

The Delta Council Review

Vol. 13, Issue No. 3

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

November 2017

Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting 4 Committees, Barbour, Meena to Highlight Mid-Year Session

The 2017 Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting, sponsored by **C Spire**, will feature an overview of major issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the Delta through the convening of four major committees of the organization—Farm Policy, Soil and Water Resources, Highway/Transportation and Development Department. The General Session and Lunch will feature an address by **Former Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour**, a recognition of our Veterans, other special guests, and remarks by **C Spire CEO Hu Meena**, relative to their continued deployment of broadband in the MS Delta and the State.

as well as a comprehensive briefing on important water supply issues in the Mississippi Delta. **Patrick Johnson** of Tunica, chairman of the Delta Council Farm Policy Committee, and **Bowen Flowers**, chairman of the Delta Council Soil and Water Resources Committee, will preside over the session.

In Capps Room B, the Transportation and Development Department Committees of Delta Council will jointly convene. The meeting will be highlighted by a presentation from **Mississippi Department of Transportation Commissioner Mike Tagert**, an update on policy considerations surrounding highway and infrastructure funding in Mississippi, an update on Delta Strong, and a review of what is working in workforce development in the Mississippi Delta region.

Please go to www.deltacouncil.org to see the full committee agendas.

In addition, Delta Council will pass policy resolutions guiding the regional



Meena



Barbour

organization's plan of work and focus, as well as present special recognition to some of the area's leadership.

"We hope that members and guests of Delta Council will join us on November 10," said **George King** of Chatham, President of Delta Council. "November 10 is also Veteran's Day, and we will pause to recognize that without the sacrifice of millions of American men and women over many years, the dreams of our forefathers for a country of free Americans, would not be possible."

GUEST COLUMN Yazoo Basin Farmers Doing Their Part

BY BEN SCAGGS
Director, Gulf of Mexico Program

Few government workers can resist a good acronym, and this past summer our neighbors working at LUMCON (the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium) went on their annual water sampling cruise in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana and Texas and mapped the largest hypoxic

or "dead zone" that has been recorded in those waters since the standardized mapping cruises began in July 1985. The zone measured 8,776 square miles or roughly the size of the State of New Jersey.

So how does a "dead zone" form?

Crops are fertilized and those critical nutrients help crops grow healthy. Similarly, when fertilizer, ma-

nure, and other nutrients (e.g. human waste water) runoff into the creeks that feed into the Mississippi River and similar river watersheds, aquatic plants that grow in those water-bodies use those nutrients to grow as well. In water there are very tiny organisms that have similarities to plants called phytoplankton



DELTA F.A.R.M.



SCAGGS continued on page 3

DELTA COUNCIL MID-YEAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Friday, November 10, 2017

Charles W. Capps, Jr. Entrepreneurial Center
Stoneville, MS

- 9:30 a.m. Farm Policy & Soil and Water Resources
Room A
Development Department & Transportation
Room B
- 11:30 a.m. General Business Session
Introduction of Featured Speaker
Former MS Governor **Haley Barbour**
- 12:15 p.m. Luncheon

The Delta Council Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting is sponsored by C-Spire



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DELTA COUNCIL

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Message From The President

BY GEORGE KING

Producer, Washington County



King

As we approach our November 10, Board of Directors meeting and concurrent Committee sessions of Delta Council, we are pleased to have our featured luncheon guest, **Former Governor Haley Barbour** of Yazoo City, address the topic, "From Rural America to the Potomac: A Clear Message But Complex Path Forward." **Barbour's** Washington summation will be an interesting perspective on the November, 2016, election cycle, and the impacts it has had on public policy.

At 9:30 a.m., the Farm Policy and Soil and Water Resources Committees of Delta Council will meet jointly, to review current issues confronting Delta agriculture and the role which Delta Council and Committee members might define for the regional organization in the future. Delta Council leaders will review the status of agricultural issues currently under consideration by the Congress.

The Water Resources portion of the joint Committee meeting will be highlighted by presentations related to the work of the

U.S. Geological Survey, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Corps of Engineers, ARS-USDA, DREC-MSU, Natural Resources Conservation Service-USDA, and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Water Management District in the Delta. This new, in-depth data is aimed at identifying options for addressing the groundwater declines being experienced in the Delta. Allied agricultural enterprises that do business with Delta farmers and the farming community in the Delta will not want to miss these briefings. Presentations will not only identify options for remedial steps in addressing the drawdown of the aquifer, but also more clearly define the challenges the Delta is facing with each option, individually and in combination with one another.

In the other concurrent joint Committee meeting, beginning at 9:30 a.m., **Transportation Commissioner Mike Tagert** will headline the Highways and Transportation Improvement Committee portion of the Joint Committee on Highways and the Development Department. Additionally, **Transportation Committee Chairman Walton Gresham** will give a briefing on current issues arising that are related to the deteriorating conditions of our road and bridge system in the State of Mississippi,

and open the floor for any discussion that might ensue related to the current policies of Delta Council. Should the Legislature decide to address the pressing highway needs or become tempted to only confront these needs through a "no new revenue (tax)" solution that addresses only the highest priorities, **Gresham** will be open to ideas and suggestions for amending our current policy which specifically advocates a Statewide, long-range road and bridge rehabilitation program.

The Delta Strong program update will be given by supporters of the Delta Strong initiative, and I believe that the audience will be favorably impressed with the progress report of this Delta-wide initiative in its first year of existence. Over two dozen company executives from Canada and the Midwest have met with Delta Strong team members since June, 2017, when the recruiting phase of Delta Strong began.

