



# The Delta Council REVIEW

Vol. 10, Issue No. 2

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

April 2014

## Deputy Secretary of Agriculture to Keynote 79th Annual Meeting of Delta Council

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, **Krysta Harden**, will be the Featured Guest and Keynote Speaker for the 79th Annual Meeting of Delta Council to be held on the Delta State University Campus at 10:30 am, Friday, May 30, 2014, at the Bologna Performing Arts Center in Cleveland.

**Harden**, who was raised in South Georgia in a farming family, was sworn in last year as Deputy Secretary after a distinguished career in many areas of agricultural policy.

"We are so pleased that our friend,

**Krysta Harden**, will be the featured speaker for this year's Delta Council Annual Meeting," said **Gibb Steele**, the Washington County farmer who serves as President of Delta Council "We have worked with **Krysta** in a number of different capacities during her career, including her distinguished tenure as CEO of the National Association of Conservation Districts, the American

Soybean Association, and as staff person on Capitol Hill concentrating on agricultural issues. Secretary **Harden** has distinguished herself over the last 5 years

at the Department of Agriculture, serving as Chief of Staff to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. Since being nominated as Deputy Secretary, she has already been charged with implementation of the 2014 Farm Bill over the coming months, and we look forward to her talking to our members and guests about the future of Rural America."

**Harden** was instrumental in implementing programs under the 2008 Farm Bill that have resulted in record investments in America's farms and

.....  
**HARDEN** continued on page 4



**Harden**

## General Hood Convenes Multi-State Copper Theft Review

Mississippi Attorney General **Jim Hood** convened a meeting of top law enforcement officers from Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana to focus on the epidemic problem of copper theft, which has become an issue of multi-state concern throughout the mid-south.

"We brought it to the attention of General **Hood** that vacant industrial and commercial buildings, irrigation wells and systems, and other equipment which



use significant amounts of copper wire harnesses have been the target of literally hundreds of thousands of dollars of theft in the Delta, during recent years," stated **Gibb Steele**, the Washington County farmer who currently serves as President of Delta Council.

Irrigation wells, located in remote areas and only seasonally utilized, have made an easy target for the burglary of copper wire, which is easily transported across State lines and sold in

bulk. According to local law enforcement officials, vacant industrial and commercial buildings have been reported to be stripped of copper wiring in a similar manner.

"We are indeed fortunate that the Attorney General has formed a multi-state effort of the mid-south's top law-makers, with the aim of making it much more difficult for the perpetrators of these crimes to not only commit the crime, but also make it tougher for them to sell their stolen goods," added **Steele**.

### 2014 DELTA COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING ITINERARY MAY 30, 2014 Bologna Performing Arts Center Delta State University

Schedule of Events

**2014 Salute to Delta Honor Graduates**  
9:00 a.m.

**Delta 1000 Event**  
9:00 a.m.

The 2014 Midterm House-Senate  
Election Analysis  
**Stu Rothenberg**

**General Session**  
10:30 a.m.

**Catfish Luncheon on the Quadrangle**  
12:00 p.m.



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## DELTA COUNCIL

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**Vice-President:** RICHY BIBB, Tunica  
**Vice-President:** THOMAS EDWARDS, Ruleville  
**Vice-President:** PAUL HOLLIS, Anguilla  
**Vice-President:** IRENE LONG, Indianola  
**Vice-President:** CHARLES MCCLINTOCK, Holly Bluff  
**Treasurer:** JOHN PITTMAN, Greenwood

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# Outlook

## Message From The President

As we prepare for the May 30, Delta Council Annual Meeting, and this being the next to the last Delta Council newsletter prior to that Annual Meeting, I would like to reflect on a very positive aspect of what I have learned this year, although never really



**Steele**

expected.

I have always felt throughout my 40-year career in farming that the Delta has enjoyed some extraordinary people, public servants, and elected officials who call the Delta their home. In more recent years, I have not really kept up with the activities of the Mississippi Legislature, or the Governor's Office, possibly because most of these people are not contemporaries, from an age standpoint. However, I would not want to close this year out as President

of Delta Council without giving some reassuring reflections of what I have observed about Legislators from the Delta who represent us at the current time.

