



**STATE OF INDIANA  
Department of Correction**

Indiana Government Center—South

**Eric J. Holcomb**  
Governor

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**Robert E. Carter Jr.**  
Commissioner

**Photo Release**

For Immediate Release:

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**IDOC Partner's with Ivy Tech to Build a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skilled and Ready Workforce**

Early Friday morning, Edinburgh Correctional Facility and their partners Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana celebrated the graduation of 18 students who completed their 80-hour American Welding Certification (AWS) training.

The partnership between IDOC and Ivy Tech was developed in response to Governor Holcomb's Next Level Agenda which challenges the State of Indiana to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century skilled and ready workforce. The AWS program trains men at the Edinburgh Correctional Facility how to weld with the ultimate goal of aligning them with gainful employment in the industry upon release. Welding is an exceptional pathway for released offenders as it provides them with higher pay rates and stable employment upon re-entry. Currently, Indiana's correctional facilities house approx. 27,000 offenders—and more than 90% of them will eventually be released back into Hoosier communities. Of the recent graduates, five have already been released with pending offers of employment.

Dr. Sue Ellspermann, President of Ivy Tech Community College, brought words of inspiration and encouragement to the ceremony stating, "Ten years ago when I was elected, it was pretty tough to find a career coming out as an ex-offender. Today that is not the case. You will get a fair look by most employers. They will look to you for your talent, your skills, the integrity you bring...they will put very little emphasis on what happened then. So this really is a new day that I have never seen in this state in all of the positions that I've held."



**\*Ivy Tech Community College President Sue Ellspermann straightens a graduate's cap before he is presented his American Welding Society certificate at Edinburgh Correctional Facility. "Once a mom, always a mom!" she stated.**



**\*Ivy Tech Community College President Sue Ellspermann bringing words of inspiration and encouragement to the graduating class.**



**\* Graduates throw their caps in celebration of graduating from Ivy Tech Community College with their American Welding Society certification while incarcerated at Edinburgh Correctional Facility.**