



▶ MS FSA & ASU Small Farmers Conference 2



▶ FSA THE SILENT PARTNER AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA... 4-5



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ISSUE 1

VOLUME 2

YEAR 2007

# FSA *focus*

FOCUSED ON RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS FSA EMPLOYEES ON THE JOB & IN THE COMMUNITY

## 2007 FARMER OF THE YEAR: FSA Producer/COC Advisor Receives Honor at 2007 Small Farmers Conference

Rankin County Producer **Lee Foote** was selected from a group of statewide farmers as the "2007 Farmer of the Year."

Alcorn State University Extension Program in cooperation with the MS Association of Cooperatives, recently held their 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Farmers Conference March 26-28 in Vicksburg, MS. (*Story on Page 2*)

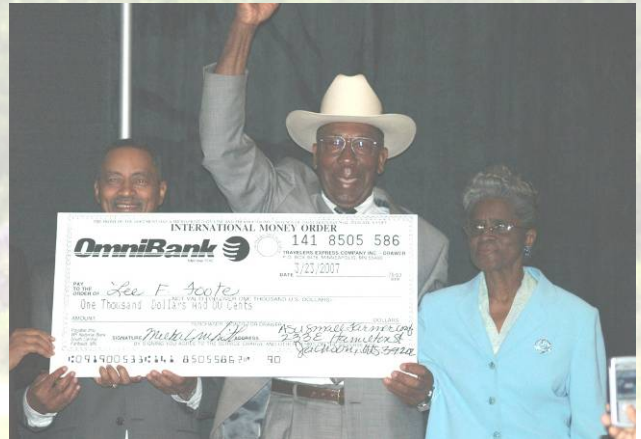
Nominations were received from throughout the state for the farmer who demonstrated the greatest success in his/her farming operation this year. A forestry learning site tour was held at the Foote Farm to showcase the success of the timber operation.

**Foote** and his wife, **Ann**, were presented with a trophy and a check for \$1000 for the prestigious honor. During the awards ceremony, a documentary showcasing the Foote Farm was shown to the audience of an estimated 250.

**Foote**, who has been farming for over 50 years, resides in the McLaurin Community, and serves on the Rankin County FSA County Committee as a COC Advisor. He owns over 460 acres with cattle and timber. He participates in **FSA's DCP and CRP Programs**. Once you meet Mr. & Mrs. Foote, you'll never forget them. When I visited the Foote farm, I felt like a member of the family. They both are so caring and kind, not only to each other, but everyone they meet. He'll quickly tell you, "my land is part of God's creation and I give it the respect it deserves by being a good steward."

Rankin County CED Casaundra McCullough says, "He supports me and FSA in all of our endeavors. ANY meetings, functions, he's there."

Congratulations **Lee & Ann Foote - ASU's Farmers of the Year!**



(Left to right: Alcorn State University Extension Director Dr. Dalton McAfee, Lee Foote and wife Ann Foote receive check and trophy for ASU Farmer of the Year) BELOW: Foote gives the history of his family farm to attendees who toured his farm during the Conference. A few of his cattle are pictured in the background of this page.



## 2007 SMALL FARMERS CONFERENCE:

THEME: "NEW DAY....NEW WAY.....CHANGE!"

### FSA Employees Participate in Annual Small Farmers Conference

Alcorn State Extension Service in partnership with the MS Association of Cooperatives, headquartered in Jackson, held their 18<sup>th</sup> annual joint conference for small farmers and women in business March 26-28, 2007. Registered attendance of 250 gathered at the Vicksburg Convention Center to gain insight and information from agency and industry experts. **FSA PR/Outreach Specialist J. Latrice Hill** again served on the program planning committee.

The purpose of the annual conference is to provide technical assistance and information to small farmers and women in business.

This year's theme for the farmers was "New Way...New Day....Change". Topics were included to equip farmers with relevant data to help improve overall production, introduce creative ideas to enhance farm income, and provide tools that will assist small farmers in becoming better managers and stewards of their farms.

This year, participants were allowed to select from six Learning Sites: Sustainable Meat Goat Production held in Claiborne County, MS; Beef Cattle Production held in Claiborne County, MS; Show Cattle and Timber Production held in Rankin County; and Fruit and Vegetable Production held at the ASU Model Farm on Alcorn's campus.

MS FSA sponsored a Learning Site. Employees who made presentations were: Farm Loan Specialist **Rodney Johnson** (Beef Cattle Production), Rankin County CED **Casaundra McCullough**, Farm Loan Officer **Thomas Boyd** (Show Cattle/Forestry Site).

Several local businesses, such as Wal-Mart, took advantage of the fifth and sixth Learning Sites: Women in Business-Leadership/Asset Building and Wealth Creation, held at the Vicksburg Convention Center. These sessions were held to provide information to enhance skills to maximize potential business opportunities, provide women with necessary steps to start a business; provide information on available funding for start ups; financial literacy, IDAs, homeownership and building wealth.

Keynote Speaker for the first day was Congressman Bennie Thompson. Other featured speakers were Dr. Claud Evans- Researcher/Farmer from Texas, MS Forestry Commission's State Forester Charlie Morgan, Dr. Homer Wilkes- MS NRCS State Conservationist, Kalven Trice- Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist, Larry Owens- Federal Agent Farmer, Pete Heard- Director of MS Ag Wildlife Center.

Women in Ag Awards went to Jefferson Davis County Producer **Minnie Oatis** and Winston County Producer **Omeria Dotson**. Both received trophies and \$500 each.

Special thanks to those FSA employees who participated in assisting these small farmers in improving their operations!!



#### FEATURED LEARNING SITES:

- Sustainable Meat Goat Production
- Beef Cattle Production
- Show Cattle
- Timber Production
- Fruit & Vegetable Production
- Business Leadership
- Asset Building
- Wealth Creation

Dr. Dalton McAfee – ASU Extension Director

Melbah M. Smith – MS Association of Cooperatives Director

Ben Burkett - MS Association of Cooperatives Coordinator



MS Congressman Bennie R. Thompson was the Keynote Speaker for Day One of the Small Farmers Conference.

# FSA STATE OUTREACH



## FSA FY 2007 Events:

- National AgrAbility Conference
- NRCS Small Farmer Outreach Meetings
- MS Association of Conservation Districts  
Annual Meeting
- MS Association of Cooperative's Annual  
Conference
- Small Farmers Conference
- Magnolia Beef & Poultry Expo
- Community Bank's 2007 Poultry Expo
- ASU Ag Day 2007
- SARE Grant Workshop
- MS State Fair
- State FFA Convention
- MS Fish & Wildlife Expo
- MS Latino Festival
- Southern Federation of Cooperatives  
Annual Meeting
- FSA/Southeast Rankin Cooperative  
Youth Day
- FSA/Winston County Self-Help  
Cooperative Outreach Meeting
- FSA/Indian Springs Cooperative  
Outreach Meeting
- Neshoba County Fair
- Choctaw Festival
- Blacks in Government Training/Awards  
Day
- The 1999 Black Farmers Settlement  
Group Youth Day



## FSA - THE "SILENT" PARTNER IN RESTORING MISSISSIPPI FARMS

### Meet: The Jefcoats Jones County, Mississippi

- Farms over 300 Acres
- Over 100 head cattle
- 2 Poultry Houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina
- ECP, FIP, FLP

*"A lot of people are leery of the government, but I'll tell anyone, FSA really helped me when I needed it."*

Hurricane Katrina occurred almost two years ago, but producers in South Mississippi are still trying to get back on track.

