

Grants Ferry completes first section

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ERA students added to National Honor Society

See page 14

NEWS Pelahatchie

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Pelahatchie, MS

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Pelahatchie News
P.O. Box 771
Pelahatchie, MS 39145

PES nurse is also a champion competition dancer

By Susie A. Wolfe

Trish Drake, the nurse at Pelahatchie Elementary for 16 years, is also a competitive ballroom and country western dancer. As an amateur, with her professional partner, she placed fifth in the Pro-Am Crystal at the United Country Western Dance Council World Championships in January in Nashville. They were also the 2015 American Country Dance Association Advanced Champions in two divisions and placed second in both divisions in 2016.

Drake said that dancing is good exercise. "For someone that wears scrubs all day, it is fun to dress up."

She has participated in ballroom and country western dancing for six years, which she said comes naturally to her. She typically practices once a week for about two hours. Since there are few social venues where one can dance in Jackson, the lessons and competitions are primarily where she can enjoy her hobby.

A member of several dance organi-

zations, Drake is an advanced student who dances in two age divisions in Pro-Am with her instructor, Mike Spencer. She attends competitions in areas such as Atlanta, Houston, Orlando and New Orleans, dancing a total of 16 dances including Waltz, Two-Step, Cha and Swing. She said her favorite dances are the smooth dances.

Drake said that dancing is a good hobby. "It is good clean family fun for every age, from 8 years old to 80 years old. There is a skill level and age level for everyone."



Special to Pelahatchie News

Drake and partner, Mike Spencer, placed in two national championships in 2016.

Business Spotlight: EZ Wheels is one of top Kubota dealers in the country

By Susie A. Wolfe

In 2016, EZ Wheels was named seventeenth in the country in Kubota sales in the one-store category. According to J.J. Risher, manager, they started selling Kubota tractors in 1981. They also sell Bush Hog and Land Pride implements, cutters, box blades, tillers, seed spreaders, discs and more.

EZ Wheels was founded in 1979 by Billy Don and Billie Baker, who originally wanted to only sell used cars. Mrs. Baker-Risher still owns the dealership 36 years later.

The shop, on Highway 43 in Pelahatchie, carries a wide variety of Kubota products, including B and BX tractors, small sub compact 25hp tractors or mowers; L series tractors, ranging from 29hp to 44hp; M series tractors, rang-



Photo by Pelahatchie News

EZ Wheels is holding their Spring Sales Event in March. Pictured (l to r) are: Tommy (Bo) Holmes, JJ Risher, Randy While and Jessica Sledge, office manager. Not shown is Ricky Baker.

ing from 50hp to 100hp, for heavy bush hogging, farming, and chicken houses; and Kubota RTVs, both gas and diesel. They also carry Zero Turn mowers, from small residential to large diesel models.

Their Spring Sales event will be in March. They will showcase new models and have special financing available.

"Year over year, we have seen growth in our sales and parts," said Baker-Risher. "We are excited, and look forward to what the future holds. None of this would be possible without loyal customers. Thank you, Pelahatchie, for your support."

EZ Wheels is open 8-5 Monday – Friday. For more information, call 601-854-5112.



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Linda Brewer, RN, CFNP, CGNP

Chief's Comments: Emergency responder training course



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Chief Kevin Poole,
Pelahatchie Police Dept.

The Police Force and the Fire Department work together to take care of the citizens of Pelahatchie. We also need to work together to protect ourselves from ambushes like being attacked when we respond to emergency calls. These types of incidents are happening around the country.

I am developing a training course that will teach both law enforcement

officers and volunteer fire fighters in town how to protect themselves from attacks. It will be a teaching scenario-based defense course. First responders need to know what they can and cannot do by law. Once a month, we will have scenario-based situations that will help them know how to react in real life.

It is a win-win situation where the 16 police officers and 25 volunteer fire fighters will build camaraderie and collaboration that will benefit and serve the community.

Pelahatchie Municipal Court Judge sworn in



Special to Pelahatchie News

Marsha Weems Stacey, left, was sworn in as Pelahatchie municipal court judge on Monday, January 23, by Mayor Pro-Tem Margie Warren with Police Chief Kevin Poole holding the Bible. Judge Stacey is also serving as District One justice court judge in Madison. She will preside over court twice a month.



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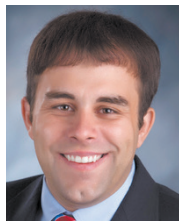
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Legislative updates: January at the Capitol



By Tom Miles, State Representative, House District #75

Special to Pelahatchie News

The 2017 Legislative session kicked off on January 3 with few fireworks and a general mood of friendly cooperation, which I hope continues. I believe that the people who send us to the Capitol expect us to work together to do good for all Mississippians. We expect issues dealing with the budget, education, campaign finance reform, and a possibility of funding a trooper school to continue to dominate the session.

I have been encouraged at the overwhelming support the Trooper School idea has received from both sides of the aisle and even Governor Bryant. While there is more than one bill in play, it has been my pleasure to promote the idea and make sure that people all over the

state understand what a dire situation we are in. I'm sponsoring a measure (HB 505) that will fine sex offenders additionally for the express purpose of paying for the trooper school. Our troopers are stretched too thin for their own good and for ours, too. I'm also supporting an across-the-board pay raise of \$2,500 for Troopers and a bill that would allow for a large trooper class for this year and next year.

One of the first acts of the House during this session was the passage of HB 479, a campaign finance reform measure sponsored by Speaker Gunn, myself and others. This is similar to a bill the House passed last year to define what candidates are allowed to spend their campaign funds on. It also prohibits a candidate from taking a war chest home once the campaign or their service is over.

We recently got to see the much anticipated EdBuild report hearing. Even

though most of us had been kept in the dark about this reporting process, I went into the meeting with an open mind. The issue we all recognize is that our public schools need good, solid financial support, because our children's futures depend on a solid education.

