

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

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Vice-President  
Economic Development

**Jacob Blakeney**  
Vice-President  
Stakeholder Development

**Donnie Caughman**  
Executive Director

**From the Executive Director**

What do you think business considers when looking to expand or open new locations? According to all the experts, it is the following: Taxes, market size, wealth, competition and growth prospects; workforce size, wage levels; transportation and utility access and costs; quality of schools and other lifestyle amenities; and of course incentives.

While the most recent income data from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security shows that Simpson County has a per capita personal income of \$34,710 compared to \$34,431 for the state, we must concede that our county trails the state in average annual wages by almost ten thousand dollars a year, and we experience 19.6% of our people living below the poverty level. Quality jobs would help alleviate those disturbing numbers.

What makes Simpson County a great place to invest, work, live and visit? Consider the fact that a fifty mile radius around Magee finds a population of approximately 800,000 people. That equates to about 28% of the state's total population. This is a large market size by Mississippi standards. We are located in the heart of Mississippi, just south of Jackson and north of Hattiesburg, centrally located within 500 miles or less from most major south/southeastern industry hubs, New Orleans, Dallas, Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville and Houston.

Our county has an effective and efficient transportation hub with a multitude of transportation and distribution options, i.e., truck, air or rail.

Simpson County has one of the most dependable, trainable workforces in the state with one of the best community colleges, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Simpson Center, in the nation located in the county to provide training. Our public high schools are graduating more students than ever before and are showing progress in accountability and achievement.

There are low state taxes or none at all for corporations and industry, and local officials may provide up to a ten year property tax exemption with the exception of school taxes. Also, Mississippi is a right-to-work state (no union requirements). Moreover, incentive programs are available through the state based on job creation, payroll and investment.

The county is powered by excellent sources of power, communications and water. We experience a low crime rate with outstanding law enforcement, fire protection and emergency management.

Of course recreational opportunities are prevalent with excellent hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking along lakes, rivers, creeks and trails. Various youth leagues are organized and sponsored by cities, service clubs and churches.

My evaluation of our county is that we are ready for growth, business attraction and expansion. We need to encourage and advocate local government leaders that have a vision for county-wide growth and land use. I believe we should promote a plan for a single, strong, quality high school in the county and support those school board members who plan for the future of the children in Simpson County.

**"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary." Winston Churchill**





## News Briefs

### New Businesses and Construction



The new Dollar General Store is now open 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.

Other new businesses open in the county. The Mendenhall Area Chamber of Commerce advises that the following businesses have opened since July 2016:

Main Street Barber Shop  
Easterling Automotive  
Core Training Program, LLC  
The Flea Market

**SCDF welcomes these new businesses to our community.**

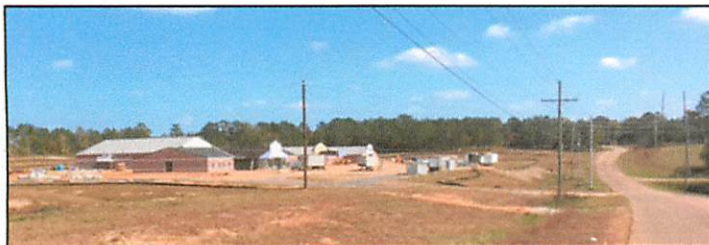


**Construction begins on the new Love's Travel Stops in Magee.** This major addition to Magee's and Simpson County's business community is located on U. S. Highway 49 on the south side of Tractor Supply.



Construction is now underway.

**Construction of Magee Elementary School Building progresses.** As this recent photograph shows, the construction of the new elementary school building at Magee has progressed over the summer. The school is located on Goodwater Road.

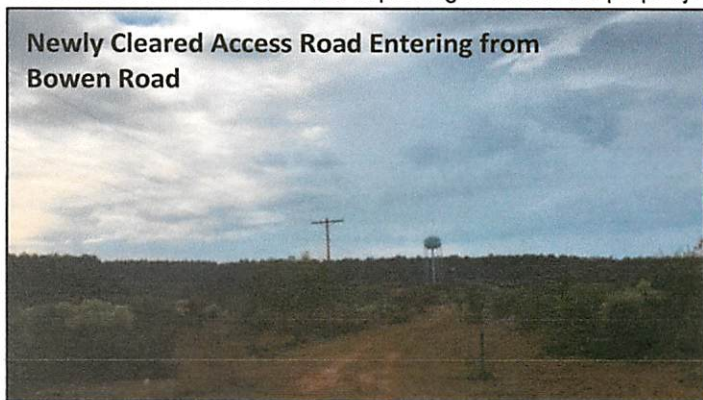


### Developmental Property Management

Simpson County Economic Development District [SCEDD] trustees make decisions on selected properties. At their October meeting, the SCEDD Trustees received and acted on several property appraisals and proposals. The water tank at Mendenhall Commerce Park, Highway 43 and Bowen Road has been professionally inspected and appraised: the tank is in excellent condition and needs only disinfecting to be functional.

