

The Delta Council REVIEW

Vol. 8, Issue No. 4

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF DELTA COUNCIL

October 2012

Delta Council's Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting Slated For Oct. 30



Gonzales



Meena



Gunn

Delta Council President **Bill Litton** of Greenwood requests that all Board of Director Members and Delta Council Members hold the date of Tuesday, October 30, for the organization's 77th Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting. The morning meeting will begin with committee sessions at 9 a.m., include an 11 a.m. General Session, and con-

clude with a luncheon address and the Audience Response System. This year's meeting is being sponsored again by our friends at C Spire.

"We've got a great lineup of speakers for this year's Mid-Year meeting," said **Litton**. "We're very pleased that we will

MEETING *continued on page 6*

DELTA COUNCIL MID-YEAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING October 30, 2012

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

Committee Meetings 9:00 a.m.

Farm Policy/Soil and Water Resources/Flood Control

Education and Health Policy/Transportation/Development Department

General Session 11:00 a.m.

Phillip Gunn

Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives

Luncheon and Election Address 12:00 Noon

Nathan Gonzales

Deputy Editor, *The Rothenberg Political Report*



Farm Bill Gradually Slipping ... into 2013

The options, which the current Congress has to enact farm legislation prior to December 31, 2012, are becoming narrower with each passing day.

"The Congress is not scheduled to go back to Washington until November 14 for a lame-duck session that will primarily be aimed at beginning the organization of the next Congress, for 2013," stated **Bill Litton**, Delta Council's Pres-

ident from Leflore County.

With only time to address those issues which require re-authorization prior to the 2013 Congressional Session, passage of a new 4-year Farm Bill re-authorization measure seems to be slipping beyond the end of the 2012 Congress.

Notable options that are suggested as possibilities would be for the Congress

to return during the lame-duck session, and even though there are many Members who will not be returning to the 2013 session, proceed by finishing House floor action. Then, move to a Conference Committee for an expedited House-Senate Conference, in order to get a 4-year Farm Bill to the President's desk before December 31.

Another option which appears to be

more prominent with each passing day, is for the Congress to return for a lame-duck session and the House-Senate leadership agrees to a simple extension of current law for the 2013 crop year. In the event this option is the chosen direction of the House-Senate leadership prior to December 31, the question will

FARM BILL *continued on page 4*



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Outlook

Message from the President



Bill Litton

The Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting will give Directors, Committee members, and guests a good overview of the activities of Delta Council

since May of this year. The challenges which we face in agricultural irrigation groundwater management will be discussed at our Soil and Water Resources Committee Meeting and an update will be given on the progress being made by the MDEQ Sustainable Water Resources Task Force Initiatives, of which Delta Council, Farm Bureau, Soil and Water Conservations Districts, and the Delta Water Management District are participants.

A review of drainage district laws and proposed changes which were offered in the 2012 Mississippi Legislative Session has become an item on the agenda of the Flood Control Committee of Delta Council, and recommendations will be forthcoming from Delta Council pertaining to this subject.

And, a highlight of the committee meetings will be a report on the status and outlook of Washington farm legislation by **John Maguire**, one of the foremost government relations experts inside Washington, who works on Capitol Hill for the National Cotton Council.

In areas of Transportation, Education and Healthcare Policy, Transportation Commissioner **Dick Hall** has been invited to give the leadership of Delta Council a report on progress being made to re-open the C&G Railway between West Point and Greenwood. The rail line opens east-west rail traffic for steel, chemicals, agriculture, and other bulk commodities that rely on access to the inland waterway system of the Mississippi River

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PRESIDENT *continued on page 7*

GUEST COLUMN | Room For The River

By Stephen Gambrell

Executive Director of the Mississippi River Commission

The Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) system is designed to pass a larger flood. Believe it or not ... it has room to handle more water. The 2011 flood, while record-setting in many areas, remained below the project design flood levels. At the Cairo gage, the 2011 flood reached 89 percent of the project design flood; at Arkansas City the flood reached 79 percent of the project design flood. This equates to another 360,000 cfs at the Cairo



