

The Delta Council Review

Vol. 13, Issue No. 4

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

March 2018

COCHRAN COMES THROUGH FOR THE DELTA AGAIN



Chairman Cochran

U.S. Senate Chairman Thad Cochran, joined by **House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway** (TX) and Ranking Committee Members **Colin Peterson** (MN) and **Senator Patrick Leahy** (VT) forged a bipartisan compromise this week which resulted in restoring meaningful income protection for the covered

commodities of cotton and dairy in the Supplemental Appropriations Bill which passed both bodies of Congress this week.

“Last Spring, **Chairman Cochran** and **Senator Leahy** struck a bipartisan agreement aimed at restoring the principles which would be necessary to include the commodities of cotton and dairy back into the current 2014 Farm Bill through their 2018 Appropriations Bill,” stated **George King**, the Washington County farmer who serves as President of Delta Council.

After months of negotiations on the overall Appropriations measure, which included cotton and dairy features similar to other covered commodities of corn, wheat, soybeans, and rice, and the threat of a government shutdown, the Appropriations measure gained House-Senate approval this week. The actions will apply to the 2018 crop which farmers are preparing to plant in

the coming weeks.

All remaining members of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation – **Senator Roger Wicker**, **Congressman Gregg Harper**, **Congressman Trent Kelly**, **Congressman Steven Palazzo**, and **Congressman Bennie Thompson** – joined **Cochran** in approving the measure.

“The importance of this action led by **Chairman Cochran** cannot be overstated and it cannot be overlooked that the role of **House Agriculture Committee Chairman Conaway** was essential in getting the House leadership team to buy into this Farm Bill change,” added **King**.

Delta Council President George King advised that a summary of these actions accompanied by an explanation of how they will affect Delta farming operations that have generic base will be posted on the Delta Council website in the coming days.

USGS TO COLLECT DATA USING HELICOPTER IN MS DELTA



Running late February through early March 2018, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) is using a specialized instrument towed beneath a low-flying helicopter to collect data about the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial Aquifer in an area just North of Greenwood. The instrument is contained in a 30-foot long torpedo-shaped tube suspended 100 feet below the helicopter, at an altitude of 200 feet.

The data collected will allow scientists to better understand the properties of geologic layers beneath the land surface. Additional information can be found at the following website: <https://www2.usgs.gov/water/lowermississippigulf/map/geophysics.html>.

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INDUSTRIAL PREPARADNESS CONTINUES IN THE DELTA

The efforts of the Delta Council Development Department continue to assist communities in our region for industrial preparedness and success. Most notably are two special regional initiatives - the Delta Strong program and the ACT Work Ready initiative. “The Delta Strong efforts of workforce training and industrial

recruitment are leaving an evident trail of success across the region, and we want to thank the local and regional leadership that has been working hard to see these results,” said **Tom Gresham**, the Chairman of the Delta Council Development Department. “We have a lot more hurdles to jump and results to

achieve, however.” Delta counties have been working diligently to adopt and support the ACT Work Ready Communities effort. Since December, Coahoma and Leflore counties were both awarded the ACT Work Ready Certification. Obtaining certification is not only nationally recognized by employers

and growing industries as a gauge of how to and who to employ, but it also demonstrates an educated, trained and ready-to-work workforce to potential industries looking to relocate or expand. The certification supports economic development, industry recruitment, and bolsters existing industry by linking

workforce development to education and employers’ needs. Certified counties in the Delta include Washington, Bolivar, Sunflower, and most recently Coahoma and Leflore. The Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce has been working toward the certification for

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MAKE WEEDS BEG FOR MERCY.
FOR 6-8 WEEKS.



FIERCE
HERBICIDE 999



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY GEORGE KING

Producer, Washington County



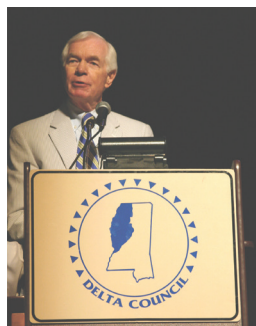
Now that recreational hunting and the holiday season have passed, once again we prepare for another 2½ million-acre crop to be planted in the Mississippi Delta.

King Although market prices for most of our Southern crops are teetering on the equivalent cost of production for each of these crops, there is positive news on the horizon, and once again that is the result of one **United States Senator Thad Cochran**. Cotton is the only major commodity left out of the 2014 Farm Bill, due to sanctions that were levied against U.S. cotton farm policy by the Country of Brazil. **Senator Cochran**, with bipartisan support from his good friend, **Senator Patrick Leahy** (VT), and extremely effective advocate for agriculture in the U.S. House, Chairman **Mike Conaway** (TX), forged a compromise solution to the cotton and dairy programs of the current farm bill. These provisions hold the

promise of restoring the economic viability of cotton production in the Delta. I open this President's Message with this news about the cotton program because throughout my career in farming, there is no other name that has been more prominent when it comes to responding to the needs of agriculture in rural America, than **United States Senator, Thad Cochran**.

