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NEWS ADVISORY

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Cleanup Underway After Disturbance, Property Damage at Crossroads Correctional Center

Around 8:10 p.m. Saturday, May 12, at the conclusion of the evening meal, a group of 209 inmates at Crossroads Correctional Center (CRCC) in Cameron, Missouri, participated in a sit-down protest, citing dissatisfaction with staffing-shortage-related activity restrictions, such as reduced recreation and programming time. Inmates were asked to return to their housing units, and they refused.

As the situation persisted, 131 of the inmates surrendered to staff and were escorted away from the building. To ensure employee safety, staff vacated the building and secured the entrance and exit points. The remaining 78 inmates committed property damage throughout the building, which houses dining halls, kitchen facilities, storage areas, staff offices and a Missouri Vocational Enterprises factory.

Local law enforcement agencies, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and emergency medical services arrived on the scene to provide backup support, surrounding the facility with patrol cars and emergency vehicles. With help from a Highway Patrol negotiator, the situation was resolved peacefully by 2 a.m. May 13. The inmates involved in the incident have been identified, searched, and placed in restrictive housing. These inmates will be held accountable through the conduct violation process and may face referrals for prosecution and payment for damages.

Department of Corrections Director Anne Precythe and Division of Adult Institutions Director Alana Boyles arrived at CRCC early in the morning of May 13 to meet with the staff and assess the situation. Property damage was extensive and included destruction of food supplies, graffiti, damage to security cameras, and damage to equipment and machinery throughout the building. The full extent of the property damage is still being determined.

CRCC staff acted appropriately, followed proper policies and procedures, conducted themselves calmly and professionally, and took necessary steps to ensure the safety of inmates and employees, using skills honed through ongoing emergency scenario training drills. As a result, no one was seriously hurt during the course of events. No staff members were injured, and no inmates sustained injuries requiring outside medical care. Approximately 10-12 inmates were treated for minor scrapes and bruises.

CRCC remains on lockdown, and visiting has been suspended until further notice. Staff from throughout the state have been dispatched to the facility to help with cleanup, inventory and repairs. Meals are being supplied by neighboring institutions, and a mobile kitchen unit has been deployed to provide further food service for inmates.

Statewide, the Missouri Department of Corrections is experiencing a staffing shortage and consequently has embarked on an aggressive employee recruitment effort involving multiple strategies. The shortage is particularly pronounced in the Cameron area, which is home to two large DOC facilities. Before the weekend's incident, plans already were underway to transfer some inmates from the area to other facilities to help ameliorate the staffing issue. The department has assigned a full-time recruiter for the Cameron area.

We are thankful that this situation was resolved peacefully and did not require additional outside intervention. We are deeply appreciative, however, of the dedicated fellow government agencies, law enforcement, medical services and other first responders who stood by, ready to help, as events unfolded. These important partners include the sheriff's departments of Clinton, Dekalb, Clay, Platte, Buchanan, Andrew and Livingston counties; the Cameron and Kansas City police departments; the Missouri State Highway Patrol; the Cameron Fire Department; area emergency medical services; and Life Flight.

We are proud of the way the situation was handled and thankful for the staff who worked tirelessly throughout the night and well into the next day to ensure the safety of employees, inmates and the surrounding community. Staff members who were off duty offered to help, and Corrections Emergency Response Teams (C.E.R.T.) from Chillicothe Correctional Center, Western Missouri Correctional Center, and Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center joined the CRCC team to provide extra security. Above all, we are grateful and relieved that the members of our DOC family remained safe.

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