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Mayor proclaims March Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month...page 11

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Grand Opening of Magnolia State Bank Downtown Laurel Branch

By Linda Cranford

"It is great to see his vision finally come to fruition," exclaimed Kris Mangum, CEO of Magnolia State Bank, speaking of former Magnolia State Bank President/CEO Thomas Brown, who passed away in March of 2016.

Ten years ago Mr. Brown was introduced

to the beautiful building in downtown Laurel that was once a department store named Carter-Heidi then later became known as Effird's before the building was remodeled and turned into an astoundingly beautiful office building with dark mahogany wood and chandeliers throughout.

Thursday morning, March 2, Laurel

Mayor Johnny Magee, other local government officials, members of the Chamber of Commerce and EDA, family and friends joined Barbara Brown – Chairman of the Board, Lillous Ann Shoemaker – President, Mangum, Drew Brown Downtown Laurel President, Mike McClellan – Senior Vice President, and employees of Magnolia State Bank for a Grand Opening Ceremony and Building Dedication.

The honorable Judge Charles Pickering, retired federal judge of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, led the Building Dedication ceremony outlining Mr. Brown's history and vision for Magnolia State Bank. Pickering said that Mr. Brown was told if he purchased the building he would have "the most beautiful bank lobby in Mississippi."

Four years ago Mr. Brown finally pur-

chased the building and Thursday was a bittersweet moment for all associated with the bank and everyone who knew Mr. Brown.

Mayor Magee said several years ago he and a group of people from Laurel traveled to Washington D.C. to gather information to start the now Laurel Main Street organization which is dedicated to revitalizing Downtown Laurel. "There were naysayers who said Laurel was dead, gone, a waste. With the opening of Magnolia State Bank, it shows that Downtown is not dead, but thriving," stated Magee.

The main branch of Magnolia State Bank is still located in Bay Springs. The three-story Downtown Laurel Branch building with its central location will also

See GRAND OPENING, page 4



Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting and Building Dedication of the Magnolia State Bank Downtown Laurel Branch. Photo/Linda Cranford

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NEJ Gold Horizons place in recent competition



The Northeast Jones Gold Horizons competed in the West Jones Showchoir Invitational recently and placed first in their division and was first runner-up in finals. Gold Horizons has worked really hard and have had a phenomenal year. Their last competition of the year will be at the Oak Grove Invitational. Gold Horizons will travel to New York to perform at “The Heritage Festival” in New York City on March 25, 2017. *Photo/submitted*

JCJC hosts MCTM Jr. H.S. Math Contest

Submitted

Approximately 20 students from five Pine Belt schools spent the morning of March 2 on the Jones County Junior College campus working on math problems to earn a spot at state competition in April.

Each year, JCJC’S math department and the Mississippi Council of Teachers of Mathematics sponsor the district level MCTM Math Contest for Jr. High School

students.

The winners will continue competition on the state level in April. They are, first place for 7th graders, Ta’Kyra Daniels of Laurel Middle School; second place for 7th graders, Aiden Moffett of Taylorsville; first place for eighth graders, Maxwell Dobbs of Laurel Middle School; and second place for eighth graders, Wade Parker of Laurel Middle School.



Pictured, left to right, are winners in the MCTM Math Contest, Ta’Kyra Daniels of Laurel, Aiden Moffett of Mount Olive, Maxwell Dobbs of Laurel, and Wade Parker of Laurel. *Photo/ Brooke Riley, JCJC yearbook student*

LRMA to hold 10th annual Spring Break Festival March 14

Submitted

The Lauren Rogers Museum of Art will hold its 10th annual Spring Break Festival on Tuesday, March 14. On the Museum’s front lawn from 1 - 3 p.m., there will be hands-on art activities, face painting, and the Hattiesburg Zoo will join us showcasing a variety of animals. Also, the Mississippi Children’s Museum of Jackson will set up its Imagination Playground for children to explore and build. This family festival is free and open to the public. In case of inclement weather, the festival will be held in the LRMA Sanderson Gallery. This year’s Spring Break Festival is generously sponsored by Citizens Bank.

WJHS art student wins award



11th grade art student Paulleen Lam from West Jones High School won Artist of the Week from Artsonia.com. Artsonia is an international online art gallery for school-aged students. There are currently 4 million artists and 48 million artworks featured on the site. Paulleen won “Artist of the Week” for the High School division. She received a plaque, a \$50 gift certificate to Blick Art Materials, and a \$100 art supply gift certificate for her art class. *Photo/submitted*

FCA Breakfast of Champions set for April 14 at USM

Submitted

The 6th Annual “Good Friday” FCA Breakfast of Champions is set for April 14th at the Payne Center on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi at 7am. The Southeast Mississippi Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes will celebrate an incredible year of ministry to students, student-athletes and coaches on middle school, high school, junior college and university campuses all over this region. The guest speaker for the event will be Collins native and current middle linebacker of the Cleveland Browns



Cleveland Browns linebacker Demario Davis will be the guest speaker at the 6th Annual Breakfast of Champions. *Photo/submitted*

of the National Football League, Demario Davis. “Demario’s story in the Lord is just the right message we all need to hear. His humble beginnings in Covington County, coupled with youthful missteps and poor choices early in his life, soon led him to total surrender and a very genuine and real relationship with Christ,” says FCA Multi-Area Director Mitchell Williams. “Now a significant leader on a NFL football team, FCA welcomes home a native son Demario Davis to tell his faith story to the community, better yet on “Good Friday” at Southern Miss.”

