

2004



Delta Council Annual Report



Delta Council

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dan Branton, *President*



Dan & Sheila Branton

I have enjoyed serving as your 2003-2004 Delta Council President, and believe that the Mississippi Delta continues to have a bright future. As you read through this Annual Report on just some of the current activities of this organization, I think you will get a glimpse of why that is true --- people from all over the Mississippi Delta willing to stand up and be counted on the issues that confront those of us who live and do business in the region.

There is good reason for optimism--agriculture had one of its best years in decades; existing industries in the Delta are showing strong signs of growth; and, we have begun to see new businesses make long-term commitments to the region. Furthermore, situations that some called hopeless a few years ago --- teacher shortages in the Delta, health care, workforce training, literacy, new industrial locations, and continued flood relief, among many others --- have been helped by the work of this organization. Delta Council cannot impact the direction of the international economy or the price of commodities, but we can work on those issues that directly affect our little piece of the world in order that we may enjoy a better economy and quality of life today and tomorrow.

- Dan Branton
Leland

DELTA COUNCIL OFFICERS 2004



Cobie Collins
Vice President
Yazoo City



Scott Coopwood
Vice President
Cleveland



John McKee
Vice President
Clarksdale



Carver Randle
Treasurer
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Ronnie Robertson
Vice President
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Mike Sanders
Vice President
Cleveland



Fred Miller
Treasurer
Anguilla



Al Rankins
Chairman, Dev. Dept.
Greenville

Delta Council

Our mission is to work diligently every day to enhance and expand the Delta's opportunities and to play an effective role in shaping a brighter future for Northwest Mississippi.

DELTA COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Steep in tradition...not afraid of change.
Delta Council is proud of its tradition.

William Faulkner's famous speech to the 1952 Delta Council Day, the announcement of the Marshall Plan at the 1947 Delta Council Day by State Department Official Dean Acheson, then-Majority Leader Robert Byrd playing his violin on stage, and the swearing-in of Delta Council leader Bill Hawks as Undersecretary of Agriculture, by the Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman in 2001: The tradition of Delta Council Day continues on. Great-grandsons of Delta Council founders are now seen in attendance at the Delta Council Annual Meeting and important policy decisions continue to emerge year after year in conference rooms around the Delta which impact national farm policy, major transportation issues, workforce training, and higher education. Yes, even after 69 years, Delta Council has not taken its eye off of the fundamentals which have served as the proving ground for the national reputation which the organization has built for getting things done.

Afraid of change?

Where else, or better yet, who else would propose a tax increase in an election year with the expectation of bringing 4-lane highways within 25 minutes of every citizen in the state?



Cong. Jerry Moran, Dan Branton, and Cong. Chip Pickering in a meeting at the Delta Council building in Stoneville

Is Delta Council afraid of change?

Since the days of Dr. William Kethley, the President of Delta State University and first President of Delta Council, lawyer and farmer Billy Wynn of Greenville, James Hand of Rolling Fork, Sam Coker of Yazoo City, and many others, Delta Council has held a high respect for change, ... and that is why the people of the region have looked to Delta Council to cause change.



Past President, Brian Jones (2002-03) and family members at the 68th Annual Meeting

Where else would farmers ask the state legislature to place a surcharge on pesticide purchases in order to utilize the fees to monitor for groundwater protection?

Where else would business leaders and educators go to a conference room and agree on a strategy for overcoming the chronic effects of teacher shortages and implement the plan with a goal for reversing the problem in ten years?

And, *who* would set out with an ambitious goal to seek emergency feed assistance to a devastated catfish industry which was under siege from foreign imports?

The answer lies inside small hamlets like Holly Ridge, Inverness, Sumner, Holly Bluff, Rolling Fork, Hollandale, Minter City, Tunica, Mattson, and a host of other larger towns in Northwest Mississippi that proudly claim that they are from the *Delta* first, and receive their mail at a zipcode which is a subdivision of the region.

