

# **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Fewer shanks, cellphones found at Wilkinson County prison year later under Operation Zero Tolerance**

JACKSON – Fewer shanks and cellphones were found among assorted contraband items at Wilkinson County Correctional Facility a year after the Mississippi Department of Corrections kicked off Operation Zero Tolerance.

When officers searched the prison on Thursday morning, they collected 57 shanks compared to about 80 on March 2, 2017, and three cell phones compared to 15 in 2017. The prison's population of 911 inmates is slightly higher than last year's 888 inmates on March 2.

Spice, tobacco, and an assorted number of pills – common contraband items – also were seized.

Ten bags of canteen, however, stood out. Officers suspect the bags were being hoarded by inmates for illegal purposes.

“Let me reiterate that my goal is to operate all of our facilities in a safe and secure manner,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “These shakedowns are one very important way to not only address the issue but also to assure staff, inmates, and the general public of my objective.”

The element of surprise and large showing of officers distinguish the shakedowns from daily searches in the prison system under Hall's administration. The shakedowns are occurring not only in the prisons but also at Community Corrections facilities, such as community work centers and restitution centers.

WCCF, which is located in Woodville, is one of three privately operated state prisons.