The RESOURCE

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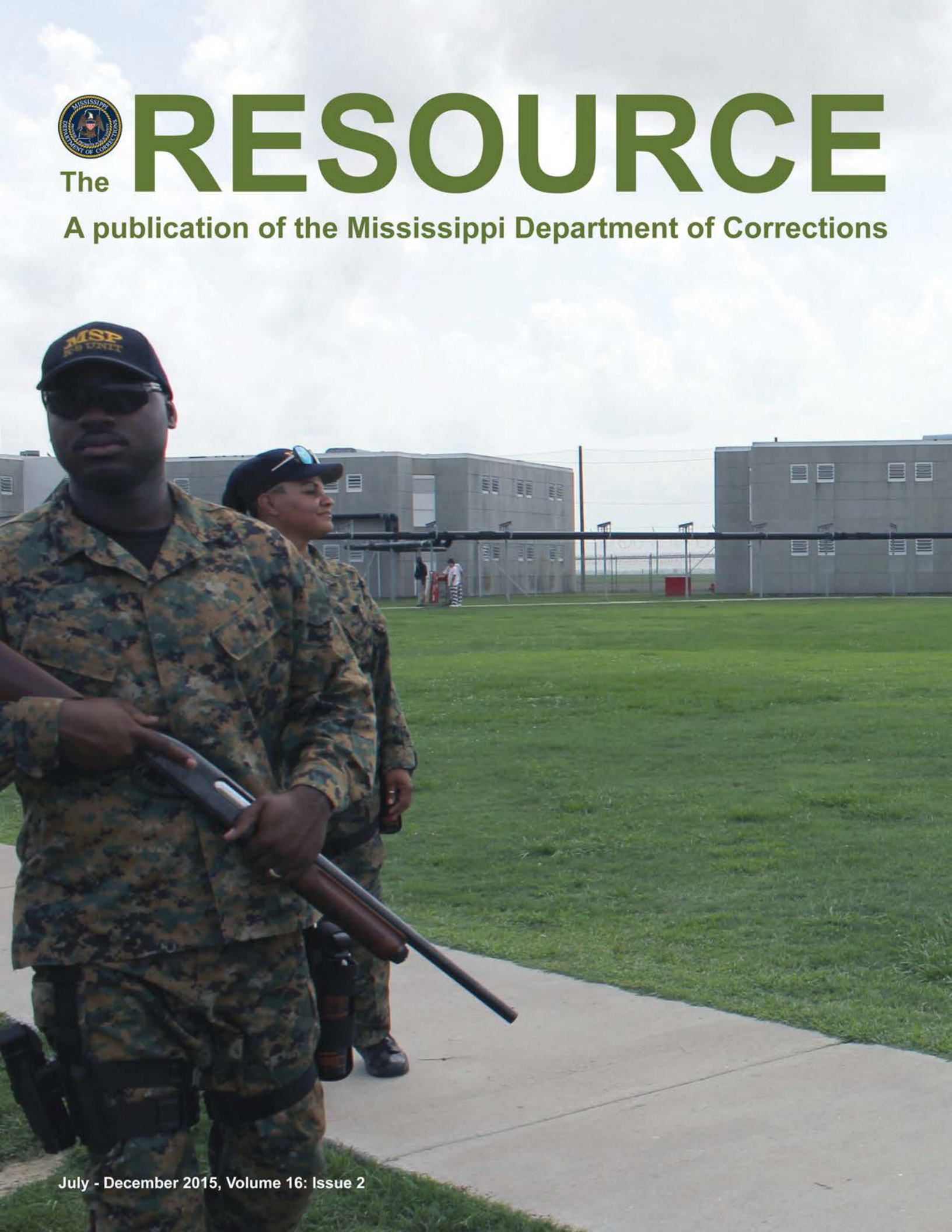

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MDOC
MISSION STATEMENT

To provide and promote public safety through efficient and effective offender custody, care, control and treatment consistent with sound correctional principles and constitutional practices.

Message from the Commissioner

Revamping training; doubling academy time; putting inmates back to work; starting a new Joint State County Work Program; closing community work centers.

These changes and more have been occurring at the Mississippi Department of Corrections in the last six months. There's more to come as we constantly assess and reassess how well we are performing our public safety mission. One goal, however, remains constant and a priority: Realigning employees' pay.

We must increase the annual salary of the people working in our prison system not only to attract more quality people but also to get those people to want to make corrections a career. We are having to close community work centers because we don't have enough people to staff them. We have changed officers' shifts at prisons in order to adequately cover posts. Of course, a higher annual salary isn't the only solution for our statewide staffing shortages, but it sure can go a long way to stem the revolving door MDOC has become in recent years.

In addition to seeking a livable wage, more and improved training is high on my list. Academy training for corrections officers is now eight weeks rather than four. Firearms training for probation and parole agents, formerly called field officers, is now quarterly rather than annually. Plans are in the works also for a probation and parole academy, and the curriculum is being tweaked for both Institutions and Community Corrections. Defensive tactics and physical fitness, for example, will be getting more attention.

MDOC is still in the throes of doing its part to carry out changes mandated under the sweeping criminal justice reform law. I support recommendations of the oversight task force to tweak some parts of House Bill 585.

We also will be placing even more emphasis on re-entry. MDOC's re-entry officer will be working closely with the new statewide re-entry coordinator whose hiring is pending.

Regardless of the changes to come, MDOC, a pilot agency for performance-based budgeting as part of Results First, will stay within its budget. Counties should no longer depend on inmate labor. It is not our mission to subsidize county budgets. We are not obligated to do so.

I want the MDOC to be a place where people enjoy working. I will continue to meet with rank and file officers to hear their concerns. I thank all of you for all you do.

Marshall L. Fisher
Commissioner

MDOC Staff Remembered

Theresa Seabrook, retired SMCI Deputy Warden

Brenda Benson, CMCF Vocational Teacher

Ellis Bevis, Region I Probation/Parole Agent III

Angiela T. Wells, CMCF Transfer Coordinator for Reclassification

Seabrook, 60, passed away Dec. 14, 2015. She retired on Oct. 1, 2015 from South Mississippi Correctional Institution as deputy warden of Area I, after 26 years with MDOC. She was a past president of the United States Deputy Wardens Association, and was a member of the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation.

SMCI Area I Warden Hubert Davis and Seabrook began their careers together in 1989. "She was loyal, dependable, trustworthy and honorable. She had a contagious, energetic personality that everyone loved. She was certainly an asset, and MDOC suffered a great loss with her passing," he said.

Seabrook is survived by her husband; mother; two sons; one granddaughter; four sisters; one brother; and other family members.

Benson, 58, passed away on Oct. 26, 2015. Central Mississippi Correctional Facility vocational teacher Benson, 58, was an Apparel & Textile instructor for eight years. Linda Minor, a Family Dynamics vocational instructor at CMCF, is effusive in her praise of Benson. "She was an inspiration to the class and staff," Minor said. "She was easy going. If you had any type of problem, you could go to her. She was going to read Psalms 91. She was going to pray for you."

Benson is survived by her husband; two daughters; one son; five grandchildren; 11 brothers and sisters, including a twin; and other family members.

Bevis, 56, worked in Community Corrections in Region I. He passed away Nov. 2, 2015.

For nearly 20 years, Bevis quietly but effectively did his job, said Lee McTeer, director of Region I Community Corrections, where Bevis was assigned.

"He was very knowledgeable about the job and earned the respect of his peers and local officials," McTeer said.

Bevis is survived by his wife; two sons; two sisters; four brothers; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and other family.

Angiela Teresa Thomas Wells, 45, passed away Nov. 15, 2015. She was a case manager for more than 15 years and worked part-time at Home Depot in Clinton for seven years.

"Mrs. Wells always had a positive attitude and would offer her assistance to anyone who needed it," CMCF Superintendent Ron King said. "Staff from all areas admired her, and she could brighten up anyone's day."

Wells is survived by her husband; four children; one grandchild; father; grandmother; nine sisters; eight uncles; six aunts; and a host of other relatives.

Six pairs of eyes and ears keep Commissioner Fisher in the know

Office of Communications

JACKSON - When Commissioner Marshall Fisher wants to know about the concerns and issues of rank and file officers, he has six pairs of eyes and ears to keep him in the loop.

The first Commissioner's Advisory Board kicked off July 20 with three members from Institutions - Robert Dudley from the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, Dexter Expose from Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Kimberly Green from South Mississippi Correctional Institution - and three employees from Community Corrections - Beverly Corder, Angela Harper, and Ben White.

"I can't fix everything," Fisher said at the inaugural setting. "I can't live long enough to learn what you all know about corrections. But I am willing to look at what I can do, depending on our budget. I want to make the department a place where people come to work and want to make a career."

Before hearing from each individual, the commissioner updated the group about the many changes he has put in place, including requiring quarterly firearms training, and those in progress, including changing the uniform of correctional officers. He said he also would seek to provide a pay realignment for everyone in the near future.

The employees thanked the commissioner for having such a setting, a first, to allow them to express what is on the minds of the correctional officers and the probation and parole agents. Each employee came with list of discussion items, with some having more to say than others and some having similar concerns.

For example, Corder, Harper and White all expressed concern about the heavy caseload per agent, the amount of paperwork they must do, and equipment concerns.

Agent Angela Harper makes a point about working conditions as fellow employees Beverly Corder and Dexter Expose listen on.

"It means a lot to me to serve on the board," White said. "I don't have the words to express my appreciation for Commissioner Fisher taking time to listen to us speak freely about issues that staff have forwarded to us. I think the board has helped morale by giving staff a mechanism to voice not only concerns and frustrations but also possible improvements that could better the agency."

Like the three Community Corrections employees, Dudley, Expose, and Green all shared concerns about working conditions, staffing and relationships with supervisors.

The commissioner aims to meet with the group quarterly and has limited it to rank and file officers. Immediately after meeting with the group, he shares their concerns with the deputy commissioners.

"The meetings have been productive," Fisher said. "I have learned a lot. For the most part, members have not come with personal agendas. This is not the forum for them to bad mouth a supervisor or to negotiate for more pay. I want the members to come with matters of concerns for them and their peers.

"I am not looking for informants. I am looking for them to tell me what is going on," Fisher said of the peer advisory board."■

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS: Who Are They?

Institutions

• **Robert Dudley,** Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, began working for MDOC as a contract employee in 2008. He was hired full-time as a correctional officer in June 2009. He works at the unit that has the most difficult inmate population, including death row, protective custody, and long-term segregation. The father of three has been correctional officer of the month and is an MSP Employee of the Year.

• **Dexter Expose,** Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. Expose, a CO IV, has been with MDOC since Oct. 4, 2004. He has a bachelor's degree from Jackson State University in accounting and previously worked for the Mississippi State Tax Commission. He served in the United States Marine Corps 1980-1982 as an assistant gunner. He is an active member of the Mississippi Alliance of State Employees (MACE).

• **Kimberly Green,** South Mississippi Correctional Institution. Green has been a correctional officer since July 2007. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree at the University of South Alabama, majoring in psychology and criminal justice. She is presently a transportation officer.

Community Corrections

• **Beverly Corder,** Region 1, Corder is a probation and parole agent in Pontotoc County. She formerly worked as a drug treatment coordinator and a compliance school attendance officer. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Mississippi in criminal justice and attended Itawamba Community College. She has been Officer of the Month and has received several Extra Effort awards for her work ethic. Corder has worked for MDOC since July 9, 2001.

[Continued on page 20]

SPOTLIGHT:

Employees of the Year Honorees

Christy Brooks

Brenda Cox

Jerry Wilder

Gloria Hollins

Jackie LaFontaine

Undra Loper

Tjuana Carter

JACKSON – Every year the Mississippi Department of Corrections honors employees who have demonstrated outstanding service to the agency: going above and beyond in their duties.

The latest winners from the three state prisons, three regions, and Central Office were honored Dec. 17, 2015 at the Employee Recognition Luncheon, which is named after the late Eddie Lucas, who served as MDOC commissioner from April 1992 to September 1994. The program is usually held in May, a time for law enforcement appreciation programs. ■

In Their Own Words

Region I
Christy Brooks, Agent
"I love my job. That is why I am coming back tomorrow."

MSP
Brenda Cox, Deputy Warden
"Upon receiving the news of being honored as MSP Employee of the Year and a MDOC Employee of the Year, I said, 'Wow! Thank God!' Also, I quickly reflected to the famous words of President Theodore Roosevelt, 'Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.' Overall, I felt appreciated, but yet I remained humbled. I was thankful of everyone who played a vital role in making this happen, especially my MSP Family."

Region II
Jerry Wilder, Commander
"Wow! 'Me' being recognized for what I was hired to do. I felt very honored and excited when my name was called to receive the award as Employee of the year for Region II. I felt blessed and grateful that some members of my family as well as my reporting line of supervision and colleagues were present to witness this momentous occasion. I felt I was on top of the world."