Gambrell

gage, and 597,000 cfs at the Arkansas City gage. Additional room for larger floods can be accommodated by the river's use of floodways and backwater areas. At peak discharges, the three floodways in operation had the design capacity to divert a combined total of 1.4 million cfs from the Mississippi River. During 2011, the combined maximum discharge barely exceeded 900,000 cfs, or 65 percent of the maximum design capacity. Adding in the unused West Atchafalaya Floodway and its 250,000 cfs maximum design discharge, the total percentage drops to 55 percent. Put another way, the four floodways possess the capacity to divert an additional 750,000 cfs over what was divert-

ed in 2011. Likewise, the total acreage in the massive backwater areas numbers 1,652,000 acres, but only 20 percent (335,000 acres) were used during the 2011 flood. That leaves a little more than 2,000 square miles of land available to store water up to 20 feet deep.

Local people have a voice. One of the key things that makes the MR&T project successful ... especially in extreme floods, is the long-term, regular dialogue and input from the local people. The comprehensive MR&T project is so unique because it captures all the decisions from regular systematic local input and dialogue with the federal government and the many

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GUEST *continued on page 4*

News

AirGuide Announces Clarksdale Facility

On August 14, Governor **Phil Bryant** announced at a luncheon event in the Coahoma County Expo Center that AirGuide Manufacturing will be opening a facility in Clarksdale.

The company will add 40 new jobs to Coahoma County and will be inhabiting the old Taylor Chair facility located in the Pharr Industrial Park. AirGuide manufactures HVAC equipment including aluminum grills and vents. The Clarksdale facility will be producing a new ultra-violet lighting system that kills germs in hospitals, in addition to lighting.

Local business owners, industry leaders, and local officials were on hand to hear the good news for the community. Governor **Bryant** was quick to praise the workforce of the



(L-R) **Brent Christensen**, Executive Director of MDS, **Ron Hudson**, Executive Director Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce, Governor **Phil Bryant**, **Tim Smith**, of AirGuide, and **Doug Marty**, President of AirGuide

area stating, "I can assure you, these are some of the hardest working most industrial people you will ever meet." He was also very enthusiastic about the medical impacts of this new product on the health care industry, "The world of health care could be changed starting right here with this company, with these people in Clarksdale Mis-

issippi."

Ron Hudson, the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Authority, said the deal is also evidence that the city and county can work together to offer buildings that lure investors to the area.

"You've got to have something to sell," **Hudson** told the crowd. "You've

got to have an industrial park that has facilities to show to someone. ... We tried to get those buildings and take those lemons, the jobs that are lost, and make lemonade. And we've been successful in a number of cases."

Delta Council Development Department Chairman **Tom Gresham** joined Governor **Bryant** in praising the work of **Hudson** and his team in the Clarksdale/Coahoma County community.

"They have an outstanding track record of taking their available buildings, investing in them, and making them attractive to both new companies and existing ones in the community. They are a good model for how a community and Industrial Foundation can maximize their assets."

Deltan on the Move: *Al Garner*



PERSONAL INFORMATION

Garner, a native of Ripley, Mississippi, grew up on a family farm in north Mississippi. He graduated from Mississippi State University with a degree in Forestry in 1977. He worked for two years for the Mississippi Forestry Commission before accepting a job with the

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Garner and his wife **Sharen** have two married children — **Sam** and his wife who live in Connecticut and **Amy** and her husband who live in Arkansas. He has two grandchildren. He currently resides in Brandon, MS, and enjoys reading and running/walking.

CURRENT JOB TITLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Garner recently retired from the NRCS. Before retirement, **Al Garner** served as Acting State Conservationist in Mississippi for NRCS. Mr. **Garner** has worked for NRCS since 1980. He began his career as a Soil Conservationist in Corinth and has served as a District Conservationist in Charleston and Resource Conservationist in New Albany and Pearl before being tapped to serve as Assistant State Conservationist in 1998. His responsibilities have included both operations and program management.

During his tenure as Acting State Conservationist in Mississippi, **Garner** worked hard to strengthen relationships with other conservation and stakeholder groups to leverage efforts and capitalize on opportunities. These efforts were recognized as Mississippi's ability to attract additional conservation funding grew

exponentially.

