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APRIL 4, 2019 978-774-3821 wraynard@essexsheriffma.org

ESSEX COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT BUILDS SOLID FOUNDATION WITH NEW HARDSCAPING PROGRAM

The Essex County Sheriff’s Department held a graduation ceremony this afternoon for the first class of inmates that participated in its innovative Hardscaping Program at the Essex County Pre-Release & Re-Entry Center in Lawrence MA. The first-of-its-kind program requires completion of an eight-week course that includes experiential learning through field work and academic classwork resulting in the attainment of an industry-recognized credential that was created by New England Concrete Manufacturers Association (NECMA).

“Today’s ceremony marks a day of achievement for the eleven graduates,” said Sheriff Kevin Coppinger. “Our program has provided them with a unique skill set making them marketable in an industry sector with a demand for a skilled workforce.” “By creating opportunities for well-paying job for our graduates, we hope to break the cycle of recidivism, making families and communities more secure and safer,” Sheriff Coppinger concluded.

The Hardscape Program was funded through a Perkins Vocational & Technical Education Grant for incarcerated individuals. The Sheriff’s Department partnered with Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical High School, NECMA and other industry professionals that furnished materials, tools, supplies to support the program that will consist of three additional sessions in its first year.

 “The Hardscape Program is designed to create career pathways in the tight labor market in the Construction Industry across the North Shore, the Merrimack Valley and the Commonwealth,” Larry Nicolai, Senior Vice President of Ideal Concrete Block, Inc. and President of NECMA commented. “Our members applaud Sheriff Coppinger and his Department for establishing the Hardscape Program, and we’ve whole heartedly supported the effort with in-kind support of materials, tools and supplies, as well as guest presenters during the course,” he said.

“Our Department has worked very hard to create a process of transitioning inmates through our programs in a systematic way to help with a successful transition back into surrounding communities with labor market skills,” said Sheriff Kevin Coppinger.

To highlight the work that has been done within the program, the participants designed and built the patio that they received their certifications on at today’s ceremony.