



PRESS Announcement

MS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS *723 N. PRESIDENT ST. *JACKSON, MS 39202 *(601)359-5600 *(FAX: 5738)

Date: May 22, 2002
Contact: Jennifer Griffin
Phone: (601) 359-5721
Fax: (601) 359-5738

South Mississippi Correctional Institution Completes American Correctional Association (ACA) Audit

Jackson—Commissioner Robert L. Johnson today expressed his appreciation to the staff of the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) for their hard work and dedication in successfully demonstrating their ability to meet nationally accepted correctional standards. Following a three-day audit at SMCI by American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors, the state institution located in Leakesville, Miss. received a score of _____.

“I commend Superintendent David Turner and the staff at SMCI for embracing this challenge and receiving a recommendation for ACA Accreditation,” said Commissioner Johnson. “This is indeed a banner day for the Mississippi Department of Corrections.”

In announcing the accreditation score given to SMCI, ACA Auditor Chairperson _____ said (I’ll fill in the rest with comments from the lead auditor.) The auditing team consisted of (I’ll may not put their names – unless they agree – but will refer to their corrections experience).

“.....,” said ACA Auditor Chairperson. “.....”

The ACA auditing team arrived at SMCI on Monday, May 20. They spent three days reviewing all MDOC policies and procedures, the SMCI facility, and interviewed MDOC staff and inmates housed at the institution. To be awarded accreditation, SMCI must comply with 100% of the mandatory standards identified by ACA and comply with at least 90% of the non-mandatory standards identified by ACA.

SMCI is currently in candidate status. The ACA auditing team will now report its findings to the Commission on Accreditation (CAC), which will hold an accreditation panel hearing. At the CAC panel hearing it will be decided if SMCI is awarded accreditation.

(more)

SMCI Passes ACA Audit

5/22/02

Page 2

“.....” comment from either DCI Epps or SMCI Superintendent David Turner. “...”

Individual accreditation awards last for 3 years; however the process is designed to be continuous. Accreditation is a system to verify that correctional programs comply with national standards developed by the American Correctional Association. The ACA Standards Committee continually revises the standards based on changing practices, current case law, and correctional agency experiences. Approved standards reflect the view of correctional practitioners, architects, medical and legal experts.

The advantages and benefits of accreditation are numerous and include:

- The assessment of a facility’s strengths and weaknesses;
- The identification of obtainable goals;
- The implementation of state of the art policies and procedures;
- The establishment of specific guidelines for daily operations;
- An aid in the defense of frivolous lawsuits;
- An increase in community support; and
- A higher level of staff professionalism and morale.

The Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, Miss. and the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl, Miss. are in candidate status. Both institutions are preparing for their official site visit and review from an ACA audit team later this year.

In addition, the MDOC Community Corrections division is in _____ status. (Write more when get info from Lora Cole.)

###