



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

L. GALE BUCKNER, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE **OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

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AUGUSTA YDC ESCAPEE RECAPTURED

(AUGUSTA-GA) Commissioner L. Gale Buckner of the Department of Juvenile Justice is pleased to announce the recapture of 18-year old escapee Wayne Johnson who escaped along with four other juvenile offenders from the Youth Development Campus in Augusta Friday night.

Johnson, who has been the target of a round-the-clock, multi-agency dragnet in the Augusta and Atlanta Metro areas for the last two days, was arrested shortly before 2PM today by a Richmond County Sheriff's Deputy.

The deputy was acting on a tip from an off-duty DJJ staff member who recognized Johnson while driving down the street near the intersection of Barton Chapel Rd and Milledgeville Rd in Augusta and flagged down the officer about the siting.

When confronted by the deputy, Johnson confirmed his identity for the officer and was taken into custody. Johnson was transported to the Richmond County Jail where he will be held on charges of escape and vehicle theft.

Police had been warning the public not to approach the youth who was believed to have driven the stolen getaway car used after the escape from the Augusta YDC. The Department of Juvenile Justice had secured felony warrants for the 18-year-old and a "BOLO" (Be On the Look Out) was issued in Georgia and Florida to alert law enforcement for the escapee.

The other four missing youth were returned to state custody Friday night. None of the youth were from the Augusta area. Local law enforcement agencies in Augusta and DJJ investigators and DJJ SMRT Team officers in Augusta and Atlanta were continuing their fugitive search today at the time Johnson was arrested.

Richmond County Sheriff's Deputies responded to the stolen vehicle report Friday night and apprehended three of the youth following a brief car chase. Two other occupants ran into nearby woods. One of those youth later surrendered to a Department of Corrections canine team. No one was hurt in the round-up.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

As a continuing security precaution, the Augusta detention facility remains on lockdown today while investigators verify how the escape occurred. Investigators from the DJJ Office of Investigations in Atlanta are on-site at Augusta YDC conducting a facility safety review, examining the campus for security deficiencies, and looking for any policy violations which may have contributed to the escape.

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice once again expresses its appreciation for the extraordinary level of cooperation provided by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office and all other local and state law enforcement agencies that have provided logistics and search assistance in the effort to recapture this escapee.

(END RELEASE)