



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Commissioner Announces Plans for 2014 Closing Of DJJ Youth Detention Center in Gwinnett

(LAWRENCEVILLE – GA) Commissioner Avery D. Niles announced today that the Department of Juvenile Justice plans to close its Regional Youth Detention Center in Gwinnett County as of June 2014. Commissioner Niles made the announcement after notifying Gwinnett County law enforcement officials, legislators and members of the Gwinnett judiciary.

GWINNETT RYDC BUILT 30 YEARS AGO..

The Gwinnett RYDC was built three decades ago to provide secure care and supervision for 49 young offenders, accommodating 38 males and 11 females.

The youth assigned to the Gwinnett RYDC are charged with crimes or have been adjudicated by a juvenile court judge and are waiting for disposition of their cases by the juvenile court. Juvenile offenders committed to DJJ custody are frequently held in secure detention at the Gwinnett RYDC while waiting for placement in a special DJJ treatment program or placement in a long term Youth Development Center.

MAINTAINING AN AGING GWINNETT FACILITY..

Commissioner Niles said, "DJJ's Gwinnett facility has weathered more than thirty continuous years of wear as a youth detention center. The Department of Juvenile Justice made the decision to close the Gwinnett RYDC next fiscal year based on expectations of increasing maintenance costs for an aging facility with significant infrastructure issues."

Case in point: Earlier this year, the Commissioner had to activate special transport plans to move the entire youth population from the Gwinnett RYDC to other metro area detention centers after a major sewer line collapsed six feet beneath the concrete floor of the Gwinnett facility. No youth were endangered, but the entire facility went off-line for weeks during emergency repairs.

(MORE MORE MORE)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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“WHAT WE CAN FORSEE..”

“Contractors had to cut a six foot deep trench through concrete across the length of the cafeteria and inside the main security control room to repair the broken line,” said Commissioner Niles.

“We can foresee more infrastructure breakdowns in our future at the Gwinnett RYDC and it’s time for us to see our way ahead with contingency plans,” the Commissioner said.

NEW ROCKDALE RYDC ALREADY ON LINE..

When DJJ closes the old Gwinnett County RYDC in June 2014, juvenile offenders from the DJJ service area in Rockdale County and the southern part of Gwinnett County will be assigned to the newly renovated Rockdale RYDC. Juvenile offenders from the DJJ service area in Hall County and the northern part of Gwinnett County will be assigned to another RYDC in Gainesville.

The Commissioner is making the December closing announcement months before the decommissioning of the Gwinnett RYDC to help provide local law enforcement, judiciary and stakeholders with an early start to develop contingency plans of their own for revised manpower and transportation schedules.

“THE WAY AHEAD”

Commissioner Niles said the Department of Juvenile Justice Human Resources Division will assist DJJ Staff to find re-employment at other DJJ facilities when the aging Gwinnett RYDC is phased-out of operation. When the Commissioner discussed the decommissioning plan with Gwinnett RYDC staff this week he told them, “I’m here to assure you that DJJ is committed to this RYDC Staff because this staff is committed to the DJJ mission. We need experienced professionals like you and we will continue to work together on the DJJ Team to serve the needs of these youth entrusted to our custody and care.”

A SMOOTH AND ORDERLY TRANSITION..

The Department of Juvenile Justice will schedule monthly coordination meetings with Gwinnett County officials and local stakeholders beginning in January 2014 to plan for the smooth and orderly relocation of youth and the transition of juvenile services.

(END RELEASE)