



# Choctaw County Economic Development Foundation

## Foundation Matters

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

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### DID YOU KNOW?

- 101,000 - water acres in Mississippi are devoted to channel catfish production.
- 61% - of land in Mississippi is devoted to commercial forests.
- 700,000 - acres of hay were harvested last year in Mississippi.
- 262 - acres is the size of the average farm in Mississippi.

### Nick Walters to be Featured Speaker at Banquet

The Foundation will hold its annual banquet on Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. The featured speaker will be Nick Walters, former State Director for USDA-Rural Development and currently Executive Vice President for Kidwell & Company. Kidwell & Company is a full service investment banking and financial advisory firm assisting public bodies such as counties, cities, schools and hospitals, as well as businesses, secure funding necessary to operate efficiently and effectively.

To purchase a ticket, please call 662-285-3778 or contact a member of the of Foundation Board Directors.



Guests enjoy the 2006 CCEDF Banquet

### Welcome Silverado Green Fuel

On December 18<sup>th</sup> the Choctaw County Economic Development District, Choctaw County, the Mississippi Development Authority, and Silverado Green Fuel executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the location of a coal-to-liquids demonstration project in the Red Hills Ecoplex. Silverado's hydrothermal treatment process will produce an environmentally friendly oil substitute from low-rank coal (lignite).

This low cost alternative to petroleum is a stable fuel which can use existing oil infrastructure for handling, storage and transportation.

be created at an average salary of \$48,000 per year. Garry L. Anselmo is CEO of Silverado Green Fuel. Several people played important roles in the successful location of this project in Choctaw County, including members of each of the four parties to the MOU. The Mississippi Development Authority deserves special recognition for their efforts.



Pictured above Thomas Higgins, President Choctaw County Board of Supervisors, John Tennant, President Choctaw County Economic Development District, Garry Anselmo, CEO Silverado Green Fuel and Gray Swoope, Executive Director MS Development Authority

### In Memory...



Robert Kay Bowie  
1941-2006

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The demonstration project, to be known as Mississippi Green Fuel, will be the first tenant for the Red Hills Ecoplex, locating on a 14 acre site. The total investment over a three year period will be \$26 million. It is projected that 45 full-time jobs will

## Foundation Receives MDA Grant to Redesign Website

The Foundation recently was awarded a grant of \$3,060 from the Mississippi Development Authority through its Economic Developing Marketing Grants program to redesign its website. The proceeds of the grant will be matched equally by the Foundation for a total project cost of \$6,120.

The project consists of significant design changes to the website for Choctaw County at [www.choctawcountymys.com](http://www.choctawcountymys.com). When originally created, the website was designed to serve a multitude of purposes ranging from economic development to “chamber of commerce” type functions. Since that time it has been determined that the website should be more user friendly for economic development purposes, specifically for use by site selection consultants, with additional information added for the needs of these professionals. The site was evaluated by economic development personnel at TVA who provided good insight into how the site should be structured and the type information that needs to be provided. In addition, the community development or “chamber of commerce” portion of the website will be enhanced and clearly separated from the economic development section.

The final result will be an up-to-date website which clearly defines and emphasizes the economic development assets of Choctaw County and provides pertinent information on finance programs, incentives and taxes, special designations such as GAP and the GO Zone, existing industry, utilities, quality of life, education & training, transportation, demographics & the workforce, and contact information. One particular area of improvement will be the use of maps.

The economic development section will be targeted to site selection consultants and companies considering relocation or expansion. Data will be presented in a concise manner and the website will be designed in such a way to be “search engine friendly” to ensure that the website has priority when the proper key words are used in a search.

The community development portion will be better oriented to newcomers and tourists. The changes in this area will include improvements to existing web pages and creation of new web pages where applicable. Links to area businesses and attractions will be provided. The site will also be used to promote local festivals, events and the Choctaw County Economic Development Foundation itself.

## TVA Technology Grant Will Improve Office Efficiency

The Foundation made a successful application to TVA for the second year in a row under their Technology and Equipment Grant Program. The TVA grant award was \$4,583 and with the Foundation match the total project cost was \$5,742. The proceeds were used to purchase a new color laser printer, Adobe Creative Suite 2.3 Premium, two desktop computers, two backup drives, and two office telephones. The Foundation is grateful to TVA for the award under this program.

The color laser printer will greatly improve efficiency and quality for in-house productions such as brochures, newsletters, presentation packages, etc. The printer replaces two small printers purchased in the mid to late 1990s. This newsletter is one of the first products of the new printer.

Adobe Creative Suite will provide mapmaking and editing capabilities currently lacking and handicapping responses to RFPs for projects, among other things. Creative Suite now includes DreamWeaver, which is the software that will be employed in the website redesign. The desktop computers will replace two computers purchased almost 5 years ago and will have greater capability to store and run programs such as Creative Suite. The office currently does not have a computer backup system, and the two backup drives will meet that need and allow the establishment a user friendly system that can be utilized on a regular basis with minimum time requirements. The new office telephones provide several features and capabilities that were lacking in the old telephones.

