

The Delta Council REVIEW

Vol. 9, Issue No. 1

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

March 2013

Task Force Unanimously Adopts Meter Policy

The DEQ Task Force voted unanimously, to move forward with the voluntary metering policy which would respond to the advocacy for voluntary metering and reporting of groundwater usage by 2015. In summary, the policy would extend the opportunity for the Delta water management district to enlist permit holders who would voluntarily install flow meters and reporting usage on 5% of the wells in each Delta county by July, 2014. Provided that the more than 800 wells across 18 counties, or 5%, have installed meters and are



Litton

prepared to begin reporting water usage by the end of 2015, the policy adopted by groups on the task force would allow the water management district to repeat the task by obtaining another 5%, totaling 10% of all wells in each county to have meters installed and be reporting usage by December, 2015.

"It was the view of all participants that if the goal of 10% of all wells reporting data by the end of 2015, could be achieved through voluntary participation, this would be a better approach than the original proposal to achieve

mandatory metering of 10% of all wells on a person's farm by 2015," stated **Bill Litton**, the Delta Council President.

"We are proud of the people who have served on this task force for the past 1½ years and although they have a difficult task ahead of them, we feel the right people were at the table to make the best decisions on behalf of Delta agriculture," concluded **Litton**.

See page 4 for the policy and highlight of the recent water resource survey.

POLICY continued on page 4

Cochran: IPC Receives \$5.99 Million Education Gift

Local Program Successfully Competes for New "Promise Neighborhood" Program

Senator **Thad Cochran** recently commended the Indianola Promise Community for successfully competing for a nearly \$6.0 million federal Promise Neighborhood implementation grant.

The 2012 Promise Neighborhood grant was approved by the U.S. Department of Education and is worth \$5,997,093. The Indianola Promise Community program operates



Cochran

in partnership with the Delta Health Alliance.

"This grant can be credited to the Indianola Promise Community's determination to see that Mississippi children achieve more through additional attention to their health and education," **Cochran** said.

The Indianola Promise Community grant is among 17 grant awards announced to support local efforts to




coordinate comprehensive services designed to improve educational achievement for students in distressed neighborhoods. Prior to competing for this new grant, Indianola had previously received a \$332,531 planning grant for a Promise Neighborhood program.

Cochran is a member of the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Promise Neighborhood program, which is a collaborative initiative involving the Education Department with the federal departments of Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Treasury, and Health and Human Services.

"To ensure this mission is successful,

GIFT continued on page 6



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Outlook

Message from the President



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Litton

As we look forward to planting season, Delta Council has already begun to focus on preparations for the next round of discussions in Washington on our Farm Bill.

The current environment in Washington clearly does not seem as though it will offer a good atmosphere to be writing a new farm law, but there is some level of redemption knowing that **Senator Cochran** will be back in a position of leadership on the Agriculture Committee, promoting the cause.

We have been fortunate to participate in meetings with the National Cotton Council, the Mississippi Soybean Association, and the Mississippi Rice Council over the past weeks to hear the priorities of our respective crops that are so important to the economy of this region. All of these groups include top Delta leadership from our region who are giving responsible input to research priorities and State/federal policies affecting the business of Delta agriculture. I am especially pleased to see the younger gener-

ation of farm leaders stepping forward in all of these organizations.

The Future Delta event was moved to Jackson this year, and the First Lady and Governor of our State opened the Governor's Mansion to this distinguished group of young agricultural leaders from the Delta to serve as hosts for a reception in their honor. **Governor and Mrs. Bryant** met and welcomed every individual young agricultural leader in attendance and spent the entire evening visiting with the group. In the midst of all Governor **Bryant** has going on as the chief executive officer for the State of Mississippi, he and his wife, **Deborah**, could not have been more gracious hosts.