First, it is a fact that Delta Council most often has a very small legislative agenda and we rarely have even a half dozen issues that we seek support for any given year. This year was not much different, although we did, in fact, have an interest in a slightly larger number of issues in the State Capitol. The staff has compiled a list of all the legislation and outcomes that I invite you to go to our website link - <http://www.deltacouncil.org/legislative-report.html> - and review, but suffice to say, Governor **Bryant**, Lt. Governor **Reeves**, Speaker **Gunn**, and the entire Delta delegation in the Legislature, aided by some key ones outside the Delta, helped us in many ways during this legislative session by

serving as authors, co-sponsors, or the primary workhorses for a number of priority areas.

In the State Senate, there was no action taken on behalf of the entire Mississippi Delta this year that Chairman **Buck Clarke** of Hollandale did not shepherd in one way or another. Senator **Willie Simmons** of Bolivar County lead the efforts in the highways and transportation gains that were made in the Mississippi Department of Transportation Appropriations measures. Without the leadership of Representatives **Willie Bailey** (Greenville), **Linda Coleman** (Mound Bayou), and **John Hines** (Greenville), in the Mississippi House, the Transportation Appropriations measure would have met with stiff resistance.

Subcommittee Chairman **Briggs**

.....  
**PRESIDENT** *continued on page 3*

## GUEST COLUMN

### The Delta Health Alliance's Impact on Delta Health Care

By **Dr. Robert Dale**

*Recently retired as Chief Medical Officer of Delta Health Alliance*

Having recently retired as Chief Medical Officer from the Delta Health Alliance (DHA), I have had some time to reflect on the positive inroads we have made in recent years in promoting good health for the residents in one of our nation's most impoverished areas.



**Dale**

Mississippi leads the nation with the highest rate of obesity and diabetes. It has been said that subtracting the 18 Delta counties' statistics from the rest of Mississippi's, the remainder of our state would fall within the nation's average for these diseases. Add the Delta's unacceptable high school drop-out rate and the adult illiteracy rate which approaches 40% and one can see the monumental task lying before us to impact health care in the Delta.

The mission of the Delta Health Alliance is simply to improve health care for all Delta residents. This has been

approached by collecting and studying data to help gain a foothold in approaching chronic illnesses, by improving access to quality medical care for all Delta residents, and by educating them in helping themselves to a healthier life style.

Through the efforts of DHA, considerable federal funding was secured through various grants, as well as support from private foundations, to allow us to pursue our mission. Dr. **Karen Matthews**, DHA's CEO, had a vision to place electronic health records in providers' offices throughout the Delta to both improve quality of care and to allow for data collection to give real time results as to what our efforts were accomplishing or not accomplishing. This expensive project was accomplished in several Delta clinics at no cost to the providers. As of May 2012 these systems had been placed in 48 Delta locations utilized by 106 providers. The data which is now being collected is showing improvement in our health care efforts with our various programs. A state health information exchange is being established to electronically connect clinics with each other, hospitals, labs, and the Mississippi State Health Department in order to have instant access to

patient records, instead of having to rely on more time consuming services.

**Dr. Matthews** also promoted "telehealth" programs throughout the Delta, and again made available considerable funds to put television monitors in clinicians' offices throughout the region. These clinics were then able to connect patients audiovisually with specialists in the metropolitan areas of Jackson and Southaven. Early efforts were aimed at telepsychiatry, in which mental health patients would go to their regular Delta provider and be connected by TV to a psychiatrist at the University of Mississippi Medical Center or the state mental health facility at Whitfield. This service was extremely well received by the patients and local providers because the patient did not have to travel out of town, take off from their jobs, and spend their dollars on travel expenses. It also enabled the local doctors or nurse practitioners to continue to be part of the patient's team. Now, through these efforts and data collection proving its cost effectiveness, Mississippi Medicaid has included this mental health service in its reimbursement plan. Additionally, other telehealth

.....  
**GUEST** *continued on page 6*





# News

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## Aquaculture Committee Leaders Continue Focus on Food Safety Inspection

Delta Council Aquaculture Committee leaders **Bill Battle** and **Austin Jones** voiced concern to Congressional leaders regarding further delays in the implementation of catfish inspection.

"Although we have grave concern for the fact that USDA has missed their first deadline which was provided in the recently-enacted Farm Bill for issuing a final rule on inspection, we acknowledge and remain grateful that the Secretary of Agriculture has repeatedly told the Congress that the department will have inspection fully engaged by April, 2015, which means they will meet the final deadline for implementation", according to **Bill Battle**, the Tunica County catfish farmer and processor

who serves as Vice Chairman of the Aquaculture Committee of Delta Council.

