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Room 308, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

CONTACT: Ed Myslewicz (DGS)
(717) 787-3197

Susan McNaughton (DOC)
(717) 975-4862

NEW STATE PRISON PLANNED IN FAYETTE COUNTY WILL HELP EASE OVERCROWDING

Request for Proposals on 2,000-Bed Facility to Be Sought Late in 2009

HARRISBURG – Department of General Services Secretary James P. Creedon announced today that the commonwealth will soon begin the process of building a new, medium-security prison in German Township, Fayette County.

Department of Corrections Secretary Jeffrey A. Beard, Ph.D. said that the new facility is part of the state's efforts to address an overcrowded prison population. Once completed, the new facility will house up to 2,000 inmates.

"We're building this facility to manage a growing number of inmates, but we're doing so with 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 facility offers 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 site for new prison in German Township, Fayette County, is yet to be determined. The state will take several months to conduct a thorough site selection analysis, after which it must acquire the land. It anticipates releasing the design-build RFP in late 2009. Work on the new state prison is expected to be completed within three years.

The facility is expected to employ approximately 650 people upon completion.

The Fayette County 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 and Montgomery counties, as well as four additional housing units in Crawford, Forest, Indiana and Northumberland counties.

The new prisons will be certified according to energy-saving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) ratings.

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

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