



The

RESOURCE

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MDOC MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance public safety
by providing secure facilities
and effective post-release supervision
for offenders and ensuring
a safe and professional
work environment for staff
while bringing accountability,
innovation, and fiscal responsibility
to the citizens of Mississippi.



Message from the Commissioner

Expect another productive, but unconventional, year at the Mississippi Department of Corrections. While a lot of changes already have been made, there's more to come. We are in dire financial times, and as such, difficult decisions are ahead.

Challenges facing the department the third year of my administration will undoubtedly include the following: How technical violation centers may be improved, and should they be moved to the former Walnut Grove prison? If the inmate population continues to decrease, will that mean additional facility closings or changes in the inmate housing program? Can MDOC continue to perform our mission and stay within our shrinking budget?

We have reduced spending by about \$23 million by shaking up the status quo over the last two years. We eliminated reimbursements to counties for housing inmates in joint state-county work programs, reduced the state inmate population at regional facilities and rebid food and medical contracts. In the last six months, we renegotiated contracts for a lower per diem per inmate in regional facilities, closed Walnut Grove Correctional Facility, and subsequently refinanced debt associated with it and the other three remaining private prisons.

Also, since I last addressed you here, correctional officers and probation and parole agents have received much needed raises. Though the pay still isn't commensurate with the work, I am happy to report it is better than what it was when I started two years ago.

We have changed the uniform of our correctional officers. Trainees in the November graduating class showed off the khaki pants and blue shirt upgrade.

We are revamping our alcohol and drug programs. Because we are housing enough inmates with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders to be a de facto mental hospital, providing therapeutic treatment makes perfect sense. We will be doing just that with the help of Dr. Alyssa Killebrew, who started in October as the clinical alcohol and drug director. We have added an AA program at Flowood Community Work Center. We moved the A&D program from Parchman to Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. Additionally, we are working with the Department of Mental Health in a three-year pilot program, funded by a federal grant to help non-violent offenders who have returned to Hinds County.

We are more focused on helping offenders become productive citizens when they re-enter their communities and are currently exploring ways to bring an innovative entrepreneurship program, operated by Defy Ventures, to our state. Also, we have signed an agreement with the Department of Medicaid to allow Medicaid-eligible inmates to resume receiving their benefits upon release. We already have a partnership with the Department of Public Safety to provide inmates with identification upon release.

Making two bold, controversial moves — closing Walnut Grove Correctional Facility in September and holding the 15 regional jails to contractual amounts — has allowed us to use taxpayer dollars more efficiently. Above all else, though, a manageable inmate population has been the biggest plus.

Whether we are able to do more for both our employees and the offender population largely depends on our budget. The MDOC budget was cut in September to the tune of \$5.3 million. As I prepare this message, I just learned we are going to be cut an additional \$4.7 million in FY 2017.

As my good friend retired Col. Danny R. McKnight, of both the book and movie "*Black Hawk Down*," has said, it's easy to lead on good days, but "it's the tough days when true leaders shine."

Together, I know we can make MDOC a place our employees can be proud of. Thank you for your continued dedication and support of our important mission.

-- Commissioner Marshall L. Fisher

MDOC Staff

The Mississippi Department of Corrections remembers five employees who died in the last six months. Three were young people killed in traf-

fic accidents during the summer 2016. The two others died at their perspective homes less than four months apart. One of the five was in training

to become a correctional officer; another had been with the agency for 26 years. Here are who they were.

Elizabeth M. Stubbs



Stubbs, 51, died Dec. 2. She was one of the two remaining original teachers for the Youthful Offender Unit (YOU) when it opened in December 2012 at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF). She was a special education instructor and librarian.

"Ms. Stubbs strongly believed that every incarcerated offender should be provided the opportunities to learn each subject just as student who is not incarcerated," said YOU Warden Leander Parker. "She had untiring patience and always demanded high expectations from her students. Ms. Stubbs was known for establishing uncompromising principles for her students to follow and she accepted nothing less than high expectation from them."

Parker said Stubbs was always willing to take on whatever tasks were requested of her for the YOU's benefit. For example, upon request, she created an in-house newspaper (The YOU Chronicles). "The monthly newspaper was very successful and was read by many of MDOC's employees," Parker said.

She also could be counted on to be at work, ready and willing to help coworkers with a smile.

"Her attendance was excellent," Parker said. "Ms. Stubbs had a very upbeat and pleasurable personality at work. You could hear her laughing often with her students and coworkers, but you rarely heard her making any complaints."

Stubbs was a native of Mendenhall. She obtained a degree in education from Mississippi College and taught at the Crystal Springs and Gary Road Elementary Schools before coming to work for MDOC in February 2013. She is survived by her mother, Mary Stubbs; her sister, Theresa Owens; and brothers Calvin and Lonnie Stubbs.

Charles Kent Crocker



Crocker, 53, died Aug. 30, at his home in Pearl. He had worked for MDOC since January 1990. He was assigned to Finance & Administration at Central Office at the time of his death. As a special projects officer, he handled various assignments, including helping to prepare the agency's strategic plan.

Crocker, who was known by his middle name, started out with MDOC in the Hinds County Program Planning office in January 1990. His career also took him to Policy, Planning Research & Evaluation, Records and Communications.

By the time he received his 25-year pin in 2015, he had received multiple Extra Efforts Awards. The Employee Recognition commendation is given for reasons including, significantly contributing to work force cohesiveness, pride, morale, enthusiasm and productivity, and willingness to enhance personal and professional education and growth.

"Kent was extremely intelli-

gent and had a great sense of humor. He was well known and respected throughout the agency for his historic knowledge of MDOC. He was instrumental in establishing the agencies first policy and procedure manual. He will be missed for his quick wit and dedication to MDOC and its mission," said Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty, whose department Crocker was assigned.

Computer savvy, Crocker was known for helping people to resolve computer issues. He also was an animal lover and had four cats and four dogs when he died. In his memory, MDOC staff donated \$150 to the Community Animal Rescue and Adoption shelter in Jackson.

He was preceded in death by his father, Charles F. Crocker, and his son, James Matthew Queen, and survived by his mother, Mary Ruth Crocker; sister, Cindy Crocker; and numerous friends and extended family.

Jasmine Peterson



Peterson, 23, was one of three people killed in a nine-vehicle crash on I-55 in Byram on Aug. 20.

She had worked for MDOC since August 2012 and was assigned to a women's unit at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility at the time of her death. She worked with the crew whose duties include beautification. She also helped K-9 on special details.

Hard working, caring, eager to assist and full of potential is how Peterson's supervisors describe her.

"Anything you asked her to

in Memoriam



do, she would do it," Deputy Warden Joann Shivers said. "She would work 24 hours, if you allowed her to. She never had an excuse for not being at work. She would be too early or leave late. She had a good heart. She is really going to be missed."

Like Shivers, Deputy Warden Sheila Parks said she, too, saw a lot of potential in Peterson.

"She wanted to move forward, up in the agency," Parks said. "She talked about that numerous times. I saw something special in her. She always would come in every evening before she got ready to leave to talk about her day. I am going to miss her a lot. She was genuinely a beautiful person on the inside."

LaShetta Wilder, MDOC's division director for the Statewide Reentry Program, met Peterson while working at CMCF.

"She would come work out with me," Wilder said. "I can say it was never a dull moment with her. I couldn't believe it when I received the news that it was she in the accident."

Wilder said Peterson kept in touch with her when Wilder's career took her to Central Office. She wanted to make sure Wilder didn't forget her and to look out for her when she readied to advance, Wilder said.

"Jasmine always knew how to make you laugh," Wilder said. "I will never forget her gigantic smile and those deep dimples. CMCF has really lost a great officer. I'm praying for her family."

Donald Ensley IV

Ensley, 26, of Jackson was killed in a two-vehicle accident on I-20 in Edwards on July 30.



Ensley, known as Bean, had worked only a few months as a records technician for MDOC, where he has several relatives currently working. He was hired in May. Rosetta Young, deputy director of Records, remembers him as being polite and professional.

Outside of work, Ensley was a musician and was known for involvement with church.

In a story about the fatal crash, Bobby Stapleton, pastor of Rehoboth International Ministries, told WLBT Channel 3 that Ensley was "a young man who loved God and he loved God to the fullest."

Russell W. Cox Jr.



Cox, 23, of Crowder was training to become a correctional officer at the time of his death.

He was killed in an accident on Mississippi 3 in Quitman County on July 4. He started training on June 1 with the 2016-5M Academy Training Class at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

Cox, affectionately known as Junebug, has multiple family members who work for MDOC, both in Institutions and Community Corrections.

He graduated South Panola High school in Batesville in 2011 and served in the U.S. Army from 2014 to 2016.

Cox talked with one of his aunts, Deputy Warden Brenda S. Cox, about joining MDOC. He joined MDOC envisioning "more than an opportunity for employment to support his son, but the foundation of a career, a new beginning and frontier where his prior experience in the military would be beneficial," Deputy Warden Cox said. "He saw there was room for growth and advancement."

Cox is described as energetic and friendly with a positive attitude.

Deputy Warden said, "He had a magnificent shine and a smile that would brighten anyone's day. We have suffered a great loss."

He is survived by his father, Russell Wayne Cox Sr. of Crowder; mother Latrina Cox and birth mother Sharon Bailey; son, Bryson Getter; brothers, Marcus M. Bailey and Sharod Adams, both of Memphis, and DeUndre Adams of Atlanta; sister, Lasheena Adams of Crowder; grandparents, Ruby Jean Bailey and Leslie Bailey of Memphis; great-grandmother, Mattie Joiner of Memphis; nephew, Cordell Walter Jr. of Crowder; a host of other relatives; and special friend La'Kiarra Geeter of Marks.

Special note:

Darlester Foster

Retired employee Darlester Foster, who spent more than 30 years working for MDOC, died Jan. 28, 2016. Foster had retired as an associate warden at MSP on May 31, 2014.

CID Director Sean Smith: Thankful for Every Breath

JACKSON – Do you take life for granted?

Many people can answer this question with a heartfelt no. Count MDOC Chief Investigator Sean K. Smith among them.

Smith lives each day knowing that Feb. 20, 2014 could have been his last time to do a myriad of things that come with living, including talking with his wife, two daughters and co-workers.

Shockingly, to him and others, Smith flirted with heart failure after suffering a heart attack that day.

He had planned to travel alone to a retirement luncheon at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, but divine intervention, Smith now says, placed a co-worker alongside him in the car when he started experiencing unusual discomfort in his chest.

“If I had been alone I know I would not have told anybody about any of the symptoms,” Smith said. “And, I probably would have driven on back home later on after the luncheon and who knows what could have happened.”

The two colleagues were seven miles south of Parchman when he began feeling the pulling sensation in the right side of his chest closer to the shoulder area.

“I had had training on signs and symptoms of a heart attack but that never crossed my mind,” said Smith, who also is married to a nurse. “As we got closer to Parchman, I was telling my co-worker that it just didn’t feel right, that something was amiss, that I think I needed to get checked out. He encouraged me as well.”

Once on prison grounds, they made a brief stop at the Corrections Investigation Division Office to let the supervising investigator know what was happening. They then headed to the prison hospital. In the emergency room, hospital personnel determined that Smith was having heart attack symptoms. The hospital staff admin-

istered medication and treatment to stabilize him.

Minutes later, he learned he needed to get to the nearest off-grounds hospital for further treatment. He was taken by ambulance to the Northwest Regional Mississippi Medical Center in Clarksdale, about 20 miles farther north.

Smith learned from a cardiologist that he needed to stay there overnight for observation. If his symptoms were to worsen, Smith was told he would need to be airlifted to a hospital in Memphis or Jackson. Test results confirmed that he was having a heart attack and had blockage in his right artery.

“At that point, the cardiologist told me he was going to have to open me up to insert a stent, or he was going to try to stabilize me to get me to the nearest hospital,” Smith said.

Sitting in a hospital room with his wife, Smith said, things seemed calm. But a nurse arrived and immediately began packing his things without explanation to move him to another room. His new room, the cardiac critical care unit, heightened his wariness.

Taking in all of the multiple monitors and other equipment, Smith said, “I asked the nurse, ‘Is there something wrong I don’t know?’ She asked me, ‘Did they not actually tell you what was going on?’ I said, ‘No.’”

The nurse responded, “Well, I want to be prepared in case you crash because you are having symptoms now that appear that you are about to go into heart failure.”

During the night, Smith’s condition almost took a turn for the worse, but thankfully increased medication helped. The stormy weather would have prevented an emergency airlift at that time.

“I say God was in control,” Smith said. “He allowed my symptoms to calm down to do what needed to be done and I was able to rest until the next morning when an ambulance transported me to the University of



Sean K. Smith

Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.”

He went straight from the ambulance to the emergency room to surgery for a stent implementation.

“God guided their hands in the right direction from the right side of my body,” said Smith, still marveling at the nature of the surgery.

Smith gained a greater appreciation of the medical care he received after learning the gravity of his situation.

“If it were not for the medication they had me heavily dosed on coming down the highway, I probably would not have made it,” he said.

Smith, who turned 47 and marked 20 years with MDOC in November, underwent a lifestyle change both mentally and physically while recuperating for 12 weeks. He has learned to take one day at a time and appreciate “what the good Lord has given me.”

“I don’t take anything for granted any more,” Smith said. “Every day is a new day and everything that happens in that day is very important. Every morning when I awake I thank the good Lord for watching over (me and my family) throughout the night. I always ask ‘please allow this day to be better than it was yesterday, for what I have done, please forgive me if it was not pleasing in your sight.’ ... I am thankful for every opportunity that I have to take one breath.”

Agents Commended for Role in Escapee’s Capture

JACKSON - When inmate Depriest Gray escaped the Clay County jail one early morning in late July, little did he know that a Mississippi Department of Corrections’ probation and parole agent was not going to give up until Gray was back in custody.

That agent and four of his colleagues were responsible for Clay’s capture before the dawn of another day.

Clay County Agents Johnny Hancock, Ryan Boykin, Patrick Culley, and Jeromiah Staten, and Oktibehha County Agent Joe Huffman received a letter of commendation from Commissioner Marshall Fisher for their “exceptional performance on July 23, 2016.”

