



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311

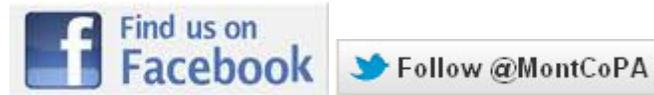
Frank X. Custer, Communications Director

Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant

PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX 278-5943

COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair*

LESLIE S. RICHARDS, *Vice Chair*, BRUCE L. CASTOR, JR., *Commissioner*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 9, 2014

County Officials Present Results of Review Following Recent Prison Escape

Norristown, PA (September 9, 2014) – Acting quickly in the wake of the first escape from the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) in Eagleville in over 20 years, county officials today detailed the results of a comprehensive review of prison and public safety procedures.

The review outlined a half dozen steps that will be taken to help prevent any future escape from the correctional facility ranging from disciplinary action, protocol alterations, physical changes to the minimum security section of the prison from which the inmate escaped, and steps to notify area residents should any future escape occur.

“We take this incident seriously, and we are committed to making sure it doesn’t happen again,” said Josh Shapiro, chair of the Montgomery County Commissioners. “We immediately ordered an investigation into what happened, and today we are confident that this quick response will address the mistakes that were made, and help ensure they do not happen again. The most important issue in all of this is the safety of our residents, and we are committed to doing everything possible to ensure that safety.”

The escape occurred on Labor Day afternoon when inmate Raehib Hankerson manipulated a wire fence in the minimum security section of the prison and got through the fence and into a nearby wooded area. Hankerson had been placed in the prison a week earlier by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for a Technical Parole Violation.

Immediately after he was discovered missing at 3:05 p.m., the entire facility was placed in maximum security and the county’s emergency operations center was notified to issue an alert to all county police departments. Within minutes police and county detectives arrived on the scene, and a search for Hankerson commenced.

He was captured at 5:39 p.m. and placed into custody.

The review revealed the following:

- Established procedures by certain staff were not followed
- Available visual technology was not used as provided
- Routine security checks were not performed
- Accountability procedures of inmates were not maintained

Warden Julio Algarin and Tom Sullivan, director of the county's Department of Public Safety, announced the following:

- Disciplinary action to include reassignment, suspension, and possible termination of certain staff
- A complete review of the incident, reports, and physical structure was conducted
- Corrective actions already taken include security audit of the area and established procedures
- Immediate modification of the gate and fence area through which the escape occurred
- Technical Parole Violators will now immediately be sent to the MCCF classification housing unit to determine their fitness for the Community Corrections Center (the minimum security area from which Hankerson escaped)
- Community notification systems will be recommended to the county commissioners including urging residents to sign up for "Ready Notify," the county system which alerts subscribers to important public safety information; actively soliciting residents to sign up for this service; installation of a siren to immediately alert the community of an escape; and, installation of a dedicated telephone line for community use during an emergency for the purpose of disseminating information or receiving a call back for emergency-related questions.