We hope to see Directors, Committee members, and guests at the November 10, meeting in Stoneville at the Capps Center, and please don't forget that November 10 is a day which serves as our Salute to Veterans in our Armed Services and those who have served in the U.S. and abroad. We hope you will join us.

Overview of Issues with Neonicotinoid Insecticides and Perceived Impacts on Pollinators

BY TREY COOKE

Executive Director, Delta Wildlife

BY JEFF GORE

Assistant Research Professor, Delta Research & Extension Center



Cooke



Gore

Numerous factors are impacting the health of managed pollinators, including parasites, hive pests, diseases, habitat loss, and presumably agricultural and public health pesticides. Over the last 5 years, there has been considerable debate about the impacts of agricultural uses of neonicotinoid insecticides such as thiamethoxam (Centric), imidacloprid (Admire Pro and numerous generics), and clothianidin (Poncho, Nipsit, and Belay).

In reality, the controversy over the impacts of pesticides on pollinators is a scientific issue, but much of the debate has been waged on social media and in other public venues. One major misconception is that beekeepers are at the heart of the debate. In reality,

most commercial beekeepers realize the risks of placing their hives in environments heavily dominated by agriculture such as the Mississippi Delta. However, they are willing to accept and manage those risks because honey yields tend to be higher in those areas. For the most part, beekeepers in Mississippi and the surrounding states have very good working relationships with their grower hosts. We cannot speak for the rest of the country, but that does not appear to be the case in other regions of the U.S. The real heart of the debate comes from environmental groups that have teamed up with a few large beekeepers across the country to challenge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the registration of several pesticides including (but not limited to) neonicotinoids. Their attempts have already been successful at getting the registration of sulfoxaflor (Transform) cancelled as ordered by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Additional restrictions are likely to be placed on foliar uses of the neonicotinoids mentioned previously.

As a result of the concerns that have been raised, considerable research has been conducted by private companies and public universities to shed some light on the im-

fact of pesticides on pollinators. Additionally, considerable federal, state, and private funding has been allocated to pollinator research. As would be expected, the results have been highly variable across different regions of the country. We have conducted considerable research in the Mid-South to determine if the use of neonicotinoids in our agricultural system may impact managed pollinator health. We mostly evaluated the use of neonicotinoids as seed treatments in soybean, corn, and cotton. Based on levels of those seed treatments detected (or not detected) during the flowering stages of the crops, we concluded that the use of neonicotinoids as seed treatments pose very little, if any, risk to pollinators in our agricultural system in the Mid-South. Recently, the focus has shifted from their use as seed treatments to their use as foliar sprays. Less research has been conducted on foliar applications, but we believe the risk to pollinators to be similar if not lower than other insecticides used as foliar sprays.

Much of the debate about neonicotinoid insecticides has focused on their negative impact on pollinators. In the public debate, little consideration has been given to

Closed & Posted Bridges Across the Delta

Closed and posted bridges are changing daily across the Delta. “At harvest season we are reminded of the deteriorating condition of our road and bridge infrastructure, because we cannot move a legal road weight limit from the field to storage at the farm headquarters, or to the elevator because of posted weight limits on nearly 600 bridges in the Delta,” stated **George King**, Delta Council President. The Office of State Aid

Road Construction homepage provides accurate and up-to-date maps by county. Go to www.ms-stateaidroads.us; click on “Bridge Information” on the left menu, then click “Click Here to Continue” toward the bottom of the next page. The link will lead you to a list of counties in Mississippi. Choose your county, and there are a total of 20 available links including maps and lists of bridge information.



Bill Northey Picked for USDA Position

President **Donald J. Trump** recently selected the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture **Bill Northey** to serve as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) under **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue**. The Under Secretary for FPAC oversees three critical USDA agencies: the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Risk Management Agency.

“**Bill Northey** will continue his honorable record of public service in leading FPAC,” commented **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue**. “Having served the people of Iowa for the last ten years as their Secretary of Agricul-

ture, and as a fourth generation corn and soybean farmer, **Bill** has a unique understanding of issues facing farmers across the nation. He will be an invaluable member of the team.”

While **Northey** hails from Iowa, he is quite versed in southern production systems and conservation practices. **Northey** and the Iowa Department on Agriculture and Stewardship has worked with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Delta F.A.R.M. and others to support voluntary conservation efforts in agriculture to address natural resource concerns in lieu of regulation. In these efforts, **Northey** has traveled to Mississippi on several occasions where

he has spent time with farmers in Tunica, Coahoma, Bolivar and Washington counties.

“Delta Council, Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife applaud **Northey's** nomination to serve as USDA Under Secretary over FSA, NRCS and RMA,” stated **Dan Branton**, Washington county producer, Past-president of Delta Council and current Chairman of Delta F.A.R.M. “I’ve had the pleasure of being with Secretary Northey on several occasions and can assure Delta farmers that **Northey** understands the importance of the agencies under this post and the programs they administer for row crop agriculture in the Delta and across the country.”



Bowen Flowers, Dan Branton and Trey Cooke with Secretary Northey in Iowa

Corps of Engineers Presents Award to Mississippi Levee Board

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented the Mississippi Levee Board the 2016 Certificate of Merit for the Operation and Maintenance of Flood Control Projects. **Colonel Michael Derosier**, District Engineer of the Vicksburg District, commended the Board on achieving this award which recognizes the Levee Board’s outstanding maintenance of flood control projects including the levee and interior streams. The Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners was organized shortly after the Civil War in November, 1865.

