



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

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Groundbreaking Set for New Wilkes County Regional Youth Facility - Community Leaders to Attend -

(Washington, GA) – Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Commissioner Avery D. Niles is pleased to announce the groundbreaking ceremonies for the state juvenile justice system's new Wilkes Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) in Washington, Georgia. The groundbreaking for the new juvenile facility is scheduled for today, October 11th starting at 1:00 p.m. The Wilkes RYDC is located at 1430 Industrial Park Road, Washington, GA 30673.

The Wilkes RYDC groundbreaking marks an employment milestone for this East Central Georgia community, bringing in 60 new jobs for teachers, nurses and juvenile corrections officers. The new RYDC repurposes a former Georgia Department of Corrections adult pre-release center and will incorporate a secure facility redesign. When it is completed the Wilkes RYDC will become a showcase for new Georgia juvenile justice programming.

Under the redesign plan, construction at the new Wilkes RYDC will include 30,000 square feet of dormitory space to securely accommodate a population of 40 male and 8 female juvenile offenders. Another 6,000 square feet has been allocated for a gymnasium. The Wilkes RYDC will demonstrate DJJ's added emphasis on education and technology with 1,200 square feet designated for a new vocational education section.

"The new design shows we are always thinking about preparing young offenders for reentry into their communities as responsible and law-abiding citizens," said Commissioner Niles.

The Wilkes RYDC will also incorporate enhanced security measures as part of DJJ's mission to ensure public safety, including CCTV surveillance, touch-screen security controls and the addition of upgraded perimeter fencing. The secure facility is expected to be open and operational in 2017.

A number of community leaders and state legislators are expected to attend the groundbreaking event. Commissioner Niles said, "We're grateful to Governor Nathan Deal, the General Assembly and the citizens of Georgia for supporting our mission and this project."

To learn more about available employment opportunities with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice at the new Wilkes RYDC and facilities throughout Georgia go to www.djjcareers.org. For more information about Juvenile Justice Reform in Georgia, please visit www.djjnewsandviews.org/juvenilejusticereform.

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The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a multi-faceted agency that serves the needs of this state's young offenders up to the age of 21. The Department employs more than 4,000 men and women at 26 secure facilities and 92 community services offices throughout the state to effect justice and redirect the young lives in the agency's care.

Including those who are placed on probation, more than 50,000 youths are diverted each year to evidence-based community programs, sentenced to short-term incarceration or committed to the Department's long-term custody by the Juvenile Courts. It is the duty of DJJ's professional corrections staff to preserve public safety and safeguard the citizens of Georgia, as well as protect the victims of crimes so that they can rebuild their lives.

DJJ holds juvenile offenders accountable for their delinquent conduct so that they can take responsibility for their actions through probation, supervision and secure detention. At the same time, the youth are provided with medical and psychological treatment, as well as specialized education and programs designed to equip them with the social, intellectual and emotional tools needed to achieve their successful reentry and reintegration into community, workplace and neighborhood settings as more productive and law-abiding citizens.