



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

EXTENSION

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT
AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2015
ANNUAL
REPORT

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Providing new tools to support Mississippi's small towns and rural areas was a highlight of 2015 for the MSU Extension Center for Government and Community Development.

A series of workshops for private well owners was launched during the year. Topics for attendees in Holly Springs, Hazlehurst, and Biloxi included protecting water supplies from contamination, testing water, and maintaining wells. GCD personnel also continue to conduct water system studies and reviews for Mississippi municipalities and to provide technical and other support for rural water associations.

Rural tourism programs were also expanded during 2015. The Rural Tourism Technology Training Workshop held during June in West Point included sessions by MSU Extension personnel on using video, Facebook, and other technology to help small towns and rural communities attract visitors. A video produced during the West Point conference is available for other towns to use as a guide for adding video to their tourism websites.

The first session of the KEYS to Community leadership program was taught during 2015 by the staff of the Wilkinson County Extension office. The program was developed by GCD faculty for youths ages 14 to 18 and concentrates on the workings of county governments and their services.

We will continue to develop new programs and adapt existing educational outreach and other GCD programs to meet the changing needs of our clients.

Orientation for newly elected county supervisors was held in December. The incoming supervisors received copies of the just-published fifth edition of *County Government in Mississippi*, which is also available for other elected officials.

We look forward to working with all the new county and municipal officials elected in 2015 and continuing to provide educational programs and other support for those returning to serve their counties and communities.

There is always more about GCD activities and programs at <http://gcd.msucare.com/>, <https://twitter.com/msuextgcd>, and <https://www.facebook.com/msuextgcd>.

Sumner Davis, Head

Extension Center for Government and Community Development

**SERVING
GOVERNMENT.
IMPROVING
COMMUNITIES.**

Communication and Teamwork Workshop

The MSU Extension Center for Government and Community Development uses the Real Colors Temperament Workshop for team-building and leadership development for local government and other groups throughout the state.

“Real Colors is a dynamic workshop that provides participants the skills to understand human behavior, uncover motivators specific to various temperaments, and improve communication with others,” said GCD instructor Patrick Miller. “Through Real Colors, workshop participants begin to see the world from a new perspective—and have fun doing it.”

The workshop uses a personality quiz to help participants discover where they fall on the personality spectrum common to all people.

“The workshop helps participants recognize how individuals with the various personality types respond to situations in the workplace and other environments,” said GCD instructor Terence Norwood. “They also get to discuss with their fellow participants what it’s like to be each other.”

That experience, he added, helps local government officials and others in similar capacities better understand topics such as stress, workplace issues, teams, and leadership.

GCD began offering the Real Colors workshop as part of the MSU Extension educational outreach mission in 2013. Since that time, approximately 1,000 people have participated in the sessions.

REAL
COLORS



GCD instructors Terence Norwood (left) and Patrick Miller conduct the True Colors workshop for a variety of groups throughout the state, including youth groups and local business and community leaders.

Understanding Local Government

Keys unlock things that are important to us—our homes, cars, or maybe a locker at school or work—but high-school students in Wilkinson County were recently given keys of a different type.

The six students are the first graduates of the MSU Extension KEYS to Community program.

“The KEYS program really opened their eyes to the role of local government in their lives,” said Wilkinson County Extension Coordinator Ann Davis. “One of the things that got their attention was going to the courthouse and getting the price of a tag for their dream car.”

The KEYS leadership program was developed for youths ages 14 to 18 by GCD’s Jason Camp, Patrick Miller, and Terence Norwood. The curriculum concentrates on the workings of county governments and their services.

“The curriculum was valuable because the juniors and seniors who participated knew little about county government, how the county operates, and who makes county-wide decisions,” Davis said. “Before participating in the program, several of the youth did not fully understand the difference between municipal and county activities and elected officials.”

The KEYS program was also held for students in Itawamba County during November and December. An additional 35 counties plan to implement the program in 2016.

