



The Delta Council Review

Vol. 14, Issue No. 3

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

October 2019

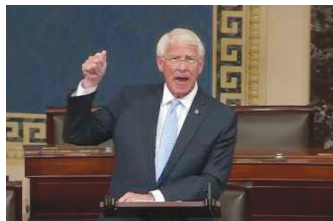
2019 FLOOD FINALLY RECEDES PUMPS PUSH CONTINUES



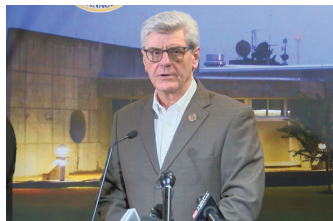
Congressman Bennie Thompson



Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith



Senator Roger Wicker



Governor Phil Bryant

This year has been a record-breaking one for Mississippi. Our state, and the other states north of us that send 41% of the Nation's water down the Mississippi River, suffered through 8 months of the greatest precipitation since 1895 due to record rainfall from October 2018 through June 2019. The Mississippi River at Vicksburg exceeded flood stage for 162 days, the longest flood stage since the Great Flood of 1927. The Yazoo Backwater Area flooded for 219 consecutive days with water above 87' elevation from January 4 until August 10.

The 2019 flood has sharpened focus on the last remaining piece of the Yazoo Backwater Project, the pumping plant.

"The 2019 flood has tested the resilience of our communities, citizens, farmers, landowners, and our environment, including wildlife," said Delta Council Flood Control Chairman **Paul Hollis** of Sharkey County, who also sits on the Mississippi Levee Board of Commissioners. "We are appreciative of the outpouring of support that has been demonstrated, and we will work

hard to not only recover from this man-made disaster, but to prevent it from happening again to the best of our ability."

"Led by our Congressional delegation **Congressman Bennie Thompson**, **Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith** and **Senator Roger Wicker** – and our local and State leadership, particularly **Governor Phil Bryant**, we have got a group of elected officials who are advocating and actually working to reverse the misguided 2008 veto on the Yazoo Backwater Project Pumping Plant. We are hopeful that the appropriate federal agencies, specifically the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency can expedite their review of the veto and provide relief from suffering for the people of the South Delta," added **Hollis**.

The following are some highlights as it relates to damage assessments, recovery, and unfinished business:

AGRICULTURE

231,000 acres of the 548,000 that flooded this year were prime cropland. Agriculture damages and losses are already calculated at over \$600M and expected to exceed \$800M. In an area where agriculture is the primary source of economic dependency, prolonged flooding has placed direct hardship on 170 farming operations with over 680 employees, resulting in unemployment rates spiking 2.9%.

WILDLIFE

While there will almost certainly be a short-term impact to wildlife, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks (MDWFP) believes there is not enough clear data to quantify the immediate impact or predict the long-term impact of the Backwater Flood on populations of white-tailed deer and other game species. It is clear that the flood event degraded habitat quality and caused a significant amount of mortality evident by the hundreds of corpses and piles of bones spread across levees and small patches of high ground. Residents have found remains of animals ranging from snakes to feral hogs in their homes as they have returned to begin restoration efforts. MDWFP is working with MSU to develop and implement a survey that will require the assistance of landowners and wildlife managers throughout the area to help assess the extent of wildlife impacts.

RESIDENTS

Over 800 individuals so far have applied for state funded housing assistance, and 651 homes in the 5-county area (Humphreys, Sharkey, Issaquena, Warren, and Yazoo) were affected by backwater flooding. Dozens of homes have been demolished by volunteer groups, and more homes will be demolished in the upcoming months.

Hundreds of homes are currently undergoing "muck and gut" by volunteer agencies, in hopes to have families back in their homes by the holidays.

While families are working to return to a normal life after a year of devastating losses, two families will never be able to replace their loss. In mid-June, two residents lost control of their car on Satartia Road near Holly Bluff Road East and drowned in the backwater surrounding both sides of the road. The victims were **LaTamala Taylor**, 29, who was 13 weeks pregnant and her boyfriend, **Darron Wilson**, 24.

If the pumps were installed and operational, similar to the other 22 federally funded pump projects completed since the 1980s, the floodwaters would have only reached 92.5' instead of 98.2', saving thousands of wildlife animals, 651 homes and 2 lives. This is proven by the 2009 flood when the backwater crested at 93.7' without any

flooded homes or closed public roads.

Mississippi has never faced a disaster of this length and magnitude. Delta Council urges those who live, work or recreationally visit the region to cooperate with officials conducting surveys to help measure the magnitude of the effects of this historical event.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

SURVEY

MSU Extension is conducting a survey to gather information on cash expenses associated with the Backwater Flood. This survey will provide policy makers and government agencies with information regarding costs caused by the flood that are not included in other economic loss estimates. You can find the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/backwaterflood2019> or you can visit your local Extension office to complete the survey.

FLOODING *continued on page 8*

DELTA STRONG CELEBRATES INDUSTRIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS WITH TWO COMMUNITIES

After two years of "working the plan", Delta Council was pleased to announce that there were two Delta Strong manufacturing announcements on the same day.

Stud welding company Image Industries announced it is locating operations in Clarksdale. The project is a \$3-million corporate investment and will create 50 jobs over the next four years.

"Skilled trade jobs are the backbone of our Nation's economy, as millions of workers produce top-quality products

every day that keep industries across the country thriving in today's global marketplace," **Gov. Phil Bryant** said.

