

Peitz promoted to assistant district director

Leadership change in Eighth Judicial District

By JOHN MANGALONZO

Long-time Burlington Residential Correctional Facility manager Gary Peitz is the new assistant district director for the Eighth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services.

Peitz, of West Point, took over the new position Friday. He replaced Ron Mullen, who recently was appointed superintendent of the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility.

"He's really a good leader and a good manager," said Dan Fell, correctional services district director. "At this level (assistant director), you have to do both. I have full confidence in him."

Peitz, who served 10 years as residential manager of the Burlington facility, will be responsible for the overall operations for the Ottumwa and Burlington residential facilities. Peitz has more than 26 years of law enforcement and corrections experience.

He heads the district's evidence-based practices committee, which supports the adoption of interventions and programs specifically designed for offenders based on their risk to re-offend, personal needs and receptivity to change and programming.

Officials say it is about individualizing treatment and programs for each offender, based on the offenders' needs. One of the functions of the program is not to over supervise low-risk probationers by mixing them with caseloads involving higher risk offenders.

"Our goal is to reduce recidivism," Fell said in a recent interview. "By looking at the available research, rethinking what we do and redirecting our staff and resources, we can have a positive impact in the lives of offenders, prevent future victims and make our communities safer."

Peitz said the most rewarding thing in the corrections field is seeing "people doing some good things for themselves and being successful."

He has seen former offenders do well for themselves as well as those who have been in and out of the criminal justice system. He said his work requires a lot of patience, and plenty of persistence.

"This isn't a sprint," Peitz said. "It's a marathon."