



*Save the Date*  
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2016  
THE MADISON COUNTY BUSINESS  
LEAGUE & FOUNDATION  
*Summer Celebration*

5:00 – 7:00 pm  
JACKSON YACHT CLUB  
700 Yacht Club Road  
Ridgeland, Mississippi

*Reservations Required*

BY  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2016  
Collins.jan01@gmail.com or 601.832.5592

*Summer Business Attire*

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# 2016 LEAGUE & LEGISLATURE



MCBL&F 2016 League & Legislature Luncheon at the Old Capitol Inn



MCBL&F Executive Director Jan Collins and the 112th Military Police Battalion Color Guard



MCBL&F Executive Director Jan Collins; Don Clark, Butler Snow; MCBL&F Chairman Tina Lakey, CenterPoint Energy; and Lt. Governor Tate Reeves



MCBL&F Secretary-Treasurer Phil Buffington, Adams & Reese Rep. Cory Wilson; MCBL&F Government Relations Committee Chairman Trey Dellinger

The Madison County Business League & Foundation hosted the 2016 League & Legislature Luncheon on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, at the Old Capitol Inn. Over 400 MCBL&F members, elected officials, legislators and guests attended the annual event in honor of the Mississippi State Legislature. The 2015-16 Madison County Youth Leadership Class also participated as part of their Government Day activities. Keynote Speaker was Lt. Governor Tate Reeves. The 112th Military Police Battalion Color Guard of Canton presented the colors, and the Raphael Semmes Jazz Ensemble and Brittneye Aven entertained the guests with music.

View photos from the event at [www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com)

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## SAVE THE DATE



# Coffee WITH The Senator



A LUNCHEON WITH SENATOR ROGER WICKER

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30<sup>TH</sup> FROM 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

AT THE COUNTRY CLUB OF JACKSON.

*Invitation to follow.*

## MADISON COUNTY EDUCATION



*Samuel C. Kelly*  
MCBL & F Vice  
Chairman

The Madison County School District continues to thrive. The laws enacted by the 2016 Mississippi Legislature should not change that. The most publicized change related to appointed versus elected School Superintendents. Madison County's current superintendent, Dr. Ronnie McGehee, was elected by an overwhelming majority. He is one of the best, if not the best superintendent in the State. Dr. McGehee understands Madison County and the education process. He puts the students and our wonderful staff first in all decisions and in position to be successful. As one member of the School Board, I would

not hesitate to appoint Dr. McGehee as Superintendent of the Madison County School District. His leadership throughout all phases of the school system is evident and the academic and athletic accomplishments confirm this fact.

There was also a long list of educational initiatives which centered around Charter Schools and other non-public education. Fortunately, as an "A" School District, Madison County will not have to contend with Charter Schools at this time. For now, the financial resources received from the State will not be diluted by students opting for Charter Schools or other non-public education. This fight is not over however. We must be vigilant about our school

resources. It takes money to sustain the programs offered throughout the Madison County School District. These programs have proven successful and deserve to be continued.

Madison County has also been blessed with continued growth in the residential and business communities. This growth demands that the School District keep up in terms of physical facilities and educational opportunities. As the growth continues, be on the lookout for additional changes, challenges and opportunities throughout our District. In the meantime, visit your local school and see what great things are going on.



## MADISON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION WEEK PROCLAMATION



The Madison County Board of Supervisors signed a proclamation, presented by the Madison County Creative Economy

Council, observing the week of May 15 – 21, 2016, as Madison County Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. All citizens are urged to support the awareness campaign in their community to show appreciation and support for our municipal and county law enforcement officers who keep our communities safe. Activities are planned for each day of the week. For more information, please contact your local chamber of commerce.

*Shown (l-r) seated: Supervisor David Bishop, President of the board Supervisor Trey Baxter, Supervisor Sheila Jones*

*Standing (l-r): County Administrator Tony Greer, Madison County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jodi Maughon, Supervisor Gerald Steen, Supervisor Paul Griffin, Madison County Business League & Foundation Executive Director Jan Collins, and Madison County Chief Deputy Jeremy Williams*

## MADISON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION WEEK PLANNING



The MC Board of Supervisors, Canton Mayor & Board of Aldermen, Town of Flora Mayor & Board of Aldermen, Madison Mayor & Board of Aldermen, and the Ridgeland Mayor & Board of Aldermen have each signed proclamations declaring the week of May 15-21st as Madison County Law Enforcement Appreciation Week.

