

# Beacon

October 2012



## *A Message from the Executive Director*

I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful fall weather. This is a great time of the year in Mississippi: the seas of white in the Delta; the colorful foliage in the Hill Country; high school and college football statewide and the many festivals along the Coast. Get out and enjoy the outdoors with your family. This is the perfect time to do so.

Please remember our friends in the Northeast as they recover from Superstorm Sandy. They were very generous to us during our trying times after Katrina. A prayer, a contribution to the [American Red Cross](#) or a letter to a friend or loved one letting them know that someone cares provides hope which goes a long way to aiding their recovery.

In the May Beacon I discussed the concept of lifelong learning and how we can all better ourselves regardless of our age, education or experience. I believe so strongly in this concept that we have adopted Self-Development as one of our Agency Values. The agency and all organizations in general have to be engaged in a process of continuous improvement to be successful in this day and time. Simply maintaining the status quo or assuming a position of complacency will cause an organization to fall behind and many times even fail.

If we are to improve and remain competitive as an organization we must

improve as individuals. In addition to participating in the classes offered through the Division of Human Resources and the Character First curriculum that we are currently rolling out statewide, you should ask yourself, "What can I do as an individual to initiate a process of self-improvement?"

First, ask yourself the question, "Why might I change?" followed by, "How ready am I to change?". Then develop an Individual Development Plan focusing on an area that you wish to improve. Self-Discipline, commitment or compassion are some examples that come to mind. Select a partner and hold each other accountable. You do not have to have the same area of concentration but share the goal of self improvement. Together you can develop new habits to improve your skills and/or character. These new skills, combined with good character, will build on each other as you move from area to area resulting in a process of self-development.

Great organizations are made up of great people focused on a common goal!

Richard Berry  
MDHS Executive Director

## Congratulations on Appointments

Martha Benjamin was recently appointed as a Commissioner Elect to the Mississippi Commission on the Status for Women by Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves.



The Commission was established in 2001 as a nonpartisan body composed of thirteen Commissioners appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the Attorney General. All appointees are submitted to the Senate for confirmation.

The vision of the Mississippi Commission on the Status of Women is the improvement of the overall quality of life of women, specifically in the areas of education, health, economics, political participation and race relations. The Commission works to influence policies and practices that affect women through an inclusive, collaborative process.

Martha currently serves as the MDHS Division of Field Operations, director of Program Operations. She has been with the state for 13 years.

[Appointments continued on page 2](#)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and MDHS Sign Agreement for Child Welfare**
- **Oakley Chosen for Smoking Cessation Program**
- **Adoptions and so much more**

*Appointments continued from page 1*

Madison County Director Glen Lacey was appointed to the Local Workforce Investment Board under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Glen will serve a two-year term on the Local Workforce Investment Board from November 2012 - October 2014.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is a federal law which provides job preparation, job training and job placement services designed to increase the employment, retention and earnings of workers and potential workers; and, consequently, to improve the quality of the workforce available to employers. Activities are provided through statewide and regional systems intended to coordinate and evaluate a variety of services. The Local Workforce Investment Board provides guidance and oversight to workforce programs within the seventeen-county region.

Also of note, Melinda Bertucci, director for the Division of Aging and Adult Services was appointed to the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities (MSCDD) which is a thirty member board appointed by the Governor. This body of advocates promotes quality of life issues for people with developmental disabilities, their families and the community at large. Board membership is composed of 60% or more of persons with disabilities and/or family members. The council also includes government representatives from public and private support/service organizations.

Others represent certain public and private entities providing services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities, including: Department of Rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), Department of Education (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), Department of Human Services (Older Americans Act of 1965), Governor's Office of Medicaid (Title XIX), Department of Public Health (Title V), representation from a non-governmental agency and private non-profit entities, Mississippi Disability Rights and University Centers of Excellence.

Improvements in quality of life are provided through demonstration projects that have the potential for replication in advocacy, independence and systemic change. The MSCDD is funded by the Federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), which is under the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The mission of the ADD is to help individuals with developmental disabilities in their pursuit of the American Dream.

