

# NEWSRELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Families can now send money to inmates online**

The Montana Department of Corrections has launched a new online service to make it easier for families of inmates to deposit money in the accounts of incarcerated offenders.

The Inmate Trust Account Deposits Service, accessible through a website at <http://inmatetrust.mt.gov> provides another means for pre-approved family members and other individuals to make deposits into accounts from which inmates can use money to buy items of personal clothing, hygiene products, over-the-counter medications, TV or music player. The service requires depositors to be approved by officials at Montana State Prison, where the new service is a pilot project.

Prior to implementation of the online service, inmate family members and others were required to submit deposits by mail using money orders. The new trust accounts deposits service saves individual depositors time and money and gives them a more convenient option to help provide their incarcerated loved ones with the ability to purchase personal items from the prison canteen.

The ability of inmates to have access to some personal money is a critical part of their rehabilitation, Warden Mike Mahoney said.

“It’s a mental training process to get these guys to understand they have some responsibility while incarcerated,” he said. “We expect them to use the funds in a positive and responsible manner. We ask inmates to take some responsibility for themselves, develop some independence and financial stability before release, and learn to manage money on a limited budget.”

“This is so convenient for my elderly mother to send money to her son,” one online customer told officials with Montana Interactive, the company that operates the service for the state. “I was very concerned about her driving to purchase a money order when the weather is bad.”

Mahoney said that, in this age of online technology and capability, it makes sense to provide an alternative to reliance on the outdated money order.

In addition to convenience for family members, the online service creates a process that makes it easier to track the source of deposits when they are made using a credit or debit card. Electronic deposits also are more secure than those done using money orders.

(more)

Although the deposit service initially involves just Montana State Prison, the Department of Corrections intends to expand the program to allow other facilities to utilize the online service in the future.

In the past fiscal year, more than \$1.1 million was deposited in inmate accounts statewide.

The application was cooperatively developed and is supported by the Department of Corrections, the Department of Administration, and Montana Interactive. The Helena-based company built, operates and maintains the state's eGovernment services that are available through the state's official website ([www.mt.gov](http://www.mt.gov)).

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