Tax legislation, budgets for the Division of Agriculture at Mississippi State University, efforts to change State policies which could

PRESIDENT *continued on page 7*

GUEST COLUMN

The Case Against Congressional Earmarks

By Bill Litton

Delta Council President



Litton

As we enter the third federal fiscal year as a Nation that *put its foot down*, and demanded that the power of our Congressmen and Senators to direct funds to the States must be banned, our federal debt crisis has grown, the debt ceiling has been lifted three times, the federal deficit has not declined commensurate with the dollar amount of the Congressional earmarks which were banned, and neither the President's Budget, nor the Congressional Appropriations for

government have been reduced by the amount of dollar outlays previously dedicated to "projects back home."

How could this be?

Fact: Congressional directives, commonly referenced as "earmarks," were never an added expense for the federal government over and above the proposed amount of the federal budget submitted by the President of the United States. Not under Bush I, not under Clinton, not under Bush II, and not under the current President.

Instead, Congressional directives, which never totaled more than 3% of the federal budget, were always the result of a realignment of allocations by the Congress, not to exceed the Executive Budget Request sub-

mitted by the White House each year.

So, if you are a fiscal conservative, or if you consider yourself a moderate, or even a proponent of big government, just how much has been accomplished in terms of fiscal responsibility by adopting a policy in the United States Senate and the U.S. Houses of Representatives to ban Congressional directives?

The first question any of us should ask is, if we are not applying those savings to the deficit, where are the dollars going? Good question. The answer, from federal agency to federal agency is, with a ban on Congressional directives, the alignment of priorities within each agency has

GUEST *continued on page 3*

Delta Council Adult Literacy

Delta Council continues to devote efforts to ensure that not only is the Mississippi Delta a land of fertile soil but also a land of fertile minds. Delta Council staff and leadership, in partnership with community leaders and members, has combated the challenge of seeking out those in need of literacy assistance and offering literacy services free of charge. We are always looking for new, innovative ways to reach more Deltans to increase their reading capacity and

employability.

Over the past three months, presentations to create and maintain classes have been made at community centers in Lambert, Moorhead and Indianola, Adult Basic Education/GED classes of Coahoma Community College and Northwest Community College-Quitman County base, Pastors Luncheon in Quitman County, Bolivar County Adult Day Care Center, Ministerial Alliance in Sunflower County, Rotary Club of Inver-

ness, and the Job Corp Center in (Clarksdale) and **Marcia Vanlandingham** (Leland).

Consequently over the past three months, there have been 9 classes of 3-4 individuals started (Stoneville - 2 classes, Cleveland - 2 classes, Batesville - 1 class, Lambert - 1 class, Marks - 1 Class, Clarksdale - 1 class, Moorhead - 1 class). The classes are taught by Mississippi Delta residents:



Cotton

Lanny Kennedy (Inverness), **Kaye Allen**

Furthermore, to boost recruitment efforts Delta Council has delegated a staff member **Margaret Cotton** to commit to MS Delta region-wide coordination of the Delta Council Literacy Program.

For more information about this program, please contact her at 662-686-3368.

Senate Committee Chairman Focuses on Mississippi Catfish Industry

State Senator **Billy Hudson**, who serves as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee in Jackson, recently held a meeting in concert with Mississippi Agriculture Commissioner **Cindy Hyde-Smith** to more sharply focus on ways the State can play a role in stabilizing the downward trend being experienced in the U.S. catfish industry, and more especially the Mississippi catfish industry.

“Chairman **Hudson** visited Stoneville as a guest of Mississippi State University almost one month ago, and he immedi-

ately began arranging a meeting with top agriculture and catfish leaders in the State to examine every possibility for making certain the State of Mississippi did all it can do to try to bring economic stability to this industry,” stated **Austin Jones**, the catfish producer leader from Sunflower County who serves as Vice Chairman of the Delta Council Aquaculture Committee.

Louie Thompson of Holmes County and **Jones** were joined in the meeting by representatives of Farm Bureau, Delta



Senator **Billy Hudson** and MSU Vice President **Greg Bohach**

Council, Catfish Farmers of America, and Mississippi State University Agriculture Specialist, **Jim Avery**, in order to empha-

size the needs that exist in the industry. Federal purchases of catfish to support Federal Human Nutrition programs, and USDA inspection of domestic and imported catfish were stressed as the two primary targets, in terms of bringing stability to the farm-raised catfish industry. **Thompson** and **Jones** lauded Chairman **Hudson**, the South Mississippi Senator who is widely known in the Mississippi Legislature for his passion and commitment toward the advancement of agriculture in Mississippi.

