

Delta Council Annual Report

2002



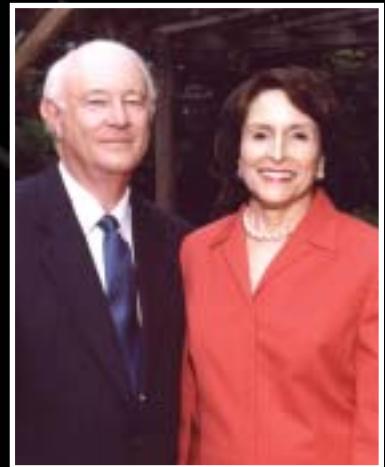
Delta
Council
annual report
2002

Message from the President

As President of Delta Council this year, I have learned firsthand what was long suspected: Delta Council is an organization that simply gets things done for the Mississippi Delta. As a farmer and ginner who lives in an area without a Chamber of Commerce, we have always relied on Delta Council for the fundamental challenges to our economic well-being, relating to farming, highways, infrastructure, and drainage.

However, my term as President of Delta Council educated me on the depth of this organization's commitment to those regional issues I was familiar with, and then a number of other Delta issues and initiatives that I never knew Delta Council had an impact on. The Delta is a unique and special place, and this unique and special organization of ours --- Delta Council --- is rising to meet the challenges of this region. I want to thank the officers, directors, and membership of Delta Council for working together to make the Delta a better place to live; the fundamental trait that makes this region and this organization stand apart.

Ben Lamensdorf



Ben & Betty Lamensdorf

Delta Council - Officers



Vice-President
Cliff Heaton
Clarksdale



Vice-President
Ray Makamson
Greenwood



Vice-President
Ray Rounsville
Charleston



Vice-President
Howard Sanders
Hollandale



Vice-President
Sledge Taylor
Cleveland



Vice-President
Huey Townsend
Belzoni



Treasurer
Frank Sibley
Marks



Chairman, Dev. Dept
Al Rankins
Greenville

Delta Council Past Presidents

- W. M. Kethley,* Cleveland(1935-37)
W.T. Wynn,* Greenville(1937-38)
John Pettey,* Greenwood(1938-39)
Ellis T. Woolfolk,* Tunica(1939-40)
James Hand, Jr.,* Rolling Fork(1940-41)
Hugh L. Gary,* Greenwood(1941-42)
Walter Sillers,* Rosedale(1942-43)
Alexander Fitz-Hugh,* Vicksburg(1943-44)
W.K. Anderson,* Clarksdale(1944-45)
Jere B. Nash,* Greenville(1945-46)
Irby Turner,* Belzoni(1946-47)
Ellis T. Woolfolk, Jr.,* Tunica (1947-48)
W.T. McKinney,* Anguilla(1948-49)
W.M. Garrard, Jr.,* Indianola(1949-50)
Sam H. Coker,* Yazoo City(1950-51)
Maury Knowlton,* Perthshire(1951-52)
J.R. Flault,* Swan Lake(1952-53)
C.R. Sayre*, Scott(1953-54)
William A. Crabil,* Marks(1954-55)
Luther W. Wade,* Greenwood(1955-56)
LeRoy P. Percy, Greenville(1956-57)
G.C. Cortright,* Rolling Fork(1957-58)
R.P. Parish,* Greenwood(1958-59)
Miller P. Holmes, Yazoo City(1959-60)
Sidney Levingston,* Ruleville(1960-61)
O.C. Carr, Jr.,* Clarksdale(1961-62)
Aven Whittington, Greenwood(1962-63)
F.H. Nance*, Cleveland(1963-64)
George K. Wade*, Greenwood(1964-65)
Frank T. Brumfield,* Inverness(1965-66)
Monty Payne,* Winterville(1966-67)
E.M. Hood, Jr., Tunica(1967-68)
James Hand III, Rolling Fork(1968-69)
- Morris Lewis, Jr.* Indianola(1969-70)
Harris S. Swayze*, Benton(1970-71)
Robert A. Carson, Marks(1971-72)
J. Tol Thomas III,* Cruger(1972-73)
Frank M. Mitchener, Jr., Sumner(1973-74)
Henry C. Self,* Marks(1974-75)
Carter Stovall,* Stovall(1975-76)
W.P. Brown, Jr.,* Schlater(1976-77)
Robroy Fisher, Glen Allan(1977-78)
Seymour Johnson, Indianola(1978-79)
Jimmy Dick Carter, Rolling Fork(1979-80)
William H. Houston III, Tunica(1980-81)
Bruce J. Brumfield, Inverness(1981-82)
W.A. Percy II, Greenville(1982-83)
R.B. Flowers, Tunica(1983-84)
B.A. Jordan, Yazoo City(1984-85)
W.T. Robertson, Holly Ridge(1985-86)
Charles W. Capps, Jr., Cleveland(1986-87)
John T. Dillard, Leland(1987-88)
John Sharp Howie, Yazoo City(1988-89)
Ralph Hand, Jr., Glendora(1989-90)
Harry Vickery, Greenville(1990-91)
Bill Gresham, Indianola(1991-92)
T. S. Shuler, Greenwood(1992-93)
John McPherson, Indianola (1993-94)
Mike Sturdivant, Jr., Itta Bena (1994-95)
Bobby Carson, Marks (1995-96)
Harley Metcalfe, Greenville (1996-97)
Griffin Norquist, Jr., Yazoo City (1997-98)
Tom Robertson, Indianola (1998-99)
Curt Presley, Clarksdale (1999-2000)
Kenneth Hood, Gunnison (2000-2001)

*Deceased

Delta Council Overview

Delta Council is an area economic development organization representing the eighteen Delta and part-Delta counties of Northwest Mississippi.

