

# Cochran-Wicker Say Pump Veto Has No Validity

In a rare and extremely cloaked process by the Bush Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, with its Regional Administrator recusing himself from the process, proposed a veto of the Yazoo Backwater Project. Since EPA publicly announced the engagement of their veto process, which is only the 12th veto utilized by EPA since 1978, the federal agency has declined to provide supporting evidence of their justification for the veto. EPA has utilized every means available to them in order to avoid responding to specific scientific, technical, and policy questions presented to them by the project sponsor and members of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation.

"In my judgment, this White House and the Environmental Protection Agency have completely ignored the

repeated request by Governor Barbour, Senator Cochran, Senator Wicker, and Senator Lott prior to this year, for there to be a consensus-based solution and a scientific evaluation of the facts relative to the future of flood protection in the Delta," stated John Phillips, the Delta Council President who resides and does business in the 6-county South Delta area affected by the veto.

Cochran and Wicker resorted to asking the Congressional Research Service, an independent arm of the Congress which provides legal and technical interpretation of laws and the intent of laws, for an expert opinion of EPA's authority to veto the pumps. When the Congressional Research Service rendered an opinion which suggested that the Yazoo Backwater Project was not subject to the EPA veto

process, Cochran and Wicker notified EPA at once, in order to urge the agency to delay further action, study the opinion and meet with the Senators. In a letter co-signed by both United States Senators, they urged EPA Administrator, Steve Johnson to carefully examine the opinion of the Congressional Research Service and abandon the current veto schedule until the question of their legal authority could be reconciled.

"For 5 years, Delta officials worked with EPA and the Corps of Engineers to responsibly address environmental considerations of this project, only to be misled beginning about August of last year," stated Bill Kennedy, then-President of Delta Council.

"100 percent of the rainfall runoff of my home county of Sunflower goes

down there on those people in the South Delta and I personally resent that officials with the EPA and those Administration officials who have supported the veto process have completely snubbed the local citizenry, our Governor, and our two United States Senators, as they have refused to engage in any meaningful discussions about their justification for stopping this project," stated Bill Kennedy, an Inverness agribusinessman who served as Delta Council President when the veto process began.

Governor Barbour continues to urge the Administration and EPA to allow him to convene an intergovernmental working group, composed of federal and state resource agency officials, to build consensus for a solution to flooding in the 6-county area.



# The Delta Council Review

Vol. 4, Issue No. 4

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

August 2008

## Delta Health Alliance Initiative: *Electronic Health Records*

Electronic Health Records, or EHRs, are the new millennium's answer to the paper medical record. The EHR is a longitudinal electronic record of patient health information that includes patient demographics, progress notes, problems, medications, vital signs, past medical history, immunizations, laboratory data and radiology reports. EHRs benefit our communities by ensuring safety, quality of care, fiscal efficiency, reduction in medical errors, and increased access to care. By utilizing EHRs, physicians save money, in turn, reducing the overall cost of medical care to patients. Through the EHR network, physicians and patients will have access to specialty care physicians and experts at UMC in Jackson, thus increasing access to care.

The project links access across a group of participating agencies, clinics and hospitals through an integrated EHR network. Currently, there are four sites, all located in Greenville that DHA has initiated as of May 2008 using this EHR. Reports from the clinics are positive, with e-prescribing being the most popular feature. Physicians and pharmacists no longer have to use paper prescriptions—the physician simply sends an electronic

prescription securely to the pharmacist, and the order is waiting for the patient when the patient arrives.

Numerous other physicians' offices and clinics are lined up to become a member of this EHR initiative. Locations will soon include Clarksdale, Cleveland, Indianola, and Batesville. Each of these locations is scheduled to go live within the next six months. Chuck Fitch, Delta Health Alliance's Chief Information Officer states, "The Allscripts TouchWorks™ EHR will automate, inform, and connect rural physicians in the Mississippi Delta to University of Mississippi Medical Center specialists. Another component of the system will help providers in urban settings and remote areas of the Delta communicate with each other and retrieve the clinical information they need to provide the best care for patients, many of whom have multiple chronic conditions and are seen by multiple providers. The EHR system will allow the information to be easily accessible to all providers despite location." All of the counties in the Delta are deemed health professional shortage areas by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, making

EHRs critical to the underserved area and enabling the delivery of the highest quality care to the patients of the Delta.