GUEST from page 2

less to do with the “folks back home,” and more to do with the priorities of the administration within that agency.

The fading of the influence from “the folks back home” without even putting a nick on the bumper of the federal deficit, is gradually peeling layers of infrastructure away from urban, rural, densely-populated, sparsely-populated, wealthy, underserved, ethnically-diverse and ethnically-dominant areas of our country.

Since we have not accomplished any gains in addressing our fiscal responsibility as a result of the ban on Congressional directives, maybe we should explore whether we simply feel better about ourselves

The badge of honor for putting “our foot down” and eliminating Congressional directives could be prominently pinned on

things like I-69—why is there no progress being made toward construction throughout the 7-State footprint; or why did we quit incorporating the necessary structural measures in Delta waters which have vastly improved water quality, wetlands habitat, and every other water quality indicator in Delta lakes and streams; and what about the recent history of maintenance for federally-owned properties at our State parks and wildlife management areas, including those at Sardis, Enid, Grenada, Arkabutla, Lake George, Mahanna, and others. Have you been to any of them lately—canopy areas closed and gates locked.

Or, maybe we should observe the accomplishments of the earmark ban from the standpoint of a noble move, rather than simply judging it from its failed fiscal policy.

According to the national association representing ports, harbors, inland water-

ways, and rural drinking water associations, they are deteriorating rapidly and the deferred Federal maintenance on these National assets is taking its toll. As a country, the mere navigation of commerce throughout the U.S. waterways was not sustainable this year. Port and harbor maintenance, which is fundamental to the movement of steel, grain, chemicals, and fuel to keep our country running and to keep our balance of trade positive with competing countries, is declining because turning basins at our ports could not be maintained for the deep draft of the boats that carry this commerce.

In higher education, universities that provided Pell Grants to students from middle and lower income homes are now being rolled back... earmark ban. Prospective scholarships for entering freshmen who aspire to become school teachers across rural America, are being eliminated;

and if you are tired of looking at orange barrels on highways across America, without any apparent activity ongoing around them other than traffic congestion, you are one who really thinks that the earmark ban was not a good thing for the “folks back home.” Without Congressional directives, there is no highway authorization measure which tells the Federal Highway Administration where or when a project should be scheduled for completion. So, commerce, education, and highway transportation are three areas of infrastructure where the earmark ban is successful in having a real impact—which by any measurement is an adverse impact. The federal deficit has not been reduced due to that and unfortunately, some Americans have been spoofed into thinking that we are better off for it.

From the perspective of Delta Council, somehow we do not feel that we are better off for it, either.

POLICY from page 1

WATER RESOURCE SURVEY

In the summer of 2012, the Education and Outreach Workgroup of the MDEQ Task Force set out to identify the perceptions, beliefs and informational needs of agricultural stakeholders in regard to irrigation water supply concerns in the region. The process began with private and in-depth interviews with three different Delta producers and two focus group meetings. Preliminary survey questions evolved from these interviews and focus groups and were submitted to **Dr. John Edwards** of the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University. The Social Science Research Center then reworded the preliminary questions and developed the survey instrument to assure the study was not biased by word choice, question order or other suggestive inferences.

The target population for this study was identified as all permit holders, landowners and operators (producers), who withdraw water (surface and groundwater) for agricultural irrigation in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta region. By surveying the entire target population instead of a sample of the population, the study was deemed a "census" by Social Science Research Center rather than a survey.

WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY?

- 37.8% Landowners (not actively farming)
- 51.5% Landowner & Operators (owning land and actively farming)
- 10.7% Operators Only (actively farming, not owning any land)

PERCEPTIONS & BELIEFS ABOUT THE VALUE OF IRRIGATION WATER TO PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE:

- 97.6% Believe it would be difficult to farm without irrigation water.
- 82% Believe irrigation water availability increased land values by at least \$1,000.00/acre.

