

---

# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

---

Vol. 2, No. 7. October 2, 2009

Hello, Everyone:

Well, I managed to get myself in a little hot water with DAS Carolyn Lewis over the story I told on her last week, about the frozen extension cord. Carolyn wants to clear up that last report, and she took me to task for failing to mention why she told me about that incident. She was trying to make me feel better about something silly that I did, and she comforted me with her iced cord experience. But, now, writing What's Up, Doc? I could not remember my own "senior moment," soooo, I went back to Carolyn to ask what it was I had done. She gently reminded me that we were walking down the hall one evening last week at 6 p.m. and I said "good morning" to her administrative assistant Katherine Abrams. Whereupon Carolyn gently reminded me that it was evening, that the whole day had passed; I had said I was under a lot of stress and sorta lost track...and Carolyn said, oh, don't worry about it, Doc, here's what happened to me the other day... I'll try to remember a little better when I'm telling stories about colleagues that maybe they will have some stories to share about me!

We had a wonderful experience yesterday when the St. Landry Parish Council met to discuss a resolution in support of building the Acadiana Center for Youth in the Opelousas area. Several of us went to Opelousas to address the council meeting, and speak with members of the public. After much discussion, the parish council approved the resolution to continue negotiations for acquisition of the property on which to build. Many thanks to Lafayette Regional Manager Sharon Guillory, Bridge City Center for Youth Director Linda London, Deputy Director Michael Gaines, who is from that area, General Counsel Martha Morgan and Assistant Secretary Girard Melancon, who answered questions and provided information about local service needs. After many years of seeking a location for a small, regional therapeutic facility, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

None of this could have been possible without the visionary leadership of Senator Elbert Guillory and St. Landry Parish President Don Menard. Special thanks to Sheriff Bobby Guidroz, who told the crowd at the meeting he is so supportive, he wouldn't mind having the facility in his own back yard!

While approval from the parish council is a great victory, I attribute our success to the hard work that our staff has been doing. I am so glad that the community can recognize the benefit of providing services to youth in their own area, and I give credit to the professional staff in this agency for your hard work, your good work, throughout the state. We are gaining strength and credibility with our service partners and I see important working relationships evolving. On my recent trip to the Shreveport office, I could see the perception of people in the community, and again last night in Opelousas, I could see evidence of the good work that is being done. The district attorneys, the judiciary, law enforcement, and members of the community, are seeing us as partners, to bring enhanced services to the youth and families we serve. It's getting better all the time, and I truly appreciate all of you who work tirelessly in your communities.

Please welcome Swanson's new director, Carolyn Atkins, who arrived at her new post this week. Carolyn has 21 years of experience, and most recently served as warden for the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in management, both from Johns Hopkins University, Executive Leadership Program, and is an ACA Certified Correctional Executive. I am very pleased that she chose to come to Louisiana to work with us.

OJJ is planning to celebrate our five-year anniversary on October 14, with a big event centered at Jetson. We will celebrate five years of progress as an independent, cabinet-level agency, and highlight the dramatic changes that have taken place throughout our agency. The Jetson campus has undergone a facelift and is a good example of change. We want to make sure that people can see the progress we have made, and thank the many people inside and outside the agency who have contributed. Guests will have the opportunity to visit with youth and staff, tour the facility, and enjoy a luncheon. Staff from each office and facility will be a part of the event and we are hoping for good participation from stakeholders, community partners, legislators, and of course, our staff. You will hear more about the anniversary celebration as we get closer to the date.

Have a great weekend, and thanks to every one of you, in every office and facility, for the good work you do daily to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

---

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov