



Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc.

April—June 2016

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From the Director. . . .

In our last Newsletter, we promised more information on Legal Services sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging of the GTPDD.

We contract with *North Mississippi Rural Legal Services* in Oxford, Mississippi to provide a range of legal assistance to the elderly in our area, free of charge.

North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (hereinafter, **NMRLS**.) was granted funding by the Office of Economic Opportunity and began operations in 1966, as a training program for Ole Miss law students, "with a focus on legal problems of the poor."

Ten years later, **NMRLS** was restructured as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, but the goal remained the same: to assist the poor with their legal problems.

And, in 1985, when **NMRLS** initiated its Elder Law Project, the

collaboration with NMRLS and the GTPDD came into being. According to the Elder Law Project Director, Catherine V. "Ginny" Kilgore, "The grant that we receive each year from Golden Triangle PDD enables **NMRLS** to assist elderly clients to maintain the essentials in life, such as food, clothing, shelter, and safety from abuse, neglect and exploitation. With the help of GTPDD we also assist the elderly with legal issues that impact them specifically, such as end of life documents, access to Medicare, Medicaid and other health law issues."

NMRLS, along with the Administrative Office in Oxford, maintains 4 service centers, located in West Point, Clarksdale, Greenville, and Oxford, and a large staff of attorneys. Additionally, Ms. Kilgore and her Elder Law team travel over the 39 counties of **NMRLS**, providing community legal education training to the elderly and other interested parties, and gathering information from clients to implement the services they request

(e. g. wills, powers of attorney, contracts); sometimes, the documents can be completed, signed, and notarized on the spot.

NMRLS can travel to the home, or nursing home, if a prospective client is physically unable to get to an office. An **NMRLS** Call Center (Ph. 1-800-498-1804) is maintained Mon.-Thurs. 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. to assist callers in scheduling these services. Additionally, Ms. Kilgore can be reached at 1-800-898-8731, ext. 2101.

In a recent quarterly report (cumulative for the contract year), **NMRLS** reported that the program served 64 elderly clients, 17 of whom were over 75 years. The income of all these clients was less than poverty level and all were from rural areas. (Cont'd on Page 12.)

2016 County Advisory Committee Meetings

COUNTY	DATE	TIME	PLACE
CHOCTAW	July 5 th	8:15 a.m.	Choctaw Co. Library
CLAY	July 7 th	10:30 a.m.	Courthouse Crtroom 2 nd floor
LOWNDES	July 13 th	9:00 a.m.	Gardner Blvd Bldg
NOXUBEE	July 12 th	3:00 p.m.	Civic Center
OKTIBBEHA	July 5 th	10:30 a.m.	Courthouse Sup. Bdroom
WEBSTER	July 18 th	9:00 a.m.	Doss Bldg. Hwy 182
WINSTON	July 18 th	1:00 p.m.	2 nd floor Crtroom in Courthouse

Message from Jimmy Cole, Loan Officer

I want to use this opportunity to share some personal news with you. After many weeks of thinking about it, I have decided to retire from Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc. effective August 31, 2016. This was not an easy decision, but my wife and I felt that now is the right time for me to move on to the next stage of my life. I plan to enjoy the extra time with my family. I'm looking forward to seeing what the next chapter holds.

My job as Loan Officer has provided me with feelings of personal and professional satisfaction as I worked with business owners to provide a portion of their loan funding for the opening of a new business or an expansion of their existing business.

As I travel in the cities located within the seven

counties served by GTPDD, it is with pride that I look at the successful businesses and I remember the business owners with whom I worked. The loans to assist these business owners totaled more than fifteen million five hundred thousand dollars (\$15,553,933.85) and resulted in 915 existing jobs being retained and the creation of 1,652 new jobs.

