



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



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Governor Barbour Proclaims May 3th – 9th as Correctional Officers Week in Mississippi

Jackson - Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Christopher B. Epps today expressed his gratitude to Governor Haley Barbour for designating May 3 – 9 as Correctional Officers Week. During the week, MDOC will join with other correctional agencies nationally to honor workers who were killed in the line of duty and also to salute correctional employees who daily place their lives on the line to make society a safer place for all.

Governor Barbour officially proclaimed May 3–9, 2009, as Correctional Officers Week in Mississippi. The proclamation reads in part, “WHEREAS, the employees of the MDOC are an integral part of the criminal justice framework and coordinate with other state and local law enforcement professionals, constantly striving to provide a correctional system which exceeds all recognized standards.” Governor Barbour also recognizes that no group of Mississippi’s law enforcement has a less publicly visible role than the brave women and men who work in our correctional facilities and probation and parole offices.

“Corrections employees are essential to the criminal justice process and we should take the time to recognize our corrections employees whose jobs are extremely serious and dangerous,” said Governor Barbour. “They are essential to the success of our judicial system. I encourage the citizens of our state to join me in recognizing the outstanding efforts of correctional officers to ensure protection for the public, and security for staff and inmates.”

Commissioner Christopher Epps reaffirmed the Governor’s commendation of Mississippi’s correctional officers. “During this week, we honor those who have gone above the call of duty. This week is especially important to us because it allows us to pay tribute to those whose jobs are about protecting society,” said Epps. “Too often the public assumes that when a criminal is caught and sentenced they are no longer a threat to our community or to our safety. The reality is that the men and women of corrections are confronted each day by the most dangerous individuals among us. No group of Americans has a more difficult or less publicly visible job than the brave men and women who work in our correctional facilities. It is through the efforts of these exceptional professionals that the agency is able to carry out its mission to provide custody, care, and control for over 22,400 incarcerated offenders and nearly 31,000 probationers and parolees in Mississippi.”

Commissioner Epps continued by saying, “The MDOC staff is respected throughout the country. This agency has achieved the American Correctional Association’s highest honor - the ACA Eagle Award - for its work to have all programs accredited. We are just the fourteenth correctional agency nationwide that can claim this accomplishment, and I am thankful to the staff for maintaining such an achievement.”

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Corrections, like the criminal element itself, has become sophisticated. Mississippi's correctional officers and probation/parole officers excel in the management of the offender population, one which continues to grow exponentially. Today's correctional officer must be able to look at situations from an inmate's perspective. He must be in tune to the changing situation of aging inmates, know how to deal with offenders who may be suicidal, be able to recognize gang signs and colors, and be sensitive to issues involving supervision of offenders of the opposite sex.

As part of the observance of Correctional Officers Week, Commissioner Epps will be hosting a celebratory Employee of the Year Awards Luncheon for MDOC staff with Mississippi Senate Corrections Committee Chairman Willie Simmons as the featured speaker. The luncheon will be held at the Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson at 11:00a.m.on Thursday, May 7th. Staff representing each of three state prisons, the MDOC Central Office and Community Corrections will take part in this ceremony where one MDOC employee will be recognized as the 2008 employee of the year.

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