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For immediate release

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Iowa State Penitentiary, Fort Madison –

## Iowa State Penitentiary

Iowa State Penitentiary, Fort Madison –

Recently 13 offenders graduated from the substance abuse program at the John Bennett Unit located adjacent to the maximum security institution.

John Bennett houses minimum security offenders who are preparing for transition back into the community.

As part of reentry into the community, the parole board often requires offenders to complete over 220 hours of substance abuse curriculum. The curriculum is designed to assist offenders in dealing with their substance abuse as well as provides various life skills.

Offenders must meet certain qualifications in order to participate in the licensed program, such as an identified need as well as appropriate behavior.

At the end of each program, a graduation ceremony is held to commemorate their accomplishments. The participants discuss their work in the program and their experiences with those that attended the ceremony. The group wanted to send a special message to the youth of our community to "*Just Say No*" to drugs and alcohol.

This graduation ceremony was special occasion for two reasons; first long term treatment provider Nancy McClure will be retiring after 30 years of service. This group of offenders represented her last Treatment Education Awareness (TEA) class. To demonstrate appreciation for the program support received over the years Warden Ludwick presented Southeastern Community College instructor Sue Dunlay as well as Parole/Probation Supervisor Mike Benda with Certificates of Appreciation. Both Dunlay and Benda have been instrumental in the success of the program.

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The mission of the Iowa Department of Corrections is to:

**Advance Successful Offender Reentry to Protect the Public, Staff and Offenders from Victimization.**

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