

**ENTERPRISE & COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**  
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 AND CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL TRAINING & TECHNOLOGY

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**Bost Extension Center  
 Mississippi State University**

*For more information contact:*

**Enterprise & Community  
 Resource Development**

[msucares.com/departments/ecrd](http://msucares.com/departments/ecrd)

*Or divisions within E&CRD*

**Center for Governmental Training & Technology**  
 Phone: 662-325-3141

**Community Resource Development**  
 Phone: 662-325-3144

**Food & Fiber Center**  
 Phone: 662-325-2160

**New Oktibbeha County Leadership Initiative Underway**



*Working in small groups builds teamwork and provides a comfortable environment for learning and sharing.*

The Community Resource Development Department of Mississippi State University Extension Service is coordinating a newly formed leadership initiative sponsored by the Greater Starkville Development Partnership and designed for the residents of Oktibbeha County. The resident expertise and resources of the University were major reasons why this unit was selected by the steering committee as the program coordinator.

The Oktibbeha County Leadership Program began in September and will meet monthly through June 2005. This program promises to be a comprehensive, interactive experience designed for minimal lecture and maximum dialogue, discussion, and application for its 25 participants. Foundational leadership principles serve as a basis for this effort while several other topics and tours are incorporated into the sessions. Community development, economic development, government, and communication components encourage a complete and balanced leadership program that will stimulate dynamic, outside-the-box thinking and community action.

This initiative's approach provides diverse, emerging leaders with the knowledge and tools that equip them to focus on talents, skills, and resources of the area to evoke positive community change. Through individual and team projects, class members will play an important role in the future success of Oktibbeha County.

**eBay Selling Online Workshop**

A hands-on "eBay Selling Online Workshop" was conducted at the Rankin County Extension Office on August 5. Eighteen people completed the daylong workshop that taught them how to make additional income by selling items on eBay. The workshop took participants step-by-step through the process of listing items for sale on the Internet's largest auction website. According to eBay, there are more than 430,000 sellers on eBay.com selling goods and services full-time or part-time. The items listed in the workshop sold from \$13.00 for a videotape to over \$167 for a global positioning system.



## Local Entrepreneur Secures Funding to Provide Needed Childcare

Childcare continues to be a problem in Mississippi and the nation. Many reports suggest that finding quality childcare is a serious problem for young families today. Nowhere is this problem more acute than in Noxubee County, Mississippi. Noxubee is a rural county, with declining population and economic conditions. In this county, the loss of any employment, no matter how small and what type of jobs, is significant.

When parents and employees of a local day care center learned the facility would close, this created stress and anxiety for those involved and indirectly for local merchants as well. Soon, there would be 10 more people unemployed in the county. However, a local entrepreneur and former day care director, decided to do something about this situation. She decided to reopen the center under new management.



**New Daycare facility reduces unemployment by 10 jobs and provides more than 60 parents with quality child care services for their children.**

The local entrepreneur contacted the Extension Service for help. A Specialist from the Community Resource Development Department and the local Extension office met with the entrepreneur and a Bank official to outline a series of short and long-run action steps. The Extension team evaluated different options for addressing address this issue. Those were: to build a new facility or identify an existing building that would meet the state childcare licensure standards. Second, after inventorying available buildings in Macon and Noxubee County, the team decided on the old USDA Farmers' Home office building. This building was for sale at a cost of \$85,000. Third, the team and a contractor surveyed the build to assess conditions, repairs, and changes needed to comply with state childcare standards. Specifically, Extension assessed the feasibility of this business idea; prepared a business plan and meet with bank officials about financing the project; and revised financial projections based on recommendations from the local bank. Because of this public-private partnership, the local entrepreneur secured \$125,000 to purchase the building and start a day care center which opened on September 26. Local unemployment was reduced as 10 jobs were created and more than 60 parents now have quality child care services for their children.

## Bioterrorism Seminar and Workshop Conducted

The Governor's Homeland Security Council conducted a bioterrorism seminar and workshop December 1 in Jackson, which was attended by representatives from 21 state and federal agencies, conducted by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, and coordinated by the Center for Governmental Training and Technology (CGT).

This was the third session for the Governor's Homeland Security Council, which meets at least every six months to review state plans for prevention, preparedness and response to a weapons of mass destruction event. P.C. (Mac) McLaurin, Jr., Leader of the Center for Governmental Training and Technology said, "This event helped make our state as ready as possible to respond to circumstances we hope never will occur. But, if the unthinkable happens, this and other training opportunities like it will help the state be prepared to respond and recover."