Image Industries is relocating cold forming manufacturing operations from Illinois to the former Metso facility in Clarksdale. There, the cold forming process will enable the company to economically produce hundreds of custom parts per minute, such as threaded weld studs, shear connectors and concrete anchors, hydraulic weld

DELTA STRONG

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DELTA STRONG

MAKE WEEDS BEG FOR MERCY.
FOR UP TO 8 WEEKS.



FIERCE
HERBICIDE



DELTA COUNCIL

2019–2020 Delta Council Officers

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Vice-President: HUGH ARANT, JR., Ruleville
Vice-President: TED CONNELL, Clarksdale
Vice-President: CLINT DUNN, Itta Bena
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Layout and design of The Delta Council Review

Coopwood Communications
Cleveland, MS

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY TOM GRESHAM



Gresham

It has been an interesting and enjoyable first few months serving as President of Delta Council. I would like to thank so many members and friends of this organization who have reached out to me and expressed their encouragement and suggestions.

I have been involved in the work of Delta Council for a long time, but it never ceases to amaze me how engaged the people of the Delta are in forging consensus and better public policy to advance our region.

I could not have asked for a better group of officers to serve with me this year. We have held one official Officer's Meeting, and they have attended several other key policy development and strategic sessions throughout the region over the past few months.

Hugh Arant, Jr. of Ruleville, **Ted Connell** of Clarksdale, **Clint Dunn** of Itta Bena, **Jeffrey Mitchell** of Cary, **Errick Simmons** of Greenville, **Gibson Steele** of Greenville, and **Keith Mitchell** of Grenada underscore the fact that leadership is our greatest asset in the Mississippi Delta. As we continue to look for opportunities and face our challenges, this group of officers - along with the totality

of the membership of Delta Council - is well equipped to make good things happen for those of us that live and do business in the Mississippi Delta.

It is hard to believe that as we sit here at the end of September 2019, we are less than a month removed from over six months of floodwater evacuating the South Delta of Mississippi. Both the front page news article and **Paige Adcock's** excellent guest column below highlight the absolute disaster that the stroke of a pen in 2008 has wrought on the citizens of the South Delta, and Delta Council will continue to push for the removal of the Administrative Veto and the completion of the long awaited Yazoo Backwater Pumping Plant.

Major and controversial public works projects like this certainly have a lot of moving parts, but the message to federal agencies and the administration should be very simple and succinct: "Gather the necessary data in an expedited manner to remove any administrative barriers such as the veto, and begin construction of the long awaited promise to the people of the South Delta, the Yazoo Backwater Pumping Plant."

Delta Council cannot thank our federally elected leadership and our Governor enough for the role they have played throughout this horrendous flood. **Congressman Bennie Thompson**, **Senator Roger Wicker**, **Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith**, and **Governor Phil Bryant** have been phenomenal advocates,

and we are confident that they will continue this fight until completion. Their support for this project and the people of the South Delta is simply not a sound bite or political grandstanding; instead, they are executing a strategic and coordinated effort to ensure that this project receives the favorable consideration and conclusion it deserves.

Also, it gives me great pleasure to announce our Delta Strong Initiative had two major location announcements this summer with hopefully more on the way.

We are in the final 16 months of our four-year Delta Strong plan, and we look forward to more positive developments in the very near future.

The work of Delta Strong, and so many other positive developments happening around the region, I think can be traced back to the hard work by Delta Council and whole hosts of other local and state groups and educators surrounding strategic efforts in work force training.

We have had many major expansions from existing businesses over the last months, and there is much evidence that individuals are being trained here in the Delta to fill local jobs. Much of the credit goes to the local communities, educational institutions, and our Delta Workforce area who have made the ACT Work Ready Community effort an incredible success. The Delta has led the state and the country in adopting this pro-

PRESIDENT *continued on page 3*

GUEST COLUMN | FINISH THE PUMPS

BY PAIGE ADCOCK



Adcock

I want to offer some facts which contradict the propaganda circulated by various non-profit environmental organizations regarding the devastating flooding Mississippi's South Delta experienced in 2019. In the aftermath of the 1927 flood, Congress enacted the Flood Control Act of 1941 as a massive plan of alleviating flooding for 41% of the nation to the detriment of the Yazoo Backwater Area of Mississippi. To offset the unnatural and undue burden placed on this area, Congress authorized the Yazoo Backwater Project which consisted of drainage structures, levees, and pumps to remove excess rainwater from the Delta during high water events on the Mississippi River. Construction on this project began in the 1960s, and the drainage structures and levees were completed in 1978. The final critical component of this project, the Yazoo Backwater Pumps, has yet to be completed

due to pressure from environmental groups.

Environmentalists opposed to the project claim the Yazoo Backwater Pump "would drain and destroy 200,000 acres of wetlands in the heart of the Mississippi River Flyway." According to the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Environmental Protection Agency, there are 189,600 acres of wetlands in the project area. The pumps would only be operational when flooding in the area exceeds 87 feet. At 87 feet, there would be over 216,000 acres already under-water. None of these 216,000 acres would ever be drained by the pumps. In fact, the natural 30-year average water elevation in the Yazoo Backwater Area is 75 feet, well below the levels the pumps would maintain during a high water event on the Mississippi River.

