



## **CMCF holds largest Vocational Village graduation to prepare inmates for better future**

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JACKSON – The largest group of students from the Vocational Village at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility has graduated.

On Friday, April 11, 2025, 167 inmates celebrated their achievements in various vocational programs, surpassing the 133 graduates in January.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) established the Vocational Village in 2023 to prepare inmates for good-paying jobs after release. The programs have been sanctioned and certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence and the National Center for Construction Education and Research.

In total, inmates received 216 certifications in areas such as Business Office Technology, ServSafe, ICEV, electrical, HVACR, NCCER Core, heavy equipment, carpentry, and welding, all under the theme "Building a Better Future."

"Congratulations to all our teachers and staff for the largest vocational graduation, which equips inmates with the skills to get a job upon release, reducing recidivism," said Commissioner Burl Cain.

Commissioner Cain emphasizes that jobs coupled with morality equals success for inmates reentering their communities.

HVACR Graduate Tommy Kemp, eligible for parole in July, encouraged fellow graduates to focus on the future.

"Being able to advance your knowledge and skills in a world that has already counted us out proves that we can be turned around for good," Kemp said. "Be proud of yourself, better yourself, build up your self-worth, and keep moving forward."

Inmate Clarence Mitchell graduated three vocational classes during the four-month term (from January to April).

“It takes a lot of dedication to take HVAC, Carpentry 1, and Carpentry 2 in four months,” said Cpl. Shytel Berry, who assists with programs at CMCF. “To be able to apply himself to that many trade classes and succeed just shows how determined he is to change his life and build a better future.”

