

**GEORGIA PUBLIC DEFENDER  
STANDARDS COUNCIL**

**104 Marietta Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**



**Michael Mears  
Director**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Cordele Judicial Circuit and GPDSC Create First Circuit Defender Office**

**Atlanta** - - At the invitation of Judges, County Commissioners and the Tripartite Committee the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC) has agreed to establish the first circuit defender office in the Cordele Judicial Circuit. The first of forty-nine circuit defender offices, the Cordele circuit office is scheduled to be open and functioning in sixty days. The implementation of the Cordele Circuit Defender office is a pilot project designed to provide a working example of what is to come with the creation of Georgia's first statewide public defender system by the January, 2005 deadline.

Michael Mears, director of the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council, is excited about the opportunity to assist the circuit with meeting the obligations created last year with the Georgia Indigent Defense Act of 2003. "The Standards Council recognizes the endeavor that the Cordele circuit has undertaken. We are delighted to work in conjunction with the counties as we prepare to implement provisions of house bill 770. With the establishment of this office, GPDSC will be able to evaluate what is needed to sufficiently implement the other circuit defender offices throughout the State."

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***In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right . . . to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.***

**U.S. Constitution, Amendment VI - December 15, 1791**

The prototype circuit defender office will be in located in Fitzgerald, Georgia. The Ben Hill County Commission offered space in a recently renovated building which houses the meeting room for the county commissioners. The proposed space will provide offices for three attorneys, an investigator and an administrative assistant. There is space for a reception area, file storage and it is being wired for telephones and internet access.

The project has the support of the county commissioners. Nolan Martin, court administrator states, “. . . we plan to sufficiently furnish and provide the necessary operational funds to make this project a success. We look forward to partnering with the GPDSC in an effort to continue to provide effective assistance of counsel.”

The Georgia Public Defender Standards Council is an independent agency within the judicial branch of state government. House bill 770 created the Georgia Public Defender Standard Act of 2003, under this Act GPDSC is responsible for assuring that adequate and effective legal representation is provided, independent of political considerations or private interests.

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