



## Shelby County and the City of Memphis



Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., Mayor of Shelby County & A C Wharton, Jr., Mayor, City of Memphis

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### **Felons Get Support From Unified Re-Entry Program**

Three agencies have combined to help incarcerated felons get life-skills training and find work after their release from prison. Details about the new Memphis and Shelby County Office of Re-entry will be discussed at a news conference on Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m., in the parking lot of the Urban Child Institute, 600 Jefferson Avenue.

Shelby County Government will lead the bureau, which combines the Shelby County Corrections Center Re-entry program, the City of Memphis Second Chance program and the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole.

**"It's important we link these similar services to help felons avoid repeating their criminal behavior. As a former warden with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, felons will quickly return to prison without intervention programs,"** said Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.

**"As a public defender, I saw firsthand countless individuals who wanted to make a fresh start but, because of their education or barriers to employment, found themselves on the wrong side of the law again almost as soon as they were released,"** said Mayor A C Wharton, Jr. **"For those individuals who are determined to walk the right path, we are determined to help them find their way. The Office of Re-entry will help these men and women transition from inmate to involved, productive members of society."**

The idea for the joint office of re-entry services originated with the *Operation: Safe Community* initiative. Representatives of government, law enforcement, the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, schools, faith-based organizations and other community organizations meet monthly to discuss ways to reduce and prevent crime throughout Shelby County.

The initial pilot program will involve about 200 felons, all within six months to a year of their release from the Shelby County Corrections Center and other state prisons in west Tennessee. Those chosen must have had no major disciplinary issues in prison and reside in Shelby County after their release.

Various community agencies will offer training classes on such topics as job readiness and how to effectively resolve family conflicts. **"Attendance at these sessions will be built into the inmates' probation requirements. This unified approach for re-entry will be a model for other communities,"** said Charles Traughber, Chairman of the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole.

The Memphis and Shelby County Office of Re-entry staff is comprised of four people from the City of Memphis, three from the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole, and five from Shelby County Government including the administrator.

**(End of Release)**