

The river that connects us.



DELTA COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Message from the President

The River That Connects Us is the theme for this year's Delta Council Annual Meeting as we spotlight the contributions and importance of this resource to our region. As I look back over my tenure as President of this organization, there are indeed a lot of things that connect us!

Above all, the Mississippi Delta is most fortunate to have a large number of leaders who are not content to accept the status quo when, through deliberate, inclusive, and reasonable coordination of efforts, positive change can occur. As you read through this Annual Report, you will see the results of just a few of these efforts coordinated by ordinary citizens who give extraordinarily of their time for the greater good.

Whether it is workforce training, teacher shortages, four-lane highways, diabetes management, farm policy, or adult literacy, the leadership of the Mississippi Delta is making solid headway at a time when the "sky is falling" syndrome is much more fashionable. Just as Delta Council does not get involved in purely local issues, as they are best decided by the people who live and work in those communities, we are not content to defer the solutions for the region's challenges to those who live far away from here, and therefore are removed from the challenge and the solution.



Ken Murphree
Tunica



Vice President
Tripp Hayes, *Clarksdale*



Vice President
Mike Lamensdorf, *Cary*



Vice President
Jim Luckett, *Dublin*



Vice President
Harry Simmons, *Yazoo City*



Vice President
Tom Turne, *Belzoni*



Chairman, Dev. Dept.
Tom Gresham, *Indianola*



Treasurer
Joe Ricotta, *Indianola*

Delta Council Overview



After 70 years... Delta Council... cares enough to listen... concerned enough to act!

Although Delta Council is proud of its rich tradition and the fact that it pre-dates most nonprofit organizations of its kind in the nation, it is because of Delta Council's commitment to change and its intolerance for the status quo that the organization continues to have an impact on major transportation issues, higher education, national farm policy, and workforce training improvements.

Delta Council continues to take on issues of regional significance, despite the challenge that some of Delta Council's policies pose to the status quo.

- Are Delta teacher shortages throughout the region just too severe to get our arms around?
- How can the Delta confront the issues of groundwater protection and surface water protection throughout a region that relies so heavily on its land and water resources for its economic viability?
- And, how can a sometimes first-generation workforce be trained to possess workplace values, quality control, and productivity in order to be internationally competitive?
- Is there any way to prove that the lost generation of adults in our Delta society really have the desire and commitment to learn how to read?
- And finally, can the people of the Mississippi Delta really have an impact on world trade policies, U.S. agricultural policy, or the encroachment of foreign imports and the dumping of farm products into the U.S. marketplace?

These questions are asked so that the people of this region are reminded of the impact which regional approaches to challenges of the Delta can have. The solution to these sweeping questions and others is that the Delta is confronting the challenges of our region through organized, grassroots, locally-driven inputs by Delta leaders who care enough to listen and are concerned enough to act.



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Clarksdale

Aquaculture

Austin Jones, Chairman
Moorhead

Educational Policy

Howard Sanders, Chairman
Hollandale

Farm Policy

Dan Branton, Chairman
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Flood Control

Jim Luckett, Chairman
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Bill Kennedy, Chairman
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Al Rankins, Chairman
Greenville

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
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Arrangements Committee

Gerard Mohamed, Chairman
Belzoni

Development Department

Tom Gresham, Chairman
Indianola

flood control in the Delta



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 task. 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 F. Percy, LL
Greenville • Past President, Delta Council (1982-83)

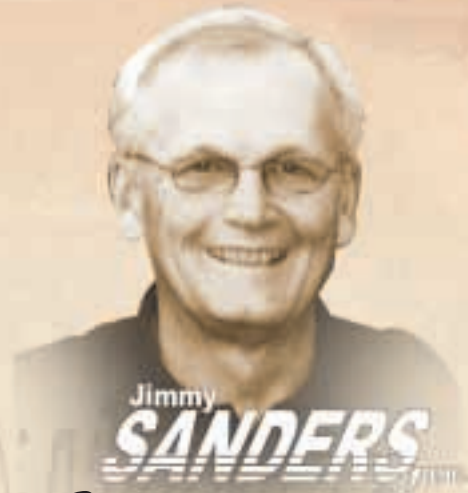
Over the past 100 years of development of this comparably young area referred to as the Mississippi Delta, the river has acted as a master mathematician, constantly subtracting from something but always multiplying benefits and adding hardships. It also possesses the innate ability to divide us temporarily, only to come back full circle and bring total enjoyment and pride to the concept of working together... as one region tied to our home. A home which we fully understand that begins with the river.





