

Delta Council

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The Delta Council REVIEW

Vol. 7, Issue No. 4

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

July 2011

Barbour Convenes Post-Flood Alternatives Analysis

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Delta native and Governor Haley Barbour's chief coordinator for disaster and emergency response, Patrick Sullivan, convened a meeting of Delta officials to review post-flood operations and to analyze options for improving flood protection in future events.

In response to Governor Barbour's request that local officials reach a consensus on modification and completion of Yazoo Basin flood control features, Sullivan asked the Corps of Engineers to present an alternatives analysis of all potential



Public officials, emergency management personnel, Levee Board representatives, and others were on hand for a May 23 meeting in Stoneville with representatives from FEMA and MEMA to begin dialogue about post-flood issues, such as access, housing, economic injury, and other response items.

features that might be considered in the future, in order to avoid the impact of flooding similar to 2011. Particular emphasis was placed on the Marks area and portions of Yazoo and Humphreys Counties.

At the Vicksburg meeting, the Corps of Engineers reviewed and analyzed pre-flood, flood, and post-flood evaluations of Yazoo Basin lake operations (Arkabutla, Sardis, Enid, and Grenada) and the primary drainage outlet for the lakes, which is the Yazoo-Tallahatchie-Coldwater River system.

MDCC Electrical Lineman Training Program Wins NADO Innovation Award

Mississippi Delta Community College's Electrical Lineman Training Program has been chosen to receive a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2011 Innovation Award

The 2011 NADO Innovation Award winners will be honored at the Showcase Reception at NADO's Annual Training Conference, to be held in Miami, Florida in October. South Delta Planning and Development District, through the Delta Workforce Investment Board, The Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Delta Electric EPA, Coahoma EPA, Entergy, and Twin County EPA provided funding, equipment, and supplies to create and sustain the program.



MDCC's 2nd Electrical Lineman Training Class

always looking for innovative projects that address community, workforce and economic development needs," said Billy Haney, Executive Director of South Delta.

“NADO's Research Foundation is

“This was an opportunity for us to showcase the partnership with workforce, education, and local businesses that it has taken to make this program successful. We're excited that NADO sees the significance of what we've worked hard to accomplish with MDCC and our local utility partners.”

Twenty students have graduated from the program with 18 hired by local Electric Power Associations and energy construction contractors. “The third session of MDCC's Electrical Utility Lineman training is schedule to begin August 15, 2011, with 17 candidates accepted to the program,” reports Jennifer Marshall, Workforce Development Coordinator for the Lineman training program.

Catfish Industry Touts Comments On Inspections

Public comments and evidence submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture overwhelmingly support broad inspection and regulation of all commercial catfish species imported or grown for sale to consumers in the United States, according to the USDA website.

Of the 280 comments posted on the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) official comment site, 84 percent, or 234 postings, urged the agency to include all imported and domestic catfish in new regulations currently under consideration by FSIS, according to data posted on Regulations.gov. In addition, more than 4,000 consumers filed petitions on the site urging USDA to include all catfish under the new rules.

The public comment period ended June

24. “The comments submitted to the USDA make it absolutely clear that consumers, chefs, scientists, public officials and members of the catfish industry all agree: Our government needs to guarantee the safety of every catfish that lands on a plate in the United States, regardless of where it was raised,” said Butch Wilson, president of the Catfish Farmers of America.

Congress voted in 2008 to shift inspection and regulation of catfish from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to the USDA because of safety concerns revealed in several government investigations. In its most recent report released in April, the Government Accountability Office reported that

FDA tested only one-tenth of one percent (0.1 percent) of all seafood imported into the United States for banned drugs in 2009.

The report also found that FDA violated its own regulations and tested no catfish for banned drugs from 2006 to 2009, despite designating catfish as one of its highest priority imports for inspections.

The primary opponents to the new regulations are some exporting nations and the U.S. seafood importing industry. Opponents say they fear many imported fish will be unable to meet the USDA's health and safety regulations.

