News for Immediate Release

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Officials Dedicate SCI Benner Township, Newest State Prison

Harrisburg – Corrections Secretary John Wetzel and General Services Secretary Sheri Phillips today joined about 200 local, state and federal officials and dignitaries to formally dedicate the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Benner Township, Centre County.

The new, state-of-the-art prison, which is situated on the grounds of the State Correctional Institution at Rockview, is scheduled to begin housing adult male inmates within the next few weeks.

Built at a cost of nearly $200 million, the prison will house about 2,000 inmates and is expected to be fully operational by July 1.

The prison will employ about 560 people, most of whom are employees transferring from the soon-to-be closed SCIs Cresson and Greensburg and other state prisons.

"Traditionally we celebrate the opening of a prison with a dedication ceremony," Wetzel said. "This ceremony is somewhat bittersweet due to the closings of SCIs Cresson and Greensburg. Employees from those prisons have had their lives directly affected by this opening, but I am confident that this new prison's employees will perform their duties at professional and exceptional levels and that the operation of this prison will further the DOC's mission of public safety and offender rehabilitation.''

Cutting the ceremonial ribbon and speaking at the ceremony were Secretaries Wetzel and Phillips, Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre), Rep. Michael Hanna (D-Centre), Rep. Kerry Benninghoff (R-Centre) and SCIs Benner Township and Rockview Campus Director Marirosa Lamas.

The prison will be open for public tours today from 1 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. and tomorrow from 6 to 8 p.m.

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