## Local Business Working to Build a Better County

Together Bobby and Leonard Black, after years of working in the construction business, decided to open a building supply store. Black Brothers Building Supply, on Seward Street in Ackerman began selling supplies to home builders and home owners in 1971. Today, although expanded, the building supply is still operating on Seward Street. Black Brothers employs five full-time and two part-time workers. The store is open Monday through Friday until 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday until noon. The

Foundation would like to extend thanks to Black Bros. and Bobby Black for the support given to the CCEDF.



## Ackerman Forge Employing Over 50

Since the reopening process began this past year at Ackerman Forge, employment has grown from 6 people to the current level of 51. Bubba Hudspeth, owner and President of Ackerman Forge, began revamping the facility several months ago to begin producing flanges. The process was long and tedious. Because the plant had been closed for more than 5 years, a good deal of maintenance was required.

Production began on the first line and the first batch of flanges was shipped in October. The current production level is three truckloads per week, with a short-term goal to reach five truckloads per week. Flanges are shipped to customers in New Jersey, Houston, California, and Atlanta. Ackerman Forge is presently running 2 lines in 1 shift for forging, while working 2 shifts with machining. Payroll at Ackerman Forge is about \$30,000 per week.

The management team consists of Bubba Hudspeth – President, Cully Hudspeth – Vice President, David Odom – General Manager, and Jackie Nowell – Plant Manager. Each of them would readily reply that the employees are the most valuable resource at Ackerman Forge, many who worked at the previous operation and now bring years of valuable experience to Ackerman Forge. The Foundation salutes the efforts of the fine people at Ackerman Forge, and joins the entire community in wishing them the best.



Ackerman Forge employee demonstrates the process of making flanges.

## TVA Sponsors Leadership Program

The Tennessee Valley Authority is sponsoring a leadership program to be implemented through the Foundation. Late last year TVA presented a \$1,250 check to the Foundation in support of the program. Developing leadership is a vital part of preparing communities for economic growth. Simply put, leading is setting direction and guiding others to follow that direction.

The leadership program will provide skills training for commu-

nity leaders to enhance leadership capabilities, conflict management, group and team developments, meeting management, and project planning. It is hoped that the program will lead to the creation of a lasting leadership network in Choctaw County.

The Foundation is seeking participants for the program. At least 10-15 participants are needed to have an effective leadership program. If you or someone you know are interested in participating, please contact the Foundation at 662-285-3778.

## Economic Impact Studies on Lake Project Complete

A team of professors from Mississippi State University recently completed an Economic Impact Report for a lake impoundment located on the eastern side of Choctaw County. The study was prepared by Jon Rezek, Garen Evans, Stephen Grado, and Darren Hudson of Mississippi State University.

Dr. Rezek presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board of Supervisors on the findings of the study which examined the fiscal impacts of recreational visitors and residential lake development. A similar presentation was made to the Foundation’s Lake Committee and interested citizens on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The study projected the rate of residential development, with a peak in years 15 and 16, and an estimate of 340 homes to be built over a 30 year period. The net present value of property tax revenues from residential developments around the lake is \$3.9 million. These results were derived using a conservative approach and do not include the impact of the future growth of business and industry in Choctaw County, but does take into account some of the anticipated growth in the Golden Triangle region.

For more information about the lake project or the economic impact study, contact the Choctaw County Economic Development Foundation at (662) 285-3778.

While too extensive to be adequately presented in this newsletter, the projected annual economic impacts from recreational activities and residential developments are summarized in the following table:

	<u>Recreation</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Total</u>
Sales	\$12.5 million	\$10.6 million	\$23.1 million
Employment	171	43	214
Employment Income	\$5.2 million	\$963 thousand	\$6.2 million

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Development Foundation**

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

**[www.choctawcountymiss.com](http://www.choctawcountymiss.com)**

The Choctaw County Economic Development Foundation is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote business and community development through coordinated effort of its membership.

The Foundation membership includes industry, small business, utility providers, local town governments, retail merchants, churches, and individuals.

The Foundation Board members are:

**Everett Adams, Aubrey Ashford, Ray Atkinson, Katherine Black, Kenneth Carmichael, Lila Chandler, Charlotte Cornish, Gradie Ervin, Wesley Gammill, Ken Henderson, Ted Lewis, Randy Loper, Dannie Reed, John Tennant, C. Sade Turnipseed, Jody Webb, and Lewis Wright.**

**CCEDF Banquet will be held on April 17th.**

To purchase tickets contact our office 662-285-3778



**Choctaw County Economic Development Foundation**

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