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FSA *focus*

FOCUSED ON RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS FSA EMPLOYEES ON THE JOB & IN THE COMMUNITY

*Sharkey-Issaquena
Signs First Cotton E-LDP!*

Producer Enjoys Benefits of E-LDP

Clyde Nichols of Clyde and Linda Nichols Farm Partnership in Issaquena County decided to give electronic filing a try. Mr. Nichols is the first recipient of a cotton eLDP in Mississippi. Patsy is shown handing him the eLDP summaries for each eLDP. The county office did 5 LDP's totaling some 373 bales.

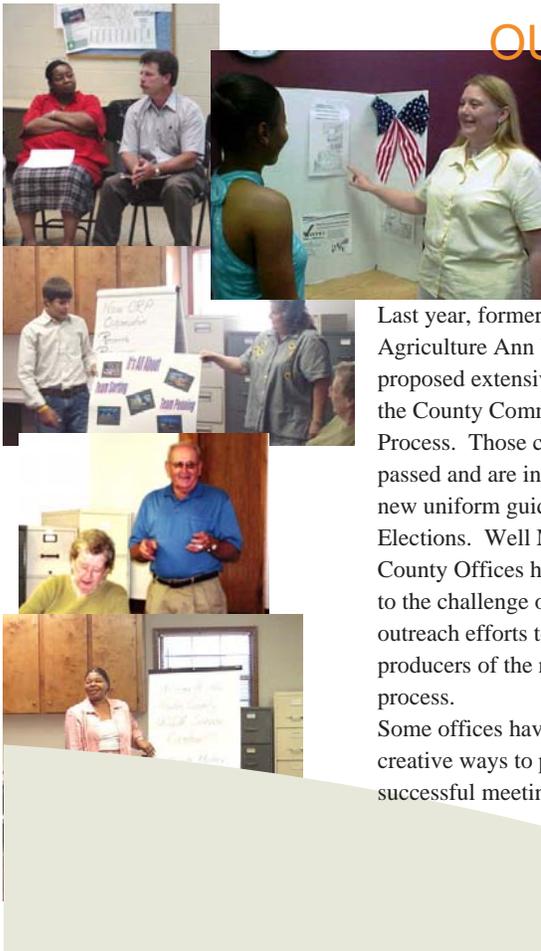


RUNNING A SPECIAL MISSION

Randy Saxon likes a challenge. In fact, he takes the word challenge literally to a new dimension. Recently this Farm Loan Specialist had the opportunity to fulfill two personal missions in one setting. He's always wanted to challenge his endurance skills by running in a 100-mile competition and he's always looking for ways to share his faith and help others. As a result of his completion in the 17th annual Vermont 100 Mile Endurance Run in Brownsville Vermont, over \$2500 went to a local mission ministry. How did this running madness all begin? "I started running mainly for weight control in the early '90s," said Saxon, who lives in Laurel, Mississippi. "I ran in the Carl Touchstone Run (Mississippi Trail 50) back in '99 and just fell in love with it. I ran the 50K out there, which is 31 miles, and things progressed from there. I've done a number of marathons and several 40 and 50-mile runs, so this is just the next step up the ladder." Saxon always felt he would compete in a 100-mile run. Sadly, he did not have his father, Gene Saxon, along to support him for this milestone run. "I had always thought I would eventually try a 100-mile run and I wanted to get my dad to 'crew' for me," he said. "He had retired, but I had

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COC ELECTION OUTREACH MEETINGS



Targeted Counties Make Extra Efforts to Inform Public About Nomination Process

Last year, former Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman proposed extensive changes to the County Committee Election Process. Those changes were passed and are included in the new uniform guidelines for COC Elections. Well Mississippi FSA County Offices have stepped up to the challenge of increasing outreach efforts to inform producers of the nomination process. Some offices have discovered creative ways to produce successful meeting results and

would like to share: Serve them food and they will come! Nothing elaborate and certainly not required, but in some offices everyone in the service center brings a dish. Some offices have recruited actual producers & committeemen to talk about FSA programs & how FSA has helped them. Some hold evening or night meetings when producers are not at work or in the fields. Perhaps get a local speaker to come in and give an educational session to attract more people. These things coupled with working with TEAM USDA partners equal successful meetings!