It was organized in 1935 by a group of farsighted citizens to provide a medium through which the agricultural, business, and professional leadership of the area could work together to solve common problems and promote the development of the economy of the area.



With headquarters at Stoneville, Mississippi, Delta Council is supported and financed by dues-paying members and by the counties that it represents. Its Board of Directors is elected by a referendum vote of the members representing the counties and municipalities of the area. Officers, including a president, six vice-presidents, and a treasurer are nominated and are ratified by the Board of Directors and by the membership of the organization. The Chief Executive Officer of Delta Council is hired by the Executive Committee and serves at the pleasure of that committee.



When Delta Council was organized in 1935, members focused on three main areas of activity for concentrated attention. These areas were:

- (1) The promotion of agriculture, including agricultural research and legislation relating to agricultural programs of special significance to area farmers.
- (2) Flood control and drainage which are imperative to the area's welfare.
- (3) The promotion and development of transportation facilities and services with special attention to the development of a modern highway system throughout the entire Delta.

The work of Delta Council is carried on through a comprehensive committee system that represents all phases of the economy of the area. Every member is provided with the opportunity to serve on one or more committee. Since 1957, the Council's program of work has included a full-time economic and industrial development department. This department, in conjunction with various state, area and local developmental efforts, strives to help create new job opportunities and attract investments into the area.

Committees & Chairmen

Advisory Research

Kenneth Hood, Chairman - Gunnison

Aquaculture

Austin Jones, Chairman - Moorhead

Educational Policy

Dr. Cass Pennington, Chairman - Indianola

Farm Policy

Bobby Carson, Chairman - Lambert

Flood Control

Tom Gary, Jr., Chairman - Greenwood

Forestry and Wildlife Resources

Burk Burkhardt, Chairman - Vicksburg

Ginning

Bill Kennedy, Chairman - Inverness

Highway Improvement

Ken Murphree, Chairman - Tunica

Rice and Small Grains

Travis Satterfield, Chairman - Benoit

Soil and Water Resources

Chat Phillips, Chairman - Yazoo City

Soybean, Wheat, and Feed Grains

Terry Dulaney, Chairman - Clarksdale

Arrangements Committee

Sherry Smythe, Chairman - Leland

Development Department

Al Rankins, Chairman - Greenville

Transportation: The Delta Moving Forward

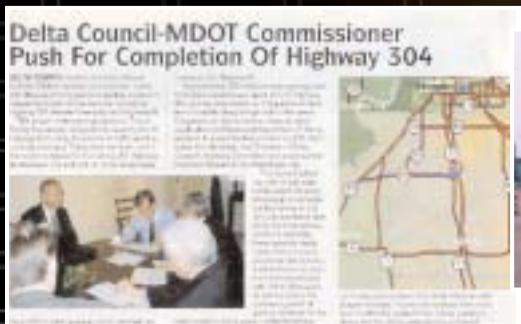
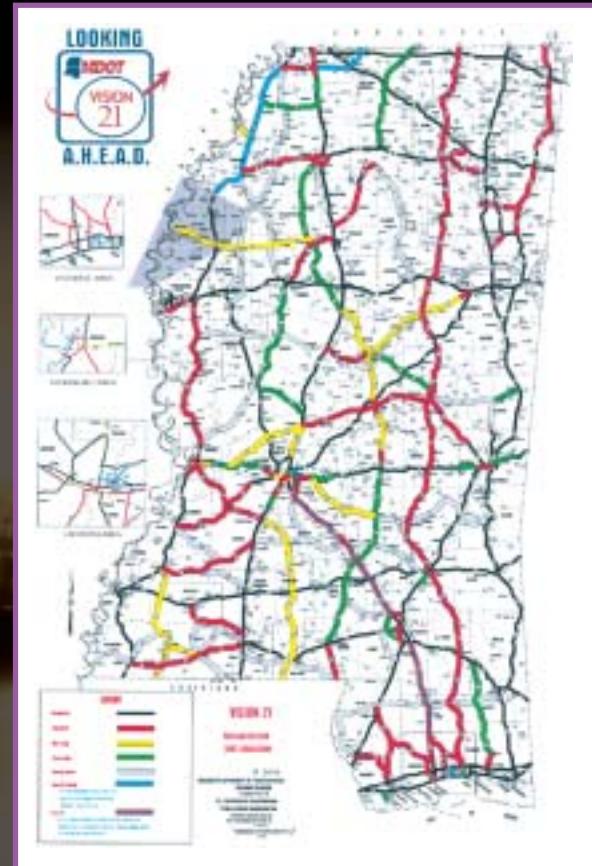
The Mississippi Delta, through the medium of Delta Council, has long worked to provide better transportation needs for this region. Many years ago, the objective was to get the region "out of the mud" whereby farmers could get their crops to market in an orderly fashion.

