

Beacon

November and December 2012



A Message from the Executive Director

The holidays are a special time of the year and I encourage you to take advantage of your time away from work. Spend time with your family and renew old friendships.

I write and speak to you a lot about spending time with your family. The nuclear family unit has been the foundation of our civilization for thousands of years. It seems to me that the farther we drift away from this model, the more social problems we encounter.

Every day staff in our MDHS divisions deal with the consequences of broken homes, fatherlessness and children being raised without love and compassion.

So I encourage you to take time to help others who are struggling, but most importantly, never take for granted the ones that you love. Providing a nurturing environment for your children and grandchildren will set the foundation for future generations.

I bumped into the gentleman that hired me into my first State job during the holidays. He is 85 now and is doing well in retirement as he did during his work career. It was a brief but special time of reflection. He was very proud of my accomplishments but I was quick to tell him that none

of this would have been possible if he had not seen something in me and given me a chance 35 years ago.

The State still provides an opportunity for individuals to have a career. There are not many places where you can start out working a desk in a local office and make it to the top of an organization.

I know that we have challenges with pay and increasing workloads but the opportunity is still here for meaningful and rewarding work that makes a difference in peoples' lives and provides an opportunity for life-long income and stability.

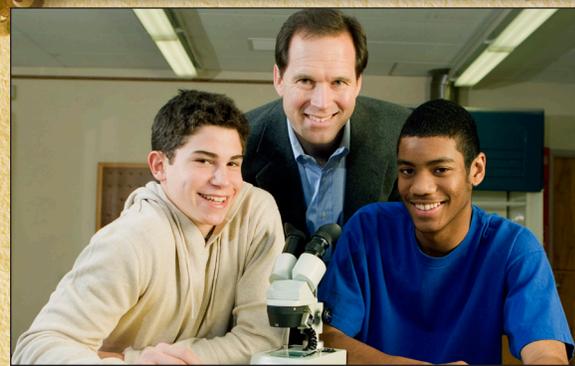
Another special quality of the holidays is just as you have time to reflect on the past the new year is upon us providing an opportunity to make new friends and accomplish new goals.

With the New Year comes hope and a renewed spirit. There are many good things for us to look forward to in 2013. The people that we serve are depending on us and deserve nothing but our best.

Happy 2013!

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

Oakley—The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Recipient



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is making a difference in the lives of teens across the world. Now the program has expanded to include Oakley Youth Development Center (OYDC) near Raymond, a state-run rehabilitation center for youth offenders age 10-17. The partnership with OYDC is the first DofE Award to a program serving offending youth in the U.S.

DofE Award will significantly strengthen Oakley's impact on youth by offering diverse programming and bestowing international honor upon those youth striving to change their lives and better themselves.

The program began in 1956, and since its inception has served over 8 million youth in 140 countries.

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UPCOMING HOLIDAY

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert E. Lee Birthday Observances - January 21st.

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- Harrison County News
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This global charitable organization aims to create a world where young people can reach their potential regardless of their circumstances. The program balances activities to develop the whole person – mind, body and soul – in an environment of social interaction and teamwork.

For Oakley students, the DofE Award will serve to strengthen their confidence and self-esteem so that when they return to their home environment, they're ready and able to become productive, successful members of society. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award program is set to begin on campus January 2013.

Oakley Statistics - State Fiscal Year 2012

Oakley served 218 students.

Average age - 16.

About 80% of the students were black males.

Average length of stay for a felony offense - 16 weeks.

71% of students were committed for felony offenses.

Recidivism rate is about 22%.



Oakley Students are the Best



The employees at the MDHS 660 North Street Building were thrilled to receive a picnic table built by the Oakley Youth Development Center, Career and Technical Education Class students under the supervision of Carpenter Instructor Herman Taylor. The treated pine table took students approximately 32 hours to construct. Building 660 staff extends their appreciation to the students for a gift that will allow them a place to enjoy breaks outside.

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES!

During 2012, there have been a couple of reports of individuals who allegedly misrepresented themselves as MDHS employees.

NOTE: When you are at work and representing the agency, whether at your office or on official business away from your regular duty office, it is **MANDATORY** that at all times you visibly wear your official MDHS issued badge.

Further, inform your clients and families that **ALL MDHS EMPLOYEES CARRY OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION AND ARE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE THOSE CREDENTIALS FOR INSPECTION UPON REQUEST.**

If a client wants to verify if a person is an employee of the agency, they can contact MDHS at 1-800-345-6347 or call the local county MDHS office or law enforcement.

Protect yourself and the integrity of the agency.

WEAR YOUR BADGE.

REFERENCE: AP-43



Forever Families Celebrated during November



Region 6, which encompasses Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry and Stone Counties celebrated National Adoption Month with a mass adoption on November 8, 2012. The Resource and Adoption Unit were on hand to observe proceedings for 13 children and hosted a reception for the families following the event.