The Constitution of the State of Mississippi requires the Board to protect the Delta from flooding. The Board currently operates and maintains 212 miles of levees including the Mainline Mississippi River Levee, the Brunswick Extension Levee, the Yazoo Backwater Levee and the Greenville Harbor Dike. The Board also has the maintenance responsibility for 350 miles of interior streams located throughout the Mississippi Delta.



Peter Nimrod, Heath Douglas, Bobby Thompson, Jimmy House, Roy Nichols, Kenny Rodgers, Fred Ballard, Col. Michael Derosier, Nott Wheeler, Paul Hollis and Hank Burdine.

SCAGGS *continued from page 1*



Scaggs

(also, sometimes called microalgae) that can create their own energy from sunlight via photosynthesis (sunlight, CO₂, and water).

As an aside, I was personally fortunate to take an advanced degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but no professor ever described photosynthesis better than my fifth grade science teacher **Mrs. Barham** at Poplar Springs Elementary in Meridian, Mississippi. But **Mrs. Barham's** struggles with my flagging scholarship are a story for another day.

Similar to plants, phytoplankton can use nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus to grow and increase in number. Spring rains, snow melt, and other drainage from farm lands and cities can carry excess fertilizer and manure into creeks and rivers that ultimately drain to the

Gulf. When these nutrient-rich waters reach the Gulf of Mexico, phytoplankton start using those nutrients to grow and increase which is called a “bloom”. Low oxygen (hypoxia) can occur in Gulf waters when these blooms of phytoplankton die and start to breakdown (decompose) on the ocean bottom. As these phytoplankton are broken down, large amounts of oxygen are used up by bacteria involved in the decaying process. This use of oxygen by the bacteria breaking down the phytoplankton can cause oxygen levels in the surrounding water to go so low that fish and other creatures can’t breathe.

I know what you’re thinking. Can’t fish just swim away from a low oxygen area – the way we would remove ourselves from a really smoky room? Well, yes. Fish that can move will usually move out of the low oxygen area, but other creatures that can’t move - including many of the bottom living food sources (worms, oysters etc.) for fish and humans - can die and/or become less

resilient from infection because of the low oxygen conditions. As a result, the food chain can be negatively impacted (i.e. cue the “Circle of Life” musical theme from Lion King).

So what do we do about it? **The good news is that in the AG sector, a lot of farmers are already doing their part to address nutrient run-off. Many of the 31 States in the Mississippi River watershed have established goals for reducing excess nutrients. To learn more about this work visit <https://www.epa.gov/ms-htf>.** Best management practices that meet or exceed nutrient reduction goals, while at the same time resulting in as high or higher yields (when compared to more traditional methods), are growing in popularity.

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program is committed to helping farmers in the Mississippi River Watershed undertake voluntary measures to improve water quality, including making a real difference in the size of future hypoxic zones.

This fall, we will be competitively awarding two large grants (estimated one million dollars each) to support Farmer advocacy groups to promote use of best management practices and other innovative techniques or approaches aimed at nutrient reduction and water quality improvement. Dubbed the “Farmer to Farmer Program”, these awards will place funds in the hands of organizations in both the Upper and Lower Mississippi River Watershed to work on a voluntary basis with producers to “ground truth” how various management techniques affect water quality and quantity, yields and farming costs. We look forward to reporting out on the results of this new program in the future.

In the meantime, we’d like to thank the many producers, large and small, who are already helping to make a difference in the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Your efforts support the communities that rely on the Gulf for their livelihood and way of life.

Wicker Introduces Workforce Development Legislation



Wicker

Senator Roger Wicker has introduced legislation aimed at bolstering apprenticeship programs, which help American workers develop the skills required to succeed in today's economy. The measure would set into statute

one of the goals outlined in **President Donald Trump's** Executive Order to expand apprenticeships and improve job-training programs, which he issued in June. Specifically, S. 1841 would require the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) State Apprenticeship Agency to act on applications within 90 days after an application is submitted, and forward the application to DOL if the State Apprenticeship Agency does not make a decision in the allotted time. DOL would then have 30 days to make a final determination or the application will be automatically approved.

Delta Ag Theft Task Force-Don't Be a Victim of Theft



With harvest season coming to a close, people need to be on the lookout for and report any suspicious activity. Specifically, we urge the Sheriff's Offices in the Delta to alert other law enforcement offices so that they can assist in tracking stolen property. We also encourage people to contact the Delta Ag Theft Task Force at the Secretary of State's Office to report ag theft or any information related to ag theft. Contact information for the Delta Ag Theft Task Force is as follows: 601-359-6368 (Office) 601-576-2546 (Fax) Ag_taskforce@sos.ms.gov

"We would like to offer our appreciation to **Attorney General Jim Hood**, Commissioner of Agriculture, **Cindy Hyde-Smith**, and Secretary of State, **Delbert Hosemann**, for their efforts and staff support to help the agriculture community in their fight against ag theft," stated **Bubba Simmons**, the Washington County producer who serves as Chairman of the Delta Council Advisory Research and Education Committee.

Andrew Wheeler Nominated as EPA Deputy Administrator



Wheeler

Mr. Wheeler has spent his entire career working in environmental policy. In addition to spending four years at EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics during the **George H. W. Bush** and **Bill Clinton** administrations, he also

spent many years on Capitol Hill. After serving as general counsel to **U.S. Senator James Inhofe**, he worked as staff director and chief counsel for two Senate Committees with vital roles in protecting human health and the environment: the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) and the U.S. Senate Subcommittee for Clean Air Wetlands and Nuclear Safety. **Mr. Wheeler** currently works as a principal at FaegreBD Consulting providing guidance on federal regulatory and legislative environmental and energy issues.