My takeaway from the report was as that they offered good ideas on some areas, but I was very concerned that it appears the final result of the "new" funding system will push the bulk of expenses down onto the local taxpayers. That means an increase on property taxes on homes, businesses, farms and car tags. We need to continue to work to improve our public education system, but passing the cost to tax payers at the local level to give the legislature a pass for not doing its job is not a good idea. I am withholding final judgment until all of the information is made available to us – like how much each district will be expected to contribute. The Legislative

leadership is determined to make funding changes, rather than follow the current law, so I am sure something will be presented for our consideration shortly.

We took up a couple of insurance bills of interest this month. If signed into law, House Bill 319 would require drivers to show proof of motor vehicle liability insurance to renew their registration, and HB 469 would allow Supervisors to redraw the fire protection districts in their counties so that homes will be no farther away than five miles. This should help with fire insurance premiums out in the counties.

The session will be picking up steam with committee work over the next week or two. If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to always reach out to me attmiles@house.ms.gov, via Facebook at Representative Tom Miles or 601-469-7886. You can also follow me on Facebook for daily updates.

Get a jump on the Spring gardening list



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

Special to Pelahatchie News

Now is the time to inventory the garden and get the jump on that list of spring gardening chores that seem to pile up rather quickly when the weather warms. Take the time to stroll around the yard and garden with a notebook and pencil in hand. Make a list of all the "have to" chores, and then make a list of the "want to" chores. An example of a "have to" chore is any corrective or other pruning that should be done to trees and shrubs

before spring bud break, or maintenance on any lawn equipment. A "want to" chore would be to finally design and order the seeds and plants to establish that cut flower garden you have always wanted. Another "want to" list may be to consider joining a gardening organization or take a gardening class to expand your ideas and knowledge of gardening. Keep these lists handy, and as weather permits, do each chore, check off the items on the list one by one.

You may be surprised how motivating these lists can be, especially if you stick them in conspicuous places as a daily reminder--on the fridge door or a mirror in your home. You

may be tempted to yank some of these unchecked lists off in disgust by June. But, for now, you and I can pass the cold month ahead making lists, dreaming, and planning for that perfect yard and garden.

For information on gardening, please visit the Mississippi State University Extension Office, 601 Marquette Road, Brandon, MS or call us at 601-825-1462.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Doug Carter serves as the Rankin county extension agent, agriculture and natural resources/county coordinator. He lives south of Pelahatchie, with his wife and two daughters.



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Local build team makes twice yearly trips to Mexico



Special to Pelahatchie News

The 21-member Build Team helped families in Reynosa, Mexico with building and supplies. For eight years, many Pelahatchie volunteers have made this trip in the summer and Christmas holidays.

Special to Pelahatchie News

What do three churches, a school, three houses and an outdoor kitchen in Reynosa, Mexico, have in common with Pelahatchie, Mississippi? These buildings were built by men from Pelahatchie and surrounding towns.

In December, 2016, a 21-member team went to a refugee camp outside Reynosa, a city with a population of 1.3 million, to build an outdoor church, insulate and sheetrock a school and another church, and paint another church in less than a week. The Reynosa Build Team accomplished that, as well as held three evangelistic services, provided Christmas for a village, distributed Bibles, passed out hygiene kits, and other acts of service.

East Rankin coach Scott Walters

has been leading mission trips to Reynosa, Mexico since 2009. "This is the biggest group that has gone in several years," he said. "I have never had anyone go who did not describe the trip as one of the most meaningful things they have ever done."

Hector Silva de Luna runs Senda de Vida, the refugee camp where the Mississippi Mission Team stays and works out of when they travel to Mexico. Silva met Walters in 2008, when he served as an interpreter for Walters, who was leading evangelistic crusades in Mexico. He was living in a garbage dump that was bordered by a pig farm. The only thing that was standing on the piece of property was one old army tent where people slept and, also, went to church.

The following year, the annual trips

began. According to Walters, "Silva had prayed for a church where people could worship. The answer to those prayers happened to be a group of men from Pelahatchie. Nine men made that initial trip and have been able to witness firsthand what used to be a garbage dump turn into a center of ministry."

There is now a nursing home, medical clinic, and dormitories located on that property, where, on any given day, around 100 people are at Senda de Vida. In December, many people were being cared for at the camp, including people from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico and the United States.

Walters said that these build trips would not be possible without help from Pelahatchie. The students and

staff at East Rankin and Pelahatchie, as well as area churches, gather supplies for the team to take, as well as participate. The local businesses have also played a major part in making the trips happen. Joe Hedgepeth at Country Boys Farm Supply has provided building supplies and candy for the kids. Hedgepeth also paid for a 100 percent disabled veteran to go on the trip several times. Walter Hudson from The Service Station also helps keep the vehicles serviceable for the 15-hour drive.

The goal of the Build Team is to make quarterly trips to Mexico to bring supplies, but right now, they are only able to go twice a year. If you or your group is interested in partnering with this Build Team, contact Scott Walters, Brian Hall or Brian Edwards.

NOTICE TO THE COMMUNITY:

Proposed Development: Golden Age Apartments
207 North Avenue
Pelahatchie, MS 39145

Type of Development: Acquisition and Rehabilitation

The Purpose of this notification is to inform the community that CMS MS Properties, LLC; General Partner of Golden Age Pelahatchie, L.P., is making application to Mississippi Home Corporation for Housing Tax Credits in its 2017 Application Cycle. This is a competitive application proposing to acquire and rehabilitate Golden Age Apartments; a twenty (20) unit elderly apartment complex.

Any Questions or Comments may be sent to any of the following:

Property Owner: Golden Age Pelahatchie, L.P.
Owner Contact: Herbert J. Peterson, III
CMS MS Properties, LLC
(662) 287-5044
Email: Chip_Peterson@Bellsouth.net

Developer Contact: Dudley Development, LLC
Rodney H. Dudley
(601) 927-4602
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Lady Chiefs high school basketball ranked fourth



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Lady Chiefs are ranked fourth in the state for 2A basketball, and are 5-0 in district play. Senior Night is February 10, and it's their last home and regular season game.



