

A Message from the Executive Director

My plan was to provide a technology update in this month's article; however, a major programmatic change is being undertaken so I will address technology issues next month. I want to utilize this medium to be sure that all employees, partners and supporters of the agency that receive our monthly newsletter are aware of an impending change in service delivery. It is imperative to me as executive director that employees learn of this change from direct contact from me and not through hearsay or from another source.

A blanket email has been sent out issuing the following statement regarding the agency's Child Support Enforcement Program:

"The Mississippi Department of Human Services is committed to carrying out our mission 'To provide services for people in need by optimizing all available resources to sustain the family unit and to encourage traditional family values thereby promoting self-sufficiency and personal responsibility to all Mississippians.'

One of the key programs to achieving these lofty goals, and an area where the agency continues to struggle, is the area of Child Support Enforcement. There has been a considerable amount of progress in this area over the past two years due to a departmental reorganization, the addition of a centralized call center and a new approach to collections in the outsourcing of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). These initiatives, along with the efforts of dedicated state staff, have contributed to increased collections.

Even though these steps have brought about positive results, agency management does not feel that the improvements are increasing at the rate needed to provide exceptional service to our citizens. I, along with the key leadership at MDHS, and with the full support of Governor Phil Bryant, continue

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APHSA Updates MDHS on Washington



APHSA Executive Director Tracy Wareing provided updates to federal policy and the current legislative agenda. From left, MDHS Deputy Administrator for Administration Will Simpson; Deputy Administrator for Family & Children's Services Dr. Kim Shackelford; Wareing; and MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services recently was host to [American Public Human Services Association](#) Executive Director Tracy Wareing who provided information and updates to executive staff of recent federal policy changes and topics of discussion at the Capitol Hill regarding programs administered through the agency.

Last state fiscal year, the agency managed more than \$1.3 billion in federal funds along with an additional \$129 million in general funds. Through proper administration of these funds, MDHS serves families throughout the state with programs such as LIHEAP, SNAP, TANF and child care certificates, just to name a few.

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to explore ways to vastly improve child support services to the citizens of our state.

Today, we will begin the process of implementing a Pilot Project to outsource the Legal and Case Management components of the Child Support Enforcement program in 17 counties in southwest Mississippi. A complete listing of the affected counties is as follows: Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Covington, Franklin, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lamar, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Simpson, Smith, Walthall and Wilkinson.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is being developed with a target date for implementation of January 1, 2015. This action will displace approximately 50 full-time employees. The affected employees will be given all of the proper notifications and rights afforded to them under State Personnel Board rules and regulations. Affected employees will be encouraged to apply for other openings within MDHS as well other agencies. Language will be included in the RFP strongly encouraging the successful bidder(s) to employ MDHS employees displaced by implementation of the Pilot Project.

Project implementation will begin immediately by MDHS filing documents with the various agencies and developing the RFP as required by Mississippi Law. The process will be lengthy; however, it is imperative that the affected employees have as the earliest possible knowledge of this situation in order to manage the change that they will undergo.”

Any decision that affects the livelihood of our employees is extremely difficult to make. You have my assurance that we will do everything in our power as the agency leaders to assist displaced employees to secure employment in other divisions within the agency or with the new vendors once that they are in place.

The performance of the new service providers will be tracked closely and they will be held contractually to performance standards with high expectation levels for improvements in service.

There are no other plans to expand the Pilot at this time. Employees in the remaining 65 counties should concentrate all of their efforts on producing the best outcomes that they can for the children and families that we serve.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we strive to better serve our citizens.

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

APHSA serves as our Washington, D.C. liaison, a voice for health and human services organizations throughout the U.S., and supports its members vision of transformation of human services for the American people.

Wareing provided key insight to current policy discussions in Washington, listened to local concerns from MDHS directors and returns to the Capitol city to share our ideas and expectations for progress.

APHSA works to leverage outcome-based policy and practice that best positions members to positively impact the lives of people served, and meet the expectation of taxpayers. The organization builds knowledge by advancing and sharing state and local innovations and evidence-informed practices that strengthen members work, and help them to achieve real results. APHSA also connects its members with each other, key partners and with national experts to collectively leverage transformation at the local, state and national levels.

Streamlined services and a 21st Century business model are the key to the success of the current APHSA organization that seeks to connect state health and human service leaders. These connections ensure that knowledge and best practices are shared among governmental agencies, and are aligned for better results and taxpayer savings.

Current 2014 national policy priorities include:

* Influence

- Extension of [A-87 Cost Allocation Exception](#).
- Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) reauthorization.
- Strategy for child welfare practice and finance alignment.
- New regulations—CCDF, EBT usage, third round of CFSRs.

* Build:

- FNS-SNAP Integration Project.
- Abt/Mathematica Job Research study.
- Work with Casey Family Programs in support of waivers for child care dollars to reduce the need for foster care.

Thanks so much to APHSA for their support and sharing of best practices from across the U.S.



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

A Day at the Zoo for Fathers



Above, from left: DFFS Ruth Williams, Vera Butler, Selena Magee and Arnell Wilson. At right, Jerome Nicks and his daughter who came to enjoy the Day at the Zoo.

June 21, the [Division of Family Foundation and Support](#) and [Mississippi Community Education Center](#) sponsored a Day at the Zoo for fathers and their children. Free admission and lunch was provided for 241 individuals. This was a great event that provided a safe, fun outing for noncustodial fathers.



Back-to-School with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mississippi



Each summer, parents are faced with the sometimes daunting lists of school supplies needed for their children. These supplies, along with uniforms, and book and registration fees can be out of financial reach for those who are struggling to put food on the table. [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mississippi](#) collaborated with [Academy Sports + Outdoors](#) on a Back-to-School Promotion held July 17 at their [Flowood](#) location. The event helped to raise \$3,200 for back-to-school supplies, clothing and uniforms for 32 local children. Congratulations for your efforts that served Mississippi children.

Welcome our Newest County Directors



County directors play a crucial role in the delivery of services to the families we serve. They additionally shoulder the responsibility as the liaison of the agency with the local boards of supervisors. We truly appreciate all that you do. Many of these faces are not new to the agency, but new in their roles. Mid-July, they were at the State Office for training which included: The County Director Role; Managing your Workload; Motivating Staff; Assigning Work, and other essential topics to help them as they work to serve the people of Mississippi.

Front row, left: Sarah Lomenick, Lafayette; Deanna Pearson, Choctaw; Lynn Newman, Sharkey; Anita Gentry, Union; Karen Chatham, Greene; Tanisha Anderson, Carroll; LaRita Brennettsy, Wilkinson. Back row, left: Theresa Phillips, Hinds; Gloria Nunn, Yazoo; James Miller, Grenada; Allison Carmical, George; Shebra Cunningham, Oktibbeha; Cecilia Weathersby, Perry; Kathy Nicholson, Covington.

MDHS Retirements

Lisa McPhail, Tate County



Tate County Director Lisa McPhail retired with 30 years. We appreciate your dedication and hard work throughout the years. Region 2-E Director Cindy Brewer was on hand to award the certificate.

Shirley Banks, Simpson County



Simpson County Child Support Enforcement Officer Shirley Banks retired after 28 years of service on May 31, 2014. From left, Child Support Supervisor Fannie Sheppard, Banks and Region 5-E Director Debbie Grant.

Entergy Mississippi Helps Customers Beat the Heat



This may be the hottest time of the year, but some Entergy Mississippi, Inc. customers will be keeping their cool thanks to the company's annual fan giveaway. The 'Beat the Heat' program, in its 16th year, provides qualified customers with a free oscillating fan.

This year, Entergy Mississippi will donate 383 fans to charitable, nonprofit agencies in the company's 45-county service area. These agencies review applications from area residents who are low-income, elderly and disabled, and give the fans and air conditioners to those who qualify.

Since Beat the Heat began in 1998, more than 8,800 fans and more than 700 air conditioners have been given away to thousands of low-income customers in the state.

Entergy Mississippi partners with community action agencies and the MDHS, Division of Community Services.

MDHS Eligibility Workers Rock



During July, training was held at the State Office for eligibility workers. Training is an integral part of Field Operations in both economic assistance and child support enforcement programs. Our eligibility workers and other field staff proudly represent the "Face of MDHS" to communities across the state. We appreciate your dedication and attention to detail for the many guidelines, regulations and rules for the federal programs administered by the agency.



What's in your Disaster Supply Kit?

We've all heard the phrase, "Hope for the best. Prepare for the worst."

How many of us have prepared by getting basic supplies together for our families? Do you know what the recommended supplies are?

With hurricane season in full swing, it's not too late to prepare. A disaster supply kit is simply a collection of basic items you and your family may need in the event of an emergency.

MEMA and FEMA, Ready.gov recommends that you try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. Particularly in the areas closest to the Gulf of Mexico, including the Mississippi Gulf Coast, it is prudent to be prepared and be ready to survive on your own after severe weather or other disasters. This means having your own food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for up to one week. After a catastrophic event, such as Hurricane Katrina, it could be days or weeks before help arrives.

What should your kit include?

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener.
- Battery-powered 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.
- Infant formula and diapers, if you have an infant.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air.
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Pet supplies, if needed.
- Medicines.

Just as important as putting supplies together for a disaster kit, it is equally important to maintain the kit so that supplies are safe when needed.

- Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned goods that become swollen, corroded or dented.
- Use foods before their expiration dates.
- Change stored food and water every six months.
- Review your kit each year to ensure that it continues to meet your family's needs.

For more information, go to Ready.gov or to <http://www.msema.org/be-prepared/>.

SUPPORT MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND. PURCHASE A CAR TAG.

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) of Mississippi has developed a car tag to support efforts to prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation in Mississippi.

For the state to go forward with plans for the car tags, 300 tags must be pre-sold at \$31 each prior to October 1, 2014. For every \$31 purchase, \$24 will go directly to the CTF to promote child abuse prevention efforts.

We need YOUR HELP to SELL car tags. The Field Staff employee who sells the most tags by October 1st will be awarded a prize. The State Office staff who sells the most tags will get a covered parking spot for at least one month.

For more information on the car tag, call 601-359-4999 to speak with the DFCS Prevention Unit or go to: <http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/family-childrens-services/programs/child-abuse-preventionprotection/childrens-trust-fund/ctf-car-tag/>.

To purchase a tag, make checks payable to: **CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND OF MISSISSIPPI**

Mail to: MDHS/DFCS, PO BOX 352, JACKSON, MS 39205-0352

Currently, the CTF is funded solely through a \$1 surcharge on each birth certificate purchased in the state and an assessment that is charged to each person that the court imposes a fine or other penalty for certain violations against a minor.

As you can imagine, the need far surpasses the amount collected. Individuals and groups can help by making a personal donation or purchasing a tag. Your help can make a difference in the life of a child.

The monies collected by the Children's Trust Fund are used to:

- Provide financial assistance for the provision of direct services to prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Promote and support a system of services, laws, practices and attitudes that prepare and enable families to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for their children.

The CTF was established in 1989 to assist organizations in delivering programs aimed at preventing child abuse, neglect exploitation.



Help the children of Mississippi by doing your part to build healthy families and prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation.



Investing in healthy happy families and child abuse prevention

County Corner - Tunica, Union & Walthall Counties

This month we take a peak at three counties—Tunica, Union and Walthall.

Tunica County

Tunica County is located in northwest Mississippi in the Delta on the Mississippi River. As of the 2010 census, the population was 10,778.

The county is named for the [Tunica Indian tribe](#), most of whom migrated to central Louisiana during the colonial period.

Since the late 20th century, Tunica County has enjoyed the boom of casino entertainment and Riverboat gambling and is recognized as one of the top six destinations in the country for gambling.

Tunica is also the name of the county seat. Until the early 1990s, the town was one of the most impoverished places in the United States, semi-famous for the particularly deprived neighborhood known as "Sugar Ditch Alley," named for the open sewer located there. The town now lies on the fringe of all the casinos which attracts visitors from all over the world.

The town, Tunica, is the fourth community to serve as county seat. The first was the community of Commerce which was incorporated in 1839 but is now a ghost town.

Thomas Fletcher, an early settler, along with an unnamed Choctaw Indian, named the place "Commerce" expecting it to become a great city. Commerce Landing is one of two hypothesized locations where Spanish explorer [Hernando de Soto](#) may have crossed the Mississippi River. Archeological sites at Commerce have dated to around 1541.

In 1843, the [Mississippi River changed its course](#), submerging a portion of Commerce Landing. In an effort to save their homes, the early settlers built the first levees in this portion of the Delta.

Notable People

- Sam Carr, drummer for [The Jelly Roll Kings](#); raised in Dundee
- [Oliver Sain](#), musician

Union County

Union County is located in northeast Mississippi and is home of the [Holly Springs National Forest](#). As of the 2010 census, the population was 27,134. The county received its name by being a union of pieces of several large counties: Lee, Pontotoc and Tippah.

The Union County seat is [New Albany](#) which, as of 2010, had a population of 8,526. The town is known for its education system, well-educated labor force and strong work ethic. It has a historic downtown area but also boasts modern factories, robust neighborhoods and vibrant shopping centers.

New Albany was organized in 1840 at the site of a grist mill and a saw mill on the Tallahatchie River near the intersection of two historic Chickasaw Indian trade trails. The town developed as a river port and regional center for agriculture and commerce. The

Civil War interrupted this progress and Union troops swept through the city and burned many structures.

The father of author [William Faulkner](#) worked as a New Albany railroad depot clerk. Born in 1897 in a single-story clapboard house, Faulkner went on to write 19 novels and 75 short stories, winning the coveted Nobel Prize and the Pulitzer Prize twice for his work.

The Tallahatchie RiverFest is one of the largest annual events in North Mississippi. The event is a weekend full of entertainment, arts, crafts, food and fun for all ages. This year's festival will be held Sept. 25-27. For more information, visit www.tallahatchieriverfest.com.

