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More Counties Sign Agreement with MDOC to Continue Work Program

JACKSON – A dozen more counties have signed an agreement with the Mississippi Department of Corrections to house and work state inmates without reimbursement.

Twenty-six of the 30 original counties now are participating in the new Joint State County Work Program.

MDOC is moving 75 inmates who are in counties that have not signed an agreement to community work centers. Those counties include Alcorn, Holmes, and Issaquena. Inmates have already been removed from Hinds, the other county.

The counties who have signed the agreement are Attala, Bolivar, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Grenada, Jefferson, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lincoln, Marion, Monroe, Panola, Pearl River, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Scott, Simpson, Stone, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tishomingo, Union, and Winston. More than 300 inmates are now in the program.

Under the new agreement, counties must provide alcohol and drug treatment and GED programs to all JSCWP inmates at the county's expense. MDOC still will pay for medical care for inmates.

Ending the current program allows MDOC to redirect \$3.2 million. As of Saturday, Aug. 1, the state is no longer paying counties \$20 per day per inmate.

Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher said the number of participating counties shows the agreement is a win, win situation. "Counties can continue to use inmate labor to do trash pickup and other jobs," Fisher said. "However, I caution all parties that this program may need to be revisited because, if the inmate population continues to drop as we see the full effects of House Bill 585, the number of eligible inmates for this program will drop."

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