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Reaching for success in all areas



By Dr. Bryan Marshall,
Pelahatchie High School Principal

Parents and guardians, here we are in the second semester. For those seniors, it is time to start focusing on life after high school, and for the underclassmen, it is time to start thinking about what they want to do in the future. We have some exciting opportunities that we will unveil in the next few weeks. One of these includes a manufacturing and production academy model that will help train students for jobs in this field once they graduate high school. This is a first of its kind for this area, and has the potential to be a powerful program for our students.

Of course, there could be no article from Pelahatchie High that doesn't mention the importance of reading. We still need to be encouraging reading and writing with all our students. This includes at home. Research suggests that avid readers and writers score much higher on standardized tests than other students. Literacy will continue to be a focus this semester and we will strive to teach students to be readers, writers, and thinkers.

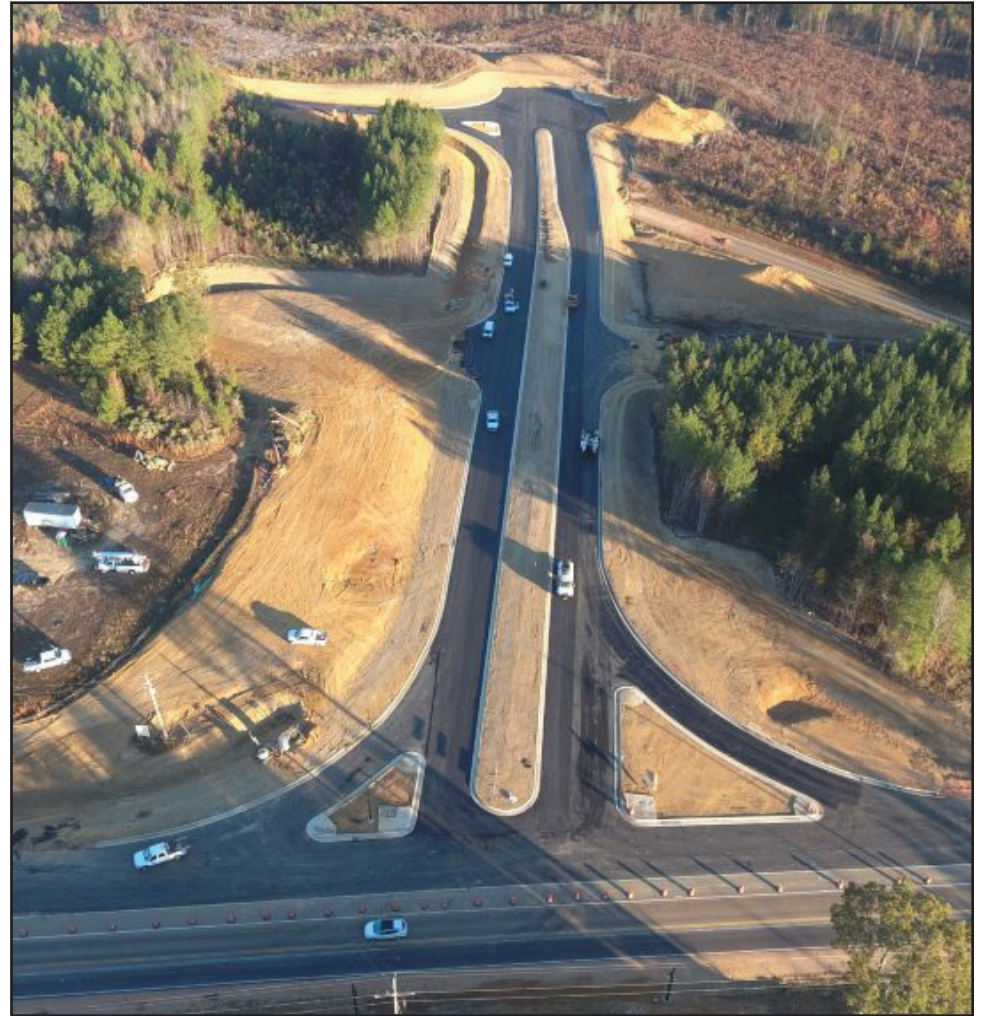
Athletically, we are on a roll with three of the four teams currently in season being ranked. Boys Basketball is ranked fifth in 2A, and Girls Basketball is ranked fourth in 2A. The Girls

Soccer team is ranked eighth in 1-3A schools. As one can see, we are playing well and are looking forward to the playoffs. Baseball and softball season will kick off at the end of February, and we are looking forward to both of those sports. Each will tout new coaching staffs. Taking the helm of the softball team is David Price, a three-time state championship winner in his career. We look forward to a great softball season. Additionally, the baseball program is under the leadership of Coach KK Aldridge, who has been the backbone of success in three separate programs, Hattiesburg High, Brandon High, and Northwest Rankin High. We are excited to also welcome Brent Leach as our pitching coach. For those that do not know, Coach Leach is a former Major League pitcher with the Los Angeles Dodgers. So, we have a lot of exciting things in store for this semester.

Parents, remember to push reading and writing, and let's focus on college and or career readiness for every student in the community. This will be our focus. Of course, to be college ready, we need that ACT score of 18 plus, so make those babies take the ACT. The next ACT assessment is February 11. Please sign up quickly.

This semester is shaping up to be one of the best ever in the history of Pelahatchie High School, so come out and get involved. Be a part of our success. Your children are the ones that will bring about change in our society. Let's all be a part of this monumental task. GO CHIEFS!

Grants Ferry completes first section



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

Grants Ferry Parkway, LLC recently announced that Phase A of the Grants Ferry Parkway opened for traffic on December 23. Pictured is the intersection of the Parkway with Highway 80. Carter and Gardner Landscape, Inc. of Brandon has been retained to install landscaping for Phase A.

The developers plan to begin construction of Phase B of the Parkway in early February. Phase B of the Parkway will extend approximately 1-1/4 mile northwesterly from Trickhambridge Road, north of the railroad, to the east side of Cornerstone Subdivision. It is anticipated that Phase B will be completed by late summer, 2017.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Arrangements
James Brown	58	Forest, MS	1/1/17	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Peggy Gray	56	Pelahatchie, MS	1/3/17	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Judge R. Wilkerson	82	Lake, MS	1/6/17	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Theresa Benton	77	Forest, MS	1/7/17	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Robin Rogers	55	Pulaski, MS	1/16/17	Wolf Funeral Serv.