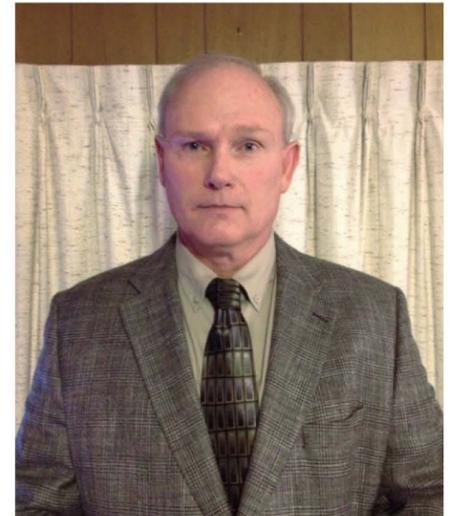
“As a result, Gray’s escape was short-lived and the safety of the public was not compromised.” Fisher said.

The agents looked for 30-year-old Gray on their day off. The escape was Gray’s second while he was in another agent’s custody.

Hancock, in particular, “doggedly conducted interviews, searches and followed leads, while simultaneously keeping (his) supervisor updated on the progress,” Fisher said, citing what he learned from Clay County Sheriff Eddie Scott and Hancock’s superior officers. “Your dedication, leadership and tireless work contributed greatly to Gray’s timely capture.”

Gray, who was captured without incident in Oktibehha County, is now back in prison. At the time of his escape, he was serving a total of 45 years for three sentences – two in Oktibehha County and one in Clay County, for burglary/larceny of an unoccupied dwelling and armed robbery. This past October, he was convicted of escape on Oct. 15, 2015, in Clay County and given five more years to serve.

Region 3 Community Corrections Associate Director Nathan Blevins commended the men for their actions. “They did a superb job from beginning



Joe Huffman

to the end,” he said. “I can’t be more proud of these agents.”

Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, who oversees Community Corrections, also applauded Blevins and his staff. “I am privileged to work with each of you,” she said.



Pictured left to right: Probation and Parole Agents Jeromiah Staten, Patrick Culley, Ryan Boykin, and Johnny Hancock. They received a letter of commendation from Commissioner Marshall Fisher for their work in the capture of a Clay County escapee in July.

Surviving An Assault: One MDOC Officer's Story

JACKSON – Deputy Warden Georgia Shelby knows firsthand what it's like to be assaulted by an inmate and then see that inmate prosecuted and sentenced.

Two years ago, she was punched in the face by an inmate at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF). The inmate was convicted of assaulting her and another officer in the same incident, but appealed. Recently, the Mississippi Court of Appeals upheld that conviction.

"He didn't get away with what he did," Shelby said, referring to the favorable ruling handed down in October in the case of Jemarcus Curry, AKA Jermarcus Curry v. State of Mississippi.

The court added 10 years to Curry's time in prison after a jury convicted him of two counts of simple assault on a law enforcement officer. He was already serving seven years for two drug-related crimes in Warren County.

Shelby, a captain and 19-year-officer when the assault occurred, said she was somewhat angry about having to go to court and testify about her actions that day.

"In my 19 years, I never had to go before anybody about any offender that I had allegedly assaulted or mistreated," she said. "I always followed policies and procedure... I know how to talk (to) offenders when they get aggressive. I know how to calm them down."

With the court sided with the officers, she said, "This sends a message to the rest of the offenders that any time you assault a staff member, you can go to trial for what you did." Shelby talks about the assault and working at MDOC in **a video*** (link listed in editor's note above picture).

These days, Shelby said, officers encounter at least one or two aggressive inmates each day at CMCF, where she still works.

She, however, was not expecting to fight possibly for her life when she started her shift on June 20, 2014.

Editor's note: See Deputy Warden Georgia Shelby's story and a related court ruling on the MDOC website at www.mdoc.ms.gov/Pages/Surviving-An-Assault-.aspx*



Deputy Warden Georgia Shelby was assaulted in 2014 by an inmate after she had told a group of inmates to face the wall at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. The Mississippi Court of Appeals upheld the inmate's assault conviction in October.

About 7:30 a.m. that day, she heard a lot of commotion in the hallway as she stopped by the control room to put up keys on her way to her office. Coming out, she saw about 40 to 50 inmates gathered and asked them to face the wall. All obeyed, except Curry and another inmate at the front of the line. She repeated her order. The second inmate half turned but Curry still ignored her.

Having taught other officers about how not to confront an inmate in a crowd, Shelby, a member of the Emergency Response Team, said she tapped Curry on the shoulder and told him to go over to the wall. She was unaware of his prison record, which includes multiple infractions for aggressive behavior toward staff.

"He started swearing at me, telling me 'You don't tell me what to do,' and 'Don't touch me (expletive).' As I turned around to tell him 'You need to calm...,' before I could say 'calm down', he hit me in my face and broke my glasses."

She then had to use all the defensive training she had learned and taught. Curry was taller and weighed more than she did. She defended herself. "He was steady swinging," she said. "Then he fell on the kitchen table. He kept swinging and hitting me, and I was punching. I couldn't let him up. If I had let him up he would have literally killed me or tried to really hurt me."

Shelby suffered a contusion to her forehead and bruising on her shins and thighs.

Lt. Leon Shields, another officer who had come to assist her in clearing the hallway, was struck in the eye.

A third officer in the control room that day said she saw another inmate hitting Shelby in the back as Shelby and Curry were fighting, but because Shelby neither witnessed nor felt the other inmate's punches, she said, that inmate was not prosecuted. Shelby was off work for about a month and never thought about quitting over the assault. "I wasn't going to let one particular inmate ruin my career," she said.

She has since been promoted to her current position where she works in administrative segregation with nearly 1,000 inmates who have behavioral issues. She marked 21 years with MDOC as of Sept. 5.

"I think we should be looked at as the highest standard of law enforcement because of what we have to deal with," Shelby said. "We are not respected as correctional officers."

Shelby knows the assault she survived could have been much worse, considering the number of inmates around her as she and Curry scuffled that day. "That guy fought until the end," Shelby said. "It was a situation that could have turned deadly."

MDOC Understaffed, Commissioner Says

Jimmie Gates

Published: Aug. 24, 2016

JACKSON - Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher appeared Tuesday before lawmakers looking at ways to save on department and agency spending.

From Fisher's presentation, the things the public need to know about MDOC:

- The number of inmates in MDOC custody: 19,478
- MDOC's inmate capacity: 23,981
- Inmate population: range in age from 15 to 91
- Approximately 17 percent of the inmate population have a mental illness
- MDOC is understaffed by about 400 corrections officers.

Fisher, who became corrections commissioner in December

2014, has closed some community work centers and reduced inmates at regional jails to the contractual number to deal with budget shortfalls.

When asked why he had such a shortage in correction officers, Fisher pointed to the need for better pay. Last budget year, lawmakers gave Fisher the authority to realign employees' positions and pay, but Fisher said the state Personnel Board had some concerns about the wording in the legislation. Lawmakers made changes to the legislation this year which provided Fisher with the authority to give raises to corrections officers and probation and parole officers.

Fisher said Tuesday that if inmate population continues to drop over the years, there will be a result-

ing drop in expenses. However, Fisher said there has been an unexpected increase of about 1,000 inmates since the same period last year. He said he didn't know the reason for the increase.

Fisher has been moving inmates out of private prisons in the state into the three main state corrections institutions, including the maximum security Mississippi State Prison at Parchman.

House Speaker Philip Gunn, R-Clinton, asked Fisher to provide him with a list of unusable MDOC buildings and what should be done with them. MDOC has deemed about 26 buildings unusable.

Story courtesy of The Clarion-Ledger



Commissioner Marshall Fisher appears before a budget working group on Aug. 23 at the first of several hearings at the state Capitol. The panel was examining agency spending. Seated next to Commissioner Fisher is Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall. To the left in the background is Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty.



Budget working groups like the one in which Commissioner Fisher appears before is examining the spending of the state's largest agencies to make recommendations. Listening to Commissioner Fisher (from left to right) are Senate President Pro Tempore Terry Burton, former House Appropriations Chairman Herb Frierson, who is now commissioner of revenue, Speaker Philip Gunn and Sen. Sean Tindell. **See more pictures of budget hearings on page 43.**

Polygraphers to Applicants: Tell me the Truth

JACKSON – If you apply to work at the Mississippi Department of Corrections, expect to meet with one of its ‘truth seekers.’

‘Truth seeker’ is what a co-worker jokingly called investigator Kevin May and the name has stuck with him. After all, May says when he and Milton Williams Sr. polygraph someone, they are seeking the truth.

The two full-time polygraph examiners with about 50 years of law enforcement experience between them make up one of MDOC’s newest units.

“If something is there in your background, the instrument will find it,” said Williams, who has been administering polygraphs for 11 years.

MDOC has been using the polygraph in pre-employment screening since October 2015. Since that time, 939 applicants have been polygraphed as of Dec. 15. The agency also uses it in criminal and administrative investigations.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher, who created the unit, said he understood concerns about possibly losing applicants because of the fear of taking a polygraph. “But I see it as a situation of pay me now or pay me later,” he said. “That is, it’s better to find out on the north end before you get to the south end whether an employee is going to work out or not. We can’t afford to hire the wrong people.”

Both Williams and May say polygraph testing has proven its worth for MDOC’s workforce.

“There is no doubt in my mind that we have weeded out people who would not have been a good hire,” Williams said.

He estimates of the tests he has given, 10 percent were “potential employees with the wrong intent,” including “some that gang members re-



Veteran law officers Kevin May (left) and Milton Williams Sr. (right) are MDOC’s first full-time polygraph examiners.

cruted to come in to be employed.”

Then there are some who fudged on their resume, May said. “I look at it as a check and balance system,” May said. “It’s just another tool to assist law enforcement.”

May said the aim is not to trick anyone. “If I am doing my job, I want you to pass that test. We need to know about you before we hire you and invest in you.”

“If you don’t pass the test, you are going to leave people to assume everything you said is a lie.”

Fear of having to take a polygraph can deter a person from trying to get hired, both May and Williams said.

“If I have a shady background and I see polygraph, I am going the

other way,” Williams said. “So the polygraph is like a roadblock. If you see a roadblock, you are going to go the other way.”

Also, Williams said, speaking from firsthand knowledge, “The name polygraph itself makes people nervous.” He was tested twice during his law enforcement career that began as a state trooper in 1993.

May also can speak from experience. He underwent a polygraph when he started as a lawman with the Hinds County Sheriff’s Department in 1994.

“All major law enforcement agencies I have ever been affiliated have had a polygraph department,” May said. “I don’t know how MDOC got by without having full-time poly-

“There is no doubt in my mind that we have weeded out people who would not have been a good hire,” - Milton Williams, Sr.



Polygrapher Kevin May illustrates how he administers the polygraph to potential employees.

graph examiners.”

Taking the test itself can be intimidating. “It is something about the polygraph, people will tell you things that they wouldn’t tell the regular investigator,” May said.

A pre-employment examination can take 90 minutes, including a pre-test interview. A blood pressure cuff is placed on the examinee’s upper arm to record cardiovascular activity. Other components, including electronic sensors and electrodes that monitor respiratory and sweat gland activity.

How effective the polygraph is depends on the examiner, Williams said. “A polygraph is only as good as the person conducting the polygraph,” he said. “The examiner must be a skilled interviewer.”

A superior officer thought Williams was just that when he asked Williams to become an examiner while Williams was working as an investigator for the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation, the criminal investigative division of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol. After rejecting the offer more than once, Williams said he agreed to attend training in Alabama in 2005.

Both he and May, who completed training in Florida within the last year, said basic polygraph training was one of the toughest programs they have had to complete. After two months of schooling, examiners must have on-the-job training for a year, and unlike other states, Mississippi requires passing a state test.



Pieces of the equipment used by the MDOC polygraphers.

Williams came to work for MDOC in January after retiring from the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, where he also was a liaison to MDOC. He has conducted 2,700 polygraphs for federal agencies in addition to state, county and city law enforcement departments. Of those he has tested, about 150 have been MDOC employees.

“I love doing polygraphs,” Williams said. “I love it. The best part is when you put the components on the person and they confess before you start it. I get a thrill out of that.”

May has been working for MDOC since 2012 and has done about 60 exams. He said, “It’s a fact-based test, and you want to know the truth.”

Intelligence Unit to Help MDOC One Step Ahead

JACKSON – Confiscated cell phones and social media can be gold mines for intelligence gathering in law enforcement.

Gleaning pieces of information from such sources and sharing them within and outside of the Mississippi Department of Corrections will be the sole job of its new Intelligence Unit.

“The whole point of the intel unit is to put together raw data that comes from multiple sources and put it into a usable intelligence piece that can be used for officer safety, inmate safety and safety throughout the United States,” said Corrections Investigation Division Director Sean K. Smith. “Again, the main goal is to gain information from the inmate population that we can present not just to the MDOC family to make it a little safer but also to our local, state, and federal partners in fighting terrorism, gang activity, and any other illegal activity.”

One analyst will be based at each of the three state prisons and two at Central Office for a total of five. The

unit is expected to be fully operational in 2017.

The specialized team is another brainchild of Commissioner Marshall Fisher, a career law officer who knows firsthand how beneficial intelligence gathering is.

“Having more intelligence analysts should help us better counter any gang or criminal activity and decrease an inmate’s ability to conduct a criminal enterprise in the free world,” Commissioner Fisher said. “We need to always be one step ahead.”

MDOC already has seen the benefits of intelligence gathering in some of CID’s major investigations involving contraband, inmate-on-inmate assault or inmate-on-staff assault. For example, in 2016, a CID investigator cracked an inmate-led smuggling ring that resulted in three inmates and four women, including a corrections officer and the relatives of inmates, being charged.

“All of the investigators that we have throughout the state are very trained and well versed in gathering in-



formation,” Smith said, “but with them having caseloads of investigations and doing other things, just to ensure that none of that very important information is lost or dropped through the cracks, this intel unit will take the information and put it together in a more timely manner and get it out.”

MDOC Plans to Use Former Leake County Prison

Walnut Grove closed in September

JACKSON – The Mississippi Department of Corrections is considering using the former Walnut Grove Correctional Facility site for other purposes, such as an alternative to incarceration or for re-entry.

With more mentally ill inmates than the state mental hospital and a large percentage of inmates with substance abuse problems, MDOC is refocusing its resources on rehabilitation.