"**Andrew** will bring extraordinary credentials to EPA that will greatly assist the Agency as we work to implement our agenda," said **Administrator Pruitt**. "He has spent his entire career working to improve environmental outcomes for Americans across the country and understands the importance of providing regularity certainty for our country."

His nomination is receiving high accolades from across the country:

U.S. Senator James Inhofe: "I am pleased that **President Trump** has nominated **Andrew Wheeler** to serve as deputy administrator at the EPA. There is no one more qualified than Andrew to help **Scott Pruitt** restore EPA to its proper size and scope. When he served as my **staff director of the Environment and Public Works Committee**, he provided me with invaluable guidance, and in turn became a close friend. I am confident

Vroom Announces Retirement from CropLife America



Vroom

Jay Vroom announced during the general session at the 2017 CLA Annual Meeting in Dana Point, California, that he would be retiring from his position as president and CEO at the end of 2018. After nearly thirty years at the helm, **Vroom** reflected on his tenure and plans moving forward.

He will continue to serve as president and CEO of CLA over the next twelve months and will assist with the transition through the end of 2018. During that time, the CLA Board of Directors will work with a search firm to identify potential candidates for the next CEO of CropLife America.

Tony Tooke Appointed U.S. Forest Service Chief



Tooke

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the new chief is **Tony Tooke**, who is currently the Regional Forester for the Southern Region based in Atlanta. He replaces **Tom Tidwell**, who was named chief in 2009. "Selecting **Tony Tooke** to lead the Forest Service's Southern Region was an outstanding choice by **Secretary Purdue**. **Tony's** knowledge of rural forest-based economies and his years of experience with the USFS will be of great service to not only the national forests, but also to the private landowners in the southern region. I welcome his leadership," commented **Jim Luckett**, vice-chairman of Delta Council Forestry & Wildlife Resources Committee.

Mike Sturdivant Named 2017 Mississippi Farmer of the Year



Sturdivant

After earning a prestigious Harvard University Master of Business Administration degree, **Micajah "Mike" Sturdivant III** could have entered real estate or most any other business, but decided instead to become a Mississippi Delta farmer. As a result of his success as a row-crop farmer, **Sturdivant** has been selected as state winner of the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo South-eastern Farmer of the Year award.

His Due West farm near Glendora consists of some 12,000 acres, mostly family owned land, where he grows 3,300 acres of cotton, 4,400 acres of corn and 3,600 acres of soybeans.

A fifth generation farmer, **Sturdivant** has run the farm on a daily basis for 43 years.

Fulbright Taps Shaw for U.S.-France International Education Administrators

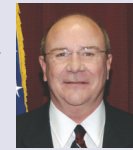


Shaw

Mississippi State's chief research officer will be taking on a new role this fall: student. The Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program has selected **David Shaw** for its prestigious U.S.-France International Education Administrators Program. **Shaw** will spend two weeks in France learning about that country's higher education and research system. He and 11 other senior administrators from U.S. colleges and universities will participate in briefings, campus visits and meetings with government officials. They also will engage with French international education professions, explore the larger culture and have networking opportunities with their peers.

At MSU, **Shaw** holds the faculty rank of Giles Distinguished Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences. Beginning his career at MSU in 1985 as an assistant professor, he has played a key role in the creation and leadership of several cross-disciplinary research centers that focus on the applications of remote sensing technology to resource management.

President Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Personnel to Key Administration Post



James

R.D. James has most recently served as a civilian member and engineer on the Mississippi River Commission, originally appointed in 1981 by **President Ronald Reagan**, where he provided water resources engineering direction and policy advice to several Administrations, Congress, and the Army for a drainage basin that covers roughly 41 percent of the United States. He is a self-employed farmer and manager of cotton gins and grain elevators in New Madrid, Missouri. Over the past 35 years, **Mr. James** has developed a wealth of knowledge about our nation's critical infrastructure. He previously served as president of the Southern Cotton Ginners Association, he served on the board of directors and executive committee of the Southern Cotton Ginners Association, the Cotton Producers of Missou-

ri, the Board of Directors of U.S. Bank of Sikeston, and the board of directors of Osceola Products. **Mr. James** is the recipient of the prestigious Bronze de Fleury medal for his significant contributions to Army engineering, the Sikeston Area Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Award, and was formerly named the New Madrid County Outstanding Conservation Farmer. **Mr. James** received his degree in civil engineering from the University of Kentucky.

"**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 the economic benefits as his guiding principle for every successful civil works mission of the Corps. He will also 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.

Gov. Bryant Approves Appointments for Promotion Boards



Governor Phil Bryant has approved the recommended reappointments and new appointments for the Corn, Rice and Soybean Promotion Boards. New appointments include **Mike Graves** of Ripley to the Corn Promotion Board and **Reese Pillow** of Greenwood to the Soybean Promotion Board.

Reappointments include **Will Long** of Indianola, **Todd Williams** of Olive Branch, and **Phillip Good** of Macon to the Corn Promotion Board. **Carter Murrell** of Avon, and **Donald Gant** of Merigold were reappointed to the Rice Promotion Board. **Bill Ryan Tabb** of Cleveland, **Jerry Slocum** of Coldwater, and **Wayne Dulaney** were reappointed to the Soybean Promotion Board.

