

A Message from the Executive Director

May begins the transition from spring to summer, signifies the end of another school year and begins a prime time for outdoor activities. Everyone should set aside some time to get out and support your favorite team and spend some time with your family. While our mission is very important we do not need to lose sight of our "work life balance." We are all much more productive after spending a little time away with our friends and family.

As parents every minute that you spend with your children and grandchildren not only enriches your life but is truly an investment in theirs. We, as a culture, are starving for basic values.

As an old song said, "Teach your children well!" Children learn in many different ways. There is a lot of new science in the field plus the advances in technology. I tend to be a bit old fashioned and believe there is nothing better for a child's social and intellectual development than creative play and interaction with adults.

Thanks to all of you that provided assistance during the recent disaster recovery. The sheltering and the DSNAP project ran incredibly smooth thanks to all of your extra efforts. As we approach hurricane season we will be providing extra training and preparedness meetings to do an even better job. Inevitably there will be a next time. We owe it to our citizens to be at our best at all times but especially in their times of greatest need.

I was honored to travel to the Washington County Region 2-W Permanency Roundtables and present the second Annual Richard Harris Leadership Award to

Continued on page 2

Viedale Washington Presented the Richard Harris Leadership Award



From left, Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Rickey Berry, Viedale Washington and MDHS Deputy Administrator for Family and Children's Services Dr. Kim Shackelford.

Since 2013, the MDHS executive director has recognized an individual for exemplifying outstanding leadership, courage, integrity and dedication to duty and honored them with the Richard Harris Leadership Award.

Mr. Harris was a longtime state employee, deputy administrator for the agency, and serviceman in the U.S. Army.

This year, the second annual Richard Harris Leadership award was presented to DFCS Region 2 West Director Viedale Washington by MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry at a Greenville regional meeting.

Continued on page 2

In this issue:

- DSNAP for families affected by April's severe weather.
- June 1 begins Hurricane season in Mississippi.
- Winston County family gets a new home.
- Human Resources sponsors Blood Drive at State Office.
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Neshoba County DFCS join to prevent child abuse.
- Biloxi supports Pack-A-Bag for children in foster care.
- And much more!

Distributed by the
Mississippi Department of
Human Services
750 N. State Street
Jackson, MS 39202
1.800.345.6347



Like us on Facebook
or follow us on
Twitter for news
and updates.

Executive Message continued from page 1

DFCS Regional Director Viedale Washington. There is a separate article in this month's issue about Viedale and you can watch the video presentation on the award by going to: <http://video.mdhs.ms.gov/videos/video/277/in/featured/>.

I also traveled to the beautiful northeastern part of the state to attend a retirement reception for Janis Haynie, retiring Alcorn County director. Janis had 44 years of outstanding service to the citizens of Alcorn County and the entire state. We could always call on her to deploy to trouble spots around the state and her service after Hurricane Katrina was exemplary. Best wishes to a great lady in her retirement years!

I was able to visit Oktibbeha, Clay and Chickasaw counties on the trip north and promise to follow up on my statement in last month's issue to get out to the counties more. It always lifts my spirits and reminds me why we do what we do when getting out in the field and observing the dedication and professionalism of our county staff. You are the ones that make the agency. We here in the State Office exist for one purpose, and that is to support you and your mission in the counties.

A follow-up on the issue of pay raises. Language in the appropriation for State Fiscal Year 2015 beginning July 1, 2014, provided for approximately 800 employees earning less than \$30,000 per year who have not had a pay increase of any kind since July 1, 2010, to receive a \$1,000 annual raise. The language also allows for approximately 665 employees earning more than \$30,000 per year to receive up to 5 percent at the discretion of the agency head. I have decided to award what is allowable under the law thus providing much needed relief to more than 1,400 of our employees. I am fully aware that there are another 2,000 employees that cannot receive pay raises under this year's appropriation. I felt that the right thing to do was to help everyone that we could this year. Although the legislature has to have final say on such matters, you have my word that I will do everything in my power to address this vital issue over the summer and in the session beginning next January.

Everyone enjoy the coming month and we will update you on the agency's "goings on" in the June edition.

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

Continued from page 1

Viedale noted that her leadership started at an early age as a single parent raising four children. Viedale's mother told her to always "put her heart and soul into everything she did," and to "never give up on your dreams."