PRODUCER PICS



Picture of young Amish Boy fertilizing corn in Ponotoc
(photo provided by Rodney Akers)

Below: Winston County Coop members



A Little Known Fact: Provided by Lori Holmes (Hinds County PT):

*In the late 1700's many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board was folded down from the wall and used for dining. The "head of the household" always sat in the chair while everyone else sat on what else was available. Once in a while, a guest (who was almost always a man) would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. Sitting in the chair, one was called the "chair man". Today in business and even FSA we use the expression or title **"Chairman or Chairman of the Board"**.*

Eubanks Farms...From Lucedale Fields to Your Hometown Wal-Mart

State Committee Member Allen Eubanks is the owner of Eubanks Farms. Eubanks, a fourth generation farmer, owns and operates Eubanks Produce Farm with his wife Janice. He has expanded the business from 50 acres to 1,000 acres and from regional sales to national and international sales. Eubanks has served on the boards of directors of the Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Association and the George County Co-op. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Mississippi State University.

The pictures on the right are of Mr. Eubanks with State Office Program Specialist Gene Martin surveying cucumbers and a scene of the processing plant where cucumbers and watermelons are being packaged to send to Wal-Mart.



FSA PRODUCER FEATURED IN COUNTY BEING NAMED ONE OF 10 BEST RURAL PLACES TO LIVE BY PROGRESSIVE FARMER MAGAZINE

Special to FSA Focus by: Joshua Cogwell-Clarion Ledger



When Rankin County FSA Producer Gary Thrash graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1966, he took a job teaching school in Jackson and lived in Ridgeland.

But city life didn't suit him. He moved back to his family's farm in Leesburg, northeast of Pelahatchie, and has been raising crops and cattle there since.

"I don't want to be anywhere else," Thrash said.

Between 1990 and 2000, the county's population grew by 32.3 percent.

Thanks to a mix of traditional country life and the amenities that come with the county's rapid growth, Progressive Farmer magazine rates Rankin County 10th on

its list of the Top 10 Best Places to Live in Rural America. "Certainly there is a lot of growth in Rankin County, but the community leaders are committed to preserving traditional agriculture and that small-town feel," Jamie Cole, Creative Editor of Progressive Farmer, said.

Thrash is an active participant in FSA's DCP Program and frequents the Rankin County FSA Office regularly.

USDA EMPLOYEES RECEIVE EARTH TEAM AWARD



USDA Earth Team Volunteers from the Booneville Field Office were awarded the 2005 North Area Group Award at the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts Summer Meeting in Corinth. The volunteers were nominated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service staff because of all the hours they have spent helping to promote conservation education. Members of this group are employees of Farm Service Agency and Rural Development.

Pictured L-R Donna Taylor, May Deen Miller, Shirly Morgan, Al Garner, Linda Ledbetter, Debra Lovell, Vicki Stutts, Mary Riddell, and Joe Tanner. (Not Pictured: A.L.Top and Tim McClung)



ROBERSON AWARDED FOR VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Remember Lynn Raney Hardy and the struggle that Beverly Roberson & the Tallahatchie County Staff (Team Lynard) shared with us last year? Well, a reception was held in late May in Charleston to honor our own PT Beverly Roberson in recognition for her outstanding leadership of "Team Lynyrd". She was selected for the 2005 NASCOE Distinguished Service Award – Service to Community. Her family was on hand for the reception, including grandson Bryce. Lyn Raney Hardy was also there greeting guests and taking pictures. The award was presented at the NASCOE Convention in South Dakota. Beverly was nominated by co-worker and fellow Team Lynard volunteer Jeanne Monday. Congratulations Beverly for recognition of your hard work!

Demarius McFadden Honored By MS Board of Education

The MS Board of Education recently honored the Parent of the Year and the Congressional District Finalists. Demarius McFadden of Waynesboro, wife of CED Joe McFadden, was selected as the Congressional District IV Finalist!

