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Ketchikan Regional Youth Facility closing today

Youth needing detention transferred to Juneau; 15 staff members laid off

ANCHORAGE —The Ketchikan Regional Youth Facility will close today. Due to the fiscal crisis, the Department of Health and Social Services made the difficult decision to shut down the facility last month.

Youth from the Ketchikan area who were determined to need secure detention services have been sent to Juneau and placed in the Johnson Youth Center.

Fifteen full-time state employees with the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) received lay-off notices. One facility position was reassigned to the DJJ probation office in Ketchikan. Another position was transferred to the Johnson Youth Center.

The building will be completely vacated as of Oct. 15.

“The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to a responsible state budget,” said DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson. “Since FY2015, the Department’s unrestricted general fund has been cut over \$200 million or almost 16 percent. These cuts have real life impacts on Alaskans, and closing this youth facility is one difficult example.”

She added: “Now youth in detention will have to be sent further away from their communities and hard-working Alaskans have lost their jobs. However, given the financial realities our state is currently facing, we saw no alternative.”

Opened in 2002, KRYF was a short-term detention facility for youth from Ketchikan, Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell, Petersburg, Metlakatla, Kake and surrounding communities.

The facility’s annual budget was approximately \$1.9 million.

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