Through a competitive request for proposals and bid process, the DHA selected Allscripts TouchWorks™ to develop and provide clinical software, connectivity, and information solutions that personally fit the needs of Delta physicians as they improve health care

locally. The DHA reviewed all the leading Electronic Health Records and found TouchWorks™ to meet the needs of the Delta population in terms of security and proven health care delivery. The system's user-friendly interface and electronic prescribing capability also enables physicians to increase patients' access to prescriptions.

The Delta Health Alliance initiated a project that utilizes EHRs in physicians' offices and hospital clinics throughout the Delta, with almost no implementation costs to the office or clinic that focuses on improving the quality of health care delivered to patients. The incorporation of EHRs into these clinics aids the physicians in:

- Providing continuity of care;
- Preventing medical errors;
- Delivering evidenced-based information to healthcare providers in a timely and effective manner;
- Increasing administrative efficiencies;
- Assisting in the early detection of infectious disease outbreaks;
- Improving chronic disease management;
- Expanding access to affordable care
- Reducing operating costs in handling their medical records; and
- Increasing the utilization of continuous quality improvement practices.

The EHR project facilitates communication among providers and patients, increases provider efficiency, and improves the quality of care for patients.

**2008 MAXIMUM YIELD**  
Championship yields start with good defenses.

Proud sponsor of the Delta Council Newsletter | [www.valent.com](http://www.valent.com) | 800-6-VALENT (682-5368)

**Domark**  
230 ME Fungicide  
Domark Dominates.

## Delta Council

433 Stoneville Rd  
P.O. Box 257  
Stoneville, MS 38776

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
GREENWOOD, MS  
PERMIT NO. 257

## Delta Council Meets with IHL Commissioner

### *Pressing for Alternatives to Cuts*

In an effort to obtain a thorough explanation of the new higher education funding formula, which will serve to distribute State-appropriated funds to the 8 Institutions of Higher Learning, Delta Council met with IHL Commissioner Tom Meredith and



Tom Meredith

his staff on June 10.

Dr. Meredith presented a summary of the proposal which was unanimously adopted by the 12 trustees for higher education in Mississippi. The 6-year plan would result in substantial reductions in funding for Alcorn State

University, Delta State University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi.

"The meeting was informative and cordial, but we urged Dr. Meredith to work with Delta Council in a way that would allow us to substitute a plan for avoiding the sweeping and damaging

cuts that will occur at our two regional universities in the Delta, as well as others across the State," stated Tom Gresham, one of the Delta Council leaders in attendance at the meeting.

Although Delta Council members praised the conscientious work of the Institutions of Higher Learning Board,

COMMISSIONER *continued on page 6*

**2008 MAXIMUM YIELD**  
Championship yields start with good defenses.

Proud sponsor of the Delta Council Newsletter | [www.valent.com](http://www.valent.com) | 800-6-VALENT (682-5368)

**Domark**  
230 ME Fungicide  
Domark Dominates.

## Message from the President



**John Phillips, President  
Delta Council**

Our first Officers Meeting was on Wednesday, July 9. I look forward to getting to know our Delta Council officers better. We engaged in an orientation on the issues facing Delta Council for the next year.

**Farm Policy:** Some would suggest that because prices are so high for grain commodities, that the farm safety net in the recently-enacted farm law does not have the impact which it would have had otherwise;

however, I have advised staff that I have never experienced a time in my farming career when the Farm Bill was more vital. The problem is that the safety net and farm income protection features of current farm law were debated when fertilizer was \$350 a ton, and diesel fuel was \$2 a gallon, instead of \$700 a ton and \$4 per gallon as it is today. When commodity prices recede, — and they will, — energy prices are not likely to go down in similar increments, and therefore, fuel and fertilizer will overwhelm the prices received by farmers, even with the safety net and marketing features of current law. This will be a point of great discussion throughout this year. Farm program eligibility will be another major issue, as we move into the transition of another farm law and watch the rules/regulations begin to be implemented.

**Catfish:** The Cinderella story of American agriculture, and more especially Delta agriculture, is in deep trouble. The unrelenting level of Asian imports of catfish is keeping the price of fish at the pond bank relatively low. And, at the same time, the cost to feed farm-raised

catfish has more than doubled since 2007, due to skyrocketing costs of feed ingredients, and the recent floods in the Midwest. This 1-2 punch is causing contractions in the catfish industry which are already resulting in a significant downsizing of production, processing capacity, feed sales, and jobs in the Delta.