PERCEPTIONS & BELIEFS ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE:

- 90.4% Believe that they are currently doing everything they can to conserve water.
- 93.8% Believe water conservation practices are effective in reducing irrigation water use.
- 92.6% Believe that water conservation practices save money.

PERCEPTIONS & BELIEFS ABOUT THE STATUS OF WATER RESOURCE IN THE DELTA:

- 52.2% Believe that the depletion of the groundwater aquifer is the most important water issue in the Delta.
- 58.2% Believe that agricultural irrigation water use is the primary cause of groundwater depletion.
- 61.3% Believe that there is sufficient water in the Delta, but we are NOT managing it properly.
- 80.9% Believe that more water supplies are needed to sustain agriculture in the Delta.
- 83% of Landowners Believe that there is an abundance



of water where they own land.

78.1% of Renters Believe that there is an abundance of water where they rent land.

60.8% Believe there is an abundance of water in the entire Delta.

54.3% Believe there will be a future shortage of irrigation water in the entire Delta.

PERCEPTIONS & BELIEFS ABOUT METERS AND METERING:

58.5% Believe that meters are the best way of measuring irrigation water use.

52.3% Believe that meters as a part of irrigation practices can conserve water.

PERCEPTIONS & BELIEFS ON IRRIGATION WATER USE REGULATION:

59.9% Believe that regulations on water use are needed to protect the aquifer and ensure water will be available in the future.

85.5% Believe that self-regulation by farmers can protect the aquifer from overuse and ensure sustainable supplies.

Proposal for Voluntary Installation of Meters

...on 10% of wells by 2015

The Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force voted unanimously for the following voluntary proposal for metering of groundwater wells.

Proposal Concept: MDEQ will work with YMD to develop a voluntary approach to reach the Phase 1 goal of 10% by December 31, 2015 through the following process:

1. Through voluntary implementation, 5% of all wells on a county by county basis with good geographic coverage will be metered by June 30, 2014.
2. If this goal is achieved, this voluntary process will be extended and will replace the Phase 1 Metering Program.
3. If this goal is not achieved, the Phase 1 Metering Program will begin implementation July 1, 2014.

Through this proposal, the following related activities would complement the proposed process:

1. The impact of the 2011 water withdrawal permitting changes over a 3-year period will have been evaluated. This evaluation, performed by MDEQ with input from YMD, will include number of meters installed, new/total conservation practices implemented, and estimation of water savings as a result of the new regulations (stressing new/total

savings), and will include a review of addition options/tools that could further enhance water conservation.

2. Comprehensive conjunctive water management strategies will have been developed and implementation occurring throughout the Delta. These strategies, developed through the collaborative efforts of the Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force, include a multitude of activities designed to assure sustainable ground and surface water resources for current and future generations. Several of the core strategies include Irrigation Efficiency and Conservation; Stakeholder Awareness, Outreach, Education and Training; and Funding and Incentives. The implementation and advancement of these and other conjunctive management strategies, if successful, should result in greater stakeholder acceptance of the role of metering in conservation and a higher rate of voluntary implementation. If unsuccessful, Phase 1 would kick in.

3. The establishment of a program by MDEQ to ensure compliance of the water withdrawal permits issued through

the 2011 regulations will also complement this effort. Several core principles will have to be supported through such a voluntary 18-month (and possibly longer) program. These are listed below:

1. A process acceptable to MDEQ that could be implemented immediately;
2. A process that would be based upon each county reaching the 5% goal by June 30, 2014;
3. A process that would ensure good geographic distribution of meters throughout each county of the Delta;
4. Reporting water use to MDEQ annually for each beneficial use.

Any clarification of these provisions is requested in 7 days. A response describing the voluntary approach and how the goal is anticipated to be met is requested in 14 days.

This proposal will be presented through the Metering Work Group.

The Delta... working together.



From left, **Jon Hornyak**, Sr. Executive Director of The Recording Agency of Memphis, Tenn.; Governor **Phil Bryant**, and **Lucy Janoush**, President of the Cleveland Music Foundation.