CMCF
Gloria Hollins, Correctional Supervisor
"I was very impressed that they thought a lot about me for my work performance at CMCF. It means a lot to me that I was nominated among my peers. I was very appreciative that CMCF thought enough of me to honor me as a representative for them."

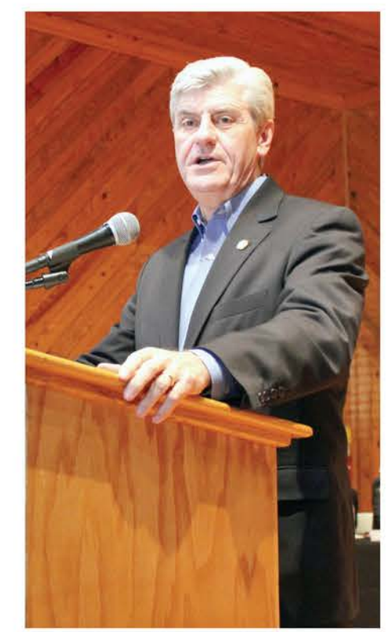
Region III
Jaqueline LaFontaine, Commander
"Passion for the Agency itself and that I believe I give it 100 when I come to work. I truly care about every individual that I meet and try to help in this field."

SMCI
Undra Loper, Senior Systems Administrator
"My reaction was that I was sort of in shock. I couldn't believe that I had received such a great honor and award. It truly makes me feel that, with enough dedication and work, anything can be achieved. It make me proud and pushes me to continue to strive for new ways to work with my team to excel our department forward."

Central Office
Tjuana Carter, Records Officer
[No comment available]

Members of the Lucas family have regularly attended the Employee of the Year Luncheon, which is named in honor of the late Eddie Lucas, a former corrections commissioner.

Jackson Police Honor Guard stand at ease before presenting the colors during the ceremony. The group consists of Officers Eric Redmond and Chelsea Gross, Investigator Stephanie Horn and Cpl. Caesar Hamilton.


Guest Speaker Gov. Phil Bryant encourages MDOC employees while drawing comparisons to the circumstances under which he became state auditor in 1996 and those under which he tapped Marshall Fisher as commissioner in December 2014.

New Strategies for Case Managers

Putting House Bill 585 into Action

Office of Communications

Commissioner Marshall Fisher and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall congratulate Tamala King as other executive staff members, Donald Rhodes, Kevin Jackson, and Corrie Cockrell, look on.

JACKSON – Case managers at the Mississippi Department of Corrections are on the front lines as the agency meets specific requirements of the sweeping criminal justice reform legislation passed in 2014.

Effective case management is a must under House Bill 585 in order for presumptive parole and re-entry planning to move from concept to reality.

Four MDOC employees graduated the Effective Case Management training, which the Crime and Justice Institute provided in the fall.

Associate Warden Angie Holloway and Associate Warden Katherine Blount from the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), Case Manager Tamala King from the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF), and Case Manager Markisha Martin-Fipps from the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) completed training in Community Resources for Justice Trainers, becoming the agency's first Effective Case Management Trainers.

Holloway said the training opened her mind to the different ways to carry out case management and that the offenders should be involved in every aspect of the case planning process.

"By implementing effective case management, the recidivism rate will be reduced," Holloway said. "Our focus is now on case planning and rehabilitation. Traditional case management involves security responsibilities, disciplinary responsibilities, and ensuring that court ordered programs are complete."

Each Effective Case Management (ECM) session includes training in core correctional skills, principles of effective intervention, background readings and case plan webinars.

By successfully completing this train-the-trainer process, the four employees have demonstrated superior knowledge of the Effective Case Management material and the ability to help the state roll out this important innovation. Effective Case Management is a critical tool for helping offenders be successful in and out of the corrections system.

"I have learned that communicating with the offender is the most important part of training," Holloway said. "Helping the offender realize the root cause of offending is the key so that he will not re-offend."

Constituent Services Director Kevin Jackson said, "Completion of this training by the MDOC staff marks another giant step toward reducing recidivism and accomplishing goals set within House Bill 585." ■

MDOC'S RE-ENTRY EFFORTS INCLUDE:

- **DOCUMENTATION** - MDOC has provided 332 state-issued IDS, 1,088 birth certificates, and 211 Social Security Cards to inmates. Factors, including multiple aliases and inmates' refusals, affect how many can be provided.
- **TRAINING** - Vocational Programs to help offenders obtain employment after release include:
  - Barbering/Cosmetology
  - Business Technology
  - HVAC
  - Carpentry
  - Engine Repair
  - GED
- **EMPLOYMENT** – MDOC is working with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to bank inmates' applications. That is, offenders nearing release will already have their application on file with MDES.
- **PROGRAMS** - Soldier on Veteran Outreach – MDOC is setting up a special unit at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility to provide services to veterans. Veterans will have access to case management, medical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment and peer support through both the Department of Veteran Affairs and community-based organizations
- **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING** - MDOC contracts with New Way Mississippi Inc. and Crossroads Ministries Inc. for a total of 120 transitional beds.
- **RE-ENTRY JOURNAL** - A checklist for offenders to keep a record of their journey after release is available. Offenders can use it to record or keep track of where they applied for work, housing, etc.

Revamped Training : A First-Year Priority for Commissioner

Office of Communications

JACKSON — Academy training for correctional officers has been doubled. The days of a four-week academy are now in the past.

Also, the frequency of firearms qualifications for probation and parole agents has increased.

Revamping training has been a major focus of Commissioner Marshall Fisher in his first year on the job.

Probation and parole agents were the first to experience the changes. A select group received two days of tactical firearms training from the FBI in mid-July.

Probation and parole agents, previously called field officers, now must undergo quarterly firearms training rather than annually.

"Qualifying once a year with a weapon is simply not enough," said Fisher, a career law officer who started out as a police officer and worked as a parole agent before becoming a federal narcotics agent. "Probation and parole agents deal with felons every day, and they are dealing with more because the department has more people on community-based supervision than incarcerated. And, for whatever reason there seems to be more of an anti-government, anti-law enforcement sentiment in the country today than before. Our officers need to be ready in case they find themselves in a dangerous situation."

Twenty-one Community Corrections officers trained at the FBI Training Center at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy in Rankin County on July 16 and 17. They also are part of a newly created special response team at MDOC.

"If you can go through your whole career without having to pull your weapon that would be ideal," said Nathan Blevins, a Community Corrections associate director.

Blevins has not had to fire his state-issued Glock in the line of duty. "However, should I or anyone else have to do so, this training from FBI Agent Kevin Sanderson and his staff prepares us," he said.

Kevin May, an investigator with MDOC's Corrections Investigation Division, said he deeply appreciates getting the refresher training. "This is the real deal," said May, also a former sheriff's deputy. ■

Probation and parole agents receive training tips first-hand from Agent Matt Campbell at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Academy on July 16.

Prison Tours

Gaining " a Clear Understanding of Prison life"

"Some [visitors] are interested to see how the "bad guys" live and if what they see on TV is actually true."
- Joe Errington, SMCI deputy warden

Story continued on page 14...

MSP Superintendent Earnest Lee shows Rep. Angela Cockerham (left), who is chairperson of the Energy Committee and vice-chairperson of the Management Committee, and Legislative Budget Analyst Lee Anne Robinson, cells in Unit 29.

(Left-right) House Corrections Committee members Bill Pigott, Reecy Dixon, Charles Young Jr. and Carolyn Crawford stop at the vocational school during a tour at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on Nov. 10. Vocational School instructor Robert Garner, standing between Young and Crawford, discusses some of the work the inmates do.

Office of Communications

JACKSON – "My visit to the state prison was kind of scary at first, but ended up being very interesting."

"This prison facility was much nicer than ones you would see on television."

"I had plenty idea as to what to expect from class, television and media but it was still different from what I expected."

These are the kind of reactions the Mississippi Department of Corrections gets from visitors after they have toured a prison.

MDOC is quite the attraction for tours. High school students, college students, lawmakers, ministers, law enforcement officers, church members, civic club members and others often can be found walking among prisoners and staff, getting a firsthand look at prison life.

More than 75 tours were conducted at the three state prisons alone in 2015.

"In my opinion, the average person does not have a clear understanding of prison life and I feel that the tours will hopefully have an impact to possibly prevent someone from being incarcerated," said Zerika L. Cusic, correctional services aide at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Or, as Deputy Warden Joe Errington at South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Leakesville said, "Some tours are interesting to persons who are interested in criminal justice and law enforcement as a profession. Some are interested to see how the "bad guys" live and if what they see on TV is actually true."

Don't expect the tours at CMCF to be episodes of "scared straight."

"If the individuals are yelled at and intimidated, they are likely going to miss the actual realities of being in prison," Cusic said.

At the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, "all want to visit the execution chamber," since he has led the facility, Superintendent Earnest Lee said.

Lawmakers and staffers from the Department of Finance & Administration's Bureau of Building, Grounds...

[Continued on page 21]

Alabama Southern Poverty Law Center members study how the Youthful Offender Unit (YOU) is run to get ideas to take back to their legislators.

University of Southern Mississippi students peer out at the prison grounds as Superintendent Ron King describes the different buildings and their functions on Oct. 9. at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

YOU Warden Leander Parker leads the Alabama Southern Poverty Law Center members across prison grounds on Nov. 30. Superintendent King flanks the group.

MDOC Head: Put Inmates Back to Work

Jerry Mitchell

JACKSON - Two years ago, a Mississippi inmate serving a life sentence escaped from a work detail.

Since then, the Mississippi Department of Corrections has barred all those serving life sentences from doing any work.

Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher wants to change that. "I want to put inmates back to work," he said.

More than 2,000 of Mississippi's more than 18,000 inmates are serving life sentences.

Fisher's inspiration came after a visit this past summer to the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, which decades ago had a reputation as a "hellhole."

These days, Angola resembles a military base, where inmates learn skills that enable them to get good jobs when they leave.

The two-year program awards certifications in heating and air conditioning systems, automotive repair, horticulture, culinary arts, plumbing and other areas. Inmates can also graduate from an accredited seminary program.

The results so far speak for themselves.

One in two Louisiana inmates winds up back in prison within five years of being released. Of the 360 inmates who have completed the reentry program, only one in 10 have returned to prison.

"It continues to get better because we're getting better in our requirements, to make as sure as we can that they have their heads on right," said John Easley, who directs certification for Angola's reentry program.

Rather than hire instructors from the outside, Angola uses inmates serving life sentences to teach these inmates, he said. "The program actually saves $4 million a year in instructional costs."

In 2010, Louisiana created the program that allows judges to work with prosecutors to select nonviolent offenders doing 10 years or less to spend two years learning a trade and getting their GED.

Angola Warden Burl Cain and two judges, Laurie White and Arthur Hunter, spearheaded the program, which began in Orleans Parish and has now spread to six parishes.

In addition to job skills, inmates go through alcohol and drug rehabilitation, counseling and anger management.

What also makes the reentry program unique is there is "work on moral rehabilitation, changing from within," said Gary Young, director of public relations for the prison. "If you don't, you'll just have a smarter criminal."

Under the reentry program, corrections officials can recommend the early release of an inmate who has completed the program. The Reentry Court rules on requests.

Mississippi, which has a three-year recidivism rate of about 37 percent, has no reentry court.

After inmates are released from prison, an intense probation period follows, aimed at helping inmates stay on the right path.

The July visit impressed Fisher, who snapped photographs the whole time as he watched trained inmates serving life sentences instructing other inmates about automotive repair, brake repair and transmission repair.

He said he watched the cordial interaction between the inmates and staff, each treating one another with respect.

Instead of gang activity, he witnessed club activity. The prison also had sports teams.

The prison felt so safe that he wandered the halls with staffers, including some females, until 9 p.m.

He returned to Mississippi feeling inspired.

Long ago, he said he realized it was better to learn from others that had found the answers.

"They've got the recipe," he said. "I'm not above copying, if it works."

From discussing the matter with those who have spent their careers in corrections, training does more than prepare inmates for life outside bars, he said. "It gives them a purpose."

And inmates who become trainers feel they have a purpose, too, he said.

The longtime law enforcement officer who spent most of his career locking people up is now seeking reforms so that what happens behind bars can help ensure they never return.

"You give them a life skill, and they can become taxpayers, instead of returning to prison and becoming tax burdens," he said. "It's not going to work in every case, but it's certainly worth the effort."

MDOC has already begun to change policies that would enable these inmates to work.

From a public safety standpoint, Fisher said this makes sense.

"We take away the idleness, give them a job and then give them rewards for doing that job," he said. "That makes for a better behaved inmate."

The idea of ruling by force, standing on somebody's neck for years, won't work, he said. "Even a rabbit will fight for its life if it's cornered by a bobcat."