In the Farm Bill, the Congress specifically outlined a 6-day rule for publishing the final regulations pertaining to catfish inspection, and required reports to the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Appropriations in both the House and the Senate, every 30 days until the implementation deadline of February 7, 2015. Earlier legislation in the 2008 Farm Bill, mandated that a catfish inspection program be implemented, but failed to specify the taxonomic definition of a catfish. In the 2014 legislation, Senator **Cochran**, the Ranking Republican Member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, insist-

ed on passage of language which would insure that food safety requirements were met on all imported and domestic catfish sold in the United States.

"We were disappointed that USDA continued to delay and essentially abandon the 2008 law, but it is reassuring to know that since the Congress provided specific direction to USDA relative to the definition of a catfish, the Secretary, himself, has given the Congress assurance that USDA will meet the February, 2015 deadline for implementation," added **Battle**.

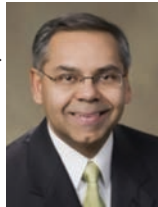
During the spring, meetings will be held with catfish industry leaders, Stoneville scientists, and State officials to provide a briefing



on preparations for implementation of catfish inspection, sponsored by Catfish Farmers of America.

## Arora, VP of Innovate Mississippi, Addresses Senate Ag Committee

**Dr. Sumesh Arora**, Ph.D., who serves as vice president of Innovate Mississippi and as Director for Innovate Mississippi's Strategic Biomass Solutions program, joined a blue ribbon committee of witnesses to testify before the Senate Agriculture Committee at the invitation of Chairwoman **Debbie Stabenow** (MI). Chairwoman **Stabenow** held her hearing on the theme of, Creating Jobs and Lower Prices at the Pump.



**Arora**

"The Senate Agriculture Committee continues to examine the role which domestically produced and non-food based biofuels might play in the future of creating jobs and strengthening rural economies. We are fortunate to have Sumesh as part of Mississippi's team to advance the message of practical and economically viable biofuels projects," stated **Tom Gresham**, the Sunflower County Chairman of the Delta Council Development Department.

## Critical Conservation Area

More than 10 agricultural and conservation organizations have petitioned the Chief of NRCS-USDA to designate the 5-State Lower Mississippi River Valley Delta area as a critical conservation area, making it eligible for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program of USDA.

"Delta Council is extremely grateful for the efforts put forth by the Mississippi Farm Bureau Feder-

ation, Delta Wildlife, Delta F.A.R.M Mississippi Soybean Association, Mississippi Rice Council, Mississippi Corn Growers Association, Catfish Farmers of Mississippi, and the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture", stated **George King**, Chairman of Delta Council's Soil and Water Resources Committee.

### PRESIDENT from page 2

**Hopson** of Vicksburg played a pivotal role in balancing the total appropriation for the Board of all eight Institutions of Higher Learning. IHL experienced one of the best years in the past decade, as it related to their legislative request and the Subcommittee Chairman teamed up with full committee Chairman **Clarke** to guide the IHL appropriations to a successful ending. As a sub-heading to the success of IHL budget efforts, the Division of Agriculture of Mississippi State University gained another boost during this Fiscal Year toward full funding under the combined efforts of **Hopson** and **Clarke**.

Senator **Robert Jackson** of Marks sponsored legislation aimed at exempting nature tourism from the collection of sales tax on their services. His efforts, with the support of the Senate Chamber's leader, Lt. Governor **Reeves**, helped gain passage of the measure affecting the Department of Revenue's tax treatment of this growing industry.

The gains made in downtown revitalization in Clarksdale, Greenville, and other com-

munities are directly attributable to the historic tax credit provisions in Mississippi tax law. Delta members of the Senate and House Revenue Committees played a key role in gaining the necessary support among their colleagues for the extension of this important measure.

Prepaid agricultural inputs are a common business practice throughout the Delta relative to purchases of seed, feed, fertilizer, fuel and implements. Leaning on his professional business career as a certified public accountant, Chairman **Buck Clarke** provided the necessary technical correction to current law which exempted deferred gains and deferred income on these inventories from Mississippi's Corporate Franchise Tax Law. This clarification of current law will contribute to literally millions of dollars in added economic activity in the Delta this year that would otherwise be foregone without this technical correction.

