

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Resource Fair Held Today at Parchman for Inmates Nearing Release

JACKSON - Inmates in the pre-release program at the Mississippi State Penitentiary will be connected today with resources they likely will need after their release from prison.

The first Resource Fair for MSP's Pre-release Program will be held from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. in Unit 25.

Sixty (60) inmates will be allowed face-to-face visits for several minutes with representatives from 10 groups, including the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, the WIN Job Center, Families First for Mississippi, Transformation Reentry, and Region I Community Mental Health Center. Some of MDOC's probation and parole agents also will be on hand.

"We must assist inmates as much as possible so that prison becomes less and less of a revolving door," Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. "I appreciate the staff for reaching out and trying new things so that we are providing meaningful and progressive rehabilitation."

Mirinda Frison, acting pre-release director at MSP, said plans are to provide future fairs. "I do not want the goal of our (inmates) to be to get out of prison. I want their goals to be to stay out of prison," she said.

The fair is the second one for the agency's pre-release program. The first one was held on Oct. 12 for inmates in the program at South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) in Leakesville. One hundred (100 inmates) and 10 vendors participated.

“I believe the job fair was very encouraging for the offenders to know that there are resources and jobs out there for them,” said Lisa Herndon, acting pre-release director at SMCI. “Several offenders stated they had never had an opportunity to attend anything as helpful to their re-entry as this fair was. One offender also stated it made them feel like someone really cared about their re-entry because the vendors took time out to come and speak with them.”

Inmates in the pre-release program are a year to six months from being released. In addition to job readiness, the curriculum also includes adult basic education, Thinking for A Change, re-entry and life skills classes.