

Delta Council: Teach for America Institute a Big Catch for Region

(Stoneville) --- Enhanced education opportunities and the addition of more people and economic activity in our communities underscore the importance of supporting Teach for America's bid to place an institute in the region, according to a Delta Council educational leader.

Cass Pennington of Indianola, Co-Chair of the Delta Council Education and Health Policy Committee, said that the non-profit organization that places almost 4,000 teachers across the United States from elite American universities to serve two-year terms in primary education, will soon be making a decision on adding another education institute to train their corps members and the Mississippi Delta region is one of the finalists.

"Teach for America will be visiting Delta State University this week to choose a location for their institute that trains teachers from around the United States to go into public schools," said Dr. Pennington, a former superintendent and retired executive. "This institute will bring in hundreds of teachers and instructors annually, as well as partnering with Delta State University around the year. This would have a tremendous impact, not only on our educational development in the region, but also from an economic development standpoint."

Pennington praised Dr. John Hilpert and his staff at Delta State University for the effort they have put in to land the institute.

"Dr. Hilpert has continued to strengthen Delta State's mission as one of the best regional universities in the country. The fact that DSU is one of two finalists with a college in Colorado for this prestigious location is a testament to the respect Dr. Hilpert has brought to Delta State among his colleagues in higher education. Delta Council urges the business community from around the Delta region to support this bid similar to the support given to a manufacturing location because it is that and much more."

In addition to the institute, Teach for America currently places more than 150 recent college graduates in classrooms around the Delta. Reports indicate that this number could swell to approximately 300 in the region next year.

“Having 300 highly educated and motivated young men and women moving to the Delta every year is a positive for our education system, especially in our more rural areas where we face shortages,” noted Pennington. “In addition, the impact of 300 well-paid career people moving in to our communities across the region is akin to the location of a large manufacturing plant with its impact felt throughout the entire region.”