COMMITTEES & CHAIRMEN

Advisory Research

Kenneth Hood, Chairman - Gunnison

Aquaculture

Austin Jones, Chairman - Moorhead

Educational Policy

Howard Sanders, Chairman - Hollandale

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

Jim Robertson, Chairman - Inverness

Arrangements Committee

Sherry Smythe, Chairman - Ieland

Development Department

Al Rankins, Chairman - Greenville



Delta Council



"Delta Council is one of only a few farm organizations in the United States recognized on Capital Hill, in the White House, and in the Department of Agriculture, as being a leading spokesman for agriculture."

– Woods Eastland, C.E.O., Staplcotn



DELTA COUNCIL AGRICULTURE



Agriculture continues to be very important to the Delta economy.

The latest information from the Mississippi State University Department of Agricultural Economics shows that direct and spillover impact from the agricultural and forestry sectors of the Delta Council area make the following contributions to our business climate: 49.2% employment and 63.9% of Delta income.

These figures demonstrate very clearly that if the prosperity of this area is going to improve, then agricultural income must make a significant increase.

In order to improve income, we must be successful in our efforts to sustain higher yields; therefore, reducing input costs. It is also imperative that we are successful in dealing with the pressures of globalization in an equitable manner.

– Bruce Brumfield, Inverness
Past President, Delta Council (1982-83)



"As the catfish industry faced a deliberate and insidious assault on the United States farm-raised catfish industry by Vietnam, we knew that the industry was in for a long legal and political battle. The Catfish Farmers of America Vietnamese Committee associated ourselves immediately with Delta Council to help fight their efforts. They were a tremendous asset in allowing us to be successful."

– Seymour Johnson, Indianola
Chair, Catfish Farmers of America Vietnamese Committee

DELTA COUNCIL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As we enter 2004, the economic picture is much brighter. Existing industries are showing signs of strength as major expansion plans have been announced in the Delta. Meanwhile, new industry and business location has been stronger than any one time in the last decade - industries with strong wage rates that make precise and advanced products.

During the worst days of the manufacturing downturn, it was said by many naysayers that the Delta may not ever be able to compete --- that our workforce could not perform at the level necessary. Delta Council, along with local and state agencies, educational institutions, and industry executives, knew better. The region had already invested heavily in workforce training to ensure that the Delta's superior workforce had the most advanced and newest training possible.



Greenwood Mayor, Harry Smith, Leflore County Supervisor, Robert Moore, Hamlin HVAC CEO, Bill Hamlin, and Miss. Valley State University, Vice President, Moses Newsome at Hamlin's ground breaking in the Greenwood Industrial Park

Industries like Baxter Healthcare, Delta Wire, Uncle Ben's, and Milwaukee Electric Tool, consistently say the workforce in the Delta is as adept as any in the country. New industries, such as Faurecia, Textron, SportRak, and Casco see the vast potential that the Delta workforce offers their companies.

Meanwhile, the resources necessary to constantly upgrade the skills of this tremendous asset continue to be directed so that the Delta can capitalize on today's potential and tomorrow's promise.



Textron CEO, Rick Clayton, Gov. Haley Barbour, Delta Council Development Department Chairman, Al Rankins, Delta Council President, Dan Branton, and Cong. Bennie Thompson at Textron's announcement in Greenville



"Businesses are constantly looking at ways to cut costs, but at the same time, training is an essential part of any company's growth. Because of the grant monies that have become available,

Viking has been able to provide more training for its employees more quickly, more economically, and we have not been forced to send employees out of the state for training. Quality training is available locally, and in some cases, on site. We have been very thankful for the efforts of Delta Council."

*Jennifer Marshall, Training Coordinator
Viking Range Corporation*





Morgan Keegan

Leopon Phillips



Gary Gaines



Roy Humphreys

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Buddy Bass




The KBH
CLARKDALE • MS
Corporation



Bill Allen



Bank Plus
It's more than a name. It's a promise.



69th
Delta Council
Annual Meeting

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
HONORABLE HALEY BARBOUR
Governor, State of Mississippi

Haley Barbour

DELTA COUNCIL MANAGING WATER



The river, after millions of years of flooding and dropping its silt, gave us our home. The Mississippi Delta is the most fertile of alluvial plains along with an aquifer of clean and plentiful life giving water.

The gift was not unconditional. The river's habit of flooding has not changed and its aquifer can be depleted and fouled. For over a hundred years we have tried, for the most part successfully, to keep it in its banks. But it is an unending tasks. Just as vital, more recently, we have added conserving and preserving the aquifer as major tasks.