Delta Council President, **Bill Litton** presents a gift to First Lady **Deborah Bryant** at the Governor's Mansion for the Future Delta Reception.



Lt. Governor **Tate Reeves** is welcomed by Delta Council **Bill Litton** at the 2013 Future Delta event in Jackson.



Senator **Willie Simmons** (third from left) is pictured with the Sunflower County delegation at the Delta Legislative Day held in Jackson by the Chambers of Commerce throughout the Delta region. Pictured with Senator **Simmons** include; (L-R) **Steve Shurden**, **Steve Willoughby**, **Mayor Steve Rosenthal**, **Sherilyn Jones**, and current Inianola Chamber President **Paul Townsend, III**.



Ben West, Western Region Director for the University of Tennessee, (left) discusses the dos and don'ts of power point on the Stoneville Campus.



(L-R) **John Barnard**, Mississippi Division President, First South Farm Credit, **Will Howarth** of Cleveland, winner of this years Future Delta raffle, and Delta Council President **Bill Litton**.



(L-R) Congressional Staff Members **JoAnn Clark** and **Brad Davis** visit with **Dr. Ed King** and **Dr. Craig Tucker** of USDA-Stoneville.

Delta Workforce Training Project Delivering Results

The Delta Workforce Training Project is working! In combination with Mississippi Development Authority's regional offices, local economic developers, and other workforce partners, the Delta Workforce Coordinator continues to meet with companies, exposing obstacles, finding opportunities in the delivery of workforce services, and ensuring accountability of all service providers.

In 2012 the Delta Workforce Coordinator met with more than 50 companies throughout the Delta area and the Coordinator connected 76% of these companies to workforce service providers. The coordinator continues to successfully reduce the complexity of accessing work-

force assistance programs and positively impact companies' experiences with the workforce delivery system.

Baxter Healthcare's Senior Human Resource Representative recently stated, "As a result of this training, we have been able to improve equipment reliability, reduce scrap and have improved efficiency and bottle quality. These outputs are a direct result of the training and will help sustain this product line's success and future in Cleveland, MS. None of this would have been possible without the direct financial assistance of MDA and the Delta Workforce Coordinator. Baxter appreciates the working relationship with



MDA on this project and looks forward to other opportunities in the future."

To better assist companies in recruiting talented and qualified candidates, the Delta Workforce Project created Twitter and Facebook accounts, Delta @ Work. Delta @ Work focuses on opportunities for Mississippi Delta employers to match job openings with interested and skilled applicants. "Delta @ Work is not a repository for all jobs, but a tool to reach individuals who utilize social media and who are looking to enhance their job status," said **Tom Gresham** Chairman of the Delta Council Development Department and Governor's repre-

sentative on the Delta Workforce Cabinet. "It also reaches Deltans who live and work outside the Delta but who are interested in returning home for the right job opportunity. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/deltaatwork> and Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/DeltaatWork>. If your company has information that you would like to post on Delta @ Work or would like more information, please email **Christie Sledge**, at deltaatwork@hotmail.com.

Gresham stated, "I want to thank Governor **Phil Bryant** and all of the partners for making the Delta Workforce Training Project a success."

King Addresses Members of Senate and House Ag Committees

George King, a Washington County Producer and Delta Council Leader, gave testimony recently to members of both the Mississippi Senate and House Ag Committees in support of funding for the agricultural units of Mississippi State University. **King** spoke on the importance that the Division of Agriculture of Mississippi State University and the Delta Research and Extension Center play in sustaining the Delta's agri-industrial complex through research, extension education and teaching pro-

grams. He also noted that these resources are vital to keeping the region competitive with foreign markets.

King closed his remarks by stating, "To end my comments, if you think of the Mississippi Development Authority as the economic development agency of Mississippi, when it comes to recruiting investors in manufacturing and extending incentive packages to retain and expand jobs for our manufacturing sector, I would ask you to consider the budgets of the Division of Agriculture at

Mississippi State University as the State agency that does the equivalent for the thousands of people employed in this State solely because of our agricultural industry. Mississippi State University's Division of Agriculture is Mississippi agriculture's incentive package."

