

A Message from the Executive Director

As we begin year three of this administration, I would like to thank all of you for the hard work, loyalty and dedication that you display each and every day. Our mission, as outlined in the name of the agency, "*Human Services*," speaks for itself. This is a good time of year to catch up on many things going on in the agency.

I would like to thank everyone for your positive comments regarding last month's article on Compressed Time. The purpose was not to attack or criticize but to stress the importance of what we do and how we cannot allow anything to interfere with our mission.

Based on my feedback, the message was accepted in that manner. Although everyone was emphatic in pointing out how vital the benefit is, you were also just as determined to make the needed changes and improve the accountability of the process so that Compressed Time can continue.

It has been an exceedingly difficult winter and I appreciate everyone's perseverance and extra effort in meeting the increased needs of the public while we were struggling with our own situations. I can always depend on you to do our best work when the chips are down.

The legislative session is beginning the stretch run. I feel good about the agency budget at this point. We are seeking a modest increase to begin the development of a new child welfare computer system to replace MACWIS. We will ensure that this system will be built on a modern platform that will eventually become the overall system for the agency as we transition away from the old legacy systems that are approaching 30 years old. The end users will be very involved in the development of the new system

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DFCS State Office Staff hosts Hygiene Drive for Stewpot



Byron Wilbert, DFCS Fingerprint Unit, is shown above with collected items that were donated during the "State Office Hygiene Drive." The items were delivered to Stewpot Community Services for use in their shelters as they serve the homeless population in the Jackson metro area.

The **Mississippi Department of Human Services** is fortunate to employ many caring individuals who volunteer and serve in various capacities across the state and beyond. This holiday season, members of the Division of Family and Children's Services sought to fill a need at **Stewpot Community Services**, a

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to be sure that it is user-friendly and meets the daily needs of the workers, as well as providing management with the vital information needed for budgeting, tracking and planning.

There is one particular piece of legislation, House Bill 49 that bears the interest of all employees. If implemented it would require drug testing of applicants for TANF. The bill is based on the program in Utah. While personal accountability is stressed, the bill is not punitive and will allow those with problems to seek the assistance needed to ultimately obtain self-sufficiency.

Regarding legislative issues affecting employees, it is clear that there will be no increases in employee contributions to the retirement fund or health insurance premiums. I have no indication at this point on the issue of a pay raise. It has received much discussion and you will just have to "stay tuned" to see what finally emerges toward the end of the session.

If you visit the state office, you will notice many changes underway. The windows are being re-glazed and the building will be painted. The sign reflecting the new agency logo has been installed as well as improvements to the entrance ways on the eighth and ninth floors. Many other changes are in the works such as a complete rework of the entrance/reception area for the first floor lobby.

Hopefully, construction will begin soon on the big project which is to enclose the patio area in the back of the building and create a 2,700 square foot multipurpose room for training, meetings and emergency operations. There will also be aerobics and workout rooms with lockers and showers. A partnership will be formed with My Active Health and other partner(s) as needed to design exercise and nutrition for all employees wanting to participate.

Of note, the state office facility will become a smoke-free campus July 1. Through these projects and many other ongoing initiatives, we are working diligently to promote our employees' health and well-being.

You, of course, are our most valuable asset!

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

nonprofit organization that serves the low-income and homeless population in the Jackson metro area.

Stewpot began more than 30 years ago when representatives from seven area churches came together across denominational lines, to discuss a problem they all had in common—meeting the consistent requests for food and assistance from downtown Jackson's poor and homeless. Formed from this delegation is known today as Stewpot Community Services.

The goal of Stewpot has been since its inception to promote, develop, stimulate and encourage physical and spiritual development by providing nutritious meals to the community.

The Community Kitchen provides a noontime meal to anyone—no questions asked—seven days a week, 365 days a year.

In 1982, the success of the soup kitchen inspired the establishment of a Food Pantry. This mini-grocery store provides a four-day emergency food supply for carefully screened applicants. And in 1983, Stewpot began providing services to homeless women and children through the Sims House, a transitional shelter.

