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Dade Youth Treatment And Development Center Now Open

(Everglades Academy)

Florida City -- In order to combat juvenile crime and rehabilitate juvenile offenders, the Department of Juvenile Justice in partnership with Youth Services International has opened the Everglades Academy, a 102-bed high risk juvenile facility for adjudicated male youths. The program, in a former Department of Corrections Work Camp, is located in the remote area of southern Dade County.

The facility on SW 424th Street off Route US 1 in Florida City, received its first five youths last Thursday and is expected to reach full operational capacity by late March. The program will receive youth ages 13-18 with an average length of stay of nine to twelve months.

This highly secure facility will not only increase public safety but will also include a very regimented and supervised program. The youth will participate in group sessions, an educational component stressing living and social skills and vocational training to better prepare them upon completion. "The Florida youth that are sent to Everglades Academy will have a real and meaningful opportunity, commented Timothy P. Cole, YSI's CEO. "They will be able to get their lives back on-track and be prepared to re-enter society as self-sufficient citizens."

The opening of the Everglades Academy is the result of a meeting by State Representative Ralph Livingston, 75th District, and attended by Ted Mannelli of the Governor's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Calvin Ross and Department of Corrections Secretary Harry Singletary, last March. Representative Livingston was concerned over the early release of detainees at the Southwest Florida Regional Detention Center, due to overcrowding. Representative Livingston stated, "This was an interim solution to keeping youthful offenders off the street." Representative Livingston plans to tour the facility in the near future.

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