

**For Immediate Release**

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**MDEQ, MDOC, and MDE Joint Project  
Reduces Landfill Waste, Creates Job Skills for Inmates, and Provides Computers for Students**

Jackson, Miss., October 15, 2003 –At Governor Ronnie Musgrove’s direction, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC), and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) have joined forces to protect Mississippi’s environment, to provide workforce training for inmates and to educate school kids.

“Mississippi’s school children will reap the rewards of the computer recycle program,” said Governor Ronnie Musgrove. “We were the first state in the nation to have Internet accessible computers in every classroom. This program will help us keep those classroom computers up-to-date, at minimal cost to the citizens of the state.”

Using discarded computers collected from various state agencies and transported by MDEQ, female inmates at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl take the discarded computers apart, replace the broken parts, and update other components to make them ready for Mississippi’s public school students to use.

“This educational project has provided inmates with technical skills that they may readily use once they return to the work force,” said Chris Epps, commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Additionally, the inmates have learned computer repair skills during this project that have helped them to earn national certification in hardware repair and in software operation. Of the six inmates participating in testing associated with this project, all have received hardware certification, and three have also received software certification. The three that passed both parts of the examination will receive their A+ Certification.

MDEQ promotes computer recycling to keep discarded equipment out of landfills. To find organizations that will take discarded computer equipment, go MDEQ’s web site at [http://www.deq.state.ms.us/MDEQ.nsf/pdf/Recycling\\_Electronic\\_Directory/\\$file/Electronic%20Directory.pdf](http://www.deq.state.ms.us/MDEQ.nsf/pdf/Recycling_Electronic_Directory/$file/Electronic%20Directory.pdf).

“MDEQ would like to see more and more computers recycled and kept out of our landfills,” said Charles Chisolm, executive director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

The over 400 computers refurbished by the project will be distributed to schools.

For more information about this program, call Rick Cox at 601.932.2880, extension 6352 or email him at [jcox@mdoc.state.ms.us](mailto:jcox@mdoc.state.ms.us).

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