Of the 189,600 acres of wetlands in the project area, 124,500 of them are designated as "Temporary Flooded" wetlands in which "surface water is present for brief periods (from a few days to a few weeks), but the water table usually lies well below the ground surface for most of the season". The entirety of those 124,500 acres was inundated with 6-12 feet of stagnant water for

more than eight months this year. Rather than being "drained" by the pumps, these wetlands are being negatively impacted by recurrent flood events which significantly alter their wetlands classification due to the absence of the pumps.

Environmentalists' disinformation claims there is no "evidence (this project) would have alleviated the area's recent flooding". This assertion is blatantly false. There are over 50 years of engineering studies on this one project alone. All conclude the pumps would have significantly reduced flooding above 87 feet. Further, there are three other backwater areas along the Lower MS River Valley which were also authorized by the 1941 Flood Control Act, the St. Francis and White River Backwater Areas of Arkansas and the Red River Backwater Area of Louisiana. All three lie within the same MS River Flyway as the Yazoo Backwater Area and have similar wetland ecologies. All three have their authorized pumping stations installed and operational. They perform as predicted, giving us confirmation that such projects function as designed without any

GUEST *continued on page 6*

MSU SPECIALISTS TOUR BACKWATER AREA TO PREPARE FOR CROP RECOVERY MEETING OCT. 22

Recently, Mississippi State University specialists from Starkville and Stoneville campuses and several Extension employees met with South Delta farmers to tour the Yazoo Backwater area in Issaquena and Sharkey counties to begin studying the long term effects of this year's backwater flood event. The tour was led by MSU Extension Agent for Issaquena and Sharkey counties, **Emily Carter**, who arranged



Charlie Darden at his pecan orchard

specialists to meet with **Charlie Darden** at his pecan orchard in Cary to see how the backwater impacted his trees and pecan production this year. Next, they traveled to **Jeffry Mitchell's** farm where **Dr. Bobby Golden** and **Beth Baker** dug soil samples to examine with the group and discuss long term soil health. The tour showed them many homes, roads, farms and trees demolished by flooding and also included visiting a stocked

pond MSU helped prepare and CRP land both nearly 5 feet under water for over 6 months in the Goose Lake area. The group has planned their next meeting for October 22. On that day, farmers and landowners are invited to attend a post-flood agronomic crops recovery meeting at 8:30 a.m. at the National Guard Armory in Rolling Fork. Attendees will hear information from MSU Extension Crop Specialists and other officials concerning agronomic crop, forestry, and wildlife related backwater flood recovery.



Dr. Bobby Golden and **Beth Baker** examine soil samples from fields inundated for over 200 days



MSU Extension agents, associates and specialists gather at **Jeffrey Mitchell's** field after floodwaters have receded

MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES NOW ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Individuals and households affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from Feb. 22 – March 29, 2019, in Clay, Humphreys, Issaquena, Lowndes, Monroe, Sharkey, Warren and Yazoo counties in Mississippi are now eligible to register for federal disaster assistance.

Disaster assistance is available for individual homeowners and renters. The assistance may include grants to help pay for temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs for homeowners, and other disaster-related needs such as uninsured and out of pocket medical, dental, funeral, and childcare expenses.

Disaster Recovery Centers will be opening soon in select local areas to apply for Individual Assistance. However, online and telephone registrations are being accepted by FEMA now for Clay, Humphreys, Issaquena, Lowndes, Monroe,

Sharkey, Warren and Yazoo Counties. The deadline to register for federal assistance is November 19, 2019.

The following is needed to complete your registration:

- Social Security Number (SSN) OR the SSN of a minor child in the household who is a U.S. Citizen, Non-Citizen National or Qualified Alien.
- Annual Household Income
- Contact Information (phone number, mailing address, email address*, and damaged home address)
- Insurance Information (coverage, insurance company name, etc.)
- Bank Account Information (if you are eligible to receive financial assistance, the money can be deposited in your account)
- Provide all receipts for monies spent towards your recovery

Twenty-nine counties in Mississippi are now eligible to receive federal funding under FEMA's Public Assistance program to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from Feb. 22 – March 29, 2019. All designated counties could receive federal funding on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities and infrastructure.

The state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations in

the following counties are eligible for federal grants: Alcorn, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Clay, Coahoma, Grenada, Humphreys, Issaquena, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Leflore, Lowndes, Montgomery, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tishomingo, Union, Warren, Washington, Webster,

USDA RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS HURT BY 2018, 2019 DISASTERS

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that agricultural producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019, including Hurricane Dorian, can apply for assistance through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+). Signup for this U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program will begin Sept. 11, 2019. WHIP+ eligible counties in the Mississippi Delta include Carroll, Coahoma, DeSoto, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo.

"U.S. agriculture has been dealt a hefty blow by extreme weather over the last several years, and 2019 is no

exception," **Perdue** said. "The scope of this year's prevented planting alone is devastating, and although these disaster program benefits will not make producers whole, we hope the assistance will ease some of the financial strain farmers, ranchers and their families are experiencing. **President Trump** has the backs of our farmers, and we are working to support America's great patriot farmers."



TAIWAN DELEGATION SIGNS LETTER OF INTENT TO PURCHASE MISSISSIPPI CROPS

The State of Mississippi recently served as a host for representatives from Taiwan who signed a letter of intent to purchase Mississippi crops, including soybeans and corn. The visit to Mississippi was a result of a trade mission that includes **Governor Phil Bryant**, Commissioner of Agriculture **Andy Gipson**, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President **Mike McCormick**, Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board and United Soybean Board Director **Bubba Simmons** of Tribbett.