Thanks to the efforts of Delta legislators, House Chairman **Scott Bounds** of Philadelphia and Senate Chairman **Giles Ward** of Louisville, legislation was passed that will be

required to get a permit from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks in order to transport feral hogs. If found in violation, this year's legislative session adopted language which would make the transport of hogs without a permit a Class II felony. Delta Legislators lined up behind their efforts in order to ensure passage.

Finally, the entire Mississippi Delta Delegation worked arm-in-arm to obtain support among their colleagues for the support of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area as the premier mechanism for lifting up heritage and cultural tourism in the region.

These Delta legislators should be given a pat on the back: Senators **Lydia Chassaniol**, **Buck Clarke**, **Briggs Hopson**, **Robert Jackson**, **Kenneth Wayne Jones**, **David Parker**, **Derrick Simmons**, **Willie Simmons**, **Gray Tollison**, Representatives **Gene Aday**, **Willie Bailey**, **Clara Burnett**, **Bryant Clark**, **Linda Coleman**, **Oscar Denton**, **Chuck Espy**, **John Hines**, **Bobby Howell**, **Wanda Jennings**, **Trey Lamar**, **Nolan Mettetal**, **Alex Monsour**, **Pat Nelson**, **Willie Perkins**, **Tom Reynolds**, **Ferr**

**Smith**, **Rufus Straughter**, **Tommy Taylor**, **Sara Thomas**, **Jason White**, **Linda Whittington**, and Speaker **Philip Gunn**.

We also would be remiss not thanking all of the Members in both Houses not from the Delta who stepped forward to advance these measures: Chairman **Gray Tollison**, Oxford; Chairman **Giles Ward**, Louisville; Chairman **John Polk**, Hattiesburg; Chairman **Billy Hudson**, Hattiesburg; Chairman **Joey Fillingane**, Sumrall; Chairman **Terry Burton**, Newton; Chairman **Hob Bryan**, Amory; House Chairman **Scott Bounds**, Philadelphia; Chairman **Herb Frierson**, Poplarville; Chairman **Bobby Howell**, Kilmichael; Chairman **Sam Mims**, McComb; Chairman **Jeff Smith**, Columbus; Chairman **Robert Johnson**, Natchez, and Chairman **Preston Sullivan**, Okolona.

We are announcing in this edition that our friend, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture **Krysta Harden**, will keynote the Annual Meeting on May 30. Make plans to attend and be looking for another Delta Council News in the coming weeks to highlight more about **Krysta** and the Annual Meeting.



**DELTA  
COUNCIL  
MEMBER  
FOCUS****TOMMY  
EWING**

## a Farmer and Businessman

*from Sharkey County*

### Business

**Tommy Ewing** is the owner of Ewing Planting Company in Anguilla (Sharkey County)

### Hometown

**Ewing** is a native and resident of Sharkey County. He was raised on a farm and later became a

farmer. He and his wife **Melissa** live across the street from the house in which he was raised. He is the father of two sons **David** (deceased) and **Justin**; and the grandfather of six grandchildren.

### Affiliations

He is a member of the Anguilla Methodist Church, Delta Council and serves on the Board of Supervisors for Sharkey County.

### What people say

"**Tommy** has built a highly successful farming operation and he is an excellent businessman. In addition to his successful business and farming operations, we are fortunate in the South Delta that he has offered himself for public service in his capacity as a County Supervisor," stated **Paul Hollis** of Rolling Fork, Vice President of Delta Council.

**Ewing**

### HARDEN from page 1

rural communities, record agricultural exports and record conservation efforts. **Harden** worked to pass and implement the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, ensuring the availability of nutrition assistance to struggling Americans. A chief advocate of conservation, **Harden** continues leading efforts to build close stakeholder relationships with an ultimate goal of enhancing land and water conservation, improving economic opportunities through increased outdoor activities and expanding modern forest management.

From 2004 to 2009, **Harden** was the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Conservation Districts. She

worked with the American Soybean Association as Senior Vice President of Gordley Associates from 1993 to 2004 where she concentrated on conservation and renewable energy issues. She also served 12 years on Capitol Hill, as Staff Director for the House subcommittee on Peanuts and Tobacco and as Chief of Staff and Press Secretary for former Congressman **Charles Hatcher**. **Harden** received her B.A. in Journalism from the University of Georgia.

