

# Open House and Ribbon Cutting Nebraska State Probation District 5 - Columbus on Thursday, August 6, 2015



*Pictured left to right: Danielle Graybill, Office Manager; Carrie Rodriguez, Chief Deputy; Ellen Fabian Brokofsky, Probation Administrator; Shane Stutzman, Chief Probation Officer District 5; Tom Martens, Platte County Commissioner; and Marty Metschke, Reporting Center Coordinator.*



*From the Columbus Telegram*

## Probation office opens at new location

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A state-run agency with its main office in Columbus has settled into its new digs.

District 5 Probation moved out of the Platte County Courthouse this summer and into a building vacated by East Central District Health Department at 2282 E. 32nd Ave.

Operations began at the new site on June 1 and, on Thursday, an open house and ribbon cutting were held to officially mark the opening of the office.

Space was being maxed out at the courthouse and a downtown satellite location for the probation office, which covers an 11-county area. The new building is about 14,000 square feet and provides enough room for the 28 probation office employees to be located under one roof. It also has additional space for growth.



The probation office serves both adults and juveniles and is the site for a reporting center, which offers therapy and services to those who have a risk of reoffending.

“We are trying to be a positive fixture in the community so people who are on probation don’t have to stay on probation or stay in the mentality that this is as good as it is going to get. Our ultimate goal is to get people to improve their lives to the point where they look back in a few years and say, ‘Wow, look at where I came from,’” said Marty Metschke, reporting center coordinator.

At any given time, there are about 1,200 people on probation in the district, with about 300-350 from Platte County. The office has 11 probation officers, two assistant officers and support staff like drug technicians. On average, an officer can have a caseload of 80-100 people, less if those are high-risk cases.

Officers go through extensive training to learn case management, supervision techniques, officer safety and how to write reports and work with people.

“It’s a balance between counseling and law enforcement,” said Carrie Rodriguez, chief deputy probation officer for District 5.

Though the main office is located in Platte County, there are offices in each of the other counties in the district, which includes Boone, Butler, Colfax, Hamilton, Merrick, Nance, Polk, Saunders, Seward and York.

Aside from having adequate space for all employees in one area, the new location also is set up to provide separate entrances for adults and juveniles, and another for those being tested for drugs.

Probation officers meet with individuals at the office and make home visits. Group supervision also is conducted, as are several programs. Some programs, like parenting and anger management, are open to the community.

The salaries, training and employee benefits are paid through state funding. Counties, though, do pay for operating costs. In Columbus, the probation office rents the building from Platte County, which purchased it for \$580,000 last year.