



NEWS RELEASE

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George County Community Work Center and Pascagoula Restitution Center Receive American Correctional Association (ACA) Recommendation

Jackson – Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Christopher Epps today expressed his appreciation to the staff of the George County Community Work Center (CWC) and the Pascagoula Restitution Center for their hard work and dedication in successfully demonstrating their continued ability to meet nationally accepted correctional standards. Following a 2-day audit at the George County CWC in Lucedale by American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors, the CWC received a recommended score of 100% on the mandatory standards and a recommended score of 100% on the non-mandatory standards. In addition, the Pascagoula Restitution Center in Pascagoula received a recommended score of 100% on the mandatory standards and a recommended score of 100% on the non-mandatory standards. Both facilities initially received ACA accreditation in 2006.

“I congratulate both Commander Angela Wiley of the George County CWC and Commander Judy Clawson of the Pascagoula Restitution Center, for a job well done,” said MDOC Commissioner Christopher Epps. “Once again, the MDOC Community Corrections staff has inspired me, but not surprised me.” Commissioner Epps also thanked the leadership in the Community Corrections Division by acknowledging Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Lora Cole, Region III Community Corrections Director Jerry Williams, ACA Accreditation Manager Bobby Welch and Branch Director Sonny Edwards for their expertise and guidance in the ACA accreditation process. “We all know it takes a team spirit to maintain this elite status in the field of corrections, and I want to personally thank each of you for the leadership you have shown through this rigorous process.”

The ACA auditing team spent four days reviewing all MDOC policies and procedures; touring the work center and restitution center; and interviewed staff and inmates housed at both facilities. To be awarded accreditation, the CWC had to comply with 100% of the 34 mandatory standards identified by ACA and comply with at least 90% of the 185 non-mandatory standards. The restitution center had to comply with 100% of the 34 mandatory standards identified by ACA and comply with at least 90% of the 191 non-mandatory standards. The ACA Auditing team was comprised of two veteran correctional professionals. Mr. Reginald Hines from Oklahoma Department of Corrections and Ms. Marion Langdon from Pennsylvania.

George County CWC and the Pascagoula Restitution Center are both currently in candidate status. The ACA auditing team will now report its findings to the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections (CAC), which will hold an accreditation panel hearing. At the CAC panel hearing it will be decided if these two facilities are awarded accreditation.

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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.

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.

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