

Forrest and Perry County Drug Court graduation is July 30

July 26, 2006

The 12th Circuit Adult Drug Court program in Forrest and Perry counties will hold a graduation ceremony Sunday, July 30, at 3 p.m. in the Saenger Theater in Hattiesburg.

Eleven people are expected to graduate. The ceremony is expected to include an open microphone for the graduates to speak about their experiences.

Circuit Judge Robert B. Helfrich, who founded the 12th Circuit Court Adult Drug Court program in Forrest and Perry counties on Oct. 8, 2003, will preside over the graduation.

After graduation, 114 people will remain enrolled in the Drug Court. Five more people are expected to enter the program next week, said Drug Court Coordinator Lucy Bates Davenport. The program, which has four phases, requires a minimum of two years for completion, and can take up to five years.

Drug Courts are special courts which seek to rehabilitate drug-using offenders through drug treatment and intense supervision with drug testing and frequent court appearances. Drug courts offer the incentive of a chance to remain out of jail, and the sanction of a jail sentence if participants fail to remain drug-free and in compliance with all program requirements. Participants are required to work, and if they dropped out of school, they must pursue a General Education Development (GED) degree.

Mississippi has 16 active drug court programs.

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