We will be focusing on these issues during 2008 with Catfish Farmers of America and Catfish Farmers of Mississippi.

I look forward to learning more about the work of the Levee Boards, the Water Management District, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Geological Survey, Mississippi State University, Agricultural Research Service, and the work of the Corps of Engineers. Our relationship with these agencies and many others is of key importance to Delta Council and I want to sustain the close cooperation which we have enjoyed with these groups in past years.

See Photos of  
Officers on Page 3

## Reciprocal Trade With China Critical For Cotton In 2008



**Larry McClendon, Chairman  
National Cotton Council**

U.S. cotton producers can count on U.S. textile mills to purchase only about twenty-five percent of the U.S. crop. The remaining seventy-five percent must find a home in a world market dominated by China. Almost thirty-five percent of U.S. cotton exports found their way to China in 2007. While China is a very important customer, it is critical that the National Cotton Council continues to insist that China live up to its trade commitments and reduce the distortions it is creating in the

world cotton market—distortions that reduce sales and marketing opportunities for all other cotton producing countries.

Current levels of market access for cotton fiber and cotton products into China are not adequate and do not reflect China's position as the number one cotton producer and processor in the world. China has imposed processing requirements on a significant portion of cotton fiber imports, forcing the export of textile products produced from imported cotton and enhancing China's ability to compete with textiles produced in other countries.

Through licensing schemes, the auctioning of import quotas, and the establishment of specific internal cotton price goals that determine over-quota tariff levels, China has created a variable levy system that often amounts to a multi-billion dollar subsidy for Chinese producers. China's use of VAT tax rebates and government-sponsored loans to textile and apparel manufacturers all contribute to China's ability to

dramatically increase its share of the global textile and apparel market.

China must begin to honor fully its WTO market access commitments by administering its tariff rate quota system in a manner that does not differentiate between domestic and export uses and by ending its variable levy system.

From the beginning of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, China has worked to avoid concessions regarding increased market access. That position harms cotton producers throughout the world. Exports of Chinese textile and apparel products have benefited from increased market access around the world. China must now fully engage in the Doha negotiations and begin to reciprocate by opening its market to all cotton producing countries, like those in West Africa.

In the absence of any meaningful move by China in the Doha negotiations to provide increased and predictable market access for

MCCLENDON continued on page 3

## Water Quality Improving in the Delta

By Dan Prevost, Watershed Specialist  
Delta F.A.R.M.

After a report from the EPA identified more miles of polluted waters in Mississippi than in any other state in the country, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) began to develop a strategy to address the problem. The strategy became known as the "Basin Management Approach." The methodology allowed MDEQ to focus all fiscal and technical resources in one of five different areas per year on a continuous-five year rotation. The Delta region was included in what MDEQ coined as the Yazoo Basin.

MDEQ developed an advisory group in each of the five basins to plan and prioritize future efforts. The Yazoo Basin Team consisted of natural resource professionals who were familiar with the region and local water quality concerns. Over the course of a year, the Yazoo Basin Team, lead by MDEQ, had laid a foundation by which MDEQ could empower local citizens and groups to address water quality issues at the local level.

When the Basin Management Approach was unveiled at MDEQ in 1999, Richard Ingram was appointed to serve as the Yazoo River Basin Coordinator. "MDEQ realized that local citizens and groups, in partnership

with state and federal resource agencies, could solve local problems much more efficiently than we could by ourselves. Our ultimate strategy simply combines the expertise of local state and federal resource professionals and the interests of local stakeholders to address concerns in their own backyards." Richard now serves as the Chief of the Basin Management Branch at MDEQ.

After the Yazoo River Basin Team developed its priorities in the region, local groups began to develop comprehensive watershed plans. Each plan identifies water quality concerns within a priority watershed and identifies strategies for addressing the identified concerns. MDEQ often assisted with the process and helped identify potential funding sources.

Since the Basin Management Approach began nearly 10 years ago, MDEQ has facilitated the development and implementation of many projects that have and will address water quality concerns in the Delta region. And while MDEQ deserves abundant credit, credit must also be given to local citizens and regional organizations who have taken the opportunity to be proactive in addressing water quality concerns in the Delta.

### PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

- City of Tchula
- Deer Creek Landowners Association
- Deer Creek Watershed Association
- Delta Council
- Delta F.A.R.M.
- Delta Wildlife
- Ducks Unlimited
- Entergy
- FTN Associates
- Lake Washington Homeowners Association
- Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
- Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
- Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Mississippi State Department of Health
- Mississippi State University
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Washington County Board of Supervisors
- YMD Joint Water Management District

### YAZOO BASIN WATERSHEDS AFFECTED BY THE BASIN MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- Ascalmore/Tillatoba Creek
- Bear Creek
- Bee Lake
- Buntyn Creek
- Can-Mussacuna Creek
- Coldwater River
- Deer Creek
- Hickahala Creek
- Indian Bayou
- Lake Washington
- Moon Lake
- Porters Bayou
- Steele Bayou
- Sunflower River
- Tippah River
- Wolf & Broad Lake

### COMMON BMPS USED TO ADDRESS WATER QUALITY IN THE DELTA

- Bank Stabilization
- Grass Filter Strips
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Sediment Retention Structure
- Wetland Restoration



### Mississippi Farm Bureau Rice Meeting

Representative David Norquist of Cleveland was one of the featured speakers at the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Rice Meeting recently held in Cleveland.



### DELTA COUNCIL

#### 2008-09 Delta Council Officers

- President: JOHN PHILLIPS, Holly Bluff
- Vice-President: BUDDY ALLEN, Tunica
- Vice-President: CLARKE BISHOP, Minter City
- Vice-President: BOB ELEY, Cleveland
- Vice-President: ROOSEVELT LEE, Clarksdale
- Vice-President: MERLIN RICHARDSON, Anguilla
- Vice-President: GIBB STEELE, Hollandale
- Treasurer: GARY GAINES, Senatobia

#### POSTMASTER:

Send all address changes to  
Delta Council  
P.O. Box 257, Stoneville, MS 38776

*The Delta Council Review accepts no responsibility for unsolicited materials and in general does not return them to sender. Manuscripts and photographs submitted for publication are welcomed, but no responsibility can be taken for them while in transit or in the office of publication. All editorial information is taken from sources considered to be authoritative, but the publication cannot guarantee their accuracy. Neither that information nor any opinion expressed on the pages of The Delta Council Review in any way constitutes a solicitation for the sale or purchase of securities mentioned. No material in The Delta Council Review may be reproduced in any form without the written consent of Delta Council.*

Layout and design of The Delta Council Review  
Coopwood Communications  
Cleveland, MS

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 257, Stoneville, MS 38776  
**Shipping Address:**  
433 Stoneville Rd., Stoneville, MS 38776  
Phone: 662-686-3350  
Fax: 662-686-3378  
**Web Address:**  
www.deltacouncil.org  
**E-mail:** info@deltacouncil.org

## USDA Officials Meet with the Delta Catfish Leaders

### Catfish Ponds Eligible for Conservation Reserve Program

The new farm bill extends the authority of USDA to enroll catfish ponds in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Any catfish pond which has been in operation during one of the past 5 years (2003-2007) is eligible to enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program. The 15-year rental contract with USDA has been an extremely popular program for farmable wetlands in other parts of the United States, and would convey an estimated \$60-\$80 an acre annual rental rates to ponds which discontinue operation. The program also extends a \$100 per acre, one-time, signing incentive payment.

We are grateful to Senator Cochran for including language in the Farm Bill for those who wish to enroll catfish ponds in CRP. Also, the commitment which Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Keenum has shown for making this program economically viable for those who wish to retire ponds, or convert them to wildlife and waterfowl areas is helping bring emphasis to this catfish program.

Specialists at Stoneville estimate that there will be approximately 25,000 acres of abandoned catfish ponds which will be eligible for CRP enrollment next year, with as much as 15,000 of the 25,000 acres potentially expressing an interest in the 15-year conservation rental contracts.

"USDA officials who met with us are extremely knowledgeable about the practical aspects of CRP enrollment of catfish ponds and we are very encouraged that Bob Stephenson of FSA and his staff are



**Mike Linsenbiger (right), Deputy Director of Conservation and Environmental Programs, USDA-FSA, Beverly Preston (center), Manager of Farmable Wetlands Program of USDA-FSA, and John Carter, Manager of Farmable Wetlands Program of USDA-FSA, met with Delta catfish leaders recently at Delta Council about the enrollment of catfish ponds in the CRP Program.**

working with us to put this program on the ground," stated Delta Council leader Chat Phillips of Yazoo County, who currently serves as President of Catfish Farmers of America.