Mississippi Governor **Phil Bryant**, will introduce Secretary **Harden** to the Delta Council audience.

In addition to the Keynote by Secretary **Harden**, Delta Council will honor more than 140 high school seniors as Delta Honor Graduates with the ceremony beginning at 9:00 a.m., located 'under the tent in the

parking lot' next to the Bologna Performing Arts Center. Dignitaries will welcome the Honor Graduates, their families, and school officials, to the Annual Meeting of Delta Council and present them with engraved certificates recognizing them as 2014 Honor Graduates. The top Honor Graduate will be selected by higher education officials and be presented a \$2,500 scholarship during the 10:30 a.m. business session.

"The Delta Honor Graduate event is designed to raise the level of awareness of parents, teachers, and our local communities of the importance of bringing these bright young minds back to the Delta after they have completed their formal and advanced education," stated **Cass Pennington** of Indianola, who serves as Chairman of the Delta Council Education and Health Policy

Committee.

Also, at 9 a.m. in the McPherson Recital Hall inside the BPAC, noted Washington political commentator **Stu Rothenberg**, a favorite of past Delta Council audiences, will address the members of Delta 1000 on the upcoming midterm national elections.

The tradition of a fried catfish luncheon will conclude the program for the 79th annual event on the grounds of the Quad-range on the Delta State University Campus.

Sponsors for the 79th Annual Meeting include: BankPlus, Catfish Farmers of Mississippi, Cotton, Inc., Sanders, Mississippi Corn Promotion Board, Mississippi Rice Promotion Board, Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board, and Southern Ag Credit/Mississippi Land Bank.

## Delta Wildlife Elects Dent and Tabb to Board of Directors

At the February 27th business meeting of the Delta Wildlife Board of Directors, **Hayes Dent** of Yazoo City and **Bill Ryan Tabb** of Cleveland were elected to serve as new Directors for the

organization. Each will serve a three-year term.

**Hayes Dent** attended Manchester Academy before graduating from Ole Miss with a Bachelor of Public Administration. **Dent** then worked for President **George H. W. Bush** from 1989 until 1992, Governor **Kirk Fordice** from 1992 – 2000 and President **George W. Bush** from 2001 – 2004 before starting his own business, Hayes Dent Public Strategies. **Dent**

currently resides in the country on the banks of the Yazoo River north of Satartia with his wife **Carolyn**, sons **Hayes** (17) and **Kinkead** (13) and daughter **Margaret** (15) and is a member of the 1st Presbyterian Church of Yazoo City.

**Bill Ryan Tabb** attended Bayou Academy before graduating from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor in Ag Business. **Tabb** serves on the Soybean Promotion Board, Mississippi State Farm Bureau Board, Delta

Council Board and Bayou Academy Board

while working full time as owner and operator of Tabb Farms in Bolivar County. **Tabb** lives in Cleveland with his wife **Leslie Collins** and his two children **Collins** (14)

and **Annsey** (11) and is a member of the 1st Baptist Church of Cleveland

**Dent****Tabb**





# The Delta... working together.



The First Annual Meeting luncheon following World War II in 1946



**David Rockefeller**, Executive Vice President, Chase, Manhattan Bank, New York at the Annual Meeting Luncheon in 1956



Mrs. **Tom Pitts** of Indianola, enjoys the Delta Council Luncheon following the Annual Meeting



Television crews provide coverage of the 1984 speech by Vice President **George Bush**



Platform guests in attendance at the 1957 Annual Meeting



**William Faulkner** prior to delivering the keynote address at the 1952 Delta Council Annual Meeting



**Irby Turner** of Belzoni presents President **Truman** with a gift of appreciation in 1947



Senate Majority Leader **Bob Dole** speaks at the 1987 Annual Meeting of Delta Council



The Honorable **Ray Mabus**, then Governor of the State of Mississippi, and the Honorable **Bill Clinton**, then Governor State of the Arkansas, address the crowd at the Annual Meeting in 1988



Wear Cotton Contest winners take the stage at the Delta Council Annual Meeting



Wear Cotton Contest winners take the stage at the Delta Council Annual Meeting



Ladies at the registration desks welcome guests at an early Delta Council Annual Meeting