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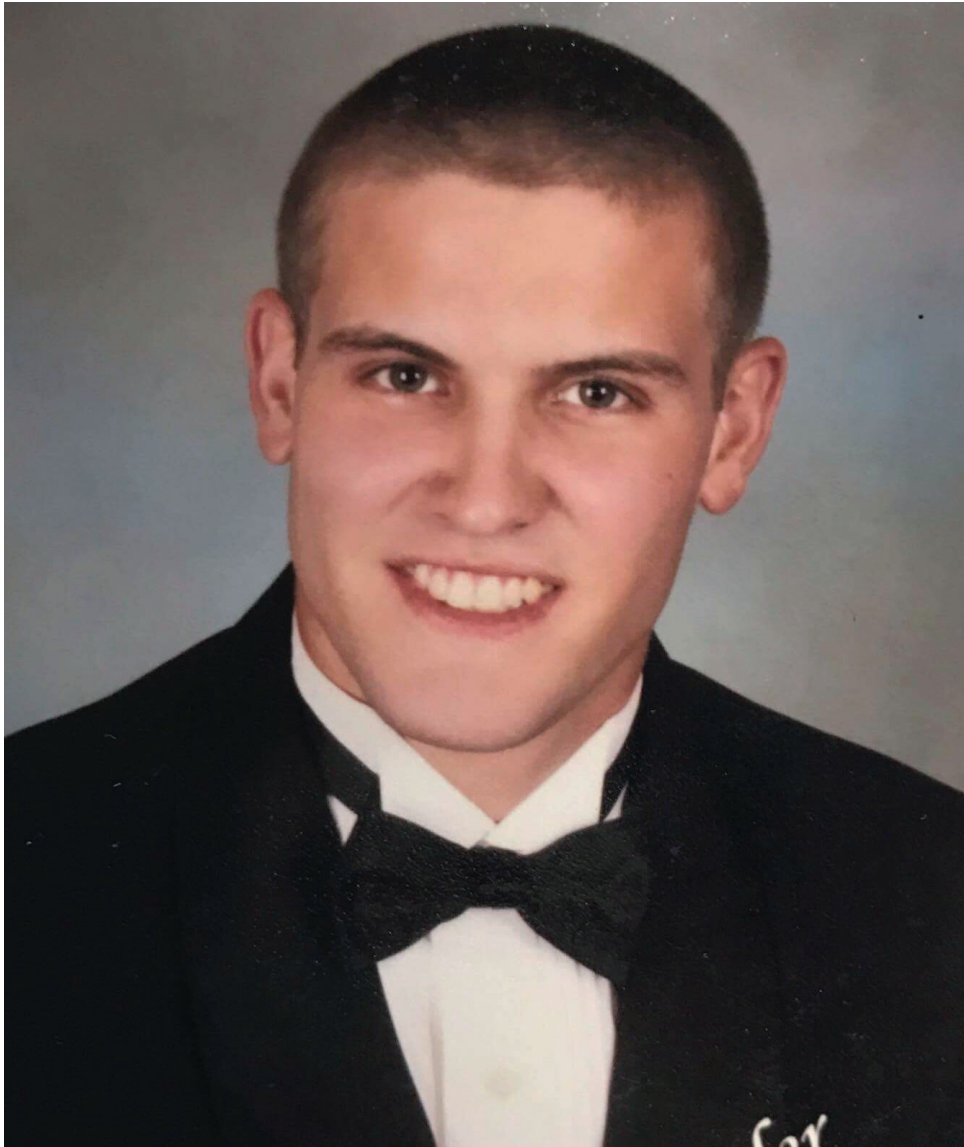
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TK Memorial Scholarship Benefit Pageant to be held on March 2



Special to Pelahatchie News

TK Memorial Scholarship Benefit Pageant will be held March 25 at Pelahatchie High School Auditorium.

By Susie A. Wolfe

Tyler Kelly (TK) died in an automobile accident when he was 21 on May 29, 2016. His family and friends want to keep his name alive through the TK Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded to an outstanding student at McLaurin High School for the 2016-2017 school year. Plans are to award a Pelahatchie High School (PHS) scholarship in 2017.

Friends are conducting the TK Memorial Pageant at PHS Auditorium March 25 to help raise money for the scholarship. Local pageant direc-

tor Linda Brown is helping organize the event. The pageant will be held 2-5 p.m. for ages 0-Mrs. and little boys ages 0-10. This will be a natural pageant with the girls from ages 0-9 being held Sunday. Best only and 10-up is either pageant dress or Sunday dress.

Those interested in this pageant, contact mamataylor40@gmail.com or 601-946-4259 for more information. Registration forms will also be available at Fairway Grocery. Kelly was the son of Joe Lane Kelly and Carla Vancor of Pelahatchie, and Lynn and Brad Williams of Brandon.

Erase belly fat, AKA visceral fat



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist Michelle Carter, Brickhouse Fitness Center

Everyone has some belly fat, that's normal, but too much can affect your health in a way that other fat doesn't. It's true, fat around your midsection is the worst kind of fat, and not just because of the way it looks. It's called visceral fat, and it actually produces proteins and hormones that make all kinds of bad things worse, including cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, and triglycerides.

Dropping visceral fat is dependent on both diet and exercise. I'm not a nutritionist, so I can only address the exercise factor. Belly fat prefers when you sit, so if you want to make the bad stuff around your waist disappear, it's time to get up and move. Just three hours a week of aerobic exercise can bust that midsection fat. You just need to make sure to do it at an increased tempo, not a window-shopping speed. Crunches or sit ups can firm up the muscles under the fat, but they won't make the fat magically vanish.



Special to Pelahatchie News

For fat erasing, you need regular aerobic exercise. Ditch the scale in favor of a tape measure (or how well your clothes fit). This is a better way to monitor fat. A pound of fat is significantly larger than a pound of muscle. Your weight really won't change if you are successfully changing that extra fat into muscle. At Brickhouse, we have a scale that can measure your visceral fat. We can also help you get moving.