FSA is the "silent" partner in restoring farms in Mississippi. Our dedicated employees have worked hard and tirelessly to ensure farmers get the necessary assistance to get back on track.

FSA offered several disaster programs to Mississippi producers. MS FSA has paid out over **\$49.4 million dollars** to farmers in Mississippi as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Jones County Producer Larry Jefcoat and his wife Lana will quickly tell you without help from FSA they don't know what they would have done.

The Jefcoats farm over 300 acres and before Hurricane Katrina had two poultry houses and over 100 head of cattle. The houses were completely destroyed. When asked if they plan to rebuild, Mrs. Jefcoat, who primarily worked the houses, teases, "**No, we're not building back!**"

Jefcoat, who has been farming for over 35 years, continues on with his cattle farming. He is a former State President of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, and remains active in the Jones County Chapter." FSA's ECP & FIP programs really helped us clean the place up and restore our fences. We were even able to apply for an equipment loan. We appreciate all that FSA has done for us."

#### MISSISSIPPI FSA: THE SILENT YET RELIABLE PARTNER FOR MS FARMERS

- Dairy Disaster Assistance Program II (DDAPII) \$ 1,710,422.31
- ECPH (Debris Removal and Fence Repair) \$9,285,832
- ECPHGM (Debris Removal, Fence Repair, Forestry, Nursery, Poultry Houses Debris Removal) \$30,421,013
- ECPHGM (Poultry Houses Reconstruction and Repairs) \$867,766
- LIP \$2,127,006
- TIP \$776,356
- HIP \$2,061,911
- FIP \$1,156,246
- Fruit & Vegetable: \$63,227
- Nursery: \$941,699

*Plus numerous Direct Operating Loans and Emergency Loans*



Jones County FLM Leo Beatty visiting with Mr. Jefcoat.

## Meet: The Pippens

Wayne County,  
Mississippi



- 78 Acres w/ 50 cattle
- 4 Poultry Houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina
- ECP, LIP, FIP, ECP DR
- 31 Days without power

*"We sure do appreciate all the help FSA has given us."*

Deborah and Ferdy Pippen also suffered losses from Hurricane Katrina. 78,000 chicks died in their four broiler houses which had been scheduled for pickup the day *after* Hurricane Katrina hit. All four houses totally destroyed, with over 1.25 miles of down fencing, the Pippens turned to USDA for help. *"We received help on restoring the fencing, help with our cows. The Board of Animal Health came out and verified our losses and we even received help to bury the chickens. FSA has been really good to us."*



Ferdy Pippen with some of his cattle.

## FSA STATE COMMITTEEMAN WINSTEAD NAMED NEWTON COUNTY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

MS FSA State Committeeman Jack Winstead was recently selected as "Citizen of the Year" in Newton County!

Winstead was selected for his outstanding efforts in forming a committee which proposed a State Veteran's Cemetery for Newton County Mississippi. Winstead organized a group of people to work on the project and had the support of the entire community. Winstead closed the deal when the State Veteran Affairs Board visited Newton County and eventually selected the county for the \$7.7 million project.

Winstead credits **others** for the successful venture and for receiving this award. *"If you ever see a turtle sitting on a fence post, he had a lot of help getting there. That's how I feel about this project and this award."*

Winstead, a retired Deputy State Conservationist with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), currently serves as Chairman of the MS Soil & Water Commission as well as numerous other committees. Aside from being appointed to the **MS FSA State Committee**, he is President of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, Commissioner with the MS Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), member of the MS Farmer's Market Board, member of The Federal Land Bank Board and Trustee on the East Central Community College Board.

Congratulations Jack Winstead on being named "Citizen of the Year!"



*"I don't aspire to be a leader, but if I see a chance to bring people together, I enjoy doing that. People will respond if you give them an idea and some encouragement."*

*- Jack Winstead*



### **2007 MS FSA STATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Pictured left to right: Allen Eubanks, Jack Winstead, Ted Kendall, IV, Robert Carson

FSA state committees are responsible for the general direction and supervision of state FSA programs. Committees keep farmers informed of agency program activities while resolving appeals and complaints. Members also maintain cooperative relationships with the agribusiness community.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES: LOUISIANA BLACK BEAR HAS CUBS ON CRP/WRP LAND

*Rare event prompts visit from USDA Under-Secretary*



*Group Photo: FSA SED Mickey L. Black pictured on left. Fordice second from right standing with family. Dep. Under Secretary Mast pictured center in sunglasses. Photo courtesy of Debra Logan*

It has been 30 years since black bear cubs were born in the Mississippi Delta. On April 12, 2007, USDA NRCS in Mississippi celebrated the birth of the cubs in Valley Park, MS (Issaquena County). The cubs were found last month on producer Hunter Fordice's property. First Lady Marsha Barbour was on hand March 2nd when the Mother Bear was tranquilized as the cubs were evaluated by Wildlife officials. The mother bear is believed to have come across the Mississippi River from Arkansas.

Fordice, son of the late Governor Kirk Fordice and former First Lady Pat Fordice, has land enrolled in FSA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and NRCS' Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

Gary Mast, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) was present for the ceremony. The NRE mission area at USDA includes two agencies—U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### **MS CRP:**

- Mississippi has 21,680 CRP contracts totaling 958,041 acres

# MS FSA RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR 2000 BAILEY PROPERTY TRANSFER in WASHINGTON POST



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Dear Readers,

This issue of the Newspaper in Education insert is of particular interest to me because of its dedication to historic preservation and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson established a national framework to recognize and preserve the tangible evidence of our past. Building on that foundation, *Preserve America* is a White House initiative created by President George W. Bush to foster greater appreciation of our heritage sites and their importance to communities, states, and the nation. As Honorary Chair of *Preserve America*, I want everyone in the United States – especially young people – to learn about our country's heritage and enjoy our national treasures.

As the years go by, more and more places of historical importance around our country are at risk of being forgotten, damaged, or destroyed. Your help is needed to ensure their survival and appropriate use today so that they can continue to inform and benefit others tomorrow. I commend students, teachers, and all the people throughout the U.S. who work hard to preserve our incredible heritage resources and share their importance and their stories with others. And I urge everyone to learn more about the vital benefit of historic preservation to our economic, cultural and educational life.

Our land is the foundation upon which the nation's story is built, and our history is found in buildings, parks, towns and landscapes. When we are able to stand in those places and learn their roles in our country's development, history comes to life.

In this publication you will find some of the wonderful stories that are captured and interpreted for all of us in places saved by preservation efforts. You will also learn how to appreciate better and participate in *Preserve America* and other historic preservation initiatives in your community, your state and the nation. I encourage you to get involved!

