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**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF  
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**Sevier County substance abuse program for inmates saves millions in tax dollars  
*70% success rate garners attention***

**SEVIER COUNTY, Arkansas (April 24, 2019)** – Sevier County’s Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program for inmates, established by the Sevier County Sheriff Robert Gentry and Jail Administrator Chris Wolcott in late 2017, is garnering positive attention across the state. Through the program, those approved are offered a significantly reduced sentence, 90 days in the jail while enrolled in the program. Following completion, graduates must remain drug free with no arrests throughout probation. The Arkansas House of Representatives recently honored Sevier County’s Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program with a resolution highlighting its success.

To date, 70 percent of graduates remain drug free with no additional arrests. Along with required substance abuse classes, the program’s electives include anger management, adult education classes, career development, parenting classes or church attendance. Many graduates are now employed full time and have reclaimed custody of children previously in foster care.

Those enrolled in the program face sentences ranging from two years to twenty years. With the Arkansas Department of Correction’s average annual cost to house an inmate more than \$22,800, the Sevier County program has already saved more than \$1.5 million in tax dollars while serving as a model to correctional facilities throughout the state.

“Launched with a minimal investment, this program is saving tax dollars, but most importantly it is positively changing the lives of Arkansans,” said Governor Asa Hutchinson. “I applaud Sevier County for establishing this and expanding the scope to include adult education and career development. This program provides inmates the tools required for success upon release.”

The Sevier County Sheriff's Office established the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program in partnership with Arkansas' Jail Standards Office, a division of the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). A grant totaling \$154,000 was provided to support the program's launch. DFA administered the grant through the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment For State Prisoners (RSAT) program, provided by the Department of Justice (Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance).

"To say the program has been a success would be an understatement," said Chris Wolcott, Sevier County Jail Administrator. "Due to the lives that have been changed, I have citizens asking how they can enroll themselves or a family member. Seeing graduates living positive, healthy lives as great parents and employees is a testament to the many people and organizations that make this possible."

A graduation ceremony for those that recently completed the program will take place on May 2. Media are encouraged to attend. Additional details are available by contacting Sheriff Robert Gentry at [rgentry@seviersheriffar.org](mailto:rgentry@seviersheriffar.org) or Administrator Chris Wolcott at [cwolcott@seviersheriffar.org](mailto:cwolcott@seviersheriffar.org).

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