File photo of inmates at work.

He sees this reform as a "sea change," he said. "We've got to turn it around and get our compass pointed north."

Fisher started his career as a policeman before spending much of his career as a narcotics officer and then head of the state Bureau of Narcotics.

"If we're going to rehabilitate people — and this is an old cop talking — if we're serious about it," he said, "we've got to teach them better skills than picking up trash and mowing grass."

Mississippi has dozens of vocational programs that instruct a total of 375 inmates, but nothing on the scale of what Fisher witnessed at Angola.

Steve Pickett, chairman of the state Parole Board, said Angola is one of a number of prisons across the U.S. that have job training programs worth imitating.

He said each day the Parole Board is mindful of the fact at least 95 percent of inmates will be returning to their communities in Mississippi.

"Will they come out of prison better or worse?" he asked. "We've got miles to go to improve reentry in Mississippi."

He said job training must be provided in areas of high demand, such as welding, culinary arts and the repair of heating and cooling systems, small engines and refrigerators.

Letting inmates work and improve themselves helps them begin to "pay back what they have taken from the community," he said.

A quarter century ago, Mississippi had some good vocational programs, but many went away when the philosophy of "lock 'em up and throw away the key" took over, said U.S. District Court Judge Keith Starrett, a member of the state's Reentry Council.

Money in corrections shifted to "warehousing inmates instead of training them," he said.

He would like to see Mississippi move toward a reentry program like Angola, where all inmates work, he said. "If you had to sit for two or three years, what would happen to your work ethic?"

The council is moving to help those released from prison find jobs, housing, transportation, medical and mental health services. "What's the end game?" Starrett asked. "Reducing recidivism." ■

Story courtesy of The Clarion Ledger
Published Oct. 24, 2015

Prison to College Pipeline

UM Program Transforms Incarcerated Men Into College Students

Edwin Smith

PARCHMAN – Several men imprisoned at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman are on their way to earning degrees, thanks to a new University of Mississippi-based program designed to assist them in obtaining a college education.

UM's Prison-to-College Pipeline Program is a university-community engagement initiative promoting higher education in prison. Participants must have earned a GED or high school diploma to be eligible. Those who complete the course receive a certificate and the possibility of time off their sentences. Begun in summer 2014, the project already has yielded 34 graduates.

"We started the program because we love both learning and learners and we believe that meaningful learning happens everywhere—even behind prison walls," said Patrick Alexander, UM assistant professor of English and African-American Studies and cofounder of the program.

Alexander started the program with alumnus Otis Pickett (PhD history '13), former UM assistant clinical assistant professor of teacher education at UM and now an assistant professor of history at Mississippi College. The two men share a common passion to extend educational opportunities to an often-neglected population.

"We both knew, through our prior research and teaching experiences, the profound role that student-centered prison education has played not only in reducing recidivism, but also in positively transforming isolated prison environments and the post-imprisonment outlooks and outcomes of imprisoned students," Pickett said.

Alexander and Pickett credit Glenn Hopkins, dean emeritus of the UM College of Liberal Arts, with inspiring them to launch the program, known as PTCPP.

"Dean Hopkins made a point of emphasizing that he saw college-level and college-aspiring students at Parchman as part of our UM community during a 2012 faculty orientation we attended," Alexander said. "Soon after we began teaching that fall, we heard from Dr. Linda Keena and Dr. Christopher Simmons, our UM colleagues who spearheaded the Ice House Entrepreneurship Program at Parchman. They shared how many of the men they'd met through that program were really interested in taking college-level courses."

Consequently, Alexander and Pickett began building relationships with education staff and prospective postsecondary students at the prison. With guidance, encouragement and support from the Department of English, African American Studies Program, College of Liberal Arts, Sarah Isom Center for Women's and Gender Studies, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, and McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, the duo began PTCPP's 10-week pilot course at Parchman.

"'Justice Everywhere' met on Mondays for three hours from June to August 2014," Pickett said. "We rigorously studied the speeches, writings and historical context that shaped the lives of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer and Barack Obama. An enhanced version of the course, which included more readings and writing assignments, was taught this past June through August."

For the summer 2015 term, six students are receiving credit in English from UM, while eight are receiving credit in history from Mississippi College. One student, who previously earned bachelor's and master's degrees, received credit from last year's course and is considering graduate school at Mississippi College.

While their identities were kept anonymous, PTCPP graduates wrote evaluations about their experiences.

"I learned more in these 10 weeks than I did in my high school and college years," one graduate wrote. "The great professors not only showed us a passion to teach, but also to learn about us and from us as they taught us valuable lessons."

Another wrote, "This course was a great confidence booster heading back into society. It's never too late to get an education and (there is) no limit to the things you can accomplish."

Participants who completed the courses received their certificates during a graduation ceremony held at Parchman. Mississippi College was the first institution in the state to offer college credit for a PTCPP student. UM added several more for-credit learners this summer.

"In the months and years to come, we hope to expand the number and diversity of courses offered in the program in ways that reflect the wide range of educational goals and intellectual curiosities expressed by imprisoned students at Parchman and throughout the state of Mississippi," Alexander said.

Prison-to-College Pipeline graduates pose with professors Patrick Alexander (far left) and Otis Pickett (far right).

Seeing their students regain dignity and rediscover hope for their futures is one of the most rewarding aspects of the program, Pickett said.

"The work we do through PTCPP aims to unite university faculty and administration across disciplines and area institutions in the ethical-intellectual endeavor of teaching at the postsecondary level throughout the state prison system," he said. "The PTCPP also aims to raise public consciousness on the impact of higher education on imprisoned populations regionally and nationally through the formal publication and public presentation of scholarly work on this topic."

Alexander and Pickett presented their findings at a Southern studies brown bag lecture during fall 2014 semester and in papers presented at the 2015 Biennial Southern American Studies Association conference last February in Atlanta.

The PTCPP was funded by grants from the UM College of Liberal Arts both summers.

"We are extremely thankful for and humbled by their generosity and hope to receive the continued support of the college, the university at-large in years to come as the PTCPP expands," Alexander said.

" This course exceeded my expectations in so many ways," a proud graduate of the program wrote. "It should be offered every summer." ■

Story courtesy of and published by University of Mississippi Communications. Published Sept. 18, 2015.

Pipeline Continues in 2016

The third summer course of the Prison-to-College Pipeline program continues in the spring. The course is scheduled to run from June 6 - Aug. 8. The focus of the first class will be history and civil rights.

The first fall course is scheduled for Aug. 22 - Nov. 30. This one will focus on African American literature and creative writing.

Participation is voluntary. Participants must be in the pre-release program and reading on at least a 6th grade reading level. The class is capped at 25.

Of the 2015 graduates, four of the 17 were scheduled to be released within eight months of graduating.

More comments from graduates:

"It opens up a whole new world for me. Also, the professors are really doing a good job at making me think."

"I think the pipeline class is very educational. I learned a lot from it about the way people have been treated in the past and present times. I have also learned how our country was back in the past and how messed up our country was."

"Over the course of the past 10 weeks, I've found this program to be very enlightening and equally motivational in so much that it opens one's eyes to the point of making you fully aware of the moral, social, and economic disparities that exist in our society."

"Pipeline put me on course with my passion to learn again, to write again. I had made so many wrong choices after getting thrown out of school... Pipeline gave me a real college feel."

Creative Writing Gives Inmates an Outlet

Professor Louis Bourgeoris leads a discussion on creative writing at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Office of Communications

JACKSON – Professor Louis Bourgeoris, who taught creative writing at Mississippi State Penitentiary in 2014, took his Prison Writes class to the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in the fall of 2015.

The class started with 30 participants: 15 of the Youthful Offender Unit inmates and 15 female offenders from the adult population. Four of the adult offenders did not finish the class. Those who completed the class presented their work to staff on Dec. 18.

Each class meeting consisted of three activities: workshop, writing exercises and discussion of reading and technique. Students were required to write at least one hour a day. At the end of the semester students turned in a portfolio containing all of their work for the semester.

"We have received a lot of positive feedback from the female participants. Their presentations were very enlightening and interesting," said CMCF Superintendent Ron King. ■

Commissioner's Committee [continued]

Commissioner Marshall Fisher outlines his purpose for the advisory panel. (Pictured Left - Right, left side of table) Officers Dexter Expose, Beverly Corder, Angela Harper, (Pictured Left - Right, right side of table) Ben White, Robert Dudley, and Kimberly Green.

[Continued from page 7]

• **Angela Harper,** Region 2
Harper is a probation and parole agent in Hinds County. She is a former Jackson police officer. She has several years of experience working with numerous community and civic leaders. She obtained a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Jackson State University. She has worked for MDOC since Sept. 2, 2014.

• **William "Ben" White,** Region 3.
White has nearly 20 years in law enforcement. He will mark his 12th year with MDOC in April. He has always worked in probation and parole, mainly with the Intensive Supervision Program, or house arrest, from 2007-2008. He worked with the Marion County Sheriff's Department for about 1.5 years as a deputy sheriff before coming to work for MDOC in 2004. He started his law enforcement career in 1998 with Ocoee (Fla.) Police Department as a patrol officer. ■

Prison Tours [continued]

[Continued from page 15]

...and Real Property Management were no exception when they toured Parchman on July 8, to view conditions at the aging prison.

Parchman gets its share of visitors from both near and far, with most being high school students, not only because of death row, but also because of its historical connection to blues.

At CMCF, the Youthful Offender Unit is quite popular.

"I believe that human rights are at the forefront of concern today, especially the treatment of incarcerated juveniles," said Warden Leander Parker, explaining why he thinks more than a dozen different groups visited the YOU in 2015. "Mississippi is exceeding many other states in this area. From a criminal justice academic perspective, it is always best to allow students to see things firsthand."

Parker believes that tours for undergrad students and youth organizations like Camp Shelby Youth Challenge Program and Quitman County High School "are a teaching tool to deter inappropriate and socially unacceptable behavior."

Youth with Quitman County and the Camp Shelby program are among the regular visitors at CMCF.

Canadian officers were another group walking CMCF grounds in 2015. They were able to tour as a result of a long-standing relationship with the University of Southern Mississippi. For the last 20 years, USM has taken its criminal justice students to Canada (Quebec and Ottawa) on a field study. This year students from the Campus Notre-Dame-de-Ste-Foy, Quebec City Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police visited USM, police departments, and correctional facilities in the state, with a stop at CMCF on the itinerary.

When Quitman County High School students toured CMCF, the group of mostly females, visited the CMCF Women's Close Custody R/C Maximum Security Units. They viewed the living areas and recreation pen for a maximum security inmate.

Several offenders talked about life inside prison and how they came to be there. Many of the offenders voiced the negative impact drugs have had on their lives and family members, and talked about the importance of staying in school and making better decisions.

"I believe that visits like these have an impact," a Quitman County staff member with the group said. ■

Members of the Corrections and Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force (Pictured left to right) Circuit Judge Vernon Cotten, Desoto County Jail Administrator Chad Wicker, Desoto County Supervisor Mark Gardner, and Warren County Sheriff Marvin Pace listen as an instructor (pictured center) for the technical violation center (TVC) shares the curriculum for offenders. MDOC created the TVC as a result of House Bill 585. The taskforce toured the center on Oct. 30 to see first hand how it operates.

Youthful Offender Unit:

Helping Young People Follow a Different Path

Office of Communications

PEARL - SONIC BOOM didn't describe the sound within the walls of the Youthful Offender Unit one October day at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl, but it was full of rhythm.

A group of music education students and professors from Jackson State University gave offenders a lesson in making music.

Such activity is believed to be therapeutic. Drumming, for example, is an exercise that can help connect oneself to others.

"The goal is to use music to help improve offenders' socio-emotional disorders, such as stress and anxiety," said Dr. Alyssa Killebrew, mental health director for the YOU.

"It helps them to self-express with different parts of their body, and the overall idea is mantra – to achieve self-calm, to listen, and connect with their inner-child and emotions," said B. L. Fish, a retired professor from JSU, who has been teaching drumming for 40 years. The partnership with the YOU was a first-time experience for him.

Andrew Lewis, a JSU music professor, and 13 undergrad students met with the YOU offenders on Oct. 29. "Music can encourage them forever," Lewis said.

Music therapy is just one of many therapeutic programs at the YOU. The YOU inmates have also participated in art therapy sessions and created a mural with Anne Dennis, the CMCF art therapy instructor who is also a member of the Mississippi Arts Commission's Artist Roster. YOU Principal Roshel Bullie, said more rehabilitation type services are to be announced.

During the music therapy, students like Michael Minor showed the offenders how to play 'chords' on the guitar, while others taught them how to warm up their voices and sing and how to play piano.

"It is my duty to serve, and that's why I favor this opportunity, and these kids are still people, so they need a way to express themselves," Minor said.

