

A Message from the Executive Director

By the time this edition is posted we will be into 2015. Time surely flies by as we are now in the fourth year of this administration. As 2014 closed out and 2015 began, Mississippi was once again ravaged by tornadoes. Thanks to all of you that assisted our neighbors in Marion, Jones and Jasper counties and please remember to keep these folks in your thoughts and prayers.

Looking back over the year there were many highlights but the dismissal of the lawsuit against MDHS by the U.S. Department of Justice and the transition of Oakley Training School into Oakley Youth Development Center has to rank at the top. Once again I would like to state how proud I am of the team that worked for nine long hard years to bring about this significant accomplishment.

We have completed the negotiation of Year 5 of the Modified Settlement Agreement for Olivia Y and the Division of Family & Childrens' Services continues to make progress toward our goal of providing a safe, stable environment for Mississippi's children.

The Division of Field Operations continues to gel as a team and had an extremely productive year finishing in the top 10 nationally in all SNAP program indicators and third in the nation in TANF Work Participation Rate. The division also met the Paternity Establishment Rate in child support while increasing collections and improving the order establishment rate by 10 percent. The first six months of the outsourced Child Support State Disbursement Unit has gone extremely well and we continue to work with the banking industry to match financial data to increase collections to benefit our children even more.

The Division of Aging & Adult Services continues to
Continued on page 2

Foster Family Fun Pass Shared by PHWD



From left: MDHS PIO Julia Bryan; Recruitment Support Specialist, MS Guided Resource Initiatives Targeting Special Needs Kids (GRITS) Fetima Hartwell; Resource Licensure ASWS IV-S Mary Brown; MDHS supporter Charlotte Smith; Prevention and Protection Bureau Director Tamara Garner; and Pat Harrison Waterway District Water Manager Mike Corley. Photo by Mark Thornton, Laurel Leader Call.

MDHS resource families play an important role in the agency's goal to place children in care in safe, secure, loving homes. These resource families provide a home environment when a child is removed from their own home. A family who opens their heart and home to a child not their own is very special.

The Pat Harrison Waterway District recognized the importance of these families and offered to partner with the agency to make the holidays and 2015 a bit brighter for them.

The district has provided free Family Fun Passes for all the resource families in the state which will allow foster families with children to go and enjoy the Mississippi

Continued on page 2

In this issue:

- MDHS Employee Gives Brother the Gift of Life
- Program Integrity Hosts Annual Christmas Party for OYDC Students
- Greetings from the State Office
- Holidays Made Brighter for Long Term Care Residents
- MACRD Awards the Best of the Best
- And much more!

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work through our Area Agency on Aging partners to provide services to help seniors live independently in their own homes. The legislature authorized six new positions that were sorely needed for Adult Protective Services to help protect vulnerable adults from financial, physical and sexual abuse.

The Division of Community Services through the statewide network of Community Action Agencies had a very productive year providing energy assistance, case management and weatherization services to elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged citizens.

2014 brought in a new leader and a renewed focus in the Division of Early Childhood Care & Development. We are now serving more than 21,000 children through the child care certificate program while continuously working to improve the quality of care provided.

The latest data that is available for the teen birth rate is 2012 which indicates an 8 percent decrease from 2011. Family Foundation & Support remains focused on Governor Bryant's mission to reduce the overall rate by 15 percent in five years. The division is also working with teen parents in the Healthy Homes Project and our success has been recognized by the federal authorities by awarding an expansion grant that will allow us to serve considerably more families.

The Division of Budgets & Accounting has had a very challenging year with the implementation of the MAGIC system. They have worked very hard and because of their resourcefulness and dedication, progress is being made every day.

Human Resources and MIS supply the systems and support that we need to carry out our vital mission. Program Integrity had a stellar year in recovering tax dollars through the claims, tax offset and special investigative process.

As you can clearly see, MDHS is a team. Although we are tasked with different functions, all of our divisions serve families in one way or another. Thank you for the great work in 2014 and I look forward to an even brighter year in 2015.

