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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2012

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Announcement of Personnel Action at the Augusta YDC

(AUGUSTA) — The DJJ internal investigations continued at the Youth Development Campus in Augusta this week, looking for serious safety policy violations along with employee misconduct on the job. Today the Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice authorized another suspension letter for a member of the Juvenile Corrections Staff at the YDC facility there.

DJJ Commissioner L. Gale Buckner announced that Lt. Damian Wise was placed on suspension with pay from the Augusta YDC today.

“Lt. Wise has been suspended with pay while a team of investigators looks into these new allegations of employee misconduct,” said Commissioner Buckner. “The suspension means Lt. Wise was removed from a position of responsibility over youth in detention at Augusta while the probe continues,” said the DJJ Commissioner.

The Commissioner says the undisclosed charges facing Wise grew out of the ongoing GBI investigation based at the Augusta YDC facility.

Today’s suspension followed a day-long lock-down in Augusta last Tuesday while the team of twenty GBI agents worked with investigators from the Department of Juvenile Justice. The combined teams conducted interviews with YDC residents and questioned the entire Augusta corrections staff for evidence of employee misconduct and contraband at the facility.

DJJ has already begun compiling its investigative findings for inclusion in an after-action report to be submitted in mid-February to DJJ Board members and Governor Nathan Deal. Until then, Commissioner Buckner’s inspection teams are continuing to make safety and security follow-ups wherever their findings indicate fundamental fixes are needed to protect Georgia’s youth in state custody.

Details of this and other incidents at the Augusta YDC and statewide DJJ secure facilities are being withheld pending the conclusion of the active administrative and criminal investigations. Commissioner Buckner is predicting still more disciplinary actions in Augusta and throughout the DJJ system.

(END RELEASE)