In addition, FCA will honor an exemplary student-athlete from FCA middle and high schools in the eleven county Pine Belt area as a “Champion of Character,” and name the 2017 Buddy Gardner/FCA Coach of the Year. Plus, a silent auction will be held to help fund FCA camps and student missions through this year. Some items may be made available for bid online. Breakfast will be served beginning at 6:30AM sharp.

For more information on corporate and individual sponsorships, go to Southeastmsfca.org, Southernmissfca.org or call FCA Administrative Assistant Jessie Taylor at 601-543-2891.



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Circle 3 Self Storage hereby makes notice that contents for Melanie Clairmont, Robert Moore and Cindy Jones will be sold to the highest bidder March 11, 9:00 a.m. at 1199 Hwy 15 South, Laurel, MS. 601-649-0479.

Brand New Michael Kors Purse. \$275.00. Never used. Burnt orange. Brand new Michael Kors wallet. \$75.00. Never used. Coral. I bought them at separate times and I thought they were a match but they did not match. Both purchased at the Michael Kors Outlet Store in Pearl, MS. And still in the Michael Kors shopping bag. All tags still attached. Serious inquiries only. No low ballers please. I bought another set and just trying to recoup some of my money on these. For photos, Text: 601-408-0556.

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LAND

Covington County +/- 74 Acres. New Listing! Located 4 miles from downtown Seminary off hwy 590 on the corner of Shirley Sanford Road and Johnny Sanford Road. This property would be perfect for a home-site with plenty of recreational opportunities. Property consist of mature pine plantation, gorgeous hardwoods, and a stream that flows throughout the property. Great for hunting. \$244,200. For more details, call Bennett today 601-913-0340 at Walley Properties, LLC. Or visit our website walleyproperties.com for maps and more information of this listing.

Highlands. Finance a lot, \$1500 down, pay for your lot over 3 years - then use your lot as down payment at your bank. Call: 601-649-9459.

+/- 60 Acres Located on Holliman Road just West of Richton, this tract consists of +/- 55 acres in 2 year old pine plantation and +/- 5 acres in hardwoods. Has several great house sites. Also has signs of gravel on property. Power and water available. Asking \$150,000. Call Rob McCraw 601-498-9143. See more at mfmland.com

+/- 46 Acres Located on Lower Myrick Road and Mollie Boutwell Rd, this property is made up of Pasture and has 4 Ponds. Perfect place to raise cattle or horses or to build your dream home. Call Rob McCraw 601-498-9143 for more information or to set up an appointment to view this beautiful piece of land! \$161,000. See more at mfmland.com

+/- 46 Acres Located on Lower Myrick Road and Mollie Boutwell Rd, this property is made up of Pasture and has 4 Ponds. Perfect place to raise cattle or horses or to build your dream home. Call Rob McCraw 601-498-9143 for more information or to set up an appointment to view this beautiful piece of land!

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+/- 219 Acres priced to Sell Quick! Located on just outside of Topton, AL, and one hour from Mobile, AL. Has road frontage on CR 19 along with power and water available. Has great secluded House/Camp Site sitting underneath beautiful mature longleaf pines and hardwoods. Dark and Rich Waters of Bilbo Creek runs through the property with Hardwoods make for great wildlife habitat. Has Lake. Has several cleared areas that will make large and plentiful food plots. Has some young pine and some thickets for deer to bed in. This tract truly has it all! Don't miss this one of a kind Hunting/Recreational Tract. Reduced \$306,600. Call Woods & Waters Realty at 800-526-3961. See more at mfmland.com

20 acre farm/ranch in Janice, Ms. With custom built home, wrap around porch, Pond, horse stalls, fenced and cross fenced, huge shop. Bordered on two sides by National Forest lands. Lots of wildlife call Shawn, Southern Coastal Realty, LLC 601-408-3570.

Land sales: Let us assist you with your land sale or purchase. We provide full service forestry consulting and land brokerage. Call Woods & Waters Realty at 601-498-9143

Jones County +/- 57 Acres: Must see! Located in South Jones County on Rainey Road. 10 Miles from Hattiesburg and Laurel right off the Sanford Road Exit on I-59. This property would be perfect for a home-site or mini-farm with plenty of recreational opportunities. Price: \$153,500. For more details, Contact Bennett 601-913-0340 at Walley Properties, LLC.. Or visit our website walleyproperties.com for maps and more information of this listing.

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Covington County 85 +/- Acres. Price Reduced! Located in the Seminary School District 4 miles North of Seminary at the intersection of Hwy 535 and Lebanon Church Road. Would make for a great home site. Features a mix of young pine plantations and hardwood stands along the creek bottom. Excellent timber investment and hunting opportunity. \$191,250 Call Bennett 601-913-0340 at Walley Properties LLC. Please visit walleyproperties.com for maps of this listing

Lake Eddins: a great Place To Be. Now offering Offwater Lots As Low As \$3500.00. Call CrossRoads Realty 601-727-7653.