Richard Berry
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Human Services

outdoors at any of their eight parks at no charge. The pass gives free admission to the parks, and families access to fishing, bicycle riding and swimming in appropriately marked areas.

Mike Corley, PHWD Water manager said, "This project is near and dear to my heart. I've adopted three grandchildren and just had another three placed with me this year. I just wanted to give all foster families a chance to enjoy the parks and not have to worry about the fees. Getting outdoors and enjoying the fresh air and time with your family is so important."

We are grateful for Mike and all our foster families and we truly appreciate PHWD for this opportunity.

For more information on the Family Fun Pass, contact your regional DFCS director.

Parks in the Pat Harrison Waterway District:

- Archusa Creek Reservoir, Quitman
- Big Creek Reservoir, Soso
- Dry Creek Reservoir, Mount Olive
- Dunn's Falls Park, Enterprise
- Flint Creek Reservoir, Wiggins
- Maynor Creek Reservoir, Waynesboro
- Okatibbee Reservoir, Meridian
- Turkey Creek Reservoir, Decatur

MDHS Employee Gives Brother the Gift of Life

Tito Avery from Biloxi was born on Christmas Day. This Christmas he is scheduled to receive a very special gift for his birthday. His sister, Maya Avery Jenkins, a MDHS, DFCS employee, will donate a kidney and give her brother the gift of life.

Maya said, "I love my brother unconditionally. When the match came back, I never hesitated. I just said 'Yes!'"

Tito is extremely thankful. He has End-stage Kidney Disease and his kidneys are only functioning at 20 percent. He currently is on dialysis about seven hours a day. He said this is a blessing that will extend his life.

Maya said that now she and Tito will always be together. She laughed. "He can't get rid of me now."



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

Books for Babies at Hancock Medical

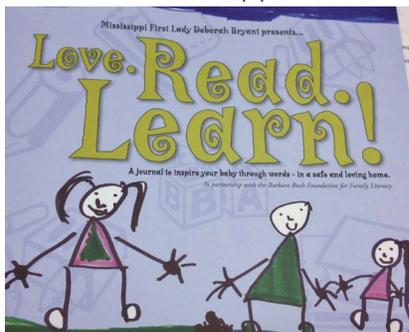


Photo from left to right: MDHS Hancock County Director Veronica Breaux; Hancock Medical nurses Bonnie Holland, Dawn Smith, Lauren Kulakowski and Leanne Lafrance.

The Love. Read. Learn! baby journals have been distributed statewide to county offices and are making their way to local hospitals and birthing centers across the state.

The Hancock Medical First Impressions Birthing Center received 500 children's books to hand out to new moms as part of the Read Across Mississippi initiative started by Mississippi First Lady Deborah Bryant, wife of Governor Phil Bryant.

We appreciate the efforts of our county leadership to make this initiative successful and share these precious journals with Mississippi moms.



Program Integrity Hosts Annual Christmas Party for OYDC Students

Each year, the Divisions of Youth Services and Program Integrity take some time to remember youth who will spend the holidays away from their homes at the Oakley Youth Development Center. This annual celebration brings PI staff and other MDHS personnel to the facility to share gifts, food and Christmas traditions with students. Monetary contributions to be used for gift purchases and items for gift bags are collected and shared with each student. Additionally, items are purchased to be used by all students such as game controllers and video games. We appreciate the divisions' willingness to participate and share the Christmas spirit with youth at the facility.

Building Hope for a Cure at OYDC



At Oakley Youth Development Center, the Honors Program got involved to help raise awareness of the need to prevent and cure breast cancer. They began their efforts in early October with a "pledge" of support for the campaign. Everyone at the facility, including staff, got involved to help with events to raise money for a cure. Staff helped youth by donating funds for the American Cancer Society, and the Honors Program held a Mini Health Fair for the staff members at OYDC. Information on breast cancer awareness was distributed to participants and prizes were awarded. Awareness campaigns such as this provide great teaching moments for students.