The most contentious issue in the new regulations is whether the USDA will inspect

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Delta Council Vice President Diedre Barret

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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

Message from the President



**Bowen Flowers, President
Delta Council**

In the short time since our May meeting, when Cass Pennington handed me the President's job, I have been on a steep learning curve. The work areas that I have been involved with over my years in Delta Council have primarily been in the field of farm policy, research, and natural

resource conservation issues. Clearly, over the past two months I have come to appreciate even these issues are becoming more complex and challenging as a part of the agenda of Delta Council. Additionally, the other work areas, such as higher education funding, improved access to health-care, highways, railroads, and workforce training are even more dynamic in their complexities, because they literally change targets from day to day.

The one thing that has become clearer to me than any other issue surrounding the work of Delta Council is that the organization has laid a foundation of relationships with Federal, State, and local agencies over the past 75 years which are paying huge dividends today. Whether we are working with the Mississippi Economic Council or the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, or whether we are working with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality or USDA-NRCS, the people who step up from these organizations and

agencies to assist Delta Council are truly our partners and they are totally committed to assisting us in building a better Delta in every way. I could not possibly list or name all of groups that I have met who are constantly orbiting around our Delta Council offices, but you know who you are and I simply want to take this space in the first edition of our newsletter since I became President, and say that we could not perform in the way that we do at Delta Council without you.

We will begin having committee meetings at the end of this month and they will extend through the Mid Year Board of Directors Meeting, which I am hoping to have during the week of November 8. We urge members of committees to please be in attendance at committee meetings and come prepared to provide your input, not just to listen to last year's policy.

I will close this message by emphasizing the importance for every citizen, and especially every Delta

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Delta National Heritage Area Making Great Strides

By Ken Murphree
Chairman

Ken Murphree of Tunica, a Delta Council Past President, is Governor Haley Barbour's appointee to the Governing Board of the MS Delta National Heritage Area. The Governing Board is comprised of 15 agencies and entities (including Delta Council) named in the authorizing legislation supported by Senator Thad Cochran and Congressman Bennie Thompson.



As one of fifteen members, Governor Barbour's appointment, and Chairman, of the Mississippi Delta

National Heritage Area, I want to update you on the progress this regional effort has made over the past year to "brand" the Delta region.

When the Delta was given the authorization to become a National Heritage Area, subject to a rigorous three-year management plan being approved by the Secretary of the Interior, all of us on the Governing Board knew we had a tall task in front of us.

The designation of the region as a "National Heritage Area" portends many positive outcomes in telling the story of heritage and culture in our rich homeland – from being able to use the National Park Service logo on signage for interpretive sites to being able to compete for funding opportunities that would not otherwise be available to us. We saw this potential designation as something that could

enhance and complement local efforts throughout the region, whether it be the Vicksburg Military Park, a B.B. King Museum, the Tallahatchie County Courthouse, or visits to Mississippi River gaming resorts. Instead of coming to visit one isolated site, tourists could be exposed to a "Delta" brand of opportunities of all stripes that could allow them to stay in the region longer.

The roadmap that the Department of the Interior gives potential Heritage Areas is quite exhaustive and comprehensive, not to mention obligating most all of the small federal funding (\$150,000 annually) that is allocated for the three year period. In order to accomplish this goal, the Governing Board has made one big

MURPHREE continued on page 7

\$300 Million Contract Awarded for I-69 Memphis Outer Loop

Delta Council President Bowen Flowers joined other platform guests for the ground-

breaking ceremony to announce the beginning of a 5-7 year project to create an outer loop of Memphis.