Stringer, MS: This excellent 92 acre parcel is located in the heart of Stringer School District. The property consist of various merchantable timber types with multiple home sites. With an abundance of wildlife the property could also be used as a hunting retreat. The property can be divided. Priced to sell at \$207,000. Contact Marc 601-670-5429 at Walley Properties, LLC.

For Sale 45 acres, 2 old houses, 2 ponds, 4 water meters, Jones & Wayne County line off 84 East. \$120,000. 601-428-7191.

Small acreage for sale, owner finance, NE Jones area. 601-426-3696 or 601-470-7772.

+/- 80 Acres Located on the Jasper/Clarke County Line just North of Heidelberg, MS, on CR 1151 this tract offers a good timber investment and great hunting and recreation. The property has a good road system in place. With the tract only being a mile off of MS Hwy 11, makes getting to the property quick and easy!!!! This property is made for the avid hunter!! \$144,000. Call Woods &

Waters Realty at 800-526-3961. See more at mfmland.com.

1 acre of land for sale in Jones County, Hoy Community. \$5000. 313-415-8368.

69 acres near Highway 15, Stringer MS. This property offers endless possibilities from home sites to commercial opportunities or just recreational use. Some dirt work has already been completed for new tenants. The property has some mature hardwood and some planted hardwood and an excellent internal road system along with frontage on Hwy. 15. \$320,000. Contact Marc at 601-670-5429. Walley Properties, LLC

Jones County +/- 29 Acres : Only 5 miles south of Ellisville down Hwy 29 East located on Busby Road. This Property with road frontage has recently been chipped, leaving residential/shade trees which would make for a perfect home-site, or mini farm. \$71,050. For more information call Bennett 601-913-0340 at Walley Properties LLC or visit walleyproperties.com for maps of this listing

24 acres in Runnells town. Lots of mature timber and wildlife. Unbelievable hunting!! May subdivide. Call Shawn with Southern Coastal Realty at 601-408-3570.

South Jones County +/- 78 acres -minutes from Ellisville. Beautiful home site ,15 acre lake, recently thinned pine plantation. \$296,400 For more details, call Bennett today 601-913-0340 at Walley Properties, LLC. Or visit our website walleyproperties.com for maps and more information of this listing.

+/- 37 Acres Located on Augusta Road 5 miles South of Ellisville, MS. This tract is made up of merchantable timber with both pine and hardwood. Has two large food plots in place. Great hunting and recreation. Has a house sites with power and water available. 1/4 mile black top frontage on Augusta Road. \$96,200. Call Woods & Waters Realty at 800-526-3961. See more at mfmland.com

Lazy Leaf River Estates, Moselle. Beautiful 3.34 acre corner lot. Community river access. No direct river access from this lot. \$18,000. 601-410-4643.

Covington County: 40 acres located 6 miles east of Collins. Intersection of Highways 84 & 37. Bordered at West by Okawoods Creek. Great location for truck stop/convenience store. \$95K. Call 601-517-6940

Continued on ... Page 5

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GRAND OPENING, continued from page 1

serve as the bank’s training center.

Allyson Knotts with the Jones County Sheriff’s Department and Jones County Chamber Ambassador served as emcee for the ceremonies. Father Jeff Reich delivered the invocation and Laurel Main Street Executive Director Judi Holifield sang the National Anthem.

After the ribbon cutting and building

dedication ceremony which took place in front of the main entrance to the bank, the crowd was invited to tour the inside of the bank, enjoy refreshments, and listen to the voices of the Laurel High School Select Ensemble, directed by Katrina Cox, echo through the beautiful lobby of the bank from the second floor.



The Brown Family – L-R, Tom, Heather, Barbara, Betsy Kendell, and Drew.



“The most beautiful bank lobby in Mississippi.”

March 15
The registration period for Laurel Little Theatre’s annual **summer Kids’ Camp** opened a few weeks ago for the 100 camper spots, but is already 75 percent full. The production for Disney’s “The Lion King Jr.” will have a workshop week May 25-June 1 in the afternoons, and then performances will be June 1-4. Register soon to avoid the dreaded “sorry, but camp is full.” Registration

is online. Check LaurelLittleTheatre.com for a link.

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Heidelberg High Class of 1981 will be having a meeting on March 15! at 2:00 p.m. at the Beat 5 building Ebenezer. You may call Lora Kennedy at 601-935-0618 or Brenda Singleton at 601-935-1107 for more information. The class reunion will be June 24 & 25.

WJHS Peer Council thanks Law Enforcement Officers with Appreciation Breakfast



The West Jones High School Peer Council recently hosted the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Breakfast to honor and thank the men and women who serve and protect our area. Council members provided a buffet style breakfast combined with lots of fun and fellowship. Also in attendance were Superintendent of Education, Tommy Parker and the administrators of West Jones High School. Peer Council teacher is Denise Graves, who is helped by Angie Bynum, Jones County School District Nurse. *Photo/submitted*

Laurel Schools honored by United Way

Oak Park Elementary School was presented the Spirit of Giving Trophy awarded to the Laurel school with the largest percentage increase in giving over the previous year’s United Way of the Pine Belt Region campaign. The school also received the President’s Award of Excellence for their increase in giving. Nora Davis Magnet School was also recipient of the President’s Award of Excellence. The award is given to those who have a 25 percent increase in giving over their previous year’s campaign. Pictured: Oak Park Elementary School Principal Tito Lanier, Executive Director of the United Way of the Pine Belt Region Barbara Johnson and Nora Davis Magnet School Principal Tammy Griffith. The Laurel School District is a United Way Pacesetter company. *Photo/submitted*