The best example of this success is found in the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, a USDA NRCS initiative designed to lessen agricultural impacts on the Gulf of Mexico by reducing nutrient runoff. Twelve states competed for funding through this initiative, but Mississippi received over 20% of the total funding in 2011.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

When asked what he liked most about his job, he responded "I enjoyed working with people and helping them solve their resource problems. Also, I liked being able to see the results of our efforts on the ground."

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT AL?

Bowen Flowers, long-time Coahoma County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, farmer and Delta Council Past President had the privilege of working with **Garner** for many years. "Al actively searched for and capitalized on opportunities to advance conservation in Mississippi. His efforts empowered us to be better stewards and invest in a more sustainable future for agriculture. He is going to be missed."

Governor's Job Fairs Huge Success



The Governor's Job Fair Network recently held Job Fairs in Greenwood and Belzoni. In Greenwood over 850 job seekers were greeted at the Job Fair by fifty-one employers! There were fifty-four possible job offers as a result of the fair and over 250 hires estimated for the coming year. In Belzoni over 300 job seekers were greeted by twenty-seven employers and there were more than eighty possible job offers as a result of the fair with 143 hires estimated for the coming year.

around the fields

DIAZ RECEIVES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The International Economic Development Council is recognizing **Pablo Diaz** of the Grenada County Economic Development District as this year's New Economic Development Professional of the Year. **Diaz** was selected as Executive Director of the Grenada County Economic Development District in 2009. A native of Mexico, **Diaz** holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of Yucatan, and a master's degree in Economic Development from the University of Southern Mississippi,



and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute of the University of Oklahoma.

METSO TO EXPAND ITS CLARKSDALE OPERATIONS

Officials from Metso have announced the company is expanding operations at its Clarksdale facility. The expansion is the result of the company's decision to increase its conveyor component manufacturing operations in Clarksdale. Metso, supplier of technology and services to customers in the processing industries, is investing \$4 million in the project and plans to create 30-50 new jobs. The Clarksdale facility currently employs 61 workers.

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tomers in the processing industry, including mining, construction, pulp and paper, power, and oil and gas. The company employs 30,000 workers in more than 50 countries. For more information, please visit www.metso.com.

"I am pleased that Metso has chosen to expand production capabilities at its Clarksdale location. The company had other options, and the fact that the company chose Clarksdale speaks volumes about Mississippi's business climate and workforce," Gov. **Phil Bryant** said. "I thank the company for its continued investment in Mississippi and for creating these jobs for our workers."

MID-DELTA REGIONAL AIRPORT NAMES NEW DIRECTOR

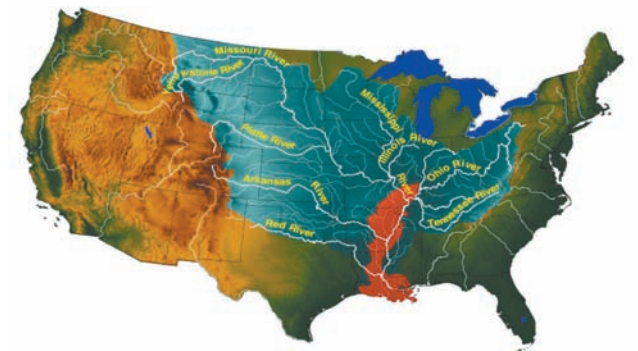
Draylan Gant has been hired as the new director of the Mid-Delta Regional Airport in Greenville. The 24-year-old Louisiana native will be on the job Sept. 17.

Mayor **Chuck Jordan** says the city received more than 20 applications for the post.

Gant studied aviation management at Louisiana Tech University before getting his master's degree in business administration at McNeese State University.

He was an intern and aircraft rescue and firefighting crewman before serving as the executive assistant at Lake Charles Regional Airport in Lake Charles, La.

Gant succeeds **Lane Rodgers**, who resigned in July.



GUEST from page 2

interests and partners convened over the past 133 years (since 1879). The thoughts, ideas, changes, additions, and improvements are captured in the form of the current MR&T project as it exists today.

The Mississippi River Commission and Corps alongside the local people, partners and interests through the long standing process continue. Listening, Inspecting, Partnering and Engineering!

