



2009

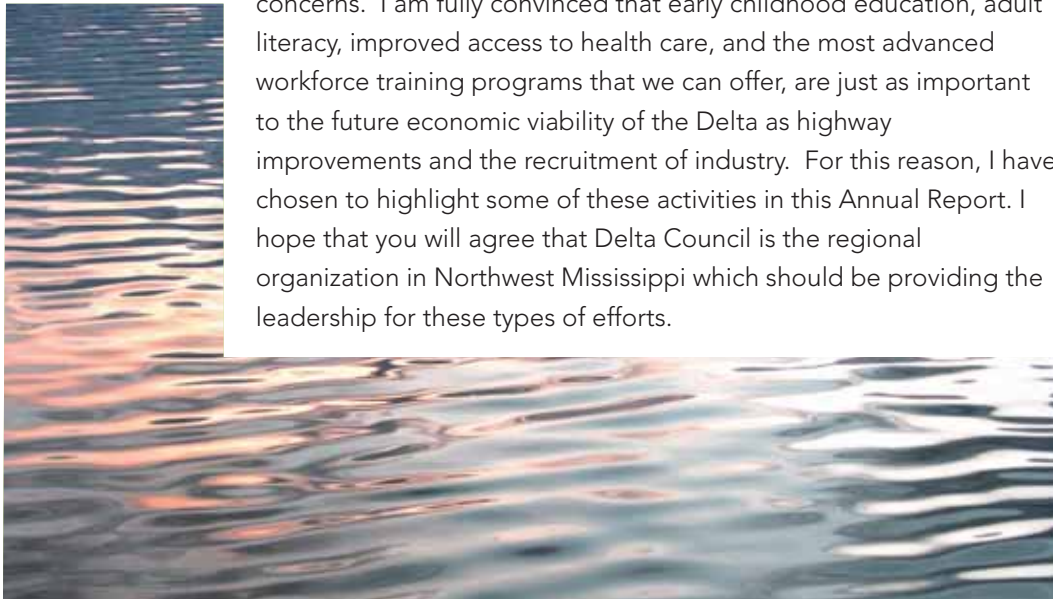
DeltaCouncil
ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President | John Phillips



It was not until I served as President of Delta Council for several months that I finally realized why Delta Council has expanded its programs of work beyond its traditional agriculture and industrial development missions. Prior to this year, I had often wondered why Delta Council should really have a role in matters such as adult literacy, early childhood education, improved access to health care, or workforce training. What I have learned is that Delta leaders and business people interested in these types of activities looked at the Delta Council model for regional approaches to highway improvements, industrial development, flood control, and the full development of our agriculture economy, and they enlisted Delta Council's leadership to address other regional

concerns. I am fully convinced that early childhood education, adult literacy, improved access to health care, and the most advanced workforce training programs that we can offer, are just as important to the future economic viability of the Delta as highway improvements and the recruitment of industry. For this reason, I have chosen to highlight some of these activities in this Annual Report. I hope that you will agree that Delta Council is the regional organization in Northwest Mississippi which should be providing the leadership for these types of efforts.



Buddy Allen
Vice-President,
Tunica



Clark Bishop
Vice-President,
Minter City



Bob Eley
Vice-President,
Cleveland



Roosevelt Lee
Vice-President,
Clarksdale



Merlin Richardson
Vice-President,
Anguilla



Gibb Steele
Vice-President,
Hollandale



Gary Gaines
Treasurer,
Senatobia



2008-09 Officers

As Delta Council approaches its 75th anniversary, this Delta land we call home and its regional organization have undergone a tremendous amount of change. In fact, change remains the watchword as we go about the task of impacting our most pressing challenges.

In 1935, the thoughtful leaders who conceived Delta Council focused its energy on those highest priorities that transcended county lines — flood protection, transportation development, and agricultural policy and research. Those three issues remain among the three fundamental programs of work for Delta Council, but the same principles of leadership and action that instilled confidence among Delta leaders almost 75 years ago have been employed in more recent years to address such diverse issues as nursing shortages, adult literacy, technology in healthcare infrastructure, cultural and heritage tourism, workforce training, youth drug education, and environmental stewardship, among many other priorities.



