

National Legislation

Will Name Horticulture Lab



Dan Batson, owner of Greenforest Nursery in Perkinston, was one of the speakers during groundbreaking ceremonies for the horticulture laboratory complex at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station.

By Bob Ratliff

A new horticulture complex in Poplarville will bear the name of the current chairman of the U.S. Senate's Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, pending congressional approval.

Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss., has introduced a bill, H.R. 3372, in the U.S. House of Representatives calling for the facility to be named the Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory. Cochran, R-Miss., is serving his fifth term in the U.S. Senate.

Mississippi's other congressmen, Chip Pickering, Bennie Thompson and Roger Wicker, are cosponsors of the bill.

The 30,000-square-foot horticultural laboratory complex is on the grounds of the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station. The facility will house research laboratories and offices for U.S. Department of Agriculture and Mississippi State University personnel. The laboratories will be used for ornamental horticulture and small fruit research.

"Sen. Cochran recognizes the importance of the horticulture industry for south Mississippi," Taylor said. "The research done here will help that industry continue to grow, creating more jobs."

The \$10 million complex will be the only major horticultural research facility on the Interstate 10 corridor between Florida and California, said Vance Watson, MAFES director and vice president of MSU's Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine.

"Mississippi has the nation's best federal/state partnership for research and other support for agriculture," he said. "The decision to build this important research facility in Poplarville is evidence of the strength of that partnership. The work done here will benefit horticulture from Texas to South Carolina and well beyond."

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