The **Billy Brumfield House**, named for a homeless man who died of hypothermia while sleeping in an old, abandoned car, began operation in December of 1987. The shelter provides a place to sleep for up to 50 men per night, and its services are divided into three different programs: a homeless program, a drug-work transitional program, and a special needs program.

By 1992, **Matt's House** was established to serve as an emergency, overnight shelter for women and children. Matt's House has as its mission to provide a safe, nurturing environment while helping residents find permanent shelter, employment or transportation back to their families.

Stewpot, which began as a simple soup kitchen, has developed into a multi-faceted organization to meet the needs of local residents and help them get back on their feet.

Stewpot believes, "The sacred is encountered in the common events in like sharing a meal. We are all fed, spiritually and physically by our fellowship with each other." For more information on how you can partner with Stewpot, go to their website at: <http://stewpot.org/>.

THE BEACON

For information or to submit articles for the Beacon:

Email: mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov

Mail: MDHS, Office of Communications

PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352

Child Support Attorney Diala Chaney: President-Elect Young Lawyers Division



Diala Husni Chaney of Oxford was elected president-elect of the Young Lawyers Division for the Mississippi Bar which is active in many public service endeavors. The division is composed of all lawyers under the age of 37 and any lawyer over the age of 37 during their first three years of practice following their admission. The Young Lawyers Division utilizes committees that are responsible for planning and implementing many of its projects, including the Law-Related Education Programs.

Diala started working for MDHS as a staff attorney in August 2009. She is now a child support senior attorney, where she supervises staff attorneys in Tunica, Panola, Quitman, Coahoma, Sunflower, Bolivar and Washington counties. Diala received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi in 2001 and her juris doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2004. In 2007, she received her LL.M. in Taxation from the University of Alabama School of Law.

Diala currently serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Mississippi School of Law, where she teaches Chancery Court Practice. Diala is a 2009 graduate of Leadership Lafayette and has served since 2007 as the hospitality director for the Oxford Film Festival. She is an active member of the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, the Oxford Community Tennis Association and College Hill Presbyterian Church.

Diala lives in Oxford with her husband, Phillip and their two boys, Elliott and Michael.



CHECK OUT THE NEW MDHS WEBSITE!

After months of preparation and anticipation, the new MDHS website will be available in March.

The focus in developing the site was our clients. We wanted to ensure that, whether a client visits the site through a desktop computer or via a mobile device, the site would be accessible, easy to navigate and user-friendly. We hope that you'll agree. Staff from many of our divisions have worked hard to make the site a success. The site has eight functional areas:

1. For Adults	2. For Families
3. For Providers	4. About MDHS
5. Contact MDHS	6. How Do I...
7. Agency Hotlines	8. Search

The first three areas are for clients to help them quickly find programs of interest.

Area 4, About MDHS, is very similar to our current site's front page and lists the programmatic divisions along with other items in depth.

Areas 6-8 gives visitors to the site a quick way to jump to important information such as the Child Abuse Hotline or specific program information.

Of note, we've recently posted county office closures due to inclement weather or other issues on our agency Facebook page along with alerting local media. In the future, as soon as the information becomes available to us, we will post this information in a scrolling alert bar on the front page of the website. ***Of course, your immediate supervisor is your first source of this information.***

Take some time to get familiar with the new site. If you have any questions or concerns, send an email to mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov.

The website's new address is: www.mdhs.ms.gov.

MDHS Investigators **SNAP** Coast Fraud: *Recent Busts Net More Than \$345K*

During January, in a sweep across the three coastal counties, investigators from the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Program Integrity Fraud Unit and law enforcement from Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties busted SNAP recipients accused of trying to steal from a program that provides assistance to those in need.

In recent months, these same investigators and law enforcement agencies statewide, busted another 34 SNAP clients with restitution and fines totaling more than \$345,000. Last fiscal year, investigators recovered more than \$358,000 from those attempting to defraud the system.