Now, that's change! But the one thing has not, and will not, change is the commitment of regional leadership working through the medium of Delta Council to affect change on a daily basis on those issues that have been identified as regional priorities by the people who live and do business here. For 74 years, they have looked to Delta Council to help address those challenges and come up with solutions that will impact the economy and quality of life in the Delta.

In this Annual Report, we are focusing on those areas that many people in the Delta and across the State and Nation do not readily identify with Delta Council. However, the same core principles that drove the harnessing of a solid transportation network, a vibrant agricultural economy, improved flood protection for most urban and rural regions in our alluvial flood plain, and a world class research complex at Stoneville based on our natural resources, are being brought to bear today on an expanded Delta Council agenda.

2009-10 Officers



Travis Satterfield
President,
Benoit



Peter Jackson
Vice-President,
Rolling Fork



Lisa Percy
Vice-President,
Greenville



Jim Robertson
Vice-President,
Indianola



Danny Walker
Vice-President,
Greenwood



Mattson Flowers
Vice-President,
Clarksdale



Davis Owen
Vice-President,
Robinsonville



Gary Gaines
Treasurer,
Senatobia

'09 Delta Council Sponsors



BancPlus Corporation is the parent company of BankPlus, which was founded 100 years ago in 1909 as Citizens Bank & Trust Company (CB&T), in Belzoni, Mississippi. In the last decade, BankPlus has grown from \$675 million to over \$2 billion in total assets and currently has 65 offices in 34 Mississippi communities. The name BankPlus and their slogan, "It's more than a name. It's a promise," reflect the enhanced services and extended hours they offer, and emphasizes their commitment to giving their customers more for their money. They're proud of their community banking roots and strive daily to maintain and build upon that 100 years of dedication.

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.



The Land Banks of Mississippi are the leaders in true, long-term financing for farms and recreational properties in the Mississippi Delta, and have been for over 90 years. From a few acres to a few thousand acres, the Land Banks of Mississippi are the first choice in land financing. We can meet all of your land financing needs with our flexible loan programs. All of our loans are fully amortized to provide you with the security of true, long-term financing. We also offer a variety of competitively priced variable and fixed interest rate programs to fit your needs. As a Farm Credit cooperative, we are owned by our borrowers and managed by a customer-elected board of directors. As such, our customers share in our profits through stockholder patronage refunds. The Land Bank of North Mississippi has 10 branch offices from Indianola to Corinth, MS. Southern Ag Credit (formerly Land Bank South) has 10 offices from Greenwood to Lucedale, MS. Land Banks of Mississippi are ready to provide you with real financing solutions to help you grow.

"Voices of Mississippi Agriculture" represent the farmer-funded research and market development efforts of the five major commodities produced in the Mississippi Delta — catfish, corn, cotton, rice and soybeans. Combined, these industries account for the economic engine that drives our economy in the region, producing several billion dollars annually of economic activity and over 31,000 jobs. Delta agriculture accounts for more than \$600 million in local and State tax revenues to support basic services for all Mississippi citizens from school teachers to garbage pick-up. These farmer funded programs work to invest in the future of agriculture so that the ag part of our Mississippi Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to generate a positive cash flow on the farm and provide a major contribution to the State's economy.



conservation



W. A. Percy, II, Mike Sturdivant, Jr, Jimmy Palmer, Lt. Governor Phil Bryant, Brian Vanlandingham, and George Vanlandingham after the 1 Million Acre Announcement on November 6th, 2008.



