

## **Third Circuit Drug Court graduation is Feb. 10 in Oxford**

February 4, 2015

Court of Appeals Judge James D. Maxwell II of Oxford will be the guest speaker at the Third Circuit Drug Court graduation ceremony scheduled for 2 p.m. Feb. 10 at the Lafayette County Courthouse in Oxford. The ceremony will be in the main courtroom.

Circuit Judge Andrew K. Howorth will preside. The public is invited.

Twenty-four people are expected to graduate.

The Third Circuit Drug Court currently enrolls 203 participants from Lafayette, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Marshall, Tippah and Union counties, said Drug Court Coordinator Brandon Vance. A total of 159 people have previously graduated from the program, which began in 2008. Each participant must spend at least three years under the supervision of the Drug Court and comply with all program requirements before being eligible to graduate.

The mission of the Third District Drug Court is to enhance public safety by providing substance abusers with cost-effective, multi-disciplinary alternatives, including substance abuse treatment and monitoring. The mission also includes improving participants' quality of life and returning those participants to the community as productive, law-abiding citizens; reducing the rate of recidivism; and breaking the drug cycle.

Drug courts seek to rehabilitate drug-using offenders through drug treatment and intense supervision with frequent court appearances and random drug testing. Drug courts offer the incentive of a chance to remain out of jail and be employed and the sanction of a prison sentence if participants fail to remain drug-free and in compliance with all program requirements.

Mississippi currently has 40 drug courts. More than 3,400 people are enrolled in drug courts statewide. The state's drug courts are estimated to produce \$46 million in annual savings by avoiding incarceration costs of those drug court participants.

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