Additionally, during October, the Honors Program held a benefit basketball game and participated in the 5K Making Strides, Hinds County Walk held Saturday, October, 25. Through their efforts, the OYDC Honors Program presented the American Cancer Society with \$500 to help find a cure for cancer. Great job!

Soldiers Among Us

We sometimes have those we pass in the halls regularly and never know what battle they are facing. At the State Office, for example, Wanda Brown from the Central Registry Unit regularly took her chemo during her lunch break. She is cancer free now but continues to face numerous corrective surgeries. During the midst of her battle with cancer, she almost lost her daughter and grandson during childbirth. **Remember** to smile at those you meet or see. You may never know what their battle is, and the kind look or word you share may be what they need to get through their day. Thanks to our many "soldiers" who work at MDHS. We have a "family" of very talented, caring, compassionate people. Hope you all had a safe and joyful holiday season.

Greetings from the State Office



When you come to the State Office, you probably had the pleasure of checking in at the front desk with two of the nicest folks in the building.

We received a recent comment from the Comment Boxes which said, "Shirley Wright and Security Carl Allen provide a great first impression for visitors and set the tone for the agency." We all agree, they greet everyone with a smile and a warm welcome.

Shirley has been with MDHS 17 years, most of it at the front desk. Outside of the office, she loves the outdoors and flowers. A Hinds County native, she has one grown son. She said, "Every day, at the end of the day, I leave motivated. I sincerely enjoy representing the agency and speaking with all the different people who come through the agency."

Carl Allen is with Pendelton Security and has been at the State Office about three years. He has a Master's Degree from Central Michigan University. A retired Navy vet, Carl has "circled the world in a ship." He retired from the military to come home and help take care of his aging mother. A Crystal Springs native, Carl was voted Mr. Crystal Springs High School "back in the day." He still lives in his hometown and participates in activities there. Carl has two grown children and one grandchild. He said, "He really enjoys helping those that come to visit the State Office."

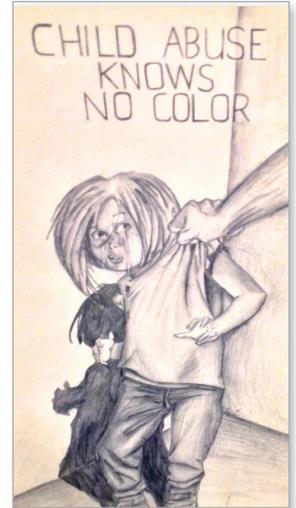
We appreciate the two of you for all you do for us! Thank you!

SUPPORT MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND

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 production. For every \$31 purchase, \$24 will go directly to the CTF to promote child abuse prevention efforts.

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/>.



Training at the State Office



Eligibility Worker Training continues at the State Office. The group in November, as with all groups, hail from across the state. We appreciate the diligence of the divisions to continuously train staff. For many of the clients, these are the faces of MDHS. We truly appreciate all our frontline staff!



Holidays Made Brighter for Long Term Care Residents



There was no “Blue Christmas” this year at the 31st Annual Snowflake Ball held Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014, at the Northwest Rankin High School Performing Arts Center. The Division of Aging and Adult Services hosted a rocking good time with guests from area long term care facilities.

As guests arrived they were serenaded by Christmas songs from the Northshore Elementary Honor Choir from Brandon Northwest Rankin

School District. The festivities quickly kicked off with the Hunter Gibson Trio who wasted no time to get the party started. Volunteers from the Leo Club of Byram and the Beta Club of Northwest Rankin High School danced and helped serve refreshments.

But, the special guest, Tim “Elvis” Johnson stole the show. The residents’ faces lit up as he came out on the stage. As he danced and sang, women, young and old, swooned over his red scarves and many of the residents even mimicked his “moves.”

The Snowflake Ball was created to provide a holiday outing for residents living in long term care facilities. More than 300 attended this year’s festivities. To all who attended and volunteered, the division extends their appreciation.



