



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

Minimum Security Unit in Redfield to Close

Pierre, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) plans to phase out operation of its Redfield Minimum Unit on the campus of the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield by the end of the year.

In 1996, the minimum security unit was established in Redfield to provide support to the Developmental Center, which is operated by the state Department of Human Services (DHS). However, the population of the Developmental Center has decreased since then.

“Both the needs of the Developmental Center and what we see as the primary focus of our minimum security units have evolved significantly over the past 12 years,” said Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch. “The primary focus of our minimum security units is to prepare the inmates to transition from prison back into the community, but there are limited options for work release jobs in the Redfield area when compared with cities the size of Sioux Falls and Rapid City.”

Fourteen full-time DOC employees will lose their jobs when the unit is ultimately shut down, but officials are actively identifying other jobs that they can transition into. Once the closure of the unit is complete, the state estimates the closing will result in a savings of over \$250,000 in state general funds annually.

The DHS will also be able to better utilize the buildings on the Developmental Center campus with the removal of the inmates. “The closure of the minimum unit will not change the mission, vision and goals of the South Dakota Developmental Center,” said Department of Human Services Secretary Jerry Hofer.

“We believe this is the right thing to do because it will result in increased opportunities for the inmate population,” said Reisch. “Our ultimate goal is that all inmates releasing from prison secure stable employment, pay taxes and remain crime free. The monetary savings are a bonus.”

The current inmate count at Redfield is 115, more than half of whom are expected to be discharged by the end of the year. Upon closure of the unit, which is expected in late fall, the remaining inmates in Redfield will be moved to other minimum custody units and work release facilities across the state.

The closing of the Redfield unit will have no direct impact on the DOC’s plan to construct a permanent minimum security unit in Rapid City. The DOC is proceeding with plans to build and occupy a unit near the Rapid City landfill by November 2010.