There are 3,194 mentally ill inmates and about 15,000 reporting substance abuse, including drug and alcohol use.

“We do not intend for the Walnut Grove site to go unused,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. “Just as we have formed a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to assist us in supervising mentally ill inmates both inside and outside prison, we are strongly pursuing other ways to help inmates re-enter their

communities in a meaningful way and remain out of prison.”

The former prison could be used also as a technical violation center, which was created under the comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation in 2014 as an alternative to incarceration. MDOC currently operates three such centers in Rankin, Leflore, and Simpson counties.

The building has been vacant since mid-September when MDOC removed the last of 900 prisoners to the state-run prisons. The department closed the private prison based on budget constraints and the reduced prison population.

The agency announced the closure on June 10, well before the U.S. Department of Justice announced on Aug. 18 that it would be reducing the use of privately operated prisons.

“MDOC’s decision to close Walnut Grove is in no way connected to the U.S. Department of Justice’s

decision nor is the closure the result of any advocacy group’s ‘victory,’” Fisher said. “When the prison closed, significant improvements had been made under Management & Training Corporation (MTC), and juvenile offenders were no longer being housed there. We believe enough significant improvements had been made that the consent decree providing oversight was no longer needed.”

Youthful offenders were removed from Walnut Grove in December 2012 and are now housed at the nationally recognized Youthful Offender Unit, which has won praise from groups like the ACLU.

MTC began operating Walnut Grove in 2012. It continues to operate three other private prisons in Mississippi (Marshall County Correctional Facility, East Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Wilkinson County Correctional Facility).



MDOC Providing a New Approach to A&D and Mental Health Programs

PEARL - Inmates participating in the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Alcohol and Drug Treatment programs can now expect to get the same treatment they would get, if they paid for it in the free world.

Dr. Alyssa Killebrew, a licensed clinical psychologist hired in October, is in charge of MDOC bringing a real world, clinical approach to how it handles inmates with addiction and co-occurring disorders.

"Who needs it most? Our population," Dr. Killebrew said. "Now MDOC recognizes that this is a medical disease and we are going to treat this as a medical condition."

She predicts that 60 percent to 85 percent of MDOC's offender/patient population "either suffers with addiction or is the child or spouse of an addict."

MDOC statistics confirm her prediction. For example, based on 18,789 inmates on Dec. 9, 14,729 reported having used drugs or alcohol or both.

Consider these other statistics Dr. Killebrew shares:

- 1 in 10 people become addicts. Addiction is not just having a compulsion to drink or use drugs. Addiction can be gambling, shopping, food, exercise, sex, workaholic, etc. Often when an alcoholic or drug addict stops using, if he or she is not actively working a strong recovery program that promotes balance, that person will become addicted to a more socially acceptable addiction.

- 144 people a day die from addiction.
- 1 in 4 drug/alcohol addicts grew up

in a household where one parent or sibling struggled/struggles with addiction. Children of addicts take on one or all the following roles: The family Hero, The Lost Child, The Clown, or The Scapegoat.

- One month of treatment is rarely enough to keep a person in long-term recovery. It takes months and often years for a person who has a long-standing drug addiction to even start thinking clearly.

MDOC plans to screen all inmates entering the prison system for substance abuse and co-occurring mental health disorders.

The A&D curriculum is being reshaped, modeled after the treatment at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, and all staffers must be certified.

"This isn't a new program," Dr. Killebrew said. "It is just an expansion with more of a clinical approach. The whole focus has been to educate and to explain to them (offenders) where the resources are when they are discharged. Now they are going to be provided with a multimodal approach to alcohol and drug treatment."

"Research suggests this is the best treatment for addiction," said Dr. Killebrew. "This means that our patients will receive individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy and experiential therapies with activities such as art, mindfulness meditation, and music. We are updating our curriculum to a modern empirically validated and 12-step approach."

Progress comes through abstinence and living a balanced life, she said, and isn't always visible.

"A one shot remedy doesn't

work for everyone," she said. "What we do know is that if a person is an addict then that person can never drink, use or participate in the maladaptive behavior successfully again so finding or creating a life worth living is imperative."

Finding meaning in her life has helped ex-offender Adele Williamson Graham stay sober 10 ½ years now. She went to prison three times between 1990 and 2000 for burglary, uttering forgery, grand larceny, cocaine possession and shoplifting in Lauderdale County. Addiction was the reason for her crimes, she said.

Williamson, who returned to Central Mississippi Correctional Facility at the request of Dr. Killebrew to share her story in 2016, now operates a health and wellness center in Meridian. She was featured in the *Meridian Star* in May as the 2016 Reader's Choice Woman of the Year.

When asked what advice would she give MDOC officials seeking to improve treatment for offenders with co-occurring substance use issues, Williamson said;

"My suggestion would be that all MDOC officials and case workers understand the value of alcohol and drug treatment programs. A 12-step program can be the vehicle that can turn someone's life around completely. There is always HOPE that someone can change! My wish is that adequate treatment can be provided for all inmates in MDOC."

Williams's achievement represents the success Commissioner Fisher envisions for offenders completing the revised A&D program.

Killebrew applauds Commis-

sioner Fisher for seeing the need to effect change at MDOC.

"Commissioner Fisher has really inspired me with his strong support for the recovery community," Killebrew said. "He told me that he spent the first half of his life, as Richard Rohr (Falling Upward) calls it, incarcerating people for drug crimes, and now he wants to spend the second half of life providing treatment and rehabilitation to them using gold standard empirically validated multimodal modalities."

Commissioner Fisher, who will mark 40 years in law enforcement in 2017, said he has long realized that locking up those addicted to drugs and alcohol is not the answer. A former federal and state drug law enforcement officer, he now speaks at Drug Court graduations.

"I know a lot of people in recovery," Commissioner Fisher said. "They are some of the most at-peace people I know. We need to not only help these people obtain a skill so that they can support their families, other than working at a fast-food place, but also we need to show them there is always hope, that given the right treatment, they can live productive, sober lives."

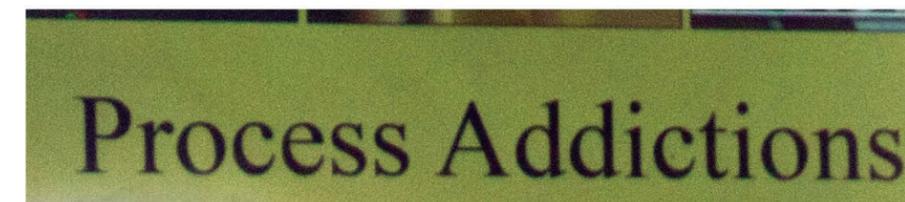
With Dr. Killebrew's help, MDOC can have even more ex-offenders like Williamson. "We at MDOC have a wonderful opportunity to help facilitate recovery in our population. I am going to do all that I can as long as I can to promote quality programs and treatment in our Mississippi state prisons," Dr. Killebrew said. "Leonard Cohen says it so well. 'There is a Crack in the World, That's How the Light Comes In.'"

Find out more about Dr. Killebrew on page 33.

Former Addict: 'There is always hope.' Nobody is hopeless.'



Adele Williamson, a repeat offender because of addiction, shares her story with MDOC employees at a workshop for staff working directly or indirectly with the Substance Use Disorders program.



PEARL - Look at Adele Williamson Graham today and you won't see the hopeless, desperate addict that was incarcerated at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility three times.

Williamson is now a successful productive member of society. The *Meridian Star* featured her in May as Woman of the Year 2016.

"Today my life is completely different from the old life I used to live," said Williamson, who is in her 10th year of sobriety. "I live and incorporate the 12 steps into my daily life. The steps have given me so many wonderful blessings that I never dreamed possible! I have a wonderful relationship with my family and children now. I am looking forward to being a first-time grandmother soon. I own my own home, am a business owner..."

Williamson, 56, shares her story of recovery to both the free and imprisoned, including at CMCF. She spoke at the Addiction 101 workshop Clinical Alcohol & Drug Director Alyssa Killebrew sponsored at CMCF on Nov. 14.

"My addiction took me to a lot of places that I wasn't proud of," she said, speaking to MDOC employees.

"My addiction led me to a life of crime."

Williamson told how she became addicted to alcohol at age 15 before she started using drugs. As a repeat offender, she lived a life contrary to her successful family, including a grandfather who was state senator, a father who was a judge and a brother who became a judge.

On her third trip to prison, she spent months in maximum security because of an escape charge that was not prosecuted. Once she was released to the general population, she worked on a maintenance crew. She tells how seeing the affect of water on a flower she found while weeding a flower bed in front of the administration building provided her "a moment of clarity."

"I thought 'Wow' that flower drank in that water and it has been restored. I related it to my life. Why can't I drink the water and be restored. That's what these (12) steps do. We are drinking in the water and we are learning new things and we can change."

She left this message with the listeners: "There is always hope. Nobody is hopeless. No one."

Departments of Corrections and Mental Health Partner to Help Reduce Recidivism

JACKSON – Mississippi has been awarded a \$647,461 federal grant aimed at reducing recidivism by addressing untreated co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders in offenders under community supervision.

The Departments of Corrections and Mental Health are partners in administering the Second Chance Act Reentry Program for Adults with Co-occurring Substance Use and Mental Disorders for 36 months, as of Oct. 1.

“Our state is in dire need of programs that can offer ex-offenders a full continuum of integrated care that will improve their functioning and outcomes when they return to their communities,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. “Therefore, when the Department of Mental Health approached me about supporting its efforts to get this grant, I didn’t hesitate.”

Fisher said the grant could not have come at a better time considering the number of incarcerated offenders with mental health and addiction disorders. There are 3,194 inmates receiving ongoing mental health treatment and about 15,000 have self-reported abusing alcohol and drugs. “We have become the de facto mental hospital for the state,” Commissioner Fisher said.

“We believe individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders represent a



group of people who have been under-identified and may have had difficulties accessing the services they need,” DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula said. “The Mississippi Second Chance Act Reentry Program will work to identify these needs and get people the services that can help them begin their recovery process.”

The grant allows the two departments to do several things, including improve identification of inmates with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders, provide training to staff, integrate individualized treatment plans and track participant outcomes.

The departments will use mental health assessments to determine individuals’ needs and collaborate to develop re-entry plans, including pre- and post-release treatment. Those treatment services will include cognitive-behavioral therapy, crisis intervention, and recovery support services such as housing, vocational, and educational services.

As the program begins, it will focus on non-violent offenders returning to Hinds County. Current plans are to serve 90 individuals during the three-year pilot program in order to develop a program model that can be replicated statewide with the receipt of additional federal grant funding. Unlike similar re-entry models, this program will require people under community supervision to participate in a minimum number of intensive outpatient therapeutic hours, based on their individual recidivism risk level.

“Through our collaboration with the Department of Corrections, we know there are a number of eligible individuals right here in Hinds County,” Mikula said. “We will be collaborating and using existing resources in the state mental health system to get these Mississippians the treatment and support services they need. I know that with all of us working together, we can create a better tomorrow for the people of our state.”

In October, there were **3,194 inmates** receiving ongoing mental health treatment in the prison system, compared to the **476 beds** available at the state hospital at Whitfeild.

“We have become the de facto mental hospital for the state,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said.

Hinds County Probation and Parole Office Hosts Job Resource Fair

JACKSON – More than 100 job hunters being supervised by the Mississippi Department of Corrections attended a job resource fair on Nov. 17, hosted by and held at the Hinds County Probation and Parole Office.

“Overall, the success of the Job Fair exceeded our expectations because of the large number of offenders and vendors who participated,” said Keith Brown, a supervisor with the Hinds office. “We are in the

planning stages of conducting a mental health fair in partnership with the VA Hospital and Region 9 Hinds Behavioral Health. We are also planning to conduct a job fair this spring.”

Slightly more than a dozen vendors participated. Those represented include Tougaloo College, UPS, Logan’s Road House, Advantage Staffing, WIN Job Center, Tyson Foods, Families First, Manpower, Brown Bottling Group, and Hinds Community College – MI BEST Program.

Recruiters and agencies had the chance to have a face-to-face interaction with the parolees and probationers who were potential employees.

“Part of our mission is to help reduce recidivism,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. “If we can position offenders so that they can find employment, then they are less likely to return to prison.”

Tougaloo College assisted MDOC with the fair.

Legal representation was present to answer questions about the expungement process.

The Hinds office at 421 W. Pascagoula St. supervises over 2,500 offenders.



Turning Street Hustle into Profits, Second Chances

Jerry Mitchell
Published: Nov. 14, 2016

What if those inside prison could take the hustle they learned on the streets and transform it into hustle for entrepreneurship?

That's the idea behind Defy Ventures, which trains current and former inmates, aiming to give them the tools they need to rebuild their lives and start businesses.

Officials from the nonprofit say they have created hundreds of job opportunities for those who graduate, most of them so far in New York City where they are headquartered.

"It would be nice for Mississippi to be a pioneer in this," said Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher. "We've got to try something different."

It's one of several initiatives he is eyeing to help reduce the revolving door of inmates through Mississippi's correctional system.

California and Nebraska are both using Defy Ventures to train inmates inside prisons. While the work in Nebraska is privately funded, the nonprofit receives \$214,320 to provide training for inmates inside three California prisons.

Mississippi correctional officials have no estimates yet on the cost if they decide to hire Defy Ventures.

In the nonprofit's "CEO of Your New Life" program, those enrolled learn "how to look somebody in eye, how to dress for an interview, how to eat, what side the fork should be on and how to make a meaningful apology," Fisher said.

These "entrepreneurs in training" also learn about business operations, market research and customer demands. "We are providing concrete tools and resources that most people don't get," said Rebecca Choi, chief of staff for Defy Ventures. "They are really building a vision for the future."

Through such training, those enrolled hear testimonies from those who have succeeded after leaving prison, she

said. "They get to dream again." Such dreams empower them to succeed on the outside, she said. "It helps them make choices that are freeing, rather than repeating behavior."

Before inmates leave prison, they begin to work with mentors and coaches, she said. "All of this contributes to transformation."

They develop business plans and make "Shark Tank"-like pitches to win funding for their new companies, which hope to be cash positive in several months.

While this approach doesn't eliminate all risks and temptations, this provides a tool "to those who really want a different future," Choi said.