Morgan Keegan

Logan Phillips



Mike Sanders

Jimmy
SANDERS



Alton McRee



Buddy Bass



Ray Humphreys



Bryan Jones



Delta Council

70th Annual Meeting

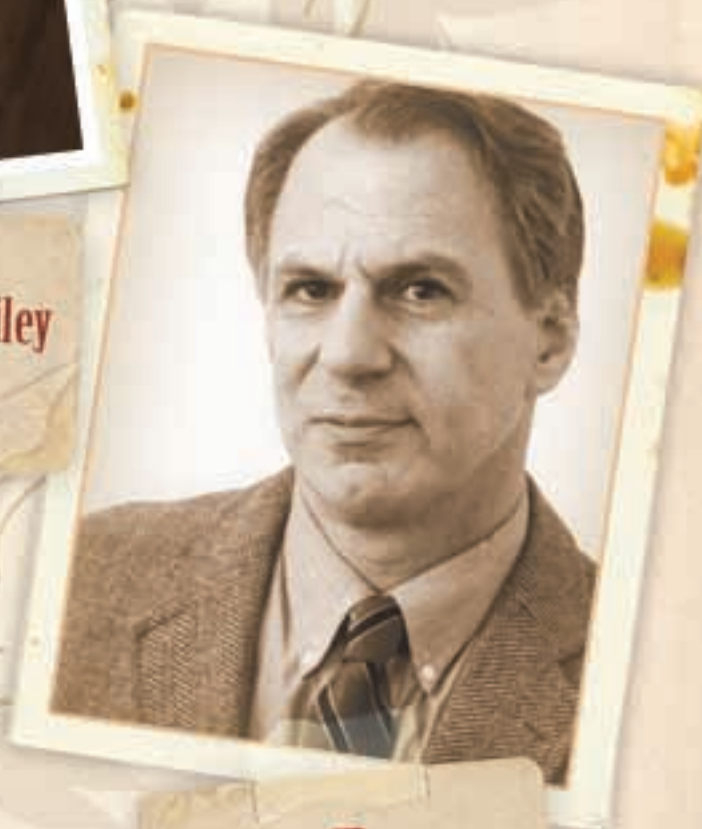
*The River That
Connects Us*

Keynote Speakers:



Major General Don T. Riley

Director of Civil Works
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



John Barry

Author of *Rising Tide*

The Delta's Water Resources



In the Mississippi Delta, we are blessed with an abundance of water. In fact, this resource is the single most important element in the settlement, development, and future of our region. Early inhabitants



settled on the high ridges along streams and bayous, where millions of years of inundation had deposited rich topsoil on the river-banks of our alluvial floodplain – allowing both protection from flooding and the ability to produce crops.

The groundwater aquifers beneath us gives us water that we drink, that our industries use to manufacture goods, and that our farmers use to grow our food and fiber. It is often overlooked that our ability to generate water deep in our alluvial aquifer is responsible for many of our industries locating in the region, including such

prominent names as Baxter & Uncle Ben's, among others.

Water provides us with both recreation and tranquility in our Delta landscape. It feeds the trees and the plants that sustain our rich wildlife habitat. Whether sitting on a lakebank fishing or riding in a boat, it also provides refuge from a hectic world.

Delta Council recognizes the importance of utilizing this resource for development, but also managing it in such a way that its longevity is assured.



Mark Twain once said that "Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting." Perhaps more germane to the Delta, he also opined that "not everyone is lucky enough to live upstream." In the early 19th century, Twain astutely recognized the fundamental nature of water — there always seems to be too much or too little.

"Whether it is the sun rising over a flight of ducks in a flooded rice field on a January morning or setting over an oxbow lake after a long day of fellowship with family and friends, the Delta's uniqueness and appeal is framed by water."

- Ben Lamensdorf, Past President, Cary
Delta Council (2001-2002)



"Delta Council made the formation of a water management district a priority because we knew how important this resource was and that it be perpetual. You need only look at places where this resource is depleted to see how fundamental an issue it is."