Come see us, so we can help you begin the process to trim down visceral fat, or, if a gym just isn't your thing, or in your budget, hit the pavement. Pelahatchie has a beautiful new walking trail. Move into a new year, and make a new healthier you!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Michelle Carter is co-owner of Brickhouse Fitness Center. She is a lifetime resident of the Walter's community south of town, where she resides with her husband and two sons.

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Davis - Hall to wed March 11



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

Mr. and Mrs. John Curtis Davis of Pelahatchie announce the engagement and upcoming marriage of their daughter, Madeline Nancy, to Blake Hall, son of Mr. and Mrs. Travis Steven Hall of Magee.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Nancy Stevenson and the late Charles Stevenson, Sr. of Pelahatchie, Mr. and Mrs. John Ray Davis of Pelahatchie and Sandra Etheridge of Morton. The prospective groom is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Rex Patrick of Brandon and Mr. and Mrs. Billy Hall of Brandon.

Madeline is a graduate of East Rankin Academy. She received an associate's degree in Health Information Technology from Hinds Community College. She is currently employed with University of Mississippi Medical Center as a Cancer Registrar.

Blake is a graduate of East Rankin Academy. He is currently attending the University of Southern Mississippi. In December, he will receive his bachelor's degree in Sports Coaching.

The couple will exchange vows on March 11, 2017 at Pelahatchie Baptist Church.

Basic principles of money for your children's future

By Guest Columnist Whitney Baker

Basic principles of money that can make a difference in your child's financial development are usually best taught to young children using the example of a "money pie." These 4 principles break down an adult's budget in a way that is easy to understand and make sure they are well prepared for a sound financial future.

Save - The biggest piece should be saved for larger expenses or a "rainy day"

Spend - A smaller portion can be spent on things you want or thing you need like clothing, food, transportation and shelter as well as bills.

Invest - Investing is a smart way to make sure you'll have some money put away for the future.

Share - Teaching children about charity and philanthropy can only benefit the world as a whole in the long run.

Utilize an app or online service that helps integrate weekly allowances with money management information.

Have your child actively participate with you in the monthly bill paying process to open their eyes to the types

of things they'll need to be prepared to pay for in the future.

Open a savings account with your child, and have them make a practice of depositing a set amount of their own money on a regular basis. This teaches them about managing their money, so that there is enough to deposit, and will also leave them with an established savings when they head off into the world. Have your child choose a charity or a cause that is important to them, and encourage them to use some of their allowance to donate to that cause. This is a great way to instill important values as well as a sense of doing their part to help someone in need.

PriorityOne Bank offers several free services to help teach your children about money. Visit priorityonebank.moneyisland.com to begin playing the game.

For more information about financial literacy and the programs at PriorityOne Bank, call 601-423-0166, email Whitney Baker at wbaker@priorityonebank.com or, visit www.priorityonebank.moneyisland.com

EDITOR'S NOTE: Whitney Baker is the Marketing Director for PriorityOne Bank.

Pelahatchie Chiefs keep top ranking



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Chiefs are ranked fifth in 2A, and are first in their district, as of January 27, with a 5-0 record.



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Pelahatchie High School Girls Soccer in playoffs



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie girls soccer record is 13-1-1, as of January 27. Girls soccer was in the second round of playoffs when the paper was printed. They are ranked in the regular season at 53 in the state, and ranked ninth in 1-2-3 A schools.

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St. Dominic's Family Medicine adds staff

By Susie A. Wolfe

St. Dominic's Family Medicine has added two positions, a new nurse practitioner and an office manager.

With the appointment of Kathy Hill of Pelahatchie as the nurse practitioner, the Pelahatchie clinic is also expanding its hours to Monday – Friday, 7:30 – 5:30. Linda Brewer will be working Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, while Hill works Monday, Tuesday and Friday. She started December 28.

Hill is excited to work in her hometown clinic. She previously worked with Baptist Clinics for 10 years, with her last position serving the Reservoir Clinic. She has lived in Pelahatchie for the past 30 years with her husband Billy. Their two sons, Bill and Brian, also live in the area.

Misty Gainey also joined the clinic as office manager on January 3. From Florence, Gainey previously supervised the physician billing department at St. Dominic's Medical Associates for five and a half years. She and her husband, Scotty, have one son, Benjamin Pruitt, 10. Scotty is the retired associate chief of the Richland Fire Department.

For more information, call 601-854-5044. Walk-ins are welcome.



Photo by Pelahatchie News

There are two new faces at Pelahatchie's St. Dominic's Family Medicine. Pictured, (l to r), are: Misty Gainey, office manager, and Kathy Hill, nurse practitioner. The clinic is now open five days a week.

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Hinds CC Centennial focuses on 100 years of community-inspired service

Special to Pelahatchie News

In 1917 on a patch of ground in small-town Raymond, Miss., a new opportunity opened for rural boys and girls who wanted to finish high school.

That modest opportunity started as Hinds Agricultural High School with 117 students and evolved into what's now Hinds Community College with six locations in three counties.

Hinds is celebrating its 100 Years of Community Inspired Service with nearly a year's worth of activities, beginning with the Centennial Convocation for employees on Jan. 3 and culminating on Nov. 4 with a "Maroon Tie Gala."

In between, alumni and other friends of Hinds will be invited back numerous times for celebrations. However, it's not all about the institution of Hinds. It's about the people who give Hinds its heart.

"When you start thinking about all the people who have come through the doors of Hinds, plus the businesses and industries that we have helped, our impact is much bigger than just six campuses or even much bigger than the central part of Mississippi. It's across the nation and even internationally," said Jackie Granberry, executive director of the Hinds Community College

Foundation and co-chair of the Centennial Celebration.

"The goal of the Centennial celebration it is to reconnect many people to the college, to have everyone understand the role Hinds plays in the community and also to celebrate the many successes we have had as a college," she said.

Some of those people involved in the success of the college were asked to share their memories of Hinds. Here are their stories:

Ted Kendall's grandfather was F.M. Greaves, a member of the college Board of Trustees for 30 years, 20 years as president. Kendall was a trustee from 1968 to 1988 and was also board president when Muse was hired in 1978.

