's Measure 17 began, as follows:

(1) Whereas the people of the state of Oregon find and declare that inmates who are confined in corrections institutions should work as hard as the tax-payers who provide for their upkeep; and whereas the people also find and declare that inmates confined within corrections institutions must be fully engaged in productive activity if they are to successfully re-enter society with practical skills and a viable work ethic; now, therefore, the people declare:

(2) All inmates of state corrections institutions shall be actively engaged full-time in work or on-the-job training. The work or on-the-job training programs shall be established and overseen by the corrections director, who shall ensure that such programs are cost-effective and are designed to develop inmate motivation, work capabilities and cooperation. Such programs may include boot camp prison programs. Education may be provided to inmates as part of work or on-the-job training so long as each inmate is engaged at least half time in hands-on training or work activity.

--Oregon Constitution, Sec. 41

## Appreciation Letters

### **2001 President's Award** (from the Minnesota Corrections Association) **MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS** **SENTENCE TO SERVICE – DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM**



*This award goes to programs, resources or facilities working in the broad field of corrections and criminal justice, which demonstrate creativity, resourcefulness, effectiveness and innovation.*

Sentence to Service (STS) has been in existence since 1986. It is designed to benefit the citizen's of the State by improving management of the State's resources, increasing sentencing alternatives for the Court, and decreasing the lengths of incarceration of non-dangerous offenders. This program stands as an example of what can be accomplished when we expect offenders to restore the community or set things right. Sentence to Service disaster relief is a shining example of this. In the spring and summer of 2001, the efforts of Mother Nature were in full force. STS crew leaders working in areas affected by the spring thaw and worked three tornadoes in Glenville, Northfield and Benson, Minnesota. While the sandbagging effort was monstrous, the quick action by crews that responded to the tornadoes was immense. Crews responded to the three sites within hours of the tornado. Homeowners stood in awe as vans with up to 11 crew members would arrive in the driveway and would begin cleaning up downed trees and debris. Some were near tears as they finished their work and tried to put their lives back to some form of normality.

In all there were 1,174 crewmembers that worked on crews putting in a total of 10,292 hours of service to the community affected by these disasters.

The work in these disaster areas are authorized and supported by corrections Commissioner, Sheryl Ramstad Hvass. The Commissioner is quoted as saying: "Offenders are paying a debt to society by working. They are also seeing the grateful faces of people they assisted at a devastating point in their lives-community work service has a tremendous positive impact for everyone involved."

# **TOWN of BIG LAKE**

"Sherburne County's First 5-Member Township Board"  
P. O. Box 75, Big Lake, MN 55309

May 13, 2002

Mr. Jerome Kleis, STS Crew Leader  
Sherburne County Sheriff's Dept.  
13880 Highway 10  
Elk River, MN 55330

Re: 2002 Clean-up Day

Dear Jerome:

The Town of Big Lake would like to extend its sincere appreciation of your donation of time spent in making our annual clean-up day a successful event. We appreciate you coordinating your crew to be available on a Saturday, they were tremendous! Because of your support, and with the help of many volunteers, we were able to collect 394 household appliances, 91.53 tons of furniture and solid waste, and 49 tons of scrap iron. Without support from individuals like you, and your crew, this could not have been accomplished.

Thank you From the Town of Big Lake.

Sincerely,

Laura Hayes, Clerk  
Town of Big Lake

# MEEKER COUNTY FAIR

72836 215<sup>th</sup> STREET  
DASSEL, MINNESOTA 55325

September 4, 2001

Mary Jean Anderson  
102 South Swift  
Litchfield, Mn. 55355

Dear Mary Jean:

HOT, VERY HOT could describe the days of the Meeker County Fair. The entire Fair Board would like to say "thank you" for all the time, hours and talents you and your STS Crew spent getting the buildings ready for the 2001 Fair.

The Meeker County Fair is a active part of summer activities for our county. We are always happy to have so many people come to our fair as exhibitors and visitors. The fair board is always so pleased to hear that we have the nicest and neatest fair grounds in the area and without all your supervision of the crews we would have had a hard time getting everything ready.