"We are our brother's keeper," said Viedale which is a great reminder from a wise woman. Viedale currently serves as a regional director for Family and Children's Services in Region 2 West. She is also on special assignment in Region 7-W. Her leadership, as well as her hard work throughout her career, is shared with everyone she comes into contact with.

We congratulate you for this achievement and thank you for your dedication to Mississippi families and the agency throughout your career.



Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Families Affected by April's Severe Weather

Residents in the 12 counties affected by the late April severe weather were eligible to apply for the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP) in May. With the exception of Rankin County, DSNAP registration took place at MDHS county offices.

Counties included were: Itawamba, Jones, Leake, Lee, Lowndes, Madison, Montgomery, Rankin, Simpson, Warren, Wayne and Winston counties.

The household must have lived in one of the counties designated as a disaster area by the **American Red Cross**, **MEMA** or **FEMA**, and must have suffered damage to their home, property or had loss of income, and meet DSNAP income limits. Affected residents must have incurred disaster-related expenses as a direct result of the severe weather to be eligible for the one-time only benefit and are required to provide proof of identity to register. Current SNAP recipients are not eligible for DSNAP benefits.

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



Winston County Family Gets New Home



After the devastating tornadoes and severe weather in late April, many houses across the state were destroyed and families left homeless.

In Winston County, Rahesia Holmes and her eight children lost everything. Ms. Holmes did not drive, had no transportation, was uninsured and was the last to leave the shelter because they had no place to go.

At about 10 a.m., May 8, the word went out of their dire predicament. Before 5 p.m., a house was found. After some minor repairs that were made by the following Monday, the home was made ready for the family. Louisville Mayor Will Hill paid the first month's rent and had the lights, water and gas turned on; beds, linens and clothes were procured along with Walmart gift cards to help get the family back on their feet.

Collaborating to make this miracle happen were MDHS, Emergency Coordinator Alynda Ponder; Winston County Director Regina Higginbotham; MDHS, ASWS Joann Clark; **Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)**; and the **Mississippi Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team.**

Joann said, "After every storm there is sunshine, new beginnings and blessings. This mother and her eight children have blessed us with their upbeat spirits after losing everything."

This is an example of team work at its finest. Thank you to all for making this happen for a family in need.

June 1 Begins Hurricane Season in State

June 1 marks the official start of the 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season and the forecast issued by NOAA is calling for a below average season due to the onset of El Nino across the tropical pacific.

An El Nino pattern usually helps to produce unfavorable conditions for tropical storm formation across the Atlantic Basin. However, this does not guarantee there will not be any landfalls or major storms.

As always, we must be prepared, individually and collectively. Below you will find a recommendation by FEMA for a basic emergency supply kit for 72 hours. Seventy two hours is just a starting point for personal preparedness. Recommended items include:

- Water-one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food-at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Manual can opener for food.
- Local maps.
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger.

For more information, go to: <http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit>.

Parent and Community Day: A Special Event for Oakley Students and Staff



In April, the Oakley Youth Development Center hosted the second Annual Parent and Community Day which brings parents and community counselors to the campus to evaluate students' academic progress. This year more than 60 people

attended the three-hour event which included an introduction to the facility, teacher conferences, lunch and visitation with students. The event serves to increase parental involvement in their student's progress.

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Neshoba County Division of Family and Children's Services Join to Prevent Child Abuse

Workers from Neshoba County Family and Children's Services joined with the **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians** on the Reservation in Philadelphia to inform the community about Child Abuse Prevention in April. Neshoba MDHS staff along with other community partners were on hand to distribute literature and informational material to participants. The event was open to the entire community. Choctaw Social Services, children, teachers, social workers, as well as other community partners, enjoyed the great, informational event and collaboration. Keynote speakers for the event were MBCI Chief Phyllis Anderson and MBCI Social Worker Mae Bell.



Human Resources Sponsors Blood Drive at State Office

The Division of Human Resources, Training and Professional Development Unit will be hosting a blood drive with **Mississippi Blood Services** at the State Office Thursday, June 12, 2014, from 8 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in Training Room A. All staff are encouraged to participate.

YOU ARE A POTENTIAL CANDIDATE TO DONATE BLOOD IF YOU

- Are 16 years of age or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in good health.