YOU Warden Leander Parker and Killebrew hope to make the Jackson State student group a regular part of the YOU program.

CMCF Superintendent Ron King said, "These specific programs have provided an opportunity for the youthful offenders to express themselves in a positive and meaningful manner. By creating an environment that is structured but not rigid, these activities allowed the youths to open up and speak about issues that normal correctional programs and settings would not have allowed."

"I have personally spoken with individuals in the Youthful Offender Program about drawings and writings that exhibited their ability to deal with circumstances that in the past resulted in acts of misconduct and/or criminal behavior."

Bullie said, "All of the activities make a difference in the lives of the youthful offenders. The impact is greater on some than on others, but an impact is made nonetheless. The mural with Dennis turned out to be beautiful and none of the offenders that participated received any RVR's during the time of the activity nor thereafter. They were also featured on msbyways.com The offenders that participated in the lesson with Jackson State University's Sonic Boom of the South have some aspirations to attend college when they complete their incarceration. Graduation ceremonies always have an impact on the offenders because they see with their own eyes that their classmates can do it. Therefore, there is hope for them as well."

Q. Brooks, one of the YOU offenders, said, "I was 15 when I first came to the YOU Unit. Since I have been here it has changed me for the good. I am able to think better and more positive. I can relate better to situations than when I was in the free world. I think the YOU is a place where young adults come when they have made bad decisions, but will get peace of mind even though we are still in prison. The staff is very respectful and understanding people. They come to work every day just to help us. They tell us they believe in us even though we have made a mistake. They care about us very much. I thank the YOU Unit for giving us a second chance."

The YOU offenders not only participate in school and extracurricular programs but they also have the opportunity to learn a trade in the Barber program. "By obtaining a recognized and credible certificate of completion, these individuals have the capabilities to obtain meaningful employment upon release in a field that has opportunities and stability," King said. "The participants also have a sense of pride by completing a difficult program when many have only experienced failures."

Bullie said the YOU is considering a mentoring program where the youthful offenders can have their own personal mentor. "Additionally, we are working on having classes provided called the Alpha Project to teach them coping skills and other attributes. We are looking at having Antonio Wright, a motivation speaker, return to give one-on-one sessions with some of the offenders on overcoming obstacles in life," Bullie said.

The YOU is one of the most unique juvenile prisons in the country. It was established in December 2012 following a court settlement. It can house 42 offenders. ■

Youthful offenders get a guitar lesson from Jackson State University students during a visit on Oct. 30 as a part of music therapy.

Susan M. Hunter Scholarship Recipient

Leigh Mabry Flemmons (center) is a 2015 Susan M. Hunter Scholarship recipient. To her right (far left) is her father, retired MDOC employee Keith Flemmons, and to her left (far right) is Commissioner Marshall L. Fisher.

Office of Communications

JACKSON - Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher congratulates Leigh Mabry Flemmons, the 2015 Susan M. Hunter Scholarship recipient.

Flemmons is the daughter of Lynda and Keith Flemmons, an on-site manager at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

Flemmons is a sophomore student at Mississippi State University. She is studying business administration and has appeared on the Dean's list each semester. She is a 2014 graduate of Bayou Academy in Cleveland, Miss. Her father retired from the Mississippi Department of Corrections in 2013. She is a previous $1,000 Hunter scholarship recipient.

The scholarship is named in honor of Susan M. Hunter, former director of the Prisons Division at the National Institute of Corrections, who died in 2004. ■

The YOU is Planting Orange Trees

You may soon see orange trees growing on the grounds of the Youthful Offender Unit (YOU).

YOU Principal Roshel Bullie said, "The library is full of plants that are taken care of by offenders daily. The orange trees were grown from seeds that were from oranges they had for snacks. After multiple tries, they could not get them to live, but we are going to keep trying. It is a learning experience for the offenders and the staff."

The greenhouse at the YOU was purchased in 2014 and built by offenders. All of the offenders will get an opportunity to participate in the garden project that will kick off in 2016. ■

Agriculture Enterprise is a Staple in the Prison System

Stanley H. Brooks, MPAE

PARCHMAN - The Mississippi Prison Agriculture Enterprise (MPAE), created by state law, plays a major role in the prison system. Its purpose is to:

- Reduce the cost of state government by producing and processing food for use by inmates;
- Operate primarily with inmate labor;
- Serve the security goals of MDOC through the reduction of inmate idleness; and
- Produce and market products that will help make a profit for the operation.

MPAE consists of the row crop and garden operations, farm shop, vegetable processing and cold storage.

Crops include corn, soybeans, rice, peas, okra, butter beans, greens, cabbage, broccoli and snap beans.

A wet spring and dry summer affected the overall yield, which will affected the cash flow and the amount of vegetables to feed the offenders. ■

MSP Cemetery Gets an Overdue Makeover

Office of Communications

PARCHMAN - Sometimes an inmate sentenced to Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman never leaves the grounds, even after death. Two acres is the final resting place for more than 300 inmates whose families could not afford to bury them or never claimed the body. In some cases, there are no family members.

Records show that the first burial was in 1930. The cemetery, which resembled an abandoned field until earlier this year, received a major face-lift at the request of Commissioner Marshall Fisher. "They may be inmates but they are still human beings," Fisher said. "A place of rest requires dignity for all. Everybody matters or nobody matters. These men have finished their sentence."

The project took several months to complete. Crosses were added to mark each grave, the grass was manicured, and a sign was installed to identify the property. Also the fence was updated. ■

Before

After

Counties Agree to Keep State Inmates in Work Program without Payment

Office of Communications

JACKSON - In early August, counties signed an agreement with the Mississippi Department of Corrections to house and work state inmates without reimbursement.

Twenty-six of the 30 original counties now are participating in the new Joint State County Work Program.

MDOC moved 75 inmates to community work centers from counties that have not signed an agreement. Those counties include Holmes and Issaquena. Inmates had already been removed from Hinds, the other county.

The counties that have signed the agreement are Attala, Bolivar, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Grenada, Jefferson, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lincoln, Marion, Monroe, Panola, Pearl River, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Scott, Simpson, Stone, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tishomingo, Union, and Winston. More than 300 inmates are now in the program.

Under the new agreement, counties must provide alcohol and drug treatment and GED programs to all JSCWP inmates at the county's expense. MDOC still will pay for medical care for inmates.

Ending the previous program allowed MDOC to redirect $3.2 million. As of Aug. 1, 2015, the state no longer pays counties $20 per day per inmate.

Sheriffs who have signed the agreement have requested additional offenders. However, because of fewer eligible inmates, MDOC can't always quickly grant the requests.

Inmates in counties without agreements were moved to the state's community work centers. "We are no longer operating under the status quo," Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. "Detractors should anticipate a different way of doing business at MDOC."

Fisher plans to make more changes as he assesses the agency's operations. "We are in the initial throes of a sea change," he said. "If the current trend of having fewer inmates incarcerated and more on community supervision continues, we must rethink how we are using taxpayer's money."

Fisher said the number of participating counties shows the agreement is a win, win situation. "Counties can continue to use inmate labor to do trash pickup and other jobs," Fisher said. "However, I caution all parties that this program may need to be revisited because, if the inmate population continues to drop as we see the full effects of House Bill 585, the number of eligible inmates for this program will drop." ■

Flowood CWC Offender cleaning up litter on Lakeland Drive in Flowood.

Operation Green Clean

MDOC Offers to Help with Anti-Litter Efforts

Office of Communications

LEXINGTON - Offenders filling large orange bags with trash have once again lined highways and roads in Holmes County thanks to Operation Green Clean. In October Sheriff Willie March was the first to benefit from Commissioner Marshall Fisher's decision to offer mobile inmate work crews to counties, upon request, in support of anti-litter efforts. The availability of the crews depends upon the number of requests. Holmes County lost free inmate labor after it opted not to continue housing and working state inmates without reimbursement. Twenty-six of the 30 counties in the original Joint State County Work Program have signed an agreement with MDOC. "Grateful is what I am," the longtime sheriff said. "It's not the MDOC's job, but it is the MDOT's job to keep highways clean." "Clean Sweep," as March calls the litter pickup in his county, succeeds the MDOT's Inmate Litter Removal program. "Other sheriffs should jump on board," March said. ■

Holmes County Sheriff Willie March requested MDOC's assistance with trash pick-up under Operation Green Clean. Holmes County is one of the few original counties that had a Joint-State-County Work Program but did not sign an agreement with MDOC to continue housing inmates without reimbursement.

Working with the Mentally Ill in Corrections

Office of Communications

JACKSON - The National Alliance on Mental Illness - Mississippi (NAMI-MS) presented a training film about correctional officers and inmates sharing their stories of living with mental illnesses in prison on Nov. 6 at the Jackson Medical Mall Community Training Room.

The film, entitled CODE or Correctional Officers De-escalation Education, is an educational tool for those concerned about the institutions that house millions of mentally ill persons in the United States. It was created by NAMI - Tennessee. Two representatives - Jeff Fladen and Melinda Hardin - from that chapter were at the showing.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher gave opening remarks. The Mississippi Department of Corrections has about 3,200 inmates indicating mental illness among its nearly 19,000 incarcerated population.

Fisher talked about PTSD. "PTSD is real and tangible, and some officers can't handle the stress of the job," he said, recalling a horrifying moment of police work in Texas when a man died in his arms. He said some former officers have committed suicide.

NAMI is concerned that correctional officers are not effectively trained to handle an offender who may display unruly behavior but actually is suffering from mental illness. Tameka Tobias-Smith is Mississippi's chapter president.

During a panel discussion, panelists said too often correctional officers or police officers do not recognize when an offender has a mental illness and that can lead to sometimes fatal circumstances.

The panelists included Dr. James "Skip" Brewster of the VA Medical Center, NAMI - Tennessee Western Regional Coordinator Melinda Hardin, Attorney Malcolm Harrison, Southern Poverty Law Center community advocate Thuli Katerere, Probation/Parole agent Christiane Williams, also a Mental Health court coordinator for MDOC; and ACLU Mississippi advocacy coordinator Blake Feldman. ■

Tameka Tobias-Smith, executive director of the local chapter of NAMI, greets the audience at the debut of the CODE film on Nov. 6.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher is one of the guest speakers at the showing of the Correctional Officers De-escalation Education film at the Jackson Medical Mall Community Room.

Pictured third from the left is MDOC Probation/Parole agent Christiane Williams, who shares with the audience the role of a probation officer in working with probationers suffering from mental illness and the challenges that come with that responsibility.

Staff Shortages Prompting More CWC Closings, Other Changes at MDOC

Office of Communications

JACKSON – Chronic staffing shortages are prompting the Mississippi Department of Corrections to consider closing three more community work centers.

Community work centers in Bolivar, Yazoo and Jackson counties could be closed starting in January, bringing to five the number of such closings in one year. Employees from those facilities would go to other locations in the system.

The agency also is having trouble staffing the three state prisons and retaining adequate staff for its probation and parole offices.

"When I was appointed corrections commissioner by Gov. (Phil) Bryant, I said my priority was increasing the abysmal pay of corrections employees," Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. "These people do jobs that no one else will do. If we don't increase wages that leads to retaining staff, there is no question that we will pay a price."

Lawmakers in the 2015 session granted Fisher's request for exemption from the state Personnel Board so he could reorganize MDOC. However, he has since been unable to fund and sustain a pay raise for employees as a result of making changes because of a glitch in the exemption legislation.

After getting a state attorney general's opinion that doesn't clear up the intent of the legislation, Fisher said he intends to go back before the Legislature to ask that the law be amended. Meanwhile, he is asking the attorney general to reconsider the opinion.

"I've got a public safety issue," Fisher said. "We've got to pay these people a livable wage. I have asked for help from the leadership and have received commitments to support us."

In requesting that the law be amended, Fisher said he also intends to seek another year of exemption from state personnel rules.

"I have not used this legislation to conduct mass dismissals of people as some accused me of wanting to do," Fisher said. "I need the authority to run the agency as I see fit in order to make sure we are adequately and efficiently performing our mission of maintaining public safety."

As current conditions exist, Fisher said, the agency is seriously understaffed in key areas and pay is likely a primary factor.

