

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jan Collins

I am excited to present this edition of the *Madison County Business League* newsletter! As executive director, it is my responsibility to keep membership informed of all the Business League news and events, and the latest county economic development news from MCEDA (Madison County Economic Development Authority). In other words...the "scoop."

During the summer quarter of 2010, the Business League hosted two extremely successful, well attended events: "Coffee with Congressman Gregg Harper," and SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: Education = Economic Development.

During the fall quarter, the Business League will host the second in the series of meetings with our MS delegation, "Coffee with Congressman Bennie Thompson" on Wednesday, October 20th, at the CAVS Extension (MSU Center for Advanced Vehicular Studies) in Canton. This beautiful new two story white building is across the street from Nissan North America on the Mississippi Parkway — take exit 118B. Doors will open for hospitality and a casual lunch at 11:30 a.m. and the program will begin promptly at noon and end at 1:00. Please make plans to attend to hear 2nd district Congressman Thompson's views on legislation in Washington and how it will impact Madison County and Mississippi. Come prepared with any questions you might want the congressman to address.

Come party! The Business League and MCEDA will host its 2nd annual Fall Forum on Wednesday, November 10th, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Jackson Yacht Club in Ridgeland. This will be a perfect setting for a fun reception and an opportunity to visit with other members, elected officials and guests. Let's celebrate the successes of the first year of the Madison County Business League (we have grown to over 80 members). "We've come a long way baby!!"

Keep in touch, and remember to always contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Let's stay connected.



JAN COLLINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Bill Guion, BankPlus

With the mercury dipping lower on the back porch thermometer and leaves beginning to gather on the ground, I am reminded of the spirit of the fall season. It's a time of thanksgiving, when harvesters and sportsmen alike take to the field to gather the bounty of the preceding months. It's football season once again, when players and coaches anxiously hit the grid iron to put into action all their hard work and preparation with one goal in mind, a winning season. All in hopes of success, achievement and realizing the satisfaction in a job done well.

As the holidays approach let us all be reminded and thankful of the hard work, the vision and perseverance of those who have gone before us to make our community the shining star that it is today. It is not without effort that such things are made possible. As residents of Madison County, we are able to enjoy the benefits of a bountiful harvest that includes strong community pride, high quality education options, excellent health care facilities, commercial development and industrial growth; a virtual horn of plenty. We are blessed and entrusted with a community that is leader not only in our state but in our nation as well.

Without a doubt, in the coming months, we will enjoy everything that makes Madison County a great community. Albert Einstein once said, "Only a life lived for others, is a life worthwhile". Certainly, it is in giving that we receive. Be thankful for those who have given of themselves to make our community what it is, but more importantly, as you enjoy the holidays with your friends and family, ask yourself what you can give to add to the strength and spirit of Madison County. I invite you to be part of the gold standard of our community. Opportunity is right here.

Need to contact us?

623 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 104 - Ridgeland, MS 39157 - 601.832.5592

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A WORD FROM MCEDA Tim Coursey

“It may be cooling off outside but things are heating up in Madison County. Its always good to be busy and so we’ve been real happy at MCEDA lately. Besides getting into the water well business, we’re involved with quite a lot of genuine economic activity. We are working to finalize a call center deal that should be operational come the first of the year. We also are providing input and assistance for three manufacturing concerns, all of which will be very newsworthy when they come together.

This is on top of our efforts to explore the feasibility of constructing and operating a wireless Wi-Max system in the county, develop a public private partnership, and facilitate some internal efforts including our annual website data update and preparing for an annual Board planning retreat.

We also are looking forward to the new Canton film studio to get up and running soon. Most of the renovations have been completed and we should see a new paint job on the building and some guard shacks going up soon. Lastly, If things go well we should see some significant changes in our ever growing retail landscape in the County in the upcoming year. Until then we will keep our heads down and trudge forward.”

For more MCEDA News and a video of the Salute to Education Forum visit MCEDA online at www.madisoncountyeda.com.



TIM COURSEY

MCBL WEBSITE OFFERS CONVENIENCE

APPLY & PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE!
madisoncountybusinessleague.com/Application

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - SOLVE DESIGN STUDIO

One of our charter members, Solve Design Studio has worked with the Madison County Business League since just after it was formed. Solve initially worked with MCBL in producing our sales brochure, after which we moved right into the MCBL website.

Solve owner, Bo Pentecost, has been active in Madison County for years. “What happens in Madison County is always important to me,” said Pentecost. “My home is in Madison and my office in Ridgeland, so the Business League was of particular interest to me.”

Bo has been very involved in the county throughout the past and into the present. Currently, Bo serves on the Board of Directors for the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, is the newly elected President of ZIP39, the county’s premiere young professionals group and most recently began the orientation for this year’s Leadership Madison County class.

“I do stay quite busy. Lea, my wife, and my sons, Alex and Carson, are enough to keep me busy alone! I find that I enjoy what I do so much, that it rarely feels like work. At Solve, we are blessed to work with many wonderful businesses in the county, metro and throughout the state,” said Pentecost. “I love to be involved in organizations that I feel have the ability to shape the county — and certainly, the professional relationships I’ve built over the years simply reinforce my desire to stay plugged in.

From business cards to billboards and from simple web pages to large scale websites with full content management systems, Solve Design Studio is at the top of the pack. To learn more about Solve Design Studio, visit solvedesignstudio.com.