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO DONATE IF YOU

- Have donated whole blood in the last 8 weeks.
- Have had mononucleosis or major surgery in the last 6 months or minor surgery in the last 2 months.
- Have been pregnant in the last 6 weeks.
- Have had tattoos in the last 7 days or body piercing at a licensed facility in the last 6 months.
- Have had malaria in the past three years.
- Have had heart disease or heart surgery.
- Have had dental work in 3 days or teeth cleaned in 24 hours.
- Are currently on antibiotics or currently experiencing allergic symptoms.
- Have HIV/AIDS or are in a high-risk group for AIDS.
- Have Hepatitis or tested positive for Hepatitis after the age of 11.
- Have Liver Disease or Lung Disease.
- Have had Cancer in the last year.
- Have abnormal bleeding tendencies including Hemophilia.
- Have engaged in intravenous drug use.
- Have leukemia, lymphomas or any blood diseases.
- Have sickle cell anemia.

The Training and Professional Development Unit would also like to remind all staff to take advantage of the FREE staff development training that is available to all MDHS staff statewide. The training topics include a wide variety of soft skills that play an important role in the day-to-day operations of MDHS. Soft skills are a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that will change you from a good employee into a great employee.

Please be advised that early registration via MELMS is required and classes may be subject to change or cancellation.

For a list of available training opportunities, contact Sandra Herring or Cedric Robinson, at 601-359-4356.

Community Supports Biloxi Pack-a-Bag for Children



The Dogwood Garden Club members also collected items at their annual Christmas luncheon held at Chateau Blessey to pack in the bags for the Biloxi Pack-a-Bag project for children.

The Biloxi Pack-a-Bag project, which helps supply personal items for children taken into MDHS custody, has received community donations and support.

The program was organized by Lee Ann Dubaz, secretary to the superintendent of education and district historian. Items collected to fill the bags include toiletries, stuffed animals, pajamas, journals, crayons, socks, underwear and clothes.

To donate or for more details, contact Lee Ann Dubaz at leeann.dubaz@biloxischools.net. Money donations also may be sent to the Biloxi High School Interact Club. If writing a check, please write Pack-a-Bag on the "for line," and send to Biloxi High School in care of Stephanie Irby.

Reprint from the *SunHerald.com*, May 5, 2014



CASA and Jackson County DFCS Team Up for Child Abuse Prevention Month



The local chapter of **Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA)** and the Jackson County Division of Family and Children's Services joined for several events to bring awareness to the community for Child Abuse Prevention Month. In March, a luncheon was held to honor social workers followed by a "walk" in April.

Leflore County DFCS Gets the Word Out on Child Abuse Prevention



Leflore County DFCS, Mississippi Valley State University and Delta State University interns, and the local Family First Resource Center set up a table at the Greenwood Walmart to distribute information on Child Abuse Prevention and available resources.

Anita Hayes Retires in Sunflower County



Sunflower County Director Anita Forest Hayes (right) retired April 30 with 40 years of service. The entire Sunflower County staff along with State Office and Regional staff, the Sunflower County Board of Supervisors, family and friends celebrated her retirement. Pictured above is Director of Field Operations Cathy Sykes who presented Ms. Hayes her certificates and awards.

Forrest County Administrative Assistant Day Celebrated



Forrest County management staff celebrated and honored all divisions' clerical and secretarial staff on Administrative Professional's Day April 23 with a luncheon, gift baskets and goodies.

Leflore County Service Awards



Leflore County ASWS Mary Leahman recognized FPS Shavonne Steward; FPSA Shirley Clay; FPSA Catrinna McClain; FPSA Janice Sutton; and FPS El Gurean for their years of service with the agency. Each were presented service pins, certificates and enjoyed lunch.

Barbara Hammer Retires from State Service

Barbara Hammer, Bureau Director I, Program Operations for the Division of Field Operations retired May 30 from state service with 29 years of faithful service to the agency.

She served in many capacities including a number of years as county director in Lamar County. After coming to the State Office, worked in the Division of Field Operations and was known for her cheerful demeanor and leadership.

Barbara, we congratulate you on your years of service and wish you well in the future.



Arlene Wilson Puts Character First



Panola County Director Arlene Wilson (left) was recently recognized for the character trait, "Responsibility" at the Region 2 East staff meeting. Arlene, a MDHS employee since 1977, serves her community and the agency well. We applaud your recognition and thank you for your service! Presenting the award is Region 2-E Director Cindy Brewer.

DAAS Celebrates National Nursing Home Week



Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services participated in **National Nursing Home Week** by visiting The Nichols Center in Madison for an obstacle course entitled, "Having the ALOHA Spirit."