Founded to foster a more sustainable future for agriculture in the region, Delta F.A.R.M. achieved several milestones in 2008. In November, the organization celebrated its 10th Anniversary by announcing the enrollment of 1,000,000 acres into the voluntary stewardship program. In addition to providing technical guidance to its expanding membership, the organization was found to be more than capable of leading successful water quality initiatives in the region. With success and experience gained at Bee Lake, Steele Bayou, and Wolf Lake, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality asked Delta F.A.R.M. to serve as Co-Lead in the development of a voluntary nutrient management strategy that would have the potential to remove Mississippi Delta agriculture from conversations about sources for Gulf Hypoxia.

Delta Wildlife strengthened partnerships and expanded services to its members to better conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat in 2008. Working with the USDA and private landowners, Delta Wildlife continued to establish new waterfowl habitat in the region through the Wetland Reserve Program and expanded quail nesting habitat through the Conservation Reserve Program.

Waterfowl and wild turkey research projects were implemented in conjunction with Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. A new partnership at Roebuck Lake has begun to address critical noxious weed issues on the lake. And through a \$1.5 million dollar contribution by Monsanto, Delta Wildlife will be providing 1,000 water control structures to landowners to improve water quality and waterfowl habitat in the Mississippi Delta over the next three years.

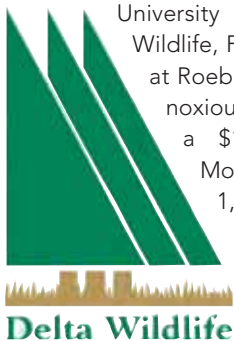


Photo Credit: Rob Hefflin

This Prothonotary Warbler nesting structure installed in early 2008 attracts its intended user at Sky Lake Wildlife Management Area.

literacy



Delta Council is tackling the problem of adult literacy in the Mississippi Delta through the continuous implementation and expansion of the Let's Read program (Literacy, Education, Training, and Readiness for Every Adult's Development), formerly known as the Delta Council Adult Literacy Program. The program is designed to jump-start the reading abilities of adult participants living in the Mississippi Delta to improve health outcomes. The approach is unique in the fact that the concept of the program requires one on one teaching of the pupil. The program has been well received by those who not only are interested in improving the literacy level of their communities, but also, in the enrichment of lives of their fellow neighbors. Over 25 sessions in 10 Delta counties with 125 plus participants have registered success.

education

Delta Council Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.®) is striving to equip every seventh grade middle school student in the Mississippi Delta eighteen counties region with the tools they need to become productive individuals, citizens and ultimately employees. The program is implemented through the combined efforts of Delta Council, MS D.A.R.E. Training Center, local school districts, civic leaders and law enforcement agencies. Over 1100 students participated in the Decision-Making Alcohol & Drug Prevention course in the Spring of 2009. Starting in the Fall of 2009, more than 5000 students in ten counties (Tunica, Tate, Panola, Coahoma, Bolivar, Sunflower, Leflore, Washington, Humphreys, Yazoo) will be participating in the D.A.R.E. Middle School program.



DROPOUT RATES (2007)		
United States	7.0%	Delta dropout rate is 9.88% higher than the U.S.
Mississippi	15.9%	
MS Delta Region	16.88%	
YOUTH OFFENDERS AGES 14-17 (2007)		
United States	unknown	Delta's youth offenders ages 14-17 accounts for 25.85% of youth offenders in MS middle school/high school age bracket.
Mississippi	15,316	
MS Delta Region	3,959	
% IN POVERTY-UNDER AGE 18 (2007)		
United States	18.0%	There is a 24.43% higher rate of youth living in poverty in the Delta region than the rate of youth in the U.S. living in poverty.
Mississippi	29.4%	
MS Delta Region	42.43%	