With best regards,

Laura Bush

## General Grant Makes Key Civil War Decision at Dillon's Plantation, Mississippi

**O**n May 12, 1863, Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman were headquartered at Dillon's Plantation near Raymond, MS. They were maneuvering their Union military forces to capture Vicksburg, seeking to secure the vital Mississippi River corridor, cut the Confederate States of America in two, and deny it the economic and military use of the river. A sharp skirmish was fought in the area of the Dillon Plantation that day while the Battle of Raymond raged nearby, as Confederate forces fought desperately to blunt the Union drive.

That evening, receiving news of the favorable outcome of the Battle of Raymond, the two generals conferred on how the campaign was unfolding. Grant decided to change the route of the Union troops' advance, electing to move decisively against Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, before turning on Vicksburg as he had originally planned. This brilliant and daring decision resulted in the destruction of railroads and war materials in Jackson, forcing the retreat of a sizeable Confederate army, thereby preventing it from joining ranks with the defenders of Vicksburg. These actions assured Union success in the Vicksburg campaign, contributing directly to the outcome of the Civil War and reunification of the nation.

The story of this decision was largely unknown but recently has been resurrected, largely because Dillon's Plantation suddenly became available to the public through actions taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA). This is a historic preservation story that shows how the process works to save special places of American heritage.

Under Section 105 of the National Historic Preservation Act, federal agencies and offices are required

to review historic resources when considering the effects of their actions. On Dec. 28, 2000, the FSA foreclosed on a 470-acre farm in Hinds County, MS. Fulfilling the required review of the property before placing it on the market to sell, the FSA contacted the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO notified the FSA that the property was associated with an important Civil War action and was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

This coincided with a Congressional authorization to the National Park Service (NPS) in November 2000 of a study on how to better preserve Civil War battlefields along the Vicksburg Campaign Trail, considered of national significance to the history of the United States. The Vicksburg National Military Park investigated the site of Dillon's Plantation and reported that since the area today appears much as it did in 1863, "preservation of the site is crucial to the establishment of the Vicksburg Campaign Trail."

As a result, on Jan. 9, 2003, the FSA transferred the property to the Natchez Trace Parkway, part of the

Natchez Trace Parkway, part of the National Park Service. The property will now be surveyed and researched by archeologists and other experts. Educational exhibits and markers will be prepared to interpret the events surrounding the decision that played a part in ending the Civil War – and preserving the United States of America.

The key battlefields for both of these places are preserved and interpreted by the NPS. ☺

#### Web Resources:

Gettysburg: [www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm)  
www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/gettaw/  
Vicksburg: [www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm)



**Background:** In 2003 FSA transferred 460 acres of FSA Farm Loan foreclosed property to the Natchez Trace Parkway, part of the National Parks Service.

Farm Loan Specialist Paul Hardin played a significant role in the entire process. SED Mickey Black is pictured above signing the transfer.



## MS FSA FARM YOUTH LOANS:

**"Planting the seeds today for tomorrow's future farmers."**

FSA makes loans to individual rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and similar organizations.

Each project must be part of an organized and supervised program of work. The project must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience.

Each year, many young entrepreneurs take advantage of these loans and gain valuable business experience in the process. Two of our sharpest **Farm Loan Officers, Jeff Boyd and Russ Clanton**, have helped two of Mississippi's youth succeed and prepare for their future.

### **KODY MILLER - District IV**

At this year's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, records were broken!

The grand champion steer, exhibited by **Kody** and **Kash Miller**, of Mize FFA, tied the previous record of \$17 per pound, but because of the size, the buyers paid a record total of **\$22,916** for the steer!

The buyers included Governor & Mrs. Haley Barbour, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Mississippi and Ergon.

This accomplishment is special to **Smith County Farm Loan Officer Thomas Boyd**. He made Kody an **FSA Youth Operational Loan** which enabled Kody to succeed!

Congratulations Kody from FSA!

### **CODY MILLS - DISTRICT II**

Cody Mills of Starkville, Mississippi has been competing in roping contests since he was eight years old. Now a teen, Cody competes in team roping and tie down calf roping in the MS High School Rodeo Association and the United States Team Roping Championships.

Cody cares for 27 cattle, six horses, two goats and the family dogs.

Cody will proudly share that he received an **FSA Youth Operational Loan** from **Oktibbeha County Farm Loan Officer Russ Clanton** to increase his cattle head. Cody uses the calves for training and in competitions. Once the calves get older, they are placed on the market.

Congratulations Cody on being one of the top calf-ropers in the state of Mississippi from FSA!

*Number of Direct Farm Operating Loans Made in MS as of 5/13/07:*

#### **MS Farm Loan Accomplishments for FY 2006:**

- \$27.6 Million Made in Farm Operating Loans
- \$15.4 Million Made in Farm Ownership Loans
- \$5,968,000 Made to Socially Disadvantaged Applicants
- \$15,232,000 Made to Beginning Farmers



Cody Mills-Photo taken by Earl Descant

# MADISON COUNTY USDA EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN WLBT & PANTENE'S BEAUTIFUL LENGTHS CAMPAIGN

Pantene Beautiful Lengths was created to support and encourage women who have lost their hair during cancer treatment. Chief Meteorologist Barbie Bassett and Reporter Stephanie Bell-Flynt of WLBT TV-3 in Jackson teamed with Pantene to promote the campaign in Mississippi to assist cancer patients. **Madison County Program Technicians Allison Coulton** and **Amy Moore** joined the other ladies in the Madison County Service Center to grow their hair to a minimum of 8" long. **Celia Miller** with Madison County Soil & Water Commission got the ladies of the Service Center started. I caught up with the Celia recently:

*"Another clerk in Simpson County, Edith Wallace, has a sister who has cancer. And I guess you just have to know them, they're both a couple of true "southern belles". Well, it was just extra hard for Ms. Ann to actually find a wig that matched and looked good. So that inspired me to participate in the campaign. Plus I thought it would be fun if all of us did it, so we started back in November. It's been as fun as it worthwhile, especially with all of us doing it together."*

Both Miller and Moore have filmed commercials for the campaign. The hair cutting date was May 16<sup>th</sup>. Here are a few photos from the campaign. All the ladies didn't make the final cut, as they did not have the required 8". But Allison Coulton of FSA and Penny Douglas of Rural Development had 8" & 9" respectively to donate.



L to R: Allison Coulton, FSA/Celia Miller, S&W Commission, /Amy Moore, FSA/ Libby Pierce, OCIO. Not pictured: Penny Douglas, RD



Allison BEFORE....



Penny AFTER...holding her hair in her hands



Stylist measuring Allison's hair with an FSA RULER (Yeah, that's Outreach! We left the ruler with the salon!)



The morning after...

# RANKIN COUNTY COMMITTEE TOURS PINEY WOODS COUNTRY LIFE SCHOOL

When members of the Rankin County FSA County Committee met for their May COC Meeting, they discussed and learned more than the routine "program talk". They learned about how one man single handedly formed the largest of four historically black boarding schools in the United States located right there in their county.

