

From the Executive Director

*The following article appeared in the March 18, 2018, edition of the Clarion-Ledger. Finding Ms. Parker's insights into **current work-force issues** to be most thought-provoking, I asked her for permission to reprint her article in our newsletter.*



Star Parker is an author and president of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education (CURE). For more information on Star Parker's work and her nonprofit CURE, please visit urbancure.org.

More men of working age...are not working

Writing last week about the opioid crisis, I suggested that, as we consider policy options for dealing with the problem, we consider that at least some part of it may reflect a spiritual, moral crisis in the country.

I noted that casualties from opioids show that they are disproportionately men, disproportionately divorced or never married, and disproportionately individuals with no more than high school education.

We can look beyond the opioid crisis and see a broad, disturbing picture pointing to a social and spiritual crisis among our young men.

In 2016, Nicholas Eberstadt, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D. C., published a book called "America's Invisible Crisis: Men Without Work."

He discusses what he calls a "flight from work" in which droves of our male population have disappeared from the workforce.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics just issued its new jobs report, and the results were heartening. Data shows a return to growth in jobs in the American economy and return to the workforce of many who dropped out during the years following the recent recession.

The labor force participation rate of prime-age working men ages 25-54, that is, the percentage of working or actively seeking work, was 89.3 percent in February 2018.

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Report of the Annual Membership Meeting

Photographs used in this article are courtesy of the Magee Courier/Simpson County News.

On Thursday, April 18, 2018, the Thirty-ninth Annual Membership Meeting of the Simpson County Development Foundation convened at 11:30 a.m. on



the campus of Boswell Regional Center. A delicious meal was prepared on site by Chris Williams/Farm Bureau Cooking Team and served buffet-style.

The Rev. Rudy Jackson, Chaplain, BRC, gave the invocation.

President Pat Brown extended a welcome to the annual meeting and recognized guests; he then introduced the guest speaker, Joe Max Higgins, Jr., CEO, Golden Triangle Development LINK

(pictured above). This regional economic development organization for Clay, Lowndes and Oktibbeha counties specializes in environmental planning, community and economic development projects, and has created nearly 15,000 manufacturing jobs, and facilitated \$6 billion in industrial development. Mr. Higgins gave an instructive and engaging address, emphasizing basing economic development on local needs and resources and the value of regional cooperation.

"When attitude is correct, positive things happen and people look for ways to make things happen rather than complaining about why they can't or don't."

--- Joe Max Higgins

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*More men of working age...are not working
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Given that this rate was down to 88.4 late in 2011, we see progress here—good news.

However, Eberstadt points out that the average labor force participation rate of these prime-age working men in 1965 was 96.6 percent.

“Expressed another way,” says Eberstadt, “the population of economically inactive American men of prime working age leapt from 3.4 percent in 1965 to 11.8 percent in 2015, and remains at 11.5 percent today.”

By my own calculations, almost 5 million prime-age working men have disappeared from the workforce.

[T]he cultural dynamics at play are more fundamental driving factors of what's going on than race We are paying a large social price for the widespread collapse of Christian values—in particular, the values of marriage and family. And our young men may be disproportionately bearing the brunt of this.

The U. S. population of men 25-54 today is 64.5 million. If their workforce participation today was at 96.6 percent, as it was in 1965, 62.3 million would be working or actively seeking work.

But today's reported rate of 89.3 percent indicates that there are now 57.6 million prime-age men working or actively looking for work—4.7 million less than there were would have been at the 1965 rate.

How are these millions of men who have dropped out of the workforce sustaining themselves?

According to Eberstadt, they get help from friends, family, and, of course, government.

Using Census Bureau data, Eberstadt reports that “as of 2013, over three-fifths of prime-age men not in the labor force lived in homes that relied on at least one means-tested program for income. Some 41 percent of these men lived on food stamps, while just over half reported using Medicaid, a noncash benefit program.”

Additional Census Bureau data, according to Eberstadt, shows that “in 2013, some 57 percent of prime-age unworking men were getting benefits from at least one government-disability program.”

What is the profile of these prime-age unworking men?

They most likely have no more than a high school diploma, are not married, have no children or are not living with children they may have, are born in the USA and are black.

Although overall the workforce participation rate for black men is lower than that of white men, the cultural dynamics at play are more fundamental driving factors of what's going on than race.

For instance, Eberstadt points out that “labor-force participation rates for white men today are lower than they were for black men in 1965.”

Also, the labor-force participation rates for never-married white men are consistently lower, by about 3 percentage points, than for married black men.

We are paying a large social price for the widespread collapse of Christian values—in particular, the values of marriage and family. And our young men may be disproportionately bearing the brunt of this.



