

# from the **DIRECTOR**



Mississippi, like every state, has specific geographic boundaries that define its location. Contained within those boundaries are its natural resources: rivers and streams; hills and valleys; forests and beaches. None of these, however, is as important in defining what Mississippi is as its people.

The majority of MAFES research is focused on the state's natural resources, but its goal is to benefit Mississippians—all 2.8 million of us.

This issue of MAFES Highlights has reports on some of the projects that have a direct impact on people.

Dr. Linda Southward and other MAFES personnel at Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center are teaming with health care professionals to find ways to better reach some of our youngest citizens with basic health services.

At the South Mississippi Branch, Dr. Patricia Knight is leading research in support of the individuals who work in the state's multimillion dollar commercial nursery industry, as well as the homeowners who benefit from the availability of landscaping plants and fruit trees adapted to their region.

Hunting and fishing are important recreational activities in Mississippi, and research is under way that will benefit those who participate in these sports and the landowners who depend on them for a portion of their income. One such MAFES-supported project is evaluating practices Delta rice farmers can use to attract more ducks and other overwintering waterfowl to their fields.

MAFES scientists on the Starkville campus and at every branch station are continually involved in projects that support the farmers who produce the food and fiber we all depend on. The latest recipient of the MAFES Researcher of the Year Award, Dr. Lou D'Abramo, is one of those individuals and you can learn more about him on page 23.

This issue also contains a report on a project that's preserving the record of our rural heritage. The Consortium for the History of Agricultural and Rural Mississippi, or CHARM, is a cooperative effort of the Mississippi State University Libraries, the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, and others to collect, catalog, and make available for research materials related to the state's rural history.

Whether it's applying the latest technology to today's needs or helping preserve a record of where we've been, MAFES personnel are working to make life better for all of us.

*Vance H. Watson*

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Director

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## MAFES RESEARCH **HIGHLIGHTS**

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