"We appreciate Taiwan's continued loyalty to U.S. Agriculture and are thankful for the opportunity to provide them with high quality, sustainably produced commodities that we grow here in Mississippi. It is

very important that we, as farmers, continue to strengthen the relationship we have with those who purchase our crops. This exchange with Taiwan has allowed us to do just that," said **Bubba Simmons**.



PRESIDENT *from page 2*

.....
gram, and it is reaping tremendous rewards for both employees and employers across the territory.

As harvest winds down throughout the region in the coming weeks, Delta Council will continue to be engaged in the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, the impact that trade disruptions have had on Mississippi agriculture, and a startling trend of assault upon crop protection

materials that our agricultural economy must depend on in order to be safe and sustainable.

Making agriculture, manufacturing, workforce training, flood protection, and infrastructure stronger should help us hasten the population decline that we are experiencing in the Delta. As President of Delta Council, you can be assured that this challenge guides our policy and program of work so we can produce better outcomes in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE INVESTS TO MAKE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO SERVE A GROWING INDUSTRY IN GRENADA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$656,231 grant to the Grenada County Board of Supervisors, Grenada, Mississippi, to make infrastructure improvements needed to help businesses expand within Grenada County's Business and Technology Park. The EDA grant, to be matched with \$256,492 in local investment, is expected to create or retain 114 jobs and attract \$6 million in private investment.

This investment will construct infrastructure improvements including lighting, water and sewer lines, an access road, and storm drainage to support the expansion of a logistics firm in the 1,100-acre industrial park. This project was made possible by the regional planning efforts led by the North Central Mississippi Planning and Development District. EDA funds North Central Mississippi Planning and Development District to help bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to strengthen the regional economy, support private capital investment and create jobs.

MISS. SENATORS ANNOUNCE \$18.6 MILLION TO HELP REPAIR FLOOD-DAMAGED FEDERAL ROADWAYS

MSDOT & U.S. Army Corps Can Use Emergency Relief Funding for Recovery Projects



U.S. Senators **Cindy Hyde-Smith** and **Roger Wicker** announced the approval of \$18.6 million in emergency relief to repair or reconstruct flood-damaged transportation infrastructure. The U.S. Department of Transportation will award the funding to the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to repair flood damage to federal-aid highways and roads on federal lands in various locations around the state.

"Flooding, particularly in the Yazoo

Backwater, has undermined the integrity of roads and highways. Federal emergency transportation relief money will help us repair and restore these important routes," said **Hyde-Smith**, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"I commend **Secretary Elaine Chao** and the U.S. Department of Transportation for approving Mississippi's request for emergency relief funds to repair roads and bridges damaged by recent flooding across our state," **Wicker** said. "These funds will help support recovery efforts and ensure residents can travel safely to and from their homes and businesses."

The Mississippi Department of Transportation will receive \$18.5 million in Emergency Relief Program funding, while \$125,000 in Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Program will go to the Army Corps. Eligible repair work includes projects to restore essential traffic, minimize further damage, or protect facilities.

On August 22, four counties submerged by Yazoo Backwater floodwaters for most of the year qualified for federal disaster assistance under the major disaster declaration approved by **President Trump** in April. Those counties include Issaquena, Sharkey, Warren, and Yazoo.

MDCC RIBBON CUTTING AND OPEN HOUSE HELD FOR LINEMAN TRAINING FACILITY



This week Mississippi Delta Community College held an official ribbon cutting and open house in honor of the new Electrical Lineman Training Facility on their Moorhead Campus. Pictured from left to right are; **Sarah Thomas**, retired Representative of house district 31; **Jackie Turner**, director of Mississippi Department of Employment Security; **Tommy Goodwin**, Executive Director of South Delta PDD; **Todd Donald**, Vice President of Workforce, Capps Technology Center; **Henry Reed**, Board President of South Delta PDD; **Dr. Ivye Allen**, President of the Foundation for the Mid South; **Chris Caldwell**, Director of Delta Regional Authority; **John Thompson**; **Mitzi Woods**, Workforce Director at South Delta PDD; **James Kenwright** and **David O'Bryan**, Delta Electric Power Association; **Dr. Tyrone Jackson**, President of MDCC; **Allyson Denson**, Community Development Director at South Delta PDD; **Henry Phillips**, Board member of South Delta PDD; **Glenn Donald**, Sunflower County Board of Supervisors.

MISSISSIPPI WOMEN FOR AGRICULTURE VISITS STONEVILLE



Board members of Mississippi Women for Agriculture recently toured the Stoneville campus to learn more about daily operations and research. After an overview of Delta Council, the attendees met with **Dr. Jeff Gore**, **Dr. Whitney Crowe** and **Dr. Tessie Wilkerson**, Mississippi State University Delta Research and Extension scientists. They also met with **Dr. Pat Gaunt**, aquaculture veterinarian with the Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center and toured the USDA hatchery. To finish their tour, they were given a cotton ginning demonstration at the USDA Cotton Ginning Laboratory.

USDA'S NRCS ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF DEDICATED FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

In response to recent flooding impacting many parts of the United States, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces the availability of dedicated funding for conservation easements on certain lands damaged by flooding and other natural disasters.