Delta Council Highways and Transportation Chairman **Walton Gresham** has been part of the three-year saga to bring our highway, road, and bridge system, and more especially adequate funding for this system into the 21st Century. "Although there is positive movement by Mississippi lawmakers to address some of the most critical local needs for road and bridge repair, Delta Council continues to maintain, along with virtually every business and trade association in Mississippi, that we cannot expect a 21st Century road and bridge system state-wide by relying on a State-appropriated funding model that was adopted in 1987 (30 years ago). We commend those legislators who have exhibited the courage to face their constituents with these cold hard facts, such as **State Senator Willie Simmons** (Bolivar-Sunflower Counties).

We are hopeful after the current election cycle has come to pass, all of the business groups of Mississippi will work together to urge legislators to embrace the bold message of these road needs, which we believe to be that, "no new taxes" will not provide the necessary funding stream at the city, county, and State level which will extend into all parts of the State, including the more rural areas such as Northwest Mississippi," stated **Gresham**.



U.S. Senator Thad Cochran

CWD IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN, BUT NOT PANIC

BY JOHN MURRY GREENLEE

Delta Wildlife President



Greenlee

It's human nature to be fearful of the unknown. And it is often the unknown that makes us resistant to change. But like it or not, the discovery of Chronic Waste Disease

in the South Delta mandates change in the way we will manage deer, hunt deer, and process venison from this point forward in Mississippi.

The good news is, the Delta Wildlife staff and others in the academic community have told me the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks is doing a good job in its approach to better defining the problem and taking



action to minimize the spread of CWD. Furthermore, those who have spoken with hunters in other states who have hunted in CWD Management Zones for years almost always comment, "it's not a big deal."

We will be learning much more about the current situation we face in the South Delta in regard to CWD as MDWFP is currently testing an additional 60 deer. If none of these deer test positive the CWD Management Zone map that was published on the MDWFP website will

In community and economic development preparedness, we are pleased that two more of our communities – Coahoma and Leflore – have been certified as Work Ready Communities, demonstrating a commitment to both employers and employees that the Delta is serious about job retention and creation. Meanwhile, the Delta Strong effort of the Delta Council Development Department kicks off 2018 with four visits to major U.S. markets in the coming three months.

In conclusion, for the past five years, as it relates to agriculture, I have come to believe that groundwater management, in lieu of groundwater regulation is possibly the most pressing issue facing Delta agriculture over the next decade. Rather than belaboring the many issues and actions of Delta Council in this area of work, I cannot overemphasize the need for the entire Delta agricultural community to embrace the importance of the effort necessary to reverse, or at least stabilize the downward trend in the saturated thickness of our alluvial aquifer. The Mississippi Delta is noted for being one of the most progressive agricultural regions of this Nation, when it comes to embracing technology and confronting the natural resource challenges.

For any farmer or allied agricultural business reading this message today, I conclude by asking you, is the next generation that operates your farm going to have the flexibility to utilize this groundwater resource in the same manner in which you have done? If you are like me, the honest response would be that, "I am afraid not". This realization is my greatest concern about the future of Delta agriculture as we know it today. On the positive side, we are working as an organization and a region to treat this delicate issue as our highest priority.

remain the primary focus of control efforts in 2018. But when, or if, new deer test positive for CWD, then we can expect the management zone to grow in size.

MDWFP is hosting multiple CWD meetings around the state for people to learn more about how they intend to address this issue. Delta Wildlife is also bringing people in from other states who have been dealing with CWD for years to address the Delta Wildlife Deer Committee and their guests in Vicksburg in late March. We all have much to learn about CWD and the size of the issue we face here in Mississippi. But it will take some time to define the latter.



INDUSTRIAL PREPARADNESS CONTINUES IN THE DELTA

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the past two years, but accelerated those efforts beginning in October 2017. “We are so pleased to be the fifth county in the Mississippi Delta and only the seventh of the 82 counties in the State of Mississippi to reach ACT certified Work Ready Status,” stated **Jon Livingston**, Executive Director for the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce. “I want to thank **Mike Philpot** of Delta Council and his Delta Strong program, **Cary Karlson** of the Washington County Economic Alliance, and the Delta Regional Authority, and **Ron Hudson**, former Executive Director of our Chamber of Commerce for their support and guidance. Additionally, I wish to thank **Shirlaurence Fair**, **Steven Jossell**, and **Rone Walker** for the strong support of this initiative.”

The Greenwood-Leflore Industrial Board has also been hard at work testing their students and workforce. In December, Leflore County earned their ACT Work

Ready Communities Certification, and did so in exactly twelve months, beginning their efforts in December of 2016. “We are so pleased our community has reached work ready certification,” stated **Angela Curry**, Executive Director of the Greenwood-Leflore Industrial Board. “I want to thank the Work Ready Team, Greenwood Leflore Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Delta Community College/Capps Technology Center, Greenwood-Leflore -Carroll Economic Development Foundation, and certainly Delta Council for leading the charge and allowing Leflore County to be a part of this regional effort.”

