



BLESSED
BY Nature



DELTA
COUNCIL

A N N U A L
R E P O R T

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Kent Wyatt
President
Cleveland



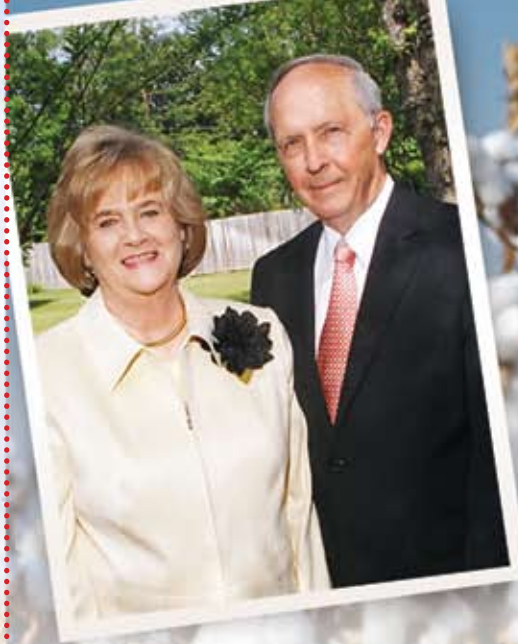
Buddy Bass
Vice President
Clarksdale



Tom Gresham
Vice President
Indianola



Jimmy Hollingsworth
Vice President
Hollandale



message from THE PRESIDENT

Throughout my career as an educator, it was obvious that the Mississippi Delta was different from other regions of our state and country. One of the last settled areas in our country around the beginning of the last century, the region displays a remarkable connectivity that undergirds our communities, businesses, family, churches, and civic lives. The land, the water, the soil, the beauty that is the Delta, all point to the fact – as our theme suggests – that we are indeed “Blessed by Nature.”

As President of Delta Council this year, I have seen this blessing underscored time and time again in conference rooms in Stoneville, Jackson and Washington, and in communities, turnrows, and courthouses all over the Mississippi Delta. The people of this region have a creativity and style of leadership that allows us to accomplish great things by understanding that we must work smarter and harder, and never let our eyes wander from the mundane yet sure steps of progress to the sometimes more

fashionable crisis of the moment. Just like the time and nurture it takes for a cotton seed to be planted and made into a pair of jeans that a child in Connecticut wears, or the time it takes for a rice crop to be grown, shipped, processed, and microwaved with other ingredients to put food on your family’s table, people in the Delta have the know-how, the determination, the creativity, and the patience to understand how great things get accomplished by working together.

We are “Blessed by Nature.” This blessing manifests itself in so many ways that make the Mississippi Delta a special place and its people recognized worldwide for their abilities and creativity. Working through Delta Council, it is obvious that this blessing is not just the land, the water, the soil, and all of the natural elements that we cherish. It is the nature of our people who work together every day to make our home a better place, now and long into the future.

Kent Wyatt



BUILDING BRIDGES AND CONNECTING THE WORLD

We are pleased that Senator Lott will address the members and special friends of Delta Council at our 71st meeting. Trent Lott has been a consistent and powerful advocate for the economic advancement of Mississippi and the Delta during his four decades of public service, first as a congressman and now as a U.S. Senator. His ability to make things happen has been a hallmark of his career. I believe most all will agree that this was underscored last year after he played a pivotal role in securing a timely and precise response to Hurricane Katrina – especially when you consider that the

storm destroyed his home on the Gulf Coast. His emphasis on infrastructure development in the state and the Delta has paid big dividends. When you consider projects like the U.S. 82 Bridge, Interstate 69, the Tunica Airport, and countless other infrastructure enhancements, it is obvious that Senator Lott understands that Mississippi can compete with any place in the country or the world. But to do so, we must have a level playing field in terms of roads, bridges, rail lines, and similar public works that are required for an economy to function properly.



Campbell F. Melton
Vice President
Tunica



Moses Newsome
Vice President
Itta Bena



Ann Shackelford
Vice President
Scott



Joe Ricotta
Treasurer
Indianola

THE 71ST DELTA COUNCIL



KBH CORPORATION:

With offices and manufacturing facilities in Clarksdale and equipment sold throughout the world, The KBH Corporation is a family owned and operated company that is now celebrating its 49th year of business. They manufacture and sell a complete line of Liquid and Dry Fertilizer Equipment, Cotton Module Builders, and Cotton Carts. KBH is also one of the largest dealers in the country for Norwesco Poly Tanks.