The success of the GTPDD Loan Programs is due in part to the great job done by the men and women who have served on the Loan Review Board. Over the years, members of the Loan Review Board have performed their duties in a professional and responsible manner. As a result of their due diligence regarding approval of loans, since 1994, GTPDD's

GTPDD's loan loss ratio is less than two per cent at 1.6825%. I thank each of you for serving on the Loan Review Board during my time as Loan Officer.

Over twenty-two years ago when I started as Loan Officer for GTPDD, Al Porter wanted to open a new funeral business in Louisville, Mississippi. One of my first loan funding projects was working with Al and Rhonda Porter so they could start Porter Funeral Home.

As this will be the last article I prepare for the newsletter, I wanted Porter Funeral Home to be the "FEATURED BUSINESS" for June, 2016.



Al and Rhonda Porter are the owners of Porter Funeral Home located in Louisville, MS. In 1995, after being in the funeral service business for 17 years, Al decided to open his own facility. They bought and re-modeled the medical clinic of Dr. Bob Giffin, which sits right in the heart of downtown Louisville. The building had been vacant for some time following the retirement of Dr. Giffin and provided an excellent space for a new business. They paved a large area for parking and fully renovated the former clinic to meet the needs of a funeral home.



Al is a native of Lexington MS, and holds a B.S. degree from Mississippi State University and a degree in Mortuary Science from East Mississippi Community College. He is licensed in funeral service and embalming. Rhonda is a native of Madison, Ga and a graduate of Mississippi University for Women. She is a licensed funeral director and handles office duties. They have three daughters, Sally, Claire and Olivia who were all raised helping in the business. The Porters are active in First Methodist Church of Louisville and its ministries. Al is a member of the Louisville Rotary Club and serves on the executive board of Winston County Medical Foundation. Rhonda is a former librarian and serves on both the Winston County and Mid-Mississippi Regional Library board of trustees. Although both Al and Rhonda grew up in other towns, Louisville is home to them now and they are fully invested in their town and its future.



In 2012, realizing the need for more space, the Porters began an addition to the building. They added another viewing parlor and a second parking lot, as well as renovating some of the original building to both update the facility and make it more accessible to the handicapped. Porter Funeral Home now encompasses over 10,000 square feet for visitation, meditation and funeral services. It is within walking distance of historic Masonic Cemetery.



For 21 years the Porters have been offering individualized care for families in their time of greatest need. The hallmark of Porter Funeral Home is personal service twenty-four hours a day. Their goal is to make a difficult time easier and less painful for grieving families.



Home and Community Based Elderly and Disabled Waiver Program

Through participation with the State of MS Division of Medicaid, GTPDD provides home and community-based services to individuals via the Elderly and Disabled Medicaid Waiver Program. Services through the Elderly and Disabled Medicaid Waiver Program are rendered to individuals who are at risk or would require the level of care found in a nursing facility.

To qualify for this service, the following factors are required:

1. Beneficiaries must be 21 years of age or older
2. Persons qualify by either SSI or 300% of SSI
3. Beneficiaries must score 50 or above on a comprehensive screening instrument
4. If assistance is not provided, the beneficiary would require nursing facility level of care

Services under this program include: personal care, in-home respite, adult day care, expanded home health visits, and home-delivered meals. All costs for these services are reimbursable to an approved provider, and all services must be approved by the Division of Medicaid.

This program serves Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston counties. A Case Management team, comprised of a registered nurse and licensed social worker, conducts the initial and yearly assessments to ensure that the client qualifies for the program. The team also visits the client on a monthly basis for continued case management.