BO PENTECOST, OWNER

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Executive Director

Jan Collins

EDUCATION BAR TOO LOW, EXPERT TELLS LEADERS

*Article by Ed Darling from the
Madison County Journal · Sept. 2, 2010*

More than 250 business leaders, elected officials and educators gathered at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Ridgeland Wednesday to celebrate Madison County's premier status as a quality provider of education.

They left shaking their heads.

The message they heard was good job indeed, but not good enough. While impressive by Mississippi standards, state leaders may be guilty of becoming gatekeepers of the past instead of leaders for the future.

Dr. Bill Daggett, the admittedly politically incorrect chief executive officer of the International Center for Leadership in Education, delivered the blunt and sobering assessment.

He praised improvements in Madison County's public, private and parochial schools, acknowledged progress in community colleges and universities, then warned listeners to look more closely at the results.

Daggett said better test scores and standings might be the product of low expectations and standards rather than smarter students.

Using national studies, he noted to a round of applause, Mississippi's No. 1 ranking in proficiency among fourth grade readers. The problem, he explained, is the state's definition of proficiency. Compared to measurements from other states, the rating tumbled dramatically.

"You, even in Madison where you're making good progress in your schools, have the lowest definition of proficiency in the country," he said. "You've got to start comparing yourself more to the highest performing schools in the United States, in the world."



Two concerns register high according to Daggett.

He said on a statewide analysis, Mississippi needs to commit to a broad and inclusive pre-kindergarten program. Many state youngsters, primarily because of a high poverty level, enter school unprepared, losing critical years where learning is most important.

"All of us say we want to improve, but none of us, not the elected officials, not the parents, not the administrators, not the teachers, not the support people, not the school boards and not the business community will say we're the problem. But we are. We all are.

Daggett praised the group for its involvement, encouraged them to make a difference and to broaden the necessary partnership that will be necessary.

Other speakers included Dr. Phil Pepper, retired state economist; Dr. Tom Burnham, state superintendent of schools, Dr. Hank Bounds, commissioner of the Institutions of Higher Education (IHL); former Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, chairman of the National Assessment of Education Progress High School Achievement Commission; state Rep. Rita Martinson of Madison and Dr. Glenn Boyce, president of Holmes Community College.

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**Please contact any
of these MCBL
members, or the
MCBL office, with
names of prospective
members.**

SAVE THE DATE

Let's Celebrate!!! One year anniversary of the Madison County Business League!

**2nd annual Fall Forum on Wednesday, November 10th,
from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Jackson Yacht Club in Ridgeland.**

DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION ARE LINKED IN AREA

*Article by Lucy Webber from the
Madison County Herald · Sept. 7, 2010*

MADISON, MS — To find the key to economic growth in Madison County, look no further than 3- and 4-year-olds, education leaders say.

“The first day of college begins in preschool,” Hank Bounds, the commissioner of Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning told a room full of business and education leaders last week.

Speaker after speaker extolled the benefits of how a good education, starting before kindergarten, leads to solid economic development at the Ridgeland forum sponsored by the Madison County Business League.

Madison County continues to grow in population and in manufacturing jobs, good indicators of economic development, said Phil Pepper, the recently retired state economist. “You can attribute the growth to the quality of education,” he said.

Bounds said he was excited “to see business leaders who get it” - that the key to economic growth is education. But it’s not just teachers, principals and superintendents that are responsible for student’s learning, he said. Parents, business leaders

and the community as a whole are part of the educational landscape, he said.

“Get into the game,” he told the Business League. “Find a way to be supportive. We need your help.”

Students aren’t reading on grade level by the end of third grade will have problems catching up or going to college, Bounds said. “We know students who can’t read the end of third grade exponentially are more likely to drop out and go to prison.”

Children who don’t go to preschool or have parents reading to them start kindergarten start kindergarten with fewer words than those who are prepared, he said. “We’ve got to think differently how we attack that issue,” Bounds said.

State Superintendent of Schools Tom Burnham said Mississippi on the whole has made strides in education. “But the problem is it’s not fast enough for us to make any kind of challenge in the nation,” he said.

The problem is that too many students “start so far behind in kindergarten,” he said. “If we have one great challenge in the state, it’s one of advancing early childhood education. By the time students start kindergarten, much of what we’re trying to accomplish has been missed.”

Madison County Superintendent Mike Kent said early childhood education will “make a difference in the state. It will give the biggest bang for your buck in student achievement.

“We’re lucky in a portion of the county where there is a highly educated clientele that is committed to early childhood education. These parents are reading at home to their kids and they arrive at kindergarten ready to read or already reading,” Kent said.

Kent said Madison County schools are already doing what was advocated by the keynote speaker at the forum, a nationally recognized education consultant: making reading a priority across all subjects, not just in reading class.

“Every teacher has got to teach reading,” said Bill Daggett, CEO of the International Center for Leadership in Education. “Make literacy a priority.”

If Mississippi is not ready to invest in pre-school, “you’re still thinking like 1980,” Daggett said. The state’s education system is doing good by the eighth grade level, he said, “you almost catch up but then you fall off by 12th grade because you’re not teaching reading.”

“COFFEE with the CONGRESSMAN”

Congressman Bennie Thompson

Wednesday, October 20, 2010

Noon- 1:00 p.m.

CAVS Extension

(MSU Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems)

153 Mississippi Parkway

Canton, MS

*Beautiful white building across from Nissan on I-55 North, Nissan Parkway exit# 118B

Light lunch will be provided