Christopher Caldwell of Arkansas to be Federal Co-Chairman of Delta Regional Authority



Caldwell

President Donald J. Trump has announced his intent to nominate Christopher Caldwell of Little Rock, Arkansas, to be Federal Co-Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), pending approval by the U.S. Senate.

Caldwell currently serves as the Director of Special Projects for **Arkansas Sen. John Boozman**. **Caldwell** was the campaign manager for **Sen. Boozman's** 2016 re-election campaign, as well as the Political Director for **Boozman's** 2010 Senate campaign. He has also served on several other campaigns, including **Gov. Mike Huckabee's** 2008 presidential bid and **Sen. Tim Hutchinson's** 2002 Senate campaign.

Beyond his political and government service, **Caldwell** has held various roles in the private sector and is an active volunteer in his community. He graduated with a B.A. in Communication from the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas. **Caldwell** resides in Little Rock with his wife **Ashley** and their two children.

Delta Leaders Elected to Mississippi Bankers Association Board of Directors



Hargett Whalen

Alan Hargett, executive vice president and chief credit officer of Planters Bank & Trust Company in Indianola, has been elected to serve on the Mississippi Bankers Association Board of Directors.

Danny Whalen of Cleveland has also been elected to the Mississippi Bankers Association Board of Directors. He serves as president and chief executive officer of Cleveland State Bank.

Other Delta leaders previously elected and serving on the board include **Andy Anderson**, of Anguilla; President, CEO, CFO and director of Bank of Anguilla. **Frank Sibley**, president and CEO of Citizens Bank & Trust Bancshares in Marks, and **Frank West** of Batesville, CEO of Security Capital Corporation and First Security Bank are also continuing MBA board members.

Mary Catherine Davis Awarded Ray and Jimmy Heidel Economic Development Leadership Award



Mary Catherine Davis recently attended the True South Basic Economic Development Course held annually at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. There she was awarded the Ray and Jimmy Heidel Economic Development Leadership Award. The award was established in 1995 by the Mississippi Economic Development Council to honor the life and contributions to the profession by **Ray Heidel**. In 1999 the name was changed to The Ray and Jimmy Heidel Economic Development Leadership Award to recognize **Jimmy Heidel's** contributions to the profession on both the local and statewide levels. The purpose of the award is to foster further economic development practitioner leadership skills. In addition to the award, a full tuition scholarship for one year to an economic development institute is awarded. **Davis** is a Mississippi State University Extension Associate at the MSU Delta Research & Extension Center, working with Delta Council through a cooperative agreement. "The award, which will allow **Mary Catherine** a stipend to continue her economic development training with the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute, is a testament to her daily efforts in working hard and smart to put our region's best foot forward," commented **Tom Gresham, Chairman of Delta Council Development Department**.

Mary Swoop, Executive Director and COO of MEDC and Mary Catherine Davis

Mary Swoop, Executive Director and COO of MEDC and **Mary Catherine Davis**, Executive Director of the Delta Council Development Department, were recently awarded the Ray and Jimmy Heidel Economic Development Leadership Award. The award was established in 1995 by the Mississippi Economic Development Council to honor the life and contributions to the profession by **Ray Heidel**. In 1999 the name was changed to The Ray and Jimmy Heidel Economic Development Leadership Award to recognize **Jimmy Heidel's** contributions to the profession on both the local and statewide levels. The purpose of the award is to foster further economic development practitioner leadership skills. In addition to the award, a full tuition scholarship for one year to an economic development institute is awarded. **Davis** is a Mississippi State University Extension Associate at the MSU Delta Research & Extension Center, working with Delta Council through a cooperative agreement. "The award, which will allow **Mary Catherine** a stipend to continue her economic development training with the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute, is a testament to her daily efforts in working hard and smart to put our region's best foot forward," commented **Tom Gresham, Chairman of Delta Council Development Department**.

Delta Health Alliance Receives \$500,000 Grant



DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

Solutions for a Healthy Tomorrow

The United States Department of Justice has awarded a three-year, \$499,945 grant to Delta Health Alliance to create rapid response teams in four Delta counties to address violence against women. The four counties are Bolivar, Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington.

Called the Delta Abuse Response Team network, or DART network, these teams will provide services for victims of domestic violence, working in tandem with other organizations.

According to **Dr. Karen Matthews**, Delta Health Alliance CEO, "The new program will offer a new multifaceted approach to addressing the critical needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in rural communities in these four counties. This collaborative program is designed to operate in close coordination with existing victim service providers, state and local agencies, law enforcement, health-care clinicians, housing officials, and neighborhood associations."

United Soybean Board Selects Polly Ruhland as CEO



Ruhland

The United Soybean Board has selected its next chief executive officer (CEO), **Polly Ruhland**. The selection process has been a thorough one, led by a team of farmer-leaders. **Ruhland** has provided executive management expertise to the agriculture community for many years. "The entire soybean industry is excited that **Polly Ruhland** has been selected as USB's new chief executive officer. The board labored with tireless diligence to find the best candidates for the job, and I am confident that **Polly** will continue to advance the soy checkoff and ensure a strong and profitable future for U.S. soybean farmers," commented local producer and Delta Council Advisory and Research Committee Chairman **Bubba Simmons**. Representing Mississippi on the USB include **David Wansley** of Valley Park, **Jimmy Sneed** of Hernando and **Bubba Simmons** of Arcola.