Piney Woods School was founded in 1909 by Dr. Laurence Jones. It is located in a rural area 21 miles south of Jackson, MS, and sits on 2,000 wooded acres, including a 500-acre working farm and woodlands.

COC Advisor Lee Foote is an alumnus of Piney Woods and arranged the tour for the committee.

The Piney Woods School was born when, one day deep in the Mississippi woods, Jones agreed to teach a half-grown, bare-foot boy to read. The next day the young boy not only arrived eagerly for his second lesson, but also brought along with him two friends. Jones welcomed the newcomers and began the day's lesson by singing *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*. Thus The Piney Woods School was born.

In 1954, Dr. Jones appeared on a coast-to-coast program, *This Is Your Life*. Dr. Jones was in Hollywood as the guest of the local Rotary Club. The Rotarians took Dr. Jones to the studio without telling him he was to be Ralph Edwards's special guest that day. During the show, Mr. Edwards asked each American to send in one dollar to The Piney Woods School. The result was \$700,000 which established an endowment fund.

The school has a 500 acre farm in which students have the opportunity to work with cattle, horses, goats, and pigs.

Personally, I always thought the school was for "troubled" or "unruly" kids. That is the far from being true. Piney Woods is a school of EXTREME excellence. I was moved by the rich history and the diverse group of impressive supporters. From the late Joan Crawford, Charles Schultz, Coretta Scott King, Earvin Magic Johnson, to Oprah Winfrey, who recently started her own school in South Africa inspired by Piney Woods concept here in Mississippi.

Piney Woods is NOT what you thought it was. Stop by for a tour and I promise you will leave impressed and proud to be a Mississippian!



Piney Woods Ag Services Manager Lisa Blackwell, COC Chair Tommy Rhodes, CED Casaundra McCullough, Vice-Chairman Compere, and Advisor Lee Foote pose at the School's Farm.



The Rock Garden on campus is the site of many private weddings.



Female Dormitory named after supporter, the late Charles Schultz - creator of Snoopy. His widow and family continue to financially support the school with annual donations.



## .....ASK THE SED



*Dear SED,*

*What's a typical day like for you; the duties, concerns, reports, etc?*

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When Latrice informed me I had a question to answer for The Focus newsletter, my answer was very short and to the point; but after careful consideration and much experience I decided to give a long response.

I don't believe anyone can anticipate what is in store for them, or be adequately prepared for the challenges they will face when one accepts the job as an SED. As an SED you walk a tight rope trying to please as many people as possible on a daily basis. As we all know, the difficult decisions that are sometimes made cannot please everyone concerned.

As a Presidential appointee, I am committed to uphold the rules, regulations and laws that are passed down to us from Congress and follow our administration's lead on all issues. If as an SED you do not understand this from the start, you must have your head in the sand?!

I am responsible for our programs and loan activities and the payments and loans that go with our programs statewide. This is the very reason I have tried to know each and everyone that works for FSA in the state. I have the utmost confidence in our employees and truly appreciate the great job you do for FSA and the farmers of MS. This is the reason I can sleep at night. I rate you as the best in FSA and will defend you to the end.

As an SED I try to look at the big picture, what's best for MS FSA as a whole. We all protect our turf and sometimes the decisions made here in the STO are not what one might like or want on a local basis.

I have a great STO staff. They assist me on personnel, program and loan activities, but sometimes it comes down to the SED to make a final call and that's when the buck stops.

Our outreach efforts have greatly expanded to reach more participants, but we need to keep working to do a better job. We're doing a better job of letting people know what FSA is and what's available to them.

Budgets for most federal agencies have been reduced to some degree over the last three years. This has been a challenge to us and has been reflected in our FTE ceiling and temporary employee allotments. Since salaries and related expense consumes the lion's share of our allotment, other expenses are tracked closely to assure we stay within budget constraints. I make it a priority to know all personnel actions and movements on a weekly basis.

The week begins with a Monday morning staff conference with my six head specialists. They brief me on the events of the week, reports due, calls received, congressional inquiries, etc. I submit a weekly SED Activity report which shows the activities and hot issues affecting Mississippi. Several times a week we receive an FSA Legislative Update which is both informing and interesting. I receive a White House Update daily that details the President's activities for the day regarding his travel, appearances made to various groups and subjects of speeches to be delivered that day.

This year I am head of the FAC (Food and Ag Council) which meets quarterly and is comprised of all the USDA Agencies and Extension Services. I am permanent chairman of the State Emergency Board.

I enjoy traveling to various functions speaking about and representing the Agency. It allows me the opportunity to meet producers from all over the state and hear what's going on in their counties. In my travels as SED, I have had the pleasure of meeting people nationwide, from the President to the producer. My job is both challenging and rewarding. Some days may be a bit more hectic than others, but at the end of the day, I know we have accomplished our mission - to serve the farmers of Mississippi.

**-MLB**

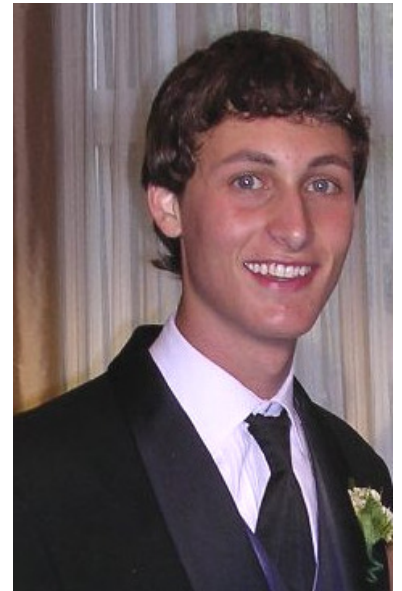
# THE STATE OFFICE KIDS.....

If you thought the baby boom was the early 90's, then you must not have been **around here** in the late 80's! The State Office proudly announces **8** graduations of **OUR** achievers! We couldn't be prouder!!!

## Administration Division - 4

Andrew Brown will graduate with honors from St. Joseph Catholic High School in Madison on Wednesday, May 23, 2007. He obtained a 3.8 high school average and scored 31 on the ACT. Among other scholarship offers from several Mississippi universities, Andrew was awarded the Presidential Scholarship to attend the University of Southern Mississippi, Alma Mater of both his mother (1982) and grandfather (1956). **GO GOLD!** The Presidential Scholarship is a full 4-year scholarship. Andrew plans to major in Biology with an emphasis in Dentistry and obtain a minor in Spanish. Upon completion of his undergraduate degree, he hopes to attend the University Medical Center's School of Dentistry.

(Susan and Norman Brown)



Briejana Asha Tate  
Murrah High School  
Jackson, MS  
May 30, 2007  
Plans to attend Rust College,  
Holly Springs, MS

**(Brenda Jackson)**



Kenneth R. Jordan is graduating from Brandon High School. Kenneth will attend Hinds Jr. College for two years and then on to Mississippi State University to pursue in a career as a Game Warden.