As the final years of the 1987 Four-Lane Highway Program wind down, the people of the Delta and the entire State of Mississippi ride on one of the top highway networks in the United States. Every citizen in our state has a four-lane highway that is within a 30-minute drive of their home. In the Delta, the four-laning of major arteries U.S. 82, U.S. 49, and U.S. 61 have made a tremendous contribution to the growth of our economy.

In 2002, the Mississippi Legislature passed their Vision 21 Highway Program with strong support and input from the Mississippi Delta and Delta Council. It includes the "immediate" priorities of four-laning MS 6 from Clarksdale to Batesville, U.S. 61 from Vicksburg to Leland, and the four-laning of MS 7 from Greenwood to Grenada.

In the area of interstate commerce, the Delta region boasts two of the most exciting transportation developments in its history. The construction of the U.S. 82 four-lane bridge over the Mississippi River south of Greenville will open the region up to more east-west commerce. The Greenville Bypass will compliment this project and provide an enhanced transportation artery for continued growth of the Delta's largest population center.

The Interstate 69 project will serve as the foundation for economic development that has not been possible in our region to date. While this critical Mid-Continent corridor from Canada to Mexico is in its planning stage, there has been more construction and planning activity in the State of Mississippi than any of the other nine states that the road traverses, and already federal highway officials expect the river crossing bridge at Eutaw Landing in Bolivar County to be among the first physical construction sites for the new highway.



"As the primary rail freight carrier of the Central Delta region, the C & G Railway appreciates the fact Delta Council understands the importance of enhanced rail capacity and works with local, state, and federal officials to impact issues. Because of their efforts, all of us in the railroad industry and the businesses we serve are better off."

*Roger Bell, President
C & G Railway*



"As a Transportation Commissioner for the State of Mississippi, I can attest to the valuable advice and support Delta Council gives to transportation developments. While they have an intense interest in realizing their transportation goals in the Delta region, the fact that they work with all areas of the State cooperatively to make positive developments happen is what sets them apart and why we rely so much on them."

*Dick Hall, Central Mississippi Commissioner
Mississippi Department of Transportation*



Funding Flood Control

A Message from **Senator Trent Lott**



I am pleased to report that President Bush has joined me in the ongoing effort to protect Mississippi's people from the ever present threat of flooding. In his budget, the President has included significant and eagerly anticipated funding that should help produce a permanent plan to protect thousands of Mississippians from high water.

Ironically, this effort coincides the 75th Anniversary of Mississippi's Great Flood of 1927 – a disaster which needlessly killed many Mississippians. In this flood, 27,000 square miles in seven states, including a large part of Mississippi, were underwater. After the water receded, 246 people were confirmed dead, although some estimates exceed 1,000 deaths. More than 700,000 people were forced from their homes, with nearly 325,000 of those forced to live in refugee camps throughout the region. After this terrible disaster, Congress passed a flood control act which survives today as the Mississippi River and Tributaries project.

I generally support this and all flood control efforts. Even a lifetime later, Mississippi must still battle floods. Though we have made great strides in checking the threat of floods, Mississippi is still very vulnerable, particularly in the Delta and our state's largest population center: the Jackson Metropolitan Area. The almost \$400,000 in President Bush's FY 2003 – the first such line item for Jackson flood control in a Presidential budget – will help complete studies into a long-term flood

control plan for the Jackson area. Several plans have been proposed. We should act quickly to select a final solution and implement it. Even a generation after the devastating 1979 Easter Flood which left a huge part of our Capitol city underwater, Jackson and its surrounding communities remain vulnerable to flood waters.

Today, about one-quarter of Mississippi's population lives in or near the Jackson Metro Area. Most Mississippians have some connection to this area, either living there themselves or having relatives there. In my case, I have my only daughter, my son-in-law and my new grandchild living near Jackson. They are among many native Mississippians and new Mississippians who have made Rankin, Madison or Hinds county their home in the two decades since the Easter Flood. Much of this new residential and economic growth is still within earshot of the Pearl River. Implementing a comprehensive flood control plan for the Jackson area is arguably more important today than ever before.



I am equally supportive of flood control efforts in other vulnerable parts of Mississippi, including the Mississippi Delta. I reject the notion advanced by some that flood control in the Delta region is environmentally irresponsible, but perfectly okay for more affluent areas. As a U.S. Senator elected by Mississippians from all parts of our state, I don't have the luxury of this exclusivity. To me, all Mississippians deserve this basic protection regardless of geography or property value.