COMMISSIONER *continued from page 1*

in their attempts to avoid cuts to the various Institutions of Higher Learning in recent years, the group collectively conveyed to Dr. Meredith that access to higher education opportunities in the remote areas of the State of Mississippi would be seriously impaired, if the Board proceeds down the path of the new formula.

"Dr. Meredith seemed encouraged when we offered to work with the Board of Institutions of Higher Learning to expand upon the idea of bringing the Mississippi business community into an effort for increased funding for higher education as a solution to the problem, rather than implementing a formula which results in more than a 20 percent cut at Delta State University over the next six years," added Bill Crump, a Viking Range executive who joined in the Delta Council meeting.

Dr. Meredith assured the Delta audience that he would act expeditiously to bring a substitute plan forward which would include components to seek additional State funding

and tuition proposals.

In attendance at the meeting, were Delta leaders as follows: Bill Crump, Viking Range, Greenwood; Angela Curry, Greenwood Leflore Economic Development Foundation, Greenwood; Bob Eley, Eley Engineering and Delta Council Vice President, Cleveland; Tommy Goodwin, Humphreys County Administrator, Greenville; Tom Gresham, Gresham Petroleum/Double Quick, Indianola; Bill Kennedy, Duncan Gin, Chairman, Delta Council Executive Committee, Inverness; Lester Myers, Delta Western, Indianola; Walter Nichols, Retired Educator, Clinton; Cass Pennington, Delta Health Alliance, Stoneville; John Phillips, President, Delta Council, Holly Bluff; Brad Prewitt, Prewitt & Associates, Tupelo; Al Rankins, President, Washington County Board of Supervisors, Greenville; Merlin Richardson, Delta Council Vice President, Anguilla; and Mike Sturdivant, Jr., Due West Farms, Delta Council Executive Committee, Glendora.

IHL			
FY 2009 Appropriation Conference Report Allocated using Formula as compared to FY 2008 Actual Funding			
Institution	FY 2008 State Appropriation	FY 2009 Conference Report Rebalanced in One Year	Difference
ASU	\$ 20,274,580	\$ 18,011,438	\$ (2,263,142)
DSU	23,160,557	17,883,970	(5,276,587)
JSU	40,580,608	41,828,484	1,247,876
MSU	99,031,766	103,582,324	4,550,558
MUW	15,760,396	11,671,910	(4,088,486)
MVSU	15,780,434	15,476,578	(303,856)
UM	80,047,736	91,035,891	10,988,155
USM	89,870,168	86,382,809	(3,487,359)
<b>System</b>	<b>\$ 384,506,245</b>	<b>\$ 385,873,404</b>	<b>\$ 1,367,159</b>

The allocation of reductions will be phased in over 6 years.

## Delta Promise School



The Delta Promise School premiered in Indianola as a result of a partnership between Mississippi State University's Early Childhood Institute and the Sunflower-Humphreys Counties Progress Head Start. Approximately 100 five-year-old children from Sunflower County are getting a jump on kindergarten by experiencing a month long program designed to assist them in learning necessary language and literacy skills so they will enter kindergarten ready, willing and able to succeed. Funded by the Delta Health Alliance, this is the first Promise School in the Delta and is already experiencing success according to teachers in the program as well as parents of participating children. At the conclusion of the summer long program, children will be assessed to determine their progress in meeting the program goals of increased literacy skill development. Dr. Cass Pennington, retired CEO of Delta Health Alliance, said, "The program builds on some already recognized work in early childhood development in the Delta, and we hope that the outcomes will allow us to continue the program and bring it to more communities in the Delta."

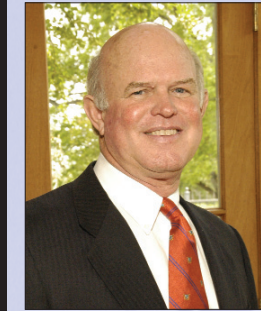
MCCLENDON *continued from page 2*

cotton fiber and cotton products, the United States should move to implement safeguards on Chinese textile and apparel products, reinforcing the point that market access is not a unilateral right. China must begin to provide true trade reciprocity for cotton fiber and cotton products.

In the short-term, Congress could help U.S. textile manufacturers and

demand for U.S. cotton fiber by approving the Colombia Free Trade Agreement at the earliest possible date. This regional trade agreement will provide expanded export opportunities for U.S. yarn and fabric manufacturers who purchase virtually all of their cotton fiber from U.S. producers. This is a small, but important step to help maintain U.S. textile jobs.