The interstate highway will serve as the largest road construction contract in the footprint of the 7 state I-69 project since its beginning in 1994. Speakers and dignitaries joining Flowers as platform guests were Mississippi House Speaker Billy McCoy, House Transportation Committee Chairman Warner McBride, Transportation Commissioner Mike

Tagert, and representatives from the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

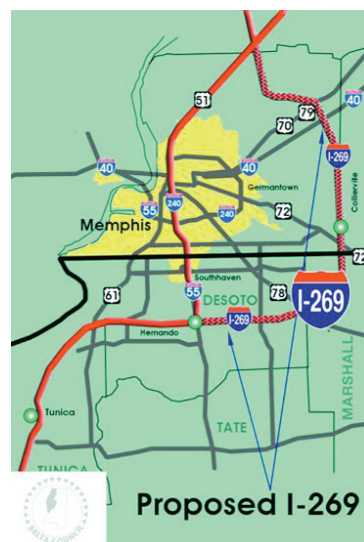
"We are here today because the people of

Northwest Mississippi and the State of Tennessee had the vision 15 years ago, to create

a warehouse-distribution corridor around the largest cargo freight hub (Memphis) in the Nation. The interstate will connect 5 major 4-lane transportation corridors, ---Interstate 40, 4-lane Highway 72, 4-lane Highway 78, Interstate 55 and 4-lane Highway 61," stated newly-elected Transportation Commissioner Mike Tagert.

When completed, the I-269-I-69 Corridor will connect the Tennessee Stateline at Collierville to Olive Branch, Hernando, and Robinsonville in Tunica County, where the I-69 planned roadway will proceed south toward a Mississippi River Crossing in the Benoit area.

"I-69 funding between Robinsonville



Commissioner Mike Tagert and other transportation and civic leaders from Mississippi and Tennessee were on hand for the recent groundbreaking of Interstate 269 in Marshall County.

and the Mississippi River Crossing will be the highest priority of the Delta Council Transportation Committee in the next High-

way Authorization Bill considered by Congress," stated Flowers, the Clarksdale businessman and farmer.

Capps Technology Center and MMA Partner to Provide Leadership Training

Mississippi Delta Community College's Workforce Education division awarded 22 Leadership Certificates to area industry participants completing the three-session leadership seminar held at The Capps Technology Center in Indiana.

Dr. Jimmy Richardson of Starkville facilitated the leadership seminar series, which developed and made possible by

Mississippi Manufacturer's Association (MMA). This series updates and replaces the MMA's successful, long-running Basic Supervision program.

To earn a Leadership Certificate, participants had to successfully complete all three modules. There were 11 participants from four Bolivar County industries, 19 from three Leflore County industries, 5 from one Washington County industry

and one from one Sunflower County industry. The Leadership series consisted of three one-day sessions held once a month during the spring.

"This training experience has given me some tools that will be with me for a lifetime," stated Joe Tadlock, a Mars Associate from Greenville. "The Leadership I, II and III training was amazing. Dr. Jimmy Richardson's style and method of present-

ing the material was magnificent and unforgettable."

The Capps Technology Center plans to partner with MMA to provide the Leadership series again soon. The Capps Technology Center provides customized training solutions. Visit The Capps Center online at www.thecappscenter.com, or call (662) 887-2876 for additional information.

DHA's Third 21st Century Model Clinic Opens in Greenwood

The Leflore County Health Center (LCHC) recently celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house spearheaded by the Greenwood Industrial Foundation.

The LCHC will provide quality health care to the uninsured of Leflore County funded through Delta Health Alliance's 21st Century Primary Care Model for Chronic Disease project, which seeks to improve chronic disease outcomes, increase access to care, increase community awareness of chronic disease treatment and management, and evaluate the effectiveness of the patient-centered medical home model in the Mississippi Delta. The clinic will treat patients from a team approach and provide primary

care and health care education, all necessary for Leflore County residents to live a healthy lifestyle.

According to Dr. Robert Dale, Chief Medical Officer — Delta Health Alliance, "The goal of this project is for patient care to become a team effort allowing the patient to become a member of the team through education about their disease process, medication management, and healthy lifestyle choices."

For a \$10 administrative fee, patients will receive services of a nurse practitioner, nurse, patient navigator, and community health workers, along with the support of the project's clinical pharmacist and registered dietician. The clinic is run by a volunteer board.

LCHC shares the facility with Leflore Hospital Walk-in Clinic, which opened in February. Leflore Hospital's clinic provides primary care for insured and Medicaid patients of Leflore County. The city of Greenwood and Leflore County own the building which houses both clinics. Private donors included Trustmark Bank, Margaret Carl and Viking Range Corp., the Episcopal Women, and Jones Signs.