In the Delta, many of the residents threatened by flooding are poor, uninsured citizens who simply could not replace their homes and property in the event of major flooding. They may be especially devastated by the loss of a loved one in a flood. On a per-capita basis, they perhaps stand more at risk than the more affluent residents of Jackson. That is why I support Delta flood control efforts along both the Mississippi River and the Yazoo River. In addition to the human assets, some of Mississippi's most productive farmland is contained in the Delta, and still threatened by flooding.

In Mississippi, controlling flood waters has always been a matter of life and death. The 1927 flood taught us that. That lesson was repeated again in 1979 when a large portion of Jackson was submerged in the Easter Flood. I am thankful that President Bush recognizes the importance of flood control efforts in the Mississippi River valley and has demonstrated that commitment by an unprecedented allocation of funds to address Jackson flooding. I will continue to support other flood control efforts throughout our state. Whether in Jackson or the Mississippi Delta, property is property and lives are lives, regardless of location. All should be equally protected from flooding.

"I always knew how hard Delta Council worked to assist people and property in my area from the hardships of flooding. As the chairman of Delta Council's Flood Control Committee, I have witnessed the intense effort and focus that this organization brings to all areas of our region. The Levee Boards and the Corps of Engineers do a tremendous job supporting, sponsoring, and implementing flood protection projects. It is critical that Delta Council continue as a voice of strong advocacy for these critical projects that affect the citizens and business community in our region."

**Tommy Gary, Farmer
Greenwood**



"Delta flood control is an ongoing task that is necessary in order to develop the Mississippi Delta and to enhance the quality of life for our citizens. Reduced flooding is essential for the Delta to attract business and industry."

**Larry Bailey, President
Mississippi Delta Community College**



Agriculture

While the continued slump in farm commodity prices and the re-authorization of new farm legislation (see Page 10) has dominated the minds of most people within agriculture over the past year, Delta Council is steady in focusing on other issues that are just as critical to the future of our farm sector; research and regulatory issues.

There is a reason Delta Council is located in Stoneville, which is regarded as the finest agricultural research center in the world. The citizens of the Delta have long realized the important investment necessary to sustain this world-class campus because the return on this investment has been so critical to the Delta's economy.



The recognized leader in problem-solving research in production agriculture, Stoneville boasts of more than 100 Ph.D.'s and 400 technical assistants that make agriculture, and the Delta in particular, more world-price competitive.

Stoneville has risen to meet the challenges of a new age in agriculture. Just as the Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center was created at Stoneville in order to meet the challenges and possibilities of a young, billion-dollar catfish industry, there are currently other exciting new developments at the experiment station.

The USDA's Agricultural Research Service will soon be home to a new 53,000 square foot National Biological Control Laboratory where scientists will test methods of using insects and other organisms to control pests. The \$15 million dollar facility will employ 50 personnel and 15 scientists.

In response to a growing need to accommodate more people that travel from all over the United States and the world to visit this unique agricultural experiment station, Mississippi State University is finalizing plans for a multi-purpose facility that will allow the tens of thousands of visitors annually to interact.



Delta Council continues its emphasis on regulatory and policy issues that confront production agriculture in the Mississippi Delta by working with producers, allied agricultural businesses, and state and federal regulatory agencies.

Delta Council understands that the fundamental issues that face agriculture are best resolved when the people who have the largest stake in the land, both in terms of investment and knowledge, are sitting at the table to make wise and careful decisions.

"Whether catfish, cotton, rice, or rural development issues are facing the Mississippi Delta, I have noticed that Delta Council is in this town working to advance the interest of its area."

*Bill Hawks,
Under Secretary of Agriculture*



"Research is always a long-term, high-risk investment with each project being important to the overall objective to problem-solving, even though many of these projects never produce an answer that can be applied. Delta Council has always demonstrated a unique ability to be farsighted, and it has paid off in a big way if one looks at Delta Council's impact on the Stoneville research complex."

*Archie Tucker, Deputy Administrator
USDA-ARS, Stoneville*



Business Development

Development Department of **Delta Council**

Delta Council continues to focus on regional coordination of economic development efforts, working with local, state, and federal agencies to promote the attraction of quality jobs to the region and increased investment opportunities.

Delta Council focuses these regional economic development efforts in three ways: service to existing businesses and industry to help them prosper and expand their operations in the Delta; recruitment of new industries to the region; and service to communities, counties, and other public bodies located in the region.

The organization believes that the region must maximize all available opportunities afforded to the Delta region. Programs such as the Growth and Prosperity Act (GAP), Empowerment Zone, Renewal Communities, and the Delta Regional Authority all are unique to the Delta region and can aid in increased capital investment. The Delta Council Development Department continues to utilize all state programs, such as those administered by the Mississippi Development Authority, and federal programs, such as USDA Rural Development, to attract jobs and investment to the Delta.



As a response to the fact that the Mississippi Delta is perhaps the only place in the country where we have high unemployment and a critical shortage of skilled labor, Delta Council worked with private companies, legislative leaders, and Mississippi Delta Community College to coordinate the planning and completion of the Delta Center for Manufacturing Technology. The one-year old facility is providing skills assessment, remedial instruction, employment skills and advanced training for those already employed.