MDHS has an extremely diverse and talented workforce. We applaud these recent appointments and know that you will represent the agency well. Thank you for your service to the people of Mississippi.

## Scenes from the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Child Support Conference



The Mississippi Child Support Association held its 21<sup>st</sup> annual conference and training workshop in October. Guests included Vicki Turetsky, Commissioner from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement and Ann Russell, Susan Clapp and Tasha Brown from the Regional Office of Child Support. Local guests included MDHS Executive Director Richard Berry, Deputy Administrator for Programs John Davis, Supreme Court Justice William Waller, House Speaker Philip Gunn and Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee. The mission of the DCSE is to provide child support services so that children receive financial and emotional support from both parents which empowers families to become self-sufficient.

## October is State Fair Time



MDHS employees are a talented group which extends to our retirees. Last month we featured a MDHS retiree who has become a published author. This month, while taking photos of our child abuse prevention booth at the [Mississippi State Fair](#), we happened upon Wayne Hilliard who recently retired from state service. He was among exhibitors of some 94 antique cars and trucks featured at the Trademart.

Wayne is the owner of a [1929 Model A Closed Cab Pickup](#). This meticulously restored vehicle was painted through an autobody class at Oakley Youth Development Center a few years ago. Wayne has owned the truck for about 7 years.

Also at the Trademart, Wayne had a [1962 Ford Galaxie 500 Hardtop](#) that he just recently restored in time for the fair. Wayne said, "The car is a great car to drive, has a big motor and four-speed and loves gas." He purchased the vehicle about 12 years ago from a man in Tennessee. Both vehicles are real beauties. This vehicle won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the division and Best of Show for the event.

Just goes to show you that when you retire, it doesn't mean you stop your life. You just keep on trucking.



Each year, the Division of Family and Children's Services sets up a Prevention booth at the fair to distribute materials on child abuse and neglect. This year we caught Aubrey Farmer, DFCS Nurse IV Program Manager, on duty. Thanks so much, Aubrey, for your work in helping fair attendees get accurate information on signs of neglect and abuse and where to report.

Lastly, we couldn't resist snapping a shot of four-year-old Nathan Kennedy who was enjoying a [FRIED OREO!](#) I'm happy to report that Nathan thought fried oreos were wonderful and he "yummed" them up. But, hey, that's the fun of the [fair](#), right? The food, rides, games, animals, the bright lights and of course the exhibits.



## MDHS and MBCI Sign ICWA Agreement



Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Chief Phylliss J. Anderson (center), Governor Phil Bryant (right) and Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Rickey Berry signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act on October 25, 2012.

"Providing adequate and culturally sensitive care for our Choctaw children living off the reservation is of the highest importance to our tribe. This agreement signifies a real effort between the state and the tribe to strengthen our relationships and combine resources to protect Choctaw children," said Tribal Chief Phylliss J. Anderson. "With great gratitude, I thank Governor Bryant and Mr. Berry for joining with us to provide better care for our young."

The purpose of the MOU is to initiate coordination of social services between the agencies in situations where Choctaw children and families live off of the reservation. The agreement also establishes procedures and guidelines for response to Choctaw families, creates a resource system in support of social services, shares expertise and knowledge in the area of child welfare and protection, and provides opportunities for training between the agencies.

Gov. Bryant agreed and said, "This is an important step in providing for the needs of our Choctaw citizens." "The work Chief Anderson is doing is to be commended and I appreciate the relationship the state has with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians."

The Tribe has an enrolled membership of over 10,000 people and is the only federally recognized tribe in the State of Mississippi.

## Oakley Chosen for Smoking Cessation Program

The Dr. Excey Edwards Medical Clinic at Oakley Youth Development Center has been named as one of two Tobacco Champion Clinics in the state. This program, sponsored by the Mississippi chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, will foster tobacco awareness and help to implement successful cessation programs in the state.



Oakley is a non-smoking campus and the staff are pleased to serve as one of the smoking cessation clinics. DYS, through Oakley and the adolescent opportunity programs, touch the lives of youth and parents throughout the state. The smoking cessation program is open to Oakley students, parents and staff and will have a positive effect upon the health of all involved.