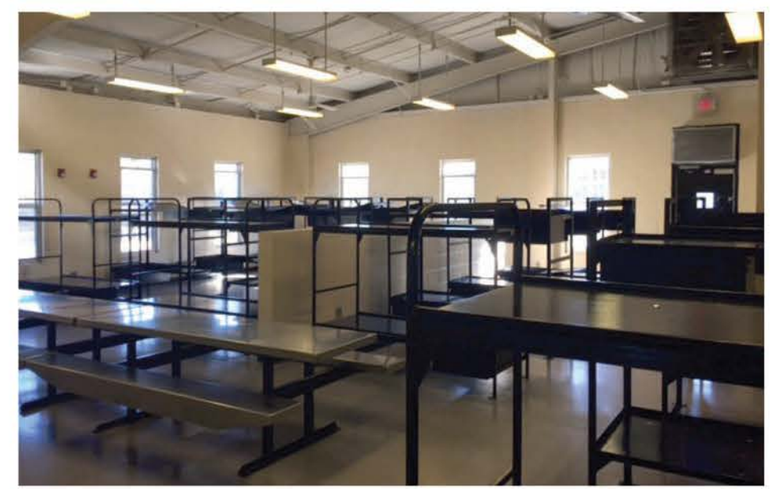
The average pay for a corrections officer is $25,968.72. Most of the corrections officers are women, many of whom are single parents. The agency's turnover rate for corrections officer is 47 percent.

The average pay for a probation/parole agent is $32,520.02. There is a 21 percent vacancy rate for parole/probation agents.

"We are looking at other changes, too," Fisher said. For example, MDOC is consolidating some units and changing the mission of others.

The agency closed the Alcorn County Community Work Center in November and the Jefferson County Community Work Center in May.

"It is difficult to look my people in the eyes and tell them that because of some technical language, they cannot get much deserved compensation," Fisher said. "Everybody matters or nobody matters. These people matter." ■



Alcorn County Community Work Center stands empty. The center closed on Nov. 11, and is the second center to close since May 2015 because of chronic staffing shortages. (Photo by CCAD Lee McTeer)

Inmates Removed from Alcorn County Regional Correctional Facility

Editor's note:
MDOC began doing business with Alcorn County again after Ben Caldwell took office in January. "I want to be crystal clear that the only reason I agreed to put back inmates and make the county whole again is because of my respect for new Sheriff Ben Caldwell," Commissioner Marshall Fisher said.

Pictured are things found during a shakedown of the Alcorn County Regional Facility on Oct. 29. One surprise was keys discovered in the hands of an inmate. A jail employee confirmed the keys were given to the inmate.

Office of Communications

MDOC removed 240 Inmates from Alcorn County Regional Correctional Facility on Oct. 29 following a joint investigation of alleged actions that jeopardized public safety.

The inmates were placed in other MDOC facilities. MDOC learned of the alleged misconduct from the Office of the State Auditor (OSA), and the two agencies worked together.

"These allegations were disturbing to hear," Commissioner Marshall Fisher said then. "Inmates allegedly were allowed to change uniforms disguising their custody status, work on personal vehicles and go across state lines."

"I thank State Auditor Stacey Pickering's office for bringing these serious allegations to our attention," Fisher said. "The alleged actions indicated clear violations of MDOC practices and procedures. Therefore, we were compelled to act accordingly. I want to be clear once again that we have zero tolerance for such flippant practices."

OSA agents are investigating funds that are under the control of employees at the Alcorn County Justice Center. Specifically, OSA Agents are looking into the use of state inmates working on private property, the possible misappropriation of funds received for the sale of pallets by employees of the Justice Center, as well as other irregularities in the Justice Center's finances.

"My office will continue looking into the resources that were improperly handled," Pickering said. "I would also like to thank Marshall Fisher and his team at the Department of Corrections, along with the FBI and United States Attorney's Office, for their work and support during this investigation."

Before the inmates were removed, agents from MDOC and the Auditor's Office conducted a shakedown of the facility. Some of the items seized include 44 cell phones, 30 ear buds, 22 cell phone chargers, six cans of smokeless tobacco, five shanks, assorted batteries, assorted over-the-counter medication, about 20 pounds of tobacco.

Also, an inmate was found with keys to the facility. A staff member acknowledged giving the keys to the inmate. MDOC referred the matter back to the facility to address.

MDOC's contract with Alcorn County was suspended until further notice. The county had to submit a written plan of action including preventive measures to avoid any future occurrences related to security breaches.

Minimum-non-community and medium custody inmates like those housed at Alcorn must be under direct armed supervision whenever they are outside the perimeter of the designated facility, based on MDOC policy.

The removal of inmates is the second time in two years in which MDOC has had to suspend housing inmates at Alcorn County Regional. In November 2013, MDOC stopped sending inmates to the regional after learning six ineligible inmates had been given unauthorized passes. One of those inmates died while out, alerting MDOC to the violation. The county later submitted a plan of action before receiving more inmates. ■

Mills Understands Commissioner's Zero Tolerance for Inmate-on-Staff Assault

Office of Communications

JACKSON - When Parchman Deputy Warden Andrew Mills hears Commissioner Marshall Fisher talk about zero tolerance for inmate-on-staff assault, he understands the reason better than anyone.

He knows because he was among the 50 staffers assaulted on the job in 2015. Mills will tell you that being assaulted by an inmate from whom he was removing restraints in May was minor.

Rather, Mills, 58, has a unique understanding because of another assault four years earlier in which he was knocked unconscious and suffered life-changing facial injuries at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

"I knew something was going on but I didn't know exactly what it was going to be," he said of that day, Easter weekend in 2012. "I didn't even consider that I was the target of it."

An investigation would later show Mills was targeted because he said he refused to be intimidated by inmates trafficking contraband through the dining hall. He was assaulted after he responded to a disturbance in the feeding line that he had been monitoring.

In a matter-of-fact tone, he describes how he dealt with one disturbance after another following the initial one by an inmate at the tray hole. "Every time I would stop one and move away, they would start another one," he said. "I ended up with three different offenders on me."

When he dropped his guard, an inmate jumped him from behind and knocked him out. "I didn't know I had been hit," he said. "I thought I had slipped and hit the floor."

He immediately awoke when his face hit the floor, he said. But inmates had already started piling on him. Fellow officers rushed to his aid, spraying him while spraying the inmates, he said.

He had to have multiple plates put in his face, an eye orbit repaired, and his jaw wired. He was off the job for three months.

Two inmates were prosecuted, including the instigator whom Mills ended up seeing after transferring to Parchman from Harrison County Community Work Center, where he worked after leaving SMCI. He has held his current post at MSP's Area II since July 1, 2015.

"I talked to him," Mills said, noting that the inmate appeared to panic when the two saw each other. "I told him I don't have any grudge. You can't hold onto grudges in this business or you will crawl into a bottle."

In the assault at Parchman, Mills said he re-injured his back when both he and the inmate who became aggressive with him lost their footing after "I took him down on the bed. We both went down on our sides on the bed." He was pinned with the inmate when other officers came to help him, he said. The inmate attempted to gouge his eyes, and had already bitten him on the thumb and punched him, he said.

Mills' cases illustrate how a typical day can quickly become an atypical day under the most usual circumstances. That's why correctional officers should be paid more, Commissioner Fisher said. "This work is dangerous," Fisher said. "To start correctional officers out with $22,639 is abysmal. My goal is to get these people more pay. They deserve it."

Most of the assaults in 2015 occurred at MSP. In one of the SMCI cases, Officer Zachary Bolton suffered four minor stab wounds to the back and side of his head when he was assaulted by several offenders in Unit A-1, B zone. The assault occurred July 24.

Understandably, Mills could have put a career in corrections behind him after being injured at SMCI when he was a watch commander. But he said he has left corrections and come back because the career has been "a good fit for me."

"I have always gravitated toward service type jobs," said Mills, who is now pursuing a master's degree to further advance his career. "I left corrections for a while, eight years, back in the 1990s. I worked some good jobs, but nothing lasted. I eventually came back to corrections. God has plans for all of us. I feel that corrections is where His plan for me is." ■

Parchman Deputy Warden Andrew Mills is one of the 50 officers assaulted on the job in 2015. Mills has been assaulted more than once at work. He suffered major injuries in one of the inmate-on-staff attacks.

Citizens Providing Input On How Money Is Spent for Inmates' Benefits

CMCF Superintendent's Office

JACKSON - Two citizens and representatives from the Offices of the State Auditor and State Treasurer are starting work to help the Mississippi Department of Corrections determine how to spend a special fund created years ago to benefit inmates.

The Inmate Welfare Fund Committee was expanded from seven to nine members to include non-MDOC personnel under a new law that took effect July 1, 2015.

Profits from the commissary and inmate telephone call commissions are deposited in the Inmate Welfare Fund and are used to pay for services, supplies and equipment toward inmates' educational, recreational and programmatic needs. As of June 30, the fund had approximately $1.2 million available for expenditures.

"This is the first time MDOC will have input from not only an inmate's family member, but also a citizen whom we know from the governor's recent prison task force is not shy about speaking her mind," Commissioner Fisher said referring to the Rev. Gene Henderson and Attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey, both of whom he appointed to the committee. "I can tell from the first meeting that this group will be engaged, and I look forward to its input."

The group held its first meeting on Nov. 12.

In addition to Henderson and Slaughter-Harvey, Deputy Treasurer Laura Jackson and Performance Audit Division Director Sam Atkinson are the members outside MDOC.

Henderson and Slaughter-Harvey said they welcome having a say in determining what types of items should be spent for inmates' benefits.

"Unfortunately, people we love make bad choices and must pay the consequences," Henderson said. "When that happens, everyone in the family suffers. I am just learning about the Inmate Welfare Fund and understand its purpose is to provide resources and services to inmates that the state cannot or does not provide. My goal is to help insure that these funds are used in the best interest for those this fund has been established to help."

Said Slaughter-Harvey: "It is unfair to the inmate and to taxpayers to have companies profit at our expense, so we have already started looking at the exorbitant prices charged for basic necessities. Too much of this leads to corruption which causes taxpayers to lose faith in the system and leaders. As usual, we will encourage citizen input."

Henderson, of Brandon, is past president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and former longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Brandon.

Slaughter-Harvey served on the task force Gov. Phil Bryant created last year to review MDOC's contracts. The five-member task force completed its work earlier this year. An attorney and a former assistant secretary of state, she is president of the Legacy Foundation.

The committee's duties also include conducting an annual needs assessment of the Inmate Welfare Fund and evaluating proposals for administering the inmate canteen.

MDOC members are Deputy Commissioners Jerry Williams and Christy Gutherz; and the three state prisons' leaders, Superintendents Earnest Lee of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, Ron King from Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Jacquelyn Banks of South Mississippi Correctional Institution. ■

Commissioner's Statement Leads to Speculation about Commissary's Future

Office of Communications

JACKSON - Family members complain that the items are too expensive.

Vendors contest not getting the contract.

So Commissioner Marshall Fisher had a solution for the controversy surrounding the inmate commissary. He issued a statement in December that left many wondering what would happen to the commissary before finally revealing his plan weeks later. His statement was as follows:

"The Mississippi Department of Corrections is seriously evaluating the feasibility of discontinuing the commissary program.

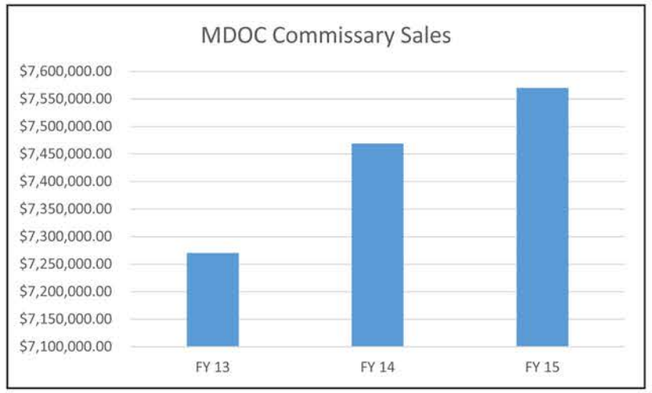
From a security standpoint, commissary items have become an institutional bartering tool for the inmate gang population. We have had about 50 staff assaulted in 2015. Yes those underpaid, under appreciated staff. The ability to buy commissary items is a privilege, not a right and not a statutory requirement.

Operating a commissary in house has been done in the past at MDOC and is currently being done in other states. We simply do not have the staff to do it at this time because of the large rate of attrition currently experienced by MDOC due to low pay.

Contrary to perception, MDOC is aware that there is a cost associated with the privilege to use commissary inside our institutions. The prices of the majority of the 300 plus items currently sold are down substantially from previous prices. We are keenly aware that family members and inmates complain. Additionally we receive complaints from vendors who want the contract. Generally when a specific vendor doesn't get a contract he or she desires, the vendor complains to public officials and attempts to cause them to pressure MDOC into acquiescing to their desires (profits). Pursuant to that not working we are pummeled with public records requests, whereupon MDOC is party to a lawsuit. At times, the vendors' attorneys have even asked for an AG's opinion.

So all in all nobody is happy and MDOC gets the brunt of complaints, although we would point out that all profit to MDOC goes directly to the Inmate Welfare Fund to benefit the inmates and only the inmates. The profits benefit inmate recreational, educational and legal needs, contrary to perception fostered by those either ignorant of the truth or using the misinformation to further an agenda." ■

A package of Ramen Noodles, by far one of our highest volume items, now sells for 50 cents per bag before tax compared to the previous pre-tax price of 59 cents. A pair of eye glasses now goes for 44 cents a pair vs. $10.59 a pair previously. Inmates can now send a stamped card for $1 less, going from $2.75 to $1.75.