**(Jean and Bill Jordan)**

Marcus Norwood will graduate from Provine High School in Jackson, MS on May 30, 2007 at the MS Coliseum. Marcus has received a scholarship to attend Jackson State University.

**(Rev. Anthony & Judy Norwood)**

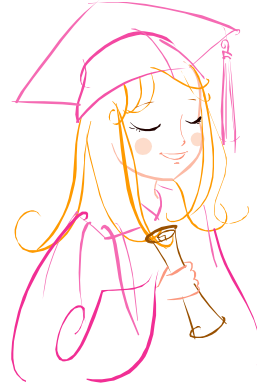


## Farm Loan Division - 3



Heather Johnson will graduate from Pearl High School on May 19, 2007. Commencement exercises will be held at Thalia Mara Hall in Jackson, MS.

**(Paula J. Williamson)**



### Not pictured:

Elizabeth Cole  
Jackson Prep  
Graduation: May 24, 2007  
**(Charles & Frances Cole)**

Kristin Saxon  
West Jones High  
Graduation: May 18, 2007  
**(Randy & Sandy Saxon)**

## Production Adjustment Division - 1



Rob Tadlock will graduate from Clinton High School on May 25, 2007 at the Mississippi College Coliseum.

**(Sid and Patty Tadlock)**

## STATE OFFICE NEWS:

### NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.....BUT STILL "OUR" ACHIEVERS



Victoria Norwood will graduate in the Top 10 of her 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class at Hardy Middle School. An honor student, Victoria was selected as cheerleader at Provine High School next year.

**(Rev. Anthony & Judy Norwood)**

Millicent Bradleigh Kennedy has been accepted to attend Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) in Brookhaven, MS during her junior and senior years of high school. With her love for painting and her extremely creative spirit, she will enter the Visual Arts discipline.

As stated in Millicent's essay, "The Arts are of major importance in my life. Through visual arts, I can let loose and express anything from a child's smile to a deep secret. For my entire life, art has been my cornerstone and my source of freedom. From the feel of pastels on my fingers to the finished piece, I love every aspect of visual art and can truly say it is the most important thing in my life. Art sets me free and I know it's what I want to do for the rest of my life.



MSA's mission is to provide a challenging arts education for artistically gifted Mississippi students in a residential learning environment that promotes honor, integrity, service and life-long learning. Her family and friends are excited about this exciting learning opportunity for Millicent, and know that her talents will be challenged as she grows. We look forward to observing her accomplishments.

**(Clara Kennedy)**



Joseph Short just completed his freshman year at Mississippi State University where he is ranked in the upper 15% of the freshman class. He is majoring in International Business and Chinese. He was recently awarded the E. Anthony Thomas Scholarship for undergraduates in the College of Business and Industry at MSU.

**(Monica & David Short)**

## Employee News from the counties....

*"Is there a doctor or a nurse in the house? YES!!"*  
**POST COLLEGE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Rankin County **CED Casaundra McCullough** has plenty to smile about these days. Daughter Kimberly will be hooded on Ford Field Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> outside of Detroit, MI. She is graduating from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit at the Fox Theater on Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>.

She will complete her Anesthesiology Residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, MI from 2007-2011.



All of Casaundra's girls pictured in Jamaica where they took mom for her birthday. Kabah, Kimberly and Carla.



Laci Brasher, daughter of **Yalobusha County PT, Luanne Brooks**, will graduate from nursing school May 19th, 2007.

Laci has worked harder at becoming an RN than anything I've ever seen her work toward! The RN Nursing Program is strenuous, to say the least. I'm not sure I would have made it through another semester!!! I couldn't even help her study - which isn't saying much, Laci had to take over helping her brothers study when they were in the fourth and fifth grades!!! I know some stuff; it just ain't the right stuff!! I just wanted to share this with all of you because it is definitely one of MY biggest accomplishments!!! Congratulations, Laci, you did it.

Shown in the picture with Laci is her five year old daughter, MY GRANDAUGHTER, Tyler Elaine Brasher!! She will be graduating pre-school on the same day that her mom graduates Nursing School!!! Laci's graduation is at 2:00 on Saturday, May 19th and Tyler's graduation is at 6:00 that night!!!! Y'all think I'm proud, or what?????

- Luanne





## COUNTY NEWS: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

**Sheila Jones, Simpson County PT**, *thinks* she's getting OLD!! She has a Senior! Kecia Jones is an honor student at Mendenhall High School and will graduate on Thursday, May 17, 2007. She has been in the band for 7 years and was the 2006 Drum Major for Mendenhall High School Band. She won two superior ratings as drum major and also won "Best Drum



Major" in her class (competing against 10 other drum majors) at the Copiah Marching Festival. Kecia also participated in 4-H, Drama Club, Spanish Club and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She won the English IV academic award and "Most Dependable". She also was selected as a member of Who's Who Among American High School Students. She received a "Future Leaders of Simpson County" scholarship and an ACT scholarship. Her plans are to attend Copiah Lincoln Community College in Simpson County and major in nursing. Sheila and her husband, David, are so proud of Kecia that they gave her a 2007 Chevrolet Equinox for graduation!



Sheila and family are pictured above.

**Coahoma Farm Loan PT Pam Vance** shares her daughter's accomplishments: Jasmine Whitley Nolan is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tracy A. Vance of Friars Point, MS and she is Valedictorian of the 2007 graduating class at Coahoma Agricultural High School.

Jasmine is a member of First Community Church in Dubbs, MS; co-captain to the Cheerleaders and recognizes her church, school and community as top priorities. She participates in several clubs, organizations, community and school-based education programs. She donates her talents, skills, dedication and works diligently to help with community programs and services.

Most distinguishing is that Jasmine is the reigning 2007 Miss Coahoma Agricultural High School. She is an honor student and the recipient of numerous outstanding honors, recognition and service awards. In honor of Jasmine's academic achievement,

leadership, abilities and dedication she received an all-expense paid vacation to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and other neighboring cities (New York, Washington, D.C., etc) from Dr. Steven Blake, M.D., Blake Gastroenterology Associates, LLC; inducted into the National Youth Leadership Forum for Medicine; nominated Who's Who Among American High School Students; inducted in The National Society of High School Scholars; honored at the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), Mississippi Leadership Seminar at Millsap College in Jackson, MS; honored at the University Familiarization Program for Minorities in Engineering at Mississippi State University; and honored by the Coahoma County, Clarksdale Exchange.

Jasmine is a 2005 graduate of Youth Leadership Clarksdale and a member of BETA, CAHS Advisory Committee, CURET, Debutante, FBLA, Friars Point Youth Community Organization, Frontline, Reading, Science, TATU and TRIO as well as many other clubs and organizations.