Delta Council places so much emphasis on workforce training because of the desperate need for more employment opportunity for Delta citizens. Furthermore, Delta industries that have aggressively pursued workforce training report that employees in their Delta operations far exceed the capabilities of

other company operations around the country. They must be given the tools to compete!

The Development Department, in collaboration with Mississippi State University, continues to implement the Delta Project, a project aimed at utilizing sound strategies and new ideas to aid Delta economic development. Programs related to increasing productivity in Delta existing industry (Lean Manufacturing) and "real-time" economic, labor, infrastructure, and demographic data through the Delta Data Center for local communities, counties, businesses, and developers have been the strength of the program. Currently, there is an Industry and Business Outreach Coordinator on staff at Delta Council and hiring is underway for the Delta Data Center position.

"The Delta has experienced the rough manufacturing economy that the rest of the country has felt over the past several years, and in fact, held its ground in manufacturing much better than many other parts of our state and region. There appears to be a lot more activity by companies during the past few months and the Delta Council Development Department will be aggressive in its service to new and existing industry."

*Al Rankins, Chairman
Development Department*



Catfish: A Year of Challenge

The catfish industry in Mississippi faced perhaps the roughest year in its barely 40-year history as low prices wreaked havoc.

The Vietnamese fish, which is not in the same family as the North American freshwater species known as catfish, effectively captured almost one quarter of the United States market by this consumer deception and the issue intensified to the level where it was hotly debated on the floor of the United States Senate.



The catfish industry, working through groups such as Delta Council, the Catfish Farmers of America, and The Catfish Institute, repeatedly asked the Food and Drug Administration to not allow the Vietnamese fish from being labeled as a "catfish", but they did not respond. After scientific verification that the species was indeed not a member of the same taxonomic family as the U.S. catfish, the catfish industry and Southern Congressmen were able to muster efforts that, while facing vocal opposition from colleagues, was successful in ensuring that the Vietnamese fish could not be labeled as a "catfish."



In addition, the industry was able to successfully pass legislation in Jackson that would call for all wholesalers and retailers of catfish products to properly label catfish products so that consumers would know exactly what product they were purchasing.

Delta Council will continue to work with federal and state lawmakers to make certain that this mislabeling will not continue and thwart any future efforts by importers and other countries to fraudulently take advantage of the customer base the catfish industry has worked diligently to cultivate by providing a superior, farm-raised North American catfish product.

In another important pocketbook issue, Delta Council worked with state lawmakers to overturn a ruling by the Mississippi Tax Commission that would have effectively tripled property taxes on most Delta catfish farms.



"During the Vietnamese fish battle, the catfish industry was fortunate to have a number of friends that helped reverse a very bad decision. Delta Council was fundamental to this success."

**Harry Simmons,
Yazoo City**



"The efforts by Delta Council in the Mississippi Legislature this year resulted in saving farmers approximately \$15 per acre in property taxes. If I stay in the catfish business another 10-20 years, you could say that this single action by Delta Council saved my farm between \$50,000 to \$100,000 alone."

**Lester Myers,
Isola**



Delta Education Initiative: An Investment in the Future

The economic success and quality of life of any given area is determined by a number of varying factors. However, the education of the area's citizens is recognized as the foundation for all other efforts.

Delta Council, working with the consortium of 34 Delta school districts known as the Delta Area Association for Improvement of Schools (DAIS) and Delta State University, has established The Delta Education Initiative to ensure that the Delta's foundation is strengthened for our region's future. With funding support from Congress through the efforts of Senators Thad Cochran and Trent Lott (\$1.5M), this effort is already being recognized for both positive long-term and short-term progress in education that is accountable, measurable, and attainable.



After meeting with DAIS and Delta State, the group agreed on a five-component plan to improve K-12 public education in the Delta. They included: attacking the teacher shortage; impacting the development of birth to five-year old children; by training a new generation of superior school administrators; and by providing the necessary technology tools.



In just two years, all aspects of the five-component program are being partially or completely met. Over 52 students at Delta State University are receiving scholarship awards of \$6,700 per year to obtain a teaching degree. In return, they have agreed to teach in a Delta school district for at least four consecutive years upon graduation. In the process, these students will help fill important teacher shortages in Delta school districts.

In addition, administrators at Delta schools have numerous opportunities through the Delta Education Initiative to obtain advanced degrees, receive stipends for enhancement sabbaticals, and receive further training and knowledge through guest lectures and travel arranged by Delta State University.

The Birth to Kindergarten Pilot Program, to be created in the Indianola School district, will utilize all existing medical and service agencies, and nationally-acclaimed experts, to work with community and educational leaders in Indianola to focus on creating opportunities for all children beginning at birth. The aim of the pilot program is to design a model for the development of the children in a way that will enable them to enter 1st Grade functioning at a six-year-old level, as opposed to the prevailing three-year-old level in so many Delta cases.



"I appreciate the work Delta Council, the Delta Superintendents, and Delta State University did to make the Delta Education Initiative a reality. I am enjoying a great opportunity to receive my degree from Delta State on a full scholarship and then looking forward to a teaching career in the Mississippi Delta."