Visiting local government offices is an important part of the KEYS to Community leadership class. KEYS participants (from left) Amerehest Whiting, Taylor Ford, Destinee Adams, and Taylor Jarvis learned about land records during a stop at the Wilkinson County Chancery Clerk’s office. Wilkinson County KEYS participants not shown were Trinity Richardson and Tierra Jarvis.

KEYS



Marketing and Special Events Assessments

The Extension Center for Government and Community Development helps communities improve the economic contributions of tourism by offering methods and strategies for evaluating and improving special events.

Many communities are faced with budget shortfalls, and tourism, though vital to the state's economy, often is not viewed by the public as an important strategy for generating revenues. GCD has developed methods that are tailored specifically to the community's

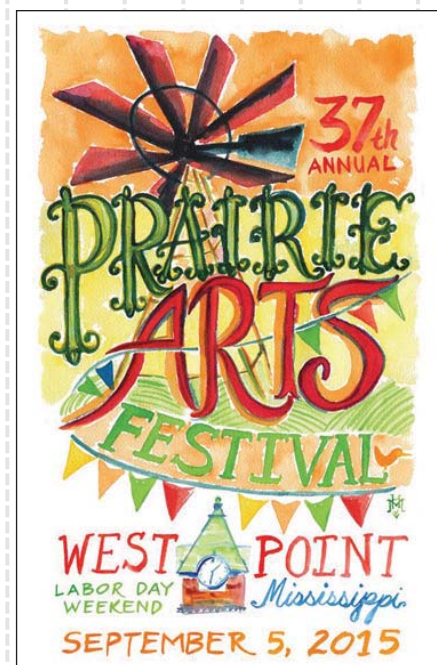
needs to help them assess their events, gather needed information, and develop plans to improve events or evaluate public budgeting decisions for events.

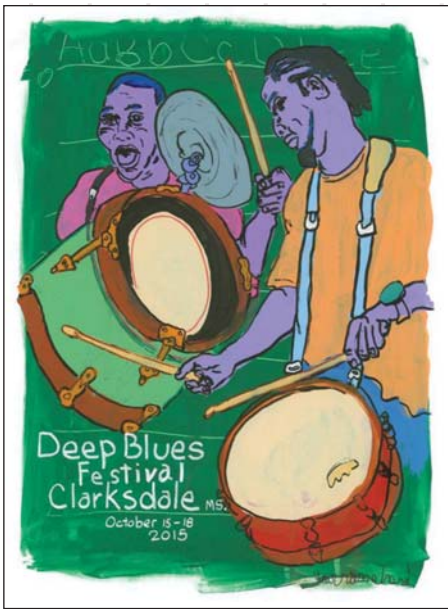
SUPPORT OF SMALL-TOWN AND RURAL TOURISM

In 2015, West Point began using information from a report by GCD's Rachael Carter on the city's 2014 Prairie Arts Festival. The report contained data on the festival attendees, including how they received information about the festival. The report has already proven effective in making better use of the event's marketing dollars, said event planner for the 2015 festival Karen Stanley with NeonFrog Marketing and Public Relations.

"It is rare that my clients have these kind of numbers so that we could tailor a legitimate budget to target the customer base," she said.

West Point Mayor Robbie Robinson welcomes participants to the Connect MS Rural Tourism Technology Training Workshop. Robinson spoke at Waverley Mansion during a tour of West Point and Clay County.





Community leaders in Pearl River County were among many groups GCD's Rachael Carter spoke to about current trends in rural development during 2015.



Rural Tourism Technology Educational Outreach Initiative

The Mississippi State University Extension Service is an active partner in the state's Connect Mississippi program, which promotes economic growth through broadband adoption and innovative use of technology across the state.