Michelle Harris is the RN Supervisor for the Medicaid Waiver Program. Current team members are:

Choctaw

Tina Gill, RN
Rachel Embry, LSW

Clay

Mitzi Phelps, RN
Lesa Wilson, LSW

Lowndes #1

Brandy Clark, RN
Audie Strain, LSW

Lowndes #2

Cindy Reese, RN
Tonia Davis, LSW

Lowndes #3

Lindsey Marsh, RN
Angelia Sansing, LSW

Lowndes #4

Christy Massey, RN
Lynn Herndon, LSW

Noxubee #1

Jana Peterson, RN
Jessica Spears, LSW

Noxubee #2

Tammy Castle, RN
Jennifer Bridges, LSW

Oktibbeha #1

Tina McWhorter, RN
Suzanne Winstead, LSW

Oktibbeha #2

Stacy Elkins, RN
Jennifer Grantham, LSW

Oktibbeha #3

Helen Smith, RN
Beverly Baker, LSW

Oktibbeha #4

Amanda McCrary, LSW

Webster

Lynette Hunt, RN
Stephanie Cannon, LSW

Winston

Kim Mills, RN
Lauren Smith, LSW

Anyone interested in this program or would like additional information should contact the Medicaid Waiver office at 662-324-7860, option #3.

Baby Boomer & Senior Expo



**“.....over 400
SENIORS interact-
ing with sponsors &
vendors, playing
bingo.....”**



This past May 23rd was a Monday, but not just any Monday! It was the day the *Baby Boomer and Senior EXPO* came into being. Judging from the tremendous community response from interested vendors and the guest attendance, this event promises to be significant in reaching out to seniors in the area.

The *EXPO*, a community-wide effort, was a blend of information, entertainment, window-shopping, and eating! Available for enjoyment or enlightenment were booths hosted by professional organizations (legal, banking, accounting, financial planners, government, etc.); medical and retirement services; crafts and clothing exhibits; an auto repair shop; Starkville Community Theater; and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership. All food items were donated by merchants in Starkville; a generous area benefactress sponsored the use of the Sportplex for the activity. An impressive total of 68 vendors, and/or, sponsors participated,

whether by donating door prizes or food, covering associated costs, or actually hosting booths (53, in total). Cable, local, and print media graciously advertised the event, donating an estimated \$12,000 in their services. Hats are off to you, WCBI and MaxxSouth!

Other advertising included the distribution of 4800 flyers in the area, 1300 of which were mailouts.

The EXPO saw over 400 SENIORS interacting with sponsors and vendors, playing bingo, enjoying lunch, watching dance troupe performances, and, in general, having a great time!

Cindy Brown, Outreach Coordinator at the GTPDD, who organized the event, gave the community credit for any success of this “happening” in saying “...it was... accomplished by all the people involved in this coordinated effort to do something special for our boomers and seniors. This was their special day and I believe that all truly enjoyed themselves. Attendees and sponsors/vendors are

saying they will commit to the event next year, if it is repeated.

“And, a big thanks to Mr. Rudy Johnson for endorsing and supporting this unconventional senior service.”



URBANYOUTH CORPS FUNDED 2016

For the third year the Golden Triangle WIOA Department is administering the Urban Youth Corps Program for the City of Starkville. In early April the Golden Triangle Planning Department submitted an application to the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) on behalf of the City of Starkville. Within the month, the Mississippi Transportation Commission (MTC) approved up to \$35,000 in Federal SAFETEA-LU Funds. The WIOA department immediately began working with city officials to administer this work program.

Interest in the program is overwhelming, as 64 youth applied for 20 positions available with the City of Starkville. After careful consideration, 40 youth were interviewed, 20 were invited to attend work ethics training, and all 20 started to work June 6th!

Training was held Tuesday, May 31st through Friday, June 3rd in the Golden Triangle Conference Room. Participants received work ethics training including areas such as appearance and dress, worksite expectations, problem solving, conflict resolution, time management, interview skills, CPR and first aid. Mitzi Lawrence, WIOA Programs Director stated, "The WIA staff was impressed with this group of young people. They presented themselves in a professional manner and evidenced positive attitudes. I think this is a superb start for these young people in competing for jobs in the economy's workforce."