The hard work Leflore County has put toward workforce will soon pay off. Milwaukee Tool recently announced a state wide expansion investing \$33.4 Million and creating 660 jobs - 300 in the Delta. The expansions are planned for the company’s plants in Jackson and

Greenwood and its distribution center in Olive Branch, with Mississippi Development Authority providing \$15.35 million toward the expansion in grants. Greenwood is the big winner in terms of state help, with two grants totaling \$9 million for public infrastructure improvements. The city will receive up to \$5 million in loans to purchase a building and make parking improvements.

Behind the scenes, the Delta Strong team has been busy recruiting industries to expand or relocate to the Delta. In the last six months, the team has met with CEOs and company owners from California to Canada, totaling over 30 visits thus far.

For more information on Delta Strong, please visit www.deltastrong.ms.



USGS TO COLLECT DATA USING HELICOPTER IN MS DELTA

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The shallow alluvial aquifer supplies most of the water for irrigation, aquaculture, and wildlife habitat enhancement in the Delta. Water levels in this aquifer have declined as demand has increased since the 1980s. The Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force, led by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), was formed in 2011 to develop strategies to assure that the Delta will have adequate agricultural water resources for the future.

The helicopter-based survey beginning North of Greenwood is the first phase of an airborne geophysical survey of the entire Mississippi Alluvial Plain, which includes portions of Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Missouri. Data gathered will be

used to improve the USGS regional water availability computer model, which will assist state and local water management agencies like MDEQ and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Joint Water Management District (YMD) in making decisions regarding the region’s water supply. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has received funding for a groundwater-to-groundwater transfer pilot project to be constructed by the Vicksburg District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the Shellmound area later this year. This project is one of several alternatives the Task Force is investigating that could potentially contribute to reducing declines in the aquifer. The helicopter-based survey data will be useful in the design of this pilot project.

PERDUE HELPS COTTON PRODUCERS MAINTAIN, EXPAND DOMESTIC MARKET



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is taking action to assist cotton producers through a Cotton Ginning Cost Share (CGCS) program in order to expand and maintain the domestic marketing of cotton.

“America’s cotton producers have now faced four years of financial stress, just like the rest of our major commodities, but with a weaker safety net,” **Perdue** said. “In particular,

cotton producers confront high input and infrastructure costs, which leaves them more financially leveraged than most of their colleagues. That economic burden has been felt by the entire cotton market, including the gins, cooperatives, marketers, cottonseed crushers, and the rural communities that depend upon their success.”

The sign-up period for the CGCS program runs from March 12, 2018, to May 11, 2018.

Under the program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), cotton producers may receive a cost share payment based on a producer’s 2016 cotton acres reported to FSA multiplied by 20 percent of the average ginning cost for each production region.

R.D. JAMES CONFIRMED TO LEAD ARMY CORPS FOR MISSISSIPPI



James

Mississippi Senators endorsed **James** in Early 2017 to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

U.S. Senators Thad Cochran and **Roger Wicker** said Senate confirmation of **R. D. James** to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works is important for the future of navigation and flood control works in Mississippi. The Senate voted to confirm **James**, who was recommended by **Cochran** and **Wicker** early last year to lead the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A self-employed Missouri farmer who has served on the Mississippi River Commission since 1981, **James** was confirmed by a 89 to 1 vote.

“The importance of the Army Corps of Engineers to Mississippi cannot be overstated. I am confident Mr. James understands how the Corps of Engineers can work as a partner with communities to protect and improve our State,” **Cochran** said. “I congratulate **Mr. James** on his confirmation and look forward to working with him.”

“**R. D. James** has extensive experience working alongside the Army Corps of Engineers during his 36 years of service on the Mississippi River Commission,” **Wicker** said. “The Senate confirmed a man who knows the importance of water infrastructure investment in supporting our nation’s economy and keeping vulnerable communities safe from the destructive effects of floods. I am confident **Mr. James** is the right man for the job, and I am positive he will be a strong advocate for Mississippi and our region.”

“**R. D. James** has been a force in water resource developments and our nation’s infrastructure for decades. He understands and appreciates the value of environmental stewardship and economic benefits as a guiding principle for any successful civil works mission of the Corps, and he will be a credible voice for the President’s infrastructure initiatives,” stated **Gibb Steele**, a long-time advocate for all inland and deepwater water resource infrastructure.

James’ confirmation was also supported by the Mississippi Levee Board and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board.

B. F. SMITH FOUNDATION ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM UPDATE

Since 2002, the Adult Literacy Program has been offering free literacy improvement services to adults in the 18 MS Delta or part-Delta counties. The program is a 10-week one-on-one service. Tutors living in various Delta communities travel to approved teaching sites throughout the Delta to work with students. Through one-on-one training, over three hundred students have successfully participated in the program. Also, students who previously dropped out of school have been able to improve on their TABE scores which led to receiving their high school diploma. Others have secured jobs they could not obtain before improving their reading skills. In addition, all who have participated in the program have improved their quality of life by either learning

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Region	States	Costs of Ginning per Acre	CGCS Payment Rate
Southeast	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia	\$116.05	\$23.21
Mid-South	Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee	\$151.97	\$30.39
Southwest	Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas	\$98.26	\$19.65
West	Arizona, California, New Mexico	\$240.10	\$48.02

CGCS payments are capped at \$40,000 per producer. To qualify for the program, cotton producers must meet conservation compliance provisions, be actively engaged in farming and have adjusted gross incomes not exceeding \$900,000. FSA will mail letters and pre-filled applications to all eligible cotton producers.