The Nichols Center staff participated in a wheelchair scavenger hunt and relay race. Participants could only use their hands on the wheelchair while recovering items for the scavenger hunt from the residents. Staff had to stack 21 cups while wearing all their scavenger items before returning back to the home base of their team.

The residents enjoyed themselves laughing at the staff and the staff truly got a lesson in the hardships of aging and maneuvering in a wheelchair.

New Internet Filtering & Reporting for MDHS Network

The MIS Division has implemented a new Internet Filtering and Reporting technology for the agency called Websense. In addition to its filtering and reporting capability, the technology blocks and prevents thousands of Malware and/or viruses that could potentially enter the MDHS network.



Websense is one of several tools MIS staff are implementing in order to secure data and protect sensitive information.

Websense is being implemented in a "Phased Approach" throughout the agency.

For more information, or if you encounter a page that has been blocked but has legitimate business value for MDHS, please notify the MIS Security Team via email at: websense@mdhs.ms.gov.



5 Star Status Achieved

Recently, it was announced that three centers: Calvert's ABC Preschool and Nursery, Aberdeen; MGCCC-JD Early Childhood Education Facility, Gulfport; and the MGCCC Center for Child Development, Gautier all achieved **Star Step 5 of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System!**

These child care owners are to be commended as this great achievement will enable their centers to receive a 25 percent ongoing quality bonus beginning June 1, 2014. Congratulations!

Claiborne County Director Retires

Claiborne County Director Meredith Hynum retired after 24 years of service with the state. Her office celebrated with her on April 30 by providing lunch and cake. Congratulations and thank you for serving Mississippi! Hynum (at right), shown with Region 5-W Director Sarah Bridge.



Walthall County Director Receives Service Certificate and Character First Award



In December, Walthall County Director Tracie Evans was presented a 15-year Certificate of Service. She was also honored with a Character First certificate awarded by Region 5-W Director Sarah Bridge. Tracie was recognized as having the Character First trait of Endurance: "The inward strength to withstand stress and do my best." On hand for the presentation were her parents, James and Theresia Ochenrider.

County Corner - Tate and Tallahatchie Counties

This month we take a look at Tate and Tallahatchie counties.

Tallahatchie County

Founded December 31, 1833, **Tallahatchie County** is located in the Mississippi Delta. As of the 2010 census, the population was 15,378. The name, Tallahatchie, is a Choctaw word meaning "rock of waters."

Tallahatchie County is one of 10 counties in Mississippi with two county seats, Charleston and Sumner. **Charleston**, established in 1837, was the first county seat and Sumner was organized later in 1872.

Charleston's population was 2,193 at the 2010 census. The city's official nickname is "Gateway to the Delta."

Charleston began as one of five settlements along the forks of **Tillatoba Creek**.

Most of the settlers entered the area over what was called **Charley's Trace, an Indian trail** that came across from the Mississippi river and entered the hills about where Leverett is now located. Here the trail merged with a trail from the south and passed near the present site of Charleston.

The town of **Sumner** has seen its population decrease, as have many small Delta towns, from 600 in 1950 to 316 in 2010. The Cassidy Bayou runs through the center of town and is known as the longest bayou in the state. Some claim the stretch that flows through Sumner to be "haunted" by ghosts.

Sumner was a heavily wooded swamp when Joseph Burton Sumner, his wife and six children arrived from Alabama in the early 1870s and settled on land that had been part of the Choctaw Nation. When clearing land began in 1873, the area was completely infested with bears, panthers, alligators, deer, wild cats, beavers, raccoons and snakes. The area was swampy, and even in the summer the land, which was low, would not drain because of beaver dams clogging the creeks.

J.B. Sumner donated land for a railroad right of way, courthouse square and jail. In 1873 the Presbyterian church was erected. A post office was established in 1885 and the town incorporated in 1900.

The first courthouse was built in 1902 but was destroyed by fire in 1908. The records were saved, but later, in 1909, the entire business section of the town caught fire and burned and all the records went up in flames. The current courthouse is undergoing a major renovation.

NOTABLE PEOPLE

Eldra Buckley, running back for the NFL's Detroit Lions.

Brad Dye, former lieutenant governor of Mississippi.

Morgan Freeman, Academy Award winning actor, Charleston resident.

Sonny Boy Williamson, blues harmonica player (1912 [?]-1965).

