

### ***A Personal Success Story...***

When I came to work at the GTPDD five years ago, little did I know the life changing impact my job would play in my personal life.

With Mississippi having the highest obesity rate in the nation, I was included in the statistics. All too often, people may think, "If one just goes on a diet, one can lose the weight". For most obese people, I think, it's not that "cut and dried".

I knew the answer to my problem, but not the solution. In other words, how did I obtain my answer? I needed a working plan just for me.

As I performed my day-to-day job duties and interacted with clients with various health conditions, I began to "see" myself not as an elderly retired person, but a disabled one. Unfortunately, I also experienced some of the health issues that accompany obesity...diabetes, high blood pressure, and osteoarthritis.

After two years of agonizing, I finally reached the point of "Okay, I'm ready to make a total life style change in my eating habits to get and keep the weight off or face the real possibility of not living to see 65!"

With my doctor's guidance, taking a day at a time and with much prayer, I was blessed to lose over 160 pounds in a three-year period.

I often think, what if Mr. Rudy Johnson had thought, "I don't think she's the right one for the job", or Vicki Clay had not given a positive recommendation, or I had not met Elizabeth Wyatt who informed me of the Case Manager position with the GTPDD? Would I still be that obese person I was five years ago? Possibly, very much so!

I know God placed these key people in my life at the right season for the influence I needed to achieve that life-changing goal. To all the people who gave me a pat on the back and said, "Keep up the good work," I give you heartfelt thanks.

As an employee with the GTPDD, I know it has played a vital role in prolonging my life.

Gratefully,  
Chris B.



**Golden Triangle Planning and  
Development District, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 628  
108 Miley Rd.  
Starkville, MS 39760-0628  
(662) 324-7860



## **GOLDEN TRIANGLE Planning and Development District, Inc.**

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*The GTPDD office is centrally  
located in Oktibbeha County in the  
Starkville Industrial Park*

### ***From the Director...***



Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson  
Executive Director

Remember how we couldn't wait to be old enough to drive, date, stay out until midnight? And we absorbed, and followed, just enough parental blah-blah to stay out of trouble. (Or most of you did, anyway.) I don't recall the same anticipation about being old enough to vote, though. Perhaps it was because this was an expectation by my parents for me, not something that I thought would give me greater status among my peers.

Sure, the social studies teachers made a big deal about the Constitution, the right to vote, freedom of speech, etc. But in the naivete of youth, this was just some short-term memory thing to be tested on. My life experiences had not encompassed long range effects of current decisions.

Responsibilities as a husband, father, and employee were fairly easily learned. It took age, maturity, and more life experiences to realize my responsibility as a citizen of the USA. So what if the system isn't perfect? What, in life, is? So what if I might be called to jury duty because I am a registered voter? Many countries without jury service take the accused straight to the firing squad.

Parents, please influence your children.

- Tell them about elections that were lost by just a few votes.
- Tell them the low percentage of registered voters who actually vote.
- Tell them how few voters actually participate in runoff elections.
- Educate them on the duties of various office holders.
- Challenge them to find out a candidate's stand on important issues.
- Remind them, if they haven't heard it in the news, that in some foreign countries, residents chance getting shot when they vote.

Mississippi's General Election will be November 6th.

See you at the Polls!



## Medicaid Waiver

The Mississippi Division of Medicaid (DOM) is the state agency responsible for determining clinical eligibility for Medicaid long-term care services. DOM administers a Single Point of Entry system for elderly and physically disabled individuals applying or being recertified for clinical eligibility and placement into the following long term care service settings/programs:

- Nursing Facility
- Assisted Living Waiver
- Elderly and Disabled Waiver
- Independent Living Waiver
- Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury Waiver

The Single Point of Entry concept is supported through use of a common Pre-Admission Screening Instrument (PAS) designed to fill two primary functions:

1. Determine clinical eligibility for Medicaid long term care across both institutional and Home and Community-Based service settings; and
2. Facilitate informed choices by individuals applying for services.

The Pre-Admission Screening process is intended for use by:

- Hospital Discharge planners;
- Nursing Facility staff;
- Planning & Development District staff;
- Division of Medicaid staff;
- Department of Rehabilitation Services staff; and
- Other providers.

An individual will be advised of all available placement options as part of ensuring that an informed choice is made regardless of where an individual applies for services. The PAS-Informed Choice section requires a signature by applicants or their legal representatives. The PAS cannot be processed without the signed Informed Choice section and the signed Physician Certification section.

The new Pre-Admission Screening process will become effective October 1, 2007. All applicants applying for Medicaid Long Term Care on October 1, 2007 and beyond must complete a PAS for clinical eligibility determination.