So far, 1,600 inmates have been trained, and the recidivism rate is 3.2 percent over the past five years, she said.

Mississippi's reported recidivism rate is 31.9 percent. (The state's method of figuring recidivism differs greatly from the national rate, which includes all those rearrested.)

Fisher believes Mississippi can reduce the number of people returning to prison, he said. "If we move the recidivism rate down three to five points, that's some measure of success."

For inmates leaving prison, "we've got to give real training,"

Overcoming hurdles to reentry

He is hoping to emulate the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, where inmates can take part in a two-year reentry program, which awards certifications in heating and air conditioning systems, automotive repair, horticulture, culinary arts, plumbing and other areas.

On Nov. 30, Angola will become the first prison in the U.S. to offer web-based testing for Automotive Service Excellence certification, said John

Easley, director of certification for Angola's reentry program.

Inmates can also earn a GED or graduate from an accredited seminary program.

In Louisiana, one in two inmates wind up back in prison within five years of being released. With this program, it is less than one in 10.

"We're continuing to learn," Easley said. "You can never be satisfied with where you are. You have to be working to make everything better."

Another hurdle many inmates must clear is conquering addiction. Three-fourths of those behind bars in Mississippi suffer from a drug or alcohol addiction, or both.

For decades, the addiction program inside Mississippi prisons has centered on education, but the new program, headed by a licensed clinical psychologist, is a therapeutic one, modeled after the Betty Ford clinic.

The program hopes to treat 1,500 inmates a year.

Fisher said he believes beating addiction is a key to ensure those in prison don't return.

Many of those battling addiction also battle mental health woes. In fact, including addiction, mental health issues affect four of every five of the state's more than 19,000 inmates, Fisher said.

That's why corrections officials are working with the state Department of Mental Health, he said. "We've got to do a better job on the treatment side."

The Mississippi Second Chance Act Reentry Program is aimed at identifying inmates' mental health needs so they can get the treatment and support services they need, said Wendy Bailey, director of outreach, planning and development for the Department of Mental Health.

The three-year pilot program will serve about 90 nonviolent offenders returning to Hinds County, aiming to improve their mental health so they don't return



Graduates of Defy Ventures entrepreneurship training at California State Prison in Lancaster are pictured with the nonprofit's founder and CEO, Catherine Hoke. (Photo: Defy Ventures/Special to The Clarion-Ledger)

to prison. She said if they receive additional federal funding, the hope is to replicate the program statewide.

The city of Hattiesburg operates a mental health court for misdemeanor offenders, and U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael Parker uses one in federal court, too.

Hinds County has had a mental health court since 2012, but it has suffered from a lack of funding.

There are now hundreds of mental health courts nationally, including all the states that border Mississippi — Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee and Arkansas.

Oklahoma officials have estimated the cost for each inmate in mental health court is less than one fourth of the \$20,000 they pay annually to imprison each offender.

'The power of one'

The Mississippi Reentry Council has made 13 recommendations for improving the system, including mental health courts.

House Penitentiary Committee Chairman Bill Kinkade said members hope to meet soon to discuss these rec-

ommendations and hear testimony in public hearings.

This past summer, he visited the state's prisons.

He talked of former state Corrections Commissioner Chris Epps, who pleaded guilty to corruption charges and took in a reported \$1.4 million in bribes and kickbacks over eight years.

Kinkade said he is impressed with Fisher, who took Epps' place.

"Mississippi is on the right track, in spite of the worst corruption scandal in state history," he said.

He works as vice president for a Memphis company that employs about 14 former offenders, mostly felons.

"For every inmate paying taxes, that's one less on the dole," he said. "I believe in the power of one."

U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett, who chairs the Mississippi Reentry Council, said halfway houses, which cost a few thousand dollars less than prison, help provide a bridge for offenders who need "support, a place to live, a job and transportation."

After the recent closing of the 70-bed halfway house by Mississippi Prison Industries Corp. in south Jackson, only two halfway houses remain for the en-

tire state of Mississippi. Together, they supply less than 140 beds.

Larry Perry, president and CEO of one of those houses, New Way Mississippi in Jackson, said the Christian ministry keeps a long waiting list.

Many of the men who wind up at New Way are from economically depressed places in Mississippi, he said. "They can't go back there."

He would like to see the faith-based community and businesses work together with New Way and others, he said. "We need to have more community involvement."

Starrett said the public's mind-set toward offenders needs to change. "The public sees a convicted felon, and sometimes that's correct," he said, "but most of the time they are good people who made bad choices."

He pointed out that 98 percent of those in prison are going to be released back into communities.

"Who do you want to come and live in your neighborhood?" he asked. "Someone who has a good shot at a crime-free lifestyle? Or someone who is going to steal for his next meal?"

Story courtesy of *The Clarion Ledger*

Soldier On: A New Start for Inmate Veterans

PEARL – A new faith-based program designed to help veterans while they are in and out of prison is in full effect at a special unit at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

The Mississippi Statewide Incarcerated Veteran's (MSIV) program, also known as Soldier On, is a collaborative project between the Soldier On nonprofit organization, Voice of Calvary Ministries and the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Several community partners and outside organizations, such as the Department of Employment Security and Hinds Community College, also are involved. The program is funded by a \$2 million Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF) grant and a \$200,000 Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program/Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (HVRP/IVTP) grant, which covers all 82 counties in Mississippi.

"This is a workforce development program that changes the direction of the lives of people who may have gone down the wrong road. This turns them into tax payers rather than tax burdens," said Commissioner Marshall Fisher.

Renovations to create a special housing unit for the veterans began in January of 2016. Eight correctional officers and one case manager were reassigned to the unit. After \$26,032 in renovations were finished in April, the first group of inmates were transported to the unit at CMCF on May 2 and classes began on May 9.

The program provides 20 hours of intensive instruction each week which include: meditation, life skills, marriage and family, budgeting, wills and estates, resume writing, and dealing with consequences. "Soldier on is a 'heart' program. We tell them, it's not what you did, it's what you do next that's going to matter. We reinforce that," said State Executive Director for Soldier On, B.R. Hawkins.

There are 11 full-time volunteers and three who are part-time. The



instructors are Soldier On and Voice of Calvary Ministries' staff members who provide the veterans services such as peer-to-peer support, mental health and substance abuse help, and Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT). Each staff member has years of experience in dealing with at-risk and displaced veterans, and the community partners have expertise in education and job training. The staff are all certified in MRT, and have years of experience dealing with at-risk and displaced veterans.

Once an offender is released on parole, probation or is completely released after serving his full sentence, from the Soldier On Program, the services provided include: Homeless veteran assistance, employment assistance, and transportation.

As of Dec. 30th, 48 inmate veterans have gone through the program, 26 are now housed there at CMCF. A total of 22 have been released back into society, and of those all have been housed and nine have found a job with the help of the program. "It's too soon to measure the long-term success or recidivism rate," said Hawkins.

The statewide program is patterned after Soldier On's successful Incarcerated Veterans Program, which began in October 2014 at the Albany County Correctional Facility in Albany, New York. Since its inception, the recidivism rate for those veterans served by Soldier On at Albany County Jail has dropped to about three percent.

"The Statewide Incarcerated Veteran's program addresses some of the most persistent problems among

incarcerated veterans - recidivism, homelessness, substance abuse, anger management, physical and mental health - and helps veterans to achieve self-respect and trust so they can successfully transition into the community," said Phil Reed, Voice of Calvary Ministries president and CEO.

Soldier On, headquartered in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is the largest provider of housing and services to homeless veterans east of the Mississippi, and supportive services for veteran families in the country. Voice of Calvary Ministries, located in west Jackson, Mississippi, is a faith-based community development organization with more than 40 years of experience in rebuilding lives and communities through the Gospel. "One of the Soldier On/Voice of Calvary Ministries' most ambitious and innovative undertakings is its Incarcerated Veterans Program," said Reed.

Reed said, "The incarcerated veterans program demonstrates the resolve Soldier On/Voice of Calvary Ministries has made in reaching at-risk veterans who have served our country and providing them with the assistance and support they deserve."

"Programs like this are going to save the state money because we'll have less people in prison and more rehabilitated people getting on the right track and improving their lives, their family and their community," said Fisher.

Fisher said his goal is to expand the program to include female offenders in the near future.

To all MDOC Military Personnel & Veterans

Thank You
For Your Service

Graduations

Mother and Son are Among Newest MDOC Graduates

Some not Ready to Leave and Some Ready to Start a Corrections Career



Sharon Canady



Adrian Canady

JACKSON – When the MTC Operated Walnut Grove Correctional Facility closed in September, Sharon and Adrian Canady were not ready to leave corrections.

So they took a job with the Mississippi Department of Corrections. The mother and son are now working at the same prison again but at different locations. He works nights at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl and she works days.

“At first, I did not like it,” Sharon Canady said of working at a prison. “But as the years passed, I love it.”

Adrian Canady said the job fits his personality, and the flexibility and opportunity for advancement are a plus. “I plan to make it a career,” he said. “I plan to become a sergeant, lieutenant or captain.”

The Canadys graduated Nov. 17 with the Class of 2016-8M. They are among the 288 correctional officer trainees MDOC added in 2016. The department held eight combined academies this year, with five occurring in

the last six months.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher doubled the academy time from four to eight weeks in 2015. Also, the department combined the separate academies at the three prisons into one. The last academy graduation of 2016 was Dec. 21 when 19 men and women took the oath of office.

Reflecting on the training he and his mother underwent, Adrian Canady said, “It was a good experience, but it was a challenge. It taught me that sometimes you have to go through things to get what you want.”

“Being away from home, living with people you don’t know for five weeks, getting to know them. When you get to know them, you fall in love with them. Of course, we had our ups and downs. That is normal in any situation.”

He and his mother motivated each other during the times each wanted to give up, he said. He credits his maternal grandmother with encouraging both he and his mother to

do what they had to do.

The Canadys are not the only new officers to come with experience.

Joyce Hunt, a 30-year retiree of the federal correction system who holds degrees in criminal justice and psychology, wasn’t ready to stop working when she retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a correctional officer after 30 years. Graduating in October, she was assigned to work at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI).

“I felt like I was not through working yet,” Hunt said. “I just enjoy working with offenders and people.”

There is also Christopher Swager, who held supervisory positions at Walnut Grove Correctional Facility, and Jeremy Magee, a former county correctional officer who supervised offenders at the Pike County Sheriff’s Department before going to work for Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola and then returning home.

Alex Crawford, class leader...

MDOC Chief Investigator Graduates FBI Academy

JACKSON – The head of investigations for the Mississippi Department of Corrections is among the latest graduates of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va.

Sean K. Smith was one of two law officers from Mississippi in the 265th Session of the National Academy. This invitation-only opportunity is offered to the top 1 percent of the law enforcement community.

The 265th Session consisted of men and women from 47 states, 24 international countries, three military organizations, four federal civilian organizations and the District of Columbia.

Smith completed 17 hours of college courses during the 10-week program. Internationally known for its academic excellence, the National Academy Program covered communications, stress management, advanced leadership, psychology, and other subjects in addition to the physical training associated with the program.

Smith, who graduated Sept. 16, said attending the FBI National Academy is one of his foremost pro-



Commissioner Marshall Fisher, Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall and others attended CID Director Sean K. Smith’s graduation. Pictured with Smith at the ceremony are (left to right) Commissioner Fisher, CID Investigator Samuel Tucker, COS Hall, Smith, CID Investigator John Hunt, and Deputy Commis-

professional experiences.

“The FBI National Academy is an incredible program that focuses on best practices in leadership for law enforcement,” Smith said. “I believe the networking opportunity and training will be invaluable in my leadership role at MDOC. I had the opportunity to focus on executive leadership for 10 weeks and bring this training back to MDOC.”

Smith has worked with MDOC for 20 years. He has led the Corrections Investigation Division since August 2012. He has a bachelor’s degree from Jackson State University.

“Congratulations to CID Di-

rector Smith for this most significant accomplishment,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. “MDOC is honored that the FBI provided this opportunity to our agency.”

The National Academy Program, operated by the FBI since 1935, has a rich history of networking senior law enforcement officials across the globe. Training for the program is provided by FBI Academy instructional staff, special agents, and other staff members, many of whom are recognized internationally in their fields of expertise. The students earn undergraduate and graduate credits from the University of Virginia.

Probation and Parole Staff Complete Unique Train the Trainer Session



Back row, left to right: Cecil Lott, Candace Applewhite, Dawn Bell, Clinton Simon, Melissa McNeese, Letisha Bell, Ben White and Alex Holsinger of the Crime and Justice Institute. Front row: Shelly McTeer, Barbara Gill, Marquita Gardner, Jewel Simmons and Tamala King.

JACKSON - Participants are now trainers for other Probation and Parole staff on the new Risk/Needs Assessment Tool after completing a Train the Trainer session by the Crime and Justice Institute.

The class was from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 and is the first of its kind for MDOC.

All P&P staff supervising offenders must know how to conduct the new assessment. Also, refresher classes must be conducted annually.

Graduations

Mother and Son Graduate *continued...*

[Continued on page 26]
[Continued from page 24]

... in Academy Class 2016-6M, which graduated Aug. 31, said he thinks corrections is a good field.

"I was a criminal justice major, so to get involved with the criminal justice system and be able to give back to my community is a great opportunity," said Crawford, a Terry resident and Jackson State University graduate. "I was always interested in corrections to see how to rehabilitate offenders back into society."

Crawford's temporary goal is to get on the ERT (Emergency Response Team) K-9 [unit].

"My long-term goal is to become the commissioner for the state of Mississippi," he said.

Many of the graduates in the 2016 classes came with military and law enforcement backgrounds. The latest graduation was no exception.

Patrick McClain, 30, one of the members of Class 2016-9M, said he spent eight years in the U.S. Marine Corp. and did two tours in Iraq and is currently in the Army National Guard. He also brings five years of



Cadets in Class 2016-8M are the first to wear MDOC officers' new uniform.

law enforcement experience. He is returning to law enforcement after having worked as a lineman for a power company.

"I hurt my shoulder," McClain said. "I was out for a year and wanted to get back in uniform and this was my first foot back in the door."

Also, he said, law enforcement is something in his blood. "I look forward to helping other people and making things right and making sure

the justice system is correct and doing everything I can to uphold it."