Thank You
For Your Service

Military - As of November 2015

Community Corrections/Central Office

NAME	TITLE	ACTIVATED
Young, Arthur	Prob/Parole Agent III	12/15/2011
TOTAL 1		

SMCI

NAME	TITLE	ACTIVATED
Bolton, Zachary	CO I	8/31/2015
Chestange, Maurice	CO T	4/1/2013
Crews Jr., Sidney T.	CO II	8/25/2008
TOTAL 3		

Agency Total: 4

Prepared by: A. White
Updated: Dec. 10

Returned from Duty

CC/CO

Otis Bailey
Vicky Erkhart
Williestine Gallion
Plez Hill
Ricardo Polk
Samuel Tucker
Roy Woods

CMCF

Larry Cole
Byron Evans
Katrina Harris
Marcus Lyles
Melvin Smith
Ronnie Thomas
Alvin Washington
Joseph Willis

MSP

Edward Coleman
Clyde Davis
Kirby Griffm
Carlester Hicks
Melvin Hilson
Earnest Lee
Roger Lewis
Darron Pruitt
Kenny Scott

SMCI

Adrian Keys
Darnisha Washington

Graduations

Academy Officers

MSP Class 2015-4M

Date:
July 29

Guest Speaker:
Chaplain Joel Hammons

Graduates:
27 (8 males, 19 females)

Class Motto:
"Any man can win a fight, but it takes a team to win a war."

CMCF Class 15-5C

Date:
July 29

Guest Speaker:
Warden Wendell Banks

Graduates:
20 (4 males, 16 females)

Class Motto:
"One team, one missions."

CMCF Class 15-7C

Date:
Dec. 15

Guest Speaker:
Warden Wendell Banks

Graduates:
7 (4 males, 3 females)

Class Motto:
"Striving for Success."

MSP Class 2015-5M

Date:
Sept. 11

Guest Speaker:
Chaplain Stanley Williams

Graduates:
12 (4 males, 8 females)

Class Motto:
"Too small to be anything but great."

CMCF Class 15-6C

Date:
Sept. 14 [pictured below]

Guest Speaker:
Deputy Warden James Fillyaw

Graduates:
9 (3 males, 6 females)

Class Motto:
"MDOC Blues, respect the rules, blood, sweat, & tears, show no fears."

SMCI Class 2015-6S

Date:
July 28

Guest Speaker:
Rev. Kenneth Powell,
SMCI Director of Chaplains

Graduates:
9 (4 males, 5 females)

Class Motto:
"We came here as one, now we are family."

CMCF Class 15-6C

SMCI Class 2015-7S

Date:
Sept. 11

Guest Speaker:
Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks

Graduates:
12 (6 males, 6 females)

Class Motto:
"Born to succeed, built to lasts."

Vocational, GED, A&D Inmates

MSP

Date:
Oct. 1

Guest Speaker:
Warden Sonya Stanciel

Graduates: 23
(5 in Carpentry, 6 in Diesel Mechanics, 1 in Electronics, 6 in HVAC, 4 in Small Engine, 1 in Welding)

CMCF

Date:
Sept. 24

Guest Speaker:
Donald Pendergrast

Graduates: 37
(Females - 4 in Business Technology, 4 in Upholstery, 4 in Apparel & Textile, 5 in Cosmetology, 2 in Family Dynamics, 2 in Life Skills, 5 in GED Females, 2 in Independent Studies ; Males - 4 in GED Males, 1 in Distant Learning, 4 in Practical Computer Literacy)

SMCI

Date:
Sept. 10

Guest Speaker:
SMCI Vocational Director Sarah James

Graduates: 14
(5 in Electrical, 2 in Welding, 6 in Mechanics, 1 in GED)

Pike Co. CWC A&D

Date: Sept. 3

Guest Speakers:
Rev. Robert Knox, Elder Walter Williams, Angela McKenzie, and Eric Patterson

Graduates: 14
(Short-Term general population offenders)

SMCI A&D

Date: Aug. 17

Guest Speaker:
Warden Mr. Marshall Turner.

Graduates: 35
(25 Short-Term general population offenders, 9 Long-Term general population offenders, 1 RID offender)

YOU

Date:
Dec. 4

Guest Speaker:
Jackson City Councilman De'Keither Stamps

Graduates: 15
(5 in barbers, 3 in barber instructors, 5 in custodial care and grounds-keeping, 1 in GED, 1 in MS Occupational Diploma)

MSP A&D

Dates:
July 7, Aug. 17, Sept. 15, Oct. 15, Nov. 16, and Dec. 15

Guest Speakers:
Chaplain Joel Hammons, Correctional Supervisor Sheronda Mitchell, Academic Teacher Gwendolyn Williams, Deputy Warden Brenda Cox, Correctional Supervisor Sequcia Wren, and Warden Timothy Morris

Graduates:
134 (Long-Term general population offenders)

YOU Warden Leander Parker (left) and YOU Principal Roshel Bullie (right) express how proud they are of the young men at the Youthful Offender Unit graduation on Dec. 4.

Employee Recognition

Each quarter, employees at the three main prisons - Mississippi State Penitentiary, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and South Mississippi Correctional Institution - the three regions of Community Corrections and Central Office are recognized with the following awards. The pictures are from quarterly meetings at MSP, July 8; CMCF, July 14; SMCI, July 22; and Central Office, July 28.

Award of Excellence

- An employee by his or her actions or deeds has contributed to the betterment of society or to the community

Heroism Award

- The saving of a life or the prevention of serious injury to a department employee, an offender under the supervision of the department, or a citizen
- Personally risking own safety to save a life or prevent serious injury or to protect or save state property from natural or man made disasters

Employee of the Month

- Professionalism and effectiveness in dealing with staff, inmates/offenders, or the public
- Significant contribution to operational productivity or efficiency
- Outstanding abilities, special skills or achievements in carrying out job assignments

Tenure

- An award presented every five years of an employee's term with the Mississippi Department of Corrections

Extra Effort

- Shows exemplary work attendance
- Significant contribution to work force cohesiveness, pride, morale, enthusiasm, & productivity
- Enhanced interpersonal, interagency or general public communication
- Willingness to enhance personal and professional education and growth

Safety Award

- An employee who has exhibited an exceptional effort towards safety by identifying and preventing a deficiency that could have caused significant bodily injury to employees and great loss

MSP/R1

Mississippi State Penitentiary / Region I

Staff Employee of the Month, May: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Jewell Morris and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Extra Effort, May, June: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Romander Nelson (June), Alma Singleton (May) and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Staff of the Month, June: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Marylen Sturdivant and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Security Officer the Month, May: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Romander Nelson and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Security Employee of the Month, June: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Jeffrey Kilpatrick and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Extra Effort, June: [Back row] Superintendent Earnest Lee, Romander Nelson and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams; [Front row] Derrick Sanders, Leather Williams and Sorrell Perry

Extra Effort, June: [Back row] Superintendent Earnest Lee, Eugene Shorter, Stephen Rogers and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams; [Front row] Yasmine Taylor, Sharonda Willis and Shaunta Scurlark

Extra Effort, June: [Back row] Superintendent Earnest Lee, Arlisa Martin and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams; [Front row] Raynaredo Black, Annette Ratliff and Michael Scruggs

Tenure, 10 years: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Alma Singleton and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Tenure, 15 years: [Back row] Superintendent Earnest Lee, Marylen Sturdivant and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams; [Front row] Angela Maxon, Nathanel Murphree and Judy Anderson

Tenure, 15 years: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Stephen Rogers and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Tenure, 30 years: Superintendent Earnest Lee, Larry Belton and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Extra Effort, May: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Tony Harris and CCD Lee McTeer

Safety, April - June: Patricia Dean-Wilson, Roy Simon, Rasheeda Washington and Lynn Dixon

Safety Health & Wellness: Steve Harris and Patricia Dean-Wilson

Tenure, 15 Years: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Rasheeda Washington and CCD Lee McTeer

At the conclusion of the quarterly meeting, employees dine on lunch prepared by inmates in culinary arts class at Mississippi State Penitentiary.

MSP/R1

Larry Belton celebrates 30 years with the Mississippi Department of Corrections after receiving a certificate marking his tenure.

Not Pictured

Tenure

5 Years

Consuela Hayes (MSP)
Leroy Chillis (Region I)
John Hora (Region I)

10 Years

Yashika Boyd (MSP)
Lacey Clark (MSP)
Sharon Hudson (MSP)
Bonnie Hutchins (MSP)
Jessie Lathan (MSP)
Sarah Sumner (MSP)
Sequcia Wren (MSP)
Shatoby Smith (Region I)

15 Years

Kevin Gamble (MSP)
Gloria Moore (MSP)
Daphen Tyler (MSP)
Christy Brooks (Region I)
Amanda Jones (Region I)
Jessie Watson (Region I)

20 Years

Kelvin Johnson (MSP)
Ellis Bevis (Region I)
Billy Smith (Region I)

Employees of the Month

April

Dean Epps (MSP)

Extra Effort

May

Shirley Miller (MSP)
Charles Williams (MSP)
Candace Applewhite (Region I)
Gregory Avant (Region I)
Robert Belew (Region I)
Ellis Bevis (Region I)
Chandra Bonner (Region I)
Joseph Chillis (Region I)
Leroy Chillis (Region I)
Mack Cox (Region I)
Jean Hooper (Region I)
Kathleen Hoyt (Region I)
Jeffrey Hunter (Region I)
Christopher Loden (Region I)
Stanley Modzelewski (Region I)
Yulanda Netterville (Region I)
Michael Perrigan (Region I)
Temelia Phillips Smith (Region I)
Elizabeth Popernik (Region I)
Timothy Pritchett (Region I)
Carver Randle (Region I)
Chadwick Smith (Region I)
James Scott Smith (Region I)
Woody Stokes (Region I)
Susan Swindle (Region I)
Byron Talford (Region I)
Nannette Trotter (Region I)
Christopher Tharp (Region I)
James Tutor (Region I)
Tony Warren (Region I)
Gary Welch (Region I)
Kenneth Winter (Region I)

June

Ashley Freeman (MSP)
Condarro Frieson (MSP)
Ahmad Price (MSP)
Vetrike Price (MSP)
Danielle Tucker (MSP)
Stephanie Walker (MSP)
Charles Wilson (MSP)

Safety

April - June

Majorie Birge (Bolivar CWC)
Linda Mitchell (Greenwood Restitution)
Allen Langdon (Leflore CWC)
Frank Stockett (Noxubee CWC)
Everett Mattheney (Washington CWC)
CCAD Kenneth Fox (Region I/Area I)
CCAD Russell Scott Pannell (Region I/Area II)

CMCF/R2

Central Mississippi Correctional Facility/ Region II

Tenure, 10 years: Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall, CCD Todd King, Yvonne Epps and Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz

Extra Effort, May: Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall, Felicia Beard, Carrie Squires, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz and CCD Todd King

Tenure, 10 years: CCD Todd King, Mamie Terrell, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Safety Award: [Back row] CCD Todd King, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall and Patricia Dean-Wilson; [Front row] Superintendent Ron King and Otis Bailey

Tenure, 20 years: [Back row] Superintendent Ron King, Kattie Fry-Brown, Evera Bates and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall; [Front row] Emma Redd and Rhonda Lee

Tenure, 20 years: Superintendent Ron King, Teresa Burton, Linda Burse, Sheila Parks and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Tenure, 10 years: Superintendent Ron King, Niki Gowdy, Tracy Gardner and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Extra Effort, April, May: [Back row] Superintendent Ron King, Joshua Hampton (April), Jamarias Sparks (April) and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall; [Front row] Calvin Roach (May), Sheila Parks (April) and Kendrell Taylor (April)

Staff Employee of the Month, May: Superintendent Ron King, Kiara Owens and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Extra Effort, May: [Back row] Superintendent Ron King, Pamela Holloway, Lakisha Harrison and Linda Robinson; [Front row] Jasmine Steen, Bettye Phillips and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Extra Effort, May: [Back row] Superintendent Ron King, Joyce Liddell, Jasmine Longley and Keziah Jenkins; [Front row] Kiara Owens, Dortha Burse and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Staff Employee of the Month, June: Superintendent Ron King, Jeffrey Felts and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Officer of the Month, April: Superintendent Ron King, Calvin Roach and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall brings greetings on behalf of Commissioner Marshall Fisher, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Kattie Fry-Brown smiles in response to Superintendent Ron King's congratulations about her 20 years with MDOC. CMCF Personnel Officer Crystal Galloway (far left), Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall share in the laughter.