Demarius serves the Buckatanna School in Wayne County in two ways, first as the mother of two students, Kiana McFadden, 9, a third grade student, and Mia McFadden, 6, a first grade student, and also as a teacher. She serves in both capacities with a generosity of spirit and a willingness to volunteer.

As a member of the Buckatanna School Parent Teacher Organization and the Booster Club, McFadden has been instrumental in guiding the organization, working on the committees and participating in fundraising activities. In addition to assisting the Student Council with their drive to raise money for Tsunami victims, she has volunteered her time to work in the concession stands at football and basketball games and sponsor a cheerleading group.

"Mrs. Demarius McFadden is the portrait of a determined and dedicated person," wrote Gina K. Mills in her letter in support of McFadden's nomination. "She works unselfishly to help her family, students, fellow teachers, church and our community."

When some of the students at the school have difficulty locating business and community leaders to shadow during the school's annual mentoring/shadowing program, she personally contacts business leaders until all of the students have been placed at a worksite.

"Not only is she a parent, but a role model, and a mentor to the students whose lives she touches," wrote Beth Loxer in her letter in support of McFadden's nomination.

She is married to Joe L. McFadden, CED of Wayne County Farm Service Agency.

As we can tell, she is the perfect mate for Joe. They have the same attributes. Congratulations Demarius!!!



Rosetta Richard, (left) Mississippi Board of Education Chair and Dr. Henry L. Johnson, (right) State Superintendent of Education, listen to Wayne County resident DeMarius McFadden as she accepts a certificate in recognition of her selection as a 2005 Parent of the Year Congressional District Finalist.

Recognize this former FSAer?

....Yes, That's Charlean Givens, former Newton County PT serving 4th graders at a recent landowner Field Day for Kids!



Pictured on left is Toni Beatty who received an Advisor Award recently at the State FFA Convention. She is the daughter of Jones County FSA FLM Leo Beatty. Congratulations Toni!!



Kids Learn 911 Safety from Sheriff's Dispatcher @ FSA Farm Safety Day in Lawrence County



FLO John Mark Pickett 2005 Delta Ag Expo - Cleveland, MS



4th Graders of Lawrence County - FSA's Farm Safety Day



CED Blake McGaughey- 2005 Delta Ag Expo Cleveland, MS



Chris Shivers of MS Farm Bureau on Speaking on Tractor Safety at FSA's Farm Safety Day in Lawrence County



2005 STO Black History Program - Brenda Jackson presenting Speaker Stephanie Summers O'Neal - Owner of Diversified Trade, with Certificate of Appreciation



John Porter & SED Mickey L. Black pictured with Guest Speaker DAFLP Carolyn Cooksie at Small Farmers Conference in Jackson, MS



Jean Jordan's Birthday – STO HR Assistant



Landing for Cotton Payments - Washington County



Tunica County Field Day



COC Training- Greenwood, MS



Scenes from Small Farmers Conference – Jackson, MS-Luncheon above & NRCS Demonstration Below



Marion County Open House – Columbia, MS



Newton County FSA Staff Prepares Refreshments for COC Outreach Meeting



2005 MS FSA Outreach Advisory Committee - STO



FLP Specialist Gary Thorne (left) & PT Micah Harmon (right) speak & entertain kids @ Field Day in Newton County



State Office FP Assistant Clara Kennedy Tells Youth about FSA @ State FFA Convention – Hattiesburg, MS



FLO Tony Luke Speaks @ Newton County Field Day



Name this FSA employee and receive a gift certificate from Barnes & Nobles!

Rules: Write employee's name, Job Title, Office Location and email to latrice.hill-moore@ms.usda.gov. Deadline August 24th, First correct email wins \$10 Gift certificate to Barnes & Nobles Book Store!
(Sorry, Co-workers of employee are not eligible to participate!!!)



