

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JAN COLLINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year!

I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday season and are looking forward to a happy and most prosperous new business year in 2011.

Upcoming news and events

MCEDA/Business League joint venture - You will soon receive a letter inviting a representative of your company to volunteer for one of the 2011 special/standing committees established by the Madison County Economic Development Authority. This will partner Business League members with MCEDA on projects that impact economic development in Madison County. Your participation is critical for the success of this program. Committee assignments

will be announced via email on Friday, January 28th.

SAVE the DATE!

Luncheon "LEAGUE & LEGISLATURE"

Wednesday, February 16, 2011,
12:00 noon
Mississippi State Capitol
Judiciary Room # 113
(first floor/east wing)

Legislative update by our Madison County state senators & representatives (Chancery Clerk Arthur Johnston – Moderator)

Member Spotlight

Mississippi State University Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems (CAVS)

The CAVS Extension is the proud recipient of the 2010 Award of Excellence in Business Assistance and Entrepreneurship by The University Economic Development Association. Awards of Excellence winners earn this prestigious recognition through their superior performance. This honor was awarded for CAVS work with the Navistar plant in West Point, MS.

The winning project was titled "The Role of MSU's CAVS Extension in Supporting Rapid Commercialization at Navistar Defense's Plant in West Point, MS." Dr. Clay Walden, director of CAVS Extension said, "The project was an example of MSU's commitment to service. CAVS Extension and the university as a whole are actively engaged in the lives of Mississippians. Our work with Navistar illustrates the assistance we provide and the partnerships we develop with employers in the state."



Pictured, from left: Dr. Clay Walden with CAVS Extension greets Congressman Bennie Thompson at "Coffee with the Congressman" on October 20, 2010.

The CAVS Extension Center's goal is jobs, more jobs, safer jobs, higher paying jobs... We envision Mississippi as the hub of a new automotive manufacturing corridor stretching across much of the south... We're committed to advancing technologies and practices so that Mississippi industries can compete successfully in a global market."

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Guest Column

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: UPDATE

Dick Hall

Put your hard hats on Madison County: Your Mississippi Department of Transportation is coming through with a number of projects that are sure to improve your traffic efficiency, safety, and quality of life. I'm proud to report that we have several active and pending projects that will benefit residents and visitors of Madison County for generations to come.

One of the active projects we are working on that affects your area is completion of the relocation of MS 463 through downtown Madison. We're in the process of relocating MS 463 to the north and including a railroad bridge over the current railroad line. This project, which should be completed in the fall of 2011, is costing taxpayers roughly \$27 Million dollars.

You may have noticed some of the defaced interstate signs during your commute on Interstate 55. We have let a contract which will replace all of these signs and others in the Jackson Metro area with state-of-the-art signs which will better guide motorists during their transit from point a to point b. This project is estimated to cost about \$4.3 Million dollars and should be completed in the summer of 2012.

Some of the major projects on the immediate horizon for Madison County include the 2 phases of the "Split Diamond Interchange" on Interstate 55 between Old Agency Road and MS 463. The first phase of construction will result in 8 total lanes on I-55, with two new lanes in each direction. We will also be constructing frontage roads in each direction. All of the Environmental documents have been approved, right of way plans are complete, and all right of way has been acquired. Pending the relocation of utilities this \$80 million phase of the project will be let for construction in the spring of 2011.

Phase II of the "Split Diamond Interchange" will consist of construction of Colony Park Blvd (McClellan Ave) from Highland Colony Parkway to U.S. Highway 51 and improvements to Madison Avenue between Highland Colony Parkway and U.S. Highway 51. This major undertaking is scheduled to be let for construction in the spring of 2013 for the Colony Park section, and the spring of 2014 for the Madison Ave section. Both of these projects will help ease traffic congestion considerably and will provide badly needed

East/West thoroughfares. The scheduling of both of these projects is subject to the timely relocation of the existing utilities and construction cost estimates are approximately \$32 million for Colony Parkway and \$20 million for Madison Avenue. Both phase I and II will be funded by the Madison Bond Partnership.

Another major undertaking and a priority of mine is the Gluckstadt Interchange overhaul. After a long but necessary design process, it was determined that shifting Interstate 55 lanes west would increase project impacts, cost and duration. Engineers designing the project proposed modifications to the Interstate on its current alignment. This design proposal, deemed "Alternative D-1", was presented at a public meeting on November 18, 2010. Subject to the timely acquisition of right of way parcels, we hope to begin construction in early 2013, if not sooner. This project will cost roughly \$25 million dollars.

The needs of Madison County residents and businesses have been heard by the Mississippi Transportation Commission. I intend to see each of these projects through to completion. That will clear the docket for other necessary projects as Madison County continues to grow. I ask for your continued patience as we make progress for the future of Madison County. We are not just building a transportation system – we are building an economy and a quality of life for us all.

If I or my staff may ever be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you for allowing me to be your Transportation Commissioner. It is an honor which I take very seriously.

Respectfully,

Dick Hall
Commissioner, Central District



DICK HALL

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