The MCBL&F and the 5 chambers in Madison County are sponsoring activities within each community. Businesses are encouraged to recognize and salute our law enforcement officers and officials for the outstanding job they perform to keep our communities safe; adding to the quality of life we enjoy in Madison County! Schools, churches and individuals are planning ways to show their appreciation during the course of the week.

Planning the week's activities has been a joint effort with the MCBL&F and all the Chambers of Commerce in Madison County.

*(l-r):*

*Jodi Maughon, Madison County Chamber of Commerce*

*Abby Enfinger, Flora Area Chamber of Commerce*

*Mary Carol Patrick, Canton Chamber Main Street Association*

*Rachel Corkern, Madison County Business League & Foundation*

*Jan Collins, Madison County Business League & Foundation*

*Linda Bynum, Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce*

*Kristy Daniels, Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce*

*Elizabeth Bryant, Madison the City Chamber of Commerce*

*Betsy Nicholson, Madison County Chamber of Commerce*

*Toya Veals, Canton Chamber Main Street Association*

## MADISON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION WEEK BALLOON RELEASE



In celebration of Madison County Law Enforcement Appreciation Week, the Madison County Business League & Foundation and the Madison County Chamber of Commerce

hosted the second annual balloon release ceremony to honor fallen Madison County officers at the Madison County Sheriff's Department on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, at Noon.

*Shown (l-r): Madison County Judge Ed Hannan, Chief Deputy Jeremy Williams, Pastor Guy Odom, Sheriff Randy Tucker, MCBL&F Executive Director Jan Collins, Madison County Judge Will Longwitz, Justice Court Judge Lloyd Spivey, Madison County Circuit Judge Steve Ratcliff, Madison County Chancery Clerk Ronny Lott*

## MADISON COUNTY YOUTH LEADERSHIP: QUALITY OF LIFE & GOVERNMENT DAY



The Madison County Business League & Foundation and MCEDA are proud to sponsor the Madison County Youth Leadership program. The 2015-16 Class of 26 public, private and parochial juniors participated in Quality of Life Day on January 20, 2016, and Government Day on February 24, 2016. The program is an investment in the future of Madison County by empowering and igniting leadership in our youth!

Quality of Life Day breakfast was held at C Spire. Brad McMullan, CEO & Founder of bfac.com, and Heather Sophia, Meteorologist WLBT-TV / WDBD Fox 40 were the keynote speakers. The class visited H.C Bailey Companies, Mad Genius, MadCAAP, and the Madison County Detention Center. Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith was the luncheon speaker at County Seat in the Town of Livingston. The class enjoyed the afternoon with speakers at the Sombra Restaurant and the Ridgeland Tourism Commission. Holmes Community College VP DR. Don Burnham served as the Chairman for Quality of Life Day. Many thanks to all of the Quality of Life Day participating companies, speakers and sponsors.

Madison County Youth Leadership: Government Day was held on Wednesday, February 24, 2016. A breakfast with local elected

officials was held at Butler Snow. Pinelake Church Student Pastor Will Blitch offered the invocation. The attendees were welcomed to the law firm by attorney Tray Hairston. Newly elected Madison County Representative Cory Wilson addressed the group.

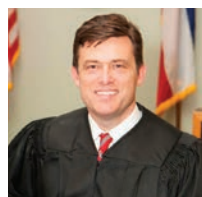
After the breakfast, the class traveled to the Mississippi State Capitol for a tour and visits with state wide elected officials and legislators. Class members joined 400 plus Madison County Business League & Foundation Members, elected officials, legislators and special guests at the 2016 League & Legislature Luncheon held at the Old Capitol Inn where they were recognized individually by Dr. Don Burnham for their participation in the leadership program. The keynote speaker was Lt. Governor Tate Reeves. Immediately following the luncheon, the class visited with Governor Phil Bryant and First Lady Deborah Bryant during a tea at the mansion. They enjoyed a tour of the formal home, the living quarters and the governor's "man cave."