Funds are made available to Mississippi landowners through the floodplain easement component of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP-FPE).

"Many landowners across Mississippi have been drastically affected by the recent extensive flooding," said **Kurt Readus**, Mississippi State Conservationist. "Conservation easements through EWPP-FPE and other easement programs provide restoration of our floodplain functions and minimize farming losses that burden our landowners."

The EWPP-FPE program is a voluntary program through which eligible applicants agree to sell a permanent conservation easement to the United States through NRCS. Compensation is based on the value of the easement as determined by an appraisal or market analysis. These easements may occur on private agricultural land or residential properties damaged by flooding and natural

disasters. NRCS will work to restore the easement to its natural floodplain condition.

Individuals and communities in any state are encouraged to contact their local NRCS field offices for more information on these floodplain easement opportunities. The application deadline for current EWPP-FPE funding will be Oct. 25th, 2019.

THREE DELTA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES REAPPOINTED TO PROMOTION BOARDS

Governor **Phil Bryant** reappointed three Delta producers as representatives of Delta Council to the Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board (MSPB), Mississippi Rice Promotion Board (MRPB), and the Mississippi Corn Promotion Board (MCPB) for three-year terms. **Paul Dees** of Leland has been reappointed to the MSPB, **Randy Howarth** has been reappointed to the MRPB, and **Jack Phillips** of Yazoo City has been reappointed to the MCPB.

PLANTERS BANK NAMES HARGETT CEO

Planters Bank announces that **Alan Hargett** is assuming the role of Chief Executive Officer on September 1, 2019. **Hargett**, a native of Ruleville, began his banking career with Planters as a management trainee in the Planters Indianola office in 1989, the same year he earned his Bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University. He became a commercial lender before being named President of Planters Ruleville office. He was later promoted to Chief Credit Officer for the bank before being named President and Chief Operating Officer in 2018. He is a member of the Planters Board of Directors and serves on the board and executive committee of the Mississippi Bankers Association. **Hargett** recently served on the American Bankers Association Agriculture and Rural Banking Committee.



Jimmy Clayton, current Chief Executive Officer, will remain as Chairman of the Board. **Clayton** has been with Planters for 43 years and has served as Chief Executive Officer for the past 35 years. With regard to the upcoming transition, **Clayton** said, "**Alan Hargett** is eminently qualified to handle the job of CEO for Planters Bank. He will definitely lead the bank to continued success in the coming years."

AROUND DELTA FIELDS

NRCS CHIEF MATT LOHR VISITS THE DELTA



Chief Matt Lohr of the NRCS visited the Delta to learn more about Mississippi row crop production systems and share with area producers information regarding the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill.

The Chief was greeted by a large delegation at Simmons Planting Company on Monday. Those helping to host the Chief included Delta F.A.R.M., Delta Council, USA Rice Federation, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Department of Ag and Commerce, US EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, RESTORE Council, Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and local producers including Patrick Johnson, Jr. of Tunica, Paul D. Dees from Greenville, Allan Grittman from Cleveland, Bubba Simmons from Tribbett, Travis Satterfield from Benoit, Pete Hunter from Clarksdale, and Carter Murrell of Arcola.

After the farm tour, the Chief served as the keynote speaker at the Delta F.A.R.M. Annual Meeting in Stoneville.

KARLSON RETIRES FROM WCEA



Karlson

After 7 years working devotedly for the Washington County Economic Alliance (WCEA), Cary Karlson, a resident of Greenville, MS, retired on July 31, 2019.

Cary Karlson, 65, joined the WCEA in 2012 after numerous

years of experience in wholesale trade and product development. During his time at the WCEA, he was responsible for rebuilding the organization into the premier economic development entity in the Mississippi Delta through numerous successful projects such as the development of two shovel-ready green sites; the certification of Washington County as an ACT Work Ready Community; and the recruitment of Nufarm Americas to Greenville, MS, which is the first manufacturing announcement to Washington County since 2004. He is a community champion,

leveraging the success in Washington County to strengthen a positive community attitude.

“Cary has been a transformational leader for economic development and workforce training in Washington County and the state of Mississippi,” said Tom Gresham, Delta Council President from Indianola. “He was confronted with a lot of challenges, and he met every one of them head-on and was successful. He is leaving the organization with much stronger footing, and Delta Council appreciates his friendship and leadership.”

“After much thought, prayer and discussion with my wife, Craig, I reached a decision to retire as Executive Director of the Washington County Economic Alliance on July 31, 2019,” said Executive Director Cary Karlson. “I have been honored to serve the residents of Washington County and be partners with great leaders including Dave Clarke, Johnny McRight, Stephanie Patton, Ryan Ashley, and Frank Howell. The talented team that I have been blessed to work with over the past seven years, Carolyn Baker, Kay Sipes, Angelica Richards, Hillary Boggs, Debra Wintory, Tom Daly, and Will Coppage, inspired me daily to help Washington County grow and be a better place to live.”

A well-attended farewell event was held at the Leyser Gallery in Greenville.

THE MIDDLEBY CORPORATION MOVING LYNX GRILLS' HEADQUARTERS, MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS TO GREENWOOD, CREATING 200 JOBS

The Middleby Corporation, a global leader in the foodservice equipment industry, is relocating Lynx Grills' headquarters and manufacturing operations to the Viking Range facility in Greenwood.

The project is a \$5-million corporate investment and will create 200 jobs, 100 of which will be added immediately. The remaining 100 will be added over the next five years.