**Janna Lyons, DSU Education Initiative
Scholarship Recipient
Liberty, MS**



Overview of Delta Health Initiative

The health of Delta citizens is crucial to the economic and social well-being of our region. Over the past year, Delta Council, the Delta Regional Authority, Delta State University, Mississippi Valley State University, the Mississippi State Department of Health, The University of Mississippi Medical Center, and the Delta Area Health Education Center have been collaborating to review the potential of establishing a Delta-wide health care initiative with the primary focus being, rural, community-based health care improvements. There are enormous opportunities for these groups to impact the health of the Delta, but according to most health care professionals, the most chronic and most prevalent problem with the labor force and general population in the Delta is hypertension and diabetes.

PARTNERS

- Delta Area Health Center
- Delta Council
- Delta State University
- Mississippi State University
- University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Mississippi Valley State University

QUICK FACTS

- Alliance will be located in MS State University branch campus in Stoneville
- \$1.5 million appropriated in FY2002
- Delta State University will be lead agency
- Alliance will have board representation from all partners, as well as health care professionals, MS Medical Association, MS Hospital Association, and community health agencies
- Senator Thad Cochran was the impetus for alliance and has been the chief advocate of more emphasis on Delta health

The goals of the Delta Health Alliance are to increase the access and availability of health care: conduct and apply health research, and offer health education programs. Making care more readily available to the citizens of the Delta will include; attracting more health professionals, enhancing availability of care, and enhancing the coordination of care. The purposes of the research initiative include: finding better ways to confront and target disease and illness in the Delta; learning more about environmental, biological, and cultural factors, and sharing information with professionals and community organizations. Finally, the Delta

Health Alliance will focus on breaking the cycle of poor health perpetuated from generation to generation by focusing educational outreach on each child, on family, on schools, and on community support.

The effort would also serve to establish another longstanding Delta Council policy—the establishment of a Mississippi Agromedicine Program. This effort will a) extend efforts for the prevention of agricultural related injuries, b) promote the prevention of exposure to agricultural crop protection products among farm workers, c) offer critically needed health care advisories to local physicians for the proper care of those victims of toxic exposure, and agricultural accidents, and, d) provide educational outreach health care services specifically targeted to rural Mississippians.

MISSISSIPPI & THE DELTA RANKS

- 1st in heart disease death rate
- 1st in age adjusted death rate
- 1st in prevalence for diabetes
- 1st in lack of breast cancer screening
- 1st in population undeserved by primary doctors
- 2nd in overweight population
- 2nd in hospitalization and emergency room visits
- 5th in uninsured population

“Delta Council played a tremendous role in getting all of the key players to the table to form the Delta Health Alliance. This alliance holds the potential of ensuring a healthier future for all our citizens in the Mississippi Delta and bringing greater emphasis to education, access, and research.”

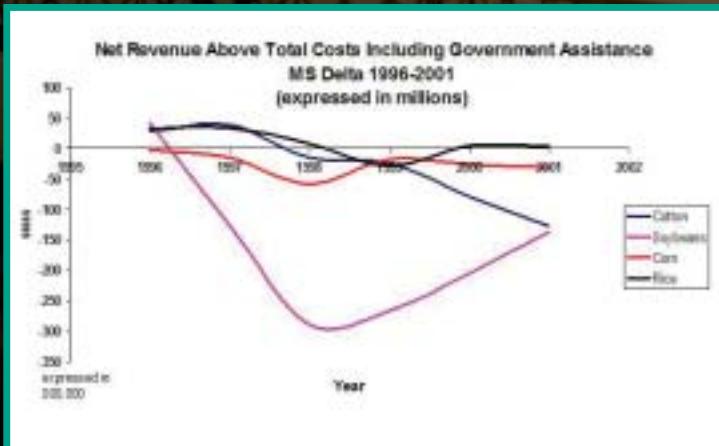
*Howard Sanders,
Hollandale*



The 2002 Farm Bill holds promise for the Delta

The downsizing of Delta agriculture began in 1998, when market prices plummeted and for four consecutive crop seasons, the balance sheet of Delta farms deteriorated to their worst condition since the 1950's. The Mississippi Delta's principal crops of cotton, soybeans, rice, and catfish have experienced market prices that have set new record-lows.

With the current economic crisis facing agriculture serving as the back drop for passage of new farm legislation, the Congress and the White House acted in 2002 in a way which clearly states that U.S. farm policy is aimed at maintaining a reliable, economical, safe, abundant, and sustainable agricultural sector and food supply.



Previous farm legislation did not adequately respond to the radical market price swings that occurred between 1996 and 2002. Furthermore, the old bill did not possess any reasonable accommodations for the impact that the strong U.S. dollar has had in overseas markets. Although national food and agricultural policy should not be expected to fully address the cost-price risk associated with globally competitive agriculture production, it is clear at first glance that this new law possesses greater capacity to respond to complex and severely adverse economic impacts that find their origin in such issues as the strong U.S. dollar in the Asian marketplace.