March 14
United Blood Services is urging the community to “march” up to the challenge to make an impact by donating blood in March. All March donors receive a T-shirt and are entered to win a \$1,000 Walmart gift card. Schedule your appointment to donate today at www.BloodHero.com, or call 877-UBS-HERO (877)827-4376. Jones County residents can donate at the Cameron Center, located at 711 North 10th Avenue from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wayne County residents can donate on Wednesday, March 15 at Wal-Mart in Waynesboro from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

March 15
The MHV Coffee Club is meeting at 10:00 a.m. for their monthly meeting. After the business meeting the program will be on Yarn Rugs. Call Lanette Crocker at 601-735-2243 or email l.crocker@msstate.edu for more information.

Our first Wayne County Touch a Truck is scheduled from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the MSU Extension Service, Wayne County office. Anyone who would like to display a truck or have a booth at the event is encouraged to contact Lanette Crocker, MSU-Extension agent at 601-735-2243 or email l.crocker@msstate.edu.

March 18
Johnson School reunion will be at 10:00 a.m. at the Johnson Community Center, Ellisville, MS. Please come and bring something good to eat. Call Tom or Margaret Beech at 601-344-7137 if you have any questions.

March 19
There will be a tent revival at the walking track behind Myrick Community Center starting Sunday, March 19 and running through Friday, March 24. Services will start at 7:00 each night. Shane Byrd, pastor of Grace & Truth Church, Sunrise, will preach 3/19 & 3/22. Bill Myers, pastor of Mill Creek Church, will preach 3/20 & 3/23. Thomas Cochran, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Ovett, will preach 3/21 & 3/24.

Pleasant Valley Usher’s Ministry of Laurel will have their annual Usher Day program at 3:00 p.m. The guest speaker for this occasion will be Rev. George Dawson of St. John MB Church of Laurel. The theme is: “Working the Post at God’s House.”

March 25
The Jones County Genealogical and Historical Organization will meet Saturday, March 25 at 10:00 a.m. in the upstairs meeting room of the Laurel-Jones County Library, 530 Commerce Street. Clark Lowery, who has spent several years living and working in Ireland, will share his experiences while living in Ireland. He will share some of the Irish customs and traditions. Lowery and Gail Fox, members of the Emerald Accent, a band that performs Irish and Scottish Music, will perform some of their music. The band plays for the Annual Laurel Irish Ceili on at the YWCO on 428 Oak Street. JCGHO members are urged to attend. Visitors are welcome. For further information, call 601-518-7708 and ask for Jean Holifield.

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City Wide Rummage Sale Saturday, March 11th from 9am-2pm, Indoors at the Magnolia Center! Admission is free. 100 + families. New and used items: antiques, collectables, clothing, furniture and jewelry. For more info visit www.myrummage-sales.com or call 601-319-6086.

Thursday 9th, Friday 10th (7am-4pm), Sat. 11th (7am-12pm), 623 Lower Myrick Rd. Books, dishes, lamps, linens, comforters, homemade jams, jellies, ladies and men clothes & shoes, baby clothes from 0 to 18 months, great for Easter.

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Continued on ... Page 8



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Family pet rescued from puppy mill

By Kelly Atwood, SCAR Board member

I recently adopted a foster dog named Claire, a Cocker Spaniel estimated to be about 10 years old. Before being rescued, she was used to breed puppies for a puppy mill. She spent those 10 years of her life in a cage. Even today, she doesn't feel comfortable unless she is enclosed in a pen. She has a crate in my house where I leave the door open so she can come out when she wants, which after several months she is finally starting to do.



She lives in our family room. It also gives her a view of the kitchen and our bedroom, so she can keep an eye on us at all times. She'll briefly venture out and visit us, but I've discovered if her crate is moved or the door shut, she panics. I want to make her as comfortable as possible, but it's sad to see a dog who has known nothing but a life in a cage need to stay in one to feel secure.

She also spent those puppy mill years scratching her ears until they've calcified. She has long-term yeast infections in her ears that we're trying to treat, but a veterinarian has suggested the only remedy is to remove the entire ear canal, which costs thousands of dollars.

When she could no longer produce puppies, the breeder abandoned her to the streets. At some point, she was hit by a car. Maybe that's another reason why she's so terrified of being out of the security of a cage. After fending for herself on the streets, her leg, which was broken in several places, healed on its own, and she still walks with a limp. The vet says it would be better to let it stay like it is than to break it in all those places and reset it.

When she was found by a good Samaritan and taken to a veterinarian, she was recognized, due to congenital defects, possibly due to inbreeding, as belonging to a certain puppy breeder.

This puppy breeder lives in Laurel. She makes money by breeding puppies, and when the dogs are older and no longer useful to her, she discards them around Jones County.

SCAR also has a white Cocker Spaniel around the same age that was discarded around the same time. She is both blind and deaf, and she is filled with yeast. Another nearby animal rescue has a blond Cocker Spaniel male of that age that was discarded. We also have another breed of dog from this breeder that spent the first month it was with one of our fosters cowering in a corner, terrified of people and other animals.

