

**Calendar
On Page Two**

Developments:
*The Newsletter of
The Simpson County
Development Foundation*

176 West Court Street
P. O. Box 127
Mendenhall, MS 39114

601.847.2375
Office
601.847.2380
Facsimile

scdf@bellsouth.net
Email

www.simpsoncounty.biz
Website

Brian Barnard
President

Skip Russell
President-Elect

Pat Brown
Secretary-Treasurer

Todd Booth
Jimmy Clyde
Greg Paes
Vice-Presidents
Government Relations

Malory Yelverton
Vice-President
Community Development

Stan Bulger
Vice-President
Economic Development

Jacob Blakeney
Vice-President
Stakeholder Development

Donnie Caughman
Executive Director

From the Executive Director

Quality of life issues have always been an important element in economic development endeavors, and it seems to have increased as a key economic driver in recent years. Employers want safe communities with social and cultural amenities, shopping and of course quality schools to attract a skilled and desirable labor force.

Recently released 2015 accountability results from the Mississippi Department of Education show that the Simpson County Public School District improved from a D rating in 2014 to a C rating in 2015. While Magee High School had a C score, Mendenhall High only had a D. Also interesting to note was the fact that of all the schools in the county, Simpson Central finished the year with an A rating helping significantly the overall rating of the District.

The trend toward school consolidation is beginning to take place in Mississippi with the most recent in our area being the planned combining of Bassfield High and Prentiss High for the 2017 school year. It may be time for our school board to take a good hard look at the advantages of consolidating Magee and Mendenhall high schools. I realize this has been a controversial topic for school administrators, policy makers and communities for a very long time. Despite the long-standing and cherished tradition of individual football team rivalries, we are now at a time when we must think of what is best for every student in our district as a whole.

*Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't; you're absolutely right."
-Henry Ford*

In August 2015, the Advisory Committee to the School Board recommended to the Board that the District study consolidation of the county's high schools. As a member of the Advisory Committee recently said to me, "If Simpson County is going to remain competitive with our surrounding counties, when it comes to attracting economic development and offering families who live in or who may want to locate in our county the same educational options as counties such as Rankin and Madison, we need to strongly consider the consolidation of these two high schools. We have some really great people working in our public school system and they, along with the citizens of Simpson County deserve a consolidated state of the art facility with adequate resources to provide the highest quality education possible."

Both Mendenhall and Magee High Schools are faced with declining enrollments and financial cutbacks due to students transferring, home schooling, moving away or worse, dropping out. Simpson County schools experienced a dropout rate of 14% last school year. The state dropout rate is 12.8%. Simpson County schools have a four year graduation rate through the 2015 school year of 77.5%. The state average is 78.4%, and the national percentage is 82%. *(Statistics from Mississippi Department of Education)*

Magee High had an enrollment of 452 students for the 2015 school year, and Mendenhall had 542 which brings up the discussion of "economies of size". While money matters, it is not the only thing. Quality leadership, teachers and learning environment means everything for a quality education. Support from the parents and community also rank high with a culture of learning evident in all our schools.

The Simpson County Development Foundation Board of Directors believes that, at the very least, a preliminary study be conducted by our school board and superintendent to help determine the feasibility and benefits of a consolidated high school in Simpson County. We must have a vision and a plan to take our children into the future for their advantage and ours.



News Briefs

Doris Adcox, Executive Director, Magee Chamber of Commerce, has announced that Crazy Day has been moved to the Fall this year. Crazy Day is scheduled for October 22, 2016. This year all Chamber Business Members who sell Retail Merchandise will be offered a Crazy Day Booth at NO CHARGE. Call Doris for details: 601.849.2517.



The 10th Annual Health Trust Scrub Run is set for Saturday, August 27, 2016. Registration deadline is August 19th.

For more information, contact Pam Wallace at pwallace@mghosp.org or 601-849-7309 or Cindy McIntyre at mcintyre@mghosp.org or 601-849-7391.



A new Dollar General Store is under construction at Braxton. The new store is located at the intersection of US Highway 49 and M. A. Neely Road. We welcome this new business to our Simpson County community.

NOTICE

Due to insufficient nominations/applications for Simpson Leaders FY2017, a Simpson County Leadership Development course will not be held this fiscal year.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our newest Business Sponsor
Member: 49 Tire Mart LLC, Mendenhall.



Gerald Brown
Owner

CALENDAR

The Officers and Directors of the Foundation met on Thursday, July 21, at Trustmark Bank in Magee, and they adopted the following schedule of meetings for Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017):

Executive Committee

[10:00 a.m., SCDF Offices, Mendenhall]
Thursday, August 18
Thursday, October 20
[December – No Meeting]
Thursday, February 16
Thursday, May 18

Executive Committee and Directors

[10:00 a.m., Site TBA*, Magee]
Thursday, September 15
Thursday, November 17
Thursday, January 19
Thursday, March 16
Thursday, June 15

*These meetings alternate between Peoples Bank, PriorityOne Bank, and Trustmark Bank.

ANNUAL MEETING

April – Details TBA



SIMPSON CO. ECONOMIC DEV. DISTRICT Trustees are scheduled to meet on Tuesday, October 11, at 11:30 a.m., at Berry's Restaurant, Magee.