The prosperity of Delta agriculture rests on cost efficiency, globally competitive yields, and strong markets that send price signals from domestic and international markets. The recently enacted 2002 Farm Legislation is part of the short term and long-range solution to creating a bridge between those periods of weak demand, low prices, and a Delta farmer's ability to sustain through these periods.

Cotton and rice state members of the Congress played the pivotal role over and over again during the farm bill debates to rescue the farm bill. Consequently, the policy reforms instituted in the new farm legislation promise to bring more economic stability to rural areas of the south, such as the Mississippi Delta, during the 6-year life of the new legislation.

Agriculture remains the dominant economic force in the Mississippi Delta, and the 2002 Farm Bill should infuse some important optimism into our communities, producers, landowners, and agri-businesses.

"Low prices and poor growing seasons have plagued Delta producers for the past three years. Most of the producers that I have worked with have budget deficits. The Farm Security and Rural Development Act of 2002 will improve income stability for Delta producers."

*Steve Martin,
Agricultural Economist Delta Research
and Extension Center*



"We have seen a serious deterioration in our customers' balance sheet in the past few years. It was critical that we get a Farm Bill that would give us the down side protection we need in order to continue to hold the net worth that we have. Without the help of our federal delegation and Delta Council, I do not believe the new Farm Bill would have been passed in a way that is meaningful to the Delta."

*Fred Miller,
Bank of Anguilla*



Delta Wildlife



Farmers and landowners will and do the right thing for our wildlife, our environment, and our quality of life here in the Delta. Created over a decade ago, Delta Wildlife and Delta F.A.R.M. assist them with the tools necessary to make improvements on the land.

Since 1990, Delta Wildlife has established a proven track record of making improvements on the ground in the Delta. Guided by a Board of Directors and membership who work, live among, and love the land we call the Delta, the biologists at Delta Wildlife seek new and creative answers to the environmental concerns of the Delta.

We are proud of the natural resources we have in the Delta: the streams, lakes, fields, wildlife, cypress brakes, and our own backyards. Delta Wildlife works every day to not only ensure that we remain good stewards of this gift, but that we pass it along for future generations.

Both Delta Wildlife and Delta F.A.R.M. are co-located in the Delta Council Building in Stoneville and share the same principles that have guided Delta Council for the past 67 years.

Delta Wildlife would like to thank its major Sponsors

Anderson Tully Company
Bank of Yazoo City
BankPlus
Bolivar Medical Center
Catfish Farmers of Mississippi
Cicero's
Columbia Gulf Transmission
Coopwood Communications
Delta and Pine Land Company
Delta Business Journal
Dulaney Seed
Delta Timber and Land Company
Dodge
Entergy
Environmental Protection Agency
Farmer's Incorporated
Farmer's Tractor
Federal Land Bank
FMC
James Ceranti's White Wilson
Joe Mac Hudspeth, Jr.
Kings Daughters Hospital
Lamar Advertising
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Division of Tourism
Mississippi Department of Wildlife
Fisheries and Parks
Mississippi Levee Board
Monsanto
Mossy Oak
Pennington Seed Co.
Planters Bank
Quality Printing
Stoneville Insurance
Stoneville Pedigreed Seed
Swiftwater Sales and Rentals
WABG-TV
Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau
WBAQ 97.9
WDMS 100.7
WIQQ 102.3
WNIX 1330
WYMX 99.1

Quail Habitat Restoration Project:

Delta Wildlife has begun an extensive quail and grassland songbird habitat restoration project that will establish 50 miles of new habitat and improve water quality in the Bogue Phalia and Sunflower Rivers. This project will be implemented over a 3-year period as each site will be mapped, planted, and managed by Delta Wildlife. After establishment, the project sites will be monitored by the Mississippi State University College of Forest Resources to document the wildlife and water quality benefits.



Each project site will be planted in native warm season grasses and legumes that are beneficial to quail and grassland songbirds. The plantings will also serve as filter strips to filter out sediment and other non-point source agricultural run-off before it reaches the Big Sunflower River. All project sites are linear in nature and rarely more than 30 feet wide. However, the plantings used and the widths have been proven by the Tall Timbers Research Facility in Georgia to yield a 10-fold increase in existing quail populations in only 3 years.

Major funding for the project has been granted to Delta Wildlife by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality through Environmental Protection Agency. Other project support has come from Natural Resources Conservation Service Wildlife Habitat Management Institute, Mississippi State University, and Monsanto.

Delta Wildlife was founded in 1990 by a group of landowners and businessmen who wanted the opportunity to address wildlife and natural resource issues specific to the Mississippi Delta. Today, the organization continues to address natural resource issues by developing and implementing creative projects that benefit the native flora and fauna of the region.

*Bill Kennedy,
Chairman and President,
Delta Wildlife, Inc.*



Delta F.A.R.M.

Much like Delta Wildlife, Delta F.A.R.M. sharply focuses on the critical issues surrounding natural resource stewardship --- on the farm. In a little over three years, Delta F.A.R.M. has set the standard nationally for a model with which the Environmental Protection Agency has said should be the goal of any new farm conservation efforts. In fact, it has served as the model for several farm stewardship programs around the country.