Our gift is understood and valued. We will do the necessary to protect and nurture it. It is our home.

- William A. Percy, II, Greenville
Past President, Delta Council (1982-83)



"That old Mississippi River has never had one ounce of racial prejudice. It will drown or wash away a white man just as quick as a Negro and never think twice about it. When it come busting over those levees, it doesn't stop to ask where the colored section is, it just takes it all. There's a particular equality about the river, an equality that comes in something so great and powerful and so potentially good that no man can change it."

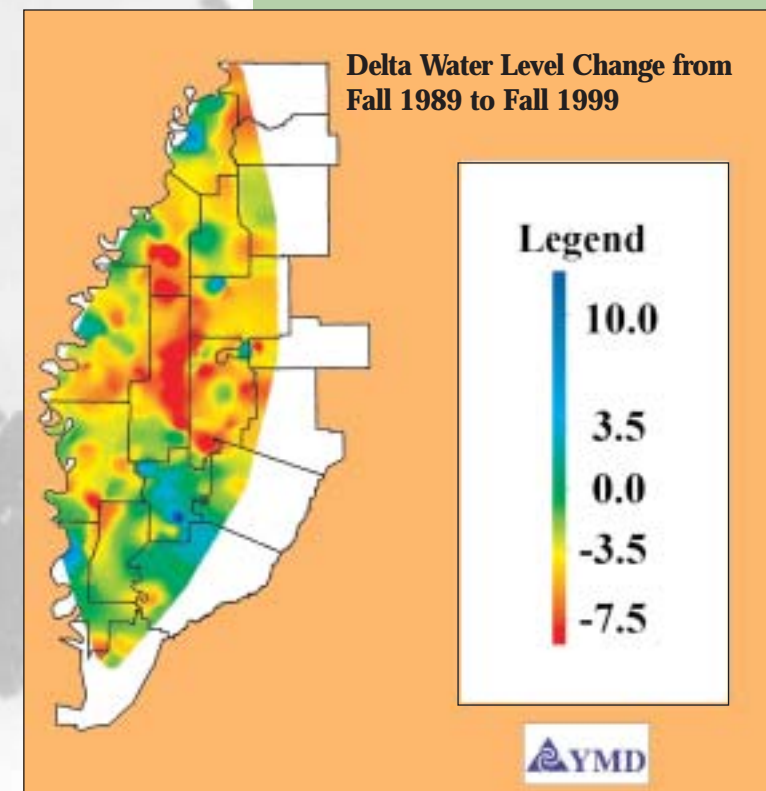
- The late, Dr. Aaron Henry
Civil Rights Pioneer and State Representative

Delta Council

"We rely on Delta Council to help us coordinate all of our efforts with local, state, and federal officials and agencies to see that our congressionally-authorized projects are constructed on schedule and adequately funded. I don't think there is any way to measure the benefits that we have received from Delta Council in trying to do our job and provide the services that the people of the Delta expect from the Levee Board."



- Jim Wanamaker
Chief Engineer,
Miss. Levee Board



DELTA COUNCIL COMING FULL CIRCLE: Health Care and Education

Few people in the Delta and even those most familiar with the history of Delta Council realize that the early days of the organization were focused on improved health care and higher education. As the second president of Delta Council, Billy Wynn of Greenville, told the founders of Delta Council that the health and education of the Delta population was just as fundamental to the future of the Delta as highways, flood control, and agriculture.

The fledgling organization of farmers and business leaders took up the challenge and by 1938 members of Congress and the State Legislature were being called upon by Delta Council leaders to place more emphasis on the health care needs of the rural, farm population that was distributed across the countryside of the Mississippi Delta. County health clinics, supported with registered nurses, offered the promise of basic health care services for a population which suffered from a severe lack of access.

The Delta Health Alliance, which grew from a concept of local Delta people, has marshaled a federal-state-local team of institutions of higher learning and public agencies with the sole objective of improved education, access, and research, to strengthen the capacity of local and existing health care providers in the region.

Is there a nursing shortage in the Delta? Absolutely.