### *Be the Change for your Community*

*Become a Local Missionary by Joining the Team of PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE*

Don't forget!  
If you win a basket and work in a county office other than Hinds, Madison or Rankin, we will deliver your basket to your office and put your photo in the Beacon.

Together we can exceed our goal of \$7,500 for 2012! Make a pledge or buy a raffle ticket. For tickets or to pledge, call Joe @ 9-4394 or Julia @ 9-4517.

### UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

- Veteran's Day (Armistice Day) November 12
- Thanksgiving Holidays November 22-23
- Christmas Holidays December 24-25
- New Year's Holiday December 31-January 1

## Don't Forget to get your FLU SHOT



It's autumn and we all love the change in weather, the football games, holidays and hunting season. But nothing can stop you in your tracks like a case of the flu.

**Influenza** (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by an influenza virus that can cause mild to severe illness, and at times even death. Older people, young children and people with certain health conditions are at a higher risk for serious flu complications.

### **Prevent flu. Get a vaccine!**

The upcoming season's flu vaccine will protect against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the season: the influenza A (H1N1) virus, influenza A (H3N2) virus and the influenza B virus.

The [CDC](#) recommends that everyone six months and older get a flu vaccine each year. Getting a flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. Also frequent hand washing and making a practice of "covering" your cough helps to stop the spread of the flu.

For state employees and covered dependents, the flu vaccine is covered under the [State Health Insurance Wellness Plan](#) if you get the shot at a medical provider's office. The flu shot is paid at 100% and is not subject to your calendar year deductible.

The CDC recommends that people get vaccinated against influenza as soon as the 2012-2013 flu season vaccine becomes available in their community. Influenza seasons are unpredictable and can begin in early October. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu.

### **Cold or Flu?**

For those of you who may already have a case of the sniffles, you may wonder if this is the flu or is it just a cold. Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. A doctor can administer a special test to determine if it's a cold or the flu. It's recommended that the test be done within the first couple of days from the onset of symptoms.

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness and dry cough are more common and intense. Cold symptoms are usually milder. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. And generally, colds do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections or hospitalizations.



So do yourself, your family and your co-workers a favor. If you are sick, PLEASE STAY HOME. And if you're not sick, schedule your appointment for your yearly wellness check and include a flu vaccination.

It will help make this autumn a more enjoyable season for you and those around you.



## Adoptions Celebrated across the State

Autumn of each year is a special time at the Department of Human Services. Offices and courthouses across the state ramp up efforts to finalize adoptions for children in state care and recognize National Adoption Day, November 17<sup>th</sup>.

In Pascagoula, the 16<sup>th</sup> Chancery Court celebrated a special Adoption Day on September 27<sup>th</sup> at the Jackson County Courthouse where Chancery Judge Jaye Bradley finalized adoptions for 14 children.

Most of the children were adopted by their foster parents and were adjudicated through the Youth Courts as abused or neglected, Judge Bradley said.

"These families literally save these kids' lives," Judge Bradley said. "To give a child a family is a tremendous gift."

Judge Bradley said she always looks forward to presiding over adoption proceedings.

"It's always a joy for me to be a part of the final step in making that unit a family," Judge Bradley said. "Their little faces are just beaming with happiness. It's the best thing about my job that I do."

This will be the fourth time Judge Bradley has presided over an Adoption Day with multiple families finalizing adoptions.

Across the state, the agency is seeking adoptive parents for more than 100 children, according to Angie Williams, Director of Permanency Planning for MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services.

In August there were 526 foster children legally free for adoption in Mississippi. Of those, 363 were living with families who plan to adopt them.

News from other adoption events:

Region I-N had a mass adoption November 6<sup>th</sup> in Prentiss County with Judge Malski where it was expected that up to ten children would permanently placed. Also there was an Adoption Celebration for Region I-N counties November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville.

Desoto and Marshall Counties celebrated November 1<sup>st</sup>, at the M.R. Davis Public Library in Southaven.