Perdue Applauds Presidential Nomination of Censky for USDA Deputy Secretary



Censky

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture **Sonny Perdue** applauded **President Donald J. Trump's** nomination of **Stephen Censky** to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. **Perdue** issued the following statement: "Our work has only just begun in delivering results for the people of American agriculture, and the experience and leadership skills of **Stephen Censky** will only enhance our efforts. He will bring enthusiasm and a dedication to this country which will be great assets to USDA's customers. I am extremely pleased with the nomination for this key position and am hopeful that the Senate will take it up in short order."

Delta Council Joins Farm Organizations to Endorse Doud

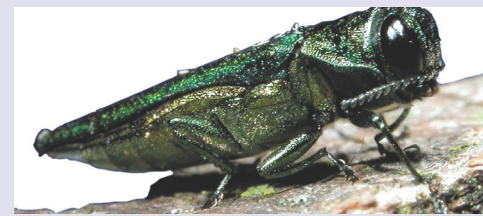


Doud

"It was a pleasure serving as hosts for **Gregg Doud** during his visit to the Delta, and we are excited to have someone with his background taking over as the Chief Agriculture Negotiator in the Office of the US Trade Representative," stated **George King**, the Washington County farmer who serves as President of Delta Council.

Doud, a Kansas native, served as a key staff person on the Senate Ag Committee. Delta Council joined with numerous other national and regional agriculture organizations in an endorsement of **Doud** to be confirmed by the US Senate.

Emerald Ash Borer Found in Monticello, AR



Drew County, Arkansas has been added to confirmed sites of the emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive beetle that feeds on and kills ash trees. The EAB is a small beetle (1/2 inch in size) that originated in Asia. The first EAB discovery took place in Michigan, over a decade ago. EAB infestation usually kills the ash host within 2-5 years of infestation.

Drew County was already included within the current 33-county EAB quarantine as a buffer county. A quarantine was established in September 2014 and expanded in October 2016 by the ASPB to slow the movement of EAB. Since the first Arkansas detection in 2014, EAB has been confirmed in the following 18 counties: Bradley, Calhoun, Clark, Cleveland, Columbia, Dallas, Drew, Garland, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Lafayette, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Randolph, Saline, and Union.

The goal of the current federal EAB quarantine is to limit the spread of EAB caused by long-distance movement of ash by humans. Quarantined items (which cannot be transported outside of the quarantine area) include firewood of all hardwood species, and the following ash items: nursery stock; green lumber with bark attached; other material living, dead, cut or fallen including logs, pulpwood, stumps, roots, branches, mulch and composted/un-composted chips (1 inch or greater). Firewood is the only quarantined item that relates to all hardwood; all other quarantined items are relative to ash, only.

Landowners may request assistance in identifying ash trees from AFC Foresters, or the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

EAB traps are being circulated throughout the quarantined counties, and throughout Arkansas by partner agencies at the state and federal level. Arkansians can help stop this pest by reporting possible EAB sightings and/or poor health in possible ash trees. The other most direct strategy for helping stop the beetle is to use only local firewood sources.

Major General Richard G. Kaiser Incoming Commander, Mississippi Valley Division



Kaiser

Maj. Gen. Richard G. Kaiser assumed command of the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Sept. 7, 2017. He also serves as president-designee of the Mississippi River Commission.

Kaiser serves as the senior military officer in the division, headquartered in Vicksburg, Mississippi, responsible for water resources engineering solutions in a 370,000-square-mile area, extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and encompassing portions of 12 states. Prior to coming to MVD, **Kaiser** served as commanding general of the Combined Security Transition Command and deputy chief of staff for Security Assistance, Headquarters, Resolute Support, Afghanistan. **Kaiser**, a native of Racine, Wisconsin, is a registered professional engineer in Missouri.

Dr. Bill Herndon Announces Retirement from Mississippi State University



Herndon

After more than 33 years at Mississippi State University and the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, **Dr. Cary W. "Bill" Herndon, Jr.**, Vice President of DAFVM, has made the decision to retire. "The past 5 years in the VP DAFVM office, along with the 28 previous years, has witnessed great rewards and many challenges which were enriched by the relationships and friendships created through working together on many, diverse projects and activities. I have truly loved my job," stated **Dr. Herndon**. "For over three decades, from the classroom to his position as Associate VP for the DAFVM, **Dr. Bill Herndon** has been an effective and respected educator and administrator at Mississippi State. The void his departure creates will certainly be felt, and we wish him the best in his well deserved retirement," commented **Bubba Simmons**, Chairman of Delta Council Advisory Research Committee.

Mississippi Chosen for Federal Railroad Administration



Hall

Heath Hall was sworn in as the agency's deputy administrator by **Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao**. **Hall** graduated from American University in 1992 and started his career as an intern at the Federal Railroad Administration. In the mid-1990s, he worked as public affairs director for **Gov. Kirk Fordice**, the first Republican governor of Mississippi since Reconstruction. **Hall** ran unsuccessfully for a U.S. House seat in southwestern Mississippi in 1998. The Federal Railroad Administration has a \$1.8 billion budget, more than 900 employees and eight regional offices.



U.S. House Agriculture Committee Meets with U.S. Cotton Industry, NCC Farm Policy Task Force in Washington, D.C.

Mississippi grower leader **Bowen Flowers**, Clarksdale, represents Mississippi cotton growers on the Task Force.

“Our meetings with **Mr. Conaway** and **Mr. Peterson**, as well as friends of Southern Agriculture from the Senate were extremely supportive of restoring cotton as a covered commodity in the next Farm Bill” according to **Flowers**.

Also, the cotton industry leadership group signaled high praise for **Chairman Cochran’s** actions in the recent Appropriations measure. This included a proposal to establish cottonseed assistance for the remaining 2018 crop year of the existing 2014 farm law.