John Taylor, Taylor Industries, was the MCYL Government Day Chairman. Other Committee members participating included Dr. Don Burnham, Rochelle Culp, Pat McNulty, Sherry Chance, Amanda Fontaine and college mentors Kierstan Knaus, Alex Milstead, Monte Barton and Caitlyn Mizelle.

View photos from the event at [www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com)



# AN UPDATE ON THE MADISON COUNTY JUDICIARY



Will Longwitz  
Madison County Court  
Judge

Since I started as Madison County Court Judge, I have had people ask me about the different courts in Madison County, and what our judges do.

I'll start with the court I serve on: Madison County Court. I share the County Court bench with Senior Judge Ed Hannan. A county only has a County Court if it is one of the higher-population counties like ours. We have a diverse set of responsibilities, and we have some Chancery- and some Circuit-type authority. We hear lawsuits up to \$200,000 in controversy, and we may handle non-capital felony cases transferred from Circuit Court. We have jury trials and bench trials, and County Court judges may issue search warrants, set bond and preside over preliminary hearings. County Courts hear appeals of criminal misdemeanors from Justice and Municipal Courts, including DUI appeals, and we share jurisdiction with Justice Courts in all matters, civil and criminal. We have exclusive jurisdiction over eminent domain proceedings. We also handle juvenile matters. Youth Court meets once a week, and it includes cases of child abuse and neglect. Judge Hannan presides over Adult Drug Court and I preside over Juvenile Drug Court.

The courts above the County Court are Chancery and Circuit. The Circuit and Chancery Courts that serve Madison County each recently got an additional judge to help address a crowded docket caused by our county's population growth. Judge James C. Walker filled the new Chancery seat. Judge Robert G. Clark, III serves Chancery Subdistrict One; he replaced Judge Janace Harvey-Goree after her retirement. And Judge Cynthia Brewer is the third and longest-serving Chancellor in the district. The 11th Chancery District

comprises Madison, Holmes, Yazoo and Leake Counties.

Chancery Courts are Mississippi's equity courts, handling domestic matters such as adoptions, custody disputes and divorces. They handle guardianships and conservatorships, sanity hearings, wills and trusts and challenges to the constitutionality of state laws. Chancellors also handle petitions to incorporate or enlarge a city, the establishment and management of drainage districts, children's welfare funds and other matters.

The 20th Circuit Court District includes both Madison and Rankin Counties. Their new judge position was filled by Judge Steve Ratcliff. He joins Judges William E. Chapman, III and John H. Emfinger on the bench. Circuit Court hears felony criminal cases, civil lawsuits and appeals from County, Justice and Municipal Courts, among other things.

The "people's court" – Madison County Justice Court – handles small claims of \$3,500 or less, misdemeanor criminal cases, traffic offenses that occur outside a municipality; they may conduct bond hearings and preliminary hearings in felony criminal cases and may issue search warrants. Madison County's four current Justice Court Judges are Marsha Weems Stacey, Martina Griffin, Lloyd Spivey, III and Bruce McKinley.

With our current judges, Madison County is well positioned to continue growing and meeting the needs of justice in our county. On every level, our courts are functioning well. Civil cases are moving along, and people who get convicted of violating the law are being sentenced and punished. I am grateful to serve with such capable judicial colleagues, and I look forward to sharing future updates of important developments in our judiciary over coming months and years.

# LMC GOVERNMENT DAY

MCBL&F Executive Director Jan Collins chaired the Adult Leadership Madison County Government Day on February 9, 2016. The class hosted a breakfast with the Madison County Mayors at Copeland Cook Taylor & Bush followed by a tour of the Mississippi State Capitol with visits from state wide elected officials. The class enjoyed a reception and tour of the Governor's Mansion by First Lady Deborah Bryant before traveling to the Madison County Chancery Courthouse to visit with County elected officials.

Senator John Horhn with the 2016 Adult Leadership Madison County Class on Government Day at the Mississippi State Capitol.