Jonathan Scott, 22, of Tchula is another member of Class 2016-9M, the last class to graduate in 2016. He said he did a stint in the Army before graduating in 2016 with a criminal justice degree from Mississippi Valley State University.

Scott said he is joining MDOC "trying to start my career off in the criminal justice field."



Above: On Aug. 4, MDOC Officer Latoya Judson (middle) sings the national anthem during the ceremony for the Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy.

Right: Officer Gabriel Jamal Garner (far right) stands next to Officer Latoya Judson (second to the right) during the graduation ceremony in Brandon.

MELOTA Graduates 5 MDOC Officers

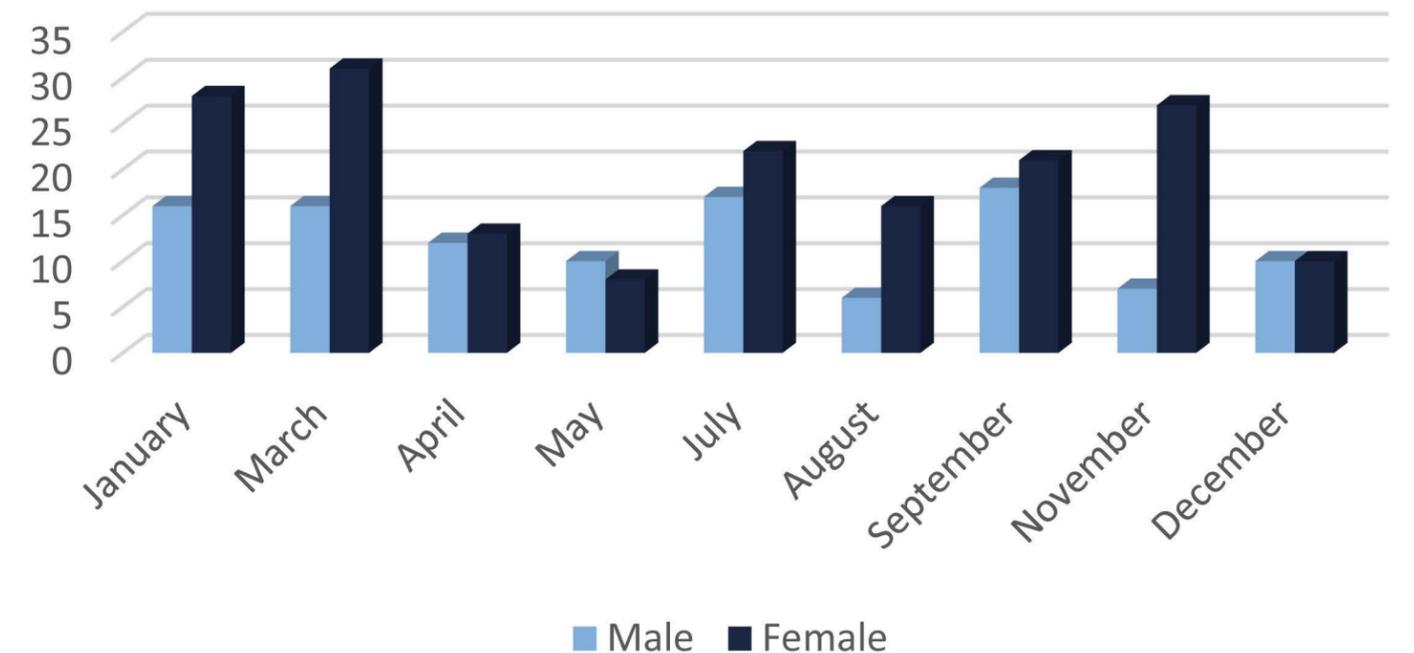


July - December 2016



Class 7M prepares to practice using rifles during a training session at Parchman. Each group of new recruits goes through eight weeks of training at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

Academy Officers: 288 Graduates January - December 2016



21 Female Inmates Earn Their GED at CMCF

"I don't think a lot of people realize how difficult it is to obtain a GED or a vocational certificate in an environment like this, trying to do something positive while surrounded by a lot of negative people and doing the right thing."

- CMCF Superintendent Ron King



Twenty-one female inmates graduated the Vocational School at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, earning either a GED or certificate in a trade on Sept. 22.

PEARL – Misty Mayberry has obtained in prison something that eluded her in the free world - a GED.

Mayberry, 29, is one of 21 female inmates who graduated Sept. 22 at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County. Fourteen inmates received their GED, four received a certificate of completion for family dynamics, two for cosmetology and one for upholstery.

Mayberry, sentenced to prison on July 16, 2015, for possession of precursor with intent to manufacture in Harrison County, said she pursued getting a GED to better her life.

"My big goal is to get out and go to college to work with animals," said Mayberry, who could be getting out within a year. She already has some college credit (3 hours) from Mississippi College through the Prison to College Pipeline program.

"It's hard work but it's doable and you'll have a big boost of confidence and self-esteem when you get it," she said.

Melanie Townsend, a compliance monitor and current Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) president, spoke to the graduates about embracing positive changes.

"It is said, good things come to people who wait. But better things come to those who put forth an effort and you have done just that," said Townsend, who has worked at MDOC over 26 years.

Townsend went on to tell the graduates to trust in God and to keep moving forward. "You are always going to have rain in your life but without it nothing will grow. You can and will inspire others if you just hold on to God's unchanging hand," she said.

CMCF Superintendent King congratulated the graduates.

"I don't think a lot of people realize how difficult it is to obtain a GED or a vocational certificate in an environment like this, trying to do something positive while surrounded by a lot of negative people and doing the



Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Superintendent Ron King offers words of encouragement to graduates at the Vocational School Graduation Ceremony at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on Sept. 22, 2016.

right thing," said King. "You've reached a milestone. You've come a long way, some of you a lot farther than others. But again, you have done a fantastic job."

The GED program is one of several MDOC offers to inmates.

Natasha Cavett, a CMCF Vocational School Instructor, said, "It's a good program and the girls all work hard. And they just feel proud of what they accomplished."

Townsend said, "There's an old civil rights song that goes something like this, 'I won't let nobody turn me around. I'm going to keep on marching, marching up to Zion.' I tell you don't let nobody or nothing turn you around, especially yourself. The skills that you have obtained through your perseverance and your dedication is like the shining light upon a hill. Know that it is something that no one can take away from you. The paper may be taken away but never can they take away your knowledge."

"It's hard work but it's doable and you'll have a big boost of confidence and self-esteem when you get it."

- Misty Mayberry, who obtained her GED while incarcerated at CMCF



Melanie Townsend, a compliance monitor and current Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections president, speaks to graduates at the ceremony.



Inmate Fayettea Dozier is congratulated by MDOC staff members.



Female students of the CMCF Vocational School listen to words of encouragement during the ceremony.

Graduations

Prison-to-College Pipeline Graduates 1st Women's Class at Rankin Prison



Fourteen graduates of the summer 2016 course were expected to apply to receive college credit hours through Mississippi College.

PEARL – Seventeen females of a 10-week course for three credit hours toward a college degree are the first graduates of the Prison-to-College Pipeline Program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Dr. Otis W. Pickett, an assistant professor of history at Mississippi College; Dr. Stephanie Rolph, assistant professor of history at Millsaps College; and Alexis Smith, a master's level graduate student at Mississippi College, taught the course.

"Dr. Rolph and I are committed to teaching here and to continue next summer," Pickett said. "We are excited to share in this work with other colleagues, for the women (inmates) whom we respect and treat with dignity and honor."

The course comes to CMCF after a successful beginning at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at

Parchman in 2014.

Pickett and Dr. Patrick Alexander, an assistant professor of English and African-American studies at the University of Mississippi, founded the Prison-to-College Pipeline program with a grant from The College of Liberal Arts at the University of Mississippi.

Participants helped design the course based on their interest, and they must have a high school diploma or GED. Pickett and Rolph taught the course at CMCF with support from the Mississippi Humanities Council and Mississippi College, which provided funding and free tuition for interested students.

Course work involves testing, writing, reading, and reflection, some of which was shared by the inmates during the CMCF graduation. Some comments brought students and their loved ones who were present to tears.

Fourteen graduates of the summer 2016 course were expected to apply to receive college credit hours through Mississippi College.

Two of the graduates are eligible for release within a year. Some are serving life sentences.

"We hope to someday have full-out college degree programs because we believe that all people deserve to have an education," Pickett shared.

"These women appreciate the content of what's being learned for the sake of the content itself, and how it connected with their experience," Rolph said. "I don't get that kind of response in my regular classroom," said Pickett.

Alexander and Pickett had their third MSP class graduation on Aug. 15 at Parchman. (See page 31 for picture.)

Vocational & GED Inmate Graduations include the following

MSP Prison-College Pipeline

Dates: Aug. 15

Graduates:
16

CMCF Prison-College Pipeline

Dates: Aug. 10

Graduates:
18

Yazoo Co. Regional GED

Date: Dec. 21

Guest Speaker:
Chiquita Minors-Hampton

Graduates:
5

CMCF GED/Vocational

Date: Sept. 22

Guest Speaker:
Melanie Townsend

Graduates:
21

Bolivar Co. Regional

Date: Dec. 20

Guest Speaker:
Marcelle Blissett

Graduates:
24
Certificates included: A&D, Anger Management, GED, Basic Construction



Dr. Otis W. Pickett of Mississippi College (left) and Dr. Patrick Alexander of the University of Mississippi (far right back row) have now completed their third Prison-to-Pipeline Program at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman. Standing with them are the 16 graduates of the last class.

Retirees & Appointments

FY 2016 Retirements

Each year, MDOC says farewell and congratulations to a new group of retirees. Most leave with 20-plus years. Retirees during the last six months of this Fiscal 2016 include:

Pamela W. Brooks	Oct.	29 yrs	MSP
Matilda Hardiman	Aug.	23 yrs	MSP
Carlester H. Hicks	Aug.	29 yrs	MSP
Denise A. Robinson	Oct.	26 yrs	MSP
Wanda K. Stanton	Oct.	24 yrs	MSP
Leandrew Tyler	Sept.	25 yrs	MSP



Farewell Emmitt Sparkman: Once a Constant Presence



One of MDOC's leaders quietly clocked out for the last time last summer. Emmitt Sparkman retired Aug. 31 after 40 years in corrections, 15 years and three months of which he spent with MDOC. He once worked as both deputy commissioner of Institutions and superintendent at Parchman simultaneously.

When he left the agency, he was director of education at MSP.

"Mention the name Emmitt Sparkman in a group of corrections professionals across the country and they will know him," said Commissioner Marshall Fisher.

Newcomers* and Some Familiar Faces

July - December 2016 Hirings, Reassignments & Promotions

Pat Owen
Director of Treatment and Programs

Shaniece Mabry*
Director of Education

Roger Davis
Food Service director

Cecil Lott
Acting CCAD Region II, Area II

Nathanael "Nate" Murphree
Interim director of Education

Andrew Mills
Warden of SMCI Areas I and III

Katherine Blount
Associate Warden, SMCI, Area II

Verlena Flagg
Deputy Warden, MSP, Area I

Catina Myers
Interim-records loading supervisor, Central Office, Records

Jewell Morris
Acting associate warden, MSP, Unit 29

Constantina Ducksworth
Correctional case manager

Jean Hooper
P/P Agent Supervisor

Susan Swindle
P/P Agent Supervisor

Meet Dr. Killebrew of the A&D Program

PEARL - In between sentences, she flashes a smile that can help calm an anxiety attack.

She speaks with a soft reassuring voice that can draw out the most kept secrets.

And, she listens like a doctor with a stethoscope pressed to the chest.

Meet Dr. Alyssa Killebrew, a licensed clinical psychologist who became director of the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Statewide Alcohol and Drug Program this past fall. Here is a glimpse of who she is:

Dr. Killebrew, a native Mississippian, grew up in Lexington, the county seat of a Delta county. Of course, she knew about Parchman, the famous Delta prison. However, her interest in the state's oldest and most well known prison is not only professional but also personal. She is the great niece of the plantation owner who came to the aid of black inmate Charlie Shepherd when Shepherd was wanted for the murder of Sgt. John D. Duvall, a leader at Parchman, on Dec. 27, 1928.

Shepherd, also spelled Sheppard, also kidnapped Duvall's teenage daughter but the girl escaped unharmed. He ran to the home of Laura Mae Keeler, who lived next door to Parchman Farms. Keeler tried to save him from a lynch mob.

"He (Shepherd) told my aunt that he couldn't take the beatings any longer," Dr. Killebrew said. "She loaded him in her Model T and tried to outrun the lynch mob. Governor Bilbo was involved. It was the largest known manhunt in the Mississippi Delta to date. Charlie died that day and Laura was either loved or hated by her fellows."

Dr. Killebrew said she is proud to know her aunt "stood up for someone and didn't let the politics of the time sway her belief in right and wrong. I know that Charlie did a terrible thing but two wrongs don't make a right."

How Dr. Killebrew views what

happened that day may or may not provide a clue as to why or how she eventually ended up in forensic psychology.

Those behind bars have had her attention since her senior year at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn., when her first client was a woman serving time for murder at the Tennessee Prison for Women.

"I spent one hour the first week with her," Dr. Killebrew recalled. "The more we worked together, the more I watched her demeanor and mood change. I watched the therapeutic skills that I was learning in school actually helping this woman change her attitude and behavior."

The woman, who overcame all odds, is free today, Dr. Killebrew said. "My work with her sparked my interest in forensic psychology but I knew I'd need more education and training."

So after obtaining a bachelor's degree that started with a minor in business administration at the University of Mississippi and ended with a major in psychology at Belmont, she earned a master's degree in education/community counseling at Delta State University in Cleveland.

She put her additional academic training to use as a counselor and an A&D prevention program manager for Life Help Region VI Mental Health Center. She also saw clients from the Denton House Chemical Dependency Center in Greenwood.

While gaining practical experience, she returned to school, this time at Jackson State University, for a doctorate degree, which she received after completing an internship at Valley Mental Health in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dr. Killebrew became acquainted with MDOC staff and offenders while working for Region VI Mental Health. She has gone on to work with youthful offenders at the Youthful Offender Unit, train the department's mental health staff and provide oversight for all patients on the mental health caseloads across the state. Before assuming her current posi-



Dr. Alyssa Killebrew

tion, she was a clinical mental health director and supervisor for Centurion, MDOC's current health care service provider.

