

- **Thank you, _____.**
- **I appreciate the opportunity to be with you this afternoon.**
- **I must confess that during the months of January, February, March and April of the last two years I have been accused of providing folks with “irritating” facts and figures...**
- **Well....you know what they say -- “If confusion is the first step to knowledge, then I must be a genius.”**
- **I’m going to do my best with the time you have given me to try to unravel some of the confusion related to the incarceration of state inmates.**
- **I want to start with the good news.....we have been given the deficit appropriation to pay you for state inmates you are housing through the remainder of this fiscal year...which ends June 30.**
- **I wish I could say the same for the entire FY 2003 fiscal year.**

- **I've heard many of you say that this is a situation that you face each year – the knowledge that the Department of Corrections is never fully funded to pay counties for housing state inmates.**
- **Well...I guess that's good you are accustomed to that because once again we will be facing a deficit situation to the tune of about \$4.8 million dollars in our local confinement budget for the year that starts on July 1.**
- **For those of you that have a regional facility in your county...our appropriations bill did not include the 3% increase on the daily per diem as guaranteed in your contracts.**
- **So we will once again go back in September and ask members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee for close to 600-thousand dollars to ensure that you are paid for the entire year.**
- **Now, I intend to pay you what we – the state of Mississippi – contractually agreed to pay you. However you need to be aware that in doing this we will not be able to pay for the guaranteed minimum of 200 inmates for each of the eleven regional facilities for the entire fiscal year.**

- **A quick glance at the rest of our appropriation shows a deficit of \$7.9 million in the medical program and nearly \$6 million in the agencies support program budget. Bringing our total budget deficit for next year to \$19.2 million dollars.**
- **The only program in our appropriation that was fully funded was for private prisons...and in fact, they are over appropriated for the number of inmates that we have for them to provide custody for.**
- **This is significant to you because they are vying for the same type of inmate that you house in your county jails.**
- **Looking at legislation passed this session that just ended, there is one bill that significantly impacts you.**
- **I have two hand outs for you....one is a this pamphlet that describes in some detail House Bill 1121.**
- **This piece of legislation modifies two code sections – 47-5-901 and 99-19-48.**
- **What this bill says is as follows:**

- **The Mississippi Department of Corrections must be in possession of the commitment order before days are counted for purposes of paying for the housing of state prisoners at county facilities.**
- **The grace period – I believe it is 5 days – remains in effect; however, we will not be paying for state inmates that are being housed in county jails for 30, 60, 90 and sometimes even larger number of days before official commitment orders are received by MDOC.**
- **This is something you need to be consciously aware of and will need to coordinate with your circuit clerks to ensure that we are officially notified that the inmate has been sentenced to our custody before we begin paying you the \$20-dollars a day per diem.**
- **The second significant requirement in this bill prohibits payment to a county for housing probationers and parolees.**
- **The language reads: “The Department of Corrections shall not pay a county for offenders housed in county jails pending a probation or parole revocation hearing.”**

- **The third significant requirement of this law looks to the Department of Corrections and encourages us to negotiate with you the per day cost per prisoner.**
- **(Explain the negotiation process and the benefits that can be derived.)**
- **Finally, this bill establishes that a transfer fee will be charged to offenders who request to be moved from one facility to another.**
- **Each of you are fully aware and understand that transportation is a high dollar cost in your annual budgets...it is no exception for MDOC.**
- **The bill states that the offender must pay to MDOC an amount equal to thirty-five cents per mile for each mile traveled from the facility they are being transferred from to the facility they are being transferred to --- OR – twenty-five dollars, whichever is greater, to cover the costs of the transfer.**
- **An offender may not be required too pay for the costs of any transfer that is initiated by the Department of Corrections.**

- **That is the summary of the bill that will have the most direct impact to you, the circuit clerks and even judges in your counties.**
- **The second sheet I have handed out is our daily inmate population report.**
- **We place these reports on our website – the address of which is www.mdoc.state.ms.us.**
- **(Significance of this report.....)**
- **It has been said of wisdom and knowledge that “I don’t have any solution but I certainly admire the problem.”**
- **I know each of you in your individual ways have problems....not enough money, not enough inmates.**
- **That to me is significant...if Mississippi is going to look at inmates as economic development, then let’s just be honest about it and shoot straight.**

Remarks – Robert L. Johnson
Mississippi Sheriff's Association Conference
Wednesday, June 5, 2002

- **My job in that regard is to bring you, the lawmakers and the public with the facts and tell you up front how much it is going to cost the state to continue to look at state inmates as a source of generating revenue.**
- **With that, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.**
- **QUESTIONS.**
- **Thanks.**