

Transforming Corrections Through Servant Leadership



Highlights from the 2025 Corrections Leadership Summit

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(BOP) - The Federal Bureau of Prisons hosted a two-day Corrections Leadership Summit at the Management and Specialty Training Center (MSTC) in Aurora, Colorado, bringing together a select group of leaders for focused development, reflection, and collaboration. Across both days, the central theme was clear: the future of the Bureau depends on strong, engaged leaders who model accountability, integrity, and excellence.

Day One: Leadership Foundations and the Coffee Bean Mindset

Deputy Director Joshua J. Smith opened the Summit by emphasizing the importance of cultivating great leaders at every level of the agency. Damon West, author of *The Coffee Bean*, delivered the keynote address, sharing his personal journey and the message that individuals have the power to positively transform the environment around them. One participant, Warden Jeremiah Johnston, connected West's message to the agency's leadership direction, sharing: "One of the messages delivered this week by Mr. West was, 'there is a reason why the windshield is bigger than the rear view mirror.' I believe this speaks to the direction Director Marshall and Deputy Director Smith are taking this agency. Focus on what's in front of us and not what was in the past."

Throughout the day, leaders participated in interactive workshops that explored servant leadership, communication, personal accountability, and wellness. Dr. Jason Gabel highlighted the physical and emotional demands of corrections work and introduced the Coffee Bean Wellness Challenge. Reflecting on the day, he noted, "Our Wardens demonstrated strength, positivity, and a continued commitment to lead with compassion, integrity, and the mindset that true leadership is about serving others first."

Day Two: Leadership in Action

Day Two shifted from concepts to application, with Deputy Director Smith, Dr. Gabel, and several Regional Directors facilitating open discussions on leadership challenges, expectations, and goals.

These conversations reinforced the shared responsibility leaders carry in shaping culture, supporting staff, and strengthening alignment between field operations and national priorities. Participants connected the lessons of Day One with the realities of their roles, underscoring that leadership is demonstrated daily through communication, decisions, and example.

Conclusion

The 2025 Corrections Leadership Summit served as a meaningful investment in the Bureau's leadership corps. By focusing on personal accountability, servant leadership, and the power of influence, the Summit reinforced a central truth: great leaders build great institutions. The insights and momentum from these two days will continue to shape leadership development efforts across the agency in the months ahead.