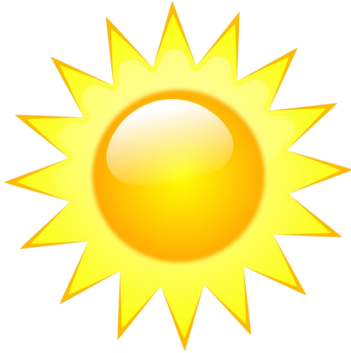
Upon completion of training, the youth met with their worksite supervisors for orientation on their individual jobs. They began work on Monday, June 6th. Work is planned to continue through the end of July, so as you venture out into the Starkville area, take note of these young workers. Whether they are sprucing up the landscape, painting curbs and handicap parking places, picking up litter to beautify the city, clearing ditch banks, identifying blockages in the sewer system or manning a desk in an office, tell them how much you appreciate the job they are doing to make the community a better place to live.

Starkville, these young people represent the future!



AH! SUMMERTIME, A DIFFERENT APPROACH

SLEEPING IN, BEING LAZY, NO ALARM CLOCKS, BREAKFAST AT NOON, TV
ALL DAY, RIGHT?



Wrong!" "Not me!" "No way!" "Too boring!" and similar responses come from these young people in the Starkville community: Kenedria Blair, Jerome Clark, Jr., Ericka Davis, Lynnzie Dean, Braylon Fisher, Trevaughn Hardwick, Keith Harris, Roquavin Harris, Jaden Hill, John King, Patarick Mame, Jalin Mobley, Brianna O'Neal, Shonatavious Poe, Desmond Reese, Jeffery Riley, Jacquez Roberts, Octavis Rodgers, JiDerreis Scott, and Tatiyana Wilson.

Why are they different?

Could it be that they ARE WORKING this summer? Yes, could be they have been introduced to the grown-up world of work.

The Urban Youth Corps Program, administered by Golden Triangle PDD for the City of Starkville, began Tuesday, March 31. To be eligible, students must be residents of Oktibbeha County and between the ages of 16 – 25. Although there are a few college age students in the program, the majority of the participants are high school students. For most, this is a first job!

Mitzi Lawrence, Urban Youth Program Coordinator, stated, "The interview staff was very impressed with this group of young people, who presented themselves in a professional manner and evidenced positive attitudes.

"This first job may be the stepping stone to a successful career for some of these young people."

The youth received 18 hours of work ethics training including areas such as appearance and dress, worksite expectations, problem solving, conflict resolution, time management, interview skills, CPR, and first aid. "Over the years," Mitzi Lawrence said, "we have found that the greatest challenge the participants experience is simply getting to work on time and being ready to work once they get there."

The program is funded through a \$35,000 grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation and \$10,000 appropriation from the City of Starkville. The youth will work for 20 hours a week for the next 8 weeks, earning about \$160 per week.

This year 64 youth applied for the 20 positions. A member of the interview staff said, "The selection process was very difficult. There were so many deserving young people. We wish we had a position for each of them. We encourage those who were not selected this year to reapply next year."



Good News!

GTPDD is awarded funding to continue the Counseling to Career job training program for out-of-school youth in Choctaw, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston counties for the PY 16 program year! Area Youth will benefit from these opportunities to learn job-preparation skills, job-seeking skills, and job-performance skills.

The PY 15 program year ends June 30th and once again has proven rewarding for the youth, as well as local businesses who took advantage of C2C services. Eighty-two (82) new area youth participated in the program. Seventy-two (72) of these accepted job placements where salary and workers comp, totaling over \$90,000, were paid through WIOA funds. If history repeats itself, many of these will receive job offers from their current "training" employers. WIOA staff continue to work with the youth as they seek employment or continue their education.

Now, other Area Youth need your help! If you know youth who are 16 to 24 years of age, not currently enrolled in school, could benefit from work ethics training, and desire employment, tell them about this chance to develop job marketability and enrich their lives. They too can learn skills for employment success, earn money for their futures, and receive support and services to reach future goals.