FARM BILL from page 1

arise as to whether the extension should include budget offsets or reductions in farm bill spending that have been previously agreed upon by the House and Senate Agricultural Committees. If this action is taken, there would be a negotiated amount of budget savings that would be taken from the Commodity Title (direct and countercyclical payments) in order to accommodate the agreement. Most commodity groups believe that the House and Senate leadership will be very reluctant to allow for time-consuming changes to any farm law during a lame-duck Session. Therefore the most likely scenario, which Farm-State legislative staffs view to be most prominent, is the option of a simple one-year extension, unchanged, which results in eligibility for a 2013 direct payment and countercyclical payment under the same provisions as outlined under the 2008 bill. Additionally, it should be fully recognized that budget sequestration will be triggered on January 2, 2013, unless a suspension of the sequestration is enacted during the lame-duck Session. The sequestration order is estimated to be an 8% reduction on Farm Bill and other Federal accounts.

"If there is a 1-year extension of the farm law, we will be gearing up for another year of discussions in the House and Senate, recognizing that the starting point would most probably be where we left off in 2012, unless there are significant changes in the House and/or Senate Agricultural Committee leadership," added **Litton**, the Leflore County implement dealer who serves as President of Delta Council.

(This report was prepared by Delta Council, in consultation with Congressional staff, Delta Council officers, and national commodity organizations.)

Photos



Mississippi State University School of Landscape Architecture students at a recent meeting with Delta Council in Stoneville. The students were visiting the Leland area as part of a study to make suggestions to the city and Leland Chamber of Commerce regarding aesthetic improvements to the town.



Trudy Fisher, Executive Director of Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality addresses the crowd at the Delta Research and Extension Center Soybean and Corn Field Day.



Dr. Verner G. Hurt; Wife **Norma Hurt**; **Dr. Greg Bohach**, Vice President Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University; and **Dr. Mark Keenum**, President of Mississippi State University at the dedication of the Verner G. Hurt Research and Extension Building in Stoneville on August 30.



Delta Council President, **Bill Litton** (right) gives testimony before the Mississippi River Commission on the August 22nd Low Water Inspection trip.



Former Speaker of the House, **Billy McCoy** (left) and **Chip Morgan**, Executive Vice President of Delta Council (right) at the recent dedication naming the MDOT Headquarters as the William J. "Billy" McCoy Building.



Daniel Ulmer with Senator Cochran's Office (left) with **Will Long** of St. Rest Planting Company (center) and **Kurt Readus**, Acting State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Mississippi (right) on a recent tour of farm conservation practices.



Southwest U.S. cotton producers recently visited the Mississippi Delta as part of the Bayer and National Cotton Council's Producer Information Exchange. Coahoma County producer **Pete Hunter** welcomes participants at a reception in Coahoma County.



(L-R) **Woody Woodson**, **Bill Litton**, **Bowen Flowers**, **Bubba Simmons**, **Dan Branton**, and **Gibb Steele** touring the laboratories at Monsanto's Research Facility near St. Louis, MO

Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission

The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission (MSWCC) recently held their quarterly meeting in Stoneville. Delta Council and Delta F.A.R.M. served as hosts for the Commission and its staff during their regularly scheduled business meeting. Mississippi State University then provided the Commission with a tour of the Stoneville Research Complex before meeting with the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Joint Water Management District about their efforts to manage irrigation water supplies in the Delta. The following day, members of the Commission and staff participated in a conservation tour in Sunflower County. The importance and role of large scale water conservation practices like tail-water recovery systems and on-farm irrigation storage systems were highlighted during the tour.



(L-R) **Mark Gilbert, Don Underwood, Paul Rodrigue, Melba Nipper, Trinity Long, Jack Winstead, and Kurt Readus** tour conservation practices in Sunflower County.

Adult Literacy Continues Progress

The Delta Council Adult Literacy Program is making a significant impact in the lives of Delta residents. There have been ongoing programs held in Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman and Washington Counties where 15 individuals have demonstrated a 3.0 grade level improvement in reading comprehension during the course of this short 10 week program. Some students went from reading on the picture level to solidly reading on the first grade level, which is remarkable!

During a June session with the Job Corps students, each participant explained how she/he benefited from the program. One student stated, "I want to finish my GED and go to Junior College with the ultimate goal of finishing college." Another participant reported, "The program helped me learn how to sound out words and break them apart so I can score higher on the GED."

