

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MDOC FULFILLS GOVERNOR'S ORDER UNDER CONTRACTING REFORM

JACKSON - The Mississippi Department of Corrections has received the designation as an approved certified purchasing office.

The designation complies with an order from Gov. Phil Bryant and ensures that the agency is doing business with integrity, professionalism, and expertise, said Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall.

“This designation from the Department of Finance and Administration is important for the MDOC, and is in the best interest of taxpayers,” Hall said. “I am pleased that we have met the requirements under Executive Order 1361.”

The order is based on recommendations from a task force Bryant created in 2014 to oversee a review of the MDOC's procurement process.

With a current budget of \$341.9 million, the MDOC's procurement spending is among the state's largest.

Victor Cavett, an accountant and auditor in the MDOC's Purchasing Department, said the agency could easily spend conservatively \$100,000 a week, purchasing items as small as paper clips or as large as forklifts.

The department must make sure that items purchased are from vendors registered with the state, Cavett said.

“We have to make certain that the items are competitively procured,” Cavett said. “That is to say, that we have enough quotes or submissions from vendors to ensure

that we are getting good prices. We have to answer a lot of questions regarding those two factors and communicate to the requisitioning parties exactly the status of their request, whether it has been processed and/or whether we need any further information to process the request.”

Cavett, who has been in procurement for about 14 years, recently earned the Certified Professional Public Buyer credential from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council. His certification as a professional public buyer provided the foundation the MDOC needed to receive certification. He was among 62 professionals who completed the examination in October and became one of fewer than 10,350 procurement professionals nationwide to achieve the status. He was the only Mississippian to do so this past fall.

“All of this involves the public’s trust so you want to make certain that we are following the established guidelines,” Cavett said. “You can assure the public that everything is open, that there is equal opportunity, and that the state or the taxpayers are getting the best quality items at the best price for their dollars.”

The Corrections Department is one of 10 approved certified purchasing offices designated by the DFA in Mississippi state government.