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Department of Health Unveils Inmate-Built Mobile Laboratory

(Pierre) – The South Dakota Department of Health has unveiled the state's mobile health laboratory, which was constructed by staff and inmates at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield.

The 53-foot long trailer features a 35-foot long self-contained laboratory. The mobile lab can be used in the case of a public health emergency such as a disease outbreak as well as provide on-site training opportunities for other laboratories in the state.

Inmates worked a total of 10, 879 hours on the trailer. Instructors put in an additional 1,952 hours on the project.

"This is a prime example of what state agencies can do for the residents of South Dakota by working together," said Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch. "We're proud of the work the inmates and staff have done on this project and we expect it will serve a great benefit to the state."

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An exterior view of the mobile lab.



Al Mudder and Terry Romkema oversaw the construction of the mobile lab at Springfield.



The mobile lab is the only known Bio-Safety Level 3 facility in the U.S.

A view of a glove box in the mobile lab.