Jackson County DHS Adoption staff, along with Region 7-East Regional Director Brenda Coe-Wess (top, second from right), were hosts for a breakfast honoring resource and adoptive parents in the area. Sherba Hinton, Adoption ASWS (top right) and Wess presented certificates of appreciation to families in attendance. Also a certificate was presented to Cassandra Jones, Adoption Specialist, who was recognized for her efforts to finalize adoptions for 14 children in September 2012.

On November 10, 2012 Region 7-West celebrated National Adoption Day with a special celebration at the Harrison County Office. Ten families who recently adopted and 16 children attended. All enjoyed food provided by Newk's Express Cafe. The children received gift bags, bears and balloons and enjoyed face-painting and entertainment by a clown.

In Region 7-W, there were approximately 65 children adopted during the fiscal year.



PI Investigators Uncover over \$159K in Fraud

In recent months, MDHS Program Integrity investigators helped bust individuals across the state trying to defraud a program that provides assistance to those in need. Through their efforts, over \$159,000 will be repaid to taxpayers in restitution and fines. SNAP and TANF fraud are usually the result of a client withholding income or household information that would 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

put food on the table. SNAP fraud, however, hurts everyone. The local store where purchases would have been made loses revenue and, of course, the family suffers because of the loss of benefits that 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.

NAME, LOCATION	RESTITUTION, FEES, FINES	SENTENCE	SNAP DISQUALIFICATION PERIOD
Barbara A. Horton, Lena	\$28,195	Three years suspended, five years supervised probation	12 months
Amber L. Moudy, Canton	\$13,437	Court withheld acceptance of the defendant's plea pending successful completion of five years of probation	Permanent
Vickie Dent, Braxton	\$12,295	Three years suspended, five years supervised probation	12 months
Shanisha F. Williams, Greenville	\$9,756	Three years to serve concurrent with the federal sentence the defendant is currently serving	12 months
Catherine Richmond, Leland	\$8,901	18 months, not to exceed three years, Pre-Trial Diversion Program	12 months
Datriene Y. Kennedy, Greenville	\$8,667	Three years to serve on MDOC post-release supervision	24 months
Robbin F. Simmons, Saltillo	\$8,588	Three years MDOC Non-Adjudicated	12 months
Angela E. Phinisee, Morton	\$8,092	If defendant fails to adhere to Non-Adjudicated court order, then sentencing will be imposed of three years to serve	24 months
Vergia Battle, Batesville	\$7,824	Court withheld acceptance of the defendant's plea pending successful completion of five years of probation	24 months
Tiffany T. Thompson, Pearl	\$7,817	Three years suspended, five years supervised probation	Permanent
Romanda L. Williams, Lena	\$7,796	Three years suspended, five years supervised probation	12 months
Rosie Jones, Mathiston	\$7,714	Serve one day in jail, remainder of the three year sentence on post-release supervision	Permanent
Susan Alexander, Newton	\$7,512	Three years, non-adjudicated with non-reporting/unsupervised probation	12 months
Leola M. Bogan, Morton	\$7,443	One year with six months to serve in the Scott County Jail and six months supervised house arrest	Permanent
Janice D. Gammage, Meridian	\$6,729	Three years suspended, three years supervised probation	24 months
Kimberly L. Bailey, Horn Lake	\$6,183	To serve three days, two years post-release supervision	12 months
Kathleen H. Cassidy, Jackson	\$2,095	Three years of post-release supervision	12 months
Charity L. Harrington, Louisville	\$196	TANF Fraud	N/A



News From Harrison County

Harrison County has always strived to provide quality and professional services to their customers.

On May 1, 2012 Harold Netto joined the team as the County Director and immediately put into action his vision for the county.



Harrison County Director Harold Netto and Associate Director Pam Baggett

On an average day Harrison County takes 85 new applications. In order to better serve the customers who come into the lobby area, Netto installed a ticket system so order is established and clients can be seated as they wait to be served. A television was also placed in the lobby for clients to view informative videos on nutrition and other subject matter.

Because Harrison County serves a diverse population, applications are available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and office staff are on-hand who are fluent in

each language to accommodate clients.

Community outreach is also high on the priority list. A health fair was held at the Biloxi Edgewater Mall in October to provide information about agency services including: SNAP,

TANF, abstinence and pregnancy prevention, adoptive services, child support and Access and Visitation. The health fair was sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

In October, the county welcomed Annette Gant as the Regional Director for Field Operations, Region 7-West.

