



# DJJ Partnership



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## Director's comments

There's good news and bad news and in the end things could be a lot worse.

First we dealt with severe budget reductions due to the worsening economy, then when the downturn grew even steeper and it looked like we'd be cut again, the state received its share of stimulus funding and we dodged that bullet.

We're still taking seriously the potential for a swine flu pandemic, but at least so far things seem to have slowed and the virulence is less than initially expected. We will stay watchful and remain hopeful this pattern continues.



Barry Green

The percentage of kids committed to the state who are arrested for new offenses after they are released from our system increased this past year. But at the same time, the numbers coming into our court service units, placed into detention, added to our probation caseloads, and committed to state facilities have continued to decline.

So I would say that we've seen our share of challenges and had some let-downs. But overall, we are still seeing a drop in the number of young people who are becoming involved with, or coming back to, the courts and who require our services. In the end, that's the good news that outweighs the bad.

I worry that local services for children may be harder to find next fiscal year than in the past, due to lower revenue collections at the local level (primarily due to the drop in housing values, but also attributable to lower sales tax and personal property tax collections), and that may make it more difficult to meet the needs for kids who would otherwise come before the court, and to keep at home those who do get into trouble.

So as one challenge appears to be met, we're faced with another. But, as with the earlier problems, we will meet the challenges and find ways to help keep our youth, their families and their communities safe.

I've really tried to get out into the field more over the past two months and it's done me a world of good. As dark as some days have looked, I am once more heartened seeing what is still happening in our court service units and residential facilities. I know that you all have felt pain from all the turmoil that the down economy has created, but you still find the good in what can be done and you continue to do it.

It is this amazing attitude exhibited by staff everywhere that I travel that helps me continue to do my job and lets me know that we will be able to stay true to our mission to assist children and their families throughout Virginia.