Retired FLO Dennis McKee (center) visited the George County Office a couple of weeks ago. Dennis comes by every once in a while and checks on every one and catches up on gossip. Dennis is pictured here with RD employees James Rutledge (l) and Alan Wood(r)



FLO Jeff Boyd speaks at SE Rankin Cooperative Meeting



EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Recently several employees around the state received length of service awards. The last LOS Awards were issued in Spring 2003 at the State Conference in Biloxi, MS. Susan Brown has been placed in charge of Awards and recently issued awards due beginning October 1, 2003 through July 2005. **Congratulations to Wayne County PT Mada Burhorn who currently led this round of honorees listed below with 40+ years!!!!**

(Pictures were submitted by co-workers)

Federal State Office Employees

10/2003-12/2003	2004	01-2005-07/2005
J. Latrice Hill-Moore – 10 Ricky Carnegie-20	Susan Brown – 20 Beth McBride-20 Jean Phillips-Hudson-15 Judy Rocconi-20 Paula Williamson-15	Sandra Brown - 30 Jean Jordan-15 Steve Melton-20

Federal Employees

(Listed by District/County Order)

10/2003-12/2003	2004	01-2005-07/2005
Tom King-25 Doug Naron-20 Emine Horner-10 Ervin Torrence-15 Bart Miller-15 Edie Butler-15 Jackie Williams-25 Robert Shivers-20	Dawn Allen-20 Pam Vance-5 Robert Davis-15 Terry Lott-25 Harold Mills-35 John Webber-25 Ron Bennett-15 Jackie Nordan-15 Glynda Boatner-20 Kevin Brown-15 Randy Saxon-20 Tony Luke-20 Jimmie Urbanic-35	Gerald Booker – 20 Jamelda Nick-5 Jeri Little – 15 David Durham-15 Brenda McDaniel -20 Doris Carnathan-20 Larry Pate – 20 Anthony McCarty-20 Louis Marsh-20 Katrina Brown-10 David Blakeney-20 Jennie Smith-20 John McTaggart-20



FLM Tommy Kirksey presenting FLPT Jimmie Urbanic with 35 Year Length of Service Award

COUNTY EMPLOYEES (Listed by District/County Order)

10/2003-12/2003	2004	01-2005-07/2005
Karen Vaughan-20 Jean Montesi-15 Luanne Brooks-15 Tammy Baker-10 Sandra Cooper-10 Ronnie Yates-15 Brenda Ricks-15 Billy Lipsey-20 Stacy McKay-15 Carla McKenzie-15 Dewayne Oberschmidt - 20	Carolyn Harrison-15 Derek Adams-20 Judy McLarty-15 Daryl Waller-10 Carolyn Yeoman-15 Betty Hale-15 Sheenah McCollins-15 Cynthia Turner-20 Martha James-30 Grover Black -20 Demetria Stokes-15 Gary Crafton-25 Melissa Wicha-15 Sondra Beam -20 Johnny Guntharp-20 Amy Francisco-5 Kathy Boone-35 Kay Hurdle-35 Judy Gilreath-25 Janis Curtis-25 Shirley Morgan-35 Shelby Hare-25 Shirley Waddell- 35 Konnie Brewer-5 Bea Hurst-5 Hayes Miles-20 Melanie Baswell-20 Jim Corley-15 Linda Allen-15 Rachel Frost-20 Jeff Turbville-10 Sallie Ellis-20 Sarah Strong-35 Carol Parrett-20 Lisa Perry-15 Mary Hodge-15 Peggy King-5 Jimmy Woodruff-15 Jean Gray -15 John Norris-15 Kay Barton - 15 Linda Craig-15 Sheila Jones-15 Mada Burhorn-40 Joe McFadden - 20 Charline Stewart-20 Gene Nunnery-15 Ken Barron-15 Deborah Smith -25 Tony Thames-30 Melissa Jordan-25 Mary Gwathney-25	Jo Muzzi-20 Robin Richardson-20 Arlin McGee-20 Teresa McMinn-20 Angela Smith -15 Sara Ferguson-15 Claudette Marion-25 Lori Holmes-15 Carolyn Trigleth-20 Sara Pannel-25 Bob Givens-30 Bonnie Hodges-30 Bob Alexander-25 Scott Dooley-15 Valene Allen - 20 Nona Durrett-5 Linda Shaw-10 Kristi Gill-10 Mary Frances Carson - 20 Brandi Ellis-5

SED Mickey L. Black presents 35 Year Award to Lawrence Co. CED Tony Thames



RETIREMENTS , OPEN HOUSES AND GRANDBABIES!!