LAND BANKS OF MISSISSIPPI:

Land Bank South has seven offices from the Delta (below U.S. 82) to the Gulf Coast. The Land Bank of North Mississippi has seven locations from the Delta to Northeast Mississippi. They are premier rural lending experts with 14 conveniently located offices throughout the state of Mississippi. Offering customized financing options, they specialize in rural property loans and are your resource to obtain the credit needed to purchase rural land, refinance existing debt, make capital improvements, build a home or finance your agribusiness operation.

DELTA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER:

Delta Regional Medical Center's purpose is to provide quality health care and service to the people of the Delta. DRMC is now ninth in size among health care systems in Mississippi and the largest employer in Washington County. The combined system now has 1,178 employees, 398 beds and more than 100 physicians on staff who represent some 36 medical specialties.

ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS



BANKPLUS:

BankPlus has 48 banking offices in 30 communities throughout Mississippi. The name BankPlus and their slogan, “It’s more than a name. It’s a promise.” reflect the enhanced services they offer and emphasize their commitment to giving their customers more for their money. In the last decade, BankPlus has grown from \$156 million to \$1.3 billion in total assets.

MORGAN KEEGAN:

Founded in 1969 in Memphis, Tennessee, Morgan Keegan & Company is today a premier regional investment firm offering full service investment banking, securities brokerage, trust and asset management. Morgan Keegan serves the diverse financial needs of individual investors, corporate and institutional clients throughout the U.S. and abroad. The firm has over 240 offices in 18 states, over 3,000 employees and \$480 million in equity capital. As a subsidiary of Regions Financial Corporation, Morgan Keegan is partnered with one of the nation’s Top 15 financial services providers, with \$84 billion in assets.

JIMMY SANDERS, INC.:

Founded in Cleveland, Mississippi, in 1953, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., has become one of the leading farm supply distribution businesses in the Mid-South with locations in four states and 35 branch offices/distribution centers. The company is multifaceted in its operations, which include agricultural chemical distribution, seed production and sales, bulk handling of fertilizer, the exporting of grains, variable rate technology, and other agronomic services.

LT. GOVERNOR TUCK TO HONOR TOP DELTA GRADUATES AT DELTA COUNCIL DAY



Lt. Governor Amy Tuck has been a consistent supporter of education and Delta Council is pleased that she has addressed the Delta's top Honor Graduates at the Delta Council Annual Meeting for the past five years. Her message for them to continue their superior achievements in education and impressing upon them the need to remain in the Mississippi Delta after graduation to make a difference is one that is vital for our future. Amy Tuck understands just how important this is.

Carver Randle, Chairman
Delta Council Educational Policy Committee

DELTA 1000



Washington political analyst Stu Rothenberg speaking to the Delta 1000 members before the Delta Council Annual Meeting.

The DELTA 1000 program is composed of individual leaders, businessmen, and agricultural interests who recognize the most pressing Delta concerns and agree to pay \$100 annually above their regular dues to support the work of Delta Council. Any individual member of Delta Council who wishes to be a member of the DELTA 1000 program can be assured that the funds raised through this program are dedicated only to those special and most critical projects such as industrial location projects, enhanced workforce training initiatives for employers, the development of new agricultural technology through the expansion of the Stoneville-based experiment station, transportation and important farm policy considerations.


Billy Percy, Greenville
Delta Council Past President



DSU EDUCATION INITIATIVE AND SUPERINTENDENTS ACADEMY

We are proud of the success that the Delta State Education Initiative has registered in reducing teacher shortages in the Mississippi Delta over the past few years. Another big component of the program that has not attracted the same amount of attention, but has generated the same impressive results, is the Superintendents Academy. In most towns, it is the superintendent who manages the biggest budget in the community, as well as the greatest potential for the Delta's future. By allowing superintendents an avenue to remove themselves from their daily routine, the academy focuses on the executive abilities needed by superintendents to effectively manage school districts, and the leadership skills needed for increasing student achievement.

Kent Wyatt, President
Delta Council



Delta State University

4-YEAR \$25,000 SCHOLARSHIP

30	Current Teachers in the Delta
9	Fulfilled Obligation and left Delta schools
14	Currently Enrolled at DSU
53	TOTAL RECIPIENTS

THE MISSING LINK: HIGHWAY 6

In response to longstanding efforts by Delta Council and local leaders throughout Northwest Mississippi, the recently passed Transportation Appropriations measure in Congress included several million dollars to begin work on four-laning Highway 6 from Clarksdale to Batesville, which will help start planning and design work on the east-west corridor. The Mississippi 4-Lane Highway Program, combined with our interstate system, has extended 4-lane access across the state on Interstate 10 across the Mississippi Gulf Coast, U.S. Highway 84 from Natchez to the Alabama state line, Interstate 20 from Vicksburg to Meridian, and U.S. Highway 82 from Greenville to Columbus. The northwest quadrant of the state is the only portion of Mississippi that has no 4-lane connector to I-55 and 4-lane U.S. Highway 61. These funds will allow the Mississippi Department of Transportation to begin planning and design work on this important piece of our state and region's transportation network.

