

Business Journal

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JUNE 2010



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Equipment dealers see an improved 2010

By Dennis Seid

BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – If agricultural equipment sales are a good indicator of economic recovery, a rebound might be in the works.

According to the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, retail sales of tractors and combines in April increased 3.1 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively, compared to the same month a year ago.

Northeast Mississippi equipment dealers are spotting similar trends.

“So far this year, our tractor sales have increased about 20 percent year-to-date compared to last year,” said Joey Holcomb, general manager of Chickasaw Equipment Co. in Tupelo.

The company, which sells Kubota and New Holland tractors, also has a store in Houston.

Chickasaw sells mainly to “hobby farmers,” those who have small plots of land, from five to 20 acres.

“We don’t work much with row crops,” Holcomb said.

The hobby farmers typically buy 20- to 45-horsepower tractors, Holcomb said.

According to AEM, sales for under-45 horsepower two-wheel-drive tractors is up more than 9 percent nationwide. Sales of 40- to 100-horsepower tractors, however, are down 10 percent. But moving up the line, tractors with at least 100 horsepower climbed 10.2 percent.

Sales of four-wheel-drive models of all engine sizes are up nearly 25 percent.

At Abby Farm Supply in Salt Lilo, finance manager Jeri Hamilton said the recession hasn’t put much of a damper on Mahindra tractor sales, either.

“We’re having a very good spring,” she said. “Last year we were a little down, but we’re back up this year. We’re getting close to what sales were before the recession.”

John Deere, the world’s largest maker of farm equip-



C. TODD SHERMAN

Joey Holcomb, general manager of Chickasaw Equipment Co. in Tupelo, says tractor sales have held up in the area, despite the recent economic downturn. Holcomb and other agricultural equipment dealers say demand has risen as economic signs improve.

ment by sales, recently reported that its second-quarter earnings rose 16 percent due to higher production and improved demand.

Farm equipment sales for Deere rose 1 percent from a year ago. Operating income jumped 35 percent to \$953 mil-

lion on higher equipment prices and increased production, which helped boost profit.

The company expects farm equipment sales to rise 9 percent to 11 percent this year, with growth expected in South America and the U.S. offsetting falling demand in Europe.

In the U.S., Deere expects farm equipment sales to rise 5 percent to 10 percent.

Kubota, the world’s third-largest equipment maker behind Deere and Amsterdam-based CNH, whose brands include Case and New Holland, expects overall revenue to increase more than 7 percent this year.

AEM predicts overall farm equipment sales to fall about 4.3 percent this year, compared to a 12.5 percent decline in 2009.

But next year, AEM projects a 4.7 percent increase in the U.S., followed by a 4.9 percent increase in 2012. The group also sees increases in Canada and the rest of the world the next two years as well.

Ann Duignan, a machinery analyst for JP Morgan, said the agricultural equipment industry “is performing better than expected in the U.S. and Brazil.”

She also estimates that overall ag equipment sales are up 8

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NEWSMAKERS

■ The CREATE Foundation recently added three new members to its board of directors: **Betsy Hamilton** of New Albany, **John Creekmore** of Amory and **Octavious Ivy** of Tupelo. Their terms began May 12.

Hamilton is a former teacher, real estate broker and appraiser. She was on the New Albany Public School Board for 11 years. She also has been a board member for the Union County Development Association and was chairman of the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies. She has been as a member of the Commission on the Future of Northeast Mississippi and the advisory board for the New Albany Boys and Girls Clubs. She was past chair of the UNITE Community Foundation.

Creekmore is the owner of Creekmore Law Office in Amory. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi School of Law. He is on the board of directors for Renasant Corp. in Tupelo, serves as the attorney for the board of directors of the Gillmore Foundation in Amory and is on the board of directors for the Mary Kirkpatrick Haskell Scholarship Foundation in Amory.

Ivy is the administrator of clinical and support services at North Mississippi Medical Center. He is a graduate of Morehouse College, where he received a bachelor's degree in biology. He also attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, where he received a master's degree in health care administration. He is a member of the Rotary Club, a graduate of CDF's Community Leadership Institute and a board member of the United Way of Northeast Mississippi, Good Samaritan Free Clinic and Gardner Simmons Home for Girls. He also is on the advisory committee for Itawamba Community College Workforce Development.

■ **Tonya Hensley**, who works in the Community Bank Mortgage Tupelo office, was named the 2009 Rising Star and was recognized as the North Mississippi Realtor Affiliate of the Year.

■ **Brandy Brown** has been named employee of the month for May at Franklin Collection Service in Tupelo.

Brown has worked at Franklin for four years and is a member of the client services team.



BROWN

■ **North Mississippi Medical Center** recently awarded its Excellence in Nursing Awards recently.

The awards recognize and reward members of the NMMC nursing staff who exemplify standards of excellence. Nominees for the following award categories include:

- **RN Excellence Award** - Amanda Foster, Baldwin; Terri Green, Fulton; Tammi Hollis, Hamilton, Ala.; Jackie Martin, Tupelo; Mary Pruitt, Tupelo; Jessica Raines, Dumas; Vicki Shouse, Tupelo; Amy Weathersby, Houston and Samantha Williamson, Fulton.

- **Excellence in Mentorship** - Jessica Fears, Saltillo and Sherry Robinson, Fulton.

- **Unit Coordinator Excellence** - Amy Evans, Ripley; Kerry Gates, Tupelo; Ginger Green, Nettleton; Linda Middlebrook, Tupelo and Shawana Shannon, Shannon.

- **Outcomes Improvement Excellence** - Sherry Gaskin, Okolona; Katherine Lee, Saltillo; Claudia Scarborough, Booneville; and Melissa Thornton, of Marietta.

- **CLPN/LPN Excellence** - Sue Farmer of Mooreville; Kimberly Fox of Ripley; Kathy Holley of Booneville; Danny May of Detroit, Ala.; and Doris Mitchell of Amory.

- **Excellence in Advanced Practice** - Alicia Hinton, Booneville and Michael Benge, Tupelo.

- **Nursing Assistant Excellence** - Joyce Armstrong, Amory; Angela Garmon, Pontotoc; Micki Harper, Plantersville; Lecia Poteet, Saltillo; and Virginia Steward, Pontotoc.

- **Nurse Technician Excellence** - Gail Smith, Amory.

- **Excellence in Education** - Jennifer Caldwell, Pontotoc; Judy Duncan, Tupelo; Alicia Gardner, Houston; and Christina Graham, Bruce.

- **Excellence in Leadership** - Pam Clark, Booneville; Rachel Crum, Ripley; Melissa Enlow, Tupelo; Lynette Hunt, Ackerman; and Stephen Walker, Ripley.

- **Excellence in Community Service** - Sonya Thomas, New Albany.

- **Rookie Excellence** - Kayla Angle, Hamilton, Ala.; Brenda Carreira, Saltillo; Heather Lipsey, New Albany; Kayle Patterson, Saltillo; and Mark Robinson, Oxford.

■ **Cooper Tire and Rubber Co.** has announced May service anniversary awards for employees at its Tupelo manufacturing facility:

- **25 years** - Leonard Beasley, Marty Mills, Butch Orr and Terry Jones.

- **20 years** - Mark Whiteside, Billy Bolton, Kenny Wright, Wayne Stutts, Jimmy Daniel, Matt Ferguson, Donnie Turvaille, Ed Roye, Chris Holt, Phillip Baker and David Ledlow.

- **15 years** - Brian Ezell, Frankie Sullivan, Lawrence Dye, Michael McGregor, Stanley Haynes, Randy Reeder, Charles Pennington, Tim Webb and Bobby Stout.

- **10 years** - James Roberts, John Fleming, Larry Cannon and David Buchanan.

- **Five years** - Daniel Pannell, Robert Lee, Jarvis Witherspoon, Ryan Thompson, Tommy Sloan, David White, Chris Roberson, Anthony Crump, Matthew Ewing, Phillip Nguyen, Carl McNeil, Theodis Foster, Tim Pannell and Paul Gregory.