Chickasaw County Staff Honoring Farm Loan Officer Retiree Linda Haire (4th from left) at Retirement Reception



STO Retirements:

John Tanner - State Office Program Specialist
 Johnnie Thompson – State Office Program Assistant

STO Recent Farewells:

Dietra White – State Office Program Assistant
 Nathan Welch- Administrative Student Intern



"Gentle Ben" – 6 month grandson of STO Specialist Sid Tadlock – Isn't he cute?!!! Never fussy, always smiling!



IT'S A BOY...TWICE!!!!

Jackie Williams, FLM, in Pearl River is a first time Grandfather! Son Matthew and wife, Robin had little Matthew Joseph August 2, 2005, weighing at 9 lb. 9 oz. Linda Shaw, PT in Pearl River, is also the proud grandparent of her first GRANDSON, born August 10, 2005 to daughter, Bridget and Corey Merwin. Little Tate Michael Merwin weighed in at 6 lbs. 15 oz. & measured 20" long.

Pretty In Pink!



7/05 – Twins Elinda & Elysia Robertson – Granddaughters of Quitman CED San Garrison

8/02 – Katelyn Grace (Gracie) Francisco -Daughter of Lowndes PT Amy Francisco

8/16 – Mackenzie Brooke Walton-Granddaughter of Attala PT Pam Cochran

NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO MS FSA STATE COMMITTEE

Jack Winstead, of Lawrence, MS was appointed to the state committee. Winstead and his wife Jeannette own and operate the Winstead Glebvieh Farm, a purebred cattle farm and tree farming business. A native of Union, MS, Winstead retired in 1992 as Deputy State Conservationist with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now USDA's NRCS) after 35 years of service. He holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Mississippi State University.



MS FSA STC Members from left to right: William Spight, Allen Eubanks, Jack Winstead, Ted Kendall, IV & Robert Carson (Chair)

Also appointed was Allen Eubanks of Lucedale, MS. Eubanks is a fourth generation farmer who owns and operates Eubanks Produce Farm with his wife Janice. He has expanded the business from 50 acres to 1,000 acres and from regional sales to national & international sales. Eubanks has served on the boards of directors of the MS Fruit & Vegetable Association and the George County Co-op. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Mississippi State University.

COUNTY COC MEMBERS AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



05/05-Ann T. Tucker – Jones COC
Northeast Jones Alumni Association earlier this year established the Ann Touchstone Tucker Scholarship for a deserving senior who has performed service, been a good citizen and is in financial need.

06/05-Bobby & Ann Moody- Winston COC
Both appointed by Governor Haley Barbour to the MS Council on Developmental Disabilities.
Mr. Moody was also appointed by Governor Barbour as Interim Executive Director of Medicaid Division.

NEW AND ASPIRING LEADERS!!

We have two new leaders and an aspiring leader that you may have noticed the past few months have been traveling out of state to trainings and shadowing some of our upper-management employees. All 3 ladies were accepted into USDA's Aspiring & New Leader Programs. Over the years this program has yielded top notch employees such as Casaundra McCullough, Rob Riggan, and Dietra White to name just a few. We wish them to the best of luck in all of their endeavors and salute them for the discipline and desire to advance their knowledge!

Aspiring Leader: Brenda Fuquay –PT Tate County/ **D1 Outreach Coordinator**

New Leaders: Clara Kennedy- STO Program Assistant
Jamelda Nick – Sunflower Team Farm Loan Officer



DCI AND THE REAL MCCOY!!!

I bet over half of you have never heard of DCI. And no, it's not a new airport in Washington, DC!

A handful of us old band "has-beens", like Paul Hardin & I, know ever so well what DCI is. DCI is Drum Corps International. **The best** of the best are eligible to audition for various Drum & Bugle Corps nationwide. As a child, my favorite was the Phantom Regiment out of Rockford, Illinois. Growing up, I was a flag girl and my brother was baritone. We never missed a year of DCI. I'd almost forgotten about it until I visited the Rankin County Office one day.