Notable People

- [Doc Marshall, baseball player](#).
- [Estus Pirkle](#), Baptist minister and filmmaker.
- [Bettie Wilson, woman lived to 115](#)

Walthall County

Leading Mississippi in milk production and number of dairies, Walthall County is referred to as the **CREAM PITCHER OF MISSISSIPPI**. Walthall is located in southwest Mississippi on the Louisiana border. As of the 2010 census, there were 15,443 residents.

[Tylertown](#) is the county seat of Walthall. With a population of 1,569 at the 2010 census, Tylertown was first known as the [Magee Settlement](#) with roots back to 1816. Tylertown was part of Pike County until 1912 when Walthall County was formed from Pike and Marion counties.

Tylertown has many established businesses. The [Tylertown Times](#) (local newspaper) dates back to 1907. Tylertown Insurance Agency, Inc., has been serving Tylertown's insurance needs since 1924. [Luter's Supply](#), established in 1944, has more than 10,000 square feet of display making it the largest display of tubs, showers and whirlpools. Jones Furniture has been in business since 1939. Tylertown's oldest pharmacy, Pigott's Drug Store, has been around since 1919.

Each year, people come to enjoy the [Walthall County's Dairy Festival](#) held the first Saturday in June. The all-day event is staged at Holmes Water Park. Activities are nonstop and include a Dairy Festival Queen pageant, a baby contest, a mooing contest, arts and crafts, plenty of food, concessions and other family activities. Free milk and ice cream, compliments of Walthall dairy farmers, are provided as a special treat for visitors. The world famous Dairy Festival Turtle Races have become a must-see event for practically everyone in the county. A butter churning contest, sack races and other activities are also held during the festival. There's no admission charge and all of the games and contests are free.

Notable People

- [Jon Hinson, former congressman](#)

Next month we look at Warren and Washington counties.



Choose a Healthy You for 2014

News and Health Tips

Did you know...

- **Listeria** could be lurking in your hard stone fruits? With the summer bounty of available fresh fruits and vegetables, we've also had recalls for purchased fruits such as peaches, plums and nectarines because of possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, the frail, elderly, or others with weakened immune systems. After the recall was issued, retailers, such as Walmart, removed the products from their shelves and customers were advised to either throw away the products or return them for a refund.
- August is **National Immunization Month**. Vaccinations help protect you from diseases by teaching your body to recognize illness. When you get a vaccination, it alerts your body's defense or immune system so it can fight. What are some of the recommended vaccines for adults?
 - ★ Influenza (flu): Yearly.
 - ★ Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap): Get once, then a Td booster every 10 years.
 - ★ Varicella (Chickenpox): Two doses.
 - ★ HPV: Women, 3 doses age 19-26; men 3 doses age 19-21, and 3 doses age 22-26.
 - ★ Zoster (Shingles): 1 dose after age 60.
 - ★ Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR): 1-2 doses.

For more information on recommended adult vaccinations, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read.pdf>

- A **new diet or weight loss fad** comes and goes every day with promises of fast results. Many of these diets limit some of the very nutrients our bodies need to be healthy. In the end, it's all about what goes in your mouth and how much energy you expend. If you eat less and move more, you'll lose weight and feel better. It's a lifestyle change that just works. So get off the roller coaster of fad dieting and choose a healthy, balanced diet with more physical activity. Your body will thank you.

Citrus Rice with Basil

Ingredients:

- 2 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbls butter or olive oil
- 1 Tbl orange zest
- 2 Tbls fresh orange juice
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 cup basmati rice, uncooked
- Garnish: orange and lemon curls, orange and lemon zest

Instructions:

1. Stir together chicken broth, butter, orange zest and juice, and lemon zest in a large saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat.
3. Stir in basmati rice and cover; reduce heat to low and cook for about 20 minutes until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender.
4. Stir in fresh chopped basil.
5. Garnish with additional zest and citrus curls.

Recipe from MyRecipes.com, [Southern Living](http://SouthernLiving.com), September 2009



Cook Time: 25 minutes
Yield: 4 Servings



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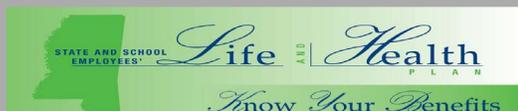
Webinar times: 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. CT

Sept. 9: ABC's of Diabetes

Oct. 14: Sweet Slumber

Nov. 11: Healthy Holidays

Dec. 9: Calm Waters-Relieve Stress



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.

News, tips and recipes are provided for informational purposes only. It is recommended that you check with your physician before starting any exercise program or embarking on a change in your health routine.