

SUCCESS

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Stories



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS**

Imagine having a budget of only \$2.65 a day to feed your guests. Three meals a day, 365 days a year. Now imagine that budget covering not only the cost of food, but the cost of supplies and replacement equipment as well.

Some foodservice operators complain about keeping food costs in line. Keeping costs in line is a matter of course for the staff at the Florence Federal Correctional Complex (FCC), Florence, Colo. Part of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, FCC is actually three facilities in one complex. They include FCI Florence, a medium-security federal correctional institute with an adjacent minimum-security satellite camp, USP Florence High, a high-security federal penitentiary, and USP Florence ADMAX, a maximum-security prison, or “super-max.”

Prison population, all male, fluctuates between about 3,100 and 3,300 inmates among the four facilities. The facilities offer a variety of services and programs to address needs of the inmates, structure their leisure time, and

help reintegrate them into society. Skills programs, general education classes, religious programs and even work opportunities all help keep inmates busy and productive, and teach them pro-social values and life skills.

Most programs emphasize personal responsibility, respect, and tolerance of others, which reduces misconduct. Most important to inmates, though, are recreational programs, good medical care and food.

“Any problems are likely to stem from one of those three things,” says Paul Scofield, food administrator for the complex. “My job is to put out the best meal possible.”

On a budget of far less than \$2.65 a day for food, one might think that FCC’s “best” couldn’t come close to what most consider an average or even below-average meal. But Scofield and administrators at each individual facility do a good job of sourcing products that no one else wants.

“We do lots of opportunity buying,” he says. “We purchase seconds and mis-cuts from major manufacturers, things like corn dogs with no sticks, or maybe a special promotion item from a national chain that was over produced by a processor.”

When it comes to finding such deals, FCC Florence relies on Derrick Jones, food service administrator of the super-max. Jones has relationships with several companies that specialize in brokering these kinds of deals with food manufacturers. That enables the complex to purchase name brand foods from large processors, often at less than cost.

“We recently bought a truckload of ice cream pints for 20 cents apiece,” Scofield says. “These are products



Keating Instant Recovery® Fryers help keep the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Florence Federal Corrections Complex kitchens within a very tight budget.

Pictured from left to right:

*Eliza Ann Keating, Keating of Chicago, Inc.;
Derrick Jones, Food Service Administrator, Florence FCC;
Paul Scofield, Food Service Administrator, Florence FCC*

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that manufacturers don't want to hit the street. It's all good food, just not ready for retail market."

Jones also goes out of his way to find special buys at the holidays so inmates can have traditional holiday meals. FCC has a food program coordinator who works with the USDA to source commodity products as well.

Menu planning is done annually on a five-week cycle schedule. All the menus are nutritionally analyzed by an outside source to make sure inmates' nutritional needs are met. The master plan is then tweaked on a weekly basis, if necessary, depending on the availability of food. Fried chicken may be substituted for baked, for example.

Some menus don't vary at all, if the staff can help it. "The inmates like variety," Scofield says, "but they like their staples, too, like hamburgers every

Wednesday, chicken every Thursday, or made-to-order eggs on Friday mornings. God help you if you change those things."

Because the \$2.65 per day budget includes the cost of replacement equipment, reliability is essential.

"Ovens and fryers are our two main pieces of equipment," Scofield says. "If a grill goes down, for example, we can always put a hamburger in an oven and bake it. We fry a lot of foods, too. Finding reliable equipment is a necessity. That's one of the great things about Keating."

There are five fryers in each of the complex's two big facilities (FCI and USP), two in the low-security camp kitchen and three in the super-max kitchen. All of them run practically non-stop three meals a day. At breakfast they're used for hash browns and other items. At lunch and dinner, they fry everything from okra and chicken nuggets to ready-to-fry tacos and chicken-fried steak.

"We serve about 6.5 million pounds of food per year," Scofield says. "At least a million of that goes through the fryers." Fryers also have to be responsive. The two big facilities serve about 1,200 inmates each in one hour or less at each meal.

In the seven or eight years the fryers have been in place, only one service call has been required. That was to replace an ignitor, according to Scofield.



The responsiveness and reliability of Keating Instant Recovery® Fryers are what help keep the Florence FCC's foodservice program running quickly and efficiently, all on only \$2.65 per day.

The foodservice program employs 600 inmates working under 30 cook/supervisors in Scofield's department. Some are dedicated to cleaning and maintaining the fryers, and filtering the oil. Sometimes, the fryers are in such high demand that it's difficult for inmate crews to get to them. Still, they keep on performing.

That performance helps Scofield and his staff accomplish their mission of providing inmates with high quality, nutritious meals while offering inmates skills they can put to use in their communities when they're released. All on \$2.65 a day. That's how Florence FCC spells success.

Mike Sherer writes frequently about restaurants and the foodservice industry.



Derrick Jones and Paul Scofield proudly show off their battery of Keating Instant Recovery® Fryers to Eliza Keating and Eliza Ann Keating during their tour of the foodservice facilities.



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