The Elderly & Disabled HCBS Medicaid Waiver Program continues in design to help qualified Medicaid beneficiaries receive services that allow individuals to remain in their homes rather than enter nursing homes. Services that an individual may receive in this area are Homemaking, Home Health Aide, Extended Home Health, Home Delivered Meals, In-Home Respite and Escorted Transportation, if the Medicaid criterion is met.

If you know of anyone who may need this service or if you have questions about the program, please call Vicki Clay, RN Supervisor or the appropriate Case Manager at 662-324-7860.

### Staff Anniversaries

Staff members that have served at least 5 years at the GTPDD.

<u>July</u>			
Angela Gregory	6 years	<u>August</u>	
Tammy Castle	7 years	Mitzi Lawrence	7 years
Kim Mills	7 years	<u>September</u>	
Mitzi Phelps	8 years	Irene Avant	5 years
		Tim Heard	14 years
		Lisa Stallings	7 years

## PLANNING



GT CEDS committee

### Weir Completes Drainage Improvements Project

The Town of Weir, as the recipient of a \$254,415 Community Development Block Grant, was able to replace and improve certain primary components of a fifty-year old storm drainage system that was no longer operable. Especially critical to the Town's drainage system was a small timber bridge that had lost its hydraulic efficiency due to deterioration and posed a safety threat to vehicular traffic.

Improvements were made to improve drainage and alleviate the threat of future flood devastation that has caused damage to residential, governmental and commercial structures, as well as to the school, thus affording the 553 citizens of Weir with an improved quality of life.

### Housing Update

The Golden Triangle PDD Housing Department has been working diligently with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and Department of HUD to complete the first three houses constructed in each of the following areas: Webster County, Clay County, Lowndes County, and Town of Maben. All homeowners have moved into their houses and we are waiting on final HUD approval to begin construction of the final two houses in each of these locations. The goal is to have these houses completed by the end of the year.

New applications submitted to MDA in April for approval are still undergoing review by the State. The PDD and local governments are working with MDA to satisfy new HUD requirements and obtain funding for these new projects.

### GTPDD-CEDS Committee has been Busy

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee has been busy developing a new planning document in conjunction with the Economic Development Administration. The committee consists of representatives from across the seven counties, representing different segments of the population. The committee developed a vital projects list along with an all-inclusive list of projects that might not serve the total populace but a certain segment or area of the District. The vital projects are more regional in nature and are as follows:

- (1) **Establishment of Regional Rail Authority** relative to the reopening of the Columbus and Greenville Railroad. This railroad is the only true east-west route and serves the northern four (4) counties in the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District. If abandonment is obtained for this rail line there will be a permanent gap of approximately 92 miles between West Point on the east and Greenwood, MS on the west.
- (2) **Constructing or upgrading educational facilities** on the community college level in order to satisfy future industrial needs brought on by the recent announcements of new industry locating in the Golden Triangle area.
- (3) **Constructing or upgrading the basic industrial infrastructure needs** of the area in order to meet future needs and also provide services to those companies that wish to expand. These basic infrastructure areas are:
  - (a) Improvements in water and sewer services;
  - (b) Implementation of alternative power (generators);
  - (c) Establishment of a multi-county utility district; and
  - (d) Revitalization and development of key river ports.

### Sturgis Enhances Park with Grant

The Town of Sturgis, a small municipality of 202 persons located in Oktibbeha County, has added children's playground equipment to an existing park with the financial assistance of a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The equipment consists of a merry-go-round, swings, a multi-task jungle-gym and benches within a fenced area. The \$15,000 grant requires a 50% match of \$15,000.

Approximately fifteen years ago, a resident of the Town of Sturgis donated ten acres of land in memory of his wife, Diane Jackson, to be utilized for public recreation. The development of the park has included the construction of baseball fields, a walking track, concession stand, RV hookups, parking and a pavilion with picnic tables and restrooms. The uniqueness of this project is demonstrated by the desire of the elected officials to offer a *quality of life* for its residents and the surrounding communities of Morgantown, Bradley, Wake Forest and Craig Springs. The mayor and aldermen want to maintain the "small-town" atmosphere that is so prevalent in this small, tightly knit bedroom/retirement community. The acquisition and installation of playground equipment will be beneficial and will provide an additional dimension to this

park, which serves as a catalyst for community involvement and family congregation. The large landscaped outdoor recreation area with a combination of active and passive uses for all age groups - toddler to retiree - will preserve and protect a natural area of unique and scenic value for the benefit of the present and future generations.