“As he always does, **Chairman Cochran** is searching for ways to help the Mississippi farming community, which is the economic backbone of all of rural Mississippi,” added **Flowers**, the Clarksdale row crop farmer.

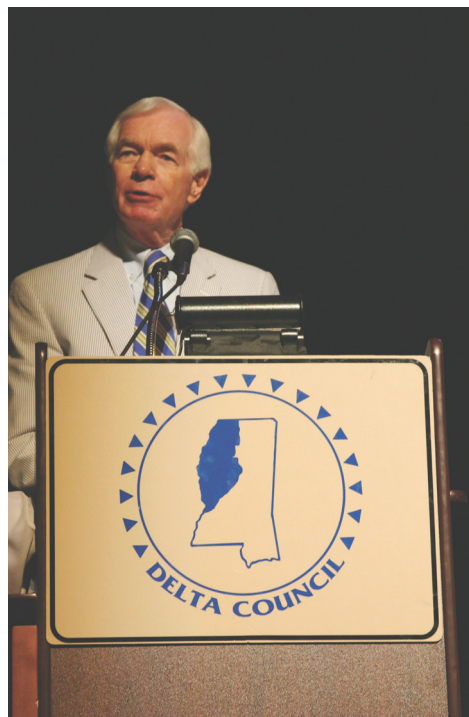


Colin Peterson, Ranking Member and Mike Conaway, Chairman

Cochran Includes Alluvial Aquifer Research Center and APHIS Funding in Ag Appropriations Bill

The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved FY2018 research funding in the amount of \$1M to support the establishment of the Alluvial Aquifer Research Center in Stoneville. “We thank **Chairman Cochran** for his dedicated support of our region and attention to issues imperative to the life of agriculture and sustainable water resource research and management, while meeting the federal budget agreement on spending,” stated **Bowen Flowers**, Chairman of the Delta Council Soil and Water Resources Committee.

Also included in the appropriations bill is Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) funding. An appropriation above the requested amount was granted in order to address wildlife damage management issues such as the depredation of catfish ponds to manage the population of double-crested cormorant and pelicans. The double-crested cormorant alone causes upwards of \$15 million in damages annually, eating almost 2,000 metric tons of catfish out of Mississippi ponds each year. The appropriation includes \$1.6M specifically to this issue. “We are grateful to **Senator Cochran** and the Committee for supporting this important measure,” stated **Andy Jones**, President of the Catfish Farmers of Mississippi. “The added protection provided by this funding will significantly reduce losses associated with bird depredation.”



Cochran

Delta Council Officer’s Meeting

Recently, Delta Council Officers met to discuss challenges and opportunities across the Delta pertaining to flood control, transportation and farm policy. With **Delta Council President George King** presiding, **Will Weathers** and **Steve Nail** of Farmers Grain Terminal welcomed the group and gave a brief oral history of the long standing relationship between FGT and Delta Council and their shared leadership. Special guest **Peter Nim-**

rod, Chief Engineer for the Mississippi Levee Board, then gave a presentation on the proposed modification of the Old River Control Structure. Following **Peter, Walton Gresham**, Chairman of the Transportation Committee, **Chip Morgan**, Delta Council staff, and **Trey Cooke**, Director of Delta Wildlife and Delta F.A.R.M. presented to the group of officers.



Scott Flowers, Mark Seard, Lynn Cox. Right photo; George King, Will Weathers, Chip Morgan, Steve Nail, Will Hooker, George Jarman, Andy Prosser, Peter Nimrod, Trey Cooke

Wicker Meets With Joint Chiefs of Staff



U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, met with **Gen. Joseph Dunford**, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in advance of an anticipated Senate hearing to consider reconfirming the General for the military’s top post. **Wicker** and **Dunford** discussed the need for a 355-ship Navy, as well as a number of national security concerns such as North Korea, China, and Syria.

INSECTICIDES *continued from page 2*

the benefits of these insecticides for economical crop production. In the Mid-South, we have conducted numerous studies to measure the long term benefits of neonicotinoids in cotton, corn, soybean, rice, and grain sorghum. The average yield advantage from the use of a neonicotinoid seed treatment over a 10 year period included 142 lbs of cotton lint per acre, 11 bushels of corn per acre, 2 bushels of soybean per acre, 12 bushels of rice per acre, and 17 bushels of grain sorghum per acre. Additionally, one thing that is often lost when looking at averages is the catastrophic losses that can occur in an individual year. For instance, southern corn rootworm was a signifi-

cant pest in 2017 across the state. This insect was responsible for up to 90% yield loss in corn trials and up to 20% yield loss in soybean trials conducted in Stoneville this year. For the most part, growers were not aware of these infestations in 2017 because of the widespread use of neonicotinoid seed treatments. In the absence of seed treatments, many growers would have likely experienced severe economic losses that may have jeopardized their livelihood as farmers. There is no denying that insecticides do pose a risk to pollinators. However, research that we have conducted clearly shows that the risks to pollinators are minimal and manageable in the Mid-South and the benefits to crop production greatly outweigh those risks.



Delta Council President **George King** (center) and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Memphis Branch chairman **David Cochran** of Greenville (left) joined a group of Delta financial institution leaders and businessmen in an exchange with the Memphis' branch regional executive **Douglas Scarboro** (right) about financial conditions in the region.



