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## DeSoto Board eyes jail matters; Bids in for final details ahead of opening in fall

**BYLINE:** Henry Bailey baileyhank@desotoappeal.com

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With construction moving toward a fall opening of the new county jail south of Hernando, the DeSoto Board of Supervisors on Monday will consider bids for some finishing touches.

The five-member governing panel will weigh the purchase of inmate correctional furniture and inmate supplies, and internal and external cabling for a telecommunication system.

At a different point on the agenda, board attorney Tony Nowak will bring up for approval an agreement with Securus Technologies Inc., a leading provider of inmate communications services, for a phone and video-visitation system as part of the \$16 million jail project.

The 65,000-square-foot facility of concrete and steel on 52 acres off U.S. 51 South could be ready to receive its first batch of inmates in October. The first-phase facility can house 272 inmates, easing crowding at the old 395-bed downtown Hernando jail; with later expansions, the new jail will be able to hold at least 1,000, both pretrial detainees and inmates.

"We're anticipating occupancy soon and we want to make sure all appropriate services are provided," said Supervisor Mark Gardner of Southaven. "What we're after is what's best for the money, but no luxury suite."

He said the jail video-telecom system will promote security and efficiency: "We won't have to transport inmates every time for a court hearing or a consultation."

In other matters, the supervisors will hear from Environmental Services chief Ray Laughter on a proposed 2 percent cost increase - based on the Consumer Price Index - for waste disposal with Republic Services/BFI/ Allied Waste. Any changes would be effective in the next fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, he said.

Also, a request will be presented to authorize board president Jessie Medlin of Olive Branch to sign an Ozone Advance participation letter. The program allows local governments to work in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency to focus on clean-air efforts; representatives from participating areas work with EPA to evaluate, select and implement control measures, and EPA can point to available tools and resources.

Gardner said Gary C. Rikard, an attorney with the **Butler Snow** firm, also will discuss legal options, including possible appeals, as the county mulls the EPA's decision this spring to link northern DeSoto with Memphis and Crittenden County as "non-attainment" on ozone levels. State and local officials, saying EPA used faulty data, fear industrial recruiting and transportation projects will be impaired if the ranking is not reversed.

Rikard is a former environmental engineer and senior attorney with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

The board meets beginning at 9 a.m. at the Courthouse in Hernando.

- Henry Bailey: (901) 333-2012

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