"**George King's** appearance and message hit a home run for the Mississippi State Division of Agriculture," said **Gary Jackson**, Director of Mississippi State University Extension.



GIFT from page 1

we will rigorously measure the performance of every program against ten statistical criteria," said Delta Health Alliance CEO Karen Matthews. "For example, we will set objective goals for increases in early childhood ratings, the state's standardized achievement tests, graduation rates, and parental involvement. DHA will retain an independent firm to identify and define these yardsticks and to assess the

programs throughout the life of the grant."

Bill Kennedy, chairman of the DHA Board of Directors said, "We aim to show that by offering a comprehensive set of programs that are independently evaluated, assessed and reassessed on a regular basis, in partnership with the people who live and work in our neighborhoods, we can ensure that Indianola children graduate from high school with the world in front of them."

MDA Names Malcolm White as Agency's Tourism Director

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) is pleased to announce **Malcolm White** has been named director of the agency's Tourism Division. **White**, who brings to MDA more than 40 years of experience in the economic development and tourism industries, began his new position effective Jan. 14, 2013.

"Many people in the Jackson area and around the state are familiar with **Malcolm White**, his devout entrepreneurial spirit and his love of Mississippi and our



Malcolm White (right) was named director of MDA's tourism division. Pictured with **White** are (from left), **Brent Christensen**, executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority; **Kappi Allen**, president of the Mississippi Tourism Association; and Governor **Phil Bryant**.

unique, creative culture," Governor **Phil Bryant** said. "The experience he brings to this position and the vast amount of knowledge he has

of the tourism industry will be beneficial not only to MDA but to the entire state of Mississippi and its tourism offerings, as well."

USA Rice's Betsy Ward and Reece Langley Address Mississippi Rice Council

The Mississippi Rice Council recently held its annual meeting at the Bolivar County Extension and Expo Center in Cleveland. The program included presentations by the USA Rice Federation's President and CEO **Betsy Ward** and Government Affairs Vice President **Reece Langley**. This was USA Rice's first formal report to Mississippi rice farmers since last month's announcement of the state's decision to join the national rice organization.

Ward thanked the Mississippi Rice Council for the invitation to speak and said she looks forward to working with Mississippi members. **Ward's** report included a review of USA Rice's work to affect favorable trade agreements for U.S. rice and remove trade barriers, noting the successful establishment of an export trading company for rice trade with Colombia, which yielded more than \$3.2 million for state rice-research programs in 2012, including \$235,000 for Mississippi. She also noted continued work to complete a phytosanitary protocol for the export of U.S. rice to China. In the domestic market, **Ward** detailed USA Rice's efforts to position rice well in marketplace trends and



Reece Langley, Vice President of Government Affairs for USA Rice Addresses Members of the Mississippi Rice Council.

work with policymakers and nutritionists to promote the benefits of rice in a healthy diet.

Langley discussed the one-year extension of the 2008 farm bill, noting that direct payments were included in the extension with no reduction in payment rate or payment acres. He explained the major differences between the House and Senate farm bill



Betsy Ward, CEO of USA Rice Addresses Members of the Mississippi Rice Council.

versions and noted membership changes on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. An update on crop insurance for 2013 included premium rate adjustments, a downed rice endorsement option and trend yield adjustments. He said USA Rice and other agricultural organizations continue to press Congress to pass a five-year farm bill.

Delta Council and Delta Health Alliance Officials Meet with State Superintendent of Education

Leaders from Delta Council and Delta Health Alliance met with the former Dean of the Delta State University School of Education, and now, Acting State Superintendent of Education, **Dr. Lynn House**, to discuss the outcomes of the early childhood programs which are moving into their fourth year of Delta Health Alliance's programs of work.

"The State Superintendent of Education is extremely supportive of the types of early childhood initiatives which Delta Health Alliance is advancing, and she finds it especially significant that Delta

Health Alliance has had outside evaluators measure the outcomes of the DHA early childhood programs," stated **John Hilpert**, Chairman of the Delta Council Education and Health Policy Committee.