Class 15-5C stand at attention during the quarterly meeting at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

CMCF/R2

Not Pictured

Tenure

5 Years
Lisa Bass (CMCF)
Laronda Carter (CMCF)
Victoria Crump (CMCF)
Lamonica Easterling (CMCF)
Keith Gooden (CMCF)
Helen Harris (CMCF)
Adrian Myles (CMCF)
Lena Sutton (CMCF)
Brittany Roberson (Region II)

10 Years
Joylene Porter (Region II)
Roy Woods (Region II)

15 Years
Barbara Hunt (CMCF)
Christie Scott (CMCF)
Shelia Stiff (Region II)

20 Years
Carl Arnold (CMCF)
Wendolyn Kimbrough (CMCF)
Ronnie Thomas (CMCF)
Angiela Wells (CMCF)
Jacquelyn Young (CMCF)

Employees of the Month

May
Virna Robinson (CMCF)

Extra Effort

April
Joshaundra Brown (CMCF)
Julia Green (CMCF)
Barbara Hunt (CMCF)
Amiracle Rhodes (CMCF)
Jacquelyn Young (CMCF)

May
Mary Benson (CMCF)
Joosephine Boyd (CMCF)
Brenda Gray (CMCF)
Kennon Keyes (CMCF)
Patricia Mayers (CMCF)
Shaccara Medious (CMCF)
Netsia Philogene (CMCF)
Anslem Turner (CMCF)
Latoya Anderson (Region II)
Minnie Coleman (Region II)
Willistine Gallion (Region II)
Patricia Kemp (Region II)
Diane Porter (Region II)
Jerry Wilder (Region II)
Stacy Wright (Region II)

June
Nashema Spencer (CMCF)

Pam Wilson, chairperson for Region IV with the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC), tells employees the benefits of being a member of MAPC. Wilson regularly appears at quarterly meetings to recruit new members.

Safety

April - June
Supt. Ron King (CMCF)
Leander Parker (YOU)
Chondra Matthews (Flowood Restitution/CWC)
Chondra Matthews (Hinds Restitution)
Valerie Buie (Madison CWC)
Shenicka Jones (Pike CWC)
Barbara Tyler (Wilkinson CWC)
Otis Bailey (Yazoo CWC)
CCAD Marlow Stewart (Region II/Area I)
CCAD Priscilla Tenner (Region II/Area II)
CCAD Rhonda Boyd (Region II/Area III)

SMCI/R3

South Mississippi Correctional Institution/Region III

Extra Effort, April: Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Adrian Keyes, David Hollingshead and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks

Tenure, 5 years: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Kenny Rush and CCD Ken Valentine

Extra Effort, June: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Kimberly Taylor and CCD Ken Valentine

Employee of the Month, June: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Clinton Simon and CCD Ken Valentine

Tenure, 5 years: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, John Hostetter and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks; [Front row] Jamario Clark and Brandy Benjamin-Sims

Tenure, 10 years: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Lisa Herndon and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks; [Front row] Katherine Blount and Lillian Taylor

Tenure, 15 years: Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, David Hollingshead and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks

Staff Employee of the Month, April: Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Kenneth Powell and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks

Extra Effort, June: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Acquaint Taylor, Lisa Herndon, Pamela Causey and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks; [Front row] Mongolia Powe, Melinda Hayes and Leesa Walley

Extra Effort, June: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Emily Wrinkle and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks; [Front row] Lowonda Hayes and Rosilyn Johnson

Correctional Officer of the Month, April: Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Zachary Bolton and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks

Extra Effort, April: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, Christopher Woolman, Thomas Byrd and Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks; [Front row] Carrie Turner, Lillie Fleming and Pleas Sumrall

SMCI/R3

Not Pictured

Tenure

5 Years

Randall Anderson	(SMCI)
Pulissa Johnson	(SMCI)
Paula Nelson	(SMCI)
Lisa Whiting	(SMCI)
Hillery Atkins	(Region III)

10 Years

Sundie Loper	(SMCI)
Sherry Revette	(SMCI)
Bryan Williams	(Region III)
Jason Boykin	(Region III)

20 Years

Clara Mickles	(SMCI)

25 Years

Max Busby	(SMCI)

Employees of the Month

May

Michael Mitchell	(Region III)

Extra Effort

April

Marcus Collins	(SMCI)
Joshua Csaszar	(SMCI)
Exxie Ezell	(SMCI)
Jimmy Gandy	(SMCI)
Kimberly Green	(SMCI)
Wendy Guerin	(SMCI)
William Harris	(SMCI)
Tommy Heathcock	(SMCI)
Joshua Holton	(SMCI)
John Hostetter	(SMCI)
Russell Houston	(SMCI)
Jennifer Jones	(SMCI)
Floyd Judy	(SMCI)
Shelia Lawrence	(SMCI)
Bruce Leverette	(SMCI)
Christopher Luker	(SMCI)
Lee McLeod	(SMCI)
Ruddie Musgrove	(SMCI)
Gwen Nix	(SMCI)
Isom O'Banner	(SMCI)
Timothy Parker	(SMCI)
Joe Polk	(SMCI)
William Reid	(SMCI)
Sherry Revette	(SMCI)
James Wilkins	(SMCI)
Austin Williams	(SMCI)
Ripling Wrinkle	(SMCI)

May

Richard Odoms	(Region III)

June

Ceola McLeod	(SMCI)
Rochelle Torrence	(SMCI)
Barbara Gill	(Region III)
Steven Gill	(Region III)
Ronnie Lambert	(Region III)
Allison Long	(Region III)
Cecelia Murphy	(Region III)
Malika Rushing	(Region III)
Lyndon Romeo	(Region III)
Kirby Shavers	(Region III)
Donald Winters	(Region III)

Family members of Sgt. Iris Smith, who died in an automobile accident in the line of duty on Memorial Day, receive a plaque and flag from Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams and SMCI Superintendent Jacquelyn Banks. Pictured with them are Smith's daughter, son and mother.

Safety

April - June

Hubert Davis	(SMCI)
Supt. Jacqueline Banks	(SMCI)
Plez Hill	(Forrest CWC)
Judy Clawson	(George CWC)
Lekelia Underwood	(Jackson CWC)
Latonya Thompson	(Pascagoula Restitution)
Arthur Smith	(Simpson CWC)
CCAD Nathan Blevins	(Region III/Area I)
CCAD Viruth Lek Phongam	(Region III/Area II)
CCAD Jason Sullivan	(Region III/Area III)

CO

Central Office

Commissioner's Appointment: [Back row] Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Commissioner Marshall Fisher and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall; [Front row] Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams

Tenure Award, 10 years: MIS Director Audrey McAfee, Harold Malone, Stacy Lewis and Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall

Tenure Awards, 20 years: Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty, Willie Edwards, Chandra Berryman-Willis and Director of Private and Regional Prisons Tony Compton

Employee of the Month, April: Lisa Varnell, Patricia Smith-Powell and Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty

Extra Effort Safety: [Back row] Kevin May, Willie Edwards, Patricia Dean-Wilson and Director of CID Sean Smith; [Front row] Jacqueline Bush, Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty and Kandace Shavers

Bureau Director of Loss Prevention Patricia Dean-Wilson announces the safety awards winners.

Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall and other executive staff members surprise Commissioner Marshall Fisher with a framed certificate of his appointment by Gov. Phil Bryant. Bryant named Fisher in November 2014 with the appointment effective Jan. 1, 2015.

Not Pictured

Tenure

15 Years

Tyeasa Evans (CO)
Brenda Rouser (CO)

Safety

April - June

Lynn Mullen (1st Floor)
Lynn Mullen (2nd Floor)
Gwendolynn Santos (3rd Floor)
James Brown (4th Floor)
Patricia Sanders-Ford (Records)

Safety Health & Wellness

April - June

Willie Edwards (CO)
Rita Twiner (CO)
Victor Cavett (CO)
Byron Evans (CO)
Lakhia Chambers (CMCF)
Kevin May (CO)
Michael Tillman (CO)

Extra Effort Safety

April - June

Cecil Lott (CO)
Sean Smith (CO)
Victor Cavett (CO)
Rita Twiner (CO)
Aungelia Williams (Records)
Patricia Sanders-Ford (Records)

Retirees & Appointments

2015 Retirements

Each year, MDOC says farewell and congratulations to a new group of retirees. The names with 20-plus years added to the 2015 list include:

Richard L. Armstrong	July	27.5	MSP
Larry D. Belton	Oct.	20	MSP
Max S. Busby	Nov.	25	SMCI
Eugene Cannon	Dec.	25	MSP
Donald R. Hentz	Oct.	25	CC
John L. Hopkins	Nov.	22.5	CO
Vida McCarty	Oct.	25	CO
Jessie L. Randle	July	22.5	CC
Bessie K. Reeves	Sept.	26.5	SMCI
Christopher Richardson	Nov.	22	MSP
Joann Robinson	Dec.	22	MSP
Theresa Seabrook	Sept.	25.5	SMCI
Arthur E. Smith	Dec.	25	CC
Robert E. Suggs	Aug.	22	CC
Northy E. Turner	July	21	MSP
Carolyn M. Walker	Aug.	25	MSP
Peggie Walker	July	22	MSP

Vida "Cissy" McCarty pauses from cutting her retirement cake as she responds to a co-worker's congratulatory remarks. She retired effective Oct. 4, after 25 years of state service. McCarty is married to Deputy Commissioner Rick McCarty, the agency's chief financial officer, who celebrated 25 years with the agency in 2014.

Meet Juanita Barbour: New Personnel Director

Office of Communications

JACKSON - Personnel Office Director Juanita Barbour, who oversees personnel for both Central Office and Community Corrections, was ready to step into her role when the position became vacant in September. After all, she has worked her way from the bottom to the top.

"I hit the ground running, and have been since," said Barbour, who has been with the Mississippi Department of Corrections for over 20 years.

She began her professional journey with the MDOC as a secretary principal for the deputy director, doing general clerical duties, and as an administrative assistant to the commissioner's office. Just before landing a job in personnel, she worked for the agriculture director.

"I have learned a lot," said Barbour, who now supervises over five employees as a division director II.

Barbour said she accepted her current position because "I felt I could make a difference in how the Personnel Office functions in totality. My leadership will enable the department to hopefully make a momentous shift in the overall day-to-day operations."

Barbour said she expects to work efficiently and meet all tasks, as directed by Human Resources, through unity. She believes that team effort is vital, and that if everyone works together then MDOC is successful.

"We are here to work for the employees," she said.

As personnel director for Central Office, which provides support to the agency, and Community Corrections which has three divisions, Barbour stays busy. Her office processes all hiring, lateral transfers, reclassifications, parole board records, etc.

"It's a lot of work, but we are going to get the job done," she said.

Human Resources Director Sharon Pepper, who oversees Personnel and recommended Barbour for the job, describes her as a hard worker. The two have known each other since 1999 when Pepper was hired with the agency.

"I have observed Juanita take on and successfully complete numerous tasks," Pepper said. "She is one to accept the challenges and move toward the finish line. With a proven track record, a dedication to the job, and with more than 20 years both with MDOC and in the personnel arena, I felt she was more than deserving of an opportunity to lead the Central Office/Community Corrections Personnel Office. I have not regretted this recommendation."

Outside of MDOC, Barbour is a member of the Zeta Phi Beta sorority and is active in her church. She helps mentor youth, especially young women of color. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, she enjoys watching her adult daughter and son pursue higher education. Both are scheduled to graduate in May, with one obtaining a master's degree. ■

July - December 2015 Appointments & Promotions

William "Ben" White
Probation Parole Agent Supervisor for Region III, Area 2

Brad Taylor
Probation Parole Agent Supervisor for Region I Area 3

Yvonne Epps
Correctional Supervisor of the Yazoo County CWC

Corrie W. Cockrell
Attorney

Youlanda Nelson
Director of Training

Lashetta Wilder
Re-entry Coordinator

Donald Rhodes
Staff Officer

Training Schedule for January - June 2016

The January - June 2016 training schedules are available on Misnet. Select "Training" on the top horizontal menu bar.

New Flex Class Available

The training department announces a new course:

Employee Management Relations

This course is designed to help employees understand that the goal of supervision is to get outstanding performance through positive people management. Dealing effectively with employees means helping them strive for excellence. This can be done by setting a positive tone in all interactions, especially those that relate to job evaluations and correcting employees. This course will give insight on how a good supervisor should help the employee be the best that he or she can be. ■

MSP Vocational Education Department has Another Successful Fiscal Year

Emmitt Sparkman
MSP Education Department

PARCHMAN - The Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) Vocational Education Department had another successful year in Fiscal 2015. The MSP Vocational Education Program has nine day and five night programs in operation: Horticulture - day and night; Culinary Arts - day; Auto Mechanics, - day and night; Diesel Mechanics - day; Heating Air Conditioning and Refrigeration - day and night; Electronics, - day; Welding - day; Carpentry - day and night; and Small Engines - day and night. The department has two other programs, Auto Body and Electrical, which are closed due to instructor vacancies. In Fiscal 2015 the department served 356 students at an approximate cost of $1,310.00 per participant. The department graduated 50 students during the year. Noted department accomplishments for the fiscal year were:

• The Auto Mechanic Shop completed repairs on 17 MDOC vehicles.