SNAP and TANF fraud are usually the result of a client withholding income or household information that could deem them ineligible to receive benefits.

Small "mom and pop" grocers are usually the type of stores targeted by those trying to defraud a system in place to help those who are at risk of food insecurity, such as the elderly and children. Local residents can help spot fraud in their grocery stores.

If you suspect a store owner, clerk or client is misusing SNAP benefits, call the Fraud hotline at 1-800-299-6905.

SNAP fraud is a crime.

Service Awards-Thank you for Serving Mississippi!

Dennia George: Kemper County



Kemper County Eligibility Worker II Dennia George was recognized for 20 years of service with the agency. Coworkers gathered to celebrate this event with her and congratulate her on this achievement.

Derrick Crawford: 2-W Regional Director



DFO Bureau Director I Barbara Hammer recently recognized 2-West Regional Director Derrick Crawford for his work and presented him a certificate for 35 years of service to the MDHS. Congratulations and thank you, Derrick for your dedication and loyalty to the agency.

Margaret Moss: Jones County



Margaret Moss, Jones County director, (center) was presented with a certificate February 27 to recognize 40 years of faithful service to the state of Mississippi. On hand to present the certificate was Barbara Hammer, DFO (left), and 4-South Regional Director Gwen Williams.

Desoto County Celebrates Mardi Gras



Desoto County staff celebrated a "Taste of Mardi Gras" compliments of Director Tammi Crawford who made Jambalaya and a King Cake. Everyone received Mardi Gras trinkets and beads. Standing, from left: Martha Nelson, Crystal Palmatier, Delise Cotton, Ethel Milhous, Carla DeLeon, Bernice Morgan, Anne Berryman, Reccie Grainger, Lucila Vallin and Mary Vick. Seated: Jo Pitts, Denise Riley, Jean Weathers and Maxine Watson. Not pictured: Helen Cutright, Crysti Horne and Ginger Hall.

County Corner - Scott and Sharkey Counties

This month our travels take us to Scott and Sharkey counties.

Scott County is located in central Mississippi and has a total area of more than 610 square miles. The population recorded in the 1840 Federal Census was 1,653. This jumped to 28,264 residents in the county during the 2010.

The territory, which now constitutes Scott County, was granted to the state of Mississippi and to the United States at the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, concluded Sept. 27, 1830. Scott County includes the **Bienville National Forest** which has the National Natural Landmark, Bienville Pines Scenic Area, one of the largest protected old-growth loblolly pine stands in the region.

Scott County is named for **Abram M. Scott**, Governor from 1832 to 1833. Scott was born in South Carolina and was an early settler to Wilkinson County. Scott was instrumental in founding historic Woodville in Wilkinson County, one of the oldest towns in the state. Scott served as a Mississippi senator from 1822, and 1826-1827. He served as lieutenant governor from 1828-1830, and in 1832 was sworn in as the state's seventh governor. He served as governor until his death from **cholera** in 1833. He is buried in historic **Greenwood Cemetery** in downtown Jackson.

Prior to the Civil War, the county seat was located at Hillsboro. During the Civil War it was burned to the ground on **Sherman's famous "March to the Sea."** On Nov. 8, 1865, an election was held and Forest was selected by a large majority. This caused one of the largest controversies in county history. Of note, an original copy of the charter shows that the name of the town was spelled "Forrest."

The town name, reportedly, was given by people who came to the area in the mid-1800s and found a land of towering pines so thick that the sunlight could barely penetrate to the ground. Thus the name "forest." Interestingly, a ridge which rises in the **Chunky River** Swamp and passes through the county causes some of the local streams to flow northward, which is unusual for Mississippi.

In 2010, **Forest** had a population of 5,684, down from 5,987 in 2000 census counts. Forest is home to several poultry processing plants, including Koch Foods, Tyson Foods and the Forest Packing Company. Raytheon also has a manufacturing plant in Forest which builds electronic equipment for radars and other sensor systems.

