

## **OJJ Emergency Preparedness Plans for the Mississippi River Flood Situation**

Below is a current update on OJJ's emergency preparedness plans. We will keep you advised of future developments as conditions change and information becomes available.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

The Office of Juvenile Justice has plans in place to keep our youth safe for the duration of any emergency situation. In the event that any of our secure-care facilities is threatened by water overtopping levees or a levee breach, established emergency operations and evacuation plans will be activated at once.

As many of you know, all three facilities are very close to rivers. Bridge City is adjacent to the Mississippi River levee; Jetson is in close proximity to the Mississippi and Swanson is adjacent to the Ouachita River. We are keeping a close eye on the levee situation for all three facilities, BCCY and JCY in particular, as developing sand boils may compromise the levees.

If necessary, Bridge City will evacuate youth either to Jetson or Swanson, depending on the situation. Those facilities have been alerted and are ready to receive the youth. In the unlikely event that Jetson evacuates, youth will be transferred to Swanson, where there is no threat anticipated at this time.

### **Central Office**

Assistant Secretary Dr. Girard Melancon, OJJ's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, monitors the Mississippi River situation.

Daily "river watch" meetings are held at central office to keep everyone apprised of the situation as it develops.

All appropriate staff, regional managers, and facility directors are on alert.

Dr. Livers attends daily meetings of the Unified Command Group (UCG) at GOHSEP, whenever indicated, to keep abreast of the latest information.

### **Community-Based Services**

Regional Managers are coordinating with local Offices of Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security.

All Regional Offices are on alert and are developing plans to protect assets and to evacuate youth in local detention centers as necessary.

The Tallulah office in Madison Parish will be temporarily relocated to the Monroe office, given the concerns about the Mississippi River levee in that region.

Christian Acres Youth Center in Tallulah is developing a one-hour evacuation plan for moving youth to Ware Youth Center in Coshatta as a precaution. OJJ staff will support this move.

The Thibodaux office in Lafourche Parish may be affected once the Morganza Floodway is opened. Thibodaux staff are developing a plan to protect office assets by placing materials in rented portable storage units and moving them out of the danger zone. Staff may work from alternative locations, if necessary, as their laptop computers are equipped with VPN (virtual private network: internet connection to a Local Area Network from a remote location).

Thibodaux staff are on standby to evacuate youth housed at St. James Detention Center if necessary.

A toll-free telephone number is being set up for staff to call in if they are unable to report to work due to flooding and road closures.

Regional Offices not impacted by the potential flooding will support those offices that are impacted.

### **Secure Facilities**

Bridge City and Jetson Centers for Youth are developing one-hour evacuation plans to move youth in the event of a levee breach/failure. Staff are also developing a three-hour evacuation plan to move assets and records.

Alternate evacuation routes are being considered in the event of road closures due to flooding.