• The Auto Body Program completed repairs on 18 MDOC vehicles.

• The Diesel Equipment Repair and Services Program completed repairs on 51 vehicles.

• The Small Engine Program performed numerous projects repairing MSP Grounds Upkeep equipment.

• The Horticulture Class continued to maintain landscaping area.

• The Electronics class repaired numerous televisions and microwaves for the MSP Housing Units and modified offender personal radios to meet security requirements.

• The Culinary Arts Program provided refreshments for the MSP Education Department and Faith Based Initiative Graduations and other MSP functions during Fiscal 2015.

The department's recidivism rate for offenders completing a vocational program and released from prison over a three-year period remains less than 10 percent. ■

Wellness

Central Office Wellness Center

Office of Communications

JACKSON - Jacqueline Bush doesn't need to leave the Central Office building to get a workout. She uses the Wellness Center on the second floor.

"I started working out this past month and I wish that I had started sooner!" said Bush, an administrative assistant for Private and Regional Facilities. "I am sharing my exercise experience with everyone that I can in the Central Office to let them know how wonderful it is that MDOC is providing this wellness tool for all of us. Exercising rejuvenates me after a day's work and I am now committed to taking advantage of this employee benefit!"

The Wellness Center is open 24/7. Patricia Dean-Wilson, director of Loss Prevention, which oversees the center, said a representative is available between 5:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on most days to interact with any employees that are interested in using the room and receiving nutritional/health information.

Pictured left to right: Alberta Reynolds, James Brown, Patricia Dean-Wilson, and Jacqueline Bush are among the employees who are using the wellness center to stay fit. (Photo by the Office of Loss Prevention)

"I have been informed that one of the main reasons that participation isn't higher is that several employees in the Central Office want to work out on their lunch hour and the lack of the ability to shower afterward hinders participation," she said.

Dean-Wilson said, "The Office of Loss Prevention continually promotes the exercise center by word of mouth in addition to sending emails about the program to all Central Office employees."

Physical fitness is just as important as mental peace of mind. ■

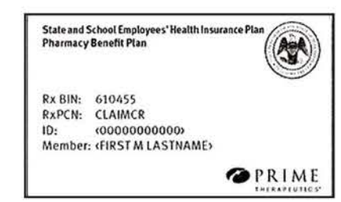
Prescription Card Update

Personnel Office

JACKSON - Prime Therapeutics LLC (Prime), the new pharmacy benefit manager for the State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan, recently sent new prescription ID cards to Plan participants. Unfortunately, an error happened while the cards were being processed. Some important information was printed incorrectly. The sample prescription ID card pictured shows the correct Rx BIN and Rx PCN numbers.

Corrected cards have been mailed by Prime. Participants should have received these replacement cards by February. If you need to fill a prescription after Jan. 1, 2016, and have not yet received a corrected ID card, you should present your original Prime ID card to the pharmacy and provide the correct Rx BIN and Rx PCN numbers listed above to have your prescription filled. Pharmacies have already been notified of the printing error to hopefully avoid any disruption in filling your prescriptions.

Once you receive your replacement ID card, please destroy the original card.


State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan
Pharmacy Benefit Plan
Rx BIN: 610455
RxPCN: CLAIMCR
ID: ‹000000000000›
Member: ‹FIRST M LASTNAME›
PRIME THERAPEUTICS

We apologize for any inconvenience this error may cause you. If you have any questions concerning your new prescription ID card, please contact Prime at (855) 457-0408, or call our office at (601) 359-3411 or 866-586-2781. ■

Conferences

Scenes from the 2015 MAPC Conference

TUPELO - The Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections held its conference Sept. 16-18. Tina Ladner announced the new MAPC president, CMCF Superintendent Ron King (bottom right), at the event. The 2015 theme was "Recipe for Success." Opening remarks were made by Jason Shelton, Tupelo Mayor; Bart Aguirre, Tupelo Chief of Police; and Jim Johnson, Lee County sheriff. Guest speakers included Levon Jackson; Murray Harber, executive director of MS Business Group On Health; Debbie Thornton, author; Marc Fomby, CEO of FTC Prevention Services, LLC; Glenda Crump of DREAM Inc.; David May, Associate Professor of Criminology at MSU; and Doris Mangrum, a Social Justice Advocate and Author. Several team building events and competitions also took place and an awards ceremony was held, honoring several MDOC officers and staff. ■

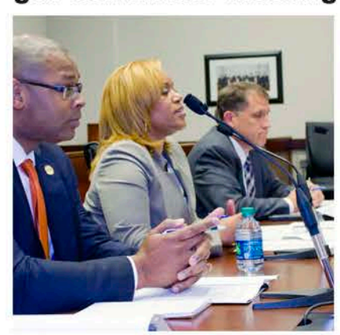
Highlights

Executive Staff Sightings

Commissioner & Staff Attend Training Meeting for Judges

Commissioner Marshall Fisher spoke to circuit and county judges about his first months on the job during the Mississippi Trial & Appellate Judge Conferences at the downtown Jackson Marriott on Oct. 22. The use of restitution centers, probationers possibly as drug court candidates and provisions of House Bill 585 were among the issues judges asked questions about during the hour-long session.

Chief of Staff & Others Attend Legislative Budget Committee Meeting



MDOC's budget meeting with the Legislative Budget Committee was held on Sept. 22, 2015. Pictured above are (left to right) Deputy Commissioner of Institutions Jerry Williams, Chief of Staff Pelicia Hall, and Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance Rick McCarty.

SAVIN is Now Available in Hinds

Gwendolynn Santos
Office of MS SAVIN

JACKSON - Citizens in Hinds County, especially crime victims, can now receive automated notifications when a suspect posts bond, transfers to another location or escapes.

However, they must register at www.vinelink.com to receive the free automated notifications.

Effective Dec. 1, 2015, the Hinds County Sheriff's Department went live with Victim Information Notification Everyday (VINE) through the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Statewide Automated Information and Notification program (SAVIN).

VINE provides inmate status changes through automated calls, text messages, and emails or a variation of the three. Services are Teletype (TTY) capable for the hearing impaired. "Real-time" information updates in the offender's electronic booking file trigger notifications to registrants.

Commissioner Marshall Fisher said, "I strongly support the different levels of public safety and automated notifications enhances our mission. It's great to see this service in our counties, especially in Hinds County."

Registration is anonymous unless requested otherwise, allowing for an open range of affiliation: victims/survivors of crime and the general public (i.e. service providers, attorneys, neighborhood watch organizations, law enforcement agencies, school officials, business owners, offender relatives/friends, etc.).

MDOC's SAVIN program has completed thousands of notifications since launching VINE in April 2008.

Currently, there are about 50,520 active registrants through this technology-based service. Since its inception in Mississippi VINE has had over 103,000 registrations.

To date, activity on the VINE website for inmate searches and registrations has had over 2,200,000 views and continues to rise daily.

Mississippi adopted SAVIN with legislators' support. It is self-sustained through a portion of funds generated by statewide fines.

VINE is currently in 48 states. It was formed following the 1993 murder of Mary Byron. The Louisville, Kentucky victim had been kidnapped and sexually assaulted by a former boyfriend. Unbeknownst to her, he was released on bond within the first two weeks of his detainment. He killed Byron on her 21st birthday.

The Office of MS SAVIN and the Department of Corrections maintain relationships with county agencies, the MDOC Division of Victim Services, the Victim Assistance Coordinators statewide, and other victim-based service providers.

For more information, contact the MDOC Office of Mississippi SAVIN at (601) 359-5759 or mssavin@mdoc.state.ms.us. You also can visit the agency website at http://www.mdoc.ms.gov for details of the other services available through the MDOC's Division of Victim Services. ■

For more information, please contact the MDOC Office of Mississippi SAVIN at (601) 359-5759 or mssavin@mdoc.state.ms.us

VINELink

Highlights

Community Outreach

MDOC Assists Delta State During Tragedy

JACKSON - MDOC probation and parole agents who provided security support to Delta State University on Sept. 14, 2015, when a professor was fatally shot by a fellow instructor on campus, were invited to participate in a public recognition ceremony on Oct. 24, 2015 in Cleveland. DSU gave thanks on the football field during half-time in the game with the University of West Alabama. Commissioner Fisher also commended the more than two dozen agents for their dedication to public safety. "Your participation reaffirms that the Mississippi Department of Corrections is a team player, especially in time of crisis," Fisher said.

Awareness: Pillows for Peace

MDOC collected 102 pillows to donate to domestic violence shelters during October 2015. The Walnut Grove facility and MAPC members donated 42 pillows and the Central Office donated the rest in support of Domestic Violence Month. These pillows are to be used at Domestic Violence shelters in Yazoo, Hinds and Copiah county. ■

Turkey Drive

Gulfport CWC

GULFPORT - Offenders with the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Intensive Supervision Program in Gulfport donated more than 300 canned and assorted dry goods to a local charity in November 2015.

"We are real proud of them to, first of all, despite their current situations and circumstances, realize there are others less fortunate than they are and to reach out to those people. Everybody has family, regardless of who they are," said Clinton Simon, the unit's supervisor, who worked along with Agents Troy Carpenter and Ray Polk in collecting and delivering the canned goods and nonperishable items.

The offenders collected canned goods, turkeys and ham to give to Feed My Sheep, which helps the homeless and needy in the Gulfport area.

"They did not force us to do this," offender Darryl E. Clark said, referring to the probation/parole agents. "[Carpenter] brought it to the group. He said 'if you want to do something to make you feel good about yourself, here it is.' "Everybody came in with no problem."

Each week Clark, who was sentenced to house arrest in June for possession of a controlled substance with intent, said he brought items.

"My mother was always helping people and giving," Clark said. "So it was nothing for me. We can do it again for Christmas and New Year. Anything we can do to give back is a great thing."

Carpenter said with the success of the program, offenders intend to continue donating items and deliver them to a different food bank each month.

Feed My Sheep was picked as the first recipient because several offenders do community service there.■

Student Mentor

Probation and Parole

Probation and Parole Agent Robert Belew spoke to students at Dorsey Junior High School in Itawamba County. The importance of staying in school, graduating and getting a job were major components of his talk with the students.

Belew, an agent in the New Albany office, focused much of his address on the corrections system. He told students about the process of receiving offenders in the system.

Belew, who has been in law enforcement for 30 years, says he hopes to keep young people from getting in the system. ■

MAPC Donates to Needy

Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) members at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman participated in a toys and coats drive for December 2015.

Several officers and staff participated including (Pictured) Officer LaVetti' Johnson, Region chair; Deirdre Huggins, 1st vice chair; and K-9 Officer Leather Williams, 2nd vice chair. ■

Officers Bring Cheer to Families

COLUMBUS - Two children from the Lowndes County community had a Christmas to remember in 2015 thanks to the donations from the parole/probation agents and staff of Lowndes, Clay, Noxubee and Oktibbeha counties (Region III Area I). Family members of Rainee Michaels, 6, and Tyler Bridges, 8, were present and overjoyed to see their children's faces as they received bikes, coats, clothes, toys and games. Agent Landon Griffin dressed up and played Santa.

FLOWOOD - The Flowood Community Work Center donated gifts for children at the Angel Tree Center after the staff gave money that went into an Angel Tree jar.

Each year gifts are taken to the Angel Tree Center to help make Christmas wishes come true for children in the community. Items donated included bikes, dolls, and a toy truck.

HARRISON COUNTY - Offenders with the Harrison-Gulfport Intensive Supervision Program donated sleeping bags and food in a new charity drive. Donations, including 10 sleeping bags, 20 pounds of breakfast sausage and several boxes of canned and nonperishables which were received within days of the start date.

View the news story and video here: *http://www.wcbi.com/local-news/video-area-department-of-corrections-employees-play-santas-helpers* ■

Inmates Helping in the Community

Offenders with the Washington and Wilkinson counties Community Work Centers helped to place sandbags in the wake of rising floodwaters. ■

Awareness: Cancer Walk

MDOC conducted numerous activities during October for Breast Cancer Awareness. This included a walk dedicated to a prison instructor who lost her battle with cancer, Brenda Benson. CMCF vocational teacher Benson, 58, died four years after, according to her close friend, she was initially diagnosed with breast cancer. Benson, was an Apparel & Textile instructor for eight years at CMCF.

Several officers and staff participated in the walk on Oct. 29, 2015.

See page 6 for more information on Benson. ■

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