In an ideal world, everyone would adopt animals that already need homes rather than encouraging breeders by buying their dogs, but if you do purchase from a breeder, please know who you are buying from. I don't mean know them by the face they share with the public; I mean know their true selves, the ones revealed by the way they treat their animals.

Make sure you get to see where the animals are kept. If they aren't showing you, it's because there's something to hide. It was determined that Claire and the other animals mentioned were fed twice a week. They weren't pets. They weren't socialized. They were tools to make money for the breeder. Their comfort or needs weren't important to this woman. Please remember giving her your money encourages her to continue her behavior.

Ask to see the "retired" dogs. Are they kept as loyal pets after their years of constant breeding? If they aren't, then why would you give your money to someone who thinks so little of the animals you're paying so much for?

As soon as we have people willing to testify, we'll gladly press charges against breeders who don't provide adequate food or shelter to their animals, or when we can provide witnesses to their abandonment. The public's help is always needed if we are to end animal cruelty.

(Southern Cross Animal Rescue is a non-profit animal rescue located on Highway 184 West. They can be reached at 601-433-5807 or scarofms@gmail.com. Visit their facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCrossAnimalRescue/>.)



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JCJC sets 18th annual Alumni Association Golf Tournament

Submitted

The 18th annual Jones County Junior College Alumni Association Golf Tournament will be held April 7 at Laurel Country Club. The event will be a four-person scramble. Entry fee is \$100 per player. Corporate sponsorships are available for \$500 and social sponsorships are \$250. Lunch will be served at 11 a.m. and there will be a shotgun

start at noon.

Proceeds from the tournament fund eight scholarships at JCJC – one student from each of the eight counties served by Jones. For more information, contact Alumni Coordinator JoAnna Newcomb at 601-477-4049 or email her at joanna.newcomb@jcjc.edu. Make checks payable to the JCJC Alumni Association. Entry deadline is March 31.

USO to celebrate 75th anniversary March 22-25

Submitted

The East Sixth Street USO, also known as the African American Military History Museum, will kick off the celebration of its 75th anniversary on Wednesday, March 22 with a commemorative event at 10 a.m.

The kickoff event will consist of musical selections from Hattiesburg High School's Chamber Orchestra and an anniversary address from former East Sixth Street USO Hostess Vermell Jackson.

"Commemorating 75 years of service in Hattiesburg is an exciting milestone for the USO. These events will celebrate the 1940s and give guests the opportunity to experience a glimpse of how life was when the USO was established," Latoya Norman, general manager of the AAMHM, said.

Other celebratory events will be held March 23-25. On Thursday, March 23, the USO will host an open house at 10 a.m. for area high school students. Following the open house, the USO will show the PBS documentary "USO: For the Troops" at 11 a.m. This documentary will give viewers a behind-the-scenes look at how United Service Organizations keep service members connected to home, service and family. These are both free events.

On Friday, March 24, the first Miss East Sixth Street USO Pageant will be at 7 p.m. with an anniversary social following at 8 p.m. The pageant will feature five female contestants competing for a scholarship for the 2017-2018 school year. As with every other celebration during this week, the pageant will be inspired by 1940s attire and etiquette. Admission to both of these events is \$10. Seating is limited, so those wishing to pre-purchase tickets should contact the USO to secure tickets.

On Saturday March 25, the USO will host a 1940s Community Day and Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration event from noon to 4 p.m.

Activities for the day include jitter-

bug lessons, a 1940s and military vehicle show, free snacks redeemed through ration cards, and a 1940s live entertainment hour. Guests are highly encouraged to dress in 1940s attire, but it is not required.

"We are both honored and elated to offer this series of special events that give us the opportunity to invite the community to celebrate 75 years of history. We look forward to our residents and visitors joining us at the USO," Rick Taylor, executive director for Hattiesburg Tourism and Convention Commissions, said.

This official bicentennial project was made possible by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, through support from the Mississippi Development Authority. The USO will also post all event activities on its Facebook page.

The African American Military History Museum's regular hours are from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, and from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday with special appointments available. The USO Club opened on March 22, 1942 and was constructed by community volunteers who invested more than 40,000 hours in the project. It is currently the only surviving restored USO built exclusively for African American soldiers and in 2003 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. More than 150 years of African American military history is on display in the Museum.

Mayor proclaims March Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month

By Linda Cranford

The ARC Pine Belt Region Officers and Board of Directors, along with intellectual disabled members of the community met with Mayor Johnny Magee in the rotundum of City Hall Wednesday morning, March 1, as he signed a proclamation declaring March as Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month in the City of Laurel.

The proclamation states, "Intellectual disability is a condition which today affects more than six million American children, adults and their families. The most effective weapons for alleviation of the serious problems associated with intellectual disabilities are public knowledge and understanding. The potential for citizens with intellectual disabilities to function more independently and productively must be fostered. During the month of March, 140,000 members through 1200 state and local chapters of

The ARC of the United States are forging vital employment, educational, and fundraising campaigns under private sector initiatives."

The Arc Pine Belt Chapter was chartered in 1962 and has been a fixture in the community ever since as a non-profit, family and service oriented organization. The Arc officers and Board of Directors present included, Abby Willis – ARC Exec Director, Viola Harkless – Assistant Director Laurel Day Adult Service, Julie Brown – Board member, Transitional Specialists, Betty Busbea – ARC Treasury and former director, and Stacy Ledbetter – Advisory Board Member.

