



Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc.

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From the Director.

50th



Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson
Executive Director

Come rain or shine.....

The Golden Triangle Planning & Development District celebrated 50 years!

The Golden Triangle Planning & Development District was established in 1970. The organization was designed to serve as a liaison between local government and the various state, regional and federal agencies, involved in development of economic, community and human resources. The GTPDD is governed by a 28-member board comprised from four people from each county represented within the Golden Triangle District. Counties served by the GTPDD are Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster & Winston.

September 16th, even though the rain came, the GTPDD celebrated their 50th anniversary with friends, board members (past & present), staff, retired staff, as well as, elected county and city officials. Attendees enjoyed wonderful food catered by Carla Guyton and Diane Thomas. The day brought rain, but blessings were abundant seeing old friends, as well as, having many representatives from companies that work with the PDD.

Executive Director Rudy Johnson presented Jimmie Oliver, Choctaw County GTPDD Board Member, with a plaque acknowledging his 50 years of service to the PDD. After the festivities outside, guests were asked to join together in the Boardroom. Mr. Johnson and the GTPDD honored Mr. Oliver by naming the Boardroom, The Jimmie D. Oliver Boardroom.

See page 2 & 3 for pictures.....

50th Anniversary





Looking For Our Next Success Story!!

During the past program year the WIOA staff served eighty-three students in our seven county service area. There were many success stories that could be shared but here are two that deserve recognition.



Deshun Lyles was a part of the Clay County WIOA Workforce Program. Deshun initially shared an interest in auto mechanics. He expressed a desire to get into a trade school after graduation and get a certification in auto mechanics. He had very little job experience when beginning the workforce program. He had worked at Walmart for a few months but the position was temporary during the summer months.

As I got to know Deshun better through the work skills training classes, I was very impressed with his overall character. He was attentive, thoughtful, and showed maturity. When discussing his desire for internship placement, we decided to find a job in auto mechanics if possible. Ultimately, the closest placement found was with a body shop. While working for Mr. Dale, the owner, Deshun would tell me he loved the work. I also received a message from his mom telling me that he always came home with a smile on his face.

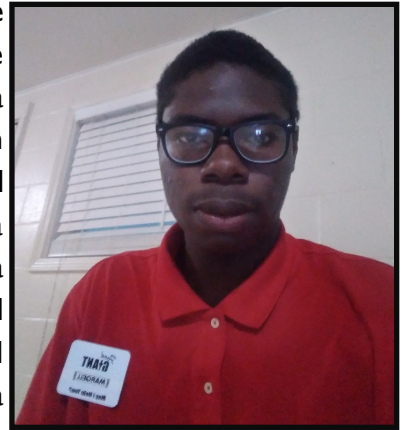
Deshun did an excellent job while working with Mr. Dale; unfortunately, he could not hire Deshun after completion of the internship. Mr. Dale did, however speak very highly of Deshun and said if he ever was able to hire, he would call Deshun without hesitation.

After taking the WorkKeys, Deshun was awarded a silver CRC. Upon graduation, Deshun made a decision to search for employment. Having problems finding a suitable job, he spoke with someone from Job Corp and a decision was made to wait before making that move. He spoke with me several times during the decision making process. After personally speaking with me, he decided to get a welding certification from EMCC. There was a job opportunity with Plum Creek in West Point that would hire him if he would get the certification since he had already scored silver on the WorkKeys. He was able to get the Plum Creek Gas Metal Arc Welding certification from EMCC and is currently employed with Plum Creek. He has been there for a month and still texts me often telling me how happy he is with his job.

Working with Deshun throughout the months of decisions, changes, options and opportunities, I was very impressed with him. He made thoughtful and wise decisions. He was diligent in contacting me, always with such a kindness and appreciation. It was so refreshing to see the overall positive character he exhibited throughout the program. Although his future plans took many different directions, I am pleased that he thought through each decision and was willing to keep me updated and ask for my help when needed, always doing so with humility.

I am so proud of what Deshun accomplished thus far. He never fails to thank me for being there for him and for giving him the opportunity to be a part of the WIOA Gateway workforce program. We, the Gateway staff, are proud of Deshun and his success. We are so proud of how the Gateway program was a positive experience for him.

Marqell Kimbrel, a student at Columbus High School, joined the Gateway Program in the spring semester of 2021. He was in the twelfth grade and eighteen years old. Marqell is the son of Carla Kimbrel and lives with his mother, sister, and three brothers. When I asked him why he wanted to be in the Gateway Program, he said that he wanted to join the Gateway Program so that he could get a job and earn his own money. He also said that he wanted to be a stocker. After completing the Essential Job Skills Training classes, I placed Marqell at Sunflower Food Store in Columbus. He completed his job internship at Sunflower and was not late and did not miss a day of work—this while having to walk or ride his bike to work.