For information on the WIOA Counseling to Career Program, call Mitzi Lawrence at 662-324-7860 ext. 1128.

HOME Program Update

Times Are Changing!

The Mississippi Home Corporation (MHC) held an Application Workshop for local units of government and project administrators on June 20, 2016. The new process for the HOME Investment Partnership Program was introduced and GTPDD staff is hitting the ground running.

For the 2016 applications, local units of government will submit applications in two phases. If the Phase I application rates high enough, a Phase II application will be requested. This new process saves the local units of government time and money, as the Phase I Application is not as intensive as previous applications. Homeowner selection will take place in Phase II. Hopefully, this process will eliminate the automatic thought of "I'm getting a new house", only to be disappointed when the application is not funded.

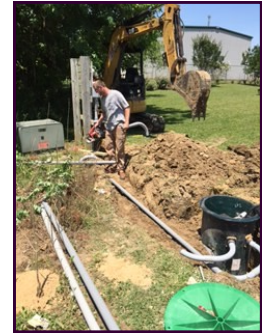
Another major change for 2016 is the focus on serving MORE residents (a very welcome change in the days where services are being reduced). To accomplish this, Mississippi Home Corporation is asking local units of government to focus on rehabilitation of current housing, rather than demolition and reconstruction. GTPDD receives calls daily from homeowners needing a few minor repairs to their home, not a complete reconstruction, and in the past GTPDD has not been able to offer them a solution. Reconstruction will be allowed, but rehabilitation is the main focus this year.

Mississippi Home Corporation is allowing local units of government to use their own designs for reconstruction, which will hopefully reduce the costs. Applications can be made for up to \$500,000 and serve up to 8 homeowners. The local units of government will be responsible for budgeting the HOME funds among the homeowners. By allowing the governmental entities more control over the budgeting process, MHC is hoping for a much smoother program.

There are also new rating factors for Phase I applications, which GTPDD staff will be presenting at upcoming governmental board meetings. MHC wants to focus on site concentration, and therefore, is looking for projects that impact certain areas of a city, county, or town. So take everything that you have learned about the HOME program in the past and erase it from your memory because Times Are Changing!

Macon received a \$450,000.00 Community Development Block Grant from the Mississippi Development Authority to extend the municipal sewer system and pick up these predominately low-moderate income households in the southeastern portion of the city. Pictured is a crew from Boyd Enterprises, LLC as they construct a hookup for a new customer. Most, if not all, new customers have begun using the new sewer service, which has enabled the beneficiaries to abandon their old septic systems and gain service to a much more reliable source.

The City of Macon is in the final stages of completing a sewer extension project to an unserved area of the city.



Mississippi's Appalachian Leader Receives Award at 2016 DDAA Conference



The Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) recently presented awards at the 2016 DDAA annual conference to congressional leaders from Appalachia for their work on behalf of the Region.

Mississippi's U.S. Senator Roger Wicker received a 2016 Congressional Award from the DDAA for his ongoing support for economic development efforts in Appalachia. The Congressional Award is presented by the DDAA each year to members of Congress for outstanding service to the people of Appalachia and support for the work of the Region's local development districts and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Wicker, a senator since 2007, has previously served in the U.S. House of Representative since January 1995, representing Mississippi's First Congressional District.

The Starkville Senior Enrichment Center 2016

Some folks scoff at the idea that social interaction fosters healthy mindsets, but research has shown that everyone benefits from sharing a laugh or two with others.

Since 2008, Rudy Johnson and the Golden Triangle Planning & Development District has provided the Starkville Senior Enrichment Center at 106 Miley Drive as a safe place where aging citizens can gather for fun and fellowship. No matter what age we are, play is a necessary part of keeping ourselves healthy.

So while you are still independent and able to transport yourself, visit the Center (1:00-4:00) Monday through Friday afternoon. If you like any kind of stitching, visit (10:00-2:00) on Wednesday and enjoy the stitching group.