At a recent class held in Rosedale, **Marcia Vanlandingham**, Adult Literacy Instructor, expressed that the participant was delightful to work with. The Rosedale participant informed the instructor that her son, who lives in Virginia, sent her some books to read and her grandson, who attends Jackson State, is so proud of her for beginning this process. The Rosedale participant stated,

“When in Bible class, I am beginning to read the Bible more. Also, I have found some books at home that I am enjoying reading. I thank God I can read now.”

Delta Council is always looking for new programs and please call **Christie Sledge**, Delta Workforce Coordinator, at (662) 686-3388 if you would like to help us start a program in your community or workplace.

MEETING *from page 1*

have a message from a state-wide public official addressing the outlook for 2013. In addition, we are also excited to highlight a key political pundit from Washington to provide insight into the potential outcomes and impacts of the upcoming national elections.”

Mississippi House of Representatives Speaker **Phillip Gunn** of Brandon will highlight the General Session at 11 a.m.

“Speaker **Gunn** has emerged as one of the most important and respected leaders in State Government over the past few years, and we are pleased that he will come spend some time with us in the Delta,” said **Litton**. “In his first session as Speaker in the 2012 Legislative Session, his management of the House of Representatives was well received by members across all parts of the State and political affiliations.”

After **Gunn's** address, the crowd will have a luncheon and hear an address by **Nathan Gonzales** of the *Rothenberg Political Report*. Mr. **Gonzales**, who is building a reputation in Washington as a rising political pundit, will also utilize Atmos Energy and Delta Council's Audience Response System to engage the members and guests of Delta Council on the

eve of the historic 2012 election.

Please go to Delta Council's website, www.deltacouncil.org, for full biographical outlines on Mr. **Gonzales** and Speaker **Gunn**.

Six committees of Delta Council will meet in two rooms of the Capps Center in Stoneville beginning at 9 a.m.

In Capps Room A, major addresses on the Farm Bill, Delta drainage, and the water supply situation will highlight the joint meeting of the Farm Policy, Soil and Water Resources, and Flood Control Committees. In Capps Room B, leaders in regional transportation, community, and economic development efforts will address members of the Transportation, Education and Health Policy, and Development Department Committees.

Please watch your Delta Council E-News and our website for more information about committee speakers in the coming weeks.

“Again, I cannot emphasize how much we appreciate the support of C Spire for stepping up to support our Mid-Year Board of Directors meeting,” concluded **Litton**. “The **Creekmore** and **Meena** families have built a very special company that all Mississippians are proud of, and they do more than their part to give back to the State and especially the Delta.”

MSU Hosts Food Safety and Security Conference

Partnerships between leading international authorities, university researchers, and government policymakers were the focus of a daylong food safety and security conference at Mississippi State University on Sept. 10.

Organized by the University's International Institute and titled, "Technology Implementation at the Local Level: Food Security for the Future," the conference explored new opportunities for Mississippi agriculture, building capacity, global challenges and university engagement, and other issues related to the world's growing food needs.

One of the guest speakers was **Raj Shah**, who is Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and spoke on the role universities play in addressing the broad issue that is world hunger.

Since joining the agency, **Shah** and his team have set a goal to move 18 million people out of hunger internationally and to move more than seven million children out of chronic malnutrition.

He said MSU's studies on aflatoxins, a fungal disease that can devastate crop yields, play a huge role in

producing more resilient plants, in particular corn, one of the main food sources for hundreds of millions



Delta Council leader **Gibb Steele** (left), and Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce **Cindy Hyde-Smith** (center), were among a group attending the food safety and security conference at Mississippi State University on Sept. 10. They are shown with **Raj Shah**, who is the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

of people around the world.

A study by North Carolina A&T State University, in conjunction with Farough Life Sciences Research Laboratory, estimates more than a quarter of the plant's food crop is affected by aflatoxins, and exposure through ingestion can increase cancer incidents and other health problems.

"It is clear that the scientists and researchers at MSU have a unique commitment to tackling some of the technical challenges that are most significant in other parts of the world," **Shah** said.