(l-r) **B.F. Smith**, Governor **William Winter**, and **Billy Percy** at the Delta Council Annual Meeting in 1980



U.S. Senator **Thad Cochran** and Secretary of Agriculture **John Block** at the 1981 Annual Meeting of Delta Council



The Women's Committee of Delta Council





## Good Middling Recipient Selection Meeting Slated

On May 7th at 11am, former Good Middling recipients will meet to select the 2014 Good Middling recipient. Being named a Good Middling Recipient is an honor

bestowed upon an individual who has sustained significant efforts to promote community and economic vitality in the Mississippi Delta. The term "Good Middling" is coined

after the highest grade in quality cotton production.

**Kay Whittington**, Director of Office of Land and Water Resources, MDEQ, will

make a presentation to the former recipients at the May 7th meeting.

## The online version of MSU's "pipe map" will be available later this month



In coordination with NRCS-USDA personnel and Stoneville Irrigation Specialist, **Jason Krutz**, the Extension Center for Technology Outreach at MSU has led the efforts to develop and design an online version.

"This effort by MSU could not have been accomplished without the producer support from the Mississippi Soybean Promotion

Board checkoff program, and it is because of the enthusiasm which growers have for this water conservation tool that we are now going to have an MSU product that is farmer-friendly, in terms of irrigation management systems technology," stated Gibb Steele, the Washington County farmer who serves as President of Delta Council.



Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board Members:

**Chairman:**

**Jan de Regt**, Hollandale

**Board Members:**

**Morgan Beckham**, Leland,

**Tim Clements**, Greenville

**Paul Dees**, Leland,

**Wayne Dulaney**, Clarksdale

**Mike Guedon**, Natchez

**Keith Morton**, Falkner

**C.D. Simmons, Jr.**, Hollandale

**Jerry Slocum**, Coldwater

**Jimmy Sneed**, Hernando

**Bill Ryan Tabb**, Cleveland

**David Wansley**, Valley Park

### GUEST from page 2

services have been initiated: emergency services, endocrinology, intensive care units, all with TV connections to rural Delta areas.

DHA improved access to care by providing funding to assist in establishing three certified rural health clinics which operated on the "Patient Centered Medical Home" model of care, in which the patient is considered a member of his/her medical team and care is tailored to each participant's needs. This team concept employs, in addition to a primary care provider and nurses, a clinic social worker, or Patient Navigator who follows up with patients and their needs, often making house calls to do so. Also a dietician works with patients to help educate them in healthier meal preparation. Unfortunately, in September 2012, supporting Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding ceased, and with it DHA's ability to fund the clinical staffs. Consequently these clinics closed. However, clinical data collected from these now defunct clinics showed progress in our efforts with this model of care, which is now becoming more widespread in other Delta clinics, as well as the state.

Other DHA projects have focused on lowering teen pregnancy, and premature and low birth weight deliveries. Data collection for our educa-

tional and home visitation programs for young expectant mothers has shown positive progress in this area. It's estimated that it costs approximately \$29,000 per teen-mother delivery and \$50,000 per premature delivery in Mississippi. Full-term healthy infants, however, cost approximately \$5,000. So, helping young girls either avoid pregnancy or better caring for themselves in their pregnancy can have a huge cost savings impact on our federal and state dollars. Consider the following statistics: In 2009 in Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington counties there were 371 premature births. Data revealed that these in-home programs helped reduce premature births by 13.8% at a cost savings of \$2.77 million per year. The cost of administering this program was only \$301,783. This computes to an amazing 9.2% return on investment.

In 2010 DHA received a prestigious federal Beacon grant, made available by the Affordable Care Act through the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) in Washington, D.C. This \$15 million dollar grant was awarded to each of fourteen rural area recipients throughout the U.S. to both study and promote improved care in diabetes and other chronic illness management. This was a three year multidimensional project. Our Beacon steering committee included representatives from our state health department, the Mississippi Hospital Association, the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, the state health infor-

mation exchange, the Mississippi State Medical Association (MSMA) and one of its past presidents, and a private clinical management agency, in addition to our staff. This monumental effort enabled us to present our data to **Dr. David Dzeilak**, medical director of the MS Division of Medicaid, the board of directors for the MSMA and the annual session of this body as a continuing medical education credit for its providers, an audience with the CDC's medical director, **Dr. Tom Freiden** during his site visit to Ruleville, MS, and to ONC meetings in D.C. to collaborate with other Beacon communities. The project-end report presented our data showing the positive impact our team's efforts accomplished. Those efforts included not only basic diabetic care, but also the use of electronic health records to both help standardize patient care and collect data to analyze it, regular diabetic eye screenings, diabetic foot exams, dietary counseling, pharmaceutical counseling and intervention, community health worker participation, and hospital-based health coaches to try to help patients better care for themselves once out of the hospital.