The table below illustrates the journey of the Senior Center during the last eight years. Various reasons account for changes shown. A significant number of Senior Center participants have died. Some have moved away to be closer to their children. Some have moved into assisted living care facilities. Women retirees outnumber men retirees as substantiated by census records. During the beginning, interesting program presentations elicited strong attendance numbers which waned over time. Presently, table games seem to be the drawing card for the vibrant regular attendees.

Because the Senior Center Is run by volunteers, hours accrued by those who give their time is noteworthy and volunteer support is a vital part of the Senior Center operation. Also, retiree input and suggestions are always welcome.

STARKVILLE SENIOR ENRICHMENT CENTER

106 Miley Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

MONTHLY VISITS AND VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

	AVERAGE VISITORS/ MONTH			AVERAGE VOLUNTEER HOURS/MONTH		
	TOTAL VISITS	MEN VISITS	WOMEN VISITS	TOTAL HOURS	MEN HOURS	WOMEN HOURS
YEAR						
2008	237	74	163	275	85	190
2009	184	40	143	146	43	103
2010	198	26	172	80	2	78
2011	205	29	176	100	3	97
2012	207	21	186	101	2	99
2013	214	18	196	116	2	114
2014	155	6	149	85	2	83
2015	144	4	140	82	2	80
2016*	154	2	152	94	2	92

*Thru May, 2016

Farmers Market Nutrition Program



Seniors, 60 years of age and older, with certain income qualifications, are eligible to receive a one-time benefit in the form of vouchers from the Golden Triangle Area Agency on Aging to shop at authorized local farmers markets. The vouchers are used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers.

The purpose of the project is to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetable by senior adults and increase the awareness of farmers markets. When buying local produce, you are supporting the local economy and your local farmer.

Local authorized farmers markets are located in Columbus, Starkville and West Point. Program participants will be able to redeem vouchers at an authorized farmers market through November.

For more information please call Bobby Gann at 662-320-2000, extension 1104.



APRIL

Sherri Fowler	11 Years
Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson	26 Years
Janet Macon	14 Years
Keisha Warren	12 Years
Wendy Williams	11 Years

MAY

Courtney Carr	05 Years
Queenzella Gibson	11 Years
Shirley Irions	05 Years
Earnestine Robinson	15 Years
Toby Sanford	12 Years
Kishina Shirley	07 Years
Teshia Taylor	09 Years
Clara Tippet	07 Years
Lesa Wilson	12 Years

JUNE

Lena Davis	10 Years
Sharon Duke	10 Years
Phyllis Flake	10 Years
Tina Gill	05 Years
Minnie Lindsey	12 Years
Tina McWhorter	16 Years
Kenny Orr	14 Years
Debra Prishmont	07 Years
Yvonne Weaver	05 Years
Sheila Winters	05 Years

Staff Anniversaries

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

Golden Triangle
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E-mail: gtpdd.com

We're on the
Web:
www.gtpdd.com

(Cont'd from page 1)

Of the 64 total, 16 were either home-bound or institutionalized. Cases handled during this quarter included 9 of Bankruptcy/Debtor Relief; 4 Repossession Defense; 3 Divorce; 1 Guardianship; 1 Name Change; 6 Other Family Matters; 2 Medicaid claims; and 1 Long Term Health Care. Housing Cases consisted of 3 Homeownership of Real Property and 1 Mortgage Foreclosure Defense. Income Maintenance cases totaled 2. There were 11 Wills prepared and 20 Advance Directives and Powers of Attorney.

Casework Hours by the Attorneys totaled 525, to the tune of an almost \$80,000 impact on the community, at no expense to the low income elderly.

The GTPDD is pleased to be associated with North Mississippi Rural Legal Services and appreciate the invaluable assistance provided to the vulnerable elderly in our area.

(Sources: *Elder Law Project Reports & nmrls.com*)

Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson



Executive Director

Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc.

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