



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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## Gov. Whitman Reviews Graduating Cadets at Young Adult Boot Camp

Corrections Commissioner William Fauver today addressed the first platoon of graduating cadets at a boot camp for young adult offenders and stressed the need for their continued self discipline and strong work ethic. The Commissioner reviewed the cadets prior to their graduation in New Lisbon.

"The cadets here today have just completed six months of grueling, 16-hour a day military style training. I congratulate them, and I wish them well as they prepare to meet their greatest challenge yet - the challenge to get work, get a better education and remain free from crime and free from substance abuse," said Gov. Whitman, who was unable to attend the graduation exercises.

"Last year in New Jersey we experienced a seven percent drop in the overall crime rate - the third largest drop in 30 years," said the Governor. "The cadets here today need to do their part to keep those statistics falling. Let the end of this boot camp mark the beginning of a new and productive life. And know that if you don't take this opportunity, you may not get another."

The Stabilization Re-Integration Program (SRP) boot camp for young adults is the first of its kind in New Jersey to house nonviolent male inmates between the ages of 18-26. The program is modeled after the state's juvenile offender military boot camp, which was created by Gov. Whitman in 1996. The young adult program is founded on the principles of military discipline, intensive physical work and substance abuse prevention and education. The program includes a strict orientation and qualification process as well as an intensive parole supervision component. The first graduating platoon included 26 cadets.

The program is open to psychologically and medically fit young nonviolent offenders. Offenders eligible for the program must be within at least one year of eligibility for parole, classified for minimum custody level and must volunteer for the program.

Offenders who have committed crimes of the first degree are not eligible for the program. Additionally, offenders who have committed second degree manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, burglary and possession of a weapon are ineligible for the program. Offenders serving a mandatory sentence without parole are eligible for the program only after completing all but one year of their sentence.

Prior to entering the program, offenders must undergo a battery of tests and assessments to ensure that they are suitable for the program and that they will not pose a safety risk. During this two month long orientation phase, inmates found to be unsuitable for the program are returned to the larger prison system.

Program participants dress in military style uniforms at all times, live in military style barracks and are given military style haircuts. They adhere to a military regimen 16 hours a day, including inspections, drills, calisthenics and heavy labor. The cadets are not allowed to have televisions or radios. They perform maintenance and groundskeeping services for the facility.

The six-month program provides cadets with substance abuse prevention and education, academic instruction and the vocational and life skills training they need to prepare to re-enter the community.

Following the completion of the boot camp, participants enter the extensive six month aftercare program, which includes parole, placement in a halfway house or electronic monitoring. Decisions regarding parole are the sole responsibility of the State Parole Board.

Under the parole supervision program, parole officers will visit parolees several times a week, act as a service broker for the parolee and will make contact with the parolee's employer or school to gauge participation and progress. The parole program will also require sustained employment, community service participation, and drug testing. As part of the comprehensive SRP, parolees will also will also receive job placement and mentoring services.

Gov. Whitman has been committed throughout her administration to strengthening laws that punish violent criminals and protect New Jersey's families and neighborhoods. She has enacted landmark legislation including Three Strikes and You're In, Megan's Law, the 85 % No Early Release Act, the Law Enforcement Officer's Protection Act and the elimination of parole for child molesters who kill. In 1996, under the Governor's leadership, New Jersey experienced a seven percent drop in crime overall - the third largest drop since 1966.

Gov. Whitman reformed the state's juvenile justice system and in 1996 established the first military style boot camp for young offenders. More than 100 juveniles have completed the program, the model for the state's boot camp for young adult offenders where graduation exercises were held today. The Governor has also expanded prison space by more than 3,000 beds and has replenished the State Police adding 379 new troopers to the ranks.

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