For strong leadership, community service, academic achievements, including highest honors of her graduating class, Jasmine is recognized as one of the 1,000 recipients of the Gates Millennium Scholars for the GMS Class of 2007, which is renewable to continue funding her education through the masters and doctoral levels. She is also the recipient of the Sam Walton Community Scholarship; the Coahoma Community College Valedictorian Scholarship; the Coahoma Community College Leadership SGA Scholarship; the Friars Point Community Scholarship; the Omega Psi Phi Scholarship; the Blake Valedictorian Scholarship; and has been selected to be honored as a Delta Honor Graduate at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Delta Council Meeting with guest speaker, Lt. Governor, Amy Tuck.



**Bolivar County PT Shirley Green** is beaming with pride these days. Oldest daughter, Dominique is graduating from Cleveland High this year and has received a Band scholarship from Delta State to attend there this fall.

## MORE NEWS.....



Congratulations to Colby Evans of Quitman who made his first hole-in-one at the Quitman Country Club on March 25, 2007. The hole-in-one was made on Hole #5 which is the longest Par 3 on the course.

Colby, 11 years old, is the son of Mike and Sheri Evans. **Sheri** is a **PT** in the **Clarke County Office**.

Pictured on the right are Dawn Adcock and daughter, Lacey Rae. Dawn is the daughter of **DD Assistant Brenda McDaniel**. The photo was taken at the 2007 Jr. Auxiliary Charity Ball, held in the Kosciusko Coliseum every January. Dawn served as chairperson of the Children's Royal Court and Lacey Rae was a member of the Royal Court. This is a fund raiser for the "Needy Children of Attala County" and over \$30,000 was raised at this event alone. The Junior Auxiliary has several events throughout the year that benefit all children of the County. Dawn won the Servant hood Award in 2006 for her outstanding service to the children of Attala County.



### FUTURE FARMER:

HUNTER WILSON,  
Grandson of Lincoln County PT  
BETH WILSON



**Claiborne County PT Amelia Carpenter:**

Pictured with me are my daughter Lauren C. Willis and our good friend from here now living in D.C., Virginia Gage. Virginia dates a young man that works in the West Wing of the White House. We had the privilege of a tour he took us on of the West Wing. These tours are only given to people who know someone that works in the west wing. We were able to stand at the door and look in your could see all the Bush family pictures etc. We also got to see the offices and the White House Mess (which is managed by the U.S. Navy), the outside of the Situation Room, the Rose Garden (where the picture is taken with the oval office door behind us). We toured all the monuments, the Capitol, most of the museums, Library of Congress, Supreme Court etc. but I think our West Wing tour was the highlight!

Virginia works at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in D.C.

- *Amelia*



**Rankin County CED Casaundra McCullough** recently turned the Big 5-0! As a birthday present, her 3 daughters took her to Jamaica!

Casaundra had a wonderful time and is looking forward to her next trip!



In March, I accompanied a missionary friend, Thomas Slawson, to St. Petersburg on a trip to pave the way for a move this July with his wife and child for two years of language study. God was indeed good to us in our travels over and back and in helping him map out his preparations. We flew to Moscow where we visited Red Square area and saw a McDonald's loaded with Russian teenagers. We should have eaten the relatively cheap burger and fries but decided to try the Russian cuisine for our first meal in the country. Well we did. For about \$30 I had a bottle of water, large piece of broiled fish and a large serving of hash browns. Thomas has a pretty good handle on Russian; however he misread the sign and didn't realize we were paying by the kilo instead of by the serving. I wondered why the server gave me such a large piece of fish and more potatoes than I could eat in a week. We then took an overnight train to St. Petersburg. The two of us had a nice relatively new 4 person sleeper car by ourselves and got a good night's rest. After several days of taking care of business we were able to see many of the ornate cathedrals in St. Petersburg, the summer palace of the Czars and the Peter Paul Fortress. The weather was great but the mid 30's temperatures had melted the snow. The attached picture was taken at one of the twenty odd St. Petersburg's McDonald's. The Big Mac and fries taste the same as they do here. The experience was fantastic and seeing God's hand work in Thomas' plans was very inspirational to my life. - **Jimmy Sullivan Yazoo County CED (pictured on left)**



# MEET FSA'S NEWEST EMPLOYEES!!!



**AMBER WATTS**  
**Farm Loan Officer Trainee**

- Graduate of MSU
- Training in Oktibbeha County
- Originally from Brandon, MS



**RODERICK CURRY**  
**Farm Loan Officer Trainee**

- Graduate of MSU
- Training in Noxubee County
- Originally from Raleigh, MS
- GETTING MARRIED 5/19/2007 in Bay Springs!



Scott pictured on left with George County Staff

## **SCOTT PORTER - George County CED**

- Born in Anderson, Indiana
- Moved to Florida while in Elementary School
- Started Career with ASCS in Santa Rosa County, Florida
- Accepted into COT program in California
- First CED Position in Modesto, CA (Home of former Sec. of Agriculture Ann Veneman)
- Moved to Virginia
- Accepted position in Mississippi; (Has Family in Florida)
- Proud father of six year old Dalton

*Welcome aboard!*

## Job Shadowing

Farm Loan Specialist Alton Walley enjoyed being a mentor for the Petal Middle School last month. Mitchell Carley, 7<sup>th</sup> grader and nephew of Alton, spent the day shadowing his uncle at the Forrest County FSA Office.

Approximately 300 7<sup>th</sup> grade students visited various businesses all over the Pine Belt on April 5. The careers that were shadowed ranged from plumbers to lawyers; military personnel to entrepreneurs; teachers to hairdressers, and financial managers to child care workers. The kids found the day both fun and educational.

Alton is pictured on right with his nephew Mitchell Carley.



## Association News.....

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### **AFGE Local 1031**

- Dawn Allen was appointed Vice President by the Executive Board of AFGE Local 1031. She is filling the expired term of Anthony McCarty who transferred to the Dade County Florida Service Center.
- Semi-annual meeting for AFGE Local 1031 members will be held May 19 in Starkville.
- Be sure to visit the Local's website! Look for the link on the Admin page of the MS FSA Intranet Site.



Photo courtesy of Allison Taylor

### **BIG**

[www.bignet.org](http://www.bignet.org) - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Magnolia Chapter Awards banquet was held April 27, 2007 in Jackson, MS. Members of the Magnolia Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG) pose with guest speaker, J. David Reeves, BIG National First Vice President (seated 2<sup>nd</sup> from the right). Mr. Reeves is the Immediate Past Vice Chairman of the National Board of Directors and is employed as an SES Management Consultant with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington, D.C.

**FSA's Farm Loan Specialist Al Taylor** and **Budget Specialist Dora Mapp-Austin** are Lifetime Members of BIG. **Taylor** currently serves as President of the Magnolia Chapter of BIG. Both employees are pictured in group photo on the left.

# MACOE

Photos courtesy of Brenda Fuquay

## Distinguished Service Awards Presented at MACOE Convention

At the recent 49<sup>th</sup> Annual MACOE Convention held in Vicksburg, MS, two of Mississippi's finest MACOE/NASCOE members were presented NASCOE's Distinguished Service Awards. Award recipients are nominated for their achievements in the various award categories by fellow members.