Funding for the 21st Century Primary Care Model for Chronic Disease project is provided by DHA through Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Project HOPE Returns to the Delta

Project HOPE was back in the Mississippi Delta a few weeks ago. Project HOPE is an international foundation that has teamed up with the Delta Health Alliance to provide health care supplies, equipment and other in-kind donations to the programs and clinics we operate. On this second trip, Project HOPE sponsored a two-day trip for executives from 7 national and international companies who have an interest in health care and who are looking at possible funding partnerships with DHA. In addition to on-site visits with selected DHA projects, the group met with Governor Haley Barbour, Lt. Governor Phil Bryant, state Commissioner of Higher Education Hank Bounds and business, political, and health care leaders throughout the Delta.

Dr. John Howe and Governor Barbour discuss Project HOPE — DHA collaboration and health issues pertinent to the Mississippi Delta

Earlier this year, in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Project HOPE CEO John Howe and Karen Fox, CEO of Delta Health Alliance, the leaders pledged to explore opportunities to develop and implement health programs in the Delta and pursue financial resources to support these programs. Immediately, supplies for Mississippi Delta residents began arriving. Through the HOPE-DHA collaboration, medical testing and other supplies have been distributed to all of the DHA 21st Century Primary Care Model for Chronic Disease clinics (Good Samaritan, Gorton Clinic, Leflore County Health Center, and the upcoming Good Samaritan Clinic for South Sunflower County Hospital) and other DHA projects.

During this visit to the Delta, Project HOPE brought guests from foundations and organizations devoted to resolving health disparities. That's good news for the

Mississippi Delta, a region plagued with chronic disease.

A noteworthy aspect of the tour was visits with state officials. During a meeting with Governor Barbour, he reiterated his support for the HOPE/DHA partnership and applauded the public-private partnership. Lt. Governor Bryant offered continued support for the collaborative



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efforts of the two organizations while Dr. Bounds announced the partnership would receive full support by the state's four institutions of higher learning, all partners of Delta Health Alliance.

Special guest representatives visiting the Delta as part of the HOPE tour included: Leslie Hardy, Vice President – Merck Company Foundation; Glen Golemi, CEO Gulf States Region – UnitedHealth Group; Frank Sample, CEO – Philips VISICU; Laure Park, Vice President Communications and Corporate Citizenship Officer – Quest

Diagnostics; Dr. Delaney Gracy, Deputy Medical – Children's Health Fund; Frank Wesley, Senior Regional Director – Children's Health Fund; Christopher Estep, Senior Manager, HR – Baxter International; Jim Peloquin, District Manager – Walgreen's; Elyse Marcellino and Jo Ann Clark, staff members for Senator Thad Cochran.

The delegation witnessed first-hand six DHA projects during their two-day stop in the Delta. The DHA projects/partners are: VISICU@(University of Mississippi Medical Center) – Jackson, Tele-psychiatry Project (University of Mississippi Medical Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior) – Yazoo City, 21st Century Primary Care Model for Chronic Disease and TeleEndocrine (The Endocrine Clinic) projects – Good Samaritan Clinic, Greenville, Delta State University School of Nursing (Cleveland), and Indianola Promise Community (Indianola). The delegation met with the individuals responsible for each program, on-site staff, and community leaders. Specials guest speakers during the tour were Mary Currier, Mississippi Department of Health State Officer and David Putt, CEO of University Hospitals and Health Systems at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Project HOPE, a non-profit founded in 1958, is dedicated to advancing health around the world and began conducting health education in the U.S. in 1969 and providing resources to Mississippians since 2005 when Project HOPE came to Mississippi's aid during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

During his visit, Dr. Howe blogged on Project HOPE's website – <http://www.projecthope.org/news-blogs/ceoblog/>.

