

Felony DUI treatment center open house May 13

May 9, 2005 (Helena, Montana). An open house and public tours of new Department of Corrections WATCH East felony DUI treatment facility in Glendive are scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. May 13. Governor Brian Schweitzer will conduct a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 3 p.m.

WATCH East opened February 1 at its capacity of 40 offenders on the campus of the former Eastmont Human Services Center. The six-month program for those convicted of fourth and subsequent DUIs is an extension of the WATCH Program in Warm Springs. WATCH East is the only facility for female felony DUI offenders in Montana, and it also accepts males from eastern Montana.

The original WATCH Program has been open for more than three years and has an excellent record for the treatment of DUI offenders. More than 93 percent of WATCH graduates have not been arrested for new DUIs. "These numbers reflect significant progress in increasing public safety and reducing recidivism among this population," said WATCH East Program Coordinator Deb Dion. "We anticipate demonstrating similar outcomes, as we have implemented the same therapeutic interventions within this program."

Dion will welcome visitors to the May 13 open house. Other speakers are Connie Kenney, vice chair of Community, Counseling and Correctional Services (CCCS), the Butte contractor that operates the facility; Bill Slaughter, Department of Corrections director; and Genny Bravo, a WATCH East participant who will graduate May 17. Gerald Redwolf, a WATCH East participant who will graduate May 25, will sing an American Indian blessing.

The WATCH East address is 700 East Little Street. From I-90, take the Glendive Exit 215 and head toward the City Center. Go about 0.4 miles and turn right onto N. Merrill Avenue. Drive about 0.1 miles and turn left onto Hillcrest Entrance Road, then left onto N. Anderson Avenue and then right onto E. Little Street, which ends at WATCH East.

Visitors will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement and agree not to enter the facility with tobacco products, alcohol, drugs or firearms. For more information, call Deb Dion at (406) 377-6001.