“We appreciate **Secretary Perdue’s** announcement of this support for the cotton industry that has been experiencing distress,” said **Delta Council Farm Policy Chairman Patrick Johnson** of Tunica.

MARSHALL COUNTY RIBBON CUTTING FOR I-269



Transportation Commissioner **Mike Taggart** and other dignitaries were in attendance Monday, December 5, for a ribbon cutting held in Marshall County, MS for the opening of the second section of I-269 from State Route 305 to State Route 302. This is the largest active MDOT construction project in the state. Dirt and bridgework for the entire I-269 corridor is complete. Crews are currently working on paving the sections of the project that have not been paved. The first section of I-269, from State Route 302 to the Tennessee state line in Marshall County, was opened to traffic on October 23, 2015. The second section of I-269 from State Route 305 to State Route 302 opened to traffic on December 5. MDOT expects the last remaining section of I-269 from I-55 to State Route 305 to be open for traffic in Fall 2018.

MISSISSIPPI GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS APRIL 9 AS BRUCE LEVINGSTON DAY



Levingston Gov. Bryant

As a result of his celebrated performances in some of the world's most renowned concert halls, his series of critically-acclaimed albums and a lifelong commitment as a supporter of the arts, Delta-born classical pianist **Bruce Levingston** has enhanced Mississippi's international reputation as a cultural center.

In recognition of Levingston's artistic contributions to the culture and people of the state, **Gov. Phil Bryant** has proclaimed April 9, 2018, as "**Bruce Levingston Day**" in Mississippi.

GROUNDBREAKING FOR MDCC LINEMAN TRAINING FACILITY



Pictured above from L to R: **David O'Brien** of Delta Electric, **Johnny McRight**, **DRA Director Chris Caldwell**, **Shawn Mackey** of MS Board of Community Colleges, **Gov. Bryant**, **Dr. Larry Nabors** President of MDCC, **SDPDD Executive Director Tommy Goodwin** and **Paula Sykes**, Chairman of the Board of MDCC

Mississippi Delta Community College broke ground on a new electrical lineman training facility in Sunflower County. **Governor Phil Bryant** was on hand at the groundbreaking ceremony and said the facility is the result of a collaboration among MDCC, South Delta Planning and Development District, Delta Regional Authority, Delta Workforce Development Area, local EPAs and Entergy Mississippi. "The lineman training program has produced approximately 200 graduates since its inception in 2010, leading to stable, good-paying jobs," said **Governor Bryant**.

MSU HOPPER HONORED WITH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD



George Hopper, third from left, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station director and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean at Mississippi State University, accepted the 2017 Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Stations Directors ESS Excellence in Leadership Award during the APLU's recent annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Congratulating him are, from left to right, **Gary Thompson**, Experiment Station Section Chair and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education for Penn State's College of

Agricultural Sciences; **Jay Akridge**, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity at Purdue University; (**Hopper**); and **Ian Maw**, Vice President of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

"For years, the State of Mississippi has benefitted from **Dr. Hopper's** guidance and direction of Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. We congratulate him on this high honor and are most pleased his national peers have recognized him with this award of excellence," said **Bubba Simmons**, Chairman of the Delta Council Advisory Research Committee and a Tribbett farmer.

PLANTERS BANK ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AND PROMOTIONS



Hargett



Randall



Quinn

"With the implementation of our strategic management succession plan, Planters Bank enters 2018 ready to capitalize on and develop new opportunities for service to our expanding market region," stated Planters Bank Chairman and **CEO Jimmy Clayton**. In conjunction with this plan, Planters Bank announced that **Alan Hargett** is assuming the role of President and Chief Operating Officer, replacing long-time executive **Randy Randall**, who has served in that role since 2003. The bank also announced that **Jim Quinn** is assuming the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Credit Officer for the bank stepping into the post formerly held by **Hargett**.



GREENWOOD-LEFLORE-CARROLL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING



Board Vice Chairman **Jean Cadney** presents Award to Chairman **Jim Quinn**

Recently, the Greenwood-Leflore-Carroll Economic Development Foundation held their Annual Meeting at the Museum of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood, where the Delta Council Development Department presented Delta Strong updates to the group of sixty regional and state leaders. Presiding **Chairman Jim Quinn** was honored at the conclusion of the meeting with an award of recognition for his two years of dedicated service to the GLCEDF as Chairman. Presenting the award to him is **Vice Chairman Jean Cadney**. **Tony Sinclair** of Greenwood Utilities will serve as the incoming Chairman.