“I am elated to welcome Lynx Grills to our corporate family. The new investment and job creation are significant to our local economy. Thanks to state and local officials for aggressively recruiting this project. It was truly a team effort,” said Angela Curry, Executive Director for Greenwood-Leflore-Carroll Economic Development Foundation.

Viking Range and Lynx are brands in Middleby's extensive portfolio of residential, commercial and outdoor equipment manufacturers.



MARTIN NAMED INTERIM HEAD OF MSU'S DELTA RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER

A former leader of Mississippi State University's largest agricultural research center has returned to that role on an interim basis.

“We are excited to have Dr. Martin return to Stoneville as interim head of DREC. His previous stint as head of the station and the further administrative experience he has gained since his departure will ensure the research and extension needs of the Delta are well served,” said Bubba Simmons, a Washington County producer who serves as Chairman of Delta Council's Advisory Research Committee.

Steve Martin became interim head of the Delta Research and Extension Center July 1. He will also continue in his current role as associate director of the MSU Extension Service.



Martin

NEW AG ECONOMISTS JOIN MSU EXTENSION



Maples



Mills

The Mississippi State University Extension Service welcomed two new agricultural economists Aug. 16.

Will Maples will be located on the main MSU campus in Starkville, while Brian Mills will be stationed at the Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville.

Maples, a native of Elkmont, Alabama, earned three degrees in agricultural economics: a bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas, a master's degree from MSU and a doctorate from Oklahoma State University.

“Will brings strong marketing skills to the department and understands how that fits into overall farm management,” said Keith Coble, Extension professor and head of the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics. “Will demonstrated leadership as a grad student chairing the national grad student organization. We expect he will immediately impact crop economics in the state.”

Mills holds bachelor's and master's degrees in

agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He earned a doctorate in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University. He will conduct research on issues related to crop production, farm management and precision agriculture.

“We are excited to have Dr. Brian Mills joining the faculty at Stoneville,” said Steve Martin, interim head of the Delta center. “He will bring much-needed expertise to our team and our producers.”

SOUTH DELTA DEER SEASON PROPOSED



During spring and summer 2019, extensive flooding occurred in the South Delta region. Data collection, including hunter observation and harvest data, will be imperative over the next 2–3 years to properly assess the full impacts of the prolonged flooding. During the September 26 meeting of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, white-tailed deer seasons and bag limits were set for the South Delta Zone impacted by flooding.

Dates: October 15 through January 31 (public and private land)

Bag limits: two antlerless deer and two bucks

On private land only, one buck must meet antler criteria and one may be any antlered deer

South Delta Zone: All Mississippi lands south of Bunge Road; south of Highway 14; west of Highway 149; west of Highway 3; west of Highway 61 from Highway 3 to Business 61 and to I-20; and east of the of state line (in MS River).

WICKER, HYDE-SMITH ANNOUNCE \$7.99 MILLION FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO LOCAL AIRPORTS

Miss. Senators Detail Four Grants to Support Statewide Air Transportation Upgrades

U.S. Senators Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith announced the award of \$7.99 million for improvements to four airports in Mississippi. The grants will be awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on behalf of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA grants for Mississippi will support four projects, with one being the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport – \$2,375,306 to improve runway safety, acquire an aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicle, and acquire miscellaneous equipment.

HYDE-SMITH, WICKER INTRODUCE BILL TO REIN IN CLEAN WATER ACT VETO AUTHORITY

BILL WOULD IMMEDIATELY NULLIFY YAZOO BACKWATER VETO AS SENATORS CONTINUE TO PUSH FEDERAL AGENCIES TO HELP ALLEVIATE PERPETUAL FLOODING IN SOUTH MISSISSIPPI DELTA

Cindy Hyde-Smith and **Roger Wicker** introduced legislation that would overturn a 2008 decision that halted the final aspects of a long-awaited flood control project for the South Mississippi Delta, a region hit by disastrous flooding for most of this year.

The Mississippi Senators addressed the flooding disaster in the Yazoo Backwater Region in speeches to the Senate and introduced the Flood Reduction, Wildlife Habitat, and Water Quality Improvement Act of 2019 as they continue to press the Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete congressionally-authorized work on a critical pump project for the region. To read more and to watch an excerpt, visit www.hydesmith.senate.gov/hyde-smith-wicker-introduce-bill-rein-clean-water-act-veto-authority.

DELTA STRONG *from page 1*

ports and cable management studs, even at relatively low volumes.

On the same day, LED lighting products manufacturer Parmida LED Technologies announced that it is locating its latest North American distribution and e-commerce operations center in Indianola's former Modern Line facility, creating 20 jobs. The project represents a \$1 million corporate investment.

"Parmida's decision is further evidence that we are a strong state

for companies with distribution and e-commerce needs," **Gov. Phil Bryant** said.

Parmida was recognized in 2017 as one of the fastest growing companies in the Amazon ecosystem.

"Both of these projects came about through our Delta Strong prospect effort, and I commend the local communities, the State, and all of the other economic development partners for making these projects a reality," said Delta Council President and former Delta Strong Chairman **Tom**

Gresham. "Both of these are family-owned, innovative companies, who will be strong corporate citizens in the Delta. The **Mahrou** family of Parmida and the **Hobson** family of Image Industries are exactly the target market we envisioned when we created Delta Strong.