Jamie Whitten, U.S. Congress (1910-1995).

Lusia Harris, Olympic silver medalist, basketball.

Tate County

Tate County is located in the northwestern portion of Mississippi and encompasses approximately 411 square miles.

The county was founded in 1873 and is named for one of the first prominent settlers of the area, Thomas Simpson Tate. By 1884 there were 96 small schools in Tate County, mostly one teacher, one-room log houses with split logs for seats. As of the 2010 census, the population was 28,886.

In April 1834, early settler James Peters purchased two sections of land from the Chickasaw Nation for the sum of \$1.25 per acre. A portion of the land became the town of Senatobia. The name Senatobia was derived from the Indian word, Senatohoba, which means "White Sycamore"—a symbol of "rest for the weary."

Senatobia received its charter as a municipality in 1860, 13 years prior to the creation of Tate County and one year prior to the outbreak of the Civil War during which the town's business section was burned twice by Federal troops.

Senatobia is the county seat, and along with several other cities in the Memphis metropolitan area, is experiencing moderate growth. The population was 8,165 at the 2010 census, up from 6,682 in 2000.

Senatobia is the home of **Northwest Mississippi Community College** which provides two-year academic and technical degree programs and has enrollment that exceeds 8,000 on three campuses.

Two Academy Award nominated films have been partially filmed in Senatobia: **The Client** (1994) and **The People vs. Larry Flynt** (1996).

Coldwater is a small town in Tate County with a population of 1,677 at the 2010 census. The current town square of Coldwater is about 2 miles south of the **Coldwater River**. Coldwater was officially incorporated in 1872. By 1890, the town had 397 residents.

When the **Arkabutla Lake** and Dam project was built in the early 1940s, the town was moved to land about a mile and a half south of its original location.

The portions of the old town of Coldwater are underwater year round.

NOTABLE PEOPLE

James Kamala Harris, WWF professional wrestler.

Dumas Malone, Pulitzer prize-winning historian and noted Jeffersonian scholar.

Dorris Bowdon, actress.

Thomas Webber Wilson, three-term U.S. Congressional Representative from Mississippi from 1923-1929.

Bill Coday, blues singer.

Fred's, Inc., a regional chain of discount retail stores.

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



Choose a Healthy You for 2014

News and Tips from ActiveHealth

DID YOU KNOW...

About 5.8 million American adults may no longer be prescribed drugs to treat high blood pressure under recently revised guidelines, according to a new study.

Newest guidelines have relaxed blood pressure goals in adults 60 and older from 140/90 to 150/90. The guidelines also eased blood pressure targets for adults with diabetes and kidney disease.

The proportion of adults considered eligible in the U.S. for medication to treat high blood pressure would fall from about 41 percent to 32 percent, the authors concluded in a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. In Mississippi, more than 700,000 or 24 percent of adults are reported to have hypertension.

The researchers also said that 13.5 million U.S. adults -- most of them older than 60 -- who were considered to have poorly controlled blood pressure would now be viewed as having adequately managed blood pressure. That includes 5.8 million adults who would no longer require blood pressure pills.

One in four adults older than 60 currently receives treatment for high blood pressure, according to the researchers.

Even under the new guidelines, about 28 million U.S. adults still have uncontrolled high blood pressure and more than half of them don't receive treatment. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

For more information about ways to reduce your blood pressure and improve your overall health, go to myactivehealth.com/mississippi.

Good for You Recipe

Recipe Name: Low Sodium Cornbread

This time of year, with lots of fresh vegetables available from the garden, many of us add a slice of cornbread. To reduce your overall sodium intake, try this updated recipe for a healthier version.

Ingredients:

- 1 C cornmeal
- 1 C flour
- ¼ C sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 C low-fat (1 percent) buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- ¼ C soft tub margarine
- 1 tsp vegetable oil (to grease baking pan)

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 10 servings

Serving Size: 1 square

Calories: 178

Total fat: 6 grams

Sodium: 94 mg

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Mix together cornmeal, flour, sugar and baking powder.
3. In another bowl, combine buttermilk and egg. Beat lightly.
4. Slowly add buttermilk and egg mixture to dry ingredients.
5. Add margarine and mix by hand or with mixer for 1 minute.
6. Bake for 20-25 minutes in an 8- by 8-inch, greased baking dish. Cool. Cut into 10 squares.

- 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.**

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



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.