



PRESS RELEASE

Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility Awarded National Re-Accreditation with the American Correctional Association

Administrator Charles J. Gatwood proudly announces the re-accreditation of the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility. The official award will be presented in January 2008, in conjunction with the American Correctional Association, Congress of Correction in Grapevine, Texas.

The accreditation audit process includes an inspection of the facility by certified auditors of the American Correctional Association based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the Association in 1870. The auditors examine the adequacy and quality of the facility's programs, activities, and services, as well as any incidents that may have occurred. In addition, staff and offender interviews are conducted which provide varied perspectives on facility operations and quality of life. To remain accredited, the process must be repeated every three years.

ACA standards address services, programs, and operations essential to effective correctional management. Through accreditation, an agency is able to maintain a balance between protecting the public and providing an environment that safeguards the life, health, and safety of staff and offenders. Standards set by ACA reflect practical up-to-date policies and procedures and function as a management tool for agencies and facilities throughout the world. Meeting ACA standards helps to reduce the risk of litigation and provides the general public assurances that correctional facilities are working safely and effectively. Accreditation results in overall lasting improvements in the facility as well as improving safety for both staff and offenders.

Charles Gatwood complimented his staff on their outstanding professional level of operation and their success in completing the re-accreditation process. During the re-accreditation audit, Chairman Jeff Rogers stated that the committee was particularly impressed with the staff training program at the facility that is run by Sergeant Eric Gore, as well as overwhelmingly positive reports received from staff members interviewed during the audit of the facility. During the re-accreditation audit, auditors spoke privately with 15 random inmates and 15 random staff members soliciting concerns or complaints. Chairman Rogers stated that the juveniles viewed both the staff and all services at the facility favorably and that it is rare to have no major issues from either staff or inmates.

Chairman Jeff Rogers expressed that the audit team was greatly impressed by the strong education component of the facility that is supervised by Mrs. Kristi Fertig and that the team was also impressed that the school is actually accredited and that the juveniles can earn their required credits while detained.

Chairman Jeff Rogers expressed that the audit team was greatly impressed with the medical program that was supervised by Nurse Rochelle Mullen, R.N. and Ann Marie Gonzales, L.P.N. especially due to the fact that the juveniles had no complaints regarding their medical care.

Chairman Jeff Rogers expressed that the audit team was greatly impressed by the exemplary knowledge, conduct and professionalism that was demonstrated by the supervisory core which consists of Lieutenant Terry R. Lemley and Sergeants Ruben Baca, Larry Stidum, Mason Nicholls and Eric Gore during the audit.

The Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility is the 1st of all county detention facilities run in the State of Arizona to become accredited, and the first to become re-accredited under the stringent, performance based standards of the 3rd edition of the Juvenile Correctional Facility / Juvenile Training School manual. Chairman Jeff Rogers stated "If the State of Arizona were to require the A.C.A. accreditation process at all county juvenile facilities, they would be wise to consult with the staff at the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility."

Only approximately 2.5% of county juvenile correctional facilities across the United States are able to achieve accreditation. There are 432 standards of which 33 are mandatory. The Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility scored 100% on mandatory standards and 99.7% on non-mandatory standards, which is an extremely high percentage for a facilities re-accreditation audit.

Mr. Terry Cooper, Graham County Manager stated, "This audit and its subsequent findings reaffirm the Board's confidence in the operation of the facility. Administrator Charles J. Gatwood and his staff do a tremendous job. We are proud of the outstanding operation that Charles Gatwood and Michael Aranda have maintained at the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility. They exemplify our county's values and are a role model for their staff, as well as leaders within the State of Arizona juvenile justice system. All of us at the Graham County Board of Supervisors are proud of this achievement by Gatwood and his staff. The facility staff should be very proud of their accomplishment and for attaining the highest rating in the facility's history."

Mr. Michael J. Aranda the facility Assistant Administrator stated, "I am extremely proud of each and every staff member who participated in achieving this lofty and worthwhile goal."

Lt. Terry R. Lemley stated, "All of the staff at the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility must be commended for their hard work and dedication to providing the most effective community-based correctional services. Indeed, without the dedication, professionalism, commitment to excellence and perseverance of our staff, this re-accreditation award could not have been achieved."

He added: "I am very proud of all my staff, as they have all worked so very hard to achieve this important goal. Preparing for an audit of this nature is a huge effort and my staff rose to the challenge."

Mr. Charles Gatwood stated, "The entire Safford community and State of Arizona for that matter should be proud of the fine work performed by our staff. In fact, the Graham County Board of Supervisors and the facility staff are unparalleled in their commitment to public safety and the finest of juvenile correctional service delivery systems. The work of the juvenile corrections professional often goes unnoticed and, frankly, unappreciated. All of the men and women who work in the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility deserve kudos, praise, and special thanks."

Mr. Gatwood added: The three-year accreditation award to the Eastern Arizona Regional Juvenile Detention Facility does not signal the end of our involvement in the accreditation process. During the award period, our staff will continue to work to improve any deficiencies identified during the audit and will maintain continuous compliance with the standards.

End of Release.

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