Rankin County Acting CED Mary McCoy's son, Shane, is a member of the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps from Chicago, Illinois. He does the Color guard section which is the rifle, flag and sabre. The Cavaliers have held the National title 6 times and were really close in this year's competition, but came in 2nd. They were also featured on CBS Nightly news 8/12/2005.

Mary says Shane has always wanted to travel with the Cavaliers and it is an honor just to be able to perform with them all over the United States. This is the fourth year he has done this and will try out for them again in December for the 2006 year. They are an all boy Drum Corp and the only one in the United States. They start training the middle of May each year then hit the road performing in June of each year and competing against other corps throughout the whole summer. All summer long they are sleeping mostly on their bus or on gym floors and get up the next day to perform or train again. For a teenager to give up his summer to do this says alot. The corps teaches them so much! The mission of the Cavaliers is to provide the members with life changing experiences, educationally and socially, which help each individual member gain real world life skills, musical training and performance experiences. Check them out at www.dci.org.

Although I'm still partial to the Phantom, guess which Corp is my favorite now? ☺

REMEMBER OUR TROOPS....

This past Independence Day weekend former Iraqi hostage and Macon native Thomas Hamil spoke at our Church about his ordeal. It really helped me, personally, put things into perspective. This man went through A LOT. Imagine what our soldiers are going through?

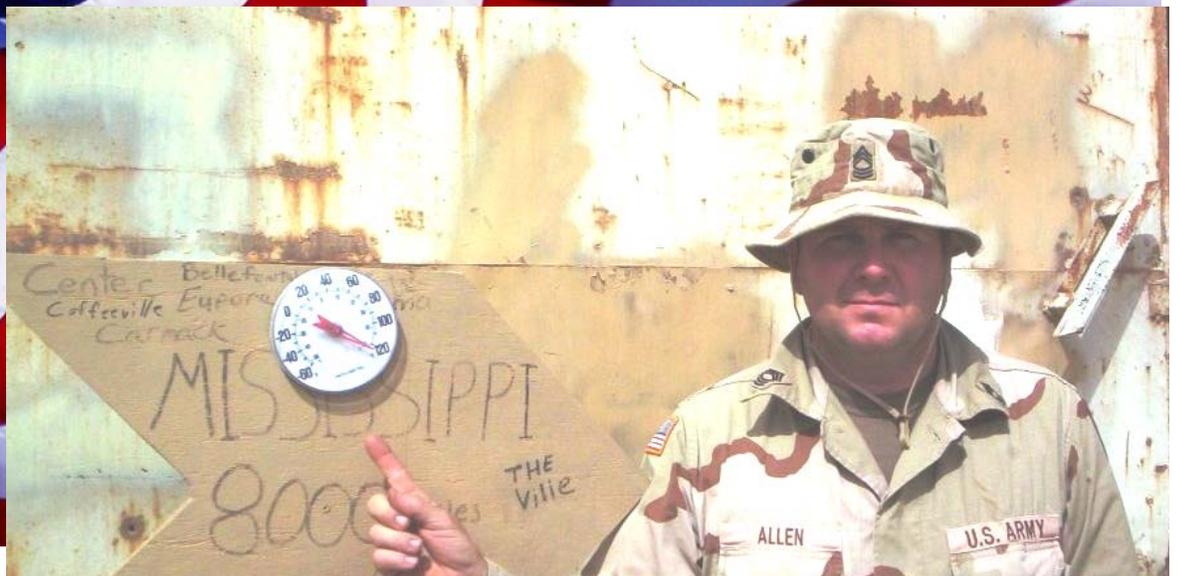
Whereas we all may not agree with the reasons for war, duration of the war, we should not forget those are our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and co-workers over there fighting. There's not a person anywhere that this war has not affected. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.



DEPLOYED FSA EMPLOYEE:

DORA MAPP-AUSTIN - FSA STO

Chickasaw Co. FLO Mike Wittauer driving horses forward (On left in white shirt). Willie Dillard-green shirt (father of Noxubee FLO Mark Dillard) leads during Brewer Community 4th of July parade in Lee County.