enrichment

The Delta Health Alliance (DHA) will be embarking upon a new collaborative effort to replicate a program that holds a lot of potential for positive change in the Delta. In 2008, the Delta Council Early Learning Leadership group and Delta Health Alliance, along with numerous other partners and agencies from the region, had the opportunity to travel to Harlem, New York, to observe the exciting results of a community-based initiative called the Harlem Children's Zone. The HCZ is an innovative approach that offers a wide range of coordinated services with intense coverage in one community, ranging from programs offering healthcare, literacy, early childhood development and social services. The Harlem Children's Zone and other intensive community-based programs have proven to be extremely successful in reversing national trends for at-risk youth and making significant, sustainable changes in the lives of its residents through coordination of services and follow through with individuals over time. After the group of Delta Council business leaders reviewed the program and how it impacted Harlem, they charged Delta Health Alliance with replicating this comprehensive, community-based program in the Mississippi Delta town of Indianola through The Delta Promise Community Project. The purpose of this project is to improve healthcare, early childhood development, literacy, and social services by incorporating the following service projects:



- Early childhood development
- Adult literacy and job training
- Development of community centers for after school, weekends and summers
- Access to primary care and dental services
- Access to prenatal care and family planning services
- College assistance program

It will take significant time, dollars, and effort to bring about fundamental change in the next few years. However, by working together, making the hard decisions in partnerships with the community, and constantly evaluating the program's success, real progress will be registered.

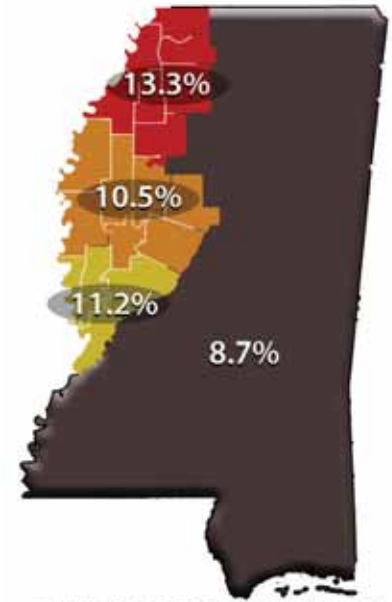


healthcare



Nursing Shortage

In 2007, the state nurse vacancy rate was 8.7 percent, indicating a statewide nursing shortage; however that shortage is magnified in the Delta, where the rate averages almost 12 percent. The Delta Health Alliance supports a program implemented by the Delta State University School of Nursing to address the nursing shortage in the Delta by increasing the number of students enrolling in nursing, increasing the quality of education that they receive, and retaining nurses working in the Delta. Since its inception, nursing school enrollment has doubled, with 83 percent of the class graduating in spring 2009 passing the registered nursing licensing exam on the first try. In addition, 80 percent of the BSN nursing class that graduated in May 2007, and 43 percent of the BSN nursing class that graduated in May 2008, signed contracts to practice nursing in the Delta. The DHA is working with local organizations to provide local solutions that are sustainable and improve the health of Deltans.



NURSING SHORTAGES IN THE DELTA



DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE
Today. Tomorrow. Together.



Electronic Health Records

Electronic Health Records, or EHRs, are the new millennium's answer to the paper medical record. EHRs benefit our communities by ensuring safety, quality of care, fiscal efficiency, reduction in medical errors, and increased access to care. By utilizing EHRs, physicians save money, in turn, reducing the overall cost of medical care to patients. The project links access across a group of participating agencies, clinics and hospitals through an integrated EHR network. The Delta Health Alliance EHR network has been extremely successful, going live with clinical information services in thirteen locations and providing training to over 240 clinicians. The EHR project has touched over 601,361 patients in the Delta and Jackson (UMMC) areas, with 161,251 patients actively participating in the EHR project.

development planning



The Delta Project is a partnership effort between Delta Council and Mississippi State University (MSU). Housed in the MSU Delta Data Center at Delta Council, the Delta Project serves as a quick resource center to address economic development issues in the Delta and Part-Delta Region. The Delta

Delta Project

Project helps the Delta compete with other regions of the State in regards to providing resources to state and local government officials, local businesses and organizations. Together, the Delta Project combines available resources of MSU and Delta Council and put those resources to work on the ground to develop and enhance the communities and industries of the Mississippi Delta.

