



PRESS RELEASE

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Pike County Community Work Center Receives American Correctional Association (ACA) Reaccreditation Recommendation

Jackson—Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps today expressed his gratitude to the staff of the Pike County Community Work Center (CWC) in Magnolia, Miss., for their hard work and dedication in successfully demonstrating their ability to once again meet nationally accepted correctional standards. American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors spent two days at the Pike Co. CWC auditing every aspect of the facility. As a result of this week’s audit, the ACA auditors found the Pike County CWC to be 100% in compliance for both the mandatory and non-mandatory standards.

“I commend Deputy Commissioner Lora Cole, ACA Accreditation Manager Bobby Welch, Branch Director Sonny Edwards, Region 3 Director Jerry Williams, Commander Otis Bailey of the Pike County CWC and our staff for embracing this challenge and receiving a recommendation for ACA reaccreditation,” said Commissioner Epps. “Initial ACA accreditation is extremely difficult, but maintaining the accreditation is even more challenging. ACA accreditation is the gold standard for management of facilities and demonstrates to the community that Pike County CWC is a safe and well-run facility.”

The ACA auditing team arrived at Pike County CWC on Monday, November 9, and spent two days reviewing all MDOC policies and procedures, touring the work center, and interviewing staff and inmates housed at the work center. To be awarded accreditation, community work centers must comply with 100% of the 30 mandatory standards identified by ACA and comply with at least 90% of the 214 non-mandatory standards identified by ACA.

The ACA auditing team was comprised of two veteran correctional professionals: Steve King, ACA Chairperson from the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services in Lincoln, Nebraska and Sheryl Zenzen, Deputy Superintendent of Programs from Five Points Correctional Facility in Romulus, New York.

“I’m constantly impressed by the work of MDOC staff who balance the delivery of complex services to offenders with maintaining the security of a facility,” said Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Lora Cole.

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.