EPA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE SAFE USE OF GLYPHOSATE



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released draft human health and ecological risk assessments for glyphosate as part of the registration review of glyphosate that has been ongoing since 2009. Registration reviews occur routinely for all previously approved pesticides. The purpose of a registration review is to ensure any new, relevant information is considered.

COMMUNITY HONORS HUDSON FOR SERVICE



The leadership of Clarksdale and Coahoma County turned out to honor retiring Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation Director **Ron Hudson**. As part of the event, existing industries in the community thanked **Hudson** for his service by presenting a rocking chair made by **Greg Harkins** of Yazoo County. Pictured from left are **Jimmy Walker** of Saf-T-Cart, **Vance Hays** of Standard Industrial, **Hudson**, and **David Drumheller** of Drumheller Packaging.

TATE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION WELCOMES BRITT HERRIN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Herrin

After an extensive search, **J. Britt Herrin**, EDFP, PCED, has been selected to lead the Tate County Economic Development Foundation (EDF). He will begin his service to the Tate County EDF on January 8, 2018. **Herrin** is coming to the Tate County EDF from Springhill, Louisiana where he has been the Executive Director of the North Webster Parish Industrial District since 2015. **Britt** is a native of Northwest Mississippi, growing up on his family farm in Quitman County and graduating high school in Marks.

Herrin is a 1986 graduate of the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Public Administration. He is also a certified Professional Community and Economic Developer (PCED) and Economic

Development Finance professional (EDFP). He previously served as the Executive Director of the Pike County Economic Development District in Indianola from 1988 to 1995. Prior to that, **Herrin** worked on his family farm and in Memphis with Bellwether Technology. “**Britt Herrin** has been a successful economic developer since he began his career over 20 years ago in Sunflower County and we welcome him back home to Northwest Mississippi,” said **Tom Gresham**, Chairman of the Delta Council Development Department.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL CONFIRMED AS FEDERAL CO-CHAIRMAN OF DRA



Caldwell

*7th-generation Arkansan to lead agency
charged with investing in the Delta*

The U.S. Senate has voted to confirm **Christopher Caldwell** of Little Rock, Ark., as Federal Co-Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). **President Donald Trump** nominated **Caldwell** in September.

“This is an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the Delta region,” said **Caldwell**. “I am humbled by **President Trump’s** confidence in me, and I am grateful for the Senate’s support.”

“Delta Regional Authority has been a great advocate for moving projects forward in the Delta, and we look forward to working with **Chris** and his team,” commented **Tom Gresham**, Chairman of the Delta Council Development Department.



TYLER SULLIVAN NAMED GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER



Sullivan

Tyler Sullivan was recently hired as the Government Relations Director of the Mississippi Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. **Sullivan** came to The Nature Conservancy from **U.S. Senator Cochran’s** office. During his time in Washington D.C., he developed relationships and learned key fundamentals that will prove invaluable to the efforts of the Mississippi Chapter of TNC.

Sullivan’s time will be split between coordinating with TNC’s larger Mississippi River Basin effort, working with the Farm Bill team and working with staff on the conservation opportunities across the Gulf Coast.

“I have witnessed **Tyler’s** progression from Delta State quarterback to the Delta State/Delta Council/Staplcotn Fellow to his current position with The Nature Conservancy, and we look forward to his contributions to the economy and quality of life of Mississippi and the Delta,” said Delta Council Past President **Walton Gresham** of Indianola, who sits on TNC’s Mississippi Advisory Board.

Sullivan graduated from Delta State University with a degree in biology, pre-medical science where he was also the Statesmen’s quarterback. He interned as the 2017 Congressional Fellow sponsored by Delta State University through the B.F. Smith Foundation of Delta Council and endowed by Staplcotn. **Sullivan**, a Louisville native, recently moved to Brandon where he is working out of the Madison office.

WILLIS FRAZER RETIRES FROM BANKING



Frazer

A distinguished banking career that began in 1976 has come to an end with the retirement of **Willis Frazer** in the Clarksdale office of Planters Bank. **Willis** is a native of Clarksdale and has spent most of his life in the Mississippi Delta.

Willis began his work in the professional world as an accountant but later felt the call to be a community banker, following in the footsteps of his father, **William H. (Billy) Frazer, Jr.**, also a long-time Clarksdale banker. His career took a pivotal move in 2000 when he and fellow banker, **Freddie Britt**, formed Covenant Bank, which sixteen years later merged with a larger peer bank, Planters Bank.

In addition to his focus on serving through his vocation, **Willis** has always had a passion to give back to his hometown of Clarksdale and other organizations, as well as serve First Presbyterian Church as an Elder, a Deacon and served for ten years on the PCA Foundation Board. “**Willis Frazer** is a consummate gentleman who has had a huge impact on Clarksdale and the Delta,” said Delta Council Past President **Bowen Flowers** of Clarksdale.

ARCHIE TUCKER ANNOUNCED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF THE USDA SOUTHEAST AREA



Tucker

Mr. Tucker has served as Acting Southeast Area Director since December 30, 2017; before which he served as Associate Area Director since 2015.