"My ties with Hinds go way back. Although I was never a student, Hinds has been a part of my family for a long time," said Kendall, a farmer in Bolton. "I was blessed to be asked to be on the board. It was a great experience."

David Barton of Raymond, an active member of the Hinds Community College Foundation, came to Hinds as a high school student in 1954.

"I came in 10th grade and graduated as a (college) sophomore in 1959. I remember things like the old barn, and the fire escapes you could slide down where the auditorium was," he said.

"This is a great place. I've got so many good memories of it."

Fried chicken is what impressed Donald Oakes, retired superintendent of Vicksburg Warren schools and a current member of the Board of Trustees. He remembers "a Wednesday in 1957 when I walked on this campus. I walked into the cafeteria, and they had fried chicken for lunch. A guy from Redwood, you don't see fried chicken on Wednesday."

Rankin County Chancery Clerk Larry Swales is president of the Alumni Association. Hinds is where he met his wife, Linda, who became a nurse.

"I have many memories here, starting in 1970," he said. "I could never say enough about Hinds Community College and what it means to me."

At 80, Ann Laster of Raymond is still teaching English for Hinds, now in the dual enrollment high school program. She met her husband Bob at Hinds when she came to a basketball game with a group of her high school students.

"Hinds has been a blessing to our family. I can't think of a better place in the world to live or better people to have as friends and associates," she said. "I've had a great life, and much of that can be attributed to my time at Hinds."

Hinds County Judge Jimmy Morton of Raymond has spent a lifetime honoring a promise he made to R.E. Woolley, who was a long-time member of the Board of Trustees, after Morton was awarded the first R.E. Woolley Scholarship.

"I promised that I would continue to give back to Hinds," Morton said.

For years after he graduated, Morton would pick up Woolley and bring him to Hinds for events. "I don't ever step on this campus that I don't think about him," he said.

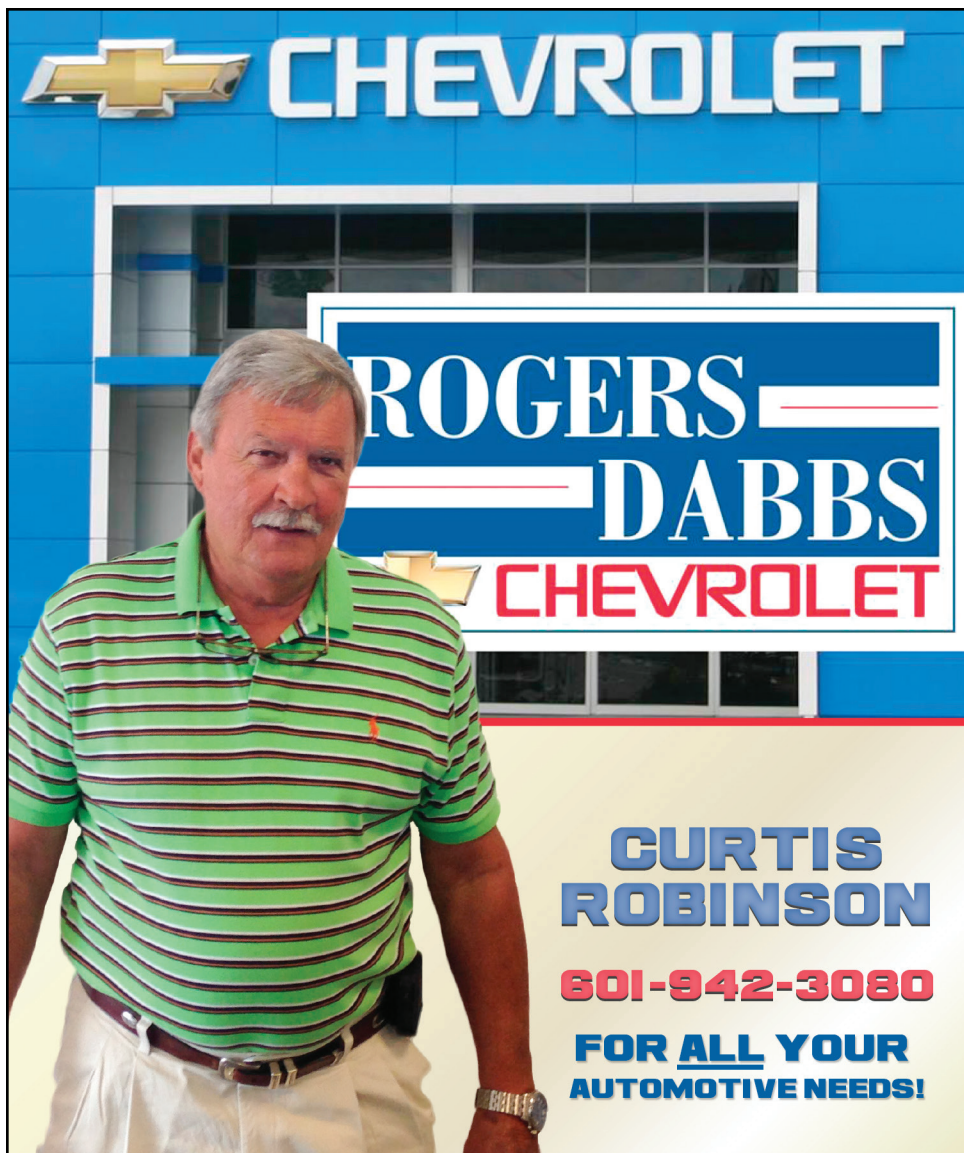
For up-to-date information about Hinds Community College's Centennial celebration, see the news and calendar section at www.hindscc.edu or 100years.hindscc.edu.

Hinds Community College Centennial Celebration calendar for February-March:

Feb. 7-9 7 p.m. - Montage Dance Performance of The Princess and the Frog, Cain-Cochran Hall

Feb. 12 2 p.m. - Montage Dance Performance of The Princess and the Frog, Thalia Mara Hall

For up-to-date information about Hinds Community College's Centennial celebration, see the news and calendar section at www.hindscc.edu or 100years.hindscc.edu.



