



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Department of Corrections receives \$2.8 million grant from U.S. Department of Justice

Jackson – The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) has received notice from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that it will receive a \$2,807,909 grant for upgrading facilities at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. The new award is the sixth annual supplement MDOC has received through the Violent Offender Incarceration/Truth-in-Sentencing Grant Program (VOITS). Statutory authority for funding of the project falls under Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The program assists states in developing additional capacity for violent offenders through construction, renovation, or security upgrades to prison beds or units.

“We are deeply pleased to receive this award,” said Corrections Commissioner Robert L. Johnson. “Mississippi has complied with DOJ’s guidelines under Truth-in-Sentencing. Our State takes a strong position against violent crime, and we deal with it appropriately by requiring violent criminals to serve a majority of their sentences behind bars. Our State’s strong stance on law and order has enabled MDOC to continue to receive these important awards on an annual basis.”

Grant awards received to date by MDOC totals \$29,288,067. These funds have enabled MDOC to recently complete conversion of half of the open bay units at Unit 29 at Parchman to single cells and to add a kitchen at a cost of \$21,760,284. In 1999, \$1,289,700 was used to assist the Department of Youth Services complete a 15-bed maximum-security unit for females at Mississippi Youth Corrections Complex, at Oakley.

The remaining portion of the grant award is being used to harden and upgrade security at Units 32, 27, & 17 by installing new technology surveillance and perimeter security systems estimated to cost approximately \$5,000,000. Work on these upgrades has already begun. Any remaining funds or future awards are currently planned to assist in converting the remaining open bay beds at Unit 29 to single cells.