Mississippi
Delta



The recent signature by President Obama enacting a law designating the Mississippi Delta as a National Heritage Area of the National Parks Service – U.S. Department of Interior, concludes a three-year effort by Delta Council, our two regional universities in the Delta, and local economic development foundations throughout the region. While this has been a top regional priority over the past three years as we have worked with Chairman Bennie Thompson and Senators Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker to make this designation happen, the celebration will be short-lived because the work which accompanies the National Parks Service process is rigorous. It will require that the governing board of the new entity go to work finding money and professional expertise in its efforts to make certain that the Delta is presented as a single community of combined interest in order to maximize the potential this designation holds. Regional, hard work, and long-term – the Delta way of doing business.



Delta Heritage Area

U.S. Dept. of the Interior
National Park Service





As a region . . .

Cohesive, Nationally distinct, and shaped by geology

Culturally

From Quapaws to a fertile landscape attracting Americans of diverse descent . . . European, African, Jewish, Chinese, Italian, Lebanese

Purpose:

- Branding of the Delta
- Establish and maintain interpretative exhibits
- Developing recreational resources
- Inventorying & Restoring historic structures

Delta Heritage

development & workforce training

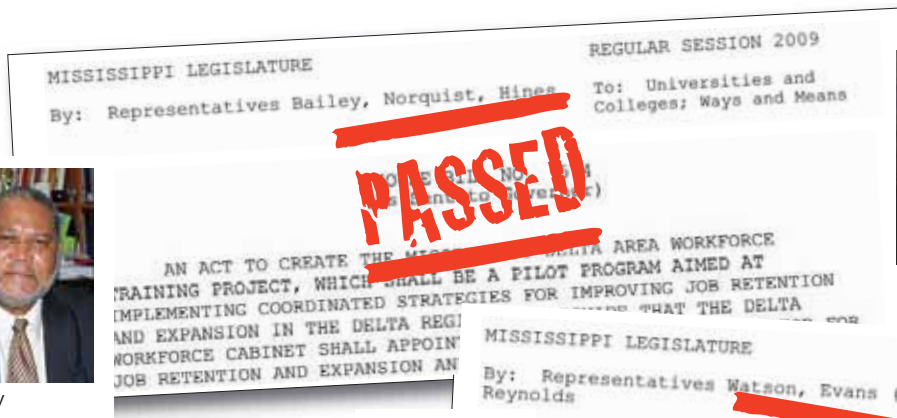
Regionalism is not a buzz word at the Delta Council Development Department, it is something we practice every day and have since the department's creation in 1956. Working in concert with the Mississippi Delta Developers Association and our entire Mississippi House and Senate delegation from the region, two pieces of significant legislation were passed in the 2009 Session – a workforce training pilot program (HB 574) and legislation to ensure continued Growth and Prosperity (GAP) industrial incentives for the Delta area (HB 1460). Those of us that do business in the Delta and live here know that it is no coincidence why some operations are highly successful and the others never get off the ground – most often, the successful operators have invested in workforce training that gives workers the skill sets to know what we already know – Delta people are highly trainable and they have the capacity to be productive.



Delta Council realizes that we must increase the intensity of focus on this issue, not only combat the stereotype that the underemployed and unemployed do not want to work, but also to ensure that business owners have access to the tools necessary to have a trained, quality workforce without disrupting the flow of their day-to-day operations. This pilot program is aimed at reducing the complexity of access to the workforce assistance programs for both existing and new employers. The GAP legislation addressed adding poverty as a trigger for continued certification in the Growth and Prosperity Program that twelve of our counties are included in and allows them to remain in the program.