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Pastors Perspective: Overcoming the scars of life



By John Vaughn, Pastor,
Cross Roads Baptist Church

Special to
Pelahatchie News

In our front yard, we have several large oak trees. Some knowledgeable people have estimated that they may be over 100 years old. They certainly are beautiful and provide shade and character to our yard. One of the trees has a serious flaw. There is a large scar on one side of the tree that runs from the top all the way to the ground. There is dead wood inside the scar. My guess is that it was probably hit by lightning at some point in its life.

But even though the tree is not perfect, it still does what an oak tree should do. It provides shade to the yard. It gives birds a place to rest and to nest. It produces acorns that the squirrels find and then hide. It drops millions of leaves that end up in the compost or burn pile!

Someday this tree will see the end of its days, but until it does, this old damaged tree is still fulfilling an important task for us.

Most people also have been damaged in life. They were abused or taken advantage of. They were treated badly or bullied. Some carry scars that are ei-

ther visible or hidden well. Sometimes the scars are physical, but can also be emotional. Some people withdraw because of the flaws in their lives. Others become defensive and abusive themselves.

Just like that old tree, we all must realize that the scars in our lives should not keep up from being useful and having meaningful purposes in life.

There are no perfect people! The Bible makes that clear. Moses was a murderer on the run. David was an adulterer. Hosea's wife was a prostitute. Jacob was a liar. Paul murdered people for being Christians. Thomas doubted. Peter denied Christ three times. But even with their character flaws, God used each of these people in significant ways.

And God can use you, too! It doesn't matter what you have been through in life or what you have done in the past. It doesn't matter if you have scars or hidden hurts. It doesn't matter if you think there is nothing you can do. God wants to use you. In fact, those very things that you think keep you from being useful to God may be the very things that He can use to bring glory to His name!

Like that old oak tree in my yard,



Special to Pelahatchie News

God can and will use you in productive and meaningful ways, if you let Him. But it's up to you. Why not ask the Lord to give you victory over those things

that have held you back. Ask Him how He wants to use you, and then get busy!

Be sure to take your family to Church on Sunday!

Cross Roads Baptist Church



Sunday Schedule

8:30 - Contemporary Worship Service
 10:00 - Bible Study for all ages
 11:00 - Blended Worship Service
 6:00 - Evening Worship

Wednesday Schedule

6:00 Family Dinner
 7:00 - Children's Mission Activities • Student Worship
 Ladies Bible Study • Couples Support Group
 Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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ERA students added to National Honor Society



Special to Pelahatchie News

Thirty-seven students are members of the East Rankin Academy Chapter of the National Honor Society. New members for the 2016-2017 school year were honored with an induction ceremony and reception. Selection for membership is based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership and service. New members inducted are, (l to r) front row: Madelyn Cordell, Macy Leach, Sam Martin, Emily Myers, Madison Newman and Lauren Parker; and back row: Lona Perrett, Lauren Shoemaker, Emilee Tadlock, Kayleigh Thompson, Bailey Tullis and Trevor Williams.

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Investment in education raises student achievement



By Guest Columnist Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair, Mississippi State Board of Education

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) have been working strategically over the past three years to improve student outcomes. Our work has been targeted, deliberate and focused to make the maximum impact with the resources and flexibility we have been afforded.

Mississippians are now seeing a significant return on investment (ROI) due to these efforts. This means potentially less money will be diverted for remediation costs and more money will be directed to classrooms. The long-term ROI will produce ongoing savings for the state because students are being prepared to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens.

Literacy-Based Promotion Act - the Literacy-Based Promotion Act of 2013 provided \$9.5 million in the first year and \$15 million in subsequent years to raise literacy levels in grades

K-3. Results for 2015-16 include: Sixty-three percent of kindergarteners met or exceeded the end-of-the-year target score that categorizes them as transitional readers. Students at this level are beginning to read unfamiliar words and easy reader material. In 2014-15, 54 percent of kindergarteners achieved this score.

Eighty-seven percent of students passed the 3rd grade reading assessment on their first try, an increase from eighty-five percent last year. After the final retest, ninety-two percent of stu-

dents passed the test.

The passing rate (Levels three, four or five) on the third-grade English Language Arts assessment reached sixty-five percent, an increase from fifty-four percent the previous year.

Early Learning Collaborative Act - the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 provided \$3 million in the first three years to create a pre-K infrastructure for four-year-olds. The MDE has overseen the administration of eleven

Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs) that serve 1,700 children annually. Results for 2015-16 include: All eleven ELCs achieved the target score that indicates students are prepared for kindergarten.

Seventy-one percent of ELC students met the target kindergarten readiness score, an increase from fifty-nine percent in 2014-15. In other public pre-K classrooms, sixty-nine percent of students met the readiness score, compared to sixty-four percent in 2014-15.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) recognized Mississippi's ELCs in its 2015 State of Preschool. This puts Mississippi among only six states in the nation that meet all ten quality standards for preschool.

A 2015 Mississippi State University study identified the powerful, long-term effect pre-K had on student achievement in Mississippi: Mississippi children who attended public pre-K were one and a half times more likely to be proficient in third grade reading, Mississippi children who were proficient readers in third grade are nine times more likely to be proficient readers in eighth grade, and Mississippi children who were proficient readers in eighth grade are three-and-a-half times more likely to graduate on time.

ACT for eleventh graders - the Mississippi Legislature appropriated \$1 million annually since 2014-15 for

all eleventh graders to take the ACT. The test measures college-readiness at a crucial time in high school when there is still time to provide interventions to improve achievement.

Eleventh graders earned an overall composite score of 18.3 on the ACT in 2016, an increase from 17.6 in 2015. Students made gains in each of the four categories of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science.

Districts offered the Southern Regional Education Board's senior year math and literacy readiness courses to students whose scores fell between fifteen and eighteen. These courses were developed to help close the gap for students who are on the cusp of meeting the ACT benchmark scores.

The MDE provided districts training related to analyzing ACT data, evaluating course taking patterns and designing ACT preparation courses.

