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Community Corrections gets new chief

Rebecca S. Green | The Journal Gazette

FORT WAYNE – When Sheila Hudson retired in mid-December, leaving her post at the helm of Allen County Community Corrections, she left the place she'd been since its inception.

But on Thursday, a familiar face to the Allen County criminal justice system was picked to replace her.

Beginning March 1, Kimberly Churchward will head the agency – which includes the operation of Allen County Re-Entry Court and Allen County Restoration Court, the Kelley House and numerous other programs in its dozen divisions.

While Churchward was approved unanimously Thursday by the Community Corrections' advisory board, she still must be approved by the Allen County commissioners, a decision expected today, officials said.

For more than a dozen years, Churchward was the executive director of Allen Superior Court's criminal division services. In that capacity, Churchward handled the administration of pre-trial services, Alcohol Countermeasures Program, and Drug Court, according to the Allen County public information office.

Before that position, Churchward was an investigator, later chief investigator, for the Allen County Prosecutor's Office.

"I hope to bring the knowledge and insight that I have gained through these various experiences to Community Corrections," Churchward said, in a written statement. "I appreciate the support and confidence of the advisory board."

Those on the advisory board offered praise for Churchward on Thursday afternoon.

"Sheila was able to create one of the most effective community corrections agency in the state," said Allen Superior Judge John Surbeck, chairman of the Community Corrections Advisory Board. "The board feels Kim has the experience, knowledge and qualifications which will allow Community Corrections to remain effective and efficient well into its future."

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