But the Delta Health Alliance is going about the business of reversing this trend.

Are the accident and chronic health care problems associated with the occupation of agriculture problematic? Yes.

Health care problems and accidents in rural, agricultural areas are unique. But, the Delta Health Alliance is establishing an Agromedicine program that will have a professional staff of health care specialists to assist health care providers and educators with remedial and preventive measures to reduce the incidents which traditionally accompany rural, agricultural environments.

Diabetes, obesity, hypertension, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular problems, are dangerously high in the Delta population. What can be done to curb the trend? The Delta Health Alliance, with the aggressive support and leadership of U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, has developed a model for reducing the severity of diabetes in the Delta. It has been proven that it can be done and now the model will be taken to Delta communities where it will be done.

What about education? The Delta Council Adult Literacy Program, in its second year, has demonstrated that in eight 30-minute sessions, people who had previously been limited to read at the picture-level can now function on a level of reading which will allow them to hold a job and be a productive part of our society. We have proven that when you teach an adult to read, you contribute toward a healthier family structure and literacy among all family members.

The acute shortage of classroom teachers in the Mississippi Delta is high. Is anything being done about it?

Due to the effort led by Delta Council, and again with the staunch support of U.S. Senator Thad Cochran and Senator Trent Lott, more than 35 licensed and certified school teachers have moved into Delta school systems in exchange for receiving a full four-year scholarship to Delta State University. These young educators have entered the Delta's teacher corps prepared to make a difference and with a promise to help the Delta ... And more teachers are on the way.

Day-by-day, month-by-month, Delta Council leaders are relentless in their commitment to bring about positive change in health care and education... 69 years ago and today.

Delta Council

"People all over the country are realizing that it takes community organizations much like the Delta Health Alliance and Delta Council to solve the serious problems with chronic disease in the 21st Century. It is going to take partnerships that have never existed before. I am encouraged that, in the Delta Health Alliance, we seem to be way ahead of the game in the Delta in health care."



– Dr. Marshall Bouldin
Project Coordinator, Diabetes Program, Delta Health Alliance



DELTA COUNCIL DELTA F.A.R.M. & DELTA WILDLIFE



Delta Wildlife

FARMERS ADVOCATING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
DELTA F.A.R.M.

Land binds us all here in the Mississippi Delta. Almost every person in this region depends on its health and productivity. But more importantly, the land's health and productivity must be sustained to ensure economic and environmental longevity. Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife are working with landowners to conserve, enhance, and restore our natural and wildlife resources so future generations can enjoy the long-term benefits of abundant wildlife, abundant water, cleaner water, and properly managed forests and wetlands.

The key to improving our natural and wildlife resources rests in the hands of those people who own the land, manage land, and lease land...no matter if it is a production farm, forestland, wetland, or a hunting club. By working with these people, Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife can provide technical assistance and help implement projects that generate real on-the-ground benefits that translates into a more sustainable future for our region.

Major Sponsors

AmSouth Bank	Farmers Inc.	Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Co.
Bank of Yazoo City	FMC Corporation	Swiftwater Sales
BankPlus	Joe Mac Husdpeth, Jr.	Syngenta
Bolivar Medical Center	Jubilee Casino	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Catfish Farmers of Mississippi	Kings Daughters Hospital	USDA Natural Resources
Coopwood Communications	Lamar Outdoor Advertising	Conservation Service
Delta Construction & Land Co.	Lighthouse Point Casino	WABG ABC TV6
Delta & Pine Land Co.	Mississippi Department of	Washington County Convention and
Entergy	Environmental Quality	Visitors Bureau
Environmental Protection Agency	Mississippi Development Authority	WDMS 100.7
Farmers Grain Terminal	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	WIQQ 102.3
	Planters Bank & Trust Co.	WYMX 99.1
	Quality Printing	Your Local Dodge Dealers

Leland Speed
Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority



"Hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities are drawing more and more people to Mississippi. Delta Wildlife is working to improve the very resources that are attracting this growing market. Delta Wildlife's efforts benefit wildlife in the Mississippi Delta, those who enjoy the resource, and local economies."