Congratulations to Kiddie Kollege in Forrest, and home-based providers, Virginia Clapp and Jaquita Moody! They recently fulfilled requirements to achieve a
FIVE STAR RATING!

Summits Held to Support Permanency for Children

During October 2014, four “Legal Stakeholders for Permanency for Children” summits were held in strategic locations across the state: Oxford, Meridian, Purvis and Vicksburg. These summits were funded by the Administrative Office of Court in collaboration with the DFCS Court Improvement Workgroup to provide training to the legal community and DFCS staff. More than 300 participants attended the conferences.

Retired Judge Stephen Rubin was a keynote speaker and shared insight on “Enhancing Permanency Outcomes with Ethics.” Stephen M. Rubin received his B.A. in political science from Oakland University, Rochester Michigan in 1971. His law degree was awarded in June 1975 from the Detroit College of Law and was admitted to the Arizona Bar in April 1975. Prior to his appointment to the bench he was in private practice with the Law Offices of Rubin & Myers for 12 years. He served as an adjunct professor of Law at the University of Arizona College of Law, having written the curriculum for the first-ever class devoted exclusively to Child Abuse and Neglect Law and Practice. He has served as faculty in numerous programs on both a local and national level, including the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Judicial College. Judge Rubin was the co-creator and serves as lead faculty for the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute which is a one week intensive course for judges offered by the National College of Juvenile Law at Reno, Nevada, devoted to the Model Dependency Court process. He also serves as chairman of the NCJFCJ Continuing Judicial Education Committee.

Dr. Sophia Gatowski, presented an “Overview of Regional Data” which included statistics comparing outcomes of Mississippi data for children with national data. Dr. Sophia Gatowski is a social psychologist and co-founding Director of Systems Change Solutions, Inc., where she is actively engaged in a variety of research and evaluation projects as well as curricula design, needs assessments and strategic planning. Prior to her role as Director of Systems Change Solutions, Dr. Gatowski worked for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges where for more than 10 years she helped to facilitate court-agency-community collaboration and systems change efforts, and conducted numerous program, practice, and policy evaluations for juvenile and family court systems. Dr. Gatowski is the author of scholarly and technical assistance articles focused on the interface between science and the law, judicial decision-making, evaluation research, court performance measurement, organizational behavior, and systems change facilitation and management.

Retirements

Andy Kalberg - Rewriting the Book on Retirement



Anthony "Andy" Kalberg spent 33 years with the Mississippi Department of Human Services. He retired in 2014 after working as an eligibility worker in Harrison County, one of the busiest county offices in the state.

Though retired from his career in state government, Andy had a book published, *A Chasing of the Wind*, which he's worked on for a number of years. A fiction set in a small beach town of Mississippi, the prologue is a fast read with a storyline that compels one to want to know more.

Visit Andy's website and take a moment to read his recent articles and excerpt from the book. If you fancy a good read, this tale will keep you turning the pages, hungry for more. <http://anthonykalberg.com/>

Annette Gant-Johnson

Region 7 West Director Annette Gant-Johnson, celebrated her retirement October 30. She leaves the agency after 30 years of work. She began her career with MDHS as a clerk for the Division of Economic Assistance, Employment and Training program. From there she was promoted to a Child Support Enforcement Officer and supervisor. She became a regional director when EA and Child Support merged. Her hobbies include singing, reading scriptures and time with family. She will be missed!



Liz Collier



After 37 years, Liz left the agency to work at the Division of Medicaid. She has worn many hats during that time including Oktibbeha County director, and most recently, Training Administrator here at the State Office. You will be missed at MDHS!

MDHS Investigators SNAP Welfare Fraud in Jones County

Mississippians support helping struggling families put food on the table, but they also want to know their taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Fraud Unit investigates those enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure the integrity of the nation's first line of defense against hunger.