MURPREE from page 2

step and is in the process of taking another:

1. After seeking Requests from Proposals from groups, agencies, and individuals around the region, the Governing Board selected the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University as the Phase One Management Entity. This entity will serve as the staff and catalyst for the Governing Board during the three-year process that we are embarking on to officially designate the region as a branded National Heritage Area. In addition to ensuring that the timeline for completion of the management plan is met, the Phase One Management Entity will ensure that all heritage and cultural opportunities and sites have the opportunity to give input during the planning process.
2. Currently, the Governing Board is

interviewing firms who responded to a Request for Proposal to assist the Governing Board in putting together the thousands of pages of documentation that will be necessary to get the full designation. The Board sought proposals where groups had been successful in the past with other Heritage Areas receiving approval from the Secretary of Interior. (During the almost two decade life of the program, only 40 different areas and regions of the country have been able to meet the standard for full Heritage Area designation.) With a ticking time clock of three years and all the obligations that must be met, the Board was encouraged by the proposals that have been given to us, and a special committee and then the full Governing Board will evaluate them in the coming month.

The 15-member Governing Board deserves full credit for all of the progress to

date. Comprised of people and agencies from across the spectrum, it has coalesced around the idea that this process and designation is vital to enhancing the Delta's efforts around cultural and heritage tourism. For a complete listing of Board members and complete information about the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, I invite anyone to visit our temporary website at <http://www.blueshighway.org/mdnhadefault.htm>.

Senator Cochran and Congressman Thompson worked hard together to make this designation possible for the region. I want to report to you, and them, that we are seizing the opportunity that has been given to us and making great strides along the way.

2011 Cotton P.I.E. Tour Planned

Entering its third decade, the Cotton Producer Information Exchange (P.I.E.) Program is still going strong. Supported by Bayer CropScience and administered by the National Cotton Council, the program allows cotton producers to visit all regions of the Cotton Belt. This weekend, four Mississippi Delta Producers, selected by Delta Council, will be among a dozen Mid South cotton growers who will travel to the Far West to visit leaders and farms in Arizona and

California. The four producers who are traveling to California and Arizona include Gary Bailey of Tunica, Will Fratesi of Leland, Will Long of Holly Ridge, and Michael Thompson of Bee Lake. The week of August 1st, a dozen cotton growers from Arizona, California and New Mexico will travel to the Mid South and spend three days in the MS Delta. "This is one of the best programs I have ever been associated with as a producer and we appreciate Bayer for continuing



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to allow more people to participate like I did twenty years ago," said Bowen Flowers, President of Delta Council.

Flowers Announces Delta Council Committee Chairmen for 2011-12

Delta Council Bowen Flowers has announced the men and women who will serve as committee chairmen of 2011-12. "The day to day operations of Delta Council are administered through committee leadership and those who have served as Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen in the past are the front line of individuals who respond to regional issues that come before the organization," stated Flowers.

Advisory Research Committee: Bubba Simmons, Arcola	Flood Control Committee: Bob Eley, Cleveland
Aquaculture Committee: Lester Myers, Indianola	Forestry & Wildlife Resource Committee: Mike Mikell, Port Gibson
Arrangements Committee: Irene Long, Indianola	Ginning Committee: James Killebrew, Tchula
Development Department: Tom Gresham, Indianola	Highway & Transportation Infrastructure Committee: Bill Kennedy, Inverness
Education and Health Policy Committee: Cass Pennington, Indianola	Rice & Small Grains Committee: Travis Satterfield, Benoit
Executive Committee: Cass Pennington, Indianola	Soil & Water Resources Committee: George King, Chatham
Farm Policy Committee: Dan Branton, Leland	Soybean, Wheat & Feed Grains Committee: Jerry Slocum, Coldwater

"We are grateful to those who have served as committee leaders in the past and I am especially proud of the team we have assembled to lead the committees for this year," the Coahoma County farm leader added.

CATFISH from page 1

all domestic and imported catfish or only catfish related to the U.S.-grown catfish species. If the narrower version of the law is imposed, the majority of imported catfish would be exempt from

the new catfish inspection and regulation rules, according to U.S. government data.