Gresham thanked the corporate partners and economic development entities who committed to the Delta Strong effort.

"This is proof that the plan is working," said **Gresham**. "We set a goal of 5 industrial announcements during the four-year Delta Strong plan, and we still believe that the goal is achievable with the two project announcements, continued visits and interests, and whatever we will generate this Fall, Winter, and next Spring in visits. Under the leadership of new Delta Strong and Development Department **Chairman Wade Litton**, I am confident we will be able to celebrate more announcements in the future."



Sunflower County Board of Supervisors President Glenn Donald, Parmida owner Peyman Mahrou, and



Image Industries co-owners Blake Hobson, Stacia Hobson and Plant Manager Mike Fleury

GUEST *from page 2*

adverse effects to wetlands. While Mississippi's South Delta was flooded by trapped rainfall to 98.5 feet elevation with no crops planted for an entire year, directly across the MS River at Vicksburg, Louisiana farmers' crops were growing as usual on land elevations of 85 feet. Pumps DO work.

A few interrelated environmental groups exhort us to "urge your Congressional leaders to reject the pumps in favor of more affordable, effective options." In the ten years following the EPA's veto of the pump project in 2008, the area's preventable flood damage losses to agriculture have cost over \$372 million. As of mid-September, the aggregate total crop damages collected by the USDA for the Yazoo Backwater Area for this year alone stands at \$622 million and is expected to

exceed \$800 million. State-funded rental assistance continues to be provided for nearly 400 families displaced since February. Preliminary assessments show 383 homes in the Yazoo Backwater Area were affected by standing floodwaters with 252 categorized as "major damage or destroyed." Public infrastructure damage assessments to roads and bridges are ongoing. Had the Yazoo Backwater Area Pump Project been completed as designed, it would have already paid for itself many times over, and we would not have witnessed thousands of dead wildlife floating in stagnant floodwaters or stranded and starving on tiny parcels of land surrounded by floodwaters. The pumps are the most ecological and economical solution for the Yazoo Backwater Area, its people, its communities, its wildlife, and its wetlands.

In 1997 the Mississippi Levee

Board formed a Consensus Group to bring government agencies and environmental groups together to formulate a plan all could endorse. The groups currently opposing the project attended the first meeting of the Consensus Group then failed to participate in the remaining 50 hours of meetings and compromises over the next 11 months. If they were genuinely interested in formulating a beneficial plan forward, it seems they would show up on behalf of their contributors and members. It appears these opposition groups are most interested in tugging on the heart (and purse) strings of the uninformed and unsuspecting in support of their indefensible radical environmentalist agenda. I urge you to research the facts for yourself then contact your Congressional delegation and ask them to protect the Mississippi Delta's environment and economy—install the pumps!

MEMBER FOCUS | LEWIS BARKSDALE



AFFILIATIONS:

Lewis currently serves on the Lee Academy School Board, is a Commissioner on the Lost Lake Drainage District located in Quitman County, serves on the advisory board for Staplcotn, and previously he served on the Presbyterian Day School school board in Clarksdale. **Lewis** and **DD** are members of St. George's Episcopal Church in Clarksdale.

BUSINESS OR OCCUPATION:

Lewis Jones Barksdale, IV owns and operates Barksdale Farm in Quitman County along with his wife **DD**, where they primarily raise cotton, corn and soybeans.

HOMETOWN:

Lewis is a Clarksdale resident. He graduated from Lee Academy in 2000, then earned a Bachelor's Degree in Insurance and Real Estate from Delta State University in 2005.

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT LEWIS:

"**Lewis** is a 4th generation farmer who has taken over his family farming operation and is doing a superb job performing a lot of the duties himself. He tends to make the right decisions at the right time and seeing the rewards of his decisions," said **Bobby Carson**, State Executive Director for the USDA Mississippi Farm Service Agency.

DELTA ON THE MOVE | JOSH PEASTER



ral Resources, and Rules committees. **Josh's** ability to connect with people, particularly from his home base in the Delta, has proven to be a valuable addition to the **Hyde-Smith** staff.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB:

"This job offers a new set of challenges and opportunities every day. It is exciting to work for **Senator Hyde-Smith** as a representative of my home state and as a leader who understands the uniqueness of the Delta and agriculture throughout the state. I specifically enjoy working with constituents to develop policies that positively affect Mississippi. Our state has long benefited from good representation in Washington, D.C., and I feel privileged to work toward continuing that trend. It is very fulfilling to watch hard work from our delegation come to fruition in the form of good policy."

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT JOSH:

"**Josh** is a talented young man and we're fortunate to have him working on our behalf in Washington, D.C. His ability to deal effectively with complex policy issues, along with gaining the confidence and trust of his colleagues, is a valuable combination. As part of **Senator Hyde-Smith's** staff, **Josh** is and will continue to be an influential player working to advance the interests of the Delta and our state," said **John Gordon Campbell**, Senior Advisor to **Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith** and Greenville native.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Yazoo City native **Josh Peaster** graduated in 2017 from the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in managerial finance. Upon graduation, **Josh** moved to Washington, D.C., to work fulltime for **U.S. Senator Thad Cochran**. Following **Senator Cochran's** resignation, **Josh** accepted an offer to work for Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell**. He served in the Majority Leader's U.S. Capitol office for 16 months before joining the office of **U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith**. While his job requires him to work in Washington, **Josh** returns to the Delta as often as possible. He is married to **Lucie Barbour Peaster**, who is also from Yazoo City.

