



## **News from the Shelby County Sheriff's Office**

**Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., Sheriff**

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 201 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

**Public Information Officer: Steve Shular**

- Office (901) 545-5532 FAX (901) 545-3310 Cell (901) 359-5117
- E mail: [steve.shular@shelby-sheriff.org](mailto:steve.shular@shelby-sheriff.org)

All news releases may be viewed at [www.shelby-sheriff.org](http://www.shelby-sheriff.org) in the **News Releases Listing**

**November 17, 2009**

### **Shelby County Jail Now Free From Federal Court Oversight**

United States District Judge Bernice Bouie Donald has ended the federal government's oversight of the Shelby County Jail which began more than a decade ago. In her Order yesterday, Judge Donald said oversight at the jail was, "**finally and unconditionally dismissed.**"

**"From my first day as Sheriff, it's been my goal to remove the federal government from our daily operations. As an elected official, I need to be accountable for what goes on at the jail without the intervention of the federal government. This is a significant accomplishment for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office and members of the Shelby County Jail Compliance Team,"** said Shelby County Sheriff Mark H. Luttrell, Jr. The Shelby County Jail Compliance Team has met routinely for the past several years which led to sweeping changes in jail operations.

Trouble at the Shelby County Jail began in 1995 when a former jail inmate filed a federal court lawsuit after he was raped in the jail by three gang members. The court ordered immediate changes in the safety and security of inmates.

However, little progress was made until 2002 when Sheriff Luttrell began an aggressive initiative to correct conditions at the jail. A 14-point jail-improvement plan focused on the safety of inmates, creation of a jail population management system to monitor inmate levels and ensured the jail staff received additional training in security and life-safety issues. Although the contempt of court charge was lifted by Federal Judge Jon McCalla in 2005, inspectors from the Department of Justice have continued routine visits to the jail to ensure compliance with the court order.

**(More)**

**Page 2**  
**Federal Court Ends Oversight of Jail**  
**November 17, 2009**

**“Our staff deserves the credit for the federal oversight being lifted. I appreciate the dedication and professionalism of our employees. The Shelby County Jail is now known as one of the best operated jails in the nation,”** said Chief Jailer James Coleman.

Although federal government oversight has ended, the safety and security of inmates and jail employees remain top priorities. **“Shelby County Government lost millions of dollars from the inmate lawsuit and resulting actions by the federal court. We will continue to daily monitor jail operations to ensure our high operational standards are maintained,”** added Sheriff Luttrell.

**(End of Release)**