"We are asking the USDA not to take a day longer than is absolutely necessary to finish writing and enforce these new consumer regulations," said Joey

Lowery, chairman of the board of the Catfish Farmers of America. "We want all catfish to be as safe as possible for the American consumer as soon as possible."

Source: *Catfish Farmers of America*

PRESIDENT from page 2

Council member to go to the polls on August 2. The election of statewide, district and local officials is one of the most important responsibilities of each and every one of us. The

privilege of being able to impact public policy at every level of our government is one which should not be taken for granted and it is something that each Delta Council member should impress upon every eligible voter in your family, on your

payroll, at your Church, and in your neighborhood.

Don't hesitate to contact me, as well as anyone of the staff, if you have input or suggestions you would like to offer for our consideration throughout the year.

Deltan On The Move: Aaron Robinson



PERSONAL INFORMATION:

A native of Brookhaven, Mississippi, Aaron has worked and lived in the Delta for almost three years. He is currently serving as County Executive Director (CED) for USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Tunica County.

Aaron is a 1997 graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Community College where he began his studies in Agriculture while playing football and serving as team captain. After graduating from Copiah-Lincoln, Aaron transferred to Alcorn State University where he completed his Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics while continuing his athletic career in football.

His professional career began in the State of Tennessee as an Area Farm Management Specialist with the Tennessee State University Extension Program. After a number of years, he was promoted to Assistant Professor/Extension Specialist in the area of Community and Economic Development at Tennessee State. During this time, Aaron also held a split appointment with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Statewide Outreach Coordinator for Tennessee.

He moved back to Mississippi and was later employed as the Delta Project Coordinator by Mississippi State University Extension Service through the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) housed in Stoneville at Delta Council.

CURRENT JOB TITLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

After completing the County Operations Trainee program last year, Aaron was placed in a vacant County Executive Director (CED) position. He currently serves as CED for USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Tunica County. Aaron stated, "Far and foremost as CED, I am responsible for managing the county office and making sure duties are performed and requests fulfilled. Specifically, the local FSA committee holds me responsible for directing and managing program and administrative operations for Tunica County to

carry out permanent and ad hoc commodity production, commodity/facility loan, conservation, environmental quality, indemnity, disaster, emergency and defense programs as well as crop insurance operations under policies established by the Risk Management Agency. I also issue program information and news using public outlets such as the local newspaper, newsletters, and word of mouth."

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

When asked what he likes most about his job, Aaron responded with the following reply: "Serving the landowners and producers of Tunica County. Working with the local producers and landowners has been fulfilling especially this year as a lot of unusual events, which required the action of the FSA Office, have taken place. My producers are knowledgeable concerning production agriculture and that certainly helps as our office staff work to the satisfaction of our farmers. We are making progress, but there is still a long way to go as technology, policy and farms change."

WHAT DOES THE DELTA SAY ABOUT AARON?

"Aaron Robinson is one of the most capable and promising young person who has ever worked for Delta Council and we are very proud of his accomplishments and this new assignment," stated Tom Gresham, Chairman of the Development Department Board of Directors of Delta Council.

Hunter Education Class Schedules

Hunter Education class schedules have been set for the 2012 season. To find a Hunter Education class near you, go to www.mdwfp.com and visit Education and Administration, click on class schedules and your location, for a full list of available class dates. Remember all persons born on or after January 1, 1972 that have reached the age of 12, must complete the Hunter Education course before they can hunt or obtain a license. Please contact the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for additional information at 601-432-2400 or on the agency website at www.mdwfp.com.

UPDATE

Martin Retires From MDES

Cindy Martin, Customer Operations Supervisor in the Delta for Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), recently retired after twenty-five and half years of service at MDES.



Martin, who served in many positions while at MDES including Interviewing Clerk, Interviewer I and II, Supervising Interviewer, and Office Manager at the Batesville WIN Job Center, has been the top MDES official in the region for the past several years.

"Cindy has been an incredible asset to employees and employers in the region with her insistence on superior customer service at all of our WIN Job Centers," said Delta Council Development Department Chairman Tom Gresham of Indianola. "MDES, and the Delta, have big shoes to fill."

