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Girls Program To Move From Plankinton To Custer December 22, 1999

(Pierre) – Gov. Bill Janklow said Wednesday he has directed the state Department of Corrections to redesign one of its girls programs and relocate it to Custer from Plankinton.

"We need a fresh start because this is too important to play politics," he said. "Our target date is March 1. I would like to do it sooner. But to properly advertise and recruit staff is going to take a couple of months."

The program will be for low-risk girls who need to learn the importance of structure, health, nutrition and education in their lives. It will serve 24 girls at a time.

"It's going to have educational, counseling, mental and physical components. It will be balanced and the physical training will not be over-emphasized. This is not going to be a girls boot camp, but it will replace the Intensive Program we now have at Plankinton that everybody calls a boot camp even though it never was," Janklow said.

Janklow said he ordered the Intensive Program to be redesigned, after he reviewed the Plankinton program following the death of Gina Score last summer. The new program will be centered at the east campus of the Custer Youth Forestry Camp in Custer State Park, where it began in 1997 before being moved to Plankinton in 1998.

"As a whole, the boys in our Custer programs have experienced phenomenal success academically and in many cases personally. The credit for that has to go to the boys as well as to the staff and the leadership of Doug Herrmann and Mark Snyder there. Any person who visits both Custer and Plankinton will tell you there is a world of difference, and by moving this girls program to Custer we will be starting fresh under proven leadership," Janklow said.