- **One year** - Avery Mills, Jimmy Moore and Roxanna Hughes.

■ More than 30 government administrators and other professionals are new graduates of the State Executive Development Institute.

Among the graduates are **Braxton Tullos**, human resources director at North Mississippi State Hospital, and **Jeremiah Dumas** of Mississippi State University and an alderman for the city of Starkville.

Since 2003, SEDI has been designated by the Mississippi Legislature as the top management training program for state government employees. The annual weeklong series of classroom sessions are organized and provided at Mississippi State by the university's John C. Stennis Institute of Government.

Program topics this year included accountability and assessment, ethical challenges in the 21st century, e-government and relationship marketing.

■ **Denise Hill**, superintendent of landscape services at the University of Mississippi, has been recognized by the International Society of Arboriculture for successfully completing the Certified Arborist examination administered through the ISA and its local chapter.

The purpose of the ISA certification program is to improve the knowledge level and standard of practice within the tree care profession. It is designed to assist the public in identifying arboriculture professionals who have demonstrated, through a professional education and examination program, a thorough knowledge of tree care practices.

■ **Amy Earheart** has returned to Galloway-Chandler-McKinney Insurance as a personal lines customer service representative. She previously worked for nine years with GCM and was recently in customer service with Ecolab.

Also, **Deanna Honeycutt** joined the Galloway-Chandler-McKinney Insurance as a member of the commercial lines customer service representative professional team. She has been with the GCM since 2003. Honeycutt holds a degree from Mississippi University for Women. She is a Certified Insurance Service Representative and a Certified Professional Insurance Woman.

Earheart and Honeycutt join the customer service representative team of Judy Lofton, Danielle Lloyd and Amy Townsend. Lofton has been with GCM Insurance since 1988.

Forty-six people are now employed by Galloway-Chandler-McKinney Insurance, which is one of the largest independent insurance agencies in Mississippi.

GCM has offices to serve the region in Aberdeen, Amory, Columbus, Starkville and West Point.

■ **Barbara R. Hoard** has been promoted to first vice president, lending, at BancorpSouth's Tupelo location.

Hoard began her career with the bank as a teller and has more than 40 years of experience with BancorpSouth.

Originally from Jacinto, she has taken several courses in banking, finance and insurance from the University of Mississippi. Hoard was instrumental in launching Tupelo's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program and works with it each year. She also mentors students at Tupelo High School.

■ **Beth Grubbs** has been promoted to vice president, CRE risk management, at BancorpSouth's Tupelo location.

She has more than 15 years of experience in banking and was assistant vice president and credit analyst.

Grubbs has a bachelor's degree in banking and finance from the University of Mississippi.



HOARD



GRUBBS

BusinessRewind

PONTOTOC COUNTY

Southern Motion adding 200 jobs, could be more

■ PONTOTOC - Reclining furniture manufacturer Southern Motion is adding at least 200 jobs over the next two years, and could add as many as 400 in the next five years.

The company company added 70 jobs in January, on top of the 65 it created in early 2009.

Southern Motion, which makes recliners, sofas, love seats, sectionals and home theater furniture, is investing \$7 million to build a 180,000-square-foot facility to accommodate increased production. The new building will be adjacent to its 400,000-square-foot facility, where it employs 701 employees.

TIPPAH COUNTY

Albany Industries to expand in Ripley, add 200 workers

■ RIPLEY - New Albany-based Albany Industries has acquired the former Agracel facility in the North Ripley Industrial Park. Albany is increasing production with the purchase of the 260,000-square-foot building, where it hopes to begin production in late June. As many as 200 jobs could be created, company officials said.

Albany was founded in 1995 with 15 employees. The upholstered furniture maker and importer now has nearly 500 employees at its 700,000-square-foot facility in Union County.

LEE COUNTY

Airport launches campaign to encourage more fliers

■ TUPELO - City and airport officials have launched a "Fly Tupelo" campaign to emphasize flying in and out of Tupelo Regional Airport for business and leisure purposes.

Starting June 10, Delta Airlines, through its subsidiary Mesaba, will offer three daily departures and arrivals.

The flights are subsidized by the U.S. Department of Transportation, which earlier this month agreed to pay the airlines more than \$921,000 through the Essential Air Service program to provide service from Tupelo.

Delta is expected to revert to a two-flight schedule sometime in August.

When Tupelo Mayor Jack Reed Jr. recently met with a Delta representative, he was given the indication that if Tupelo could fill the planes, Delta would look at keeping the three-flight schedule.

So, Reed issued the call to arms to Tupelo and Northeast Mississippi residents to fly in and out of Tupelo Regional, instead of using the Memphis airport.

Sales tax holiday back on for last weekend in July

■ TUPELO - Back-to-school shoppers who missed out on the first state sales-tax holiday last year will get another shot this year.

For 48 hours, between 12:01 a.m. July 30 to midnight on July 31, retailers won't collect the 7 percent state sales tax on eligible items.

Not every city will participate. Fourteen munic-

ipalities have opted out of the program, including Guntown and Sherman.

The items on the tax-exempt list are the same as last year's - essentially shoes and clothing that cost less than \$100 per item.

Computers and school supplies are not included.

Walmart finishes remodel, another one on the way

■ TUPELO - One of Tupelo's Walmart locations has been remodeled and the other is scheduled for an update next year.

On May 7, Walmart officials and associates gathered in the front of the North Gloster Street Supercenter to celebrate the grand reopening of the store, which underwent 3 1/2 months of interior renovations.

According to store manager Howard Brannon, the remodeling included updating the colors, expanding the electronics department, making the aisles wider and regrouping merchandise.

The remodeling is part of a corporate effort from Wal-Mart Stores, which has slowed new store openings to focus on updating its current store base.

According to Walmart market manager Sammy Sappington, about 400 U.S. stores are slated for remodeling this year. In Northeast Mississippi, remodels in Oxford and Batesville wrapped up in May, as well.

Walmart already has begun remodeling its Fulton store, with work expected to wrap up in June.

The West Main store in Tupelo is scheduled to be remodeled next year, Sappington said.

The plan, he said, is to remodel all the stores along the corridor from Batesville to Fulton.

TISHOMINGO COUNTY

ATK cancels project and its 600 new jobs

■ IUKA - Alliant Techsystems has canceled plans to add 600 jobs to its Tishomingo County facility. The plans called for ATK to invest at least \$200 million in upgrading its location in Iuka to make it ready for an expansion. The company also was supposed to provide an average salary of \$53,000 for the 800 employees.

The facility and its employees primarily support the production of large composite aerospace structures for government and commercial launch vehicles.

In February 2009, ATK announced plans to build composite structures for commercial aircraft at its plant at the Tri-State Industrial Park at Yellow Creek near Iuka.

The plant, which employed 176 people at the time, was scheduled to increase its work force to 800 within eight years. If completed, it would have been the county's largest employer.

But on Friday, ATK said instead of locating its Airbus A350 full rate production operations to Iuka, it will centralize them at an undisclosed, existing location.

Company officials have indicated they do not believe this decision will affect the current 160 employees at ATK's Iuka facility, the press release said.

ATK has more than 18,000 employees in 22 states, Puerto Rico and internationally.

Q & A with Lester Spell

Spell, a sixth-generation Mississippian, has been commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce since 1996. He has been reelected three times.

Q: What challenges are Mississippi farmers facing?

A: Our challenge is to anticipate changes and trends coupled with meaningful and sound research to determine what those opportunities will be. Throughout our state's history, farmers have been caretakers of our lands and our timber resources. They have adapted to changes and met challenges; they have an indomitable spirit and they are thankful and protective of the rich natural resources God has given Mississippi. Without the farmer and the products they provide, no nation can be strong and independent.

