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News

Ag Pilots Recognized for Environmental Stewardship

Four aerial applicators were recently recognized for exemplary environmental stewardship. Selected pilots were ranked highest among their peers based on criteria established through the A.C.E. Pilot Program. Those pilots selected for recognition include **Jerry Jones** of Valley Air Applicators, Inc. in Indianola, MS, **Ryan Cannon** of Delta Dusters in Walls, MS, **John (Skeet) Edwards, Jr.** of Edwards Flying Service in Leland, MS and **Mark Edwards** of Edwards Flying Service in Leland, MS.

Joey Daniels, President of MAAA said, "It was my pleasure as President of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association to present the A.C.E. pilot awards at our annual convention. Many aerial applicators in Mississippi deserve this award for the outstanding work they do, and it was a pleasure to recognize these gentlemen that are truly setting the highest standards that are required to be eligible to receive this environmental stewardship award."

FARMERS ADVOCATING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DELTA F.A.R.M.

The A.C.E. (Applicators Conserving the Environment) Pilot Program was developed to recognize top environmental stewards in the ag aviation industry and to incentivize other pilots to become better stewards. Those organizations involved in developing, administering and validating the program included Delta Council, Delta F.A.R.M., Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association, Mississippi Ag Industry Council, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Monsanto, Syngenta, USDA Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

All licensed aerial applicators in Mississippi who were members of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association in 2013 and had no proven drift violations within the past 24 months were eligible to participate in the A.C.E. Pilot Program. Each participant completed a questionnaire that documented his experience, track record and voluntary environmental stewardship efforts.

Pictured from left to right, **Jerry Jones, John (Skeet) Edwards, Jr., Ryan Cannon, Mark Edwards**

Joey Daniels, President of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association presented each A.C.E. Pilot with an award for $1,500.00 at the recent Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association's annual meeting at the IP Casino in Biloxi. Each pilot will also receive a plaque and a sign for their place of business, recognizing their achievement.

MVSU President Visits Delta Council

Pictured from left to right, **John Hilpert**, former President of Delta State University, Dr. **William Bynum,** new President of Mississippi Valley State University, and Dr. **Kent Wyatt**, former President of Delta State University, visit at a recent luncheon in the Delta Council Office to introduce **Bynum** to area leaders and share his vision for higher education.

HIGHWAY *from page 1*

Chairman of the Delta Council Highways and Transportation Infrastructure Committee.

After careful evaluation of the bridge pilings and the approaches to the bridge, MDOT District Engineer **Kevin Magee**, **Peter Nimrod** of the Mississippi Levee Board and the Corps of Engineers evaluated alternatives for options to remedy the problem on a time table of urgency.

"Behind the initiative taken by Transportation Commissioner Dick Hall and with the help of U.S. Senator **Thad Cochran**, the Vicksburg District of the Corps of Engineers has gained clearance from their headquarters to commence with engineering design of a "Fix" for the Steele Bayou Bridge crossing on Highway 465. The "Fix" will be aimed at alleviating the threat of interrupting access to the Eagle Lake recreational and residential areas, preventing emergency services from being cut off, as well as police and fire protection," added **Gresham**, the Sunflower County businessman who serves as chairman of the Delta Council committee.

Christensen to Head Leland Chamber of Commerce

The Leland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has hired a new Executive Director, following the retirement of former Executive Director, **Bob Neill. Melia Christensen** assumed the position on January 13, 2014.

Christensen, a native of Central Illinois, relocated to the Delta in March 2013 after her husband accepted a position with Delta Regional Medical Center. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin and has worked in the fields of marketing and development for over ten years. Most recently, she was the Marketing Coordinator for the St. Petersburg, Florida Chamber of Commerce.

"We were excited to learn about **Melia**'s Chamber experience, and very impressed with her credentials," said **Stephanie Patton**, LCOC Board President. "We know it will be put to good use in our community and within our organization. She's already hit the ground running."

Melia Christensen