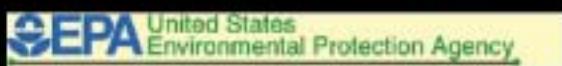
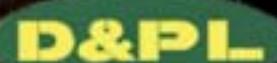
With over a half-million acres of Delta land enrolled in the program, Delta F.A.R.M. serves as the technical resource through which any producer or landowner can seek in order to make improvements on the land.

Highlights:

- Enrolled 512,000 acres of cropland into the program.
- Hosted Conservation Tour highlighting EQIP and voluntary conservation practices on working farms.
- Developed a brochure on the Continuous CRP Program
- Evaluated voluntary conservation efforts established on 410,000 acres.
 - 11% increase in the use of Soil Conservation Plans
 - 6% increase in the use of grass filter strips
 - 5% increase in the use of grass waterways
 - 60,000 acre increase in conservation tillage
 - 4% increase in the management of riparian areas
 - 12% increase in the impoundment of winter water
 - 15% increase in the sealing of abandoned wells
 - 9% increase in the recycling of pesticide containers
 - 9% increase in the use of wildlife management plans



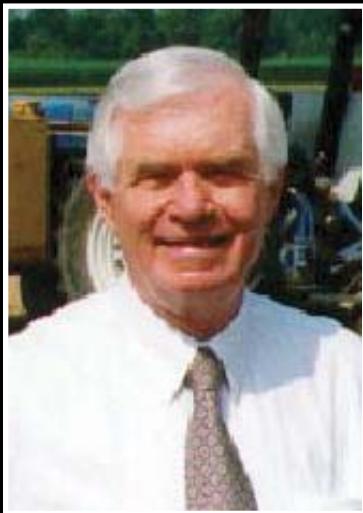
Delta F.A.R.M.'s Major Sponsors:



Delta F.A.R.M. has found a niche in the agricultural landscape by providing farmers with the necessary economic and technical information to develop and implement voluntary conservation practices that restore and enhance our soil and water resources. In addition, the organization documents the voluntary conservation efforts of Delta producers and has used that information to earn a seat at the table when new conservation programs and/or regulatory laws are being discussed. The organization has become the environmental voice of Delta farmers and the conduit between them and public natural resource agencies.

*Philip Barbour, Chairman
Delta F.A.R.M.*





2002 Delta Council Annual Meeting

Keynote Speaker: Senator Thad Cochran

What the Delta has to say about Thad Cochran

"Had it not been for Senator Cochran, I wouldn't have been able to go to Delta State University, I probably would have never achieved my dreams of being a school teacher, and I certainly would not be part of the teaching corps of the Mississippi Delta upon graduation."

*Christy Odom,
DSU Education Initiative
Scholarship Recipient,
Batesville, MS*



"In 1972, when Thad Cochran first ran for Congress, he came up through the Delta and asked questions about the need for better flood protection in the Delta. He didn't rely on newspaper articles or secondhand reports of flooding in the Delta; instead, he came to the Delta to look at the faces of flooding. I don't believe Senator Cochran has ever forgotten the importance of flood protection in the Delta, because he has remained committed to better flood protection for the Delta for all of the past 30 years."



*Jimmie Dick Carter,
Rolling Fork*

"Senator Cochran has always been sensitive to the needs of the students, faculty, and administration of this university and his efforts at sustaining federal support for Mississippi Valley State University has been the margin which was required to make us survive during tough times here in the state."

*Dr. Lester Newman, President,
MVSU, Itta Bena, MS.*



"It took courage and know-how for Senator Cochran to step forward and take on the consumer fraud which was being advanced by the Vietnamese fish imports, and when economic stability is finally restored in the catfish industry, most of us know that it will be because Senator Cochran took action on our behalf once again."



*Dick Stevens, Confish,
Isola, MS.*

"Until I got involved in Delta Council, as a young farmer, I really never fully understood the impact which Thad Cochran has had on national farm policy which affects my family.

There is no doubt in my mind that Thad Cochran has had a greater impact on Mississippi agriculture than any individual in my lifetime."

*John McKee, Farmer,
Friars Point, MS.*



"Most people are familiar with Thad Cochran's accomplishments when it comes to agriculture, catfish research, highways and flood control in the Delta, but in our small part of the world, we were touched by the fact that he took the time to help us get a rural water system to the hundreds of families who have lived in this area their whole life without a reliable or clean water supply."



*Grace Porter,
Valley Park, MS*

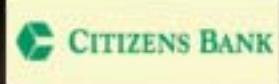
**The Delta wouldn't be the same without them
...and Delta Council wouldn't be either**

| | |
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| BASF | Horseshoe Casino |
| Bayer | Isle of Capri Casino |
| BellSouth | Indi-Bel, Inc. |
| Boyd Gaming/Sam's Town | Jimmy Sanders, Inc. |
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**Delta Council appreciates these
companies who stepped forward to make
the 67th Annual Meeting a success.**



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