Tom Gresham, Chairman
Delta Council Transportation Committee



INTERSTATE 69

Senator Cochran and Senator Lott put approximately \$150 million in the highway authorization bill to ensure that I-69 would continue to progress through the State of Mississippi. Delta Council realizes that the process of planning, designing, constructing, and opening a major interstate between Canada and Mexico is not one that will happen quickly or without turbulence, but we will never divert our eyes from the work and

priorities that such a massive public works project portends for our region. Although the existing funding for I-69 will largely provide support for engineering, design, and right-of-way acquisition, Delta Council emphasized that every effort should be made to avoid disruption of U.S. 61 four-lane traffic between the Delta and Memphis until such time that the northernmost and southernmost segments have been initiated.



DC ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM CONTINUES MOMENTUM

The Delta Council Adult Literacy Program has been a rewarding experience for our little town. I witnessed firsthand the remarkable results that were achieved in our first session. The impact that it had on the five participants was so great and will pay

big dividends, not only for them, but for their families and this whole community. The one-on-one interaction that the instructors give each of the students made all the difference. We are forever grateful for the opportunity and are already beginning another class.

Mayor Shirley Allen, Metcalfe



Delta Council Adult Literacy instructor Jill Gray talks to participants of the Metcalfe program.

BATTLING THE WORKFORCE PERCEPTION

Headlines like these are a constant call to action for Delta Council that we must place a tremendous amount of focus and energy on the issues surrounding workforce training, not only for new businesses but especially for our existing companies. In most every instance, it was NOT the workforce that was the culprit. Instead, manufacturing and other businesses are so sensitive to issues like the Chinese currency, low wage rates in developing nations, or rising fuel and steel costs, among many others in which our communities and Delta Council have no input. However, the PERCEPTION is that lack of workforce skills are the problem, and we must exhaust every avenue to ensure that not one job is lost due to a lack of training that, in most every instance, is available to employers and employees.



WATER QUALITY IN THE DELTA



With all of the hype about what we think we know about the water quality of Delta streams and water bodies, it is amazing to me that the people of this region, working through Delta Council, have remained so committed to getting to the bottom of the questions related to public health, the environment, and the economy, which are so closely associated to the water in the Delta.

Phil Bass, State Programs Coordinator
Environmental Protection Agency

AGROMEDICINE: LIVING IN NATURE

There are many perceived problems with health care research, education, and access in the Delta, and then there are the real problems. It is amazing to me that an entire region could come together to agree that there is no magic wand. They have essentially put their local and personal interests aside in favor of really focusing on the problem.

Bruce Brackin
Epidemiologist-Program Director
Agromedicine, University of Mississippi Medical Center



FLOOD CONTROL: FORGOTTEN, UNTIL AN EMERGENCY

If you have never known anyone whose community was surrounded by sandbags, whose toilet backed up due to flooded septic tanks, or who put their children on a school bus route that had only a 35 foot mound of dirt between

them and total devastation and tragedy, then you have never lived in the Mississippi Delta. Attention to flood protection is not an everyday concern for everybody, but it sure better be a concern for somebody, every day.