SCEDD charged the Simpson County Development Foundation with coordinating with the county supervisors the cleaning of the property to a state consistent with effective marketability. The Simpson County Board of Supervisors consequently have made considerable improvements to the property including clearing the area around the water tank and improving roads on the property.

### Newly Cleared Access Road Entering from Bowen Road



The SCEDD Trustees also received professional appraisals on properties at Magee. A 4+ Acre parcel (Frontage Road along Hwy 49) and an 11+ Acre parcel (along Good Water Road) have a value, respectively, of \$75,000 per acre and \$25,000 per acre. The Trustees resolved to declare these properties as surplus for industrial development and to be sold. The Board of Supervisors having passed a concurring resolution, a request for bids will be published.

### Economic Development

**USM to present target industry analysis to SCDF officers and directors.** As reported in our previous newsletter, University of Southern Mississippi School of Business graduate



Dr. Shannon Campbell

students have recently completed a target industry analysis for Simpson County, and their report has been provided to SCDF and to SCEDD. Executive Director Donnie Caughman has arranged with Dr. Shannon Campbell, Director of the Trent Lott National Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship at USM, to make a presentation of the

report to the officers and directors of the Foundation and trustees of the Simpson County Economic Development District.

The presentation is scheduled as follows:

DATE: Thursday, November 17, 2016

TIME: 11:30 a.m.

PLACE: Berry's Seafood Restaurant, Magee

[continued next page—Economic Development]



## Economic Development [continued from Page 2]



The executive summary of the report provides a synopsis of the findings of the analysis:

"The study conducted to identify Simpson County, Mississippi's target industries with the highest growth potential aligned with the county's economic advantages and Simpson

County Development Foundation's strategies concludes that the county should target industries related to Natural Gas Distribution, Light Truck and Utility Vehicle Manufacturing, Freight Transportation Arrangement. . . . In order to attract these industries to the region, we recommend Simpson County Development Foundation reaches out to related industry associations, organizations, and site selectors, forms a regional partnership with neighboring economic development organizations, establishes university and higher education institutions, collaborates with youth and young professionals within the community, and solicits input on future economic development initiatives and strategies from the community and higher education institutions within the state."

## Community Development

**Keep Simpson County Beautiful receives \$20,000 Lowe's Community Partnership Grant.** In October, KSCB was officially notified of the award of the grant. The grant provides funds to enhance the City of Mendenhall Sports Complex Playground with the addition of two (2) 12 x 20 covered pavilions, complete with picnic tables and grills, and to implement landscaping around those areas. With special consideration to the number of families that visit the Sports Complex each year for tournaments, the new playground will provide a fun and interactive environment for the children of families attending the games.

## Government Relations



**Representative Andy Gipson receives Mississippi Top 50 award.** Congratulations to Representative Andy Gipson who is among 20 recipients of the 2016 MSto50 award in the Elective/Appointed

Government Officials category.

Inaugurated this year, the Mississippi Top 50 Award is being created to recognize those that help, by virtue of

their position and talent, move the conversation in Mississippi forward.

This is an annual list of the people judged to be the most influential leaders in the state. This bipartisan selection of leaders comes from the ranks of local, state and federal elected and appointed officials; political leaders; government affairs professionals; public policy advocates; economic development professionals; business leaders; media professionals and other leaders. The categories are:

- Elected/Appointed Government Officials
- Lobbying/Government Relations
- Business, Culture and Media

The awards are sponsored by Y'all Politics, Mississippi's leading political website and SuperTalk Mississippi, Mississippi's leading statewide radio network. Awardees are nominated through an open process.

## CALENDAR

2016

### Simpson County Development Foundation

Thursday, November 17, 2016; 11:30 a.m.

Berry's Seafood Restaurant, Magee

Officers and Directors

Special Program: Presentation of Target Industries Report

December: No Scheduled Meetings

### Simpson County Economic Development District

November: No Scheduled Meetings

December: No Scheduled Meetings

