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State prison population drops in state fiscal year 2007

Pierre, S.D. – For the first time since 1989, the prison population decreased in South Dakota during the course of a state fiscal year.

On the 30th day of June 2007, the number of state prison inmates totaled 3,392. That is 77 fewer inmates than were in the prison system one year earlier.

The number of inmates admitted to prison who were assessed as having a meth dependency issue also dropped significantly during fiscal year 2007. Men's meth dependency dropped from 32-percent to 24-percent while the rate for women fell from 47-percent to 42-percent.

“The fact that our prison population has dropped and that meth dependency appears to be on the decline is tremendous news,” stated Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch. “We have made a concerted effort toward providing quality chemical dependency treatment in prison, and requiring aftercare in the community. I firmly believe the state's Circuit Court Judges are not sending people to prison who would be more appropriately sanctioned in some other manner.”

The Average Daily Count (ADC) of state prison inmates during state fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007) was 3,378, down fifty inmates from the ADC for fiscal year 2006. This marks the first decrease in ADC since between state fiscal years 1988 and 1989. The population decrease experienced at that time came as a result of legislative changes that increased the amount of good time granted to inmates per year and reduced the amount of an inmate's sentence that needed to be served prior to parole eligibility.

The number of new commitments to the state prison system during state fiscal year 2007 was down, while the number of inmates that were released from prison to parole increased during the same time period.