- Travis Satterfield, Chairman,
Rice Committee, Benoit



"I have a small manufacturing business in rural Leflore County



and I recently made a significant expansion. From a development standpoint, I appreciated the assistance of the Delta Council Development Department and my local economic development foundation. Just as significant, however, I realize the value that Delta Council and other organizations have placed on workforce training efforts. The support and guidance of the Capps Center really allowed my employees to receive state-of-the-art training on my new equipment and aided greatly in making my expansion a successful one."

Tom Gary, Money
Wildwood Gin, Inc.

Delta Council Development Department

A recent business publication tapped the Mississippi Delta as one of the "Top 10 Comeback Kids" for attracting and retaining industry in 2004 and "Top 10 Stories of the Year" for the region's efforts at attracting automotive suppliers. With a firm realization that these successes still serve only to allow us to make headway on the capacity that was lost during the country's "manufacturing and business bloodbath", the Delta Council Development Department is working every day with our local leaders, allied businesses, and federal and state partners to dispel the naysayers who said that the Delta would not recover, that it could not attract new investments, that its workforce could not perform, and that its companies would leave. With continued strong efforts, this capacity will be regained, and the critics will move on to another area where something "won't work."



New job growth and investment in 2004 was strong, with both exceeding the combined totals of 2002 and 2003. Other positive signs are the number of expansions that have been announced or are currently being executed. Whether these expansions are two jobs or two hundred, this is the surest sign that a company is satisfied with their location and willing to take financial risks on the future. The Mississippi Delta is blessed with a strong base of manufacturing and distribution companies, and while recruiting new companies may garner the headlines, wise economic developers and public officials know that more than 80% of all new jobs and capital investment are generated by companies that are already in your community. These companies are comprised of people who live next door to you, send their children to our schools, sit next to you in church, and contribute greatly to our civic life.



"The Mississippi Development Authority appreciates the unique and pro-active role that the Delta Council Development Department plays in economic development efforts in the Delta. Whether it is recruiting businesses, building capacity, or proposing policy, the work and advice of Delta Council is critical."

Gray Swoope, COO
Mississippi Development Authority



Of course, the recruitment of new companies to our region remains a priority for Delta Council Development Department. Working with local economic development professionals and our allies such as the MS Development Authority, Entergy, and the Electric Power Associations, the Development Department manages the activities of the Mississippi Delta Developers Association. Realizing the value of "strength in numbers," this group comes together to market the region as a whole, allowing our communities to do some things that would not be possible through only local efforts.

Delta Council Agriculture

- Why would the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative enlist the views of leading businessmen from the Mississippi Delta when preparing for the DOHA round of trade talks for the World Trade Organization?
- Why is the U.S. Department of Commerce, acting through its international trade agency and the Customs Service, continuing to be responsive and sensitive to the concerns of the Mississippi Delta when protecting the laws of international trade which are designed to protect the catfish industry?
- Why did the U.S. Secretary of Treasury use his visit to the Delta to acknowledge forthcoming actions which would result in increasing the buying power of foreign economies through a more balanced foreign exchange rate?

With total employment exceeding 60,000 people, accounting for an estimated 49% of the total employment of the area, and producing more than 63% of the total income of the region, the annual economic impact of Delta agriculture is something that can be easily understated but rarely overlooked by State and National policymakers.

In no other area of the nation is there a local and rural manufacturing sector which possesses all of the amenities of a major corporate headquarters. This industry is commonly referred to as Delta agriculture.

In the Mississippi Delta, the manufacturing and service sectors of our local economy are extremely important. The possible difference in the Delta economy, when compared to many other rural areas of Southeast, Southwest and Northeast Mississippi, is that our industrial base includes an agricultural sector that is our largest employer. Agriculture **undergirds the assessed valuation** of our local economics for support for our local schools, roads and other public services; and that carries with it the innumerable amenities of a corporate headquarters for a Fortune 500 company... **purchasing from all of the vertically and horizontally integrated input businesses and keeping the dividends at home.** This is the industry we call Delta agriculture.



**Morgan
Keegan**



Jimmy
SANDERS, INC.



DELTA REGIONAL
MEDICAL CENTER



Delta Council

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