That placement seemed a good fit for him, and during the first pay period the store manager said that he was going to, and did, hire Marqell at the end of his internship. Unfortunately, the good news did not last. Shortly after Marqell's hire, he and the store manager let me know that Marqell had been terminated for being on his phone more than once while on the clock at work. Marqell seemed truly sorry and apologized for disappointing me. Needless to say, I reminded him what we had discussed in class about phone use at work; and he assured me that he had learned his lesson and that it would not happen again. Rather than giving up, Marqell chose to learn from his mistake, got on his bike, and went to other businesses until he found another job. He is currently working as a stocker at Food Giant in Columbus. Well done, Marqell!

If you know of a student currently enrolled in the Career and Technology Center in the Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Noxubee, Webster, or Winston counties, tell them about the Gateway Program and have them call Mitzi Lawrence at 662-324-5007 to receive an application and training schedule. That young person just might be our next success story.



New Rail Spur to Serve New Galvanizing Line at Steel Dynamics in Lowndes County

The Lowndes County Board of Supervisors received funding for the construction of a new rail spur to serve the new Galvanizing Line at Steel Dynamics in the Golden Triangle Industrial Park. The new addition to SDI will create 40 new jobs with a total private investment of \$140,000,000. Total cost of the new rail line is approximately \$3,071,000 with funding being provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the State of Mississippi through the Developmental Infrastructure Program (DIP), the Mississippi Rail Revolving Loan Program and local sources. Calvert-Spradling Engineers in West Point, Mississippi was the project engineer and the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District was the project administrator for the various funding sources.



About the Elderly and Disabled Waiver Program

The Elderly and Disabled Waiver program provides home and community-based services to individuals over the age of 21 whom, but for the provision of such services, would require the level of care provided in a nursing home facility. Beneficiaries of this waiver must qualify for Medicaid as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or meet the income and resource eligibility requirements for income level up to 300% of the SSI Federal Benefit Rate and meet medical criteria of the program, with a score of 50.

The Elderly and Disabled Waiver program is administered directly by the Home and Community Based Services Division (HCBS). Case Management services are provided by the Planning and Development Districts. The case management team is composed of a registered nurse and a licensed social worker who are responsible for identifying, screening and completing an assessment on individuals in need of at-home services. Upon approval of the HCBS, the case managers can refer qualified individuals to the following services: adult day care, home-delivered meals, personal care services, in-home respite, and extended home health visits.

The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District's Case Management Services are provided to all counties in our district, including: Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston County.

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

Leah Agnew, RN
Jessica Rodgers, LSW

Lowndes #2

Cindy Reese, RN
Tennie Simpson, LSW

Lowndes #3

Lindsey Marsh, RN
Angelia Sansing, LSW

Lowndes #4

Jami Hubbard, RN
Stephanie Cannon, LSW

Noxubee #1

Robin Prier, RN
Jennifer Bridges, LSW

Noxubee #2

Tammy Castle, RN
Kallie Hubbard, LSW

Oktibbeha #1

Tina McWhorter, RN
Alyssa Harris, LSW

Oktibbeha #2

Stacy Elkins, RN
Jennifer Grantham, LSW

Oktibbeha #3

Helen Smith, RN
Beverly Baker, LSW

Oktibbeha #4

Krystal Taylor, RN
Megan Aucoin, LSW

Webster

Sydney Thompson, RN
Lisa Woods, 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 662-320-2003.



Golden Triangle
Planning & Development District
P. O. Box 828
106 Miley Drive
Starkville, MS 39760

Phone: 662-324-7860
Fax: 662-324-7328
E-mail: gtpdd.com

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

Medicare Annual Enrollment Period

Medicare Open Enrollment Period for Medicare Advantage plans and Medicare prescription drug coverage will begin October 15th and continue until December 7th. This is the one time each year that all Medicare beneficiaries are allowed to review plans that will be available for the upcoming calendar year.

GTPDD will once again be providing "Free" assistance and information on these plans. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please call and make an appointment. All appointments will be conducted via phone in an effort to keep everyone safe.

Call the office at 662-324-7860 and request an appointment. We ask that you complete an information worksheet and a list of your needed medications. This allows us to view your current plan and compare this plan to what might be new or different for the upcoming plan year. These worksheets are available for pickup at the office or by mail if you do not come to the Starkville area. Forms need to be returned to the office as soon as possible so we can prepare as much as possible before open enrollment begins.



JULY

Brittany Bell	06 years
Lucille Booth	13 years
Tammy Castle	21 years
Diana Granger	08 years
Kim Mills	21 years
Mitzi Phelps	22 years
Regina Rambus	14 years
Latanya Williams	10 years

AUGUST

Spencer Broocks	18 years
Angel Coggins	17 years
Robbie Harris	08 years
Yotonnia Hudgins	06 years
Queen Kidd	19 years
Anna Lancaster	08 years
Mitzi Lawrence	21 years
Judith Ross	06 years
Angelia Sansing	15 years

SEPTEMBER

Natasha Bridges	06 years
Ruthie Colter	19 years
Tiffany Gilliland	08 years
Tim Heard	28 years
Amy Sanford	10 years
Andrea Scott	08 years
Santreena Triplett	18 years

Staff Anniversaries

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