Mississippi farmers are facing many challenges today. Recently, making a profit has been the greatest challenge due to the ever increasing input cost and the extremely high financial risk associated with farming. Rising costs of all elements associated with production agriculture have far outpaced gains in commodity prices. Today, farmers must have an excellent knowledge in the areas of agricultural marketing, as well as world-wide production and demand trends to make sound decisions about which crops to plant or livestock to raise. Depending on these market factors and the uncertainty of weather to be taken into account, some commodities may or may not offer a profitable rate of return.

Q: What is the MDAC's plan for the agritourism trail and what are the benefits to producers/ranch owners/etc. who participate in agritourism? What are the cons?

A: MDAC works closely with the Mississippi Agritourism Association and the Mississippi Tourism Division of the Mississippi Development Authority in promoting opportunities for attracting Mississippians, as well as non-resident tourists, to many agricultural operations that provide a hands-on experience for the general public.

In the early 1990s, we began a seasonal agritourism operation on our family farm in Richland, which is only eight miles from downtown Jackson. We offered a U-pick operation for blueberries, blackberries, sweet corn and cantaloupe in May and June. We also incorporated tractor-drawn hay rides around the farm and educated visitors on the various food crops, bee hives and pine plantations which encompassed the farm and the importance they play in agriculture.

In the fall, we had day care centers and school groups come to the farm for hay rides and to "pick your own pumpkin." These aspects, which farm families know and do every day, are new and exciting for visitors. These are excellent ways to enable the public to build a better understanding and appreciation of farmers and the business of agriculture, not to mention providing an additional revenue stream for the farm.

Recently, MDA held a press conference at



SPELL

MDAC's Mississippi Farmers Market in Jackson announcing a new program to help promote both the growing agritourism and culinary businesses in the state. This program will help make Mississippians and out-of-state tourists aware of the unique opportunities to visit working farms and meet farm families and provide additional income to owners.

Q: Over the years, there has been a lot of talk about increasing vegetable production and organic farming in the state. Do you see either of those gaining headway with farmers?

A: Yes. Both vegetable farming and organic farming are a growing trend in Mississippi. MDAC has employees who have been trained to certify organic farms and therefore allow those farmers to sell their produce as certified organically grown.

Mississippi also has had a long history of successful vegetable production in some areas of the state. For example, in 2005, several farmers in the Mississippi Delta region near Indianola began growing about 1,000 acres of sweet corn. That operation has been extremely successful with sweet corn being shipped to over 30 states and Canada. This year that operation has expanded its growing season and capabilities by adding several additional food crops, such as multiple varieties of leafy greens, kale and various other food products.

Today, people of all ages are much more concerned about the origin of their foods and how they were grown. MDAC, in cooperation with Mississippi State University's Cooperative Extension Service, provide Mississippi growers educational workshops across the state for knowledge on the best growing techniques, different variety options and marketing aspects to be more efficient and successful in selling their products.

I believe additional support and assistance will become more available to fruit and vegetable and specialty crop producers across the state as we progress into the future and help grow this industry.

Q: Soybeans are expected to be the biggest crop in the state this year. Do you think that trend will continue in coming years?

A: Yes. Soybeans have many uses in today's marketplace, and further demand for soybean-derived products is growing worldwide. The input cost to farmers growing soybeans is less than several other row crops grown in Mississippi, and they are an excellent rotation crop for other crops due to their nitrogen-producing ability for any future crop uptake.

Q: Do you think cotton will be king again in Mississippi? If so, what do you think it will take to make that happen?

A: Due to the high input cost of cotton production, the expense of the equipment to plant, harvest and gin the cotton, coupled with the competitive world markets would question the likelihood that Mississippi's cotton production would return to its past years of record acreage.

Q: What ag trends do you see in the ag industry?

A: One troubling trend we are seeing is the decreasing number of young farmers in the nation. The bottom line is that there is lack of assurance in profitability and sustainability for young farmers. This, combined with, in most cases, the steep financial requirements from lending institu-

tions, discourages many young men and women from getting involved in farming.

While I am discouraged as to the difficulty that a farmer faces if farming is his or her sole source of income, particularly as associated with young farmers, I am encouraged that many Mississippians continue to keep their "hands in the soil," and farming supplements their income. These farmers, regardless of age and investment barriers, see marketing advantages and strong demands in the marketplace to access.

Our nation cannot survive without a viable agricultural industry. The threat is that we become more and more dependent on foreign countries for our food. The history of our dependence on foreign oil has cost us dearly both in human lives for its protection and access and economically in American currency. Sustaining agricultural production has to be a national priority.

Q: You've been a big proponent of farmers markets. Any new plans in the works for the markets?

A: Farmers markets are growing in number and size across the state. Three years ago, MDAC initiated a voluntary program named the Mississippi Certified Market Program. This program certifies local farmers markets so that shoppers know the origin of the produce being sold. In 2009, this program certified 20 markets and helped provide a wide range of marketing assistance to the market for customer and vendor outreach and education.

For a list of farmers markets, please visit www.mdac.state.ms.us/n_library/departments/farm_mkt/frk_fm_markets.asp

Q: Farmers have had a tough stretch with the weather in the past few years - droughts, cold, heat, excessive rains. How are farmers in the state dealing with the financial hardships caused by the weather?

A: Unfavorable weather conditions that have reduced both yields and the quality of the crops have resulted in great economic losses for farmers. Those losses have forced some farmers out of business and caused others to scale down many farming operations. This has been accelerated by the financing requirements that farmers must meet at the first of the year before they even get a crop in the field. One bad year can easily wreck any gains from previously good years.

Q: When Sara Lee/Bryan Foods closed in West Point, it left a lot of hog farmers without a buyer. Do you have an update on how the hog farmers are doing?

A: The plant closing in West Point was a devastating blow to Mississippi's pork industry, from not only at the farm level, but the ripple effect it caused across the local community. The farms that are still operating in the pork production business have also had to face the substantial feed input cost that the overall livestock sector has faced over the past few years.

Those factors have definitely created a huge hurdle, undue hardship and an uphill battle for our Mississippi pork producers. Despite these challenges, we must continue to support, provide assistance and help diversify these operations to capture any future market or potential growth.

Q: The Mississippi catfish campaign was launched recently. Have you had any feedback about this

program? Is it helping sales - for the catfish farmers and for the restaurants?

A: The recent law requiring restaurants to post a sign or label on their menus declaring the origin of their catfish has gotten great response from consumers across the state because they have become more concerned about drug and chemical contamination of foreign fish. Restaurants have been very helpful and cooperative in providing this "country of origin" information to their customers, and undoubtedly, this has also been very beneficial for the farm raised catfish industry. Our success in Mississippi has allowed for other states to follow suit and expand this program in their states.

Q: Are crops grown in the state that people wouldn't expect to be here?

A: Many people don't know that we have one of the largest freshwater prawn farms in the country. Lauren Farms, which is located in Leland, supplies many grocery stores and has a growing on-line ordering service. Peanuts, which over the years has mainly been grown in South Mississippi, has really expanded into Northeast Mississippi in a big way, providing those farmers an excellent cropping alternative and providing an additional supply stream to peanut product based companies.

Several specialty crops are being grown this year that will be used in certain salsa, salad-based and other specialty products. Of course in your area, Northeast Mississippi, sweet potatoes continues to be a great food crop and economically viable option for area farmers. And last, but certainly not least is our growing horticulture industry which not only helps supply your local co-op, but home improvement and nurseries around the country.

Q: Where do you see the Mississippi ag industry in 10 years? 20 years?

A: Due to the swift increase in world population expected in the future, I see food crop production increasing from the small family farms and gardens to larger acreage operations. This increase will be attributed to our favorable climate conditions and water availability opportunities. As farm land becomes more expensive in other states and urban sprawl takes over more land, and water resources limit agricultural operations, Mississippi can increase its food production and food processing opportunities.

Also, due to our long growing seasons for available forages and favorable winters that are much less severe than many other areas of the U.S., I think our livestock production has great potential because there will always be demand for high quality protein found in meat products. Plus, our state is relatively close to major production markets and has excellent access to a good transportation corridor to the major population centers around the U.S.