Visit The Arc's website at <http://www.arcpinebeltregion.com> and find out more about Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month and things you can do to join in. Spread the word using the hashtag #IDAware on social media during the month of March.



Photo/Linda Cranford

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ZB9

ComfortCare Nursing Center residents participate in Mardi Gras parade



On Tuesday, March 28, residents at ComfortCare Nursing Center participated in Mardi Gras parade to celebrate Fat Tuesday. Residents were escorted by staff and volunteers from ComfortCare Nursing Center to visit Care Center of Laurel and Laurelwood Center. The parade was led by Hellfighter's of Laurel and assistance from the Laurel Police Department. Residents enjoyed the beautiful day by celebrating Mardi Gras with others, decorating their wheelchairs and walking equipment and enjoyed a party following the parade. *Photo/submitted*

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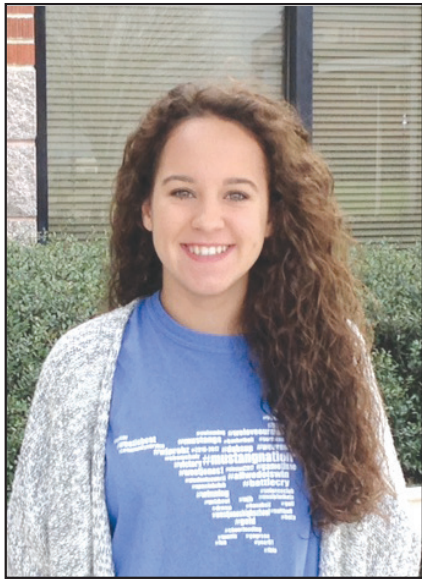
WJHS Sr. Beta club wins at State Convention



West Jones High School Senior Beta members attended the State Beta Convention and brought home many awards. Winning 3rd Place Group Talent--Bria Sims, Brianna Read, Kassidy Chandler, Madisyn Blackwell, Gretchen Bergin, Alyssa Garick, Jenna Holifield. *Photo/submitted*



The \$1500 Senior Scholarship Winner is Nick Sumrall. *Photo/submitted*



Winning 1st Place Campaign Board--Anna Grace Gieger. *Photo/submitted*



Winning 1st Place for On-Site Acrylic Painting and 1st Place Visual Art Paining was Lauren Stevens. *Photo/submitted*

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Job hunting students unaware of top hiring sector

(Family Features) A national survey reports that students getting ready to enter the workforce are often overlooking one of the top hiring sectors – agriculture.

The research, sponsored by the America’s Farmers Grow Ag Leaders program, found that agriculture is not being considered by many high school and college students, despite it being one of the country’s major industries. In fact, only 3 percent of students recognize the agriculture industry as a top hiring sector.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, employers have nearly 60,000 job openings in agriculture annually, but only approximately 35,000 students with the proper training and education to fill these jobs each year.

Part of the awareness gap may be attributed to a lack of understanding of the varied job prospects and technology focus in the agriculture industry. Fewer than one in five students (19 percent) students surveyed felt they understood the career opportunities in agriculture, and only one in three students (35 percent) described agriculture as a technology-driven industry.

However, today’s agriculture industry offers a wide array of career paths for individuals with interest in technology,

science, education, agronomy and business – among other fields. From agriculture economists and agronomists, to crop consultants, food scientists and engineers, experts in multiple fields – especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas are needed to drive innovations growers need to feed the world’s growing population.

To help close this gap, the America’s Farmers Grow Ag Leaders program sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, awards scholarships to help develop the next generation of agriculture leaders. Students looking to pursue higher education in an agriculture-related field of study from a two- or four-year program or trade school are eligible to apply for a \$1,500 scholarship until Feb. 1, 2017.

“The field of agriculture provides many exciting and important career opportunities for today’s students, and we feel it’s important to support youth who are pursuing their studies in this growing and dynamic industry,” said Al Mitchell, Monsanto Fund president.

To find more information or to apply for the program, visit www.GrowAgLeaders.com, or learn more about the program at [Facebook.com/AmericasFarmers](https://www.facebook.com/AmericasFarmers).

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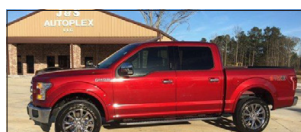
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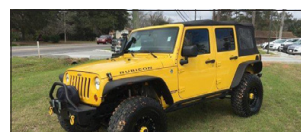
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2006 TOYOTA AVALON
J&S Autoplex
(601) 342-2293 **\$12,990**



TEXT 0280 TO 27414
2015 FORD F-150
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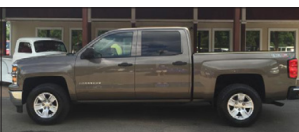
TEXT 07HX TO 27414
2013 FORD EDGE
J&S Autoplex
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TEXT M6E7 TO 27414
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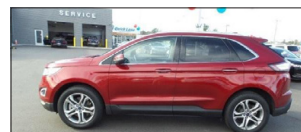
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2012 FORD F-250
SE Auto Brokers
(844) 312-8785 **\$35,900**



TEXT 7J4V TO 27414
2010 JEEP WRANGLER
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(844) 312-8785 **\$23,900**



