



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STAR Academy Consolidating Campuses

Custer, S.D.- The Department of Corrections (DOC) is consolidating the state-run juvenile corrections programs at the State Treatment and Rehabilitation (STAR) Academy near Custer to a single campus. The move is due to the decrease in juvenile offenders in state custody and the expected future impacts of the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JJRI).

The QUEST program for females will be moved from its current location at the former Youth Forestry Camp in Custer State Park to STAR Academy's West Campus located south of Custer, by Oct. 15. Two programs for male offenders, Brady Academy and the Youth Challenge Center (YCC), are now housed at the West Campus site.

The number of juveniles committed to the care of the DOC has been decreasing for several years, both in placement and on aftercare. The average end of month count for juveniles under DOC's supervision in placement and on aftercare was 901 during state Fiscal Year 2008. For state Fiscal Year 2015, the average end of month count was 582 with an average of 278 on aftercare, 218 in other placement and 86 at STAR Academy.

"As of Aug. 30, there were 54 youth in the STAR Academy programs," said Denny Kaemingk, Secretary of Corrections. "We anticipate that number will decrease further as the state continues to implement the various aspects of the JJRI."

The state Legislature passed Senate Bill 73 earlier this year at the request of Gov. Dennis Daugaard and the JJRI Work Group. That bipartisan group analyzed juvenile justice data and developed a package of policies designed to increase public safety by improving outcomes while continuing to hold offenders more accountable and investing in proven community-based practices.

The Brady Academy, YCC and QUEST programs will each reduce their capacities to 28.

(more)

Our mission is to protect the citizens of South Dakota by providing safe and secure facilities for juvenile and adult offenders committed to our custody by the courts. To provide effective community supervision to offenders upon their release and to utilize evidence-based practices to maximize opportunities for rehabilitation.

The housing unit for the QUEST program will be located in a separate building from the Brady and YCC programs. Education, meals and medical services will be scheduled to avoid having male and female youth interaction.

There have not been any staff layoffs as a result of the consolidation. Through attrition, the number of staff at STAR has been reduced and will continue to decline.

The juvenile population decrease led to the closure of the EXCEL program for females at STAR Academy in December 2013.

The former Youth Forestry Camp campus in Custer State Park being vacated will be turned over to the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks.