



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Governor Barbour Proclaims May 2 – 8, 2010 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 officially proclaiming May 2–8, 2010, 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.”

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.

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. It is through the efforts of these exceptional professionals that the agency is able to carry out its mission to provide security, custody, control and care for more than 21,280 incarcerated offenders and over 33,000 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 working to have everything in the agency ACA accredited including 19 prisons, 20 community work centers/restitution centers, all field services and correctional programs. Only fifteen correctional agencies nationwide can claim this accomplishment, and I am thankful to the staff for maintaining such an achievement.”

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, all while maintaining safety and security for inmates, other staff and himself.

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 Lt. Governor Phil Bryant as the featured speaker. The luncheon will be held at the Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. 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 2009 employee of the year.

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