Notable people

"Big Boy" Crudup (blues musician - wrote "That's All Right (Mama)", b. 1905), honored with a Mississippi Blues Trail marker.

James Eastland (1904-1986), U.S. Senator from Mississippi.

T-Model Ford (James Lewis Carter Ford) (~ 1920-2013), musician.

Andrew R. Johnson (1856-1933), Louisiana state senator from 1916-1924 and mayor of Homer in the 1910s, was reared in Scott County near Forest.

Lewis Nordan, writer.

Kevin Sessums, writer.

Sharkey County is located in the **Mississippi Delta**. As of the 2010 census, the population was 4,916, down from the 1880 census which noted 6,306 persons residing in the area. The county has a total area of more than 434 square miles of which approximately 7 square miles is water.

Sharkey County is home to the **Delta National Forest** which is one of only six national forests that is entirely contained within a single county. The area includes the Green Ash-Overcup Oak-Sweetgum **Research Natural Area** which is a rare example of a pristine bottomlands hardwood forest and was declared a natural landmark in May 1976.

The Indian mound builders were active in this region. With approximately one hundred mounds in the county, the largest is on Murphy's Bayou which towers above the treetops. Just south of Rolling Fork there is a group of five mounds, the largest of which is about 50 feet high. This group is on a crescent ridge about half a mile in length.

Sharkey County is named after **William L. Sharkey**, the provisional Governor of Mississippi in 1865. Born in 1798 in Sumner County, Tennessee, Sharkey was a judge and politician and was a member of the **Whig Party**. He died in 1873 and is buried in Jackson's Greenwood Cemetery.

Rolling Fork is the county seat with a population of 2,143 at the 2010 census, down from 2,486 in 2000. In 1826, Rolling Fork was founded as a plantation at the junction of Deer Creek and Rolling Fork Creek.

Rolling Fork Creek was named by **Thomas Y. Chaney** on his first visit here in 1826 on account of the swiftness of the current immediately preceding its emptying into the Sunflower River.

The **Great Delta Bear Affair** was first observed in 2002 on the 100th anniversary of **Theodore Roosevelt**, the 26th U.S. president's famous bear hunt with **Holt Collier** in Sharkey County. During the hunt, Collier's favorite dog, Jocko, was attacked by a cornered 250 pound black bear. Collier quickly leaped from his horse and hit the bear with the stock of his gun before throwing a rope around the stunned and only partially conscious animal. Roosevelt famously refused to shoot it, after which the cartoonist, **Clifford K. Berryman**, illustrated the President with a bear. A toy maker heard the story and asked Roosevelt if he could use his name on a toy bear. Roosevelt approved and the teddy bear was born.

Anguilla is a small town in Sharkey County. The community was named for an **island in the West Indies**. Anguilla is above the Mississippi state average for tornado activity and is 231 percent greater than the overall U.S. average for inclement weather.

Other unincorporated places in Sharkey County include Delta City, Onward and Panther Burn which got its name from an incident when there was a panther that was killing settlers' livestock. They decided to sacrifice one animal and placed it in a barn. When the panther entered, they closed the barn door and set it afire chanting "burn panther burn."

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Region 1-North chooses Amanda Gass as February Practice Model Worker



From left: ASWS Debra Gann, FPS Amanda Gass and PMC Carla Holeman.

The Division of Family and Children's Services, Region 1-North has chosen Amanda Gass, Alcorn County family protection specialist, as the February Practice Model Worker of the month. Amanda has been with the agency for two years, earning a social work degree from the University of Mississippi in 2011.

When asked the reason she became a social worker, Amanda replied, "I chose social work because I want to make a difference in the lives of others, especially children. They are our future and they don't always have a voice in their situations. I want children to know they are important and they matter. I also want families, who are often oppressed due to circumstances beyond their control, to be able to take advantage of available opportunities so they may excel in life."

