



South Carolina Department of Corrections Closing Lower Savannah Pre-Release Center

April 22, 2016 (Columbia, S.C.) - The South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) will close Lower Savannah Pre-Release Center in early June. The Level-1A minimum security facility located in Aiken, S.C. houses inmates who have served the majority of their sentence and have the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community through work release programs.

"Allocating resources to fewer institutions allows us to reinvest tax dollars in security and offer more programs and services to offenders, making our prisons safer and ensuring returning citizens are better prepared for reentry," said Bryan P. Stirling, Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

Lower Savannah Pre-Release Center opened in 1973 with an operating capacity of 250 inmates but currently houses 155. South Carolina has seen a decline in minimum security populations due to the passing of the Omnibus Crime Bill in 2010 and successful programs and services, such as Intensive Supervision Services for the Youthful Offender population. Lower Savannah residents will be relocated to similar institutions around the state to ensure offenders are able to continue their work in release programs and prepare to re-enter society.

Importantly, the institutional staff, comprised of 29 officers and 10 non-uniformed employees, will relocate primarily to Trenton Correctional Institution to provide more resources in critical areas and create a more desirable officer to inmate ratio, ensuring institutional safety.

Recidivism rates have declined steadily based on a 3-year national standard. The percentage of releases who returned to SCDC in 2012 is 24.9 percent, down from 2011 at 25.7 percent and 2010 at 27.5 percent. Under Governor Haley's leadership the prison population has declined by 2-3% each year since 2011. The current average daily inmate population is 20,550, down from 21,183 in 2015.

The closing of Lower Savannah Pre-Release Center is not expected to have any impact on the agency's ability to provide work or pre-release programming for inmates or the ability to maintain the department's labor crew commitments.