Stovall Retires From Stoneville Agricultural Research Complex

Jody Stovall, Leland native and longtime farm leader, served as Location Coordinator for Mississippi State University at Stoneville for 16 ½ years.



Stovall retired as of June 30, after making a valuable contribution to the operations and maintenance of the multi-million dollar research and education center in Stoneville.

"Jody Stovall is one of the best citizens in the Delta and the Stoneville Research Complex has been most fortunate to have someone of his caliber and his capacity to take a genuine interest in making Stoneville the best in its class," stated Delta Council Executive Committee member and longtime friend of Stovall, Dan Branton.

1st Annual Greenwood-Leflore-Carroll Resource Fair

The Greenwood-Leflore-Carroll Economic Development Foundation in coordination with MDCC's Capps Technology Center recently held the 1st annual Greenwood-Leflore-Carroll Resource Fair. Exhibitors included Representatives from local entities that provide resources to the Delta area including:

*MS Department of Employment Security/WIN Job Center
*Small Business Development Center
*Adult Basic Education and GED services
*Mississippi Delta Community College – College Admissions procedures and academic/career-tech programs
*Capps Technology Center - Workforce Education training opportunities and Job Interview sessions

Downed Rice Endorsement Listening Session

People interested in the rice industry are invited to participate in a listening session conducted by the USA Rice Federation, who has contracted with ArigLogic Consulting to develop a Downed Rice Endorsement. Listening sessions are being conducted throughout major rice producing regions of the U.S. to obtain feedback regarding the feasibility and specifications of developing a Downed Rice Endorsement. This endorsement is intended to offer optional buy-up coverage for rice producers which would compensate a portion of the additional harvest costs associated with a downed rice event.

You are invited to participate in a meeting on Thursday, August 4 at 6:00 p.m. at the Bolivar County Extension Auditorium located at 406 North Martin Luther King Drive in Cleveland to assist in developing the provisions of the endorsement. Please contact Nicole at 913-982-2448 with questions and/or to RSVP.

Alexander Will Be Missed
Longtime Arkansas agricultural leader, Don Alexander, recently retired as the Chief Executive Officer of the Agricultural Council of Arkansas. Alexander, formerly the Head of the Bureau of Plant Industry for the State of Arkansas, was named CEO of Agricultural Council of Arkansas in 2003, and served as its Chief of Staff until his recent retirement.

Alexander Will Be Missed

"Don Alexander is one of the most unselfish leaders and greatest consensus builder that we have ever worked with in Mid South agriculture, and he will be sorely missed," stated Dan Branton, Chairman of the Farm Policy Committee of Delta Council.



Waldrop is a native of Byram, previously worked for Senator Thad Cochran as his Legislative Assistant for Agriculture. He was also a staff assistant with the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2006. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Delta State University in 2006 and a master's degree in economic development from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2009.

Waldrop Hired as Legislative Assistant for Senator Chambliss

PJ Waldrop was recently hired as a Legislative Assistant for Senator Saxby Chambliss. Waldrop's responsibilities include budget and tax issues and assisting Senator Chambliss in his budget reform talks known as the Gang of Six.

Waldrop, a native of Byram, previously worked for Senator Thad Cochran as his Legislative Assistant for Agriculture. He was also a staff assistant with the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2006. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Delta State University in 2006 and a master's degree in economic development from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2009.



Schulz Will Begin Hiring Again in August

Schulz Xtruded Products LP, located in Tunica County, has hired 59 employees. The newly constructed \$300 million seamless steel pipe product manufacturer anticipates beginning production this fall. The Company expects to start hiring again in August with the goal to add approximately 85 more production workers to its workforce.

The company is coordinating the hiring process with local WIN Job Centers. "There is a skill test required and they have to pass it before being referred to the company," says Lyn Arnold President of the Tunica Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Foundation. "If they sit down to take the test and some of the skill levels are not where they need to be, then there are some things they can do to prepare and then they come back and retake the test."

The company is looking for workers with experience in tool and die; however, they will provide training when needed. The starting salary for the maintenance position is approximately \$32,000 plus full benefits but the salary can increase depending on skill and experience.