Among other noteworthy projects was an asthma clinic staffed by physicians from the University Medical Center twice monthly in Greenville. This worthy project was designed to diagnose and treat asthma in patients who would ordinarily show up ill in community emergency departments at a huge cost to them or the tax-

payers. Forty-eight percent of these patients on follow up visits reported no hospital admissions or ER visits. A health economist analysis computed a return on investment for this program at an impressive 3.53%. Unfortunately, this clinic also closed due to lack of continued funding.

Although we have had several other worthy projects, I'll mention one more. The Indianola Promise Community (IPC) is another of **Dr. Matthews'** passionate projects. Patterned after the Harlem Zone Project in New York, its goal is to prepare all participating children K-12 for college, and does so by utilizing several educational opportunities including summer camps, year round. This project, under the capable leadership of **Josh Davis**, is very popular within the Indianola community, and is able to continue to operate through funding by Kellogg and a \$30 million dollar federal grant as well.

Currently, limited funding has reduced DHA's efforts to those promoting the IPC, continued placement and development of electronic health record systems and the health information exchange, and the newly acquired Leland Medical Clinic. Other notable private funding sources have been the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Project Hope. As I ponder the future in health care, my highest hope for the Delta Health Alliance is that more federal funding will become available to promote and insure important health care programs for all Delta residents.





# News

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## AROUND THE FIELDS

### EDC of Washington County Celebrates Industrial Development Advancement



(l-r) **Cary Karlson**, Director of the Economic Development Center of Washington County, **Frank Short** of the Mississippi Development Authority; **Dave Clarke**, Chairman of the Economic Development Center of Washington County; **John Cox**, Mayor of Greenville; **Paul Watson**, President of the Washington County Board of Supervisors

A celebration was held March 7th in Greenville to recognize the christening of a new industrial park. The Chamber & Economic Development Center of Washington County recently secured an option to purchase land at the Greenpointe Site to form an 800 acre industrial site located at Stokes King Road in Washington County. This site is the first new land development since the EDC of Washington County was formed in 2007, and the first of two announcements. The second industrial site in Washington County is close to being complete and is projected to be announced in the next few months.

In conjunction with this great news, The Chamber & EDC recently was awarded one of nine statewide Site Development Grants by the Mississippi Development Authority. The Chamber & EDC was awarded a matching grant

of just under \$20,000 to assist in preparing the Greenpointe Site for industrial development. Grant recipients were selected after MDA's Grant Review Committee thoroughly reviewed each applicant's proposed site development and its potential for improving industrial recruitment efforts.

### Mississippi Rice Promotion Board Releases Annual Report

The Mississippi Rice Promotion Board recently released its annual report. This report highlights projects funded during the 2013-2014 funding cycle. We hope you find it enlightening and informative. Any time issues arise on your farm that you believe should be addressed, please speak with



one of the board members or contact any of the scientists who contributed to this report.

We appreciate your support of the Mississippi Rice Check-Off Program and wish you much success in 2014.

### North Delta Farm Clean Up and Pesticide Disposal Event a Success

On February 25 the Mississippi State University Extension Service held its second farm clean up and pesticide collection event in the North Delta. Organizers invited farmers to drop off leftover pesticide products, triple-rinsed pesticide containers and waste tires at a collection point in Coahoma County.



The event collected 30 loads of waste material from 5 counties totaling an estimated 46,000 lbs. of product. The event also collected 101 discarded tires.

The program is provided at no cost to farmers by the MSU Extension Service and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Funding comes from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to make the program possible.