Dr. Killebrew is accustomed to treating the old and young, criminal and noncriminal.

As a child of public servants she was likely to go into some type of field of service.

"My mother, a three-time cancer survivor, a writer, and the founder of The Children's Center, taught me the importance of education, service to your fellow man, and perseverance," she said.

"My father, a Renaissance man type, was the chairman of our small town family bank, a writer, an avid bow hunter, a Native American artifact collector, a Civil War re-enactor, and an artist. My parents couldn't have been more different which taught me to see things from non-polarized views."

Then there was her grandmother, who died shy of her 100th birthday. "She taught me how to love and communicate with people," Dr. Killebrew said.

Voted most versatile in high school, Dr. Killebrew is an author and a soprano soloist. Aside from yoga and mindfulness meditation, her interests outside of work also include oil painting and antique restoration.

She is married to Keath Killebrew, a farmer.

Training

Probation & Parole holds 2nd Training Academy at Camp Shelby

JACKSON - Twenty-three probation and parole agents graduated the 2nd Training Academy on Nov. 4.

The agents, many of whom did not know each other, bonded and formed lasting friendships as they worked hard and played hard for three weeks at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg.

They came from Pontotoc to Pascagoula for the "Academy Experience" at Camp Shelby.

The curriculum, specific to the P/P agent job, included a myriad of topics, including agency overview, mental health de-escalation, handgun retention, legal issues, courtroom testimony, office visits and home visits. Also, agents receiving computer training to assist them on using the different software MDOC uses.

"The academy has been a successful venture for both academics

and networking," said Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Christy Gutherz. "Thanks to all the MDOC staff who providing training for the academy students."

In 2017, two to three academy classes are planned to continue job specific training for Community Corrections staff.



Community Corrections Region 3 Director Ken Valentine congratulates an academy graduate as Ashley Harber of Training, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz and Community Corrections Region 2 Director Todd King await their turn.

Class 2016-8M Finds Contraband during Training on Shakedown

JACKSON - Trainees from Academy Class 2016-8M conducted a shakedown at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman in September and found an assortment of contraband.

The shakedown occurred at Unit 26A Building.

Shakedowns are scheduled to train the trainees to become better officers and leaders of integrity and to pay attention to the Corrections Code of Ethics. They also reinforce that a correctional officer trainee's job is to make sure facilities are secure and safe.

Class 2016-8M consists of trainees from the combined academy

of CMCF, MSP and SMCI.

Trainees Nya Wilbert and Rhoda Taylor found two Samsung cell phones.

Other items were:

- 2 Samsung cell phone batteries
- 1 charger
- 1 earphone
- 1 small bag of what appears to be marijuana
- 1 small bag of tobacco
- 3 lighters
- 1 shank

Pictured at right are some items found during the shakedown.



Commissioner, Staffers Hone Shooting Skills

JACKSON - Commissioner Fisher and other MDOC employees spent three days sharpening their shooting skills at the Mid-South Institute of Self-Defense Shooting Inc. in Lake Cormorant.

Back row, left to right: Cole Terrell, Perry Everett, Jim Hunt, Kevin Jackson, Kevin May and Frank Caswell.

Front row, left to right: Donald Rhodes, Sandy Townsend, Commissioner Marshall Fisher and Maggie Dixon



Chaplain Meeting: Helping Inmates with Different Faiths

PARCHMAN - During the third quarter IRA Training, Superintendent Earnest Lee encouraged inmates to keep doing what's right and to be an example for other offenders to follow.

Lee addressed the audience after Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman Director of Chaplaincy Service Willie Bays opened the program, followed by prayer and scripture from IRAs Luke Woodham and Jason Ros-

ier. Dr. James Burke, director of Faith Based Initiative, also gave words of encouragement. Lee told listeners the program has his support and he let the Chaplain Department to know of any concerns.

Chaplain Stanley Williams began the training by highlighting "How to Minister to Persons Whose Faith is Different from Your Own." He stressed the importance of expressing and

demonstrating love and servanthood.

After lunch, Chaplain Joel Hammons began the evening session focusing on "How to Live out Ones' Christianity in a Prison Environment." He challenged the offenders to live in a manner that others will be pleased to follow.

The session concluded with a circle of prayer for the program and the prison.

Disaster Readiness at CMCF

PEARL - EOC Commander Kattie Fry-Brown and Interim ACA Manager Dy' Shawne Evans assembled a group of key personnel for a Disaster Preparedness exercise at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on Sept. 8.

The Security, medical, food service, telecommunication, mainte-

nance, and fire/safety were all represented.

Brown and Evans contacted outside entities, such as MEMA, MLEOTA and Rankin County EOC, for guidance and a pledge to support CMCF in an emergency.



Central Office Trained on CPR

JACKSON - A Heart Saver First Aid and CPR class was held at Central Office on Aug. 30.

The class is designed to prepare people to provide first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) safely and effectively.

Instructors were Training Department Branch Director John Haynes and training staffer Willean Hathorn.

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Conferences

Women Sit in 5 Executive Positions at MDOC

JACKSON - Women sit in five of the 10 ranking cabinet positions at the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

That statistic and others were provided at 2016's meeting of The Mississippi Commission on the Status of Women at the Woolfolk Building in downtown Jackson. By state law, each state agency must report annually at the interagency council meeting.

Two top MDOC appointments in which women were named have come under Commissioner Marshall

Fisher's administration. They are Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall and Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Christy Gutherz.

"Commissioner Fisher understands the need for women in leadership positions," Hall told commission members on Oct. 13. "He recognizes that women in leadership make the wheels turn." Women also lead MDOC's medical and communications departments.

Unlike most corrections agen-

cy nationwide, MDOC is majority female. Females make up 62.5 percent of the workforce, an increase of 1 percent from last year's reporting. Of the 2,258 employees, 1,412 are women and 846 are men.

Information presented to the commission is filed in an annual report submitted to the Mississippi Legislature each session. Hall and Human Resources Director Sharon Pepper presented MDOC's report.



The Commission on the Status of Women at the Woolfolk Building hears from MDOC personnel.



Human Resources Director Sharon Pepper and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall present MDOC's report to the Women Commission.

MDOC Contributes to Coalition for Survivors of Homicides

Gwendolynn Santos,
Director of MS SAVIN

JACKSON - The Mississippi Department of Corrections continues to support the Mississippi Coalition for Survivors of Homicide Victims (MCSH) through the Office of the Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification Program (SAVIN) and Division of Victim Services (DVS).

On Oct. 13, Nakia McLaurin, then an advocate with DVS, and I attended our fourth meeting, where

planning for the upcoming retreat continued.

The annual weekend retreat is held for those impacted by the loss of loved ones to the tragedy of homicide. However, the event has been on pause for the past few years because of funding.

At this most recent meeting, like many of the previous ones, the focus was on brainstorming ways to

bring in monetary support and donations to properly plan the weekend retreat.

I am pleased to say the MDOC will be contributing in a unique fashion. Recycled contraband cellphones will be used to provide a fraction of the much needed support the coalition will seek for...

[Continued on page 45]

Conferences

MAPC Annual Conference

BILOXI - The Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) wrapped up its fall conference on the Mississippi Gulf Coast Sept. 14-16. Commissioner Marshall Fisher was the keynote speaker. He encouraged employees to take full advantage of learning opportunities provided and updated them on MDOC matters.

Conference goers received training on various topics including conflict management, criminal justice research, and reasonable suspicion.

The following awards were given.

Humanitarian Award: Linda Minor, Vocational Education Instructor (CMCF); Line Officer of the Year: LaVetti Johnson, Correctional Officer IV; Criminal Justice Professional of the year:

Deputy Warden Sheila Parks (CMCF); MAPC Henry C. Williams Memorial Scholarship Award: Vivian Frazer and Jimir Gibbs.

Awards for the shooting competition are as follows:

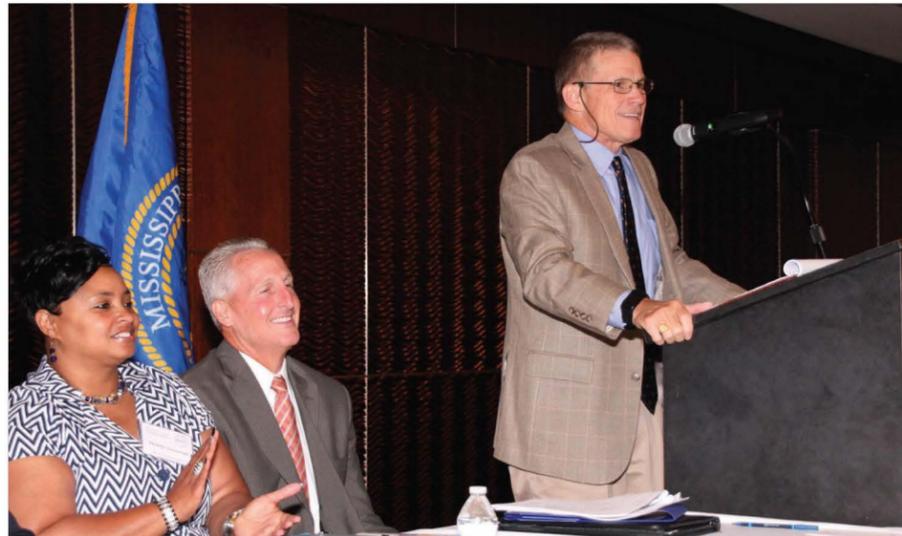
Female

First: Melissa McNeece
Second: Peggy Cadden
Third: Janise Wortham

Male

First: Kevin May (overall winner)
Second: John Simpson
Third: Jordan Tutor

The MAPC Walk/Run, which raises money for the Mississippi Burn Center, had several participants.



Parole & Parole Agents Gather for Annual Statewide Meeting

JACKSON - Probation and parole agents came from across the state for the Community Corrections Annual Statewide Probation/Parole meeting on Nov. 15 at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.

With Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Christy Guthertz presiding, Commissioner Marshall Fisher updated staff about the state of affairs, including the agency's finances; recent happenings, including the series of budget hearings at the state Capitol; infrastructure needs; program reassessment; hiring additional agents; and improving the hiring process.

"We don't anticipate closing any more CWC (community work centers)," Commissioner Fisher said. "I didn't want to close any of the five we closed last year, but staffing was an issue, as you all know."

Agents receiving a pay raise,

effective July 1, is another major development over the previous year. Also, at least 16 new vehicles will be arriving for Community Corrections in the current fiscal year.

Additionally, Commissioner Fisher told agents about the Recidivism Reduction Program (RRP), which has replaced RID, and to expect changes to the Technical Violation Centers because the current model is not working.

"I really do appreciate what you all do," he said. "I try, as much as possible, to be the cheerleader for you all at the Legislature, letting legislators know what you do."

Other speakers included Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall, who addressed off-duty employment; Director of Victims Services Dilworth Ricks, who talked about victim sensitivity; and Ann Radio of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.



WCCF Hosts MDOC State Chaplain Meeting

Wilkinson County Correctional Center

WOODVILLE - The Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCCF) recently hosted its first-ever state chaplains meeting. The meeting was coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Corrections Director of Religious Programs Chaplain Eugene Wigelsworth.

More than 30 chaplains and volunteers from various prisons throughout Mississippi attended the event.

The meeting provided training on the theme "The Heart of the Chaplain" and included discussions on the requirements of an effective chaplain.

In addition to religious matters, it focused on facility challenges, ministry strategies, needs, and adjustments within the particular institutions.

It also presented an opportunity for the chaplains to bring new

ideas and suggestions to the director for future ministry to correctional staff and offenders.

Wigelsworth spoke on the topic "True Confessions."

Chaplain Roscoe Barnes III, Ph.D., read Matthew 9:35-38 and discussed the need for compassion.

Other speakers included Major Terry Daniel, Education Supervisor Branton Lewis, Substance Abuse Counselor Angela Coleman, Case Manager Supervisor Tracey Arbuthnot, Case Manager Monica Carter, Volunteer Chaplain Rudy Rivera, Volunteer Chaplain Tony Beville, Volunteer Dorothy Singleton, Volunteer Liz McGraw, Volunteer D. Min, Contract Chaplain Claude Brown, and Chaplain Jesse Kelly.

Kairos State Chairman Gary Shelley shared a few thoughts about

Kairos ministry. WCCF Offender Willie Riley, who works as the chaplain's orderly, presented his poem, "The Prisoner's Guide," written specifically for the occasion.

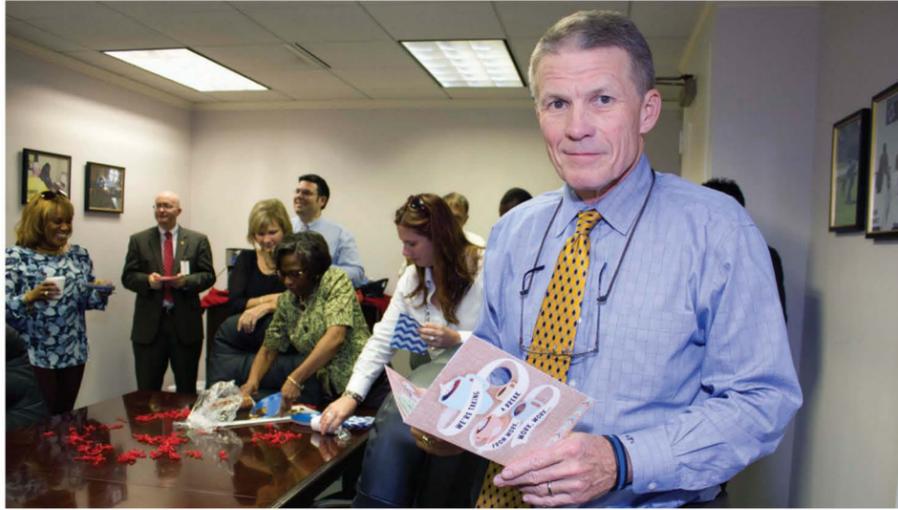
Inmate Religious Assistant (IRA) Glen Conley talked about his duties as WCCF's first IRA.

Chaplains came from Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, East Mississippi Correctional Facility, South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Jefferson/Franklin County Correctional Facility, and Issaquena County Regional Facility.