Hope you and your crew will be able to assist again next year with painting, cleaning and just keeping the fair grounds neat as a pm. We have already placed an order for cooler weather next year. So thanks again.

Sincerely,

Jean Holm  
Fair Secretary

# MILLE LACS COUNTY

## Board of Commissioners

635 - 2nd Street S.E.  
Milaca, Minnesota 56353

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**David A. Oberfeld**  
Chairman of the Board

**Telephone (320) 983-8218**  
**FAX (320) 983-8382**

May 23, 2000

Mr. Victor A. Moen  
STS Supervisor Region III  
State of Minnesota  
Department of Corrections  
Sentence to Service Program  
P.O. Box 1143  
St. Cloud, MN 56302

RE: Expansion of STS Program

Dear Mr. Moen:

We are pleased to hear that the Department of Corrections is considering making a proposal to the legislature for expansion of Sentencing to Service programs in Minnesota. Our existing STS crew has proven to be a valuable labor and economic resource for the county and its tax paying residents. The STS crew has provided countless hours of public service to our county alone, not to mention other local jurisdictions. Additionally, jail sentences have been reduced quicker consequently resulting in lower prisoner boarding fees. Please be advised that Mille Lacs County would be interested in expanding its STS program by adding a second crew if given the opportunity.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or County Coordinator Bobbie Danielson at (320) 983-8218.

Sincerely,

David A. Oberfeld  
Chairman

cc: Dennis Boser, Mille Lacs County Sheriff  
Bobbie Jo Danielson, Mille Lacs County Coordinator  
Robert Voorhees, STS Crew Leader

**Senior Citizens of Pine City, Inc.  
670 Main St. S  
Pine City, MN 55063**

March 4, 2002

Mr. Vic Moen, Regional Supervisor  
Sentencing to Service Program  
Minnesota Department of Corrections  
810 West St. Germain  
P.O. Box 1143  
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56302

Dear Mr. Moen,

On behalf of the Senior Citizens of Pine City, Inc. we want to express our gratitude to Randy Peterson, Crewleader and his crew of people from the Sentencing to Service Program who worked many hours at our new Senior Center Building which is presently under construction here in Pine City. Their help reduced the cost of labor to many thousands of dollars and we appreciate it very much. We are a non-profit organization and with their help it is nearing completion.

The crew was always very helpful, polite and pleasant to have around. We feel this program is a great one and hope it will continue to help others as it has helped the seniors.

Sincerely,

Loretta Tobeck, President  
Senior Citizens of Pine City, Inc.

CC: Mr. Greg Bennett, Chairman of the Pine County Commissioners



Tire Clean Up-2001  
Pine County



Sandbagging efforts-2001  
Little Rock Lake-Benton County



### **Report Committee**

Victor A. Moen-Chair, Region III STS/ICWC Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Corrections  
Ron Solheid-ICWC Affordable Housing Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Corrections  
Mark Siemers-STS/ICWC Region VIII Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Corrections  
Michael Stoltman-STS/ICWC Region VII Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Corrections

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Katie Refslend, Student Intern, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN

## **Reference Materials**

Broward County Sheriff's Department Internet Website:

[www.sheriff.org/about\\_bso/dodcc/inmate/](http://www.sheriff.org/about_bso/dodcc/inmate/)

Carey, Mark E., Memo dated March 3, 2000 RE: New Research Policy/Procedures.

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Minnesota. Dept of Corrections. Sentencing to Service Statistics By Fiscal Year 1990-2002. March, 2002(B).

Minnesota. Dept. of Corrections. Strategic Plan 2000(C). June 2000

Minnesota. Dept. of Corrections. STS Update. October-December 1990.

Oregon Department of Corrections Internet Web site: [www.doc.state.or.us/welcome.shtml](http://www.doc.state.or.us/welcome.shtml)

South Dakota Department of Corrections Internet Website:

[www.state.sd.us/corrections/corrections.html](http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/corrections.html)