Front row (L-R): Deirdre Danahar, InMotion Consulting & Coaching; Janet Parker, Innovate MS; Molly Moody, Watkins & Eager; Jan Collins, Madison County Business League & Foundation; Sen. John Horhn; Abby Enfinger, Madison Restaurant Group; Diane Cushing, Exit Reality; Nashandra James, Madison County School District; Connie Siggers-Parker, Comcast Cable; Joseph Brady, Comcast Cable

Middle Row (L-RT): Robert Parrott, Adams & Reese; Woody Coleman, Regions Wealth Management; Trent Nelson, BankPlus; Terrence Black, C Spire; Kent Cooper, Allen Financial; Brian Buckley, Madison/Rankin County District Attorneys' Office

Top Row: (L-RT): Kay Wong, Lighthouse, Sanders & Associates; Robert Richard, State Bank & Trust; Bertram Goodloe, Velma Jackson High School; Scott Evans, Renasant Bank; Grant Montgomery, Bancorp South

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BREAKFAST



*Pictured (l-r): Commissioner Dick Hall, Steve Puryear, CAVS; and Clyde Edwards, III, Adcamp, Inc.*

The Madison County Business League & Foundation Transportation Committee hosted a breakfast meeting at the Embassy Suites Hotel on Wednesday, February 3, 2016. Central District Highway Commissioner Dick Hall was the keynote speaker. Other speakers included Senator Thad Cochran's field director Chris Richardson, MEC VP & COO Scott Waller, MEC VP of Policy & Research Christi Kilroy and Senator Josh Harkins. 90 members, guests and elected officials attended this informative meeting discussing the federal road bill, Blueprint MS road and bridge study and proposed legislation for governance of the Jackson Airport.

View photos from the event at  
[www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com)

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE BREAKFAST



*Panel Members Senator Buck Clarke, Rep. Cory Wilson, Rep. Kenneth Walker, Rep. John Moore, Senator Josh Harkins, Senator John Horhn, Rep. Joel Bomgar, Senator Walter Michel, Rep. Bill Denny. Not pictured: Speaker of the House Rep. Philip Gunn.*

The Madison County Business League & Foundation Government Relations Committee hosted a meeting on Wednesday, April 27, 2016, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Ridgeland. All Madison County legislators were invited to attend to present a recap of legislation passed during the 2016 legislative session. 100 MCBL&F members, guests and elected officials attended the breakfast. Committee Trey Dellinger fielded questions from other committee chairmen pertaining to education, transportation, quality of life and entrepreneurship.

View photos from the event at  
[www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com)

## 2016 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK SYMPOSIUM



*Christina Treppendahl, The Headache Center, State Economist Dr. Darrin Webb, and Supt. Of Madison County Schools Dr. Ronnie McGehee.*

The Madison County Business League & Foundation hosted the 2016 Economic Outlook Forum on Wednesday, April 13, 2016. The breakfast was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel In Ridgeland, MS. State Economist Dr. Darrin Webb presented a program titled Momentum in Madison County. The report and photo gallery can be viewed on the MCBL&F website.

View the report at  
[www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com/documents](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com/documents)

## HOSTED SEDA GROUP FROM USM



Extension, MCEDA and the Town of Livingston. The MCBL&F hosted a lunch for the group at The Gathering Restaurant.

Six members of the University of Southern Mississippi Student Economic Development Association (SEDA) visited Madison County on April 6, 2016. The Economic Development graduate students toured Nissan, The MSU CAVS

### THE MISSION OF THE MADISON COUNTY BUSINESS LEAGUE & FOUNDATION

*"The mission of the Madison County Business League & Foundation is to bring together, under one organization, the voice of numerous entities in order to establish a clear and concise message for the future. This organization, which is comprised of elected, appointed, business, and individual leaders of Madison County, will enable all partners in business and economic development to participate collectively in bringing together the overall vision for Madison County. Simply put...one vision, one voice."*



# 2016 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



Cory Wilson -  
Entrepreneurship  
Committee Member

Despite what you may have read in the papers, the 2016 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature was productive on many fronts. Major legislation was adopted in several areas. We worked to foster economic growth and personal liberty, improve educational attainment, and reduce the burden of government on taxpaying citizens.