Mississippi is fortunate to have a great treasure in our abundant timber resources and available land for forestry growth. Our state's renewable timber production capabilities offer opportunities for various wood-related products ranging from building materials, paper and fiber products, and the potential to become a dependable supplier of energy in the future for converted cellulosic based fuels.

- Carlie Kollath

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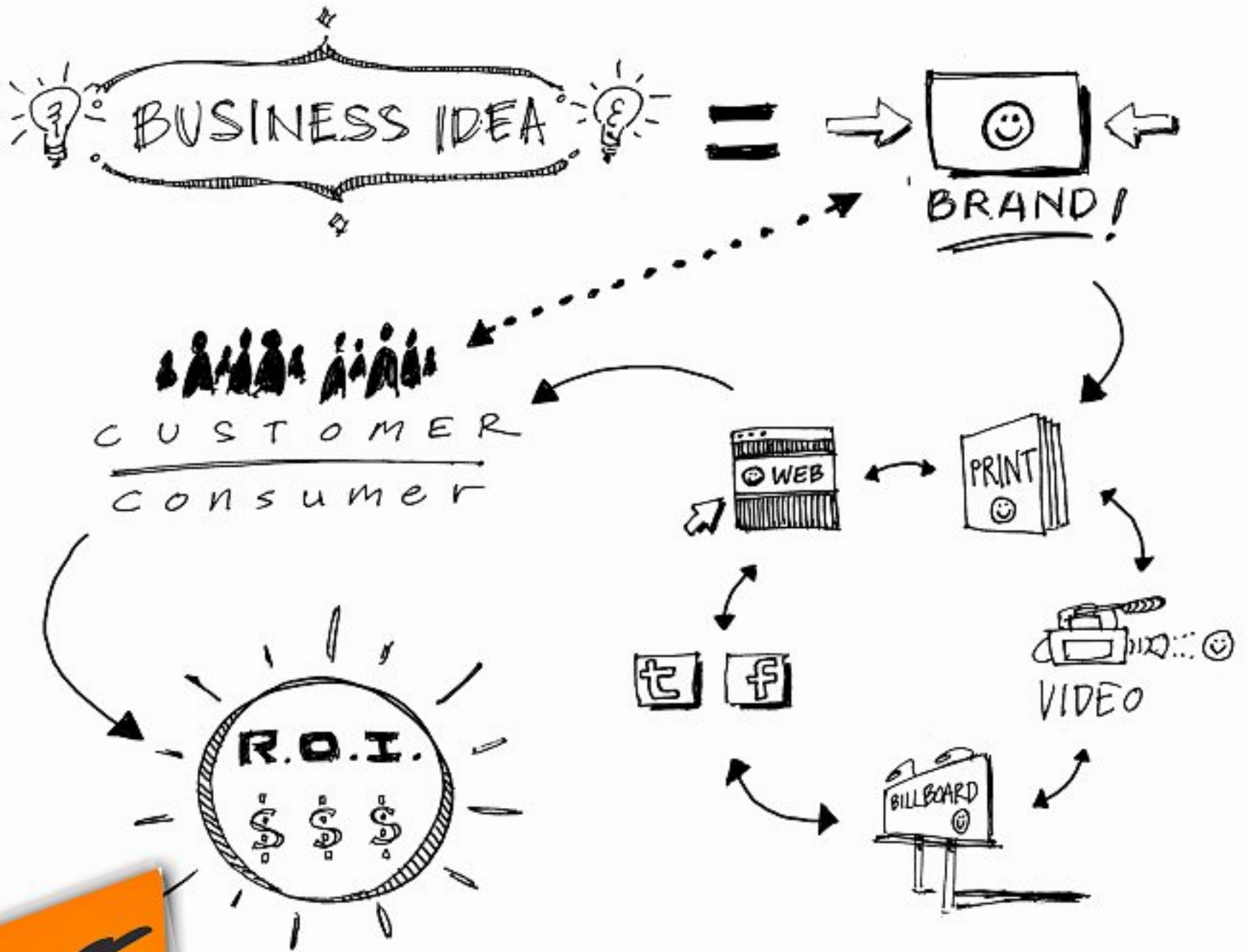
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FARMERS TEACH, HAVE FUN THROUGH AGRITOURISM

■ The state's agritourism trail has about 100 destinations and is expected to grow.

State officials hope to give Mississippi's agriculture industry a boost with the help of a new tourism initiative.

A state "agri tours" trail was unveiled in May by several officials, including Gov. Haley Barbour, State Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Lester Spell and Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Director Mary Beth Wilkerson.

The agritourism trail has about 100 stops throughout the state and is meant as a way to showcase the state's agricultural heritage. It joins

the state's other trails, including the Blues trail, culinary trail and country music trail. A literary trail is in the works.

According to the Mississippi Agritourism Association's website, agritourism is a business on a working farm or other agricultural enterprise that offers an educational and fun experience for visitors while generating supplemental income for the owner.

Examples of agritourism destinations include U-pick gardens, corn mazes and farmers markets.

For the agri tours trail, the MDA focused on providing a diversity of stops, according to Ann Curry, the MDA's associate manager in the bureau of film, culture and tourism development.

Stops include old country

stores, agriculture-related museums, old plantations, working farms and traditional agritourism destinations, such as pumpkin patches.

The state has promoted agritourism on its tourism site – VisitMississippi.org – but MDA thought it would add to the marketing appeal of the segment if it could "cluster" the farms via a trail.

The goal, Curry said, is to give an out-of-town or out-of-state visitor enough reasons to visit a particular part of the state and stay overnight.

"A tourist might not be interested in just coming for one (farm) but with the trail, they can come for more," Curry said.

She created mini trails for each region of the state, in-

■ The Mississippi Development Authority last month unveiled the state "agri tours" trail, which highlights the agricultural heritage of Mississippi. The organizers say the trail will evolve and grow. As of the end of May, about 100 stops are on the trail. These were the Northeast Mississippi stops, as listed on VisitMississippi.org.

- Covenant Creek Farm, Belmont
- Pumpkin Patch Farms, Blue Mountain
- Adkins Farm, Booneville
- Field of Dreamz Daylily Farm, Corinth
- Pine Mountain Christmas Tree Farm, Corinth
- Alcorn County Farmers' Market, Corinth
- The Blueberry Patch, Corinth
- Holley Farm, Fulton
- Little Creek Ranch, Glen
- Fitch Enterprises, Holly Springs
- The Apron Museum at the Pineslab Shop, Iuka
- Burton's Sugar Farm, Michigan City
- Wise Farms Corn Maze, Pontotoc
- Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum,

Starkville

- Aspen Bay Candle Company, Starkville
- Mississippi State University Cobb Museum,

Starkville

- MSU Herzer Dairy Science Cheese Factory & Cardwell Cheese Shoppe, Starkville
- MSU Veteran's Memorial Rose Garden,

Starkville

- Peebles Pecan Company, Starkville
- Mississippi Horse Park & Agricenter, Starkville
- MSU Aquaculture Research Center, Starkville
- Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery,

Tupelo

- The Tupelo Buffalo Park and Zoo, Tupelo
- Oren Dunn City Museum, Tupelo
- Sweet Potato Sweets, Vardaman
- North Mississippi Research and Extension

Center, Verona

- Fiddling Rooster Farm, Water Valley
- Waverly Plantation, West Point

cluding the Heritage Hills Trail and the Prairie Beltway Trail.

A diversification

Holley Farms in Fulton is one of the more than 25 stops in Northeast Mississippi. It's a working row crop farm, but

two years ago, the farm opened to the public for one month in the fall.

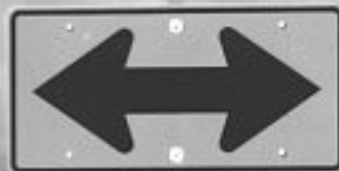
"Farming is not new to us," said Jan Holley. "This is just a new revenue source, a diversification."