The State Department of Education has pledged to work with Delta Health Alliance and Delta Council to explore ways to advance, expand, and accelerate the early childhood programs such as those implemented by Delta Health Alliance in the region. The early childhood programs embodied in 2013 legislation at the State Capitol will serve as the foundation for

added emphasis on the importance of early childhood education, in terms of its benefit to student populations entering the first grade.

"Parents are the most able teachers of any preschool child and a large part of early childhood education must be about *parenting*,—this is the most important component of the Delta Health Alliance early childhood programs, as it relates to the proven success it has recorded," added **Hilpert**, the longtime educator and current President of Delta State University.

PRESIDENT from page 2

.....
 affect the retention of more than 100 jobs in Bolivar County, and emphasis on the early childhood measures that are being advanced by the Office of the Governor and House-Senate leadership have been significant pieces of the Delta Council agenda in Jackson. Also, the policy on metering groundwater in the Mississippi Delta, was unanimously adopted by the MDEQ Task Force, and

we look forward to working in support of our water management district in leading the effort to have 10% of all wells in each Delta county, voluntarily reporting usage data to DEQ by the end of 2015.

And, we are pleased that possibly the most widely-acclaimed scientist in the field of catfish research, **Dr. Craig Tucker** of Stoneville, was asked to meet with top staff members of Congressional offices in Washington to brief them

on the background which has resulted in the U.S. farm-raised catfish industry downsizing by more than 50% in the past decade. This once-Cinderella story of American agriculture is one of the saddest chapters in the history of U.S. foreign policy and food safety standards. We are pleased that Congressional leaders have realized that federal policy related to food safety is probably one of the largest contributing factors to the demise of the U.S. catfish industry as we

knew it a short 10 years ago. **Bill Battle** of Tunica, who is from one of the pioneer families of the farm-raised catfish industry, attended the meeting with **Dr. Tucker**.

By the time we print the next edition of the Delta Council News, we will be on the way to preparations for the next Annual Meeting of Delta Council in May. It has been a fast pace and a fun year to be President of Delta Council.

Delta Council

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DELTAN ON THE MOVE: *Dr. Joe Street*

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Joe Street a native of Walnut (Tippah County), MS planted roots here in the Delta several years ago when he served for 17 years as a research scientist at the Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville and three years as head of the Center. **Street** received his Bachelor and Master degree from Mississippi State University and his Doctorate in Agronomy (Weed Science). **Joe** and his wife **Susan** have two daughters and son-in-laws—**Shannon** and **Lauren**—and five grandchildren.

CURRENT JOB TITLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

He is currently serving as Associate Director of the MSU Extension Service and Interim Head of the Delta Research and Extension Center (DREC) at Stoneville. As Interim Head of DREC, he is responsible for providing overall administrative, organizational, and programmatic

leadership for Mississippi State University's research and Extension activities offered through DREC. In addition, he is responsible for oversight of the Northwest Extension Region which includes personnel in 19 Delta and Part-Delta counties.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT STONEVILLE?

When asked this question, **Joe** responded, "I am service oriented and when I first came to Stoneville to interview as a young research scientist, I quickly realized that there is no better place to do agricultural research and outreach to serve the farming clientele and all those involved in the production of food and fiber. I feel that is still true today. As a scientist, I enjoyed solving producer problems and as an administrator, I enjoy managing

resources to better support the activities of our Research and Extension personnel. The Delta holds a special place in my heart and I am certainly enjoying being back for this time as Interim Head of DREC."



Street

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT JOE?

"We are grateful for the leadership that **Joe** has exhibited over the years to Mississippi agriculture, and especially the Delta and Stoneville Research Complex. We hated losing him a few years ago to campus, but his willingness to come back to Stoneville during the interim is a demonstration of the traits that have made him so vital to Mississippi State and agriculture—service, loyalty, and excellence," said **Travis Satterfield**, a producer from Benoit.



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