### Russia Bans Vietnamese Pangasius; Antibiotics and Pathogens Found

*from the Catfish Institute*



The Russian Agency for Health and Consumer Rights barred imports of Vietnamese pangasius on January 31 until further notice. Russian inspectors in December found unacceptable levels of antibiotics and hormones. The Russian government also found E. coli and listeria in fish products from almost half of the Vietnamese exporting farms, which included 16 out of 35 facilities, according to the Itar-Tass news service.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 2 million people in the United States are sickened each year by antibiotic-resistant infections, with 23,000 dying as a result.

U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish is a safe, healthful and environmentally sustainable source of protein; look for it in supermarkets and ask for it in restaurants.

For more information about U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish, visit [UScatfish.com](http://UScatfish.com).

### Stabenow, Cochran Commemorate 100th Anniversary of Cooperative Extension System, Expansion of Agricultural Research

Senator **Debbie Stabenow** (D-MI), Chairwoman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and Senator **Thad Cochran** (R-MS), Ranking Member of the Committee, recently announced the introduction of a resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension System, helping to connect the public to research occurring in the land-grant university system. The resolution recognizes the importance of the legislation in extending the concept of land-grant universities and agricultural research into communities across the country, and encourages people to support an innovative and sustainable future for cooperative extension.

"Farmers, ranchers and rural families benefit from the latest in technology and innovation through the Cooperative Extension System. The celebration of its 100th birthday should include a serious commitment to funding its research and educational activities," Sen. **Cochran** said.

For more information on the 2014 Farm Bill, please visit <http://ag.senate.gov>.



(l-r) Senator **Debbie Stabenow** and Senator **Thad Cochran**

### Development Department Held Regional Meetings Across the Delta



Area leaders in attendance at the regional meeting held in Clarksdale.



**Robert Ingram** (third from left) uses visual aides to help attendees understand the core concepts of economic development.



MDOT: I-269 project passes halfway point. All phases of the project are under construction with several more than halfway complete.



Stoneville Celebrates African American History. (l-r) **Al Rankins**, Delta Council Leader; **Archie Tucker**, Assistant Area Director USDA-ARS; **Dr. William Bynum**, President Mississippi Valley State University; **Deborah Bynum**, First Lady of Mississippi Valley State University; and **Dr. Mark Keenum**, President of Mississippi State University are pictured at Stoneville's 37th celebration of African American History.



# Delta Council

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## DELTAN ON THE MOVE: *Barry Knight*

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Barry** grew up in a small farming community in western Oklahoma before attending Oklahoma State University and studying agronomy. His passion for agriculture was a direct result of spending each summer with his grandfather who farmed in the Mississippi Delta near Beulah (Bolivar County). To be near his grandfather and continue his education, he moved to Starkville to work on a graduate degree in agriculture at Mississippi State. There he met his wife **Lana** and started a family and a career in agriculture. He has three adult children. He currently resides in Cordova, Tennessee, but spends most weekends here in Mississippi on their farm in Tallahatchie County. He attends First Evangelical Church in Memphis and actively supports missions around the world.

### CURRENT JOB TITLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Barry** is the President and CEO of CrescoAg. CrescoAg is a spinoff company from Sanders that focuses on under-

standing what big data can provide to bring enhanced value to the local farming community. **Barry** brings more than 27 years of experience in the agriculture industry to his role in leading CrescoAg.

He came to CrescoAg in February, 2014 by way of Jimmy Sanders. While at Jimmy Sanders he served in leadership roles including Executive Vice-President of Operations and President.

Prior to Jimmy Sanders, he was with Monsanto Company from 1999 to 2009, serving most recently as a Regional Business Director, leading their business in the southern United States. He also held roles with American Cyanamid from 1989 to 1999, serving most recently as a District Manager, and from 1986 to 1989, Barry was with USDA-ARS.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

When asked what does he like most about his job, he

answered "I'm passionate about agriculture and science. My current endeavor allows me to learn and share those production practices that unlock the soils potential for maximum yields."



**Knight**

### WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT BARRY?

"I have followed **Barry's** career since his early days with American Cyanamid, and later to Monsanto, before moving to the Cleveland headquarters of Sanders, Inc., where he has served as the CEO. I have now become familiar with his most recent move to Cresco, which like Sanders, is a subsidiary of Pinnacle. Once again, **Barry** is on the leading edge of the newest technology and his enthusiasm and knowledge about what makes farms profitable will carry him to another chapter of his long line of success stories," stated **Travis Satterfield**, the Bolivar County agricultural, civic leader, and Delta Council past president.



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