## Fiscally Conservative Budget, Taxpayer Pay Raise

The Fiscal Year 2017 State Support budget totals approximately \$6.3 billion. The budget reflects slow projected economic growth over the next year. It keeps spending within our means, with an eye toward greater efficiency. The following figures offer a comparison of FY 2017 numbers and FY 2016:

- K-12 Education-- \$2.24 billion, Funding for Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) component is at the same FY 2016 level of funding.
- IHL Universities-- \$748 million total, a \$13.5 million cut (-1.8%).
- Community and Junior Colleges-- \$264.7 million total, a \$582,160 cut (-.02%).
- Department of Health-- \$65.0 million total, a \$278,175 cut (-.04%).

The Legislature also authorized roughly \$250 million in bonds for various projects this year. Discretionary money for small projects is also incorporated into this plan. Most bonding goes for larger projects, including:

- \$61 million for the eight colleges and universities
- Community and Junior Colleges: \$25 million
- Civil Rights Museum and MS Museum of History: \$16.6 million
- Ingalls Shipyard: \$45 million
- Statewide Local Bridge Program: \$20 million

Current law permits state agencies to charge other state agencies for rent, assessments, audit fees, personnel fees and other charges for services and resources. The Mississippi Budget Transparency and Simplification Act, Senate Bill 2362, eliminates those interagency charges and frees up about \$123 million of special funds from sixteen affected agencies that will now go to the General Fund. About \$104 million in nonrecurring money will be used to balance the FY16 budget. Additionally, this creates \$19 million in recurring General Fund dollars that

can be spent in FY 2017 and future years. This reform is aimed at efficiency, transparency in the appropriations process, and saving taxpayer dollars.

Finally, Senate Bill 2858, the Taxpayer Pay Raise Act of 2016, provides tax cuts aimed at economic competitiveness and fairness for every taxpayer. Phased in over ten years beginning in 2018, this legislation will eliminate the three percent individual income tax bracket and the franchise tax and ease the financial burden on self-employed Mississippians. The delay in implementation affords time to study both revenue and spending, looking toward greater reforms on both sides of the ledger.

## Continued Education Reforms

Legislators placed continued importance on reforming public education. Among a number of bills, Senate Bill 2438 requires that all local school board superintendents be appointed after January 1, 2019. Senate Bill 2161 makes changes to the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013 by permitting students in C-, D- and F-rated school districts to cross districts lines to attend a charter school. Senate Bill 2157 increases the rigors of the "Third Grade Reading Gate," which was passed a few years ago to raise Mississippi up from the lowest achievement level in reading.

The 2016 Legislature also continued the positive trend toward district consolidation. Since 2012, the Legislature has reduced the number of school districts from 152 to 139. By consolidating, more money will go into classrooms instead of to support administrative costs.

## Pro-Business, Pro-Economic Growth

Several bills were aimed at growing our economy. The biggest was an incentive package to support the largest combined job creation project in state history. The Continental Tire project in Hinds County will be a \$1.45 billion company investment, bringing 2,500 jobs to the Central Mississippi area, including Madison County. The project with Edison Chouest Offshore, Topship, will be a \$68 million company investment, slated to bring 1,000 jobs to the Port of Gulfport. Both companies plan to hire locally and utilize Mississippi contractors for at least 70 percent of construction.

Senate Bill 2162 expands the board of the Jackson Airport Authority to include members appointed not only by the City of Jackson, but also Rankin and Madison counties, the National Guard Adjutant General, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor. The majority of the members will still be made up

of citizens from Jackson. With the departure of air carriers and the recent downgrade of the authority's bond rating, a revamp of the board may well lead to better performance of an important regional economic asset.

Another bill of interest is House Bill 1223, the "Go Cup" bill. It authorizes certain municipalities and counties to establish Leisure and Recreation Districts. Once approved, permit holders may serve beverages in an outdoor environment within the boundaries of the district. Included are the three coastal counties, Hattiesburg, Tupelo, Holly Springs, Greenville, Greenwood, Canton, Grenada, Starkville, Water Valley, Jackson, Senatobia and Corinth. If there is interest, we may look to add more Madison County communities next year.

Finally, Senate Bill 2922 includes a reauthorization of the Historic Property Income Tax Program, which has been used by investors to restore buildings around the state. Enactment of this measure expands allowable credits an additional \$60 million to \$120 million, with an annual cap of \$12 million.