October also highlighted breast cancer awareness month. Events included a walk, a Buck-A-Bowl Soup and Dessert Luncheon, a silent auction and a memory tree



Darnell Sanford, Director of Food & Nutrition Services for Biloxi Regional Medical Center; Patricia Rayford, Field Operations; Joanna Danzy, Delta State University intern.

where names of persons battling cancer or whose battle is now over were placed. With the participation of all divisions housed within the Harrison County Building, \$800 was raised. Members of the Harrison County Board of Supervisors were present during the presentation of the donation to the Cancer Society.

Kim Savant, Harrison County Board President; Aaron Dollar, American Cancer Society; Annette Gant, Regional Director; William Martin, Harrison County Board of Supervisors Vice President; Harold Netto, County Director. Below, MDHS WALKS FOR A CURE!



During the holiday season, many pause to reflect on all the blessings in life. It is also a time to share with those who are less fortunate. A collection basket has been placed in the lobby to collect donations of basic nonperishable items for the Feed My Sheep food bank.

During the coming year, Harrison County staff is dedicated to remembering that they are not just human services professionals but members of a diverse, growing community.



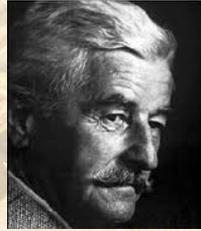
If your county has some great news, be sure to send it to Julia Bryan at: julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov

County Corner - Lafayette and Lamar Counties



This month we travel to the northern and southern portion of the state to visit Lafayette and Lamar Counties.

Lafayette County is located in north central Mississippi and as of 2010, the population was 47,351. Its county seat is Oxford.



Lafayette County is often regarded as the inspiration for Yoknapatawpha County, the fictional setting of many of **William Faulkner's** stories. The county was named in honor of **Marquis de Lafayette**, a French military hero and American general who fought during the **American Revolutionary War**.



Established in 1836, Lafayette was one of ten counties into which the **Chickasaw Cession** was divided. People came into the area hoping to settle, homestead and work. Private land was purchased from the Indians, one of whom was Hoka, an Indian princess by legend and Chief Toby Tubby.



Oxford was selected as the name of the county seat in hopes that it would also become a seat of higher learning. This goal was realized when the **University of Mississippi** was chartered in 1844 and opened in 1848.



The area became a cultural, educational, agricultural and business center with educated people and beautiful homes until the Civil War when the town was burned by Federal troops in 1864. Oxford rose from the ashes and survived the Great Depression and World War II to become a vibrant, cultural area in Mississippi.



Kimberly Nicole Morgan was crowned Miss Mississippi in 2007, becoming just the



second African American woman to win that title. Born in Oxford, Mississippi and raised in the small community of Taylor, Morgan, who grew up with a severe hearing disability, was a music teacher at Madison S. Palmer High School in Marks, Mississippi prior to her becoming Miss Mississippi.

Lamar County is located in the south central part of the state and is part of the Hattiesburg metro area.

As of 2010, the population for Lamar County was 55,658. Its county seat is Purvis. Named for the post-Civil War Mississippi statesman **Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar**, the county was carved out of Marion County to the west in 1904. It is largely a rural county, with the exception of its northeast quarter, which includes Hattiesburg.

Jesse LeRoy Brown was the first African-American naval aviator in the United States Navy, and the first naval officer killed in the Korean War. Born in **Hattiesburg** to an impoverished family, Brown gained an avid interest in aircraft from a young age.



Brown was graduated as salutatorian of his high school, enlisted in the US Navy in 1946 and became a midshipman one year later. Brown earned his pilot wings on 21 October 1948 amid a flurry of press coverage. He was subsequently assigned to Fighter Squadron 32 aboard the USS *Leyte*. At the outset of the Korean War, the *Leyte* was ordered to the **Korean Peninsula**, arriving in October 1950. Brown, an ensign, flew 20 combat missions before his **F4U Corsair** aircraft came under fire and crashed on a remote mountaintop on 4 December 1950 during a mission supporting ground troops at the **Battle of Chosin Reservoir**. Brown died of his wounds in spite of efforts by wingman **Thomas J. Hudner, Jr.**, who intentionally crashed his aircraft attempting a rescue. The frigate **USS Jesse L. Brown (FF-1089)** was named in Brown's honor.

Brett Lorenzo Favre, former professional football player who spent the majority of his career with the Green Bay Packers as quarterback. He was a 20-year veteran of the NFL and is the only quarterback in NFL history to throw for over 70,000 yards, over 500 touchdowns, over 300 interceptions, over 6,000 completions, and over 10,000 pass attempts. He officially retired on January 17, 2011. Favre started as a quarterback for the University of Southern Mississippi before being selected in the second round of the 1991 NFL Draft by the Atlanta Falcons.



Next month, we'll visit Lauderdale and Lawrence Counties.



