

Nevada's prisons chief on a mission of change

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – James Dzurenda is on a mission to sell change behind bars.

As director of Nevada's beleaguered Department of Corrections, Dzurenda has been traveling the state to meet with staff and legislators. He has scrutinized Nevada laws and the department's antiquated records system.

From his perspective, Nevada is way behind the curve in inmate management. Fixing the problem will require overcoming decades of a lock-'em-up culture. And money.

Since arriving, Dzurenda made a U-turn on the agency's mission, shifting the emphasis to rehabilitating inmates instead of keeping them contained. Now he has to convince state lawmakers and the public that changes will benefit public safety and save money in the long run.

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