## Transportation and Infrastructure

One unresolved issue is funding for roads and bridges. Serving on the Transportation Committee, I spent a good bit of time listening to concerns about our state's infrastructure needs and debating how to pay for improvements. While we did not settle on a plan to do that, House committee members plan to take a hard look at MDOT and ways to prioritize and increase efficiency in road projects before next Session. Stay tuned.

## Elections Reforms

Another "big one that got away" is election reform, including strengthening our campaign finance laws. An election code "clean-up" bill died at the end of the Session because of opposition to campaign finance provisions added to the final conference report. I served on the conference committee on House Bill 797, and the campaign finance reforms included in the final version were in my view both workable, and needed. While we passed some elections reforms, including House Bill 809 (online voter registration updates) and Senate Bill 2167 (requiring independent candidates to pay qualifying fees; increasing filing fees for party candidates), the issue of broader election reform will likely be back next year.

And these are just the highlights. All in all, a busy Session. It is an honor to represent Madison County and serve as your voice on these and many other issues adding up to a better Mississippi.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT



*Trey Dellinger -  
Government Relations  
Committee Chairman*

The MCBL&F Government Relations Committee was pleased to host ten Mississippi legislators to speak at our Legislative Recap Breakfast on April 22, 2016.

Mississippi House Speaker Philip Gunn began the program by giving a general overview of the just-completed session.

Mississippi Senate Appropriations Committee Buck Clarke followed with a discussion of the tax relief signed into law this session and gave a synopsis of the budget outlook.

Senator John Hohn spoke about his work during the session, including his efforts to change the Mississippi flag.

House Education Committee Chairman John Moore discussed the status of various education reforms, such as expansion of charter schools and consolidation of certain districts.

Senator Josh Harkins addressed the creation of the regional airport authority and addressed transportation issues.

Representative Cory Wilson discussed his work during the session, including his efforts at campaign finance reform and his reasons for voting in favor of the Continental Tire economic development incentives.

Representative Joel Bomgar discussed his opposition to the Continental Tire incentive package, and also discussed his goal of developing strategies to raise Mississippi's per capita income.

House Apportionment and Elections Chairman Bill Denny spoke about the election reforms adopted by the Legislature and also discussed those that failed to pass during the regular session.

Representative Kenneth Walker followed and discussed his work during the session, including some bills that concerned his local constituents.

Senator Walter Michel closed out the speakers. Sen. Michel previously served in the Mississippi Senate from 1999 until 2011. After spending a few years focusing on his business, he was re-elected mid-session during a March special election. He discussed how he hit the ground running after a late start and got up to speed with the work of the session.

A panel discussion followed, in which the legislators fielded questions concerning economic development, transportation and education.

The MCBL&F Government Relations Committee wishes to thank our legislators for participation in this great, informative event.

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT



*Ray Balentine -  
Transportation  
Committee Chairman*

Of all the issues that face our government leaders, transportation is one that truly affects all citizens. Whether for citizens going to work, school, vacation, or seeking medical care; for manufacturers needing to ship their goods; and for retailers needing to get their inventories and then have customers be able to get to them to buy, our transportation system is crucial to our quality of life. Our nation's transportation infrastructure encompasses not only our highways and bridges, but also includes our airports, water ports, public transit systems and railroads. All of these modes of transportation complement each other in supporting our safety and mobility, but also our economic well-being.

While there are significant portions of the system that are owned or operated in the private sector, the overwhelming majority of the system is in the public sector domain. The backbone of the system is our network of roads and bridges. That network represents the largest investment into transportation. This network is primarily under the jurisdictions of state, city, and county governments. As the system ages, the costs of maintaining that system continue to rise. Leaders at all levels of government face having to balance the need for adding additional capacity to the system by widening congested routes or by adding new routes, against the need to maintain existing roads and bridges. Construction costs have risen exponentially over the past 30 years, while revenues dedicated to transportation have remained essentially flat. This creates a

situation where our government officials face much difficulty in being able to keep pace with transportation needs.