Friday, Dec. 12, state investigators from the Fraud Unit, and local law enforcement from Jones County served warrants on eight individuals accused of SNAP fraud.

SNAP and TANF fraud are usually the result of a client withholding income or household information that could deem them ineligible to receive benefits. Disqualification periods for SNAP fraud can range from 12 months for the first violation to permanent disqualification. Ineligibility is determined by state and federal mandates and can be ordered by the courts as part of sentencing.

MDHS Director of Fraud Investigations Kenneth Palmer said, "SNAP is designed to help low-income people make food purchases for their families. SNAP fraud, however, hurts everyone. Local stores where purchases would have been made suffer a loss of revenue and, of course, the family suffers because they are disqualified from a program which would have allowed for appropriate food purchases."

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.

Legal Regional Meeting Highlights

Awards were presented at the recent Legal Regional Meeting. Pictured are: Wendie Smith - 10 Years of Service as Paralegal in Hinds County; Jennifer Coleman - Initiative Award for Outstanding Work in Hinds



County; David Love - Regional Senior Attorney for Legal Region 3; and Rutledge McMillin - Diligence Award for Outstanding Work in Washington County. Congratulations!

MACRD Awards the Best of the Best



This year's Division of Field Operations, Fall Management Conference was truly a celebration and combined managers from the DFO's Economic Assistance and Child Support staff. Senior management attended policy and leadership workshops and gathered for an evening spent dining together and sharing in the accomplishments of their counties and others around the state. As always, staff look forward to the award presentations.

The ACE Award county winners for SNAP/TANF were grouped by number of supervisors and scored on: SNAP Error Rate, TWP Participation Rate, Expedited Timeliness and Claims Timeliness. Counties with top scores were: Amite, Bolivar, Carroll, Clarke, Coahoma, Covington, Harrison, Holmes, Humphreys, Jackson, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leflore, Sharkey, Simpson, Sunflower, Tippah and Yazoo.

For the Child Support ACE Award winners, counties were scored on PEP rate, court orders and customer service. Counties with top scores were: Benton, Carroll, Lawrence, Lee and Stone.

Highlights from the Region 4 Leadership Meeting



Pictured above, Region 4 North recently held its December meeting and leadership training.



Above Choctaw County Director Deanna Pearson was recognized for her service on the Division of Field Operations CAT team representing Region 4 North. She is pictured with Region 4-N Director Ross Crawford.



Winston County Director Regina Higginbotham was recognized for 15 years of service to MDHS.



Regional staff enjoyed Christmas lunch together.



It's the United Way at MDHS

MDHS takes great pride in connecting with and supporting our local community partners. The United Way is one of those such organizations.

Each year, MDHS hosts an annual giving campaign and invites all MDHS staff to participate. On Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the State Office, a United Way Campaign Kick-Off Event was held with ticket sales toward raffle of division baskets.

The second phase of the campaign is the continuous giving through pledges. We encourage all MDHS employees to support the United Way through payroll deduction. With your support, the United Way will be able to continue to provide valuable services to the community.

The United Way supports three community impact initiatives: Education, Financial Stability and Health. For more information on how these initiatives impact your community, [click here to watch a video](#). For additional information on how you can contribute to the United Way, contact Sandra Herring at 601-359-4394.

Holidays from around the State



As part of Pike County's Christmas this year, the Division of Field Operations, Economic Assistance donated Hot Wheels Cars to the Division of Family and Children Services. When a child comes into Pike County DFCS office they will be presented with a car as a "prize" to help calm, fears and insecurities.



Over the past year, the DFCS staff have given out approximately 200 Hot Wheels to the children passing through their doors. The smiles and the joy felt by both children and staff serve to warm the heart and fuel the passion to provide a safe and appropriate environment for all Pike County's children.

In Montgomery County, MDHS employees made a "special" decoration for the Christmas tree. :) Very cute.