Deputy Warden of Programs Alan Chapman said, "I appreciate these chaplains for being a part of the meeting. I trust that we provided them with ideas and resources that they can use in their facilities. We hope to have them return in the future."

Highlights

Commissioner Lauded on Boss's Day



The Executive Staff took a break to thank Commissioner Fisher in observance of National Boss's Day on Oct. 21.

"You are an outstanding leader," said Special Assistant to the Attorney General Darrell Baughn.

"You make coming to work enjoyable," Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall told Commissioner Fisher before everyone dined on a cake a staffer had baked for him. "We thank you for your leadership and support. You not only make work fun but also you let us do our jobs."

He also received a humorous card with another gift inside.

Constituent Services Director Speaks at MSU



Some Mississippi State University seniors learned firsthand about career opportunities at the Mississippi Department of Corrections during a guest appearance from Constituent Services Director Kevin Jackson.

Jackson spoke to the Senior Seminar in Criminology class taught by Professor David May on Nov. 8, at the Starkville campus.

Aside from career opportunities, students questioned Jackson about his different roles at MDOC, including as former director of the Flowood Restitution Center and as a K-9 handler.

Jackson said he started with the agency not intending to stay but opportunity after opportunity became available, prompting him to make corrections a career. He told students that taking the initiative to exceed expectations positioned him to advance his career.

"I enjoy letting students know that there are so many opportunities at MDOC other than working as a correctional officer," Jackson said. "You can also be a case manager, program coordinator, K-9 handler, investigator, compliance monitor, community work center commander, etc."

More MDOC Appearances before Lawmakers Out of Session



Commissioner Marshall Fisher and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall (above) returned to the state Capitol several more times after the first meeting on Aug. 23 to respond to questions related to personnel, contracts, travel, and commodities/procurement. Rick McCarty, deputy commissioner of Finance & Administration, appeared with her at the Nov. 9 meeting (center) about equipment purchases.



Commissioner Fisher speaks to the Corrections Committee on Dec. 12

MDOC Attorneys Speak to Circuit Judges in Jackson



MDOC Attorney Anthony Schmidt presents an overview of new laws at the Mississippi Trial & Appellate Judges Fall Conference at the downtown Jackson Marriott in October.

Judges had several questions not only about the application of new sentencing laws but also about House Bill 585. They also wanted details about inmate vocational and educational programs and the RID replacement program. Judges said they would like for MDOC to attend the spring conference on the Coast.

Highlights

Vocational School Arts and Crafts Breakfast

On Dec. 8, the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility's vocational school hosted the annual Craft Committee Meeting in the Family Dynamics classroom.

Several people attended, including CMCF Superintendent Ron King, Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Christy Gutherz, and Education Director Pat Owen.



Kicking it for Christ

Bob Bakken
Published: Sept. 30, 2016

In the Bible, Psalms 144:1 urges the nation of Israel to "Praise the Lord, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle."

Garry Welch of Nesbit sees the increasing reports of violence across the country today; incidents of people being attacked, hurt and killed on the streets have become more commonplace.

Welch believes the battle and war against that evil is real and Christians and non-Christians alike need a means of protecting themselves.

He has taken the context of Psalms 144:1 to heart and offers what he terms a Christian-based self-defense program and ministry to give

people the tools to defend themselves when they face a threat to their peace and safety.

Welch is behind what is called Kingdom Krav Maga, a method based on tactics taught from the origin of Israel as a nation in 1948 for the Israeli Defense Forces' special units.

A probation officer with the Mississippi Department of Corrections, Welch teaches the method on a weekly basis at Cornerstone Church, 5998 Elmore Road in Southaven, where he also attends church.

A state-certified instructor, Welch also provides elite firearms training under a separate program.

The name Krav Maga has its Jewish origins from the account of Ja-



cob wrestling with an angel in the book of Genesis. Its translation is "constant combat."

While the purpose is defense, Welch points out the method...

[Continued on page 52]

EMCF Vocational Outreach Program for Inmates

Ray Rice
Deputy Warden of Programs

On Nov. 16 East Mississippi Correctional Facility held a very successful Vocational Outreach Program for Pre-Release Offenders. Over 45 pre-release offenders, with less than a year left on their sentence, heard from speakers from the Meridian Win Job Center and a Meridian Community College Recruiter. Mental Health Counselor Carolyn Powe organized the event, attended by several staff members. Nellie Satcher of Win Job Center, explained to the offenders the importance of seeking help while looking for a job and that the Win Center is always available. Rhonda Smith, MCC Recruiter, explained the availability of the local community college to enhance their education and vocational opportunities. The pre-release students were treated with cookies and punch following the program.



Pictured left to right: Ray Rice, Deputy Warden of Programs; Bonnie Sims, GED Instructor; Ms. Rhonda Smith, MCC; Nellie Satcher, WIN Center; Carolyn Powe, EMCF Mental Health Counselor; and Dr. Marshal Powe, EMCF Psychologist.

Kemper-Neshoba Regional Holds 1st GED Graduation

Catherine Walton
KNRCF Administrative Assistant

On Oct. 26 Kemper-Neshoba Regional Correctional Facility in DeKalb, hosted its first GED Graduation Ceremony in recognition of the students who received their high school equivalency through the KNRCF GED Program. A total of five offenders took the GED test and four passed.

Adult Educator Todd Pernell of EMCC has worked diligently in assisting the inmates in the GED Program and we appreciate his hard work and dedication to provide these offenders with the opportunity they need to better themselves. Over the years, KNRCF has had several offenders to pass the GED.

Warden Johnny Crockett decided to give the inmates a graduation to encourage more offenders to take

advantage of the educational opportunities offered at KNRCF and other facilities throughout the state.

During the graduation ceremony, state offenders Austin Morrison, Travis Bennett, and Daniel Woods received their HSE Certificates, with offender Christopher Davis receiving honorable mention. Davis was transferred to CMCF before the ceremony took place.

KNRCF Warden Johnny Crockett and EMCC Adult Educator, Todd Pernell presented the offenders with their certificates. The graduates were allowed to invite their family and friends to the ceremony in order to give real invitations. Warden Crockett stated, "Some of these guys parents never got a chance to see their son

march in a graduation procession, so I want the parents to know that we are in fact trying to help their sons better themselves for a more productive future." Warden Crockett also allowed the students currently in the GED class to attend the ceremony as an incentive and encouragement for them to do their best to graduate GED as well.

On behalf of KNRCF, we would like to thank the Community leaders, EMCC Faculty members, MDOC GED Test Administer, county officials, family, friends and all others for taking the time to come out and support our 2016 GED graduates and Program in the graduation ceremony. Your presence meant a lot to all of us here at KNRCF.

Highlights

Two MDOC Leaders Elected to ACA Positions

Two leaders at the Mississippi Department of Corrections have been elected to leadership positions with the American Correctional Association (ACA).

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Gloria Perry will represent Health Care on the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

Corrections Investigation Division Director Sean K. Smith (pictured right) will represent Correctional Administration on the Board of Governors.



Chief Medical Officer Dr. Gloria Perry



CID Director Sean K. Smith

MDOC Applauds Favorable Supreme Court's Decision

The Mississippi Department of Correction applauds the Mississippi Supreme Court's decision regarding inmate Michael Drankus.

In the decision issued Dec. 8, the court said Drankus is not entitled to a case plan under a provision of House Bill 585. Drankus was convicted of capital murder in Harrison County and given life in prison in 1987. The

comprehensive criminal justice reform package was passed in 2014. A case plan is used for parole.

"The department appealed the ruling of the Sunflower County Circuit Court because it believes Drankus's position is contrary to the best reading and intent of House Bill 585," Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. "Our position is that violent offenders, such as

Drankus, who were convicted prior to the passage of House Bill 585 are not entitled to a case plan and, therefore, are not eligible for automatic parole without a hearing. MDOC's Attorney Anthony Schmidt presented our position before the state Supreme Court on Sept. 20 during oral arguments. This ruling provides a resolution for other cases filed similar to Drankus's."

MSP and Angola Officials Learning From Each Other



Commissioner Marshall Fisher and Parchman Superintendent Earnest Lee in July hosted visitors from Louisiana corrections, including Angola Warden Darrel Vannoy and former Secretary Richard Stalder.

Stops included the vocational school, housing units, the cemetery, and the execution room (shown left with Stalder and Lee discussing the differences in how their perspective state carries out the death penalty).

SAVIN continued...

[Continued from page 37]

...the 2017 retreat.

Ms. McLaurin, a few committee members, and I coordinated the recycling efforts of the hundreds of contraband cellphones confiscated from prison facilities statewide in the recent months.

The retreat is a very special weekend unlike any other. Many will share their experience of being impacted by the loss of a loved one. Some may prefer to be present in the moment silently.

The retreat begins with a Friday night ice breaker activity. On Saturday, there are special sessions all day. Also included are group crafts and other fun-spirited activities.

Many survivors, their family, and friends are eager to attend each year, always sharing such positive feedback about the previous retreats. Others will be newly invited allowing for the birth of lasting friendships.

MS SAVIN and DVS have

worked with the coalition as committee members for several years.

The coalition not only provides advocacy and referral services, but also it educates survivors about the trauma associated with violent death. It also provides Victims' Rights information.

Being a part of this group is an honor. At one point, I thought I was listening to the stories of those who once lived, but I soon recognized that they still live in the hearts and memories of those we serve. This is one of the many reasons why the retreat is so important.

The MCSH consists of volunteers; service providers and survivors whose presence is vital to the coalition's mission.

For more information regarding the MCSH, contact Chairman Suzanne McGee smagee@gcwcfn.org or gsantos@mdoc.state.ms.us.



Then MDOC Victim Service Advocate Nakia McLaurin sort confiscated contraband cellphones. Proceeds from the recycled cell phones are being donated for the 2017 annual weekend retreat held by the Mississippi Coalition for Survivors of Homicide Victims.



Image of a Memory Quilt made by survivors and victim's families at the last coalition retreat.

Interns Visit with Victim Services and SAVIN



Two interns, Jessica Varner (pictured second from the right) and Donna Brown (pictured center), spent the day with the MDOC Division of Victim Services and SAVIN in October. Varner, said, "Thanks again for taking the time out of your busy schedule to teach us. I had a great time and learned a lot. I can tell that you are passionate about your job at MDOC. I wish you the best in everything that you do."

Highlights

Fundraisers and Awareness

MDOC Top Staff Part of Breast Cancer Walk



Deputy Commissioners Jerry Williams, Christy Gutherz and Rick McCarty (all wearing sunglasses) were among MDOC staffers supporting MDOC Executive Administration Assistant Belinda Scott, who is standing between Gutherz and McCarty.

Several members of the MDOC executive staff and others participated in the American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Awareness Walk on Oct. 22.

The staff also was raising funds to support MDOC Executive Administrative Assistant Belinda Scott (pictured second from the right, with a pink feather boa around her neck), who is a survivor.

In addition, for every "like" the Facebook post about MDOC at this event receives, \$1 will be added to the fundraiser for Scott.

The link to the MDOC Facebook page can be found on the back page of *The Resource*.

Awareness at CMCF



Employees at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility walked about three miles on Oct. 27 around the prison in honor of breast cancer survivors and loved ones who lost their battle with the disease.

Vocational Instructor Linda Minor, who organizes the yearly Breast Cancer Awareness event, said, "It's a great event, and it's important for us to keep ourselves in good health and promote good exercise."

The walk/run drew about 50 participants, including officers, staff and new cadets.

CMCF Staff also collected donations at the Front Gate on Oct. 17 and Oct. 18 for the American Cancer Society.



Hinds Probation and Parole Host Fish Fry/Pink Out Day

Hinds County Probation and Parole Office employees raised awareness about breast cancer in their own way.

They held a fish fry in October as part of the annual Pink Out Day. Also, everyone was encouraged to wear pink.

"In this office we have survivors who've been through breast cancer and parents and siblings of people who work here who have been affected," said Hinds Probation and Parole Program Coordinator Tia Hudson.

She was wearing a pink shirt designed by her sister, with a superwoman S on the front and the breast cancer ribbon above the words "Fight like a superhero" on the back.

Hudson's mom is a 23-year survivor, having been diagnosed in 1999. For that reason, the Hattiesburg native said, "I've always been involved in events like this."

Hudson initiated Friday's event at the Hinds location in downtown Jackson where 14 agents work.



Pictured from left to right on the front: Administrative Secretary Diann Thompson, Program Coordinator Kimbia Gillum, Case Manager Shaccara Medious, PPA Anthony Lane, and Program Coordinator Tia Hudson; back, PPA Marcus Dobson, PPA Nathan Meade, PPA Keith Brown, PPA Jarvis Conner, and PPA Charles Crook.

"We look forward to doing it," said Kimbia Gillum, another program coordinator for the office. "We did it last year."

Hinds Probation and Parole Agent Keith Brown used his personal time to add the fish fry this year.

According to Diann Thompson, administrative secretary for Hinds Probation and Parole, and others in

the office, the goal was to not only raise awareness for breast cancer but also to help bring everyone together and build the sense of community among everyone in the office.

Hudson said next year they plan to raise money and donate it to a survivor who is in need in the office.

MDOC Running for a Church Fundraiser



Richard Caston of the Recreational Department at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (pictured far left) and Constituent Services Director Kevin Jackson (pictured far right) were up and running on the morning of Sept. 17 with members of Broadmoor Baptist Church members to show their appreciation for the church's support. Caston and Jackson said they had a great time participating in the 5-K run with Jackson finishing in first place. All proceeds collected were to be donated to the Rec Department. "Broadmoor Church has been a tremendous outside support for many various activities within the Recreational Department," Caston said. "The race was a wonderful experience, and the generosity shown by this wonderful church is very much appreciated."

Highlights

Fundraisers and Awareness

River Oaks School Canned Food Drive

Agent Trainee Mimi Pippins of the Gulfport Field Office has been serving as a mentor to the students at River Oaks Elementary School this school year. She has given multiple motivational speeches to various classes offering them encouragement while simultaneously letting the students know the consequences of the decisions each of them make on a daily basis.

She recently organized a food drive at the school, with the prize being a Pizza Party secured via donations from Little Caesar's Pizza.