Region V-W will have an adoption of a sibling group of three in November 16<sup>th</sup> in Pike County in Judge Halford's court.

Region VI had a mass adoption on November 8<sup>th</sup> for 13 children in Forrest County with Judge Dawn Beam.

Adoptions are a special time for families, the courts and MDHS to celebrate a child who now has a forever family. For more information on adoption, call 1-800-821-9157.



## State Sends Teams to Northeast for Superstorm Sandy Recovery

Rick Dawkins, MDHS, Division of Economic Assistance joined teams from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and other state agencies who went to Maryland as part of an Incident Management Team to assist Maryland Emergency Management Agency with Hurricane Sandy recovery.

"Mississippi will assist the states impacted by this storm in any way we can," Gov. Phil Bryant said. "In our times of need, Mississippi has been bolstered by the aid and hospitality of people around the country, and we are honored to return the favor."

This multi-discipline team will work with state and local officials to assist with response and recovery from the impacts of Sandy.

Individual and Public Assistance teams made up of MEMA and local emergency management will deploy to assist local, state and federal officials in Maryland with damage

assessments related to the storm. The Public Assistance team will consist of seven members and the Individual Assistance team will have five, for a total of 12.

Three Mississippi-based swift-water rescue teams and four MEMA staff were also deployed to assist the state of Maryland and the National Response Coordination Center in Washington D.C.

This assistance is being provided through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. This compact allows for state-to-state support during disasters. All costs for this deployment and any additional assistance will be reimbursed by the requesting state under EMAC.

MEMA is prepared to send more support if other states request it. Our hearts go out to our sister states in the northeast who have suffered so much loss due to the storm.





## County Corner - Spotlight on Jones and Kemper Counties

**Jones County** is located in southeast Mississippi. As of 2010, the population was 67,761 with 24,275 households, and 17,550 families residing in the county. Jones has two county seats: Laurel and Ellisville.

Less than a decade after Mississippi became the country's 20<sup>th</sup> state, settlers carved out a 700 square mile of pine forests and streams for a new county in 1826. It was named Jones County after **John Paul Jones**, the early American Naval hero, who rose from humble Scottish origins to military success during the American Revolution.

Economic hard times during the 1830s and 1840s thinned their ranks as many left for greener pastures elsewhere. The Civil War brought a new set of difficulties, not only from threatening Union forces, but from Jones County's fellow confederates—the hard years before the war had bred an independent-minded people in the region, many of them not in step with the Southern cause.

**Landrum's Homestead & Village** in Laurel is a re-creation of a late 1800's settlement reminiscent of southern days gone by. One can visit the historic site and see history come to life with over 70 buildings and amazing displays nestled in a quiet, beautifully landscaped setting of lush pecan trees, streams and southern foliage. The village is an interesting, educational and fun visit for all ages.

From its oak-lined streets to its lovely, turn-of-the-century homes, **Laurel** is a charming and gracious southern town. Located in the Pine Belt, the city of Laurel was originally established in 1882. It flourished during the growth of the timber industry just over a century ago. In 1893, a decade after the railroad opened the region for large-scale timber production, **Eastman-Gardiner & Company** opened the first giant lumber mill. The Eastman-Gardiner mill was soon followed by many others, making Laurel a very large milling town. By the early 1900's, Laurel milled and shipped more yellow pine than anyone else in the world.

The **Lauren Rogers Museum of Art** opened in 1923. The museum draws approximately 32,000 visitors each year from across the nation with its outstanding collection of European and American art, Native American baskets, British Georgian silver and Japanese woodblock prints, as well as an extensive art history library.

Laurel is the birthplace of many celebrities including **Lance Bass** of the pop group NSYNC. It is also the childhood home of world-renowned opera legend, **Leontyne Price**. Leontyne Price is one of the first African Americans

to become a leading artist at



the Metropolitan Opera. Time magazine called her voice, "Rich, supple and shining. It was, in its prime, capable of effortlessly soaring from a smoky mezzo to the pure soprano gold of a perfectly spun high C."

