

Title: "From Bars to Books: A Journey of Literacy and Redemption"

In the heart of a Florida correctional facility in Sumter County Florida, an extraordinary transformation is taking place. A group of inmates gather in a small, well-lit room. These men, with a shared determination to rebuild their lives, are part of the PRIDE Enterprises Braille Transcription program.

For these inmates, this program is more than a vocational opportunity. It is a once in a lifetime chance to make amends and leave a positive mark on the world. Each page they transcribed represents a step towards a brighter future, a step away from the mistakes of their past.

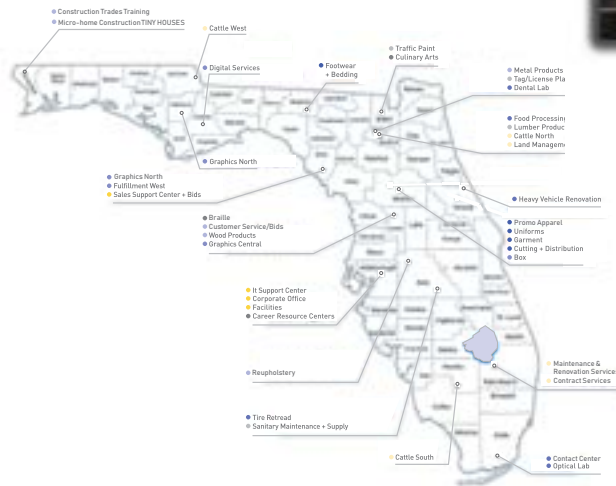
In the beginning, the program faced skepticism, both from the inmates themselves and from the outside world. Could a group of incarcerated individuals truly be entrusted with the critical task of transcribing educational materials? The answer is a resounding yes.

Under the guidance of dedicated trainers, these men absorb the intricacies of Braille. They are learning to navigate the complexities of language, deciphering textbooks of all subjects and grade levels, ensuring that visually impaired students across the state of Florida will have access to the education they deserved.

As days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, something remarkable is beginning to happen. The room, once filled with the weight of past mistakes, is transforming into a sanctuary of hope and possibility. Inmates speak of newfound purpose and a sense of pride in their work. They speak of how the act of transcribing Braille not only enriches the lives of others but is a part of the rehabilitation that each inmate desires to achieve.



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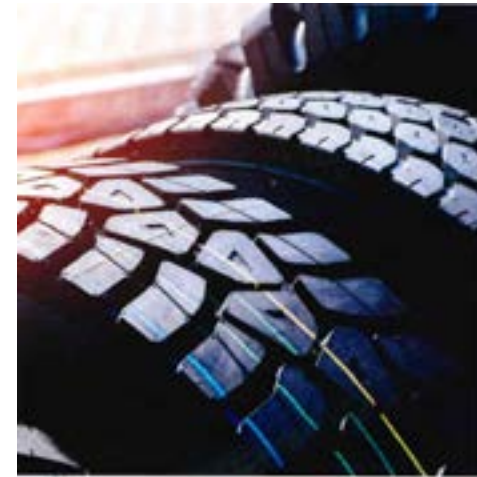
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WHO IS PRIDE ENTERPRISES?

PRIDE is an acronym, which stands for Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises. PRIDE is a 501c3, Not for Profit corporation, that was created by the Florida Legislature in 1981. PRIDE is a self-funded entity and receives \$0 appropriations from the State of Florida.

PRIDE works in concert with the Florida Department of Corrections to focus on four primary mission objectives:

- To provide a joint effort between the department, the correctional work programs, and other vocational training programs to reinforce relevant education, training, and post release job placement and help reduce recommitment.
- To serve the security goals of the state through the reduction of idleness of inmates and the provision of an incentive for good behavior in prison
- To reduce the cost of state government by operating enterprises primarily with inmate labor, which enterprises do not seek to unreasonably compete with private enterprise.
- To serve the rehabilitative goals of the state by duplicating, as nearly as possible, the operating activities of a free-enterprise type of profitmaking enterprise.

Tiny Homes – The Background Story

A few years ago, PRIDE Enterprises Board Chairman, James Reeves, had a vision for PRIDE to expand operations into the Panhandle area.



Chairman Reeves identified a need for more affordable housing in the Panhandle and as a result, in 2023, he guided the PRIDE Staff and Board to adapt a plan to move forward with a PRIDE business at the Century Correctional Institution. This new PRIDE Industry will produce Tiny Homes, built by trained and certified inmates in a manufacturing environment. Most of these homes will be sold in the region to meet the growing need to make housing affordable for the underserved people and families of the region.

Subsequently, PRIDE Enterprises submitted a request to the Triumph Foundation, seeking financial support for the training needed to certify the selected inmates. In January of 2024, The Triumph Foundation approved a grant worth \$923,745, for the purpose of reimbursing PRIDE for the Training and Certification services provide by Pensacola State College. Each inmate in the program has made a commitment to stay in the eight county region when they reach the end of their sentence, so they can become a productive member of society using the skills obtained in the work program.

Pride Enterprises also allocated \$521,000 from its own capital reserves to build a new facility at the Century Correctional Institution, that will house the Tiny Home Production Facility. The facility when completed will have 11,250 square feet of floor space. PRIDE plans to set the facility up in a Lean, One-Piece-Flow format to produce the units in the most efficient manner. Plans are to complete the facility by mid-year and begin production of Tiny Homes in the Fall of 2024.

PRIDE operates 37 Industries in 17 different Correctional Institutions across the state of Florida. PRIDE produces a vast array of products, including optical glasses, dental hardware & appliances, Industrial cleaning chemicals, graphics, lumber, re-tread truck tires, processed meat, sewn products, digital services, and furniture, to name a few. PRIDE inmates earned almost 3,000 nationally recognized training certificates in 2023.

PRIDE Enterprises launches new diesel mechanic training program

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises (PRIDE Enterprises), an inmate training company operating 37 work training programs across 17 state correctional facilities in Florida, recently launched its new diesel mechanic training and certificate program in Belle Glade, Florida, with the first 10 inmates from Moore Haven Correctional Facility voluntarily starting the program on Monday, November 6, 2023. The new program is a joint venture between PRIDE Enterprises, the Florida Department of Corrections and Palm Beach State College. The new program is a 425-hour college credit course with full state college certification through Palm Beach State College.

“We’re excited to have launched this new diesel mechanic training and certificate program,” said Blake Brown, president of PRIDE Enterprises. “The certificates earned through this program are more than pieces of paper; they are tickets to a future filled with possibility.”



Diesel program students with Instructor RJ Himes going over troubleshooting of a John Deere Tractor

With the goal of preparing inmates for re-entry into communities as productive citizens, PRIDE Enterprises cited a pressing need for diesel mechanics in the state as a reason to why they partnered with Palm Beach State College to offer the new diesel mechanic training and certificate program. In fact, PRIDE Enterprises stated that currently there is only one state college in Florida that offers this program and there are over 1,000 diesel mechanic job openings in the state.

“This is a demand that this program aims to meet,” said Brown. “Upon completion of their sentences, inmates who have graduated from the program will be stepping into a job market hungry for their expertise, with the potential for not just employment, but for careers that promise financial stability and personal fulfillment.”