Dickie Stevens
Former Director, Federal Land Bank, South Mississippi
President of the Humphreys County Board of Supervisors
President and CEO, Consolidated Catfish Companies



"To increase the value of land, you must develop every acre based on its highest and best use. Whether that use is agriculture, wildlife, or forestry, Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife can help landowners increase the value of their land in such a way to ensure economic and environmental sustainability."

Bruce D. Leopold, Ph.D.
Head, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi State University
Associate Director, Berryman Institute



"Without doubt, Delta Wildlife has been a key player in the wildlife habitat and population management that has greatly enhanced our natural resources in the Delta and surrounding lands. Delta Wildlife also serves as an outstanding facilitator who brings major players together for the common goal of managing our natural resources in a sustainable manner."

Gerald Trauger
Area 4 Forester, USDA-NRCS



"The trees planted on this (Delta WRP) site are high quality and an ideal size. They are well planted and properly spaced. I cannot recall a better planting job this year, unless it was on another site supervised by Delta Wildlife. During the last two years of spot checking our Technical Service Providers, Delta Wildlife has consistently provided high quality results. The tree plantings are performed correctly and the compliance checks are accurate. It is a pleasure to inspect thier jobs."

DELTA COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION



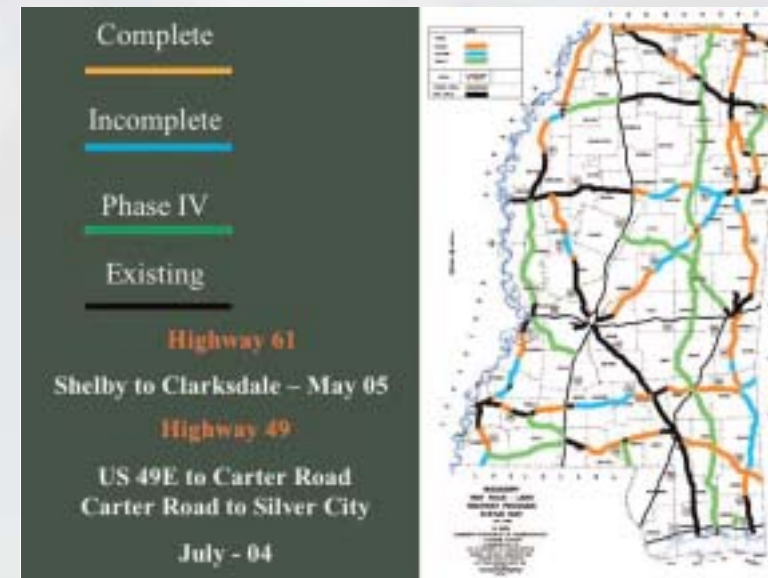
It has been a most eventful year for the Delta Council Highway Committee.

We are fortunate to have Bill Minor as our new Northern District Transportation Commissioner. Bill is a veteran state official who knows the system and how to use it to our advantage. He

understands the unique needs of the Delta and has for many years been our ally as we seek to strengthen our Delta economy through improved transportation. His experience working with our other Delta Commissioner, Dick Hall, should reap benefits for the Delta.

Delta Council has also been directly involved with our congressional delegation as the new TEA-LU transportation bill has worked its way through congress. It appears that the Highway 82 Bridge, Interstate 69, and increased formula allocation to Mississippi, are all well taken care of in the legislation. We are so fortunate to have such an experienced and powerful delegation representing us.

- Ken Murphree, Tunica
Chairman, Delta Council Transportation Committee



Road crews on the 4-Lane expansion on Highway 61 North from Cleveland to Clarksdale

Delta Council



"The most outstanding thing about Delta Council is their understanding of the need for transportation infrastructure. I, and all of us at the Mississippi Department of Transportation, always consider Delta Council as a partner in this. Of course, I don't believe we would have ever passed the 1987 Four-Lane Program without the membership of Delta Council, as an example of their leadership and activities. I can't imagine doing my job without Delta Council."

- Commissioner Dick Hall
Mississippi Department of Transportation



Morgan Keegan



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Delta Council

2004 Delta Council Annual Meeting

MAY 7, 2004 • DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY • CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI
KEYNOTE SPEAKER • HONORABLE HALEY BARBOUR
Governor, State of Mississippi