Amanda schedules and attends weekly visits with families under her direction, and adheres to a family-centered practice by seeking to help clients preserve and maintain their relative connections.

Recently Carla Holeman, LSW Practice Model Coach observed a well-planned, organized family team meeting conducted by Amanda. One component exemplified was "Mobilizing Services Timely."

It also was noted that Amanda creatively supports and mentors her families. During the meeting which included teaching home budgeting principles to a mother of six children, Amanda explained the benefits of using grocery store sales papers and food coupons. She followed up by accompanying the mother on a trip to the grocery store to further demonstrate how to shop on budget using a grocery list and coupons. Amanda truly goes the extra mile for her families.

Carla said, "Every time I see Amanda, she has a smile on her face and she is working hard with her families to assess safety, risk and their needs so that appropriate services can be provided."

Payment Help Available to Entergy Mississippi Customers in Need

Federal government releases LIHEAP funds to help pay utility bills.

Mississippi has been hit with several bouts of extremely cold weather this year already, and that is driving up many customers' electric bills. But just in time, the federal government has released **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program** funds to help low-income, elderly and disabled Mississippians pay their energy bills.

The state recently received more than \$3.7 million in sequestered and additional funds for LIHEAP. That brings the total for the 2014 fiscal year to more than \$30 million.

"Every day our low-income customers struggle to make ends meet," said Valarie Mabry, Entergy Mississippi public affairs analyst. "When extreme weather hits and affects utility bills, it creates an added strain on their budgets, so we're working hard to get the word out that help is available."

LIHEAP funds are administered through the Mississippi Department of Human Services, which provides funding to local community action agencies.

"Community action agencies across the state have seen an increase in requests for energy assistance," said Tina Ruffin, director of MDHS Division of Community Services. "Cold weather means greater energy consumption which translates to higher energy bills. These agencies have funds available to help offset these costs for those who qualify."

For information on service agencies, go to: **MDHS Community Services Resources.**

Entergy Mississippi employees, shareholders and customers also contribute to The Power to Care, a special fund that provides emergency utility assistance for elderly and disabled customers. The Salvation Army and other partners use money from the fund to help pay the electric bills of qualifying customers.

For a list of Power to Care agencies for Mississippi, visit entergy-mississippi.com/content/your_home/EMI_MS_AGENCIES.pdf.



Choose a Healthy You for 2014

News and Tips from ActiveHealth



February is American Heart Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women, but heart disease can often be prevented and controlled.

Tips for a healthy heart include:

1. Know Your Numbers - keep track of your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar numbers so you and your doctor know when to take action.
2. Quit Tobacco - Stop smoking now!
3. Focus on Fruits & Vegetables - aim for 5-10 servings per day.
4. Exercise - aim for 30 minutes, 5 days per week.
5. Manage Stress - There is time to work, relax, and play. Find your perfect balance.

Gourmet Popping Corn White Corn 100% Whole	Movie Theater Butter Popping Corn
91 NuVal	11 NuVal

DID YOU KNOW...

That butter popcorn you like has a NuVal of only 11! NuVal is a Nutritional Scoring System where foods are ranked on a scale of 1 to 100—the higher the score, the higher the nutrition. Check out this month's comparison between two popular popcorn options. You can search the entire database of food comparisons on your MyActiveHealth website.

LEARN MORE. BE HEALTHY. CHOOSE WISELY. IT'S YOUR HEALTH.

Monthly Wellness webinars are available to help you stay informed about health issues.

Click here to access a webinar.

Meeting Password: wellness

Call-in Information: 1-866-469-3239

Access Code: 652 167 619

Webinar times: 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. CST

Exercise of the Month : The Shoulder Press



Muscles Worked: The overhead press works the deltoids, which are the main muscles of the shoulders.