Randall elected to Mississippi Bankers Association Board of Directors

James "Randy" Randall has been elected to a 3-year term on the Mississippi Bankers Association Board of Directors. Randall will represent his area of the state of the Board, which governs the 122-year-old association. MBA's membership includes commercial banks and savings institutions, which hold 99 percent of the bank deposits in Mississippi.



Randall serves as president and COO of Planters Bank & Trust Company in Indianola. He has been with the bank for 33 years. Randall is a graduate of Mississippi State University. He also completed the Mississippi School of Banking at the University of Mississippi and the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University.

Humphreys County Middle School Wins 2011 Financial Literacy Challenge

Humphreys County Middle School captured top honors in the Mississippi Financial Literacy Challenge at Mississippi College in Clinton. They emerged from a field of 20 middle school teams to claim the state championship. Ashley Hurshey from Humphreys County Middle School was named the 2011 Personal Finance Student of the Year, an honor given to the student with the highest individual scores. Students competed on the topics of Spending and Credit, Saving and Investing, Income and Money Management, and Quiz Bowl.

This is the first time the Personal Finance Challenge has been offered by the Mississippi Council on Economic Education as in-person challenge. This event was made possible by funding from The College Knowledge Project which is a higher education initiative of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and is funded by the US Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant program.

Farm Bureau Hires Regional Managers

Matthew (Matt) Bayles of Prentiss has been hired as Farm Bureau's Regional Manager for the new Region 5. He is also the Equine/Swine Commodity Coordinator. His counties are Warren, Yazoo, Attala, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Leake, Madison, Rankin, and Simpson.

Britton Hatcher of Grenada has been hired as Farm Bureau's Regional Manager for the new

Region 3. Hi is also the Aquaculture and Corn, Wheat & Feed Grains Commodity Coordinator. His counties include Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Montgomery, Sharkey, and Washington.



MDEQ to Establish Office in Stoneville to Have Presence in Delta

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is opening an office in Stoneville. Sam Mabry, a 35-year veteran MDEQ staff professional, will head the office, reporting directly to Executive Director Trudy Fisher, and will coordinate MDEQ water quantity and water quality activities in the Delta.



"We have needed a daily presence in the Delta to be accessible on a regular basis to deal with the multitude of natural resource issues that our state must address. The economy and quality of life of our Delta counties depends on the availability of adequate water supplies for agriculture. Sam Mabry has a wealth of experience, knowledge, and contacts with various stakeholders after his years of service to MDEQ, and he is the right person to coordinate our efforts," said Trudy D. Fisher, MDEQ Executive Director.

The move was met with praise from the water resource community in the Mississippi Delta. Dean Pennington, Executive Director of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Water Management District, said MEDQ's presence affords even greater opportunities for positive outcomes.

"We look forward to working with the staff and continuing our relationship with MDEQ to develop sound water resource opportunities for the Mississippi Delta," said Pennington.



Vice President Deidre Barret and Executive Appointment Mark Hargett review materials at the June Officers Meeting.



(From Left) Emily Carter; Michael Sanders; Floyd Melton, III; Mark Kimmel; and Daniel Vassel at the June Officers Meeting of Delta Council.



Lt. Governor Phil Bryant, Representative Willie Bailey, and Commissioner of Higher Education Hank Bounds



Delta Council President Bowen Flowers recently took this picture of land behind the Mississippi River levee in Coahoma County. As you can see from the photograph, the 2011 Flood eroded several feet of soil. What was revealed under that soil was a perfect bed of cotton rows. Armed with some local knowledge and the fact that the mule prints are visible in the rows, the unearthed field is dated to be 60 to 80 years old when it was probably abandoned due to an earlier flood depositing soil on the field.



MS Farm Bureau President Randy Knight and Delta farm leader Jimmie Dick Carter of Rolling Fork at a recent Farm Policy meeting in Stoneville.



Public officials from throughout North Mississippi and West Tennessee were on hand for the I-269 dedication near the Marshall/DeSoto County line.