Sid Allen, brother of STO Specialist Steve Melton, pointing to thermometer of 120+ degrees in Iraq.

FSA Employees & BIG “Blossoming” Together



STO FLP Specialist Al Taylor

The USDA Magnolia Chapter is blossoming across the state and has become quite the buzz. What is BIG? Blacks in Government is a professional development organization. BIG was mandated to promote equity, excellence and opportunity through employee advocacy, professional development and empowerment of minorities and others dedicated to justice and equity at all levels of government. One of the main objectives is to promote professionalism and employee development. FSA’s HRD Training and Development Branch recognizes two National Conferences as approved employee training conferences: BIG and FEW (Federally Employed Women). Each year BIG sponsors a national training conference which brings together national leaders and experts to train government employees and workers. Federal employees from all departments and agencies nationwide participate in the yearly training conference. Recently the National BIG Conference was held in Orlando, Florida and State Office Farm Loan Specialist Al Taylor, who is the local chapter’s Executive Vice President, attended. Al provided personal security for the National President from Washington, DC and made quite a name for himself with members and officers nationwide.

So what does the local chapter do? They hosted a training session during the Rural Development State Employee Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. The speaker for the session was Sharlyn Wilkerson, Senior Human Resource Manager for the Centers of Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. Her topic was "Climbing the Ladder of Success."

However BIG is not all about employment development. Community service is another major objective. Magnolia BIG hosted their first Christmas Gala & Toy Drive in December at the Ramada Inn in Jackson, Mississippi. The toys collected were distributed to needy children in the Mississippi Delta region. BIG partnered with a local attorney and Rapper David Banner also from Jackson. The collaboration yielded a total of three tractor-trailer loads of toys. A press conference was held and the local television station aired the donation.

The chapter participated in 2004 National Make a Difference Day by assisting Jackson, MS’s Habitat for Humanity in the construction of a home on Rose Street. Al collaborated with the non-profit group to assist in this volunteer effort. He and FLO Java Jackson participated in the work day.

The chapter also sponsored a Dress for Success Clothes Drive and provided professional clothing for some of the city’s jobless.

Upcoming events will be a Membership Drive Cookout held August 27th at Pelahatchie Bay Pavilion on the Ross Barnett Reservoir. A youth motivational task force team will be established in September to encourage local youths to strive for higher education. An oratorical competition will be sponsored for state high school students and the winner will represent the chapter at the regional and national conventions. At Thanksgiving, the chapter will adopt a family to provide for and during the Christmas holidays, the group will deliver baskets and gifts to the elderly.

The chapter is comprised of members and interested individuals representing: USDA FSA, RD, NRCS, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Labor, EEOC, IRS, Social Security, City of Jackson, City of Lexington, MS Crime Lab, US Marshal’s Office, Hinds County, MS Legislature and several others. The membership is blossoming.

Other FSA officers are: Latrice Hill-Moore, 2nd Vice President representing FSA and Java Jackson serves as Assistant Secretary. The website is www.bignet.org.

CONT. Saxon Mission cont. from front page

really never discussed it with him. I just figured being retired, it would be somewhat easier for him to go somewhere way off with me and crew for me. I know he would have, but he died suddenly last June. He wasn’t physically there with me, but he was with me in spirit the whole time."

Globe Outreach, a local ministry in Laurel, Mississippi sponsored "100 Miles for Missions." The self-supporting ministry used Saxon's race as a missions fundraising event. The ministry received over \$2500 from family, fellow employees and friends.

Saxon averaged over 70 miles a week in preparation for this run and he also completed the Mount Mitchell Challenge, a 40-mile run, in Asheville, N.C., earlier this year. His training routine usually started around 4:30 in the afternoon finishing around midnight. His final time in the Vermont 100 was 27:43:29. What’s the next challenge for this driven Area Farm Loan Specialist? “Probably the Arkansas Traveler 100 on October 1st”. When asked why? “To improve my time, plus...you know me....I love a challenge!”