Description: This exercise can be performed on a stability ball (shown), seated on a bench or standing. To begin, align your body so your ears, shoulders, and hips are in line. Keeping your stomach muscles tucked, lift your arms to shoulder height and bend at the elbows with your palms facing forward. Straighten your arms overhead and lower back to starting position. Perform 10-12 repetitions and rest. Repeat this sequence up to two more times.

"Those who think they have no time for healthy eating, will sooner or later have to find time for illness."
Edward Stanley

- March 11: Healthy Meal Planning for the Family
- April 15: Tips to Fit in Fitness
- May 13: Tobacco Free
- June 10: Pumping Up Your Metabolism
- July 8: Turn the Pressure Down-Blood Pressure
- Aug. 12: Know Your Numbers
- Sept. 9: ABC's of Diabetes
- Oct. 14: Sweet Slumber
- Nov. 11: Healthy Holidays
- Dec. 9: Calm Waters-Relieve Stress

***We recommend prior consent from your physician before starting any exercise program.**



Brett Watkins,
your onsite health coach

Speak with a health coach toll-free:

1-866-939-4721, Monday–Friday, 7:30 am to 10:00 pm, CST, and Saturday, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, CST, or visit MyActiveHealth.com/Mississippi.



Scan the QR code into your mobile device to get a healthy start.

DFCS Region 4-North Hosts Meeting for Clerical Staff



Recently, DFCS Region 4-North hosted a meeting for county clerical staff. Staff discussed work flow and addressed concerns and issues. The ladies also considered opportunities to better serve their community and clients. The meeting was deemed a great success. Attending the meeting was Region 4N ASWS and Regional Director Iris Joiner. Back row, from left: Mattie Jenkins (Noxubee), Bessie Griffin (Oktibbeha), Tabitha Pollard (Webster), Barbara Sims (Winston), Darline Spencer (Lowndes), Shawna Pittman (Clay) and Tashana Stovall (Regional office). Front row: Melinda Hutchinson (Choctaw), Polly Page (Lowndes), Wander Carr (Regional office), Livia Scott (Lowndes) and Sharron Dickerson (Neshoba). Not pictured: Betty Aaron (Kemper County)

County Corner: Sharkey County (Continued from Page 5)

Also in Sharkey County is an unincorporated area called **Nitta Yuma**. The story of the origin of the name is that when an Indian friend and Colonel Vick, (whose ghost reportedly still roams the grounds of Mont Helena, a Colonial revival style mansion which sits atop an Indian mound), were walking toward the banks of Deer Creek, the Indian suddenly stopped and said, "Nitta Yuma, Nitta Yuma." He had seen fresh bear tracks. The literal meaning of the words is, "sweet bear meat," but freely translated it is, "trail of the bear."

Notable People

The Delta blues fiddler, **Henry "Son" Sims**, 1890.

Fielding L. Wright, Governor of Mississippi and 1948 vice-presidential candidate.

Slick Watts, professional basketball player.

Next month we look at Simpson and Smith counties. Until then, take some time and enjoy a day trip through scenic, historic Mississippi.

Region 2-East Hosts Team Building Workshop and Presents Character First Awards



Region 2-E Director *Cindy Brewer* recognized Quitman County Director *Luvenia Mamon* for her compassion.



Grenada County Customer Service Representative *Monika Harper* was recognized for generosity by Brewer.



Brewer and Tate County Clerk Typist Sr., *Fonda Capriotti* was recognized for loyalty.



Clerical Support *Martha Chandler* was recognized for responsibility.

Region 2-E recently held a leadership and team building day which included a workshop and exercises to strengthen skills and help staff be more effective.



Region 2-E Administrative Assistant *Beverly Peggs* was recognized for dependability.

CHARACTER FIRST

DEFINITION OF THE MONTH

CONTENTMENT

Realizing that true happiness does not depend on material conditions.



Save The Date: FiveK For The Fatherless



Save the date for this year's 5k for the Fatherless scheduled April 26. For sponsorship information, contact Rick Valore at rick@200millionflowers.org.

To sign up for the race, go to: [VISIT THIS LINK.](#)