CURRENT JOB TITLE & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Since June 2019, **Josh** has put his skills to work as a legislative aide for **Senator Hyde-Smith**. He is responsible for a range of policy areas and leverages a unique set of contacts to promote **Senator Hyde-Smith's** priorities with the Senate Appropriations, Agriculture, Energy and Natu-



Recently Delta Council Officers and Presidential Directors met at Stoneville to review bylaws and policies of Delta Council. They were also presented with an update on the Yazoo Backwater flooding, and Northern District MDOT Commissioner **Mike Tagert** addressed the group about the future of transportation infrastructure in Mississippi.



The Kansas Corn Corps toured Stoneville. Established in 2016, KCC serves as a young farmer business development program engaging participants in networking and learning more about the corn industry. Pictured are representatives from the KCC, along with Leland corn producer **John Mark Looney**, pictured sixth from the left.



Delta Council Vice President and Cary resident and producer **Jeffrey Mitchell** testified before the Mississippi River Commission on the importance of continued flood protection efforts in the entirety of the Yazoo Basin. He emphasized the critical timing of building the pumping plant to relieve the people and environment of the South Delta from the man-made disaster that has occurred in 2019 and 8 of the last 11 years.

FLOOD RECOVERY



The Mennonite Disaster Recovery team demolished a family home on Diggs Road near Fidler destroyed by backwater flooding.



Roads across the South Delta are crumbling and caving in due to prolonged backwater flooding; Shell Beach Drive in Eagle Lake.



With over 650 homes affected by the backwater, hundreds of residents are left with 3-4 feet of mold throughout their homes.

Delta Council

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HOUSE PASSES CR UNTIL NOVEMBER 21, SENATE EXPECTS TO FOLLOW SUIT

DELTA COUNCIL APPRECIATIVE OF SENATE APPROPRIATIONS MEASURES PASSED TO DATE

With the U.S. House of Representatives passing a Continuing Resolution until November 21 and the Senate expected to follow suit tomorrow, the status of FY '20

appropriations measures is expected to remain in limbo for some time.

"This Continuing Resolution is needed to avoid a shutdown, but Delta Council would like to acknowledge

the strong support of flood protection, transportation, agriculture, and infrastructure that was included in the recently-passed Senate version of the Agriculture, Transportation, and Energy and Water appropriations measures," said Delta Council President **Tom Gresham** of Indianola. "**U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith** sits on the

Appropriations Committee, along with her membership on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Energy and Water, among others. From key agricultural issues at Stoneville, critical flood protection measures throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley, rural development issues like broadband and health care, Delta

Regional Authority, the Essential Air Service Program and expanding the Highway Trust Fund, **Senator Hyde-Smith** has shown her commitment to the priorities of Mississippi. We hope that the measures she included in the Senate version will remain as the bills eventually will be conferenced at some point in the future."

FLOODING *from page 1*

PETITION

In March, a backwater area resident started a petition to override the EPA veto of the pumping plant project. In 6 months, the petition gained 25,000 signatures online, and several thousand more handwritten, resulting in thousands more than the petition to "Help Stop The Yazoo Pumps Project!" sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund received by the EPA Administrator **Stephen Johnson** 11 years ago, when the EPA vetoed the Yazoo Backwater pumps. If you would

like to sign the petition please visit www.change.org/p/clay-adcock-override-epa-veto.

RESOURCES FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

USDA DISASTER AREA DECLARATION

On August 14, Secretary of Agriculture **Sonny Perdue** designated 45 Mississippi counties as primary natural disaster areas. Producers who suffered losses due to the effects of freeze, rain and flooding may be eligible for USDA Farm Service Agency emergency loans to be used to replace equipment, livestock, trees and other operations debt.

FEMA INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Individuals and households (homeowner or renter) affected in the Yazoo Backwater 5-county area are eligible to register for federal disaster assistance. The assistance may include grants to help pay for temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs for homeowners, and other disaster-related needs such as uninsured and out of pocket medical, dental, funeral, and childcare expenses up to almost \$35,000. The deadline to register for federal assistance is November 19, 2019.

FARMERS & LANDOWNERS

MSU Extension invites farmers and landowners to attend a post flood agronomic crops recovery meeting

October 22 at 8:30 a.m. at the National Guard armory in Rolling Fork.

CHARITABLE ASSISTANCE

The Long-Term Recovery Committee (United Way of West Central MS, United Methodist Committee of Relief (UMCOR) and Delta Force) as well as MS Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (MS-VOAD) (MS Baptist Disaster Relief, Red Cross, Team Rubicon, and Team Hope) and the Mennonite Disaster Recovery team along with other numerous volunteers and agencies have done a tremendous job since flood waters have receded in rehabbing hundreds of homes damaged during the flood. As recovery efforts are ongoing,

there are numerous fundraisers to help the flood victims. There may also be scam artists looking to cash in on sympathetic donors. We do hope you will give and give generously, but please make sure the donation is going to a legitimate fund.

There are also a multitude of fundraising events being held throughout the region. Please follow us @ForgottenBackwaterFlood on Facebook and Instagram for current and breaking news, photos, interviews, maps, and other audio-visual aids. If you do not use social media, but would like more information, please contact Mary Catherine Brooks at mcbrooks@delatocouncil.org or at 662-686-3377.

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