Gov. Haley Barbour chaired the session and discussions focused on existing technology and training for health care and emergency responders to detect and appropriately respond to a bioterrorism incident on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and how the state would implement its comprehensive plan of incident management. Also in the field of emergency management recently, The Center for Governmental Training and Technology staff members finished, in November the first round of incident management training in all 82 counties and for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Another round of incident management training will be conducted by the Center for Governmental Training and Technology and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security in the coming months. Incident management training and the utilization of a unified command of incident management under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is required for state and local governments to continue to receive federal funding for emergency management and other programs. The CGT conducted a workshop for county board of supervisor attorneys this summer to explain the new regulations. The Center for Governmental Training and Technology is also working with Regional Response Teams across the state that would be utilized in a weapons for mass destruction incident. Training sessions

## e-Commerce “Electronic Retailing: Selling on the Internet” Conferences

There's no doubt about it. The way we buy and sell consumer goods is changing — and it's changing quickly! The reason for change can be explained with one word, Internet. Electronic retailing, or e-tailing, is booming. While the traditional ways of doing business should not be totally abandoned, given current trends and predictions, it is essential that businesses embrace the Internet as a vehicle for sales. Day long conferences were held in



*Dr. Beth Duncan shares with the participants about “Web Site Design”.*

Greenwood, Starkville, and Brandon in late October and early November to educate existing businesses and new business start-ups about electronic selling on the Internet. A total of 111 people participated in the conferences. Mississippi State University Extension Service received funds from USDA and the Southern Rural Development Center to develop and implement e-commerce educational programs targeting small businesses in rural areas.

This project began in 2000 and to date over 600 Mississippi small businesses have completed the educational program.



*Patrick Colley talks about “Building a Web Store”.*

## Promoting Central Farmer's Market

In July and August the Food and Fiber Center (FFC) coordinated five sessions around Mississippi to help the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) promote the new State owned and operated Farmer's Market facility. Three information sessions were conducted in Yazoo City, Gallman, and Brandon in July followed by two August sessions in Jackson and Hattiesburg. The meetings provided information about organizational and operating requirements for the new Central Farmer's Market. Survey results from a farm market consumer interest survey conducted last fall by FFC were shared with attendees. Mississippi producers and potential producers interested in providing fresh grown Mississippi horticulture products for sell at the new Farmer's Market should benefit from the new location. Over 20,000 vehicles pass the new site daily. The new market is scheduled to open in the spring of 2005 at the intersection of Jefferson Street and High Street in Jackson just north of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds. Anyone interested in marketing product through the market should contact Patrick Sullivan, Bureau Director, Market Development Division (601) 359-1158 or Jake Hutchins, Manager Farmers Central Market. (601) 354-6818 MDAC.



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## Energy Efficiency Grants Funded

Thirty-nine poultry producers in Mississippi have been chosen to receive Energy Efficiency Improvement grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service, according to Bennie Hutchins, Executive Director, of Southwest Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. A total of \$1.27 million will go to the Mississippi applicants out of \$1.8 million funded nationwide.

Grant funds will be used to pay up to 25 percent of the cost of improvements to existing poultry houses that will result in reduced amounts of energy required per unit of production. It is expected that the growers will experience an average savings of over 23 percent in annual energy costs. The projected energy savings coupled with increases in production efficiency will result in a project pay-back period of just under three years.

Assisting with the development of grant applications were Leslie Threadgil, Mississippi Poultry Association; Dr. Berry Lott, MSU Extension Service/Poultry Science Department; Dr. Ken Hood, MSU Extension Service/Food and Fiber Center; and Donald Thompson, Staff Engineer for Mississippi Development Authority.

# Mississippi State UNIVERSITY Extension SERVICE

Enterprise & Community  
Resource Development  
Box 9642  
Mississippi State, MS 39762

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## Food as a Business Conference

Each year more Mississippians create and manufacture new food products that are sold throughout the world. A day-long conference was held at the MSU Meridian Campus on November 17. Participants were able to experience firsthand what is required to get started in a food manufacturing or wholesale distribution business. Experts in the food business presented information focusing on customer and retailer relations, legal issues, labeling, marketing, sales, profits and costs. The day ended with a question and answer session where participants had the opportunity to seek one on one advice from the experts. This conference was sponsored by several agencies; East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi State University Meridian Campus Business Services, Meridian Community College Community & Business Development Department, and Meridian Community College Webb Hall. Twenty-one people attended the conference.



### Change of Contact Information:

Dr. Anna Hood has moved from the Food and Fiber Center to the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion. She will maintain her working relationship with the Food and Fiber Center and continue to provide the same services. Please change your records to reflect the updated information: Dr. Anna Hood, Associate Extension Professor, Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion, Box 9805, Mississippi State, MS, Phone: 662-325-3200, Fax: 662-325-8728, E-mail: [annah@ext.msstate.edu](mailto:annah@ext.msstate.edu).