

# IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Commissioner Hall: Unexpected amount of contraband found during recent shakedown at Parchman**

JACKSON –The amount of contraband discovered at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman during the most recent shakedown was unexpected, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

However, the agency remains undeterred in its ongoing efforts to decrease the number of cell phones and the amount of illegal drugs in the prison system, said Commissioner Hall, who has been among the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) members in Washington, D.C., this week meeting with CTIA and cellular company leaders seeking solutions to the contraband cell phone epidemic.

Seized items at Unit 29 Friday include 38 cell phones, 30 chargers, 40 packs of spice, 29 bags of tobacco, three bags of marijuana, 12 bags of crystal methamphetamine, 41 shanks, two free-world knives, more than 50 green dot numbers, and four pairs of tennis shoes.

“In addition to security measures already in place, we are no longer allowing private vehicles among the housing units,” Commissioner Hall said. “That is, we are escorting officers to their job assignments. Only non-security and escort units are permitted.”

The shakedown under Operation Zero Tolerance occurred as the three state-operated prisons and the three state-owned privately operated prisons remain under a lockdown that began a week ago Friday.

The lockdown and more shakedowns will continue as the agency investigates information indicating potential security breaches.

“Whether you are staff, an inmate or a vendor, if you are caught with contraband, we are referring your case to district attorneys for prosecution,” Commissioner Hall said.