“There has been nobody who has played a more pivotal role in the success of agricultural research in the Mid-South over such an extensive time period as **Archie Tucker**. Delta Council is pleased that we will be continuing our close working relationship with him and the entire USDA-ARS team to impact the challenges and opportunities of our largest industry,” said **George King**, President of Delta Council.

Mr. Tucker has spent his entire 42-year career with ARS in Stoneville, Mississippi, where he started in 1974 as a 16-year-old student under the President’s Stay-in-School Program. He worked part-time while completing high school and during his 4 years at Mississippi Valley State University where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. He was a member of the Bioenvironmental Insect Control Laboratory and in 1980 accepted a permanent technician position.

During his career with ARS, he has served in a wide variety of administrative and leadership positions.

Mr. Tucker has served in many details for the Agency, including as Acting Area Director for the Mid-South Area; Acting Research Leader for the Biological Control of Pests Research Unit; and Acting Deputy Area Director for the Beltsville Area. Additionally, he has completed extensive leadership and management training at the American Management Association and the USDA Graduate School in Washington, D.C.

With 30 years of Area office experience, **Mr. Tucker** is well respected within ARS and USDA, and with commodity groups, stakeholders, and university cooperators. He has served on numerous ARS national employee committees, including as co-chair of Cultural Transformation and as a member of the ACES Steering Committee.



MISSISSIPPI CORN PROMOTION BOARD



Massey

The Mississippi Corn Promotion Board, composed of 12 agricultural leaders, has been overseeing research

and promotion efforts regarding corn for over a decade. The Board is supported by a corn checkoff of \$.01 per bushel to support funding for projects such as helping farmers increase yields, reducing production costs and growing a healthier crop. Each member is nominated by one of the four representative agencies (Delta Council, Mississippi Corn Grower Association, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, and Mississippi Feed and Grain Association) and appointed by the Governor. Representing Delta Council on the Board are Delta Council President **George King** of Chatham, **Rob Coker** of Yazoo City and **Will Long** of Indianola. Other Board Members include **Danny Murphy** of Canton, **Philip Good** of Macon, and **Massey Turner** of Rich appointed by Mississippi Corn Growers Association. **Jan Hill** of Meridian, **Larry Killebrew** of Lexington, **Mike Graves** of Ripley appointed by Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and **Darrington Seward** of Louise, **Preston Arrington** of Inverness and **Todd Williams** of Olive Branch appointed by Mississippi Feed and Grain Association. **Turner Massey** serves as Chairman of the Board. For more information and news about MCPB, visit their website at www.mscom.org.



B. F. SMITH FOUNDATION ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM UPDATE

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how to read or improving their current reading skills.

This Adult Literacy program is different from many, because it is a mobile program where the instructor travels to the community where the student lives. This strategy helps to combat the transportation issues so often found in rural areas. Moreover, the program is taught in a one-teacher to one-student format. The students are pretested before beginning the program, and are post-tested upon completion. With all progress documented, data shows that students increase within 2-3 grade levels, upon completion.

If you would like more information, contact Margaret Cotton at 662-686-3368 or 662-820-7260

DELTAN ON THE MOVE



Jerryl Briggs Sr. Pres. MVSU

Name: Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr.

Personal Information:

Reared in New Orleans, Louisiana, Briggs has more than 30 years of experience in higher education. He earned a bachelor's degree in Chemistry Education from Xavier University, a master's degree in Human Relations and Supervision from Louisiana Tech University, and both an Educational Specialist degree in Higher Education Administration and a doctorate in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He also completed Harvard University's Institute for Educational Management program.

Briggs is the father of two sons—Isaiah and Jerryl, Jr. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, walking and spending time with family.

Current Job Title and Responsibilities:

Briggs currently serves as the eighth president of Mississippi Valley State University. As the chief executive officer, his duties include providing long-range strategic vision and oversight of the University to ensure its continued growth and success. He also serves as an advocate of the institution in the community to help secure its perpetuity. Briggs works closely with the University's administration, faculty, staff and external constituencies to help MVSU positively impact the quality of life and educational opportunities available in the Mississippi Delta.

What Do You Like Most About Your Job:

"I've never worked professionally outside of a university setting, so higher education is truly my passion. I have a genuine love for Mississippi Valley State University because I know first-hand the opportunities it provides for its students and their families. My top priority is to see our students succeed, and it's a tremendous feeling for me to see them accomplish their goal."

BEST DUCK SEASON SINCE...



By Trey Cooke, Executive Director, Delta Wildlife

As we approach the last weekend of duck season here in the Mississippi Delta, many will tell you it has been one of the best years on record. There are always outliers who might argue this point, but the vast majority of hunters, biologists, and researchers agree. This season has been as good or better as any season in the past 15-20 years. So what happened to make this season different? Weather is the simple answer.

Regular duck season opens during the end of September in North Dakota. North Dakota duck hunters were complaining just days into their season that the ducks had left the prairie because of an extreme, early cold front. Soon thereafter, the state wildlife agency started reporting

record numbers of waterfowl in Illinois, northeast Missouri and other states. It was clear the ducks had been pushed out of their summer breeding grounds early.

