



NEWS RELEASE

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Quitman and Bolivar County Community Work Centers Receive American Correctional Association Accreditation Recommendation

Jackson – Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Christopher Epps today congratulated staff of the Quitman County Community Work Center (CWC) and the Bolivar County Community Work Center for their tenacious work and dedication to continually demonstrate their ability to meet nationally accepted correctional standards. Following a two-day audit at the CWCs by American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors, each facility received a recommended score of 100% on the mandatory standards and a recommended score of 100% on the non-mandatory standards.

MDOC Commissioner Chris Epps said, “The ACA accreditation demonstrates the overall commitment of our staff at these CWCs. This well-deserved ACA accreditation is a testament to the integrity that drives MDOC to produce outstanding results.” Epps added, “I commend MDOC Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Lora Cole, Community Corrections Director Lee McTeer, Branch Director Sonny Edwards, Community Corrections ACA Accreditation Manager Bobby Welch, Quitman CWC Commander Allen Langdon, Bolivar CWC Commander Levon Jackson and the entire MDOC staff for their commitment to safety, collaboration and professionalism.”

The CWCs demonstrated compliance with 34 mandatory standards and 217 non-mandatory standards. To be awarded accreditation, the facilities must comply with 100% of the 34 mandatory standards and at least 90% of the 217 non-mandatory standards identified by ACA. The ACA auditing team was comprised of two veteran correctional professionals, Mr. Dan Reynolds, Administrator of Community Corrections Work Centers for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and Ms. Marian Langdon, a retired Deputy Superintendent from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

In August 2008, the MDOC was presented its highest honor for commitment to excellence – the ACA Eagle Award, for its work to have all programs within its jurisdiction accredited. Mississippi’s prison system is just the fourteenth nationwide that can claim such an accomplishment.

“A sense of team-work, pride, and mutual respect between co-workers is evident at these facilities,” said MDOC Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Lora Cole. “Staff is trusted to contribute in decision making, goal setting, and problem solving at the Mississippi Department of Corrections and here is proof that it works.”

The advantages and benefits of accreditation are numerous and include: the assessment of a facility’s strengths and weaknesses; the identification of obtainable goals; the implementation of state of the art policies and procedures; the establishment of specific guidelines for daily operations; an aid in the defense of frivolous lawsuits; an increase in community support; and a higher level of staff professionalism and morale. Individual accreditation awards last for 3 years; however, the process is designed to be continuous. Accreditation is a system to verify that correctional programs comply with national standards developed by the American Correctional Association. The ACA Standards Committee continually revises the standards based on changing practices, current case law and correctional agency experiences. Approved standards reflect the view of correctional practitioners, architects, medical and legal experts.