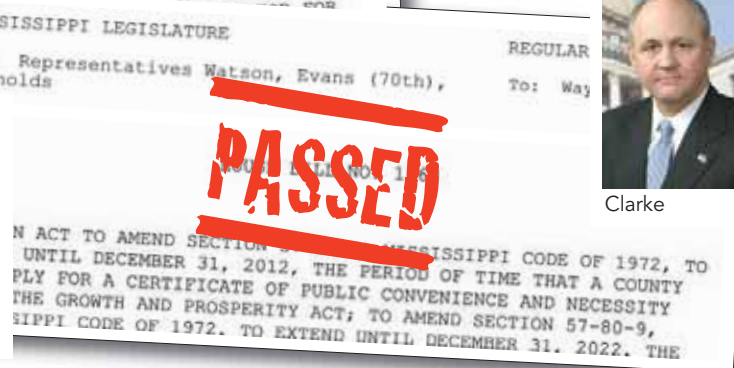
Bailey



Bryant



Norquist



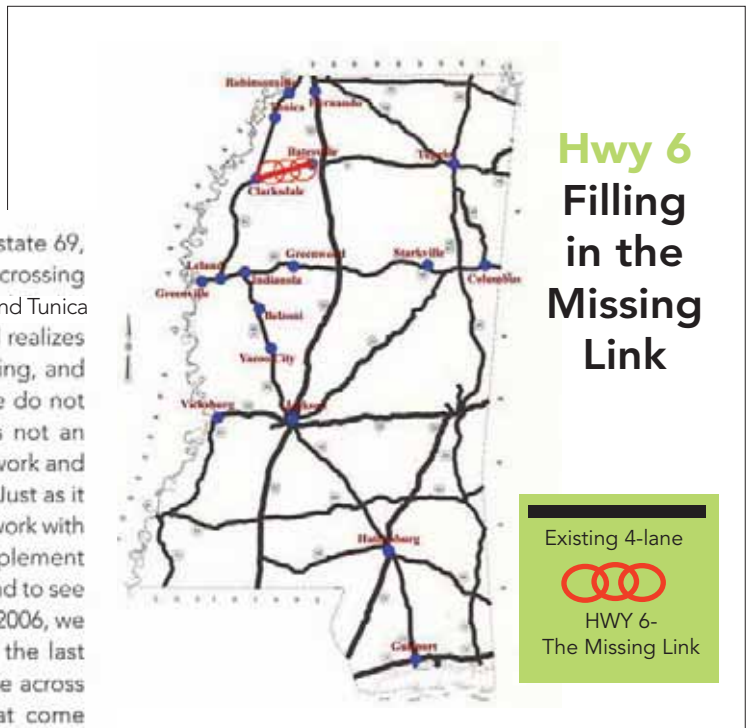
Clarke

fundamental delta

Flood protection, agricultural policy, agricultural research, and transportation remain the fundamental issues of Delta Council 74 years after they were identified by our farsighted founders. In fact, whether it is four-lane highways, sound water management, or improved research that can bulwark our agricultural economy's bottom line, they are most relevant to our regional identity of working on issues beyond community and county lines. Some of the highway numbers may have changed or been added, the challenges to moving water downhill in an alluvial floodplain increased, and the technology in agriculture improved, but these core issues bind the fabric that hold the Delta together.



In transportation, high priority items such as Interstate 69, Highway 6, improved and added Mississippi river crossing rail service, and regional air services at the Mid-Delta and Tunica airports remain our highest priorities. Delta Council realizes that the process of planning, designing, constructing, and opening major public works projects such as these do not happen quickly or without turbulence, but this is not an organization who will ever divert our eyes from the work and priorities that these projects portend for the Delta. Just as it took over 40 years for the leadership of the Delta to work with other statewide leaders to conceive, plan, and implement what eventually became the 1987 4-Lane program and to see the last stripe put down on U.S. 61 near Alligator in 2006, we recognize that many of us will not be alive when the last segments of Interstate 69 are built or the rail bridge across the Mississippi River is complete, but those that come behind us will be as grateful as we are for those that came before us and worked through Delta Council.



Delta Council
P.O. Box 257
Stoneville, MS 38776
662.686.3350
info@deltacouncil.org
www.deltacouncil.org