Every member of the Simpson County Development Foundation is essential to attaining successfully our goals for the continued betterment and advancement of our community—Simpson County. Our goals are primarily economic; however, we are concerned with every element in the quality of life of our community. You, our Members, have a vital role in the success of each of the Foundation's projects and programs.

Welcome to Our Newest Members

Cemper Scott

Wes Mason, Realtor

Real Pure Bottling Inc.

Report of the Annual Membership Meeting [continued from page 1]

Trustmark Bank was named Business of the Year. Pat Brown presented the award to Brandon Hubbard, President, Trustmark Bank, Magee (picture below, left).

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District was named Ally of the Year. Shannon Welch presented the award to Mike Monk, CEO, CMPDD (pictured below, right).



President Pat Brown called the business session to order and made initial remarks, including an overview of accomplishments of the past year.

Executive Director Donnie Caughman offered additional remarks. He also gave a report on Simpson County's participation in Aspire Mississippi. Aspire Mississippi is MDA's Asset Division's leadership development program designed to help communities discover their full potential through leadership training and technical assistance.



In addition, he recognized agribusinesses in the county, and he introduced newly appointed Commissioner of Agriculture Commerce Andy Gipson.

The business session included the report of the Nominating Committee and the election of officers and directors for the coming year.

President Brown passed the gavel to President-Elect Malory Yelverton (pictured below). Yelverton presented an award to Brown, recognizing his service as president for the past year. In her closing remarks, she challenged and encouraged members to be prepared to join in and work hard in the coming year.



OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR FY 2019

[Newly elected officers and directors will assume their duties upon election.]

Executive Committee FY 2019

President.....Malory Yelverton
President-elect.....Brien Hubbard
Secretary-Treasurer.....Josh Duckworth
VP-Government Relations.....Mayor Dale Berry
VP-Government Relations.....Mayor Todd Booth
VP-Economic Development.....Brandon Hubbard
VP-Community Development.....Stan Bulger
VP-Stakeholder Development.....Shannon Welch
Past President.....Pat Brown

Board of Directors

Class of 2019

Whitney Baker
Julie Breazeale
Ian Cowart
Price Wallace

Class of 2020

Witt Fortenberry
Kelly Jones
Marvin Lee
Josh Pierce

Class of 2021

Mary Frances Broadhead
Lacye Evans
Michael Kennedy
Brett Osborn

Non-Elected Directors

The Bylaws [Art. IV, §4.1] provide for one Board Member each from the following groups to be appointed by their respective governing bodies or institutions: Each Benefactor Member; Each President's Circle Member; Simpson County Board of Supervisors; Each of the Municipalities of Braxton, D'Lo, Magee, and Mendenhall; The Magee Chamber of Commerce and the Mendenhall Area Chamber of Commerce; The Chairman of the Simpson County Economic Development District Trustees; The University of Southern Mississippi; Copiah-Lincoln Community College.

SIMPSON LEADERS

A Simpson Leadership Development Class—Simpson Leaders—has formed with twelve participants. Thanks to those who are participating and to those who are supporting their participation. The first of four sessions will be held in August 2018. *For more information about Simpson Leaders, please call the SCDF offices at 601.847.2375, and ask for Richard Rankin.*

SCDF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS MEETING

DATE: Thursday, May 17, 2018
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
SITE: Magee Civic Center
NOTE: *Newly elected officers and directors should plan to attend: they will assume their duties at THIS meeting.*

The Foundation extends a special thanks to the following for their contributions to this year's annual meeting:

**Boswell Regional Center
Entergy
Southern Pine Electric
Central MS Planning & Development District
Chris Williams-Farm Bureau**

Developments:

The Newsletter of
The Simpson County Development Foundation
176 West Court Street
P. O. Box 127
Mendenhall, MS 39114
601.847.2375
Donnie Caughman
Executive Director

9th Annual **Mendenhall** Saturday, May 19TH *In May* *Simpson County* **FIRE FIGHTERS CHALLENGE**

**You Don't
Want to
Miss this!**

Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the day!



**• Arts & Crafts • Car Show
• 5K Run/Walk • BBQ Cook Off
• Kid Zone • Food • Fireman Challenge**

Mendenhall in May Sponsors

Fire Fighters Challenge -
*Mississippi Diesel Products (MDP)
& PriorityOne Bank*

Car Show - Booth Discount Tire,
Napa, Puckett's Paint & Body

BBQ Cook Off -
*Nick Floyd & Associates
& JJ's 49 Fuel and Food*

5K Run/Walk -
Peoples Bank

For more information contact Mendenhall Area Chamber of Commerce at 601-847-1725