During this same period of time, the AR/LA/MS Delta was experiencing an extreme drought after harvest. Many duck hunters and land managers were forced to begin pumping up wetlands and fields in the region because of lack of water. These people immediately began stopping the ducks that were flying over the region to the Louisiana marshes in October and early November.

Sustained cold weather up North and the lack of water in the South concentrated ducks in the South in November. By the Mississippi opener, those with water had plenty



of ducks. Rains eventually came to the South, setting the table for waterfowl to spread out and access for food resources throughout the region. And the cold weather stuck around, preventing the ducks from moving back North. An early December snow was followed up by a bitter cold front after Christmas. And then, one more bitter cold front and snow in January consummated the season.

As landowners, conservationists, farmers, and hunters, it is our job to provide adequate habitat for wintering waterfowl. And we do a pretty good job. But at the end of the season, it's always weather that makes the difference. Extreme and sustained cold winters almost always produce an abundance of waterfowl in the Deep South.

CHARTS ILLUSTRATE CRITICAL ROAD AND BRIDGE SITUATION

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING COMPARISON: 1989 - 2017

Info from Mississippi Association of County Engineers

ACTUALS	1989 ¹		2017	
	Federal	State	Federal	State
TOTAL FUNDS	\$394,913,124		\$1,120,192,222	
	\$134,975,330	\$256,937,794	\$514,426,182	\$605,766,040
Funds Passed Through (Harvest Permits, Fines, State Aid, Cities, Counties)	\$23,038,396	\$0	\$105,512,942	\$12,866,125
One-Time Project Specific (GO Bonds, HELP Bonds, MDA) ²	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$177,656,558
Transit, Aeronautics, Railroad, Ports, Waterways ³	\$0	\$0	\$16,430,594	\$17,978,586
Enforcement ³	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,172,048
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$50,345,484	\$21,177,053
Recurring Funds Available for MDOT's Highway Operations	\$111,936,934	\$259,937,794	\$342,137,162 <i>(206% Increase)</i>	\$360,915,670 <i>(39% Increase)</i>
	\$371,874,728		\$703,052,832 <i>89% Increase</i> <i>300% Construction Cost Index Increase</i>	

1. The 1987 four-lane tax increase was fully implemented in 1989 (15¢ in 1987, 17¢ in 1988, and 18.4¢ in 1989).
2. One-time funds to construct facilities for bridge replacements and economic development. These are not recurring operational funds.
3. These responsibilities were added in when the Highway Department became the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FACTS

Info from Mississippi Association of County Engineers

ACTIVITY OR EXPENDITURES	1989 ¹	2017
State Fuel Tax at the Pump	18.4¢	18.4¢
Total Amount of Fuel Tax Collected by DOR from 18.4¢	\$304,622,485 ²	\$430,803,001
Total Amount and % of Fuel Tax MDOT Receives from the 18.4¢	\$219,328,189 (72%)	\$303,842,249 (71%)
Cost to Overlay 1 mile of Highway	\$55,000 (1995)	\$270,000
Cost to Construct 1 mile of Highway	\$3,000,000	\$10,210,000
Cost to Construct a 10,000 ft Bridge	\$12,000,000	\$29,000,000
Personnel Cost	\$68,779,904	\$158,680,433
% of Budget used for Personnel	17.53%	13.75%
Mississippi Rank of Fuel Tax with Other States	22 nd Nationally 2 nd Contiguous	47 th Nationally 5 th Contiguous
Alabama Fuel Tax at the Pump	13¢	22.91¢
Arkansas Fuel Tax at the Pump	13.7¢	21.80¢
Louisiana Fuel Tax at the Pump	16¢	20.01¢
Tennessee Fuel Tax at the Pump	20¢	25.40¢

1. The 1987 four-lane tax increase was fully implemented in 1989 (15¢ in 1987, 17¢ in 1988, and 18.4¢ in 1989).
2. This is an estimate based on MDOT receipts.

"These charts graphically illustrate the current situation facing our transportation infrastructure in Mississippi," said **Delta Council Transportation Chairman Walton Gresham** of Indianola. "This is why it is among the highest priorities of Delta Council - if we are going to capture enhanced economic development from existing commerce and new opportunities, as well as ensure the safety of the driving public, then we must address these critical issues."

Photos

U.S. CONGRESSMAN TRENT KELLY & UNITED SOYBEAN BOARD CEO POLLY RUHLAND HEADLINE MS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION MEETING



Congressman Trent Kelly



Attendees learn about soybean updates from USB CEO Polly Ruhland



Justin Ferguson of MS Farm Bureau staff, Polly Ruhland & David Wansley of Valley Park Elevator

The Mississippi Soybean Association (MSA) hosted its annual Mississippi Soybean Producer Conference in Stoneville at the Capps Center on the campus of the MSU Delta Research and Extension Center. **MSA President Jeremy Jack** presided, introducing recently hired **USB CEO Polly Ruhland** to give a report. Following remarks from **Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board Chairman Paul Dees** and several other representatives of MSU Extension, MS Department of Ag & Commerce, Monsanto and BASF, **U.S. Congressman Trent Kelly** concluded the meeting as the Keynote Speaker, updating the attendees on the 2018 Farm Bill.