Turn to **AGRITOURISM** on Page 17

BY CARLIE KOLLATH | BUSINESS JOURNAL

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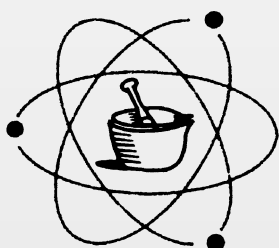
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TechTalk

Web and television converge at Google TV

The World Wide Web offers an amazing amount of information, easily searched and available on demand, provided you don't mind looking at a small screen and listening to poor or mediocre audio.

TV offers only a limited amount of information and delivers it according to a schedule, but the quality of sound and video available these days far exceeds what the PC delivers.

What could be better than the best of both worlds?

Enter Google TV. Introduced on May 20, Google TV promises a seamless integration of both systems. As the short video at www.google.com/tv/ puts it, "Google TV brings everything you love about the web to your television."

How will this work? Imagine sitting in your den in front of your 48" flat screen. It occurs to you that you'd like to watch a certain TV program. Just type in the name of the program and Google will direct you to TV channels and websites where you

can watch it.

Would you like some background information about the program you're watching or the star of the show? Surf the web while you continue to view the program. The web will seem to be a whole different world when you view your favorite sites, especially those with video streams, on the big screen.

To type in the name of a channel, program, website, search phrase, etc., you'll use a new kind of remote, with full QWERTY keyboard and navigation controls that you'll be able to use in a dark room.

Big-name partners

Google has partnered with big names to bring this technical effort, often referred to as "Smart TV," to fruition. Sony will produce Web-enabled HDTV sets and Blu-ray players. Viewers who have HDTVs with HDMI input will be able to access Google TV via companion boxes from Logitech. The required comput-



Ted
HOLT

ing power will be supplied by the Intel Atom CE4100 processor, a "system-on-a-chip" which has specialized circuitry for optimal TV viewing.

As for delivery to the consumer, Google has an agreement with Dish Network, and beginning this fall, consumers will be able to purchase Web-enabled hardware at Best Buy stores.

Google claims they're just getting started. Google has released technical specifications, based on open technologies like Android and the Google Chrome web browser, so that Web developers can build new applications geared to TV. Google also is building alliances with various companies – Google's website mentions Jinni.com and Rovi – in order to con-

tinually improve the technology behind Google TV.

But combining the Web and TV makes so much sense, why hasn't someone done it already? The fact is that others have done so. Web TV has been around for 15 years. But no one has found a way to reach the average TV watcher.

Will Google do what others couldn't do? I think so. Google has technical savvy, plenty of money and lots of smart people to make it happen. But so did the others.

The main thing I see that Google has going for it is that the technology has evolved sufficiently to support Web/TV convergence. One thing I'm sure of: If Google doesn't pull this off, someone else will do so eventually.

Convergence of Web and TV makes too much sense not to become reality.

Ted Holt is president of BINaRE, a Tupelo-based organization of professionals interested in the application of technology to the workplace. BINaRE welcomes new members. For more information, visit www.binare.org.

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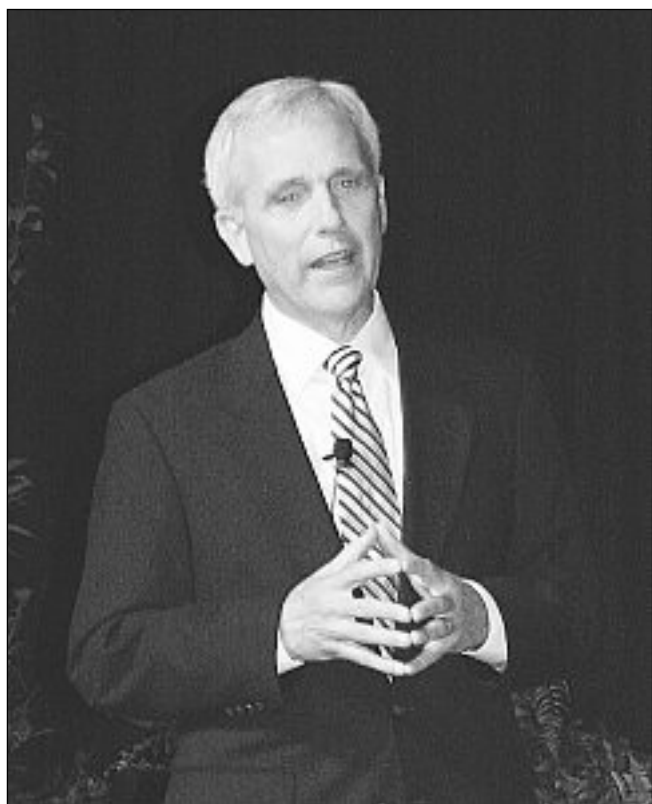


Chamber Connection

A publication of Journal Publishing and the CDF Chamber Division – June 2010



2010-2011 CDF chairman Billy Crews presents a token of appreciation to outgoing chairman, Chris Rogers.



2010-2011 CDF chairman Billy Crews gives his remarks during the dinner meeting.

Highlights from the 2009-10 CDF Annual Meeting

Themed “Peering Beyond the Horizon,” the CDF Annual Meeting was held May 6 at the Tupelo Furniture Market, Building 5.

During the dinner meeting CDF members heard remarks by outgoing chairman Chris Rogers that featured an overview of the ten year success of the Future Focus campaign, recognition of the CDF Ambassador of the Year, and the graduation of the Jim Ingram Community Leadership Institute Class of 2010. The gavel was passed to 2010-2011 CDF chairman Billy Crews, whose remarks included an outline of CDF’s next ten year plan to guide its program of work for the coming years.

Interspersed with Crews’ comments were testimonials by CDF members who helped explain several pillars of the new ten year plan. Debi Wheeler-Thomas, owner of Residence Hospice Care, shared the importance of the Renasant Center for IDEAs for small business assistance in the area. Ted Moll, chairman of the board of MTD Products, gave vital information on CDF’s existing industry program and how it provides essential support to local manufacturers like MTD. Finally, Kory Rogers, co-chairman of the Tupelo Young Professionals (TYP), and Gordon Fellows, TYP member, spoke on the creation of a Lee County Alumni Network to help bring local talent back to the community.

For more information on the outcome of the Future Focus campaign or the ten year plan, please contact the CDF office at (662) 842-4521.



Debi Wheeler-Thomas is pictured during her remarks on entrepreneurship.



Members of the Jim Ingram CLI Class of 2010 are pictured during the graduation ceremony.

Chamber focus

Dear Friends:

It was good to see so many of our members at the CDF Annual Meeting last month. The "Peering Beyond the Horizon" themed meeting included highlights of some of the noteworthy accomplishments this past decade through the support of Future Focus investors, and outlined key strategies and challenging initiatives included in the 2020 Strategic Plan. This plan will become CDF's program of work for the next ten years.

A highlight of the annual meeting was the recognition of Cindy Bryant with LSI Human Resource Solutions as Ambassador of the Year. Congratulations, Cindy.

The CDF Ambassadors continue to be vital links in helping CDF understand the needs of its membership. They attend ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking, First Friday programs, and any other functions in support of our program of work. Cindy is a



SMITH

true ambassador, and we certainly enjoyed having her as a part of the club. The new ambassadors for 2010-11 will be featured in next month's issue.

Congratulations to the Jim Ingram Community Leadership Institute Class of 2010 on successfully completing their two years of Institute. Nominations are now being accepted for the next class. If you would like to nominate someone, please call the CDF office 842-4521 or access the form at www.tupelochamber.com.

Vice President of Chamber Services

Community Development Foundation's Board of Directors for 2010-2011

CDF is governed by a 60-member Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is composed of the CDF Officers and eleven additional members of the Board. CDF's goals and objectives are accomplished through the efforts of members appointed to committees operating under one of CDF's three divisions: Chamber Division, Economic Development Division, and Planning and Property Management Division.

