

# what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Hello, Everyone:

I didn't realize Louisiana had so many festivals until last weekend. I wonder if anyone got any sleep, because throughout the state we had every kind of festival under the sun. And a LOT more to come all spring and summer. Alexandria OJJ had a restorative justice activity for victim awareness this weekend, when they helped to host a reception in conjunction with the second annual Alexandria Victim's Rights Parade. Thanks to RM Stefanie Krygowski and her team for putting in the effort to give back to their community, and giving up part of their weekend in the process.

You may have seen something in the news about a group that testified in House Appropriations about wanting to decrease our budget next year by \$3.5 million—the amount needed to transition youth to Acadiana Center for Youth and operate it until the end of next fiscal year. The group is LCCR—the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, which includes the former JJPL group. Their unexpected testimony took us by surprise, true, but we did have supporters on the House committee who understand our budget and policies and were able to defend us.

We are working to clarify the information, both with them and members of the legislature. LCCR testified that the money should be removed from our budget to keep us from expanding capacity when Acadiana opens. We have stated repeatedly for at least a year that when we open Acadiana, we will close a like number of beds at Swanson and Bridge City. We have no intention of increasing our capacity in secure care. There will be a net increase of one bed, just due to the mathematical number of slots in each dorm. LCCR stated they know that is our intent but they are concerned that another administration could change this policy. I think once we clarify our intentions, everyone will be satisfied that our plans for the future are solid, honest and workable.

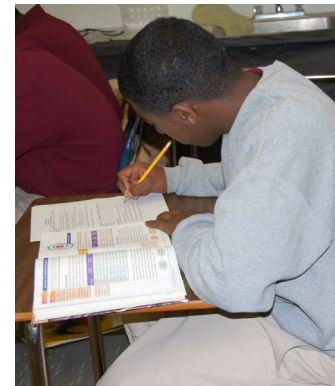
Well did you make it? Yep, I'm talking about tax season. I hope everyone was able to get their taxes done before April 15th. I'm always amazed at the folks who are late, last minute or just file for an extension. You KNOW that April 15th is tax day, just the same as you KNOW that Christmas is December 25. So how can we say it sneaked up on us?

We had a very productive PREA Steering Committee meeting this week, and the group covered a lot of ground. A main topic of discussion was progress and issues in the non-secure contract facilities. Facility level leadership training has recently been completed, and we are seeing a lot of progress in all areas. We will let you know when the facility audits are scheduled.

I hope you all had a chance to enjoy your weekend and get out to enjoy all that Louisiana has to offer, even if the entire state was waterlogged by all that rain last week. My sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, in every office and facility, for all you do, every day, wherever you serve, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?  
Send them to  
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