**Kemper County** is located on the east central Mississippi border. Its county seat, **DeKalb**, is named in honor of **Reuben Kemper**. As of the census of 2010, there were 10,456 people.

Kemper County was created by an act of the Mississippi Legislature on December 31, 1833, and was formed out of that portion of the Choctaw Cession under the Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty.

The county was named for the Kemper brothers - Ruben, Nathan and Samuel - Virginia patriots who moved to Woodville, Mississippi Territory, early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first inhabitants were the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Alabama and Muscogee Indians who migrated from the far west and celebrated Native American traditions at a large mound on the edge of Kemper and Winston County. This mound was named Nanih Waiya (bending hill) by the Indians.

DeKalb was named for Baron Johann DeKalb, a German citizen who enlisted in the French Army at an early age and came to America with the French General Lafayette to help in the Revolutionary war. The town has about 970 residents.

Kemper County is also home to the **Kemper County Energy Facility**, which is scheduled to come online in 2014.

**Kemper County State Lake** opened in 1984 and is the second largest state fishing lake operated by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. Most anglers fish for largemouth bass.

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) is located in the town of Scooba, a name coined from the Choctaw term for "reed thicket."

While in Kemper County, visit Sciple's Water Mill, made famous on the hit TV show, Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe and the only remaining working water mill in the state. Sciple's Water Mill has been in operation since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They use a man-made lake to power the mill which they then use to grind corn into cornmeal for sale. In addition, they play music on most Friday and Saturday nights.

Next month we visit Lafayette and Lamar Counties.

## Breast Cancer Awareness has Agency in Pink



In Itawamba County, Angela Watson, CSR, EA Field Operations (left) and Rhonda Boyd, CSEO, Field Operations both spoke at the Breast Cancer Awareness Luncheon held at the Fulton Country Club

on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Both are breast cancer survivors and shared their experiences. These ladies are tireless supporters of projects that increase awareness about the disease and fundraising activities, such as Relay for Life and the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

The staff of Oakley Youth Development Center (above, right) had a "Tickled Pink" Breast Cancer Luncheon on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Charlotte Robinson, training director, talked about the important of self-breast examinations and getting yearly mammograms for early detection.



## Jayna Estes Peterson Retires



Jayna Estes Peterson retired from MDHS on October 31<sup>st</sup> after twenty seven years of service with the Division of Child Support Enforcement. Jayna started in 1985 with Winston County DHS as a child support accounting clerk. She was promoted to Fiscal Officer, Supervisor and then to Regional Director in 2004. Jayna was often recognized for her leadership. Her greatest reward was helping clients get child support for their children. Jayna was honored at a retirement reception on October 19<sup>th</sup> in Winston County where she was presented Certificates of Appreciation by MDHS Deputy Executive Director Mark Smith and Family Foundation and Support Director Walley Naylor. Jayna said it was a happy and sad day as she will miss all of her coworkers, but she is looking forward to spending more time with her family. Best wishes.

### BREAST CANCER FAST FACTS:

- About one in eight U.S. women (just under 12%) will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime.
- In 2011, an estimated 230,480 new cases of invasive breast cancer were expected to be diagnosed in women in the U.S., along with 57,650 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer.
- About 39,520 women in the U.S. were expected to die in 2011 from breast cancer.
- In 2011, there were more than 2.6 million breast cancer survivors in the US.
- About 85% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer.
- As of Jan. 1, 2009, there were about 2,747,459 women alive in the United States with a history of breast cancer.

## Do You Have a Facebook or Twitter Account?

Social networking is one of the many ways we stay connected with our friends and family. We also use it to find out what's going on in the world. "Like" the Mississippi Department of Human Services Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/msdhs> or follow us on Twitter at [http://twitter.com/MS\\_DHS](http://twitter.com/MS_DHS) to stay up on the latest happenings at MDHS.

*Mississippi Department of Human Services monthly newsletter, The BEACON.*

*For information or to submit articles, contact Julia Bryan, Beacon Editor  
[julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov) or phone 601-359-4517.*

*To mail photos or articles, send to: PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352*

*© 2012 Mississippi Department of Human Services ~ All rights reserved.*