He credits U.S. Sen. **Thad Cochran**, who was the featured guest at the conference, and MSU President **Mark Keenum** and leaders like them for making food safety and security a priority issue, saying the University has begun to lead a large American effort to bring university expertise to the task.

"It also turns out there are hundreds of students on campus there, maybe thousands, that are deeply, deeply committed to these types of issues," **Shah** said. "I suspect many other universities will follow their lead over time, but (MSU) is on the cutting edge and we want to partner with them."

PRESIDENT from page 2

ports of Rosedale, Greenville, and Vicksburg. Former Greenville Airport Director **Lane Rodgers** will provide the Committee with a synopsis of the experience of saving commercial air service to the Mississippi Delta and those considerations which lead to the final determination in maintaining this service. And, Transportation Committee Chairman **Bill Kennedy** will give a status report on current MDOT highway projects and priorities of Delta Council.

Dr. John Hilpert, the longest-serving University President in the Higher Education field in Mississippi, has announced his retirement for later this year. We have asked **Dr. Hilpert** to address his insights, experiences, and

outlook for the Higher Education system in Mississippi, and also to comment on the impact of these issues on Delta State and the Mississippi Delta.

Tom Gresham, Chairman of the Development Department Board of Directors, will summarize the highlights of those issues which the Executive Committee of the Development Department Board has identified as priority areas for their programs of work of this Department in the coming year.

I feel good about Delta Council and I feel confident that its direction, combined with the vigilant participation of so many area leaders, will produce solutions to all of these issues that would not have occurred otherwise. It is with peace of mind that I

look at so many issues with which I have become so much more familiar. Probably more important than any other single asset, which I have noticed to be prominent in Delta Council's arsenal of capabilities, has been the extraordinary level of cooperation extended to this organization by State and Federal agency personnel, and other organizations which are so vital to our ability to get things done. If it were not for the relationship, which this organization has enjoyed with MDOT, I am confident that we would not have experienced the progress we have registered in transportation matters in past years. Similarly, if it were not for the long-term relationships, which the people of this region, through Delta Council, have enjoyed with the Mississippi

Department of Environmental Quality, NRCS-USDA, FSA-USDA, ARS-USDA and the Division of Agriculture at Mississippi State, only to name a few, the Delta might oftentimes fall short of its goals. I can now see that many of the issues and opportunities, which the Delta has seized upon, would never have occurred without the careful and thoughtful processes put in motion by Delta Council.

And finally, I want to extend a special thanks to **Hu Meena**, the **Creekmore** Family, and the staff of C Spire for serving as our principal sponsor of the Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting. C Spire is a valued friend and a faithful supporter of Delta Council in so many ways. I hope to see you on Tuesday, October 30.

Delta Council

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Mississippi Development Authority Names New Deputy Director

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) recently announced **Jim McArthur** has joined the agency as Deputy Director.

"**Jim** has an outstanding professional background and has the skills and knowledge needed to successfully serve as the Deputy Director of MDA," said MDA Executive Director **Brent Christensen**. "His extensive experience in economic development will be beneficial not only to the Agency but to the entire State."

Previously, **McArthur** served for three

years as Regional Sales Director for Itron, formerly known as SmartSynch. At Itron, a leading provider of energy and water management solutions for utilities, **McArthur** was responsible for marketing the company to utilities throughout the southeast U.S., as well as developing and maintaining relationships in the municipal and cooperative utility markets and with major utility companies such as Southern Company, Ten-



Jim McArthur

nessee Valley Authority and Entergy. Before joining SmartSynch, **McArthur** was Director of Business Development for Yates Construction.

McArthur holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Mississippi, and he is a graduate of Leadership Mississippi. He has also served on the board of directors for the Mississippi Manufacturers Association and the Mississippi World Trade Center.

"Delta Council and the Mississippi Delta Developers Association look forward to working with **Jim** in his new capacity, and his hiring is further evidence that Governor **Bryant** and **Brent Christensen** are serious about assembling a top-notch team to aid in job creation," said Delta Council Development staff member **Frank Howell**. "**Jim** has a lot of family in the Delta, has worked on projects in the region before, and is aware of the opportunities and challenges as it relates to economic development. We look forward to working with him."



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