



A MESSAGE FROM THE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

Jim Shuler, Director
Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DJJ SPECIAL OPERATIONS SMRT TEAM-1 WINS
OVERALL EXCELLENCE at 1ST COMMISSIONER'S CHALLENGE**

(ATLANTA – GA) Commissioner Avery D. Niles is proud to announce the department's Security Management and Response Team – 1 ("SMRT Team – 1") is DJJ's winner of the first-ever Commissioner's Challenge event. Developed as a professional competition among the agency's Special Operations Teams from secure facilities across Georgia, the Commissioner's Challenge is a tough test of leadership skills, policy knowledge, and physical challenges through an obstacle course that culminates in an all-out team Tug-Of-War.

"I am proud of the camaraderie, dedication, and heart shown by all of the teams during this first-ever competition," said Commissioner Avery D. Niles. "The teams that competed in this Commissioner's Challenge represented some of the best trained, best motivated employees from facilities across the state. Not only did these competitors come together in the friendly spirit of sportsmanship, they also demonstrated that the Department of Juvenile Justice produces some of the top corrections officers in Georgia."

DJJ's SMRT Team - 1 posted some of the fastest times recorded on the state's training course at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison in Jackson, Georgia. With a strong 1:33 finish in the Ladder Challenge; a 3:33 finish in the Water Challenge; and a 4-minute-flat finish in the Poles Challenge, SMRT Team – 1's performance nearly matched some record times set on the course by elite response teams from the Georgia Department of Corrections.

As winner of DJJ's Commissioner's Challenge, SMRT Team - 1 became the first Department of Juvenile Justice squad to have its name inscribed on the Commissioner's Challenge Trophy. The trophy is meant to symbolize statewide excellence in the DJJ Special Operations Section. The engraved silver platter will now be showcased in the Commissioner's suite at DJJ's Decatur Central Office.

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SMRT Team - 2 was the Commissioner's Challenge Runner-Up; the YSI Team placed third in the Commissioner's Challenge and Runner-Up in the Obstacle Course; and the Macon RYDC Team was Winner of the Tug-of-War.

"The Commissioner's Challenge brings together Special Operations Team members from around the state and that's one of the most important things that happen here," said Commissioner Niles. "I hold my head high when I see their teamwork. Every member of our Special Operations Teams is a symbol of professional performance in uniform. The eyes of DJJ and the public are always watching the job they do...and how well they do it," the Commissioner said.

Commissioner Niles offered his special congratulations and thanks to everyone who participated in the first ever Commissioner's Challenge. For more information about Commissioner's Challenge, visit <http://www.djjnewsandviews.org/2014commissionerschallenge/>.

(END RELEASE)

BELOW ARE DJJ PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 2014 COMMISSIONER'S CHALLENGE. PHOTO ONE SHOWS DJJ COMMISSIONER AVERY D. NILES ADDRESSING SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAMS. PHOTO TWO SHOWS THE WINNING SMRT TEAM -1. BOTH PHOTOS MAY BE SHOWN IN NEWS PUBLICATIONS USING PHOTO CREDIT, "Courtesy Georgia DJJ".



PHOTO CREDIT: GEORGIA DJJ

DJJ COMMISSIONER AVERY D. NILES



PHOTO CREDIT: GEORGIA DJJ

SMRT TEAM - 1 ON THE OBSTACLE COURSE