Professional Development - the Mississippi Legislature appropriated approximately \$1 million annually for professional development related to teaching reading and the effective implementation of the Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards. According to an independent report by the Southern Regional Education Board, the MDE sets strong expectations for high-quality professional learning for all educators and provides essential support for school districts. Results include:

Fourth grade reading and math scores improved on the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Mississippi was the only state to show significant improvement since 2013 in both reading and math scores among fourth graders.

Eighth grade NAEP scores for reading held constant and math increased slightly, as the nation saw a decline in both subjects.

Mississippi's graduation rate reached an all-time high of 80.8 percent in 2016, up from 78.4 percent the previous year. At this rate of growth, Mississippi could surpass the national rate of eighty-two percent by next year.

The state's dropout rate fell to 11.8 percent from 12.8 percent the previous year, continuing the downward trend from 16.7 percent in 2011-12.

Mississippi Assessment Program (MAP) results showed students remained stable or improved from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

Mathematics:

31.1 percent of students scored Level four or higher (proficient and advanced)

Fifteen districts had greater than forty-five percent of students scoring Level four or higher

66.2 percent of students scored at Level three or higher (passing, proficient and advanced)

English language arts:

32.6 percent of students scored Level four or higher (proficient and advanced)

Fourteen districts had greater than forty-five percent of students scoring Level four or higher

Sixty-six percent of students scored at Level three or higher (passing, proficient and advanced)

Mississippians now have powerful evidence that the education reforms and legislative initiatives that have been implemented throughout our state are working. We are seeing a significant return on investment. Students, teachers, school administrators, parents and state leaders have all dedicated themselves to meeting higher academic standards. This shared mission, along with the SBE's strategic focus and the MDE's targeted, effective work, is making a significant impact on the lives of students and the future of the state.

AT THE LIBRARY IN PELAHATCHIE

Voting for the Magnolia Book Awards occurs in February. Children and teens stop by and cast your ballot!

February 15, 2017

Adult Book Club, 9:30 a.m., discussing Joel Rosenberg's novel *The Last Jihad*

Milltown Minutes



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Jennifer Poole

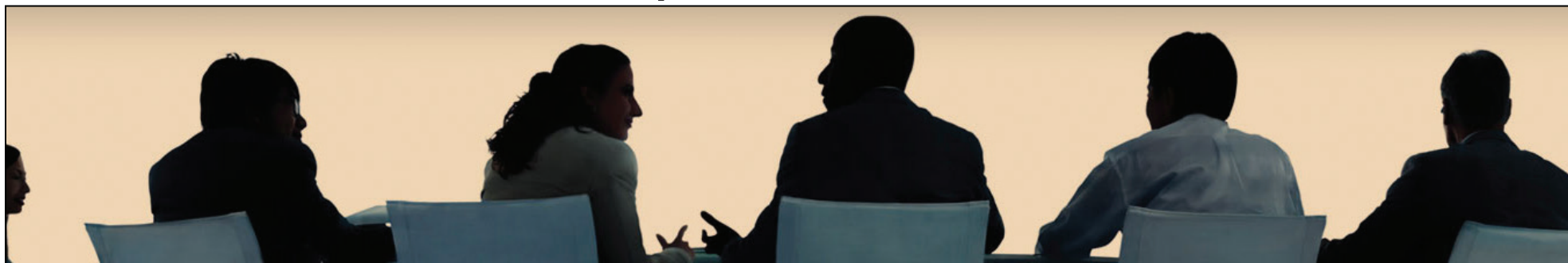
Spring registration is going on now and ends February 10. Registration forms can be picked up from City Hall or Studio Hair and Tan

in Pelahatchie or requested by email at pelahatchiemilltownpark.org.

Spring Baseball camp is Saturday, March 4, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Milltown Park with Brent Leach. The Spring baseball camp is offered to boys ages 6 to 14. The cost per camper is \$25 if you have registered to play ball at Milltown Park. The cost for campers that are registered to play ball with other leagues is \$40.

The deadline for camp registration is February 10. For any questions, please contact Brent Leach at 601-941-9059.

State Board of Education invites public comment on revised science standards



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) voted to begin a public comment period on revisions to the Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) for Science through an online process.

The online public comment forum, which will be open Jan. 20-Feb. 24, is designed to encourage stakeholders to read the standards and either submit comments in support of the standards or provide specific, actionable feedback on any particular standards of concern. The public comment venue is similar to the one used during the review of the MCCRS for English language arts and Mathematics in 2015.

Mississippi last revised its science standards in 2010. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a nonprofit educa-

tion policy think tank, rated Mississippi's current science standards a "C." Teachers reviewed the "A" rated standards from other states to inform the revisions process for the new science standards. The states used to inform the process were South Carolina, Alabama, Virginia and Massachusetts.

Comments provided about specific standards will be evaluated by a team of Mississippi educators, content specialists in Science, as well as higher education representatives. Upon completion of the review process, the MDE will bring the final proposed standards to the SBE for its consideration in March. The new science standards will be piloted in the 2017-18 school year following several teacher trainings around the state. Full implementation of the new science standards will be August 2018.

The MDE has hired two science specialists who are working across the state with teachers to finalize the new science standards. The new science standards take a hands-on approach to classroom learning, with a focus on instruction that is student-guided and project-based. The MDE will provide comprehensive guidelines and resources to teachers as they introduce the standards in their classrooms.

How the online public comment forum works: Participants are required to provide some general information on whether they are commenting as parents, educators or business and industry professionals. This demographic information is important to informing the SBE and the public about which stakeholders participated in the forum. No personally identifiable information will be requested. However, there is an

option to leave email addresses for further contact.

Standards are searchable by grade level. After reading the grade-level standard, the participant will be provided several options for input, including whether he/she likes the standard or doesn't like the standard. If someone wishes to change the actual wording of the standard, he/she will have that option in an editable textbox prepopulated with the standard as it is currently written, or they may clear the standard and write the standard from scratch.

The public may leave and come back to the forum at any time between Jan. 20 and Feb. 24, 2017, but participants will only be able to submit suggestions on a particular standard once per electronic device. At the end of the public comment period, all comments will be published online.

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