Many here at MDHS got in the Christmas spirit by participating in [National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day](#). This "holiday" was created as a day of fun and a time to "sport" that Christmas attire you've been saving all these years. Madison County joined in the celebration and dressed for the occasion.

Six Reasons APS is Thankful

The Division of Aging and Adult Services, Adult Protective Services program provided intensive training to its largest group of new workers to date. APS was awarded an additional six new PINs to increase staff and accommodate the growing service needs of the vulnerable population. APS now has 30 staff workers and is fully staffed!

Seated, from left: APS Intern Christine Baker; ASWS Sunda Bennett; APS Beverly Ferguson; APS Taneka McWilliams; and APS Edna Clark. Standing: APS Syletta Eide; ASWS Anita Ballard; APS Catina Steward-Brown; ASWS Victoria Johnson-Lewis; ASWS Alfreda Moody; APS Carolyn Jeffries; APS Jasmine Naylor; and DAAS Director Melinda Bertucci.



County Corner - Wayne, Webster & Wilkinson Counties

This month we take a look at Wayne, Webster and Wilkinson counties.

Wayne County

Demographics, 2013 Estimates

Population: 20,539

Children under 5: 6.5%

Persons 65 and over: 15.4%

Home ownership rate 2008-2012: 84.3%

Median household income 2008-2012: \$30,783

Persons below the poverty level, 2008-2012: 28.8%

Land area: 810.75 square miles

[Wayne County](#) is located in central Mississippi on the Alabama border. This area was one of the first communities established in western Mississippi and is reported to be "[older than Mississippi itself](#)."

Wayne County is in the Pine Belt region of the state and is served by both U.S. Highway 45 and U.S. Highway 84, both of which are four lane. Of note, Highway 84 is also known as the [El Camino Highway](#) and runs from Georgia to El Paso, TX.

Natural beauty is abundant and includes [Maynor Creek Water Park](#) with 450 acres of recreational area, and the [Chickasawhay River](#) and [Buckatunna Creek](#), both of which offer fishing and boating.

The name, Chickasawhay, is a Native American, Choctaw word, chikashsha-ahi, meaning Chickasaw potato. The river was formed by the confluence of the [Chunky River](#) and [Okatibbee Creek](#) at Enterprise in northwestern Clarke County.

The county seat is [Waynesboro](#) with a 2010 Census count of 5,043 persons; 418 under age 5 and 759 age 65 and older.

Back in the early 1800s, Wayne County was home to many predominately Scottish settlers. Early arrivals built along the banks of the Buckatunna Creek and established churches and schools. The first school was established in 1812 and until the early 1820s, [Gaelic](#) was spoken exclusively in the area. Native American tribes in the area included the Choctaws, Creeks and a small tribe of [Hiowannis](#). The Creek tribe, however, was not receptive to settlers and the War of 1813, also known as the Creek War, broke out. Wayne County residents erected two forts to protect the villagers: Patton's Fort at Winchester, the original county seat, and Rogers' Fort.

Notable People:

[Powhatan Ellis](#), U.S. senator and U.S. federal judge

[John. J. McRae](#), member of the Mississippi House of Representatives, U.S. senator and 21st Governor

[James O'Gwynn](#), country music singer

[James Patton](#), Lt. Governor

[Jalin Wood](#), Miss Mississippi 2004

Webster County

Demographics, 2013 Estimates

Population: 9,987

Children under 5: 5.9%

Persons 65 and over: 16.5%

Home ownership rate 2008-2012: 73.7%

Median household income 2008-2012: \$35,391

Persons below the poverty level, 2008-2012: 24.6%

Land area: 420.94 square miles

[Webster County](#) is located in the north-central portion of the state. Formed in 1874, it was originally called Sumner County, but in 1880 was renamed in honor of American statesman [Daniel Webster](#). Greensboro was the original county seat until 1876 when it was changed to Walthall. Webster County was formed from parts of Choctaw County and encompassed all the area north of the [Big Black River](#).

