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MDOC Moves Inmates from Regional Jails

JACKSON – The Mississippi Department of Corrections is reducing the state inmate population at county regional jails because of budget constraints.

The agency will be removing 602 inmates, starting today, from 13 of the 15 regional jails.

“We have places to put the inmates that have been housed above what the contracts require, and a significant amount of money will be reinvested in the Mississippi Department of Corrections,” Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. “We are determined to live within our budget.”

The department has had to reduce spending by \$5 million to comply with Gov. Phil Bryant’s recent order for agencies to cut 1.5 percent for the last half of the fiscal year ending June 30. The current (2016) budget of \$333 million in general funds is \$23 million less than what the department requested last year. MDOC is not asking for an increase in those funds in the 2017 budget.

Regional facilities receive \$29.74 per inmate per day. MDOC is contractually required to provide 80 percent occupancy.

Given the agency’s challenges - low pay, high turnover, critical staff shortages, and aging facilities, Fisher is constantly re-evaluating the department’s expenditures.

“Hard choices are just as necessary this year as they were last year when I became corrections commissioner,” Fisher said. “For example, I don’t like having to close community work centers, but we simply don’t have the staff to keep some of them operating. Until we improve the pay of corrections officers, staffing will continue to be a critical issue.”

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