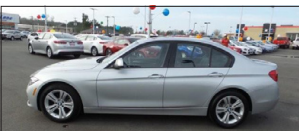
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2010 LAND ROVER SPT
SE Auto Brokers
(844) 312-8785 **\$26,900**



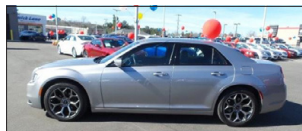
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2016 FORD EDGE
Laurel Ford
(844) 319-5854 **\$28,495**



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2014 FORD FOCUS
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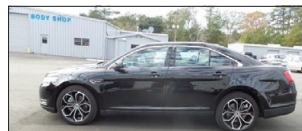
TEXT 20AL TO 27414
2016 BMW 3-SERIES
Laurel Ford
(844) 319-5854 **\$34,995**



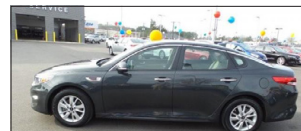
TEXT 49GN TO 27414
2016 CHRYSLER 300
Laurel Ford
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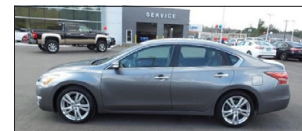
TEXT 2VLF TO 27414
2014 FORD FUSION
Laurel Ford
(844) 319-5854 **\$15,995**



TEXT HB2X TO 27414
2016 FORD TAURUS
Laurel Ford
(844) 319-5854 **\$27,995**



TEXT 2PTJ TO 27414
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TEXT EB3J TO 27414
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TEXT 28KM TO 27414
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TEXT 8RQA TO 27414
2010 FORD EXPEDITION EL
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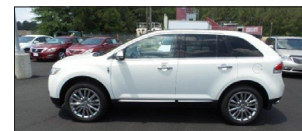
TEXT D886 TO 27414
2013 CHEVY CRUZE
Woolwine Ford
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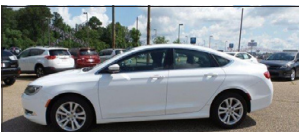
TEXT AZI0 TO 27414
2012 NISSAN PATHFINDER
Woolwine Ford
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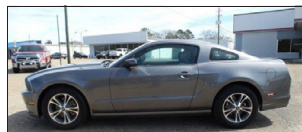
TEXT E1N0 TO 27414
2013 FORD EDGE
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TEXT FH8Y TO 27414
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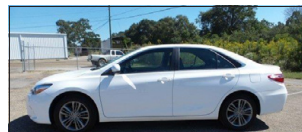
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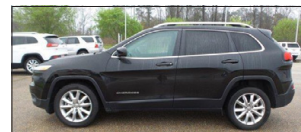
TEXT 4GVT TO 27414
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2011 TOYOTA AVALON
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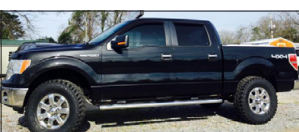
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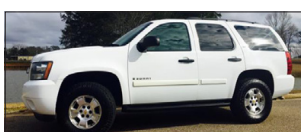
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TEXT 1GW3 TO 27414
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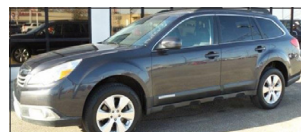
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2006 TOYOTA TUNDRA
Ellisville Motors
(844) 737-5629 **\$13,950**



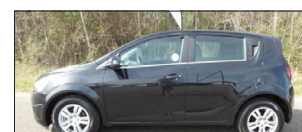
TEXT 3BLX TO 27414
2009 CHEVY TAHOE
Ellisville Motors
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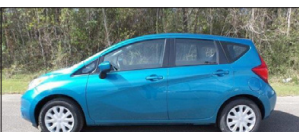
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2008 GMC ENVOY
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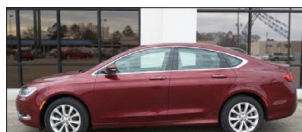
TEXT 5P1K TO 27414
2010 SUBARU OUTBACK
Ryan Chevy
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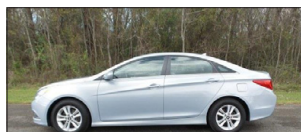
TEXT 99T4 TO 27414
2015 CHEVY SONIC
Ryan Chevy
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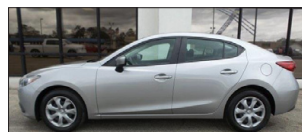
TEXT EBL6 TO 27414
2016 NISSAN VERSA NOTE
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(855) 534-3769 **\$12,000**



TEXT 1FFK TO 27414
2015 CHRYSLER 200
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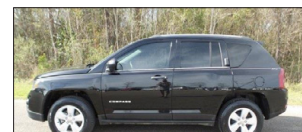
TEXT B0D4 TO 27414
2014 HYUNDAI SONATA
Ryan Chevy
(855) 534-3769 **\$12,000**



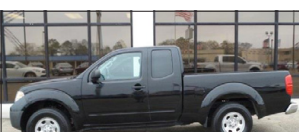
TEXT 7W6I TO 27414
2015 MAZDA MAZDA3
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TEXT 5008 TO 27414
2004 NISSAN 350Z
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TEXT B0EL TO 27414
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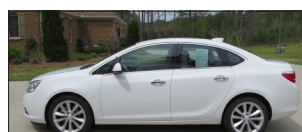
TEXT B0EG TO 27414
2015 NISSAN FRONTIER
Ryan Chevy
(855) 534-3769 **\$15,000**