The Big Black River has its source in Webster County near Eupora and flows southwesterly for 300 miles to the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg. Fed by a number of major tributaries, the river basin impacts 13 counties in the state.

Eupora, the largest town in the county, has more than 2,300 residents. In 1888, the [Georgia-Pacific Railroad](#) surveyors who were boarding in the home of Jim Eudy, named the town Eupora after his wife.

Webster County is one of 36 counties in the state which remains [dry or closed to the sale of alcoholic beverages](#).

Other towns in Webster County include Maben, Mathiston, Mantee, Bellefontaine, Fame, Hohenlinden and Tomnolen.

Notable People:

[Thomas Abernethy](#), former U.S. congressman

[William M. Golden](#), musician and songwriter

[Donald C. Simmons, Jr.](#), educator, author, poet and documentary film producer

Wilkinson County

Demographics, 2013 Estimates

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

Population: 9,381

Children under 5: 6.1%

Persons 65 and over: 14.8%

Home ownership rate 2008-2012: 77.5%

Median household income 2008-2012: \$33,618

Persons below the poverty level, 2008-2012: 27.8%

Land area: 678.11 square miles

[Wilkinson County](#) is located in the southern corner of the state along the Mississippi River. The county is named for [James Wilkinson, a Revolutionary War](#) military leader. In 1787, Wilkinson turned traitor and served as a secret agent to Spain, known as Agent 13. After the sale of area now known as Louisiana by [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) to Thomas Jefferson, Wilkinson served as the territorial leader, and as commander in chief of the U.S. Army.

History takes a turn as Wilkinson began conspiring with [Aaron Burr](#), who later killed political rival Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Details of their schemes are sketchy, but seem to include plans to separate Louisiana from the U.S. and conquer Mexico. Wilkinson eventually turned on Burr who was convicted of treason in 1807. Wilkinson, however, was acquitted.

Wilkinson County was developed by European-American settlers who farmed predominately cotton. The rise and fall of "king cotton" affected the population of the area which peaked in 1900. Since that time, there has been a resurgence of interest in the area and many visit for the historic homes, vast recreational opportunities and the Highway 61 trail of the "[Blues Highway](#)."

[Woodville](#), the county seat, has a weekly newspaper which has been in business since 1823. It is the oldest surviving business in the town and the oldest newspaper in the state. The town was incorporated in 1811 after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

Notable People:

[Henry Cohen \(rabbi\)](#), served from 1885-1888 before going to [Galveston, Texas](#), where he served a Jewish synagogue and became a nationally known community leader.

[Edward Grady Partin](#) (1924-1990), [Teamsters Union](#) business agent from [Baton Rouge](#) whose testimony sent [Jimmy Hoffa](#) to prison, was born in Woodville.

[William Grant Still](#), African-American classical composer.

Next month, we'll wrap up this series on the counties with a look at Winston, Yalobusha and Yazoo counties. Until then, take time to visit scenic Mississippi.

Choose a Healthy You for 2015

News and Health Tips

Did you know...

- Reports indicate that we may be in for a rough flu season. It has been reported that the flu vaccine distributed this year may not be effective for the newly mutated strain of H3N2. It will, however, help to lessen symptoms and severity of the virus. The vaccine also offers full protection against two or three other strains of influenza that could circulate and become widespread as the season progresses. So the best advice is:
 - Get your flu shot;
 - Cover your cough.
 - Wash your hands.
 - Stay home if you are sick.
- Did you know eating sugar, specifically, high-fructose corn syrup, can make you hungrier? Americans have a "sweet tooth." And for those who crave sugar, the holidays make it that much harder. Research shows the more sugar you eat, the less likely it is that you will be satisfied. More than two-thirds of Americans are obese. So if your goal is to lose inches in your waist, it may be smart to "just say no" to sugar.



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: **1-877-658-8148**

Access Code: **714 687 6907**

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

To speak with a health coach, call 1-866-939-4721, Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., CST, Saturday 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or visit [MyActiveHealth.com/Mississippi](#).