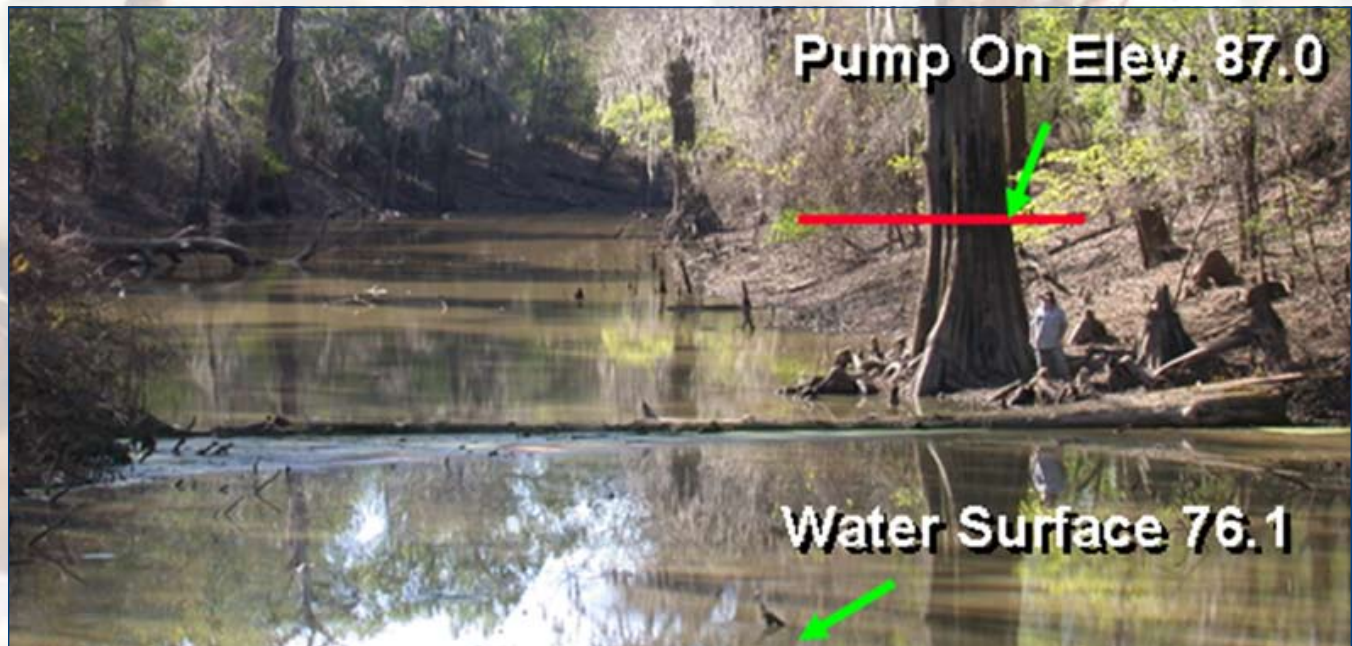


Would you want your children on this school bus if efforts to raise the levees to their proper heights were not being implemented?



Would you sleep well at night if you lived on the "protected" side of these sandbags, like the people of Quitman County in 1991?

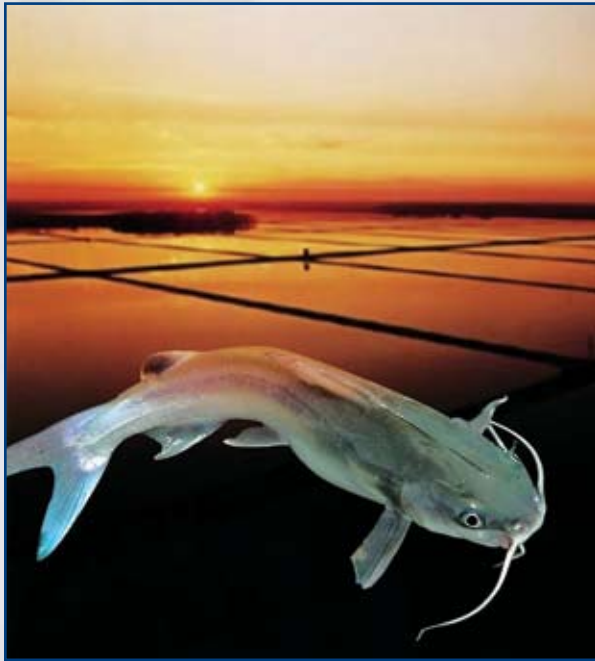
THREE PROJECTS DELTA COUNCIL WILL NEVER FORGET



Opponents of flood protection for the South Delta say that the pumps will destroy wetlands. The above picture, depicting the level when the pumps are turned on, shows they don't understand the Delta or its needs.

SEEKING THE HIGHEST QUALITY

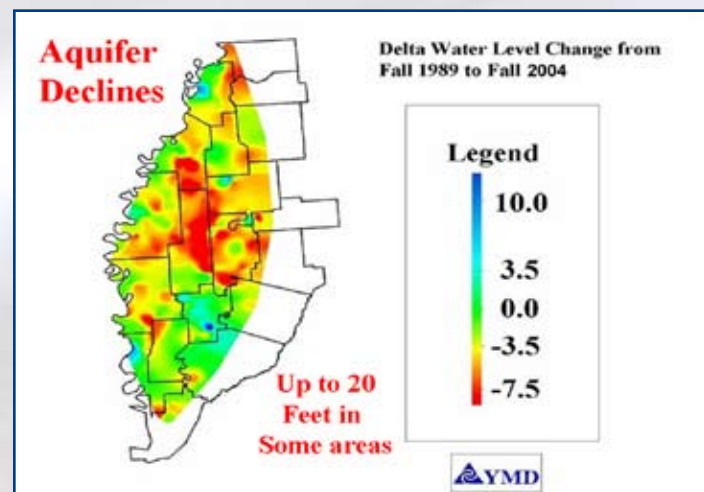
A higher quality product should carry premium price in the marketplace. It's no coincidence that Delta Council is focusing on stratifying more catfish products through a potential grading system which will hopefully separate us from the pack of inferior products.