"We all should be very proud of not only this agent, but all employees who think of the well-being of others who are not as fortunate as most of us," said Probation and Parole Agent Supervisor Clinton Simon.

The school has chosen the food banks of two local churches to share the collected items.



MDOC Staff and Offenders Give Christmas Cheer

Some needy families and children had Christmas in 2016 thanks to donations from some Mississippi Department of Corrections offenders and staff in Harrison and Madison counties.

Offenders under supervision by the Harrison County Probation and Parole Office donated more than 200 toys and more than eight cases of canned goods to the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence.

"We in the Biloxi office asked our offenders to donate a new unwrapped toy, if they could, to help the families and children of this shelter since they were not there of their own choices but trying to make a new life," said Probation and Parole Agent Randall Lundy. The Gulfport office was asked to assist. Consequently, at least 50 families with children, and 20 wom-

en and children living at the shelter have been helped.

In addition to Lundy, Harrison County Probation and Parole Agents

Maria Lopez and Kimberly Stevens worked with fellow agents Troy Carpenter, Ray Polk and Kirby Shavers to collect donations.



MDOC offenders under supervision in Harrison County donated more than 200 toys and more than eight cases of canned goods to the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence. Pictured are some of the toys.

MSP Staffers Place 2nd in Basketball Benefit Tournament

The MSP Basketball Team (pictured here) placed second in the Weekend Law Enforcement Holiday Benefit Basketball Tournament in Tutwiler on Nov. 19.

The fundraiser was on behalf of the Tutwiler Community Educational Center. CCA took home the first-place trophy.

"The MSP Basketball Team would like to thank all of the staff, family and friends that came out to support them as well as the Law Enforcement Holiday Benefit Tournament!" said MSP Warden Timothy Morris.



Madison CWC Donate to Salvation Army

In Madison County, the staff at the Madison County Community Work Center donated \$170 to the Salvation Army at the Walmart in Canton on Dec. 30.

"Donating to the Salvation Army was a collective selfless effort

from the entire team at MDOC Madison County CWC," the staff said in a statement. "The Salvation Army is a great organization that help countless number of people a year. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

(The staff members are Cmdr. Valerie R. Buie, Case Manager Linda Ford, Lt. Minnie Coleman, Sgt. Sheila Stiff, Sgt. Karl Phillips, and Officers LaQunda Collins, DeShawn Bush, Benjamin Langston, Little Green, Jimmy Bradley, Rhonda Henry.)



Sgt. Karl Phillips of the Madison County Community Work Center takes the CWC's donation to the Canton Walmart Salvation Army collection site, where money was being collected for the Angel Tree.



Highlights

Holidays and Community Involvement

Offenders at Monroe P&P Find Toys for Children When Reporting

ABERDEEN - Ensuring that children of offenders supervised by the Monroe County Probation and Parole Office

have Christmas is one way the office is working with the community to make a difference in the lives of others.



The office looks a lot like Santa's Workshop during December.

When offenders report, those with children shop from the toys and get Christmas gifts for their children.

"Our offenders are very appreciative for this gesture of kindness," said Agent Alicia Perkins.

Perkins and retired Agent Randy Perkins, along with family and friends, created the Christmas Shop at the county office in 2006.

The shop has since grown to house five agents. The agents and local business, S & J Auto in Aberdeen, continue the tradition.

MAPC Holiday Food Drive

Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) Region IV donated boxes of canned goods to Stewpot during its annual food drive from Oct. 10 to Nov. 18.



MDOC Staff Host Trunk or Treat for Local Community

Region 1 MAPC members and the Family Resource Center in Tupelo hosted a trunk-or-treat on Oct. 31 for Halloween.

"It turned out really well," said Tony Harris, Community Corrections associate director.

He and Family Resource representative Sheila Davis are pictured at right.

Region 1 also collects clothing to give to those in need. Contact Nicole Williams at NiWilliams@mdoc.state.ms.us if you wish to donate.

Collected items are given to people for job interviews after completing classes for Thinking for a Change, but anyone in need can get items.



Unit 30 ABE/GED Offenders Present Program of Thanks

PARCHMAN — Offenders at Unit 30 ABE/GED Vocational School planned and presented a program of thanks to fellow offenders and prison officials with assistance from their academic instructor.

The program, themed "We are Thankful for Thanksgiving in a Prison Environment," allowed them to turn talk into reality on Nov. 23.

A student attending ABE School wrote the prayer. The song "Thank you Lord" was led by another ABE student. MSP Faith Base Initiative Offenders Choir performed all other songs.

The offenders gave thanks for their safety in waking up to another day in prison; their family for all their support; and the staff at MSP for watching out for their well-being inside the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

An ABE offender read the "The President of the United States Thanksgiving Proclamation."

The inspirational speech was written and shared by an ABE School graduate, who is currently enrolled in the FBI program.

Prison officials, including the superintendent, wardens and associate wardens, believe in success and rehabilitation through support services. They believe that a positive peer role model builds character and offers the offenders a way to motivate themselves to push forward toward becoming a productive citizen whether inside or outside the prison system.

Superintendent Earnest Lee gave closing remarks and words of encouragement. He told each offender to go back to his living quarter and zone and tell his friend to stop the negativism and get on board with the positive. "This attitude will eliminate some of the fights and gang violence. If rules are followed, there will be better living condition amongst the offenders," he said.

Special thanks to Interim Director of Education Nate Murphree and Raynette Wells for promoting team work; and David Hadley and the Culinary Arts class for providing the refreshments.

Finally, the instructors strive daily to look for way to get the offenders involved in projects that will help them to recognize that successes and failures are a part of who we are as individuals.



Superintendent Earnest Lee speaks to offenders.

Highlights

Holidays and Community Involvement

MDOC Employees Help two Louisiana Flood Victims

Nine MDOC employees traveled to Louisiana to help two flood victims on Aug. 19.

The group, most of whom were probation and parole agents, spent Aug. 19 first at a home in Baton Rouge and then at another one in Denham Springs. They removed furniture, Sheetrock, insulation, baseboards, clothes, appliances, and flooring from the flooded homes. (Pictured right).

Rhonda Boyd, CCAD in Region 3, commended the employees for their "awesome act of kindness" in accompanying her to help the two homeowners.

"I appreciate that I have such a loving and caring staff that is willing to take the day off to help someone they don't even know," Boyd said.

Traveling with Boyd to Louisiana were Tony Rouse, David Dickinson, Kennis Montgomery, Bryan Cavin, Jewel Simmons, Joy Porter, Barry Dillon, and Dusty Walker.



Kicking it for Christ continued...

[Continued from page 42]

...stresses forward movement and can be learned very quickly.

"It's all gross motor skill movement, which means everything is a powerful, straightforward push or pull strike," Welch said. "It can be learned by any teenager, any grandma or grandpa, anybody regardless of their age. In three months in Krav Maga, you will be able to defend yourself."

Students learn to take defensive measures against all variety of attacks and are taught to counter in the quickest and most efficient way, stressing the most vulnerable part of

the attacker's body.

Welch points to a Biblical basis for training in Krav Maga.

"If we search out the Old Testament, we find time and time again a message of a loving God who believes in protecting the righteous at the same time," Welch said. "God doesn't expect anybody to just be a victim."

Students are taught that Krav Maga is their last line of defense. "The first line of defense is always prayer," Welch said, who added his classes always start and end with prayer.

Eleven people are on his staff

and all are Christians, Welch said, adding his staff and board of directors include associate pastors and deacons from a number of local churches. A beginner class is held Monday evenings at 6:15 p.m. at Cornerstone Church.

More information on the program may be found at welchskarate.com/kravmaga.

Story courtesy of the Desoto Times-Tribune

Inmates Help Habitat for Humanity in Metro Jackson

Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz and three female offenders from the Flowood Community Work Center participated in a Habitat for Humanity build in metro Jackson on Oct. 15.

"The experience provided Ginger Putam, Summer Taylor and Idice Darden with an opportunity to see the hardship of others and to be a part of the solution by giving to those who are less fortunate," Gutherz said.

The women also appreciated the opportunity to give back to the community in such a meaningful way.

One said she would like to join the Habitat team in her community after she is released.

The women were selected based on their exemplary conduct and demonstrated job skills. Their diligence throughout the day was unmatched.

The women quickly assimilated and became part of the team, enjoying the opportunity to work on such a meaningful project.

The homeowner and neighbors joined the build as the roof began to take shape, the hurricane ties were

installed and the insulation boards were nailed and taped.

Members of the Habitat Build Team expressed their appreciation to the women for their dedication and hard work.

After Hurricane Katrina, MDOC male offenders from the Madison and Yazoo CWC as well as Hinds Restitution Center participated in several Habitat Blitz builds resulting in the construction of over 20 homes.



House Arrest Offenders Donate to Homeless Shelter

GULFPORT - A Gulfport homeless shelter had dozens of hams and turkeys to serve on Thanksgiving in 2016 thanks to offenders supervised by the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Gulfport Field Office.

The food, collected over several weeks, totaling 100 hams and turkeys, is in addition to more than 2,000 canned and dry goods the offenders contributed to Feed My Sheep. Also, some of the offenders helped clean and maintain the grounds of the non-profit in readiness for Thursday's Thanksgiving meal, and some volun-

teered to serve that day.

"We want people to see that convicted felons did something good," said Probation and Parole Agent Troy A. Carpenter. "Too many times we don't see what they did right. We know they did wrong. We are not offering them anything in exchange for doing thing this."

This group effort marks the second year in a row in which the offenders, most of whom are on house arrest, have donated to the shelter. Donations exceed last year's, Carpenter said.



Highlights

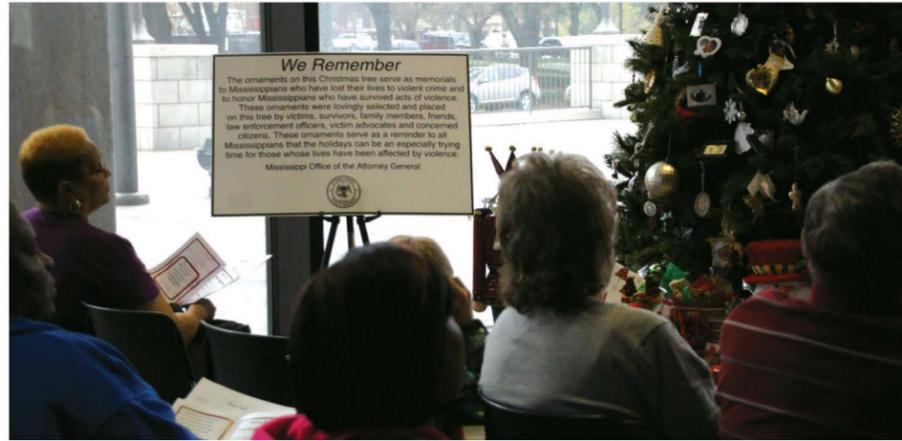
Holidays and Community Involvement

Memorial Tree Lighting at the AG's Office

On Dec. 13, the Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Victim Assistance, held its 13th Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony in the Walter Sillers State

Office Building. Gov. Phil Bryant and Attorney General Jim Hood stood at a nearby 15 foot Christmas tree, filled with 400 memorial ornaments beau-

tifully hung by previous and current attendees. Many of the Mississippi Coalition for Survivors of Homicide Victims committee members, MDOC staff, attended this heartfelt ceremony. With such overwhelming participation, it has been decided that a second tree will be in place for the coming year. The ceremony evoked this response from SAVIN Director Gwendolynn Santos: "As human beings and under no circumstances, is it ever easy to say goodbye to someone we love. Though they may not be here physically in body form, we can carry them each day, allowing their life to be present in ours through the continuous love in our hearts, the memories, and in shared moments as what we see here."



CMCF Christmas Play

The Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Chaplaincy program helped female offenders put on a Christmas play on Dec. 22.

The performance received standing ovations. Several of the inmates said they were thankful to have been able to do this project.



In Brief

APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR ERT

Applications are now being accepted in Community Corrections for the Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Requirements include:

- Must be in good health and physical condition.
- Must be able to perform under stressful situations.
- Must be free of any disciplinary action within the last calendar year.
- Must be willing to respond to calls 24 hours a day.
- Must have at least one-year related experience.
- Caseloads must be up to standards.
- Must be certified.
- Must have completed the probationary period (possible exceptions).
- Must have a collection rate of 80% for nine out of last 12 months.

Interested agents should send their request to the following representatives:

- Region 1 - CCAD **Tony Harris**
- Region 2 - PPAS **Keith Brown**
- Region 3 - CCAD **Nathan Blevins**
- Training - Director **Youlanda Nelson**
- CID - Director **Sean Smith**

There is no deadline for applications, but once the desired number is reached, additional applicants will go on an inactive list.



CID Agent Sandy Townsend at the MDOC Central Office.

AUDITS

Regional

Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility and Wilkinson County Correctional Facility passed ACA Audits conducted.

Announcements

ACA 2017 Winter Conference

The American Correctional Association will hold its winter conference Jan. 20-25 in San Antonio, Texas. The meetings, workshops and events will be held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher to speak at Jackson Rotary Club

Commissioner Fisher is scheduled to speak to the Jackson Rotary Club on April 10, 2017, at the Sparkman Auditorium on Lakeland Drive. The club has more than 225 members with an average attendance of 100 to 125 members. The club meets every Monday from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Letting Victims Know They Matter

In addition to the services MDOC already offers victims, Commissioner Fisher wants to make sure victims' voices are heard even more. Plans are under way for the first MDOC Victim Voice Advisory Panel to convene before or by the National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 2-8, 2017.

Hearing from MDOC Employees Firsthand

Commissioner Fisher intends to meet the first quarter of 2017 with members of the Employees Advisory Board for Community Corrections and Institutions. The Community Corrections members are Beverly Corder for Region 1, Gene Luster for Region 2 and Kenny Rush for Region 3. The Institutions representatives are Tonja Burks, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility; Robert Dudley, Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman; and K-9 Officer John Hostetter for South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

SSCA Conference

The Southern States Correctional Association 2017 Mid-Winter and Annual Summer Training Conference will be Feb. 16-18 in Norfolk, Va. Questions? Contact Registration Chair Dana Ratliffe-Walker, Conference Chair Karen Stapleton (804-887-8252), or Virginia Chapter Rep Lois Fegan (804-837-1028)

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