

Utah Corrections Director Rollin Cook stepping down

Deseret News

By Pat Reavy

April 18, 2018 11:11 am

Link: <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900016170/utah-corrections-director-rollin-cook-stepping-down.html>



DRAPER — Utah Department of Corrections Executive Director Rollin Cook announced Wednesday that he is stepping down.

Cook, who was appointed head of the department five years ago, will leave effective May 15.

"It's just time for me to move forward. I've been doing this a long time with the sheriff's department and now here. I'm just looking forward to taking advantages of

some other opportunities and time with my family," Cook told the Deseret News.

Since assuming that role, which includes being in charge of the Utah State Prison, Cook has strived to improve conditions for all people who are there, employees and inmates alike.

"The thing I'm most proud of is putting people first," he said. "And when I speak of people being No. 1, I also mean the inmates and offenders that we serve."

Over the past five years, Cook has pushed for employee raises, increased resources for staffers and more opportunities for career advancement. For inmates, he has helped give them more opportunities for employment, as well as make improvement to mental health care and restricted housing.

Cook's retirement prompted a statement from the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah, which praised his work with the ACLU over the past five years.

"He was always responsive to our concerns about the health, safety and housing of inmates, as well as favoring increased transparency of prison policies and conditions," ACLU Executive Director Brittney Nystrom said.

"The organization is in a great place. We have a great leadership team. We've made tremendous progress for the employees. And it's just a good time for me to take my next steps forward in life and in my career," Cook said.

That leadership team will also be the one that helps carry the department into its next era, which will include the opening of a new prison.

"They're very ready for it," Cook said. "That project is in a great place and will move forward without me there. Hopefully they'll save a seat for me at the ribbon-cutting ceremony."

As for what's next for Cook, he said he has nothing planned. But after getting "a little time to rest," he said he'll look for new opportunities, whether it's in government, corrections or the private sector.

"I'm excited for the future, but also saddened to be leaving an organization and its people who are of the highest caliber and whom I genuinely love."