

## **Keeping Mississippians Safe**

Feeling safe and secure in your home, your community and your state is an important part of having a good quality of life. Mississippi is a safe place to live, work and raise a family, and we are working proactively to make our state an even safer place to call home.

We must not wait around for an unfortunate incident or tragic accident to occur causing us to react to the situation. We are constantly looking for ways to prevent crime, and we must continue to create safety measures and programs that maintain and enhance our state's safe environment.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections is taking steps to secure safety within the prison system for both employees and prisoners. With a focus on efficiency MDOC is providing better service to all Mississippians.

Items we take for granted can often be used to make a weapon. These items can be used to harm other prisoners or MDOC employees. MDOC is working to train employees as to the types of items that can be used as weapons and replacing old items with new ones that cannot be used as weapons. They are also increasing searches for dangerous items in a prisoner's cell or in a prisoner's possession.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) not only protects the public safety and welfare of our state, they also provide assistance to victims. This past November, MDOC established the Division of Victim Services. This division helps people who have been the victims of crime obtain information including notification of the end of a prisoner's sentence and notification of a prisoner's medical release. Receiving this information will hopefully provide them some sense of relief and control. It is unfortunate this service is needed, but we are fortunate to be one of the first states to offer this assistance to its citizens.

To receive this assistance, victims of a crime must notify MDOC. In addition to services for the victim, this division serves as a liaison to other local and state agencies and organizations with victim's assistance programs. The division is also working to increase sensitivity to victims by treating them with respect and dignity and training MDOC employees to be more attuned to victim's needs.

For the first time in fifteen years, the Department of Corrections is in compliance with prison overcrowding. In less than a three-month period of time, the Department brought prison population into compliance for the state, and has now developed a long-term solution to prison overcrowding in our state.

We are doing more than just what is required to keep people safe. We are doing everything we can to ensure that people do not become the victims of crime. For those who are the victims of a crime, we want to give them a voice in our state's correctional system and give them the attention and service they deserve.

We are developing new and innovative ways to improve your ability to feel safe in your home, your community and your state. It takes all of us, law enforcement personnel and private citizens, compiling the resources in our state, to make Mississippi safe and secure.

We are optimistic and enthusiastic about the changes taking place in our state. By working together to improve safety in our state, we are certain to make Mississippi the ideal place for families to live, companies to relocate and future generations to live.