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Joanna E. Saul, Director

To: Members of the 129<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
From: Joanna E. Saul, CIIC Director  
Date: March 29, 2011  
Re: Dept. of Youth Services closure of Ohio River Valley Juvenile Correctional Facility

### Closure Overview

Ohio River Valley JCF will close on September 10, 2011. Most youth and staff transfers will occur prior to this date. Ohio River Valley JCF is located in southeast Ohio and serves a medium and close security youth population of 123 youth (reported on March 14, 2011). More than 300 hundred employees will be affected by the closure. Scioto JCF, located in Delaware, Ohio, will be the primary facility receiving Ohio River Valley JCF youth. DYS staff relayed that continuity of programming and services for youth, while maintaining safety and security, will be the primary focus during the closure and transfer process.

### DYS Action Plan

CIIC Inspectors Jamie Hooks and Carol Robison met with MT Schwartz, DYS Bureau Chief, Bureau of Professional and Organizational Excellence, serving as consolidation project manager, on March 25, 2011, to discuss the plan for closing Ohio River Valley JCF. DYS has drafted an extensive master plan to address any issues that may arise. The following provides information on the primary action steps in place to facilitate the closure:

- Staff
  - Determine eligibility of Ohio River Valley JCF staff to transfer to other DYS facilities;
  - Facilitate the transfer of staff to other DYS facilities from now through closure;
  - Provide any necessary training for transferring staff and staff at facilities receiving new youth populations;
  - Assist staff who will seek employment outside of the agency following closure with career development and job placement; and
  - Address any and all labor relation issues that arise during the closure process.
- Youth
  - Determine which youth are eligible for release prior to the closure, either due to sentence expiration or youth that will mature out of the system;
  - Coordinate the transfer of remaining youth to other DYS facilities or appropriate community alternatives;

- Address any youth with pending criminal charges or bindovers to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections; and
- Address any program needs of youth both at Ohio River Valley JCF prior to transfer and any program needs of youth once transferred to a new facility.
- Facility Related Issues
  - Address any matters not involving staff or youth, such as:
    - Maintenance needs at the closing facility;
    - Equipment inventory, transfer, and storage; and
    - Record transfer and storage.

### **CIIC Concerns**

Although the DYS closure plan is very thorough and addresses a number of contingencies that may arise, CIIC has the following concerns:

- **Staff morale at Scioto JCF, the receiving facility.** CIIC inspected Scioto JCF on September 27, 2010 and staff morale was a critical concern identified during the inspection. At that time, staff indicated fatigue and frustration due to constant policy and schedule changes. CIIC staff is concerned regarding the impact that youth transferring from Ohio River Valley JCF may have on staff morale.
- **Continuity of programming and services for youth affected by the closure.** In regard to this concern, DYS relayed provisions in the plan ensuring that youth are not moved to a new facility until there is adequate staff at the receiving facility prepared to handle their program needs.
- **STG-related concerns.** CIIC staff is concerned regarding the ability of Scioto JCF staff to manage the increased number of STG-affiliated youth that will transfer from Ohio River Valley JCF.
- **Scioto JCF as the receiving facility for Ohio River Valley JCF youth.** Scioto JCF's new population will be considerably different, likely resulting in significant staff training. DYS staff relayed that the size and design of Scioto JCF is appropriate for Ohio River Valley JCF close security youth and minimal facility conversion will be necessary. Sections of the closure plan are dedicated to ensuring that both transferring Ohio River Valley JCF staff and staff at the receiving facility are properly trained to work with their new youth population.

### **CIIC Action Plan**

- CIIC has scheduled two interim inspections of Ohio River Valley JCF prior to the September 10, 2011 closure. These interim inspections will take place on March 29, 2011 and August 18, 2011. The purpose of the interim inspections is to speak with youth and staff and provide an outlet for any concerns. These inspections will serve to monitor any concerns that may arise throughout the closure process.