During the 2016 session of the Mississippi Legislature, the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) issued an independent study of transportation in Mississippi. Their conclusions reflect the reality that additional funds have to be identified and dedicated to the Mississippi Department of Transportation for state needs. Equally important is MEC's recommendation that additional funds must be provided to the cities and counties as mayors, city councils, and boards of supervisors all struggle with having adequate funds for transportation. The pressures to invest in the transportation system are significant all across the country. This is even more crucial for growing counties like Madison County. In order to address growing populations for its citizens, and for the recruitment of new businesses and industries, the investment in transportation has to increase.

Although the Legislature did not reach agreement on a funding mechanism this year, the issue will not go away. Indeed, it will likely be a focal point when they reconvene in 2017. Members of the Legislature dedicate much time and effort in doing their jobs. It is important to them that they hear from their constituents and what is important to them. We all need to educate ourselves on the issues and become engaged with our elected officials to share our concerns and wishes. Members of the general public and the business communities should actively discuss with legislators, our desire to see our transportation system remain one of the strengths of our state and communities.

## EXCELEBRATION



Miss Mississippi Hannah Roberts reads to preschool children at the Excelebration!



Excel By 5 State Director Dr. Eileen Beasley presents Coalition Chairman Dr. Mary Sims Johnson with a plaque designating North Madison County as a Certified Early Childhood Community. Shown (l-r) Dr. Nancy New, Beasley and Johnson.



The North Madison County Excel By 5 Coalition hosted a Excelebration on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the MSU Early Childhood Education Resource Center in Canton to announce certification as an early childhood community.

North Madison is the 25th community in the state to become certified. Miss Mississippi Hannah Roberts entertained and read to the children.

## MEET THE SPANISH TRADE DELEGATION



Shown (l-r): J.R. Jones, Cellular Network Center; Ben Moncreif, C Spire; Rose Boxx, MDA; Jay Moon, MMA; Jordi Santamaria, Indra Company; Maria Jesus de Gonzalo, Embassy of Spain; Feliz Vasquez De Sola, Indra USA, Inc.; Jan Collins, MCBL&F; Tony Greer, MCEDA; Tony Jeff, Innovate MS; and Gabriel Prado, MDA.

The Madison County Business League & Foundation (MCBL&F) and MCEDA met with a Spanish Trade delegation and MS Development Authority (MDA) and World Trade Center representatives at the Mississippi Manufacturers Association (MMA) to discuss ways of developing business relations between Spain and Mississippi.

## MASTER TEACHER OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP PILOT PROGRAM



The Madison County Community Trust (MCCT) approved a grant upon the recommendation of the Madison County Business League & Foundation Education Committee to sponsor a Master Teacher of Entrepreneurship pilot program in (4) Madison

County Schools. If the program is successful, it will be considered for roll-out to all interested public, private and parochial schools in Madison County. The program is overseen by the Mississippi Council on Economic Education. Instructing the 5 week course is Joe Donovan of the Millsaps College Else School of Management. Teachers participating represent Canton High School, Canton Academy, Velma Jackson High School and St. Andrew's Episcopal High School.

Shown seated (l-r): Chandra Grant, Canton High School; and Gracie Chesnut, Canton Academy

Standing (l-r): Joe Donovan, Millsaps College; Dan Roach, St. Andrew's Episcopal School; and Greg Pigott, Velma Jackson High School





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## MCBL&F AND MCEDA OPEN HOUSE RECEPTION



*Canton Mayor Arnel Bolden  
and Kenny Wayne Jones, CMU*



*Mark Garriga, Butler Snow; Bill Senter, Atmos Energy;  
Jeff Ross, Trustmark Bank*

The Madison County Business League & Foundation (MCBL&F) and the Madison County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) hosted an Open House Reception in their new office on Tuesday, March 29, 2016. Guests enjoyed the sounds of the Raphael Semmes Trio and enjoyed food and beverages catered by The County Seat Restaurant. Over 125 members, elected officials, community partners and guests attended the event.

View photos from the event at [www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com](http://www.madisoncountybusinessleague.com)

## NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Madison County Business League & Foundation sponsored a reception for the newly elected Madison County elected officials, families, and guests immediately following their swearing-in ceremony on December 30, 2015, at the Madison County Circuit Courthouse.



# THANK YOU TO OUR MADISON COUNTY BUSINESS LEAGUE & FOUNDATION SPONSORS

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