

## STATE PRISONS CHIEF WILL RESIGN THIS MONTH

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James McDonough, the retired Army colonel whose by-the-book management style returned stability to a Florida prison system wracked by scandal, has told Gov. Charlie Crist that he plans to resign before the end of the month.

Crist confirmed Wednesday evening that McDonough is leaving soon and that he has expected such a move for a while.

"He's been a tremendous public servant," Crist said. "He has such integrity. He really has righted the ship, and I'm grateful to him."

Crist said McDonough's replacement will be named as early as next week.

McDonough, who clashed repeatedly with a deeply entrenched corrections culture, declined to comment.

The legislator who most closely oversees the prison system's \$2.2-billion budget, Sen. Victor Crist, R-Tampa, said McDonough's departure has been anticipated for some time. He called McDonough's exit a big loss to the state.

"He's been a strong, fearless organizer who brought DOC back on its feet," he said. "But he's tired. It's not what he wanted to do. It's what he was asked to do."

McDonough, 61, is a no-nonsense combat veteran who saw action in two wars and received three Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart. He made a very public exit from federal government to protest President Bill Clinton's Monica Lewinsky scandal.

McDonough oversees a system with 95,000 inmates and 150,000 more ex-offenders under state supervision. He becomes the first agency head to leave since the governor took office slightly more than a year ago.

His departure comes as the lethal injection of chemicals to execute **death row** inmates is under legal attack in the U.S. Supreme Court and while a prolonged slump in tax revenue will make it more difficult for the state to build enough prison beds to keep pace with a growing inmate population.

McDonough also has clashed with PRIDE, the privately run St. Petersburg-based inmate job program, which he has proposed converting into a unit inside the Corrections Department.

McDonough was working as then-Gov. Jeb Bush's drug policy adviser when Corrections Secretary James Crosby was named in a widening prison scandal in February 2006. After months of loyally backing Crosby, who would later plead guilty to accepting kickbacks

and go to prison, Bush shifted McDonough to the Corrections Department, and changes came immediately.

He fired or demoted dozens of prison officials, some of them wardens, and instituted random drug tests, loyalty oaths, dress codes and mandatory fitness programs for employees.

McDonough, who earns \$128,750 a year, offended powerful forces such as the Police Benevolent Association, the politically active union that represents correctional officers, which protested the weight-training rules.

The union said Wednesday it would have no comment until McDonough's resignation becomes official.

More firings came in November after McDonough and his staff uncovered an institutionalized system of cash payments from inmates' families to two lawyers and two retired prison consultants to get prisoners transferred to different prisons - 371 transfers and \$1.2-million in fees in the past year alone.

"The tone that you set permeates the ranks almost instantly," McDonough said this past summer, in remarks quoted by the Tallahassee Democrat. "By the time I got to be a battalion commander in the Army, it was almost uncanny; whatever mood I was in, within 30 minutes of my arriving in the unit area in the morning, they would all know. ... It's what you stand and what you stand for, what you allow and what you disallow."

Two senior managers in the prison system have applied for the job: George Sapp, the deputy secretary for institutions; and Bruce Grant, the deputy secretary for community corrections.

The Governor's Office also received a resume from Kathleen Dennehy, a former chief of the Massachusetts Corrections Department and now superintendent of security for the Bristol County, Mass., Sheriff's Office.

Gov. Crist said he probably will name the next corrections secretary Tuesday.