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MDOC celebrates Barber College opening at CMCF

PEARL – With the opening of the new barber college at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, individuals can now learn barbering while incarcerated.

Mississippi Department of Corrections officials celebrated the program on Wednesday along with two inmate instructors, two student instructors, 22 students, some of the inmates' family members, and others.

"This program gives us the opportunity for these men to have jobs when they go home to stop the recidivism rate, to bring it down lower," Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Supt. Matt Reynolds said. "It gives them hope. It gives them a chance."

Getting approval from the Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering took only minutes, said program manager Richard Thompson. But the process spanned two years of hard work with many obstacles, he and other speakers said.

"This has been a hard road, right here," said Warden George King, who directs vocational programs for the MDOC.

Like other speakers, King said the program will change lives. "This is one of the cornerstones where guys can go right out and impact the community and impact lives. How many of y'all get a haircut? A lot of lives have been changed in the barbershop."

The CMCF program brings the number of barber schools to two. The other program is at the Marshall County Correctional Facility.

MDOC officials used Wednesday's grand opening at CMCF to discuss plans for future initiatives, including a nail program for women, and to ensure that other barber programs are approved, including at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, and that more inmates are licensed.

Deputy Commissioner of Institutions John Hunt said Commissioner Cain's administration remains focused on both moral rehabilitation and vocational and educational training to better prepare inmates for returning to their communities.

"Commissioner Cain knew he had to change the culture," Hunt said. "That's a tall order for a department this size, especially with the overall nature of this business. But with his leadership and buy-in from staff and inmates, I think we have achieved that goal. We have changed the culture. We still have a long way to go, but the culture has changed within the MDOC."



Our mission is to elevate the barbering profession through innovative education unwavering professionalism and consistent excellence. We are committed to developing skilled, confident barbers who lead with integrity embrace growth, and set the standard for the future of the industry.