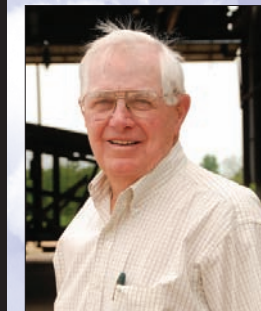
## 2008-2009 Delta Council Officers



**John Phillips, President**  
Holly Bluff



**Buddy Allen, Vice President**  
Tunica



**Clarke Bishop, Vice President**  
Minter City



**Bob Eley, Vice President**  
Cleveland



**Roosevelt Lee, Vice President**  
Clarksdale



**Merlin Richardson, Vice President**  
Anguilla



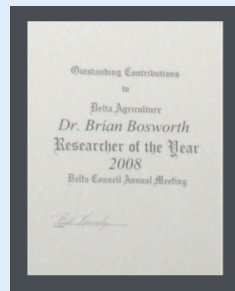
**Gibb Steele, Vice President**  
Hollandale



**Gary Gaines, Treasurer**  
Senatobia

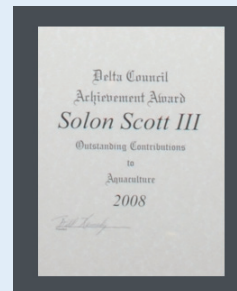
## Bosworth Receives Delta Council Research Award

Dr. Brian Bosworth of Stoneville was awarded the Delta Council Achievement Award for Research at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. Bosworth was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



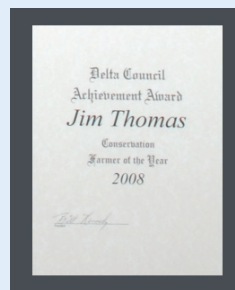
## Scott Receives Delta Council Aquaculture Award

Solon Scott, III, of Itta Bena was awarded the Delta Council Achievement Award for Aquaculture at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. Scott was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



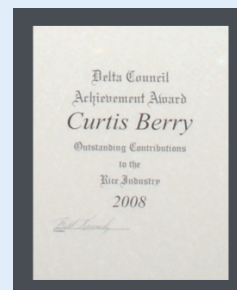
## Thomas Receives Delta Council Conservation Award

Jim Thomas of Cruger was awarded the Delta Council Achievement Award for Conservation at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. Thomas was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



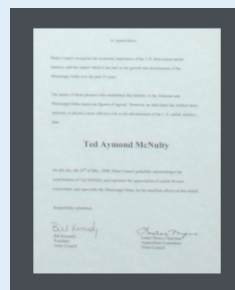
## Berry Receives Delta Council Rice Award

Curtis Berry of Robinsonville was awarded the Delta Council Achievement Award for Rice Production at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. Berry was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



## McNulty Receives Delta Council Special Recognition

Ted McNulty of Pine Bluff, the director of Aquaculture Programs for the Arkansas Agriculture Department, was awarded Special Recognition at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. McNulty was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



## Bishop Receives Delta Council Cotton Ginning Award

Clarke "Ham" Bishop of Minter City was awarded the Delta Council Achievement Award for Cotton Ginning at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the regional economic and agricultural development group on May 23 in Cleveland, MS. Bishop was presented the award by Tom Gary, chairman of Delta Council's Executive Committee.



# Workforce Study To Determine Future Economic Opportunities

## Set to Begin in 12 Delta/North Central MS Counties

The Capps Technology Center of Mississippi Delta Community College, working in conjunction with the Delta Council Development Department, Mississippi Delta Developers Association, and local economic development agencies in the area, are sponsoring a workforce analysis and are asking for local businesses and individuals to participate in this important effort.

This data will assist existing businesses in finding qualified workers, enable workforce agencies to match workers with jobs and training programs, and guide educators and other training providers in preparing the workforce for existing and emerging employment opportunities.

"The type of study that has helped auto manufacturers and other businesses locate in other parts of Mississippi and across the country is now underway in the Delta region. To succeed we need the help of both individuals and businesses in the community," says Tom Gresham, chairman of the Capps Center Advisory Council and the Delta Council Development Department. "Our goal is to position the area for economic growth and business success. Response to this survey is a very important part of this process, and we encourage all businesses to return the surveys that will be mailed to them, and for residents to take a minute to visit with the surveyors if asked."

