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**Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention visits
Mississippi Choctaw**

New grant brings \$700,000 to the Justice Center to develop a demonstration juvenile reentry program with sustainable green activities

CHOCTAW, Miss. – On October 1, 2009 the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians of Choctaw, Mississippi was awarded an OJJDP Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green four year grant award. The initiative is a component of OJJDP's Tribal Youth initiative. This is the first year that OJJDP has released a solicitation that exclusively focuses on providing services and programming for tribal youth in juvenile detention facilities in Indian Country.

With this new demonstration program, OJJDP seeks to enhance opportunities for federally recognized tribes to provide comprehensive and quality programs for tribal youth who reside within or are being released from tribal juvenile detention centers. This program also marks the first time that OJJDP is sponsoring an initiative that encourages funding recipients to partner with institutions and organizations to incorporate green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities as part of the program's educational, training, and reentry activities for tribal youth participants. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians will develop a program at the Mississippi Choctaw Youth Justice Center entitled "*Osapausi Amasalichi* , or "***Getting Healing from that Little Garden***". The OJJDP Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green grant award will give the Mississippi Choctaw Youth Justice Center, in collaboration with **Mississippi State University's Environmental Collaboration Office**, the resources to design and implement a green education program that will provide education and training opportunities to build onsite greenhouse gardens and develop an ethno botanical landscaping component which will allow youth to learn about traditionally harvested plants & foods. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Youth Justice Center seeks to successfully reintegrate Tribal youth back into the community by increasing their knowledge of sustainable agriculture and green building, which will substantially

increase job opportunities for Tribal youth transitioning back into the community from the Youth Justice Center.

On December 10th, 2009 Ms. Laura Ansera, Tribal Youth Coordinator, Office of Policy Development - OJJDP, Patrick Dunckhorst, Program Manager - OJJDP, and other staff, made a formal site visit on behalf of OJJDP to meet with Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Tribal leaders, community members, and the staff of the Choctaw Youth Justice Center and Tribal Court Services. They discussed the planning, implementation, and evaluation components of the OJJDP Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration program grant award for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Youth Justice Center. The group toured the Smith John Justice Center and Complex, as well as the Nanih Waiya mounds, and attended Miko Beasley Denson's annual Christmas Luncheon for Tribal government employees as his special guests. Daniel Mittan is the Director of Court Services for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and is charged with implementation of the award. Mittan has worked with the Tribal Court for almost fifteen years and said, "This USDOJ grant through OJJDP fully supports the Tribal Court's efforts to blend culturally-specific activities with restorative justice best-practices to enable our youth and families to be positive contributors to the community. It is truly a unique opportunity with incredible potential, and it has created a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm. We are proud to have been selected and look forward to the partnership with Mississippi State University and OJJDP."

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The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, under the esteemed leadership of Miko Beasley Denson, has an enrolled membership of over 10,000 and is the only federally recognized tribe in the State of Mississippi. Headquartered in the Pearl River community, near Philadelphia, Mississippi, the Tribe has emerged as a leader in economic development. The Tribe provides a range of governmental services for its members including schools, a hospital, medical clinics, police and fire protection, courts, an elderly center, among many others.