DELTA LEADERS MEET WITH COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION



Delta leaders met with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission twice recently. In December, **CFTC Chairman Chris Giancarlo** and **Charlie Thornton**, Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs, met with Farmers Grain Terminal staff **Will Weathers**, Customer Relations Manager, and **John Oaks**, Vice President of Rice. Later **Giancarlo** and **Thornton** traveled to Greenwood to meet with Staplcotn Officials **Meredith Allen** and **Hank Reichle**. During the CFTC's second visit to the Delta, **Commissioner Brian Quintenz** and **Chief of Staff Kevin Webb** met with Delta leaders **Alan Ayers** of Bayer CropScience, **Frederick Barrier** of Staplcotn, **Delta Council President George King**, St. Rest Planting Company partner **Lawrence Long**, **Chris Myers** of M6 Capital Management, **Lester Myers** of Delta Western, **Jim Robertson** also with St. Rest Planting Company, local farmers **Dan Branton**, **Bubba Simmons**, and **Gibson Steele** and **Valley Park Elevator CEO David Wansley**. The purpose of the visits were to figure out ways in which the CFTC can monitor the markets better and more efficiently.

SENATOR WICKER JOINS RURAL BROADBAND ADVOCATES FOR TOWN HALL ON MISSISSIPPI'S DIGITAL DIVIDE



Three days after its national launch, Connect Americans Now (CAN) hosted a town hall featuring **U.S. Senator Roger Wicker** alongside rural advocates, business leaders and Mississippi residents to discuss the coalition's plan to eliminate America's digital divide by 2022. CAN aims to open a dialogue with Congress, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other organizations about new technologies that can expand broadband access throughout rural America.

"I am encouraged by this new partnership to help close the digital divide," said **Mississippi Senator Roger Wicker**. "Connecting more Mississippians to high-speed internet is essential to our state's economic future."

"Staying competitive in the modern farm economy takes more than good weather and a strong back," said **Darrington Seward**, a farmer from Louise, Mississippi, and a Delta Council Director. "A broadband connection opens up a new world of technologies, like remote soil sensors and targeted irrigation, helping to increase yields, lower costs and conserve resources. And just like any other small business, the opportunity to shop online for affordable equipment and access customers all over the world can be a game changer. I'm excited to see Connect Americans Now pressing ahead on solutions that will expand broadband access throughout rural Mississippi and help close the digital divide once and for all."

Delta Council

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METER REPORTING GOALS 100% MET

County	Total # of Meters In Program	Individual Meter Reports Received	Needed to meet 10% reporting	% of 10% reporting	# remaining to reach 10% reporting
Bolivar	400	339	300	113%	0
Carroll	12	11	8	138%	0
Coahoma	164	133	118	113%	0
Desoto	26	18	10	180%	0
Grenada	8	7	6	117%	0
Holmes	39	33	30	110%	0
Humphreys	134	121	108	112%	0
Issaquena	60	54	30	180%	0
Leflore	205	175	160	109%	0
Panola	29	24	20	120%	0
Quitman	143	113	84	135%	0
Sharkey	136	92	68	135%	0
Sunflower	374	305	270	113%	0
Tallahatchie	126	110	96	115%	0
Tate	3	3	2	150%	0
Tunica	131	111	92	121%	0
Warren	5	5	4	125%	0
Washington	336	270	220	123%	0
Yazoo	65	52	40	130%	0
	2396	1976	1666		0

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality reported goals established for each Delta county in the Voluntary Metering Program have been met. "Thank you to all program participants who submitted their 2017 flowmeter reports. Meeting this annual goal continues to demonstrate the willingness of Delta farmers to work through voluntary measures to help manage and protect



our critical water resources. We appreciate your continued participation in this program," said **George King**, Delta Council President and Representative of the Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force.

SECRETARY PERDUE ANNOUNCES FARM SERVICE AGENCY STATE COMMITTEE APPOINTEES



Secretary Perdue

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced a slate of Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee Appointees. State committees are selected by the Secretary, serve at the pleasure of the Secretary, and are responsible for carrying out FSA's

farm programs within delegated authorities. Mississippi appointees include **Committee Chair Ted Kendall IV** of Bolton, **Scott Flowers** of Clarksdale, **Bobby Moody** of Louisville, **Henry Reed** of Belzoni and **Rita Seward** of Jackson County. "The announcement of these 5 State Committee members - on the heels of last month's announcement of

State Director Bobby Carson - underscores the caliber of men and women who **Secretary Perdue** has entrusted with this vital federal agricultural agency" said **Delta Council President George King** of Chatham. "We look forward to working with them and appreciate their willingness to serve our industry."

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FOR 6-8 WEEKS.



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