Gresham noted that the same group has done labor studies for the Memphis Region, which included a number of counties at the northern end of

the Delta Region, and for the Jackson Metro Region, which included the remaining counties in the southern end of the area. Together, the studies will give a solid composite of the needs, availability, and future direction of workforce issues.

The area being studied consists of 12 counties – Bolivar, Carroll, Choctaw, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Montgomery, Sharkey, Sunflower, Washington, Webster and Chicot County in Arkansas. Local residents and businesses are being called on to help.

Most businesses in the region will receive a survey to complete the second week of August. This survey asks employers about their workforce needs and hiring experiences.

Following this survey, interviews with local residents to identify workforce skills and availability will be conducted September 4-7 at locations provided by retailers throughout the 12 county area.

"Workforce skills and availability are the most critical factors for businesses. To create quality job opportunities and to meet the needs of industry, communities must understand and address workforce issues," notes Gresham. "We are grateful for the support that Senator Thad Cochran has given to the Delta's pressing workforce needs through his efforts at funding the Capps Center, and this would not have been possible without that."

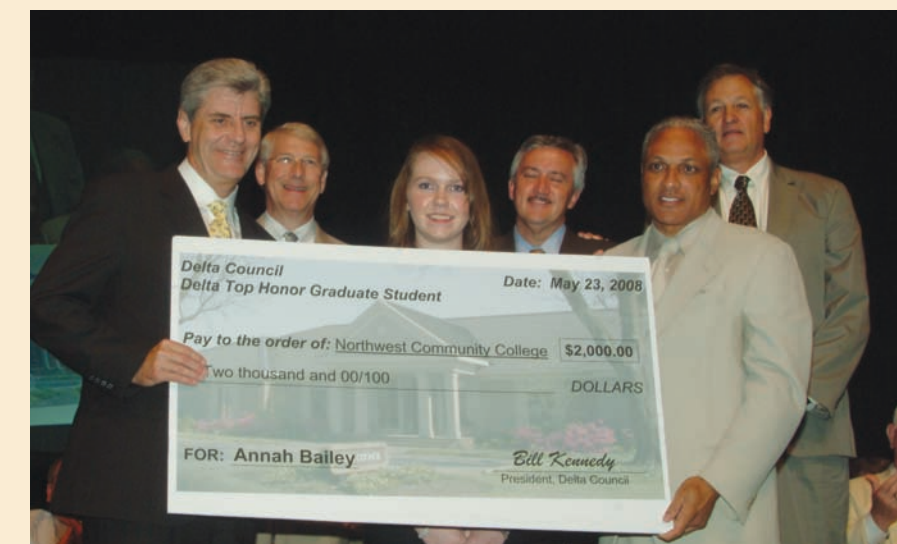
Younger Associates of Jackson, TN, in conjunction with the Wadley-Donovan Group of Springfield, NJ, is conducting the workforce analysis. They are the premier team for conducting studies of this type in the U.S. Major corporations and economic developers depend on the data from their studies for business location and expansion decisions.

For more information about the study, please contact Perry Jenkins at the Capps Center at 662-887-2684.

## The survey of local residents will help identify key workforce information including:

- Skills and characteristics of the labor force
- Any untapped labor force segments
- The extent of underemployment in the workforce
- Types of employee training needed to keep local businesses competitive

# Bailey Named Delta's Top Honor Graduate



(L-R): Lt. Governor Phil Bryant, Senator Roger Wicker, Annah Bailey, Congressman Travis Childers, Mike Espy and Delta Council Chairman Tom Gary.

South Panola High School graduate Annah Bailey of Pope (center) was named the Delta's Top Honor Graduate at the 73rd Annual Meeting of Delta Council on May 23, 2008.

Bailey was selected from among over 130 Delta Honor Graduates who were also recognized at the meeting. Each year, Honor Graduates are selected by their high school principals for their scholastic achievement, leadership, and community involvement. Bailey was selected from among that group by higher education officials to receive the Top Honor Graduate and a \$2,000 scholarship to the institution she will attend next fall – Northwest Community College in Senatobia.

All of the Honor Graduates were invited to participate in a special ceremony, led by Lt. Governor Phil Bryant and Former Congressman and Cabinet Secretary Mike Espy, before the Annual Meeting. Bailey's scholarship was recognized at the Annual Meeting.