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STATE UNVEILS PLANS FOR NEW HOUSING UNIT AT SCI COAL TOWNSHIP TO ADDRESS OVERCROWDING

Request for Proposals on 230-Bed Facility to Be Sought This Spring

HARRISBURG – Department of General Services Secretary James P. Creedon

announced today that the commonwealth will soon begin the process of building a new 230-bed housing unit at State Correctional Institution at Coal Township in Northumberland County.

According to Department of Corrections Secretary Jeffrey A. Beard, Ph.D., the new facility is part of the state's efforts to address an overcrowded prison population.

“We’re building this housing unit to manage a growing number of inmates, but we’re doing so while keeping an eye on costs,” said Creedon. “We’re approaching this project in a cost-effective manner that will secure the greatest value for the state’s taxpayers, while ensuring the completed facilities are efficient and yield long-term savings to the state.”

“Pennsylvania’s existing correctional institutions are bursting at the seams,” said Beard. “The new beds this housing unit will provide are necessary as the population of our prison system has grown by 21 percent over the past six years from 37,995 in 2001 to more than 49,300 today. Looking down the road, we expect an average growth rate of 4 percent each year through 2012.”

The state plans to issue design-build requests for proposals, or RFPs, starting as early as this spring for some of the facilities to generate responses from well-qualified contractors. The design-build concept will enable construction to begin as soon as possible this year by requiring the successful contractors to design the structures as they are being built.

Construction work on the new Northumberland County housing unit is expected to be complete within two years once the contract has been awarded.

The housing unit project is part of a broader state construction initiative that will add nearly 9,000 beds to the state's prison system. Other projects include new prisons in Centre, Fayette and Montgomery counties, as well as additional housing units at state prisons in Crawford, Forest and Indiana counties.

The General Assembly authorized construction funds for the seven projects—expected to equal \$862 million—through the state's capital budget.

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