



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

3200 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-3478
Fax: (605) 773-3194

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CONTACT: Michael Winder, SD DOC (605) 773-3478

DOC proceeds with plans for Rapid City Unit

Pierre, S.D. – Steady progress is being made by the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) as they pursue building a housing unit for minimum custody inmates south of the Rapid City landfill along SD Highway 79.

The state hired the environmental engineering firm of Leggette, Brashears & Graham to complete a study on the proposed site, and no concerns were identified that would make the building site unsuitable. A copy of the study was sent to the Department of Natural Resources and the Office of the State Engineer for their review as well.

Survey and geotechnical work will begin soon at the site, which the City of Rapid City offered to the Department of Corrections for \$1 in 2007.

“We are being very deliberate in our screening process to ensure the property is acceptable and that all environmental and safety concerns are addressed,” said Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch. “All indications are that this particular site will be suitable for construction.”

The DOC plans to issue a statement of interest in the coming weeks for an architectural engineering firm to prepare the initial conceptual drawings and develop cost estimates. Reisch intends to seek approval from the Governor to submit a bill in the 2009 legislative session to appropriate the funds necessary for construction.

Approximately one-third of all inmates sentenced to prison in South Dakota come from the Black Hills Region, and corrections officials have emphasized the importance of establishing a permanent unit of this nature in Rapid City for several years.

“We greatly appreciate the cooperation we received from former Mayor Shaw in identifying this parcel of land, and from current Mayor Hanks whose staff worked with us in executing the purchase agreement,” said Reisch. “We anticipate finalizing the sale and taking deed to the property in late spring or early summer.”

If the construction estimates are acceptable and the 2009 legislature approves, bids would be advertised and construction could begin next spring or summer. The planned capacity of the new facility is 260, and it will include adequate space for visitation, chemical dependency treatment and GED classes. The temporary unit currently in use lacks adequate space for those activities. The DOC hopes to occupy the unit by November of 2010. Space will also be available on this site for Pennington County to build a work release unit should they elect to do so in the future.