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Press Release

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SOUTHWEST IDAHO JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER BECOMES FIRST PREA COMPLIANT FACILITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Caldwell, ID – The Canyon County Board of Commissioners is proud to announce that the Southwest Idaho Juvenile Detention Center (SWIDJDC) in Caldwell is the first incarceration facility of any kind in the United States to be certified as being compliant with the standards of the Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

Director Steven Jett notes that the PREA standards, released in June 2012, set forth strict requirements for facilities to meet to make sure every effort is in place to safeguard those housed in prisons, jails, and juvenile detention and corrections centers.

“Although many of the practices mandated by PREA were already in place at the SWIDJDC, the law demands that more efforts be placed in preventing, detecting and responding to any incidents of sexual abuse in facilities,” said Jett. “We’re extremely proud to reach compliance with these strict standards and it’s truly an honor to be the first facility in the nation to do so.”

In September 2013, the SWIDJDC underwent an audit conducted by Department of Justice-certified Auditor Wendy Estano, of Little Rock, AR. Estano spent 3 ½ days at the facility interviewing staff and residents, and reviewing documents, policies and procedures. She also spent several days off-site doing more document review, phone calls and interviews. Any deficiencies were to be corrected by April 27. However, Jett and his staff were able to clear up all items by February 10.

Jett attributes the results of the successful audit to several important factors; the staff members at the SWIDJDC who embraced the goals and concepts of PREA, and his involvement in the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) and the tremendous amount of training that has been furnished at their conferences since 2007 regarding PREA and preventing sexual abuse. NPJS personnel also conducted advanced PREA training at the SWIDJDC in January 2014. Jett also served two terms as president of the National Juvenile Detention Association during the time that the PREA standards were being developed, and took an active role in commenting on the draft versions as they were released.

For juvenile facilities, there are approximately 182 standards that must be met to be considered “PREA compliant.” Several standards require the facility to partner with an outside support services agency to furnish any victims with emotional support and counseling. To accomplish

this, Advocates Against Family Violence (AAFV) stepped in to fill the role. Jett is very excited with the partnership that was forged after meeting several times with AAFV CEO Kim Ivacek.

“We want to commend Steve and his staff for this incredible accomplishment,” said Commissioners Rule, Alder and Hanson. “To become the first facility in the nation to be PREA compliant is a testament to the hard work and dedication they show each and every day while working with at-risk juveniles. It’s great to see Canyon County be a leader in this important field.”

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For more information, please contact Director Steve Jett at (208) 454-7353 or Canyon County Public Information Officer Joe Decker at (208) 455-6090.