

## Commissioner Hall: Contraband seizure at Holmes-Humphreys Regional “concerns me”

**MS Dept. of Corrections**  
Dozens of cell phones and bags of tobacco were among a large amount of contraband seized from the Holmes-Humphreys County Regional Correctional Facility in Lexington Wednesday. The seizure marks the second time in less than a month that a large number of cell phones were confiscated from the facility.

Wednesday morning, 80 cell phones and 93 large and small bags of tobacco were removed by MDOC staff during an Operation Zero Tolerance shakedown. On June 19, 95 cell phones and 79 large and small bags of tobacco were confiscated by a search led by regional staff. “That’s 175 cell phones and 172 packs or bags of tobacco removed within three weeks from a facility that usually has 200 state inmates,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “This administration has zero tolerance for contraband.”

In addition to the contraband, MDOC officials also reported a strong marijuana-like odor during the search at 5:45 a.m.

Many inmates received rule violation reports for



**Contraband and banned items continue to flow into the Holmes-Humphreys Regional Correctional Facility even after an MDOC shakedown conducted less than a month ago.** (Photo submitted)

possession of contraband. Two offenders in particular were found with the most cell phones and other illegal items MDOC has found on one offender since Operation Zero Tolerance was implemented. One of those inmates had two saw blades, screws, a wrench, eight Zip Ties, three smart phones, tobacco, and tobacco-related items.

Other items found include 115 cell phone chargers, including 20 homemade; 13 cell phone batteries; 43 packs of suspected marijuana and spice; 21 cigarette lighters; three pairs of wire pliers; 10 sets of green dot or PayPal numbers; 51 pairs of earbuds; two SIM cards; four digital scales; and 96 packs of Top paper.

“What we found today at Holmes-Humphreys Regional concerns me, but I appreciate the cooperation that we are getting from the regional staff,” Commissioner Hall said.

MDOC and regional staff also have conducted a shakedown at Yazoo County Regional Correctional Facility in Yazoo City. On July 5, several inmates were cited for rule violations after they were found with a small amount of contraband, including cell phone chargers, suspected marijuana, and green dot or PayPal numbers. Also, there were 31 smart phones, three flip phones, 27 cell phone chargers, 14 pairs of earbuds, and 18 packs of suspected marijuana seized among assorted contraband.



**Rolling papers, cell phones, suspected marijuana, internet payment information, were confiscated by MS Department of Corrections officials during a second shakedown in three weeks at the Holmes County jail last Wednesday, July 11.** (Photo submitted)

## State tax free holiday set for July 27 and 28

### Staff Reports

Shoppers and deal hunters will be on the prowl for bargains ahead of this month’s sales tax holiday on Friday, July 29 and Saturday, July 30.

The Mississippi Department

of Revenue has announced this year’s guidelines on tax free goods across the state and what items are eligible.

Under Mississippi Code Section 27-65-111(bb) a sales tax holiday is held in

the state, a temporary period when sales taxes are not collected or paid on purchases of specific products and/or services.

Passed by state legislators in 2009, the seven percent state sales tax is not due on that sale of articles of clothing or footwear if the sales price of a single item is less than \$100, regardless of how (Continued on page 5.)

## Ebenezer natives turn locals into world jet-setters



**Pictured above are the local travelers at the Lion Monument in Lucerne, Switzerland: squatting, Roy Kinney; First row (from left): Lyndsey Tutor, Heather Tutor, Katie Tigner, Madeline Frank, Jamie Sample, Bailey McRae, Ariel Kendrix, Zachery Kinney, Sara Bailey Jones, Kelly Powers and Lizzie Kate Jones; Second row (from left): Sonny Tutor, Hayden Tutor, Amanda Frank, Gloria Waters, Debra Jones, Carolyn Craft, Pamela Jones, Garrett Dickerson, Sam Sample, Corey Johnson, Matthew Triplett, Jonathan Cruz, Tyler VanCise, Edward Cruz, Katie Rodgers, Leobardo Cruz and Jenny Jones.** (Photo submitted)

### By Pamela Eugenia Jones

EF (Education First) tour philosophy is that students learn on a deeper level through direct association and on-site education. They support the theory that recognizing and appreciating differences among people and their varied cultures cannot be accomplished by itself in a classroom. EF bridges the classroom-to-culture gap by arranging expertly guided international tours. Veteran tour coordinator Jamie Sample, of Ebenezer, recently organized a grand tour of Switzerland and Italy for 29 eager students and adults. Jamie’s husband Sam Sample of Ebenezer is a fixture on EF tours, acting as chaperone. It was my good fortune to accompany Jamie and the others on this marvelous journey.

On June 18, we boarded an overnight flight bound for Zurich, Switzerland. Although most of us accomplished little in the way of rest, our excitement at arriving in Zurich provided the necessary boost. Before we knew it, Jamie had us and our luggage all collected at our destination as if we were seasoned travelers.

Our tour guide, Vinnie, awaited us with a wave and a smile. Vinnie was as fa-

miliar with this region as any native. Fluent in four languages, he also spoke the language of laughter. We became fast friends, as his easy-going personality and a great sense of humor put us all at ease.

It was almost mid-morning when we boarded our comfortable tour bus, and the mid-70’s temperature was a pleasant surprise. For a brief 12 days, this group from the deep South escaped sweltering June humidity and highs 90’s for a climate that could be described as almost perfect. On the drive to Zurich, the air was beautifully clear and sunshine sparkled on translucent lakes. Vinnie helped us anticipate every aspect of our tour itinerary by providing details great and small. Prior to reaching each destination, he pointed out historical and current features that made the experience more meaningful. In the village of Limmat, Zurich he identified centuries-old buildings that were adorned with vibrant flowers. Church steeples rose above the skyline, and in every direction, he gave us the incentive to explore tree-lined cobbled streets. The landscape and architecture of this region were in striking contrast to our Mississippi hometowns.

More of nature’s splendor was revealed as we drove further away from the commercial areas of Zurich. The lakes and mountains of Sisikon and Fluelen, Uri were truly breathtaking. These are not the low hills of the Mississippi Delta, but tree covered sculptures breaking through white clouds on a backdrop of blue sky. It was a pleasure to just sit by the window in awe of the glorious view. Arriving in the farming community of Altdorf was our first introduction to the character of the people who live here. Every section of ground was cultivated. Pastures were so neatly mowed up steep mountainsides that Mississippians accustomed to relatively flat pastureland could only be astonished. The pride of ownership and orderliness of the residents was evident everywhere. Houses were colorfully painted, each cord of wood was precisely stacked, and seasonal flowers embellished window boxes, yards and beyond.

The next morning, waking up in the Swiss Alps and seeing the glory of the earth we inhabit filled us with gratitude. Our adventure for the second day was seeing the majestic view from atop (Continued on page 2.)

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**Thursday**  
Mostly Sunny  
93/74  
Precip. Chance  
20%



**Friday**  
Partly Cloudy  
96/76  
Precip. Chance  
20%



**Saturday**  
A.M. T'Storms  
94/74  
Precip. Chance  
50%



**Sunday**  
Sunny  
95/72  
Precip. Chance  
10%



**Monday**  
Mostly Sunny  
95/72  
Precip. Chance  
10%



**Tuesday**  
Partly Cloudy  
94/73  
Precip. Chance  
10%



**Wednesday**  
P.M. Thunderstorms  
94/73  
Precip. Chance  
50%

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