-Jeanne Monday

### **Nomination for Tony R. Thames – NASCOE DSA "Service to NASCOE"**

Many folks can tell immediately that Tony Thames is "country". If not from his boots, jeans and cowboy hat, there is absolutely no doubt when he starts talking in that slow Southern drawl . . . and he is proud of it! Tony and his wife Sherry reared two sons – Luke and Jake – on their farm in Lawrence County. His whole family appreciates the value of agriculture and knows how important farming is to the world.

Tony started his career with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), now the Farm Service Agency (FSA), in July 1974, when he entered the training program to become a County Executive Director (CED). His first job was in Covington County, Mississippi, where he worked for three years before transferring to Jeff Davis County for a 7-year stint. His final move was in 1984 to Lawrence County, where he continues to serve his agricultural community as FSA CED.

Tony has been an active member of the Mississippi Association of FSA County Office Employees (MACOE) and National Association of FSA County Office Employees (NASCOE) since he started with this agency. He served as a member of the MACOE Board of Directors, MACOE Newsletter Editor, Second Vice President, First Vice President, and President (2001-2002).

By virtue of serving as MACOE First Vice President and President, he also served as the MACOE representative on NASCOE's Board of Directors and as Voting Delegate to the National Conventions.

As a matter of fact, he has attended and participated in six NASCOE Conventions and seven Area Rallies.

When Mississippi hosted the Southeast Area Rally on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Tony assisted with a multitude of tasks to help insure activities were successful and so all members and guests enjoyed themselves. Tony has worked many long hours on numerous committees at MACOE Conventions, such as making arrangements for wonderful entertainers and bands, handling door prizes, hosting receptions, and securing top-notch guest speakers. As a matter of fact, he has missed only two MACOE Conventions since he started with our agency in 1974! How's that for a great record?

One of the most outstanding services Tony has provided for MACOE and NASCOE members is his work with Legislative issues and expressing concerns and ideas to elected officials in Washington, D.C. for our farmers, FSA employees, and the Agency. He has worked diligently to personally establish relationships open to dialogue from the local level to the national level with Mississippi's Congressional delegation and staff. When Tony talks, they know that he knows agriculture and farming, so they listen with respect. That is just one of the reasons that makes him such a valuable asset to MACOE and NASCOE. He has attended 7 NASCOE Legislative Conferences in our Nation's Capitol and plans to participate in the upcoming one in 2007. Considering the fact that to be a representative from a state, one has to be invited to participate (either by the state or national employee association), it certainly speaks well of Tony and his abilities as a legislative delegate.

Even with his devotion to his family members and their interests, his dedication to FSA, his work with his livestock operation and his activities with MACOE/NASCOE, Tony still finds time to volunteer for other community service involvement, as follows:

- currently serves on the Lawrence County School Board;
- currently serves on the Community Water Association Board;
- lifelong member of New Hope Baptist Church;
- active member and past President of the Lawrence County Chapter of the Mississippi State Alumni Association, the Lawrence County Livestock Association, and the Lawrence County Livestock Show Association; and
- member of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, the Mississippi Cattle Improvement Association, the Mississippi Angus Association, the American Angus Association and R-Calf.

Tony is a dedicated member and leader in MACOE and NASCOE with proven outstanding service. He has not only "talked the talk", but he has "walked the walk". His leadership and friendly, knowledgeable, and soft-spoken communication skills have enabled him to establish and maintain good working relationships with diverse groups and individuals, both within FSA and other business-related groups. Having known Tony since 1977, I can think of no other MACOE/NASCOE member who is more deserving of NASCOE's Distinguished Service Award for "Service to NASCOE". Therefore, I proudly submit this nomination.

**Submitted by:** *Yevonne S. Dye, County Executive Director  
Clay County, Mississippi*



## **Nomination for Melissa B. Jordan – NASCOE DSA “Service to FSA-Agriculture”**

It gives me great pleasure to submit the nomination of a most deserving, fellow co-worker for this year’s Distinguished Service Award – Service to FSA-Agriculture. She began her career with ASCS/FSA on August 20, 1979, in Brookhaven, Mississippi and continues to serve FSA and the farmers there. I certainly cannot take credit for hiring her, but after working the last 18 years beside her, I can confirm that throughout her career, she has epitomized the most idealistic attributes that most employers can only wish for and dream about, but that I have been fortunate enough to experience. Through her genuine dedication, she has always been a team player that thrives on meeting new challenges head-on and who, day in and day out, strives to provide the highest level of service to FSA and our farmers in the most professional manner.



In 1986, our agency moved into the computer world. She whole-heartedly accepted this challenge and it quickly became, and still is, the love of her job. She was chosen by the District Director as the point of contact in our district to assist and train other employees on all general computer operations. She was also selected by the State Computer Specialist on numerous occasions to travel and complete computer upgrades on the System 36, AS400, and the migration to the CCE’s. Although IT has taken over many of these activities, she continues to serve as the district point of contact when other counties need some guidance or assistance with handling computer problems.

In 2004, she was selected by a State Office Specialist to attend and receive national training on Payment Eligibility and to come back and conduct numerous training sessions for our employees throughout the State. Since completing this task, she still serves as a point of contact for county offices when assistance is needed that is related to this area.

Most recently, the District Director designated her as the District Purchase Card Management (PCMS) Cardholder. She is responsible for managing the entire supply inventory purchases for all 14 counties in our district. She maintains the files, the spreadsheets of all county allocations, all approved purchase requests, all card purchases, and is responsible for any convenience checks that must be written.

In addition to her computer and other designated state, district, and county responsibilities, she is primarily responsible for all Conservation Programs, including over 165 CRP contracts, taking over 670 ECP applications compliments of Hurricane Katrina, which added a tremendous burden and challenge that she has tackled admirably. She also handles over 175 DCP contracts each year, as well as, Dairy, Reconstitutions, Claims, and of course, she always pitches in to help her fellow employees when needed.

She has been a part of two county office team performance awards in 1981 and 1990, which indicates being a true team player. Since 1996, she has received two QSI’s, two Extra Effort Awards, and four Performance Bonus Awards, which indicates her outstanding service to FSA and to the over 1850 farmers in the two counties she serves.

She has also been an active NASCOE/MACOE member and supporter each year throughout her stellar career. She has served on the MACOE Board of Directors, as a MACOE District Reporter on several occasions, and on numerous MACOE committees.

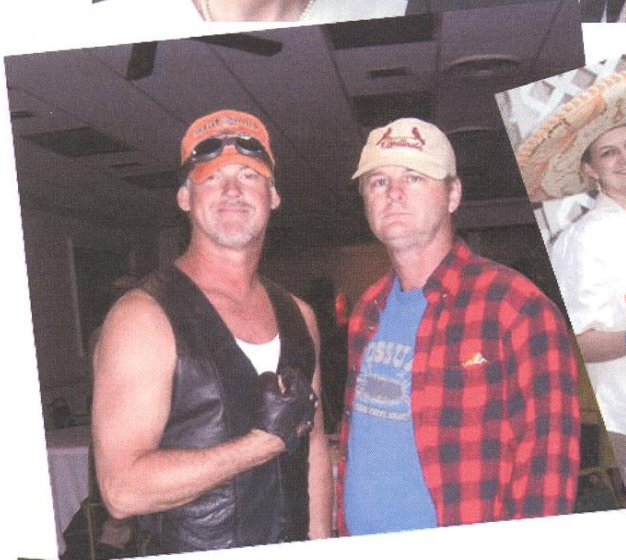
It is quite evident that she is the total ideal employee package – dedication, team player, loves challenges, and takes pride in providing the type of service to FSA and our farmers that is unparalleled. So, without any reservations, I would like to nominate Melissa B. Jordan to receive the Distinguished Service Award – Service to FSA-Agriculture.

