Inmate workers give back to community

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Inmates at the Caddo Correctional Center have worked nearly 40,000 labor hours during the first two months of 2009.

Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator said sentenced parish and state inmates housed at CCC are allowed to work a variety of jobs for government agencies, non-profit agencies, and community organizations. They receive no compensation for their service and remain under deputy supervision while they work.

In January, 120 inmates worked 18,880 hours. In February, 116 inmates worked 18,560 hours. At the federal minimum wage rate of $6.55 per hour, the inmates have returned $245,232 to the community in the past two months.

"With all the belt tightening we've seen in recent months, inmate workers are playing a larger role than ever to keep government moving efficiently without burdening the taxpayers," Prator said.

Inmates perform duties at the sheriff's substations as well as a number of jobs within CCC such as laundry, food service, housekeeping, and maintenance. They also are assigned to the city and parish litter crews, the parish animal shelter, Caddo Commission fleet maintenance, and the Northwest Louisiana Food Bank.

The inmate work crews are separate from the Sheriff's Work Release Program, which provides employment in the private sector for state inmates nearing the end of their sentences.