Congressman Palazzo Hosts Medicare Open Enrollment Teletown Hall Meeting

Mississippi residents in the Fourth Congressional District were welcomed into the 21st Century with a Community Teletown Hall Meeting to discuss Medicare Open Enrollment which runs from October 15 – December 7 of each year. During open enrollment, Medicare beneficiaries can sign up for Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C) and Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D), or make changes to their current coverage. All Medicare beneficiaries are encouraged to review their Medicare health plans and prescription drug plans each year to ensure their plans currently meet their needs.

The MDHS, Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), Dr. Renard L. Murray, DAAS's Regional Administrator with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and TRICARE representatives participated in Congressman Steven Palazzo's Teletown Hall meeting and took questions from a listening audience.

More than 10,000 individuals phoned in from the Congressman's district and individuals were encouraged

to ask questions about Medicare Open Enrollment. Any additional information needed was noted and routed to the appropriate agency or individual.

The Teletown Hall Meeting also provided DAAS with an opportunity to share unbiased information with residents about Medicare and related health insurance benefits.

For additional information on your Medicare benefits, go to: Medicare.gov or call your local SHIP provider at 1-800-948-3090.



Foster Care Payments Transitioning to Mississippi Debit Cards

Mississippi Debit Cards are coming in December for foster care board payments replacing the paper checks currently used.

All licensed resource parents in the state will be receiving debit cards and information on the new system. Payments made in January for the December board payments will be deposited to the debit card, so families will need to activate their card as soon as it is received.

For additional information, contact the State Office Foster Care Unit at 601-359-4299.



United Way Campaign a Success



The State Office United Way of the Capital Area Campaign came to a close December 19th. Efforts raised \$3,939.03 of which \$960 were pledges and \$2,979.03 were from events. Highlights included basket raffles, coveted parking in the garage, grills, spa visits, a Mr. and Mrs. DHS and so much more. Verkista Pittman and Kenneth Bryant of Community Services were crowned as Mr. and Mrs. DHS representatives. We appreciate everyone's efforts to support this local fundraiser which helps families and children in the metro Jackson area.

Forrest County DHS held their annual United Way campaign and raised \$1,181.29 for the United Way of Southeast Mississippi. The successful efforts included representatives from all the divisions and was concluded with an Appreciation Luncheon. Great job!!



It's Time to Make the Switch and Go Direct



If you still receive a paper check for your Social Security or other federal benefit payments, you are required by law to switch to an electronic payment option by March 1, 2013.

It's fast, free and easy to sign up for direct deposit or the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card by calling the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at (800) 333-1795. For direct deposit, you can also sign up online at www.GoDirect.org or by visiting your bank or credit union.

Choose Your Payment Option

Before making the switch, if you have questions, you can call the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at (800) 333-1795 to discuss options and help you choose the right one for you.

Direct deposit. If you have a checking or savings account, sign up to get your money by direct deposit. Your federal benefit payment will go straight into your account on payment day each month. On time, every time.

Direct Express® card. If you don't have a bank account or prefer a prepaid debit card, switch to the Direct Express® card. Your money will be posted to the card on payment day each month. There's no need to wait for the mail or to make a special trip to cash a check. You can make purchases and get cash back with purchases at no charge anywhere Debit MasterCard® is accepted. There are no sign-up fees, overdraft fees or monthly fees. Some fees for optional services may apply.

For information on card fees and features, visit www.GoDirect.org.

If you do not choose an electronic payment option by March 1, 2013, you may be issued a Direct Express® card.

Keep Your Money Safe

Electronic payments are safer than paper checks. In fact, you are 125 times more likely to have a problem with a paper check than with an electronic payment.

The Treasury Department urges you to follow these three tips:

1. *Be careful of anyone who calls, texts or emails you asking for personal information.*
2. *Do not give out your Social Security number or account information to anyone unless you are the one who has contacted them.*
3. *Check your bank, credit union or Direct Express® card account often to make sure that all account activity is yours.*

Remember, you are required by law to switch to an electronic payment option by March 1, 2013. Time is running out – make the switch today. More information, including instructional videos on how direct deposit works and how to use the Direct Express® card, is available at www.GoDirect.org.

Federal Taxes to Increase for 2013

By now we've all heard of the fiscal cliff and many may have assumed that your paycheck is safe from increased taxes. Wrong. About 77% of American households will face higher federal taxes in 2013. That's because even though just 1% of households will pay higher income taxes, an increase in federal payroll taxes will hit nearly every wage earner, the Tax Policy Center says. The agreed upon legislation does not prevent the expiration of a temporary reduction in Social Security payroll taxes. For example, households earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year face an average tax increase of \$579 in 2013, according to the Tax Policy Center's analysis. Helping Social Security meet its obligations will be financed by a 12.4% tax on wages up to \$113,700 a year, with employers paying half and workers paying the other half.



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 to stay up on the latest happenings at MDHS.

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