The Entomological Society of America's (ESA) Plant-Insect Ecosystems Section organized a Science Policy Field Tour: 'Balancing Pest Management and Pollinator Health', in cooperation with Mississippi State University on August 22-24, 2017 in the Mississippi Delta. The event brought together ESA members and key stakeholders representing 22 states and the District of Columbia. Stakeholder groups included representatives from state regulatory agencies, federal and state public science agencies, policymakers, NGO's (non-government organizations), beekeeping organizations, and crop protection and commodity groups. The field tour enabled hands-on understanding of pollinators and the many issues on which they intersect, including: pollinator habitat, pollinator pest species, beekeeping practices, insect pests of economic importance, and row



For a decade, Delta Council has served as host for the Future Delta event aimed at issues and opportunities for young people in Agriculture and Agribusiness. This year's event was held at Warfield Point Park under the "I Give A Crop" tent at the Mighty Mississippi Music Festival in Greenville. **Kay Whittington**, Director of Office of Land and Water Resources and USGS Hydrologist **Jeannie Barlow** discussed an array of water resources challenges in the Delta.



Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce **Cindy Hyde-Smith** conducted listening tours throughout the Delta with farmers and agri-businessmen. She made stops in Rolling Fork, Greenville, Cleveland, and Clarksdale. Pictured with the Commissioner in Greenville are **Johnny McRight** (L) and **Tim Clements**.



A group of over 30 cotton textile mill executives from 15 countries recently met in Stoneville as part of the 2017 Cotton USA Orientation Tour, sponsored by Cotton Council International. Traveling through the country, they stopped in Stoneville for a tour of the MSU Delta Research and Extension Center, the USDA-ARS Cotton Ginning Laboratory, and participated in a panel discussion with cotton marketing executives from Staplcotn and prominent cotton breeders from Bayer, Delta and Pine Land, and Phytogen to discuss unique characteristics of Mid-South and U.S. cotton. Afterward, the group enjoyed a Delta farm-raised catfish lunch on the Delta Council lawn with local producers. Pictured L to R: **Frederick Barrier**, VP of North American Sales for Staplcotn; **Mike Robinson** with Bayer, **Joe Johnson** with Dow, and **Jay Mahaffey** with Monsanto.



Delta Council President George King recently convened a small group of Delta agricultural leaders to honor the lifetime of service that **Forrest Laws** has given to Mid-South and United States agriculture as editor of *The Delta Farm Press*. "Agriculture has had no better friend than **Forrest Laws** in terms of taking complex issues and reporting them in a manner that was both accurate and instructive," said **King** in presenting Forrest a special piece of McCarty's pottery for his home. "His contributions to our industry will be missed in so many ways."



Mississippi State University's Delta Research and Extension Center (DREC) hosted the annual producers' Rice Field Day. **Dr. Jason Bond** (pictured above) discusses weed-related problems and their solutions as well as potential new herbicide releases at the 2017 Rice Field Day.

After a presentation from **Betsy Ward** of USA Rice, the attendees boarded DREC tour trailers and visited several of the station's rice demonstration plots. Presenters on the tour were **Dr. Ed Redoña**, **Dr. Jeff Gore**, **Dr. Tom Allen**, **Dr. Jason Bond**, **Dr. Bobby Golden**, and two graduate students, **Jeffrey Mansour** and **Ben Lawrence**. A wide variety of topics were discussed including rice agronomy, weed control, entomology, and plant pathology. After the field tours had been completed, the day's activities concluded with a reception at Delta Council where local ag, political, and industry leaders joined the discussions.



Over 40 business and economic development leaders met at Stoneville to receive a status report on the industrial recruitment effort spearheaded by Delta Council.



Ann Rodeo, Program Administrator for the Bureau of Alcohol & Drug Services for the Department of Mental Health, reviews the agenda for an Opioid Town Hall Meeting in Indianola on September 19. The packed house of parents, health care providers, and local law enforcement officials heard shocking statistics about the epidemic proportions of the deaths carried by opioid drugs. Another Delta meeting will be held in the Clarksdale area in 2018.

Delta Council

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Cochran Applauds Successful USDA Catfish Inspection Program

Senator Thad Cochran said he is heartened by the success of the catfish inspection program, which has led to greater assurances that untainted catfish is being served to American families.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the public health agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), assumed full responsibility for domestic and imported catfish oversight on March 1, 2016, as a result of **Cochran**-authored revisions in the 2008 and 2014 farm bills. Following an 18-month transition period intended to provide foreign countries and domestic stakeholders time to prepare and comply with the final regulations, full enforcement began on Sept. 1.

One month into complete implementation, **Cochran** assessed the FSIS catfish inspection program, which replaced a weaker Food and Drug Administration (FDA) system.

"The Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection program is successfully identifying and refusing imported catfish containing drug residues and other banned impurities. The end result is that American consumers can know their catfish is safer to eat," **Cochran** said.

From April 2016 to September 2017, the FSIS

has refused 88 shipments with a total of 615,253 pounds, or 308 tons, of catfish from six countries (Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Thailand). These shipments were blocked for cargo containing chemicals or drugs banned for use in the United States or for failure to meet other basic FSIS food safety requirements.



Cochran

EPA Administrator Pruitt Makes Special Mississippi Appearance

Delta F.A.R.M. and Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission leadership were asked to participate in an event with **Governor Bryant** and EPA Administrator, **Scott Pruitt** to learn about the repeal of the Waters of the U.S.

Pruitt, former Oklahoma State Attorney, informed the group that new WOTUS language was being drafted, and if adopted, it would only effect "navigable waters."



Administrator Pruitt, Don Underwood, Pete Hunter, Governor Bryant, Dan Branton and Rob Coker

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