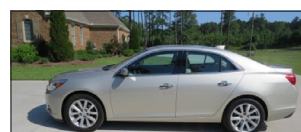
TEXT 7773 TO 27414
2005 GMC YUKON XL
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TEXT 290K TO 27414
2009 GMC YUKON
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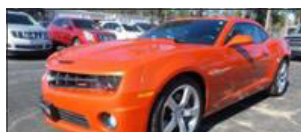
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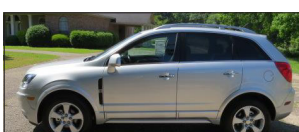
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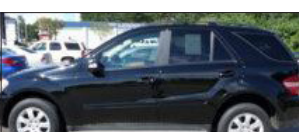
TEXT S5CI TO 27414
2013 CHEVY IMPALA
Paul Garner Motors
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TEXT M4AA TO 27414
2014 TOYOTA CAMRY
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JCJC Bobcats basketball teams bring home MACJC Championship trophies



The JCJC Lady Bobcats hoist the MACJC Championship trophy after defeating Southwest, 85-39, in the championship game. *Photos/Zac Chamblee*



The JCJC Bobcats hoist the MACJC Championship trophy after defeating Northeast, 77-52, in the championship game.



The Lady Bobcats celebrate with their trophy after defeating Southwest in the MACJC championship game.



The Bobcats celebrate with their trophy after defeating Northeast in the MACJC championship game.



Lady Bobcats K.K. Tassin (1) and Alexis Tolefree (2) embrace one another after capturing the state championship.



Bobcats Maurice Dunlap (10) and Allen Rouse (3) celebrate with one another together after capturing the state championship.

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 <p>2016 Hyundai Sonata One Owner, Factory Warranty, Clean Car Fax, Very Clean!! \$13,300 or \$233 per month</p>	 <p>2015 Buick Verano One Owner, Factory Warranty, Clean Car Fax, Luxury Plus!!! \$13,800 or \$241 per month</p>	 <p>2015 Nissan Altima S Factory Warranty, Clean Car Fax, Black with Tan, Beautiful!!!! \$14,300 or \$250 per month</p>
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Junior Auxiliary of Laurel hosts Girl Talk



For the past seven years, the Junior Auxiliary of Laurel has hosted Girl Talk at the Laurel Middle School. This day is educational and fun for approximately one hundred 8th grade girls. Girl Talk teaches the girls about the importance of making healthy choices for a brighter future. This year we had Dr. Myeasha Burgess, a local pediatric dentist, as our keynote speaker along with five other topic speakers. Dr. Burgess discussed her life, career, and family. She emphasized the importance of goal setting and making your dreams a reality. She defined dreaming as “contemplating the possibility of doing something”. She explained to the girls that “dreams can become reality if you have faith, hard work and determination” and to “never have anyone dictate how far you can go in life. Never back down from a challenge”. This one-day workshop shared information on topics such as hygiene by speaker Vickie Walters, social media and internet safety by speaker Taletha Winston, bullying by speaker Cindy McKenzie, proper attire and speech by Speaker Misty Foster, and the importance of education by speaker Jennifer Smith. They finished the day with Ian Bergin teaching self-defense and a performance by JCJC Jones on Stage. *Photo/submitted*

A Shepherd's Heart – The Reward of Service

By Dr. Timothy L. Hubbard

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple, truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward.” – Matthew 10:42

In Matthew 10, we find some interesting details concerning the way in which Jesus was preparing His disciples for the ministry they had been set apart to accomplish. He begins first by giving them instructions for their service then He reveals to them that He is asking them to go down a hard road. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves;” stated Jesus, as he warned them of the difficulties they would face as they went about serving in His Name.

As I read through this passage again, there is one thing that really grabbed my attention. The very last verse, Matthew 10:42, reminds us of God's faithfulness to reward those who serve in His Name. That truth should bring great comfort to us and should serve as a great encouragement to us as we, who are followers of Christ, are faithful to serve Him by serving others. Derric Johnson, in his book entitled “The Wonder of America,” shares the story of Molly Pitcher. Molly, who was the wife of John Hayes, an Army artillery sergeant, followed her husband from camp to camp during the war in 1778. As the battle was raging near Monmouth Courthouse in New Jersey on a hot summer day, Molly's husband collapsed under the extreme heat. Molly immediately ran to the aid of her husband and began to swab, load and fire the cannon. While carrying on with this task, she soon realized a greater need than the firing of a cannon as she was overwhelmed by the effect the heat and thirst was having on the men.

As a result, she changed her course of action; instead of firing the cannon, she began to bring pitchers of water to the troops and gave water to the men on both sides of the conflict. Because of her actions, she was given the nickname, Molly Pitcher. The point of this illustration is to remind us of what Jesus had revealed to His disciples, that even the smallest task that we do as service to others in His Name will be rewarded. I trust that as we walk through life, that we would begin to see the thirst that exists in lives of those we encounter and willing give a cup of cold water, “Living water” in Jesus' Name to them. If we do, we can rest assured that there will be a reward for our service.



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