2010-2011 Executive Committee

Billy Crews, Chairman	Sue Gardner	Aubrey Patterson
David Irwin, First Vice Chairman	Shane Hooper	Chris Rogers
David Copenhaver, Second Vice Chairman	Octavius Ivy	Jane Spain
David Rumbarger, President/Secretary	Pat Jodon	Buddy Stubbs
Chris Rogers, Past Chairman	Glenn McCullough	Mitch Waycaster
	Guy Mitchell	

2010-2011 Board of Directors

R.V. Adams	L.E. "Bo" Gibens	Fred Pitts
Mike Armour	Gunner Goad	Darrell Rankin
Richard Babb	Chauncey Godwin	Harry Rayburn
Bernard Bean	Lisa Hawkins	Jack Reed
Ronnie Bell	David Henson	Scott Reed
Chris Berryman	Reed Hillen	Rob Rice
Charles Bouldin	Frank Hodges	Eddie Richey
David Brevard	Jerry Maxcy	Cathy Robertson
Gary Carnathan	Robin McGraw	Tom Robinson
Mike Clayborne	Paul "Buzzy" Mize	Mike Scott
V.M. Cleveland	Alan Nunnelee	Randy Shaver
Scott Cochran	Mary Pace	Barry Smith
David Cole	Jim Pate	Jeff Snyder
Norma Cother	Mimi Pettit	David Steele
Tom Foy	Greg Pirkle	Mary Werner

New CDF MEMBERS

ALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL
Dr. Sonya Bryan
1411 N Coley Rd.
Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 844-4955
Animal Care

**JOE JOE'S
COFFEE & TEA**
Mr. Joe Moffatt
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Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 823-5637
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**PEKING CHINESE &
JAPANESE CUISINE**
Mr. Shawn Hu
365 S Gloster St.
Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 205-4206
Restaurants and Catering

**RIVEROAK TIMBERLANDS
MANAGEMENT**
Mr. Bill Ridge

P.O. Box 1779
Collierville, TN 38017-2616
(901) 853-1856
Forestry

**ROBINSON ELECTRICAL
AND MILLWRIGHT SERVICE**
Mr. John Robinson
P.O. Box 835
Booneville, MS 38829
(662) 720-0342
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SHAMROCK SERVICES
Ms. Kim Powell
P.O. Box 906
Tupelo, MS 38802
(662) 213-6485
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Bryant named Ambassador of the Year



Cindy Bryant, branch manager with LSI Human Resource Solutions, was named Ambassador of the Year at the CDF Annual Meeting on May 6. Throughout the year, members of the CDF Ambassador's Club attended a record 75 ribbon cuttings, recruited 35 new CDF members, and volunteered over 142 hours of service to the Community Development Foundation. To attain this honor, Bryant attended 60 ribbon cuttings and volunteered during the CDF Membership Golf Tournament, Business to Business Connection and Taste of Tupelo, and Industry-Education Day. She also recruited four new CDF members this year.

"Cindy is an asset to CDF and has worked hard this year to both promote LSI Human Resource Solutions and serve

as a goodwill emissary for CDF," said Barbara Smith, vice president, chamber of commerce division, CDF. "We are excited to present her with this honor and thank her for her service to this community."

Bryant serves as branch manager of the LSI Human Resource Solutions in Tupelo. Originally founded as a daily pay labor service, LSI Human Resource Solutions is a full service staffing organization that is locally owned and operated. With locations in Memphis, TN; Marion, AR; and Tupelo, LSI offers an umbrella of services that includes everything from staffing, training, and employee assessments, to drug screening and background checks. Additionally, LSI Human Resource Solutions provides employees payroll services for companies

who are unable to add an employee to their company payroll. As a full service staffing company, their goal is to not just send a body to do a job, but to send the most qualified person available to do the job.

A resident of the Fawngrove Community in Itawamba County, Bryant is the mother of two and grandmother of three, with one more on the way. She is married to Bill Bryant. Bryant is a volunteer with the local SHRM human resource management association, the Rotary Club of Tupelo, and is a Relay for Life team member.

For more information on the CDF Ambassador's Club or to learn how your business can have an Ambassador, please contact Jennie Bradford Curlee at (662) 842-4521 or jcurlee@cdfms.org.

Join us for the June meeting of the Tupelo Young Professionals



Thursday, June 17, 2010
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
1001 Barnes Crossing Rd.

Please RSVP to typ@cdfms.org

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PULMONARY CONSULTANTS



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of the new office of Pulmonary Consultants in Tupelo. Pictured at the event with the CDF Ambassadors are: David Barber, North Mississippi Medical Center; Dee Dee Bates, Pulmonary Consultants; Paul M. Perry, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; Vanessa W. Herndon, CFNP, Pulmonary Consultants; Carolyn Estes, CFNP, Pulmonary Consultants; David H. Witty, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; Kurt Shettles, The McCarty Company; Lyndon H. Perkins, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; Councilman Jim Newell; David B. Moore Jr., M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; Christian Reed, The McCarty Company; Robert N. Stewart, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; David A. Reed, D.O., Pulmonary Consultants; William R. Edmonson, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; James A. Rish, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; Jaime R. Ungu, M.D., Pulmonary Consultants; and Emily Addison, CDF. Pulmonary Consultants is located at 860 South Madison Street and can be reached at (662) 377-7150.

Hyperion Technology Group Creates State of the Art Technology in Renasant Center for IDEAs

In the 1996 movie "Twister," Dr. Jonas Miller exclaims to his crew just before chasing a tornado that "today, we're gonna make history, so stick around, 'cause the days of sniffing the dirt are over." What Dr. Miller didn't realize was that his counterparts, the stars of the film, had a superior technology than he possessed, enabling them to peer into the tornadoes they were chasing to discover a world of information that had otherwise been foreign. This type of technology doesn't just exist in the movies. It is actually being created right here in Tupelo, Mississippi, by Hyperion Technology Group.

Geoff Carter and the staff of Hyperion Technology Group definitely understand that the days of sniffing the dirt are over. The company is a full-service engineering provider of cutting-edge solutions for government, business, and industry, that just so happens to include tornado tracking devices. In 2008, Carter formed a relationship with Reed Timmer, meteorologist and lead storm chaser for the Domina-



Pictured in front of the Storm Chasers' Dominator vehicle are: David Harris, Hyperion Technology Group; Chad Williams, Hyperion Technology Group; Gerald Godbold, Hyperion Technology Group; Daryl Winstead, Hyperion Technology Group; Reed Timmer, Storm Chasers; Don Guilliano, Storm Chasers; Geoff Carter, Hyperion Technology Group; Dave Demko, Storm Chasers; Hank Rinehart, Storm Chasers; and Chris Matkins, Hyperion Technology Group.

tor Team on the Discovery Channel's "Storm Chasers." Through this relationship, Hyperion Technology Group built the first-ever radar to measure vertical winds inside a tornado and today are building a radar system to study these winds directly from the Dominator vehicle. The Hyperion team developed and miniaturized probes in packages smaller than a cell phone that can be shot out of an air cannon into a tornado to record information at one second intervals. These probes then send

course data back to earth every second, providing high-resolution data on tornadoes. This data will then be analyzed collectively by Hyperion, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the University of Mississippi's National Center for Acoustics, and Timmer's company Weather Fusion.

"We are using the Discovery Channel to fund science," said Carter.

Located inside the Renasant Center for IDEAs, Tupelo/Lee County's Regional Business In-

cubator, Hyperion Technology Group's emphasis extends well beyond tornado research. Half of their customer base includes universities, research institutions, or government, while the other half is made up of original equipment manufacturers of commercial and industrial equipment. Their goal is to offer not only the most cost-effective solution to client's engineering service and product needs, but to provide them with technological advancement unlike any other service provider out there.

