

Singer Jeff Bates to speak at Dec. 5 Drug Court graduation in Hattiesburg

November 29, 2016

Mississippi singer and songwriter Jeff Bates will be a special guest at the Dec. 5 graduation ceremony for the Twelfth Circuit Drug Court. The commencement celebration will begin at 4 p.m. at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg.



The ceremony will celebrate the accomplishments of 16 graduates. Twelve have completed requirements of the Forrest/Perry Counties Adult Drug Court. Three will graduate from the DUI Court, and one from the Veterans Court.

Bates, a successful country music artist, regularly uses the spotlight to tell his story of addiction, arrest, recovery and redemption. He makes appearances at churches, schools, and a few Mississippi drug courts. Circuit Judge Robert Helfrich and the Twelfth Circuit Drug Court staff met him at the August 2014 Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals conference in Natchez.

Bates was abandoned as a baby and adopted by a childless and poor couple in Bunker Hill in Marion County. Methamphetamine addiction almost killed his fledgling music career. Like many of the people who are in Drug Court, he hit rock bottom in jail after he stole from family and friends to support his addiction. He got a second chance. He's been clean and sober for 15 years.

Drug courts seek to rehabilitate drug-using offenders through drug treatment and intense supervision with frequent court appearances and random drug testing. Drug courts offer the incentive of a chance to remain out of jail and be employed and the sanction of a prison sentence if participants fail to remain drug-free and in compliance with all program requirements.

Mississippi currently has 42 drug courts. About 3,550 people are enrolled in drug courts statewide.

#####