CONFRONTING DELTA WATER SUPPLY

The people who are close to the issue of water supply in the Delta never avoid trying to get the answer, even though they know that there are risks associated with the remedial solution to any natural resource issue in the Delta. But, when people come to us with support for researching the issues before they have already decided the answer, we are inclined to cooperate and work with them to solve any potential problem.

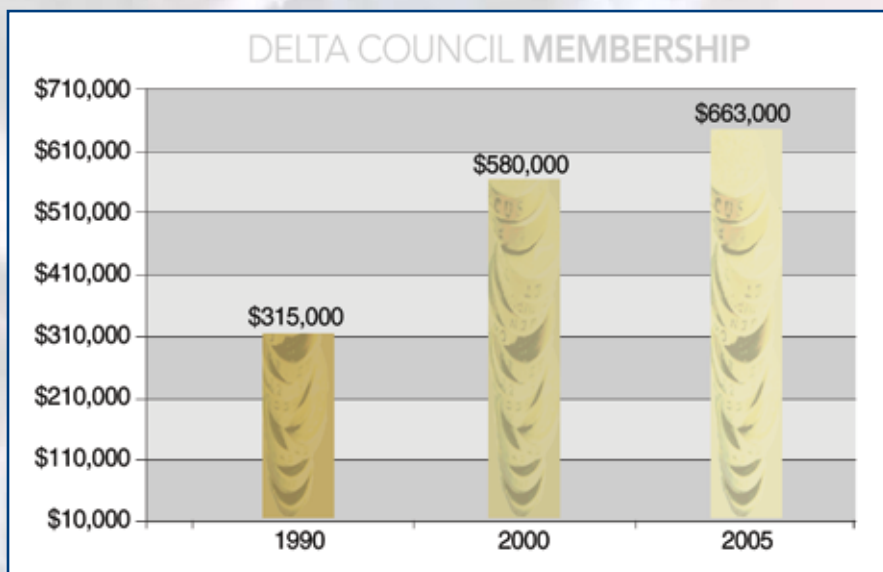
Charles Chisolm
Executive Director
State of Mississippi Department of
Environmental Quality



DELTA COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP REPORT IS POSITIVE

I have assisted in raising money for a lot of organizations and institutions, but none of them can rival Delta Council in terms of the annual response from our membership. I think it has to do with not only the effectiveness of the organization, but also the people from the communities who lend their time, name, and talents to make sure people in the Delta are pulling the wagon and not ceding to the whims of fate or other people further removed from the business of the Mississippi Delta. Money never accurately measures the effectiveness of an organization, but you cannot be truly effective without it.

Frank Mitchener, Sumner
Delta Council Overall Membership Chairman



BLACK BEAR

Research, education, and habitat conservation are fundamental to everything in Delta Council, from fisheries to cotton production. The Black Bear is no different and we are fully committed to a continued program for public education, PEER-reviewed research and local habitat conservation for the Louisiana Black Bear. And that is why we are relying on the experts to guide and direct our decisions.



PROTECTING THE DELTA'S WATERSHEDS



Delta Wildlife

I don't know if any other group could have brought together and initiated implementation of a watershed plan that moves water, holds water, and enhances land treatment practices without objection from the local interests --- nobody but Delta Wildlife. The environmental quality interest of the state and full participation of the local people who hold title to the land in this watershed are reaping great benefits because of Delta Wildlife.

Jim Lockett, Vice President
Delta Wildlife and Forestry



DELTA F.A.R.M.: THE MODEL FOR CONSERVATION FARMING

FARMERS ADVOCATING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DELTA F.A.R.M.

When I first met with Delta landowners and farm operators in Stoneville to discuss the concept of Delta F.A.R.M. (Farmers Advocating Resource Management), I never dreamed in less than nine years, we would be approaching one million acres of farming operations that voluntarily committed to a set of farm practices which are accepted as the model for conservation farming.

Travis Satterfield, Chairman
Delta F.A.R.M.



**Morgan
Keegan**

Jimmy
SANDERS, INC.

The
KBH
CLARKSDALE * MS
Corporation

BankPlus[™]
It's more than a name. It's a promise.™

LAND BANKS
OF MISSISSIPPI

DELTA REGIONAL
MEDICAL CENTER



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