"We are thrilled to have a cutting-edge company like Hyperion Technology Group in the incubator. The work they are doing to gain a broader understanding of how tornadoes form and how they can better be detected affects every citizen in our area," said Wayne Averett, vice president of entrepreneurship and small business development for CDE. "It is our hope that more companies like Hyperion with grand ideas and a goal of seeing them come to fruition will take advantage of the bundle of services that the Renasant Center for IDEAs offers."

Carter and Hyperion Technology Group see their ideas come to fruition weekly on the Discovery Channel and in the lives that will be saved by attaining a greater understanding of the science of the tornado.

Hyperion Technology Group is located inside the Renasant Center for IDEAs at 398 East Main Street in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 823-0600. For more information on Hyperion Technology Group, please visit www.hyperion-technologygroup.com.

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BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE



The Business Roundtable was held May 26 in the CDF Boardroom. Informative reports were given by CDF members on such topics of interest as the Elvis Presley Festival to drug screening. To participate in the Business Roundtable or to learn more about this meeting, please contact Emily Addison at (662) 842-4521 or eaddison@cdfms.org.

TUPELO TINT'S BLIND SIDE



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the opening of Tupelo Tint's Blind Side. Pictured at the event with members of the CDF Ambassador's Club are: David Rumbarger, CDF; Councilman Mike Bryan; Councilman Fred Pitts; Theresa Braun, Tupelo Tint; Steve Braun, Tupelo Tint; and Emily Addison, CDF. Tupelo Tint's Blind Side is located at 1512 West Main Street in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 844-8771.



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Mississippi Scholars Graduates recognized in Lee County

Mississippi Scholars graduates from Mooreville High School, Saltillo High School, and Shannon High School were recognized at awards ceremonies, throughout the month of May, for graduating with honors through participation in the Mississippi Scholars program. For the fifth consecutive year, Lee County schools participated in the program, which is designed to motivate students to enroll in rigorous high school courses that will prepare them for college and careers.

"CDF continues to facilitate this program because it helps

area students understand the importance of graduating from high school and the impact that it makes on their success later in life," said Todd Beadles, vice president of workforce development for CDF.

Each Mississippi Scholars graduate was awarded a medallion of distinction and certificate of recognition for their accomplishment. Graduates also received gift cards from the Mall at Barnes Crossing as an extra special token of appreciation.

The course of study for Mississippi Scholars includes four

credits of English/Language Arts, four credits of Mathematics, four credits of Science, four credits of Social Studies, an art credit, and two credits of a Foreign Language. Additional expectations of Mississippi Scholars graduates include community service, 95% school attendance, a letter of recommendation from a principal or guidance counselor, and a 2.5 cumulative high school grade point average.

For more information on the Mississippi Scholars program, please contact Todd Beadles in the CDF office at 662.842.4521.

Students To Learn Hands-on Skills and Business Basics at Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs Summer Manufacturing Camp

Hawkeye Industries, Itawamba Community College, and the Community Development Foundation will offer a Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs® manufacturing summer camp for students ages 12-15 from June 7-11. Designed to help inspire the next generation of inventors, engineers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers, the camp is a technical, hands-on experience to introduce students to 21st century manufacturing technology and basic entrepreneurial skills.

"Participants use technology to create a product from start to finish providing them practical experience to build their confidence and set a foundation if they choose a career in one of the trades," said Todd Beadles, vice president of workforce development for the Community Development Foundation. "There is an ever increasing demand for highly skilled professionals who can design, program, and operate technology, and this camp allows students to learn about these opportunities."

Participants will explore 3D design, computer numerical control (CNC) programming, laser cutting, machining, finishing, entrepreneurship, and more, while emphasizing product creation, problem solving, and team building. Visits to area manufacturers will provide an up-close look at products being made as well as career advice and inspiration from the entrepreneurs who run the companies.

Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs®, the foundation of the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association Intl. (NBT) and the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE). Camps will be offered at NACCE member community colleges throughout the United States.

NBT introduces young people to careers in the trades through manufacturing summer camps for youth. It also issues scholarships to students at colleges and trade schools pursuing studies that lead to ca-

About NACCE

■ NACCE connects community college administrators and faculty with knowledge and successful practices regarding entrepreneurial thinking, entrepreneurship education, and student business incubation. NACCE holds an annual conference, and produces monthly podcasts and webinars. It also publishes a quarterly journal, hosts a dynamic list-serve, develops web resources such as shared entrepreneurship curricula and syllabi for faculty, creates guides in beginning and sustaining entrepreneurship and student business incubation programs, as well as tips for grant proposals specific to entrepreneurial endeavors at community colleges. For more information, visit www.nacce.com.

reers in manufacturing. More information on NBT is available by visiting www.NutsAndBolts-Foundation.org. Based in Rockford, IL, the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, International, is a professional organization with more than 2,100 members working together to improve the metal forming and fabricating industry. Learn more at www.fmanet.org.

THE JIM INGRAM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

is presently accepting nominations for the new class.

Participation in the Jim Ingram Community Leadership Institute is open to persons at least 21 years of age, living, working, or committed to the growth of the Tupelo/Lee County area.

Please contact the CDF office at (662) 842-4521 for further information.

The nomination form is available at www.cdfms.org.



North Gloster Walmart unveils new renovatons

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the renovation of the North Gloster Walmart. Pictured participating in the event are: Mayor Jack Reed, Jr.; Cheryl Atkinson, Walmart; Joey Shidler, Walmart; Carolyn Jones, Walmart; Janie Anglin, Walmart; Dana Cheatum, Walmart; Lisa Braddock, Walmart; Nancy Pounds, Walmart; Deb Pickens, Walmart; Sonny Turner, Walmart; Susan Cooper, Walmart; Nancy Tutor, Walmart; Teresa Criddle, Walmart; Jon Tart, Walmart; Brenda Floyd, Walmart; Susan Caygle, Walmart; Delois Nabors, Walmart; Howard Brannon, Walmart. North Gloster Walmart is located at 3929 N Gloster St. and can be reached at (662) 840-8401.



Tupelo Young Professionals enjoy May event
The May Tupelo Young Professionals event was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Tupelo. TYPs were treated to a chocolate and wine pairing that featured handmade chocolates by Chef Joshua Simpson of the Hilton Garden Inn. La Vino offered a selection of wines to compliment the chocolates. A coat drive to benefit the Junior Auxiliary's clothes closet was held in conjunction with this meeting. Pictured is Chef Joshua Simpson explaining the types of chocolates prepared. Also pictured is Andy Nash of La Vino sharing information on one of the wine selections.



T-MOBILE LIMITED



To celebrate the grand opening of T-Mobile Limited in the King's Crossing Shopping Center, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured at the event are: Wayne Cook, T-Mobile Limited; Philip Herring, T-Mobile Limited; George Knox, T-Mobile Limited; Paul Knox, T-Mobile Limited; Councilman Mike Bryan; Isabella Bryan; Councilman Jonny Davis; Larry Knox, T-Mobile Limited; Tina Guyton, T-Mobile Limited; Jon Elzie, T-Mobile Limited; Mark McCrory, T-Mobile Limited; Ryan Avent, T-Mobile Limited; and Emily Addison, CDF. Also pictured are members of the CDF Ambassador's Club. T-Mobile Limited is located at 3978 N Gloster St., Ste. C in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 315-0541.

NEW ALBANY HAMPTON INN



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of the Hampton Inn in New Albany. Pictured on the front row of the event are: Emily Addison, CDF; Nancy Kidd, Baptist Memorial Hospital - Union County; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Joe Miller; Melody Leopard, Hampton Inn; Kelly Roberts, Hampton Inn; Eric Pecenka, Hampton Inn; Mayor Tim Kent; John Tampa; Amanda Kent, BNA Bank; Danny Jordan, Union County Supervisor; Vickie Duke, New Albany Main Street Association; Jeff Cruz, Rensasant Bank. Pictured on the back row are: Michael Brown, Rensasant Bank; Bob Spencer, BNA Bank; Bo Collins, BNA Bank; Benny Rakestraw, Union County Supervisor; Josh West, Three Rivers Planning & Development District; Sammy Coffey, Union County Supervisor; Dwight Pickens, Union County Supervisor; Carl Dowles; Randy Owen, Union County Supervisor; Mike Staten, BNA Bank; Phil Nanney, Union County Development Association; Bud McNeal; Joanne Lesley, Union County Development Association; Sandra McClure, Rensasant Bank; Phyllis Stanford, Union County Circuit Clerk; Colt Doom, Regions Bank. Hampton Inn New Albany is located at 320 Coulter Cove in New Albany and can be reached at (662) 251-9239.