*Submitted by: Dwayne Oberschmidt, County Executive Director  
Lincoln/Franklin County, Mississippi*

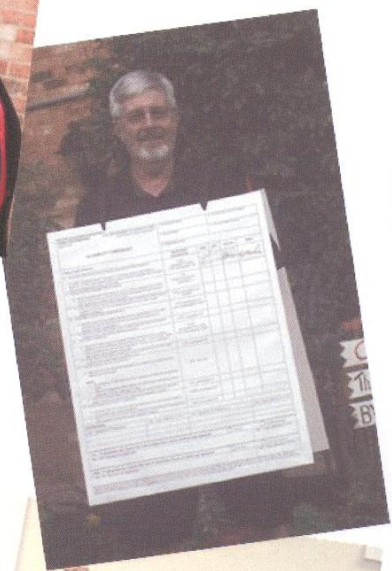
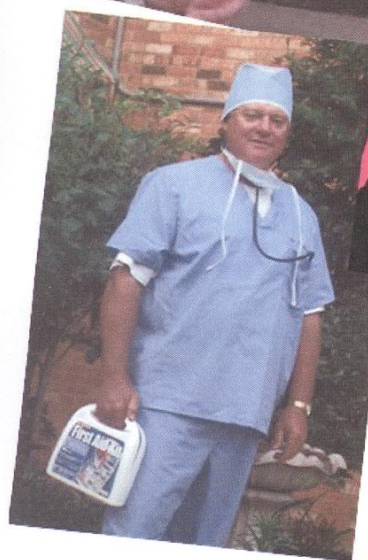
**CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH MS FSA EMPLOYEES FOR  
RECEIVING THESE DISTINGUISHED AWARDS!**

# SCENES FROM THE MACOE 2007 CONVENTION'S COSTUME PARTY

*Photos courtesy of Luanne Brooks*









## Mississippi Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2006

The mission of the Farm Service Agency is to help ensure the well-being of American agriculture. Mississippi FSA employees worked hard to fulfill that mission during fiscal year 2006.

### ***Making Credit Available to Mississippi Producers.***

FSA farm loan programs are an important source of credit to small family farmers unable to obtain credit from conventional sources at reasonable rates and terms.

### **\$43.7 Million Available to Mississippi Producers.**

Mississippi Farm Service Agency county offices approved 497 loans totaling \$43,717,000 to producers. This figure includes:

**\$27.6 Million in Farm Operating Loans.** We processed 456 loans, totaling \$27,665,000 in Direct and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans to help Mississippi producers plant and harvest their crops or reorganize their businesses.

**\$15.4 Million in Farm Ownership Loans.** We processed 31 loans, making \$15,452,000 in credit available to Mississippi producers through the Farm Service Agency's Direct and Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loan programs. The loan funds were used to purchase or improve real estate or reorganize the farm business.

**\$21.2 Million in Special Qualified Loans.** We lent \$5,968,000 to 157 qualified producers under the Socially Disadvantaged Persons Loan Program, and \$15,232,000 to 138 qualified beginning farmers.

### ***Helping Mississippi Producers through Price Support and Farm Programs.***

Farm programs are designed to improve the economic stability and viability of the agriculture sector and to help insure the production of an adequate and reasonably priced supply of food and fiber for American citizens.

**\$395 Million in Farm and Program Support.** Mississippi producers received \$395,060,000 program benefits. Farm and program benefits included:

**\$287 Million in Direct and Counter-cyclical Program Payments.** Producers who enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program received \$287,076,336.

**\$41.5 Million in Conservation Reserve Program Payments.** Conservation Reserve Program is USDA's largest environmental improvement program on private lands. Mississippi producers received a total of \$41,594,066 through: \$37,276,857 in rental payments, \$1,566,010 for cost shares and \$2,751,199 in incentive payments.

**\$25.9 Million Loan Deficiency Payments.** Producers who elected to receive loan deficiency payments in lieu of marketing assistance loans received a total of \$25,906,121.

**\$5.2 Million in Market Loan Gains.** A producer realizes a marketing loan gain if the marketing assistance loan is repaid at less than the loan principle. Mississippi producers received \$5,220,665 in market loan gains in fiscal year 2006.

**\$1.3 Million in Crop Disaster Assistance.** This program helped compensate producers who suffered crop losses due to damaging weather and related conditions. Mississippi producers received a total of \$1,307,211.

**\$161 Thousand for Trade Adjustment Assistance Payments.** This program provides state farmers and fishermen with economic assistance for losses due to imports impacting the market. Producers received a total of \$161,120 in fiscal year 2006.

**\$633,402 in Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Payments.** This program provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yield, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs because of natural disasters.

**\$1,191,167 in Milk Income Loss Payments.** Mississippi dairy operators received payments to help compensate for low milk prices: \$2,057 and \$1,189,110 in MILC II payments.

**\$75,694 in Grassland Reserve Program.** This program paid Mississippi producers for restoring and protecting grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland or other vulnerable grasslands.

**\$26,798,481 in Emergency Conservation Program** payments were paid to Mississippi producers to help restore farmlands that had been damaged by natural disasters.

**\$6 Million in 2005 New Hurricane Disaster Programs:** \$2,120,926 in Livestock Indemnity; \$770,536 for Tree Indemnity and \$1,155,455 for Feed Indemnity and \$2,033,146 for Hurricane Indemnity.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

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# Reminders

**County Committees:** The Farm Service Agency county/area committees are responsible for the administration of Federal farm programs at the local level.

**Committee Nominations Open:** Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) One will be accepted from **June 15 through August 1, 2006**. LAAs are election areas. Elections are held each year to elect or re-elect a member(s) whose term will expire.

**Nomination Forms:** The reverse of this sheet is a nomination form (FSA-669A). All nomination forms must be postmarked or returned to the local FSA Office not later than **August 1, 2006**.

## Remaining 2007 National Special Emphasis Observances

May	Asian American/Pacific Islander Month
September 15-October 15	Hispanic Heritage Month
October	Disability Employment Awareness Month
November	American Indian Heritage Month

**FSAfocus** is a publication of the Mississippi State FSA Office and provides features on the accomplishments of employees and Committee members both on the job and in the communities.

Submit news to:

The Editor: Latrice Hill - Public Relations/Outreach Specialist

[Latrice.hill@ms.usda.gov](mailto:Latrice.hill@ms.usda.gov)

Publication dates: June/October/January

