

wfxg.com

Program aims to keep first-time offenders from a life of crime

WFXG FOX 54

Since 2006, The South Carolina Department of Corrections in Allendale holds prison tours as part of their Pre-Trial Intervention program. It aims to keep first-time offenders from becoming repeat offenders. The program is seeing great success, and Thursday 18 people participated at the Correction's facility in Allendale.

The first-time offenders that participated are charged with crimes such as shoplifting, drug possession, assault and battery.

Bryan Stirling, the Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, said they learn what life would be like if they continue down the wrong path.

"You're told when to get up, you're told when you sleep, you're told when to eat, you're told when it's rec time. If you think your life is good on the outside, it will not be the same here," Stirling said.

Who better to give the details of reality in prison than inmates. Duffie Stone, the 14th Circuit Solicitor, said 10 of them help host this tour every month, and aren't afraid to say what really goes on.

"They see the inmates that they would be living with. They see the lack of freedom, the lack of family, the lack of their finances," Stone said,

Stone said participants in the 14th circuit PTI program also complete community service and drug and alcohol tests, but Stone said the prison tour is the most effective part.

Considering it costs tax payers \$20,000 a year to keep each inmate locked up, keeping these guys out of prison is the main goal.

"It's saving tax payers a lot of money. It's a public safety tool that will hopefully wake some of these young men up, and some who I saw were a little bit older, that they will not continue in their criminal ways and not end up in a facility like Allendale," Stirling said.

The South Carolina Department of Corrections said this program has an 86% success rate of participants never being arrested again.

The 14th Judicial Circuit's PTI program doesn't just cover Allendale, but Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties as well. That area is 1 of 14 in South Carolina that offers prison tours.

Copyright 2016 [WFXG](http://www.wfxg.com). All rights reserved.