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Main Contact (will receive all chamber correspondence)

Contact Name

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Areas of Interest (please circle your selections)

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Business Roundtable

Sponsorship Opportunities

Tupelo Young Professionals

Do we have your permission to use your photos in our chamber publication(s)?

Yes No

Signature and title of authorized person with your company

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Agritourism

Continued from Page 6

During October, Holley and her family members focus on educating the public about farming and where their food comes from.

"But while we're doing that, we have to have fun," said Holley, who also is the vice president of the Mississippi Agritourism Association.

Attractions include a corn maze, pumpkin patch, cotton field and a corn cannon. Last year, wagon rides also were a crowd favorite. Holley said the wagon travels to an area that was once home to Native Americans. The family set up a replica village and discussed the historical significance of Chief Itawamba.

The folks at the Waverly Plantation Mansion also focus on educating visitors about the past. Waverly, also on the agri tours trail, was a working cotton plantation until the 1950s, according to tour guide Jimmy Denning.

During the daily tours, he tells the story of the home's place in the region's agrarian history. Along with agricultural enthusiasts, Denning said the home is a popular destination for architecture and interior design students.

Little Creek Ranch in Glen attracts a very different clientele, said owner Harold Little. Visitors camp, ride horses and see the animals at the ranch, which also is on the agritourism trail.

Equipment

Continued from Page 2

percent in North America and 57 percent in Brazil.

Mitchell Scruggs, a Lee County farmer who owns Scruggs Farm, Lawn & Garden, has no complaints about John Deere sales at his retail store.

"They've been really good," he said.

Holcomb of Chickasaw Equipment said that accessories and implements sales also are doing well.

"If customers are buying a tractor, they'll usually add in a front-end loader, maybe a box blade, too," he said. "And the loaders probably make up about 25 percent of the price of the whole deal."

Do you want your site to be considered for the state's agri tours trail? Contact Ann Curry at the Mississippi Development Authority at (601) 359-3415 or acurry@mississippi.org.

"I try to make it a pleasant stay and give them an appreciation of wildlife and animal life and ranch life itself," he said.

Before the ranch opened to the public seven years ago, it was a hay and cattle operation. Now, Little Creek Ranch has many attractions, including an RV park, horseback trail and a herd of buffaloes and longhorns.

Another stop on the agri tours trail also has buffaloes – the Tupelo Buffalo Park and Zoo.

Curry expects the trail to grow as word gets out about the trail and more agritourism operations request to be included. She said the current trail is a work in progress and is constantly evolved. Just last week, she added another stop.

"We're trying to showcase a diversity of sites to make it interesting to tourists who come into the area," she said.

Contact **Carlie Kollath** at (662) 678-1598 or carlie.kollath@journal.com.



Tupelo Business Network International becomes an official chapter

Tupelo Business Network International (BNI) became an official chapter in January and is the first group of its kind in this area. Their focus is on quality business referrals of non-competing members in the Tupelo community. If you are interested in applying for membership, the group meets each Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. at the Tupelo Country Club. **Pictured from left are:** Back row – Amanda Angle, president, Amanda Angle CPA LLC; Brad McCully, Sportsman Lawn and Landscape; Emily Baker, Gloster Creek Salon; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's; Moe Bristow, Water Depot of Tupelo; Suzanne Kirby, Advanced Screening Solutions; Caleb Freeman, Freeman Investments; Jay Hawkins, Room to Room Furniture; Greg Ott, secretary/treasurer, Alfa Insurance; Bubba Orr, RTO Construction; Jason Warren, Coldwell Banker. Middle row: Lisa Hawkins, Room to Room Furniture; Katie Pickens-McMillan, vice president, Key Staff Source; John Wooten, Bishop's BBQ; Tadmadge Ray, JT Ray & Co; Robert Youngblood, Youngblood Chiropractic; Richelle Anderson, Lighthouse Web Dezines; Mike Eldridge, Servpro; Nathan Chisolm, Auto Spa. Front row: Pamela Harden, Southern Patient Care; Jan Pannell, Sprint Print **Members not pictured:** Bryan Warren, Custom Insurance Concepts; John Michael Marlin, Gum Tree Mortgage; Gerald Pittman, Criterium -Pittman Engineers; Deborah Tierce, Tierce Motivational Training; Lauren Norman Fox, Ameriprise Financial; Carmen Tedford, Cellular South; Mark Hinton and Justin Martin, Community Bank; Taylor Goodman, Goodman Law Firm; Sharon McCombs, Comcast Cable; Kristi South, Frankie Blackmon Chevrolet; Buddy Stubbs, Busy Lad; Lisa Browning, Lisa Browning Photography; Lisa Bryant, Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal.

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Cooper Tire, Tupelo Recycling up for Governor's Cup

■ TUPELO - Gov. Haley Barbour has announced this year's district winners of the Governor's Cup Award, which recognizes private-sector businesses that have made a significant impact within their communities. The Mississippi Development Authority and the Mississippi Economic Development Council, which sponsor the awards, will recognize the district winners for their accomplishments during the 2009 calendar year and announce the statewide winners in each category at the annual MEDC awards banquet on July 22 at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi.

The Big Business (51 or more employees) district winners are:

- North District - Cooper Tire and Rubber Co.,

Tupelo; nominated by the Community Development Foundation, Tupelo.

- Central District - Structural Steel Services, Meridian; nominated by the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, Meridian.

- South District - DuPont DeLisle, Pass Christian; nominated by the Harrison County Development Commission, Gulfport.

The Small Business (50 or less employees) district winners are:

- North District - Tupelo Recycling, Tupelo; nominated by the Community Development Foundation, Tupelo.

- Central District - Thomasson Co., Philadelphia; nominated by the Community Development Partnership, Philadelphia.

- South District - Shaggy's Harbor Bar and Grill, Pass Christian; nominated by the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce.

The district winners in each category will receive a Governor's Cup Award. From these district winners, statewide winners in the two categories are selected and will be announced during the awards banquet. The statewide winners will be presented with a Governor's Cup trophy and a \$1,000 cash award for their nominating entities.

ALCORN COUNTY

Corinth J.C. Penney store recognized for performance

■ CORINTH - Mike Ullman III, chairman and chief executive officer of J.C. Penney, honored the retailer's best-performing teams with the Chairman's Award recently. The Chairman's Award, the company's highest honor for performance excellence, was received by three Mississippi stores who delivered exceptional results in 2009.

The Corinth store, in the Southgate Plaza and managed by Earl Owens, was the only store in Northeast Mississippi to win the award. Other Mississippi stores were in Flowood and Greenville.

Only 93 of 1,110 stores and five of 72 districts were selected for this year's award.

OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

Gulf States Manufacturers finalist for Defense award

■ STARKVILLE - Gulf States Manufacturers has been selected as one of 30 national finalists for the 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The award is the U.S. government's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the award which was instituted in 1996 under then Secretary of Defense William Perry.

Gulf States Manufacturers, nominated by a sergeant in the Army National Guard from Starkville, was selected from more than 2,500 nominations submitted for the award. Thousands of U.S. employees were nominated for outstanding support of Guard and Reserve employees, which included providing full salary, continuation of benefits, care packages and even family support to employees fulfilling their military obligation.

From the 30 finalists, a national selection board will select the 15 recipients of the 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

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