During 2015, GCD and the Extension Center for Technology Outreach worked together to identify and implement strategies for using technology to boost rural tourism. Key activities during the year included:

- Conducted a rural tourism technology workshop in West Point, Mississippi. Speakers included tourism industry experts, technology experts, and Extension specialists. Extension agents, main street managers, elected officials, and convention and visitors bureau employees attended. The event included a bus tour, during which West Point's virtual tour was created. Participants were able to learn hands-on about concept design and video creation to enhance virtual tourism marketing opportunities.
- Created a culinary virtual tour for Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and combined the video footage with a workshop session on how to create a virtual tour and choosing a videographer.
- Worked with industry experts to develop curricula and guides for using broadband technology such as social media, app development, and website development, as well as online technology marketing trends that are vital to success in tourism.
- Created curricula on how to determine rural tourism opportunities and existing tourism marketing initiatives, develop a tourism package, and use broadband technology to market the rural attractions. The curriculum was presented at the Mississippi Municipal League to approximately 20 municipal officials.

"We were able to build partnerships and showcase local entrepreneurs. We showed a side of West Point that people didn't know was here and that the average traveler wouldn't be able to see."

Lisa Klutz, West Point Main Street Manager

Providing educational resources to help Mississippians develop and sustain small businesses is part of the work of every MSU Extension program area. Helping other Extension professionals develop and deliver those resources is a focus of the GCD.

The GCD staff works through local Extension offices to provide assistance to Mississippi's counties and municipalities to improve components that are essential for industrial and retail business recruitment, retention, and expansion. The GCD also provides counseling, training, and assistance to start-up and existing small businesses and works with regional planning and development district offices (PDDs), the Mississippi Development Authority, the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics, and other MSU departments to identify and promote potential areas of growth and opportunity in local communities.

SUPPORT OF SMALL BUSINESS

A GCD program in direct contact with aspiring small business owners is a workshop on the essentials for starting a small business. In one session, the workshop provides basic information on how to start a small business, from the idea phase to actually opening the business. The 1-hour workshop is designed for business entrepreneurs who have little or no prior business experience and is presented in an informal, interactive classroom environment. It is free to attend and open to the general public.

The workshop covers topics such as how to evaluate a potential retail market; determining start-up costs, including having sufficient working capital and applicable licenses and permits; development of a simple business plan with cash flow projections; business financing including conventional loans and SBA guaranty loans; legal business structures; and insurance/risk management.

GCD's Hamp Beatty presents the workshop each second Thursday at the Golden Triangle WIN Job Center in Lowndes County and at other locations statewide on request.

GCD's Hamp Beatty focuses on business development workshops and other programs. He also is on hand at conferences with information about Extension educational outreach for businesses. One of the stops during 2015 was the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts annual conference.



DRINKING WATER PROGRAMS

Private Well Workshops

The majority of Mississippians get their water from municipal supplies or rural water associations, but thousands of homes in rural areas of the state depend on private wells. In fact, an average of 12 percent of households in the state's 82 counties rely on private wells. In four of those counties, more than 40 percent of homes have private wells.

During 2015, GCD personnel, with assistance from the Mississippi State Department of Health and the University of Illinois, initiated a series of seminars to help homeowners learn how to better manage, operate, and protect their private wells. So far, the program has been presented in Marshall, Copiah, and Harrison Counties.

The GCD also provides system studies and other support for Mississippi's municipal, rural, and private water systems, as well as technical assistance to public wastewater system operators and certified operators of waste and wastewater systems.

Mississippians with private water wells were invited to participate in private well seminars at three locations in the state during 2015. GCD's Jason Barrett conducted the seminars, with assistance from experienced well drillers and others with water supply expertise.



Each year the GCD works with Mississippi's local government associations to plan and implement educational programs to meet the needs of the state's approximately 5,000 elected and appointed local government officials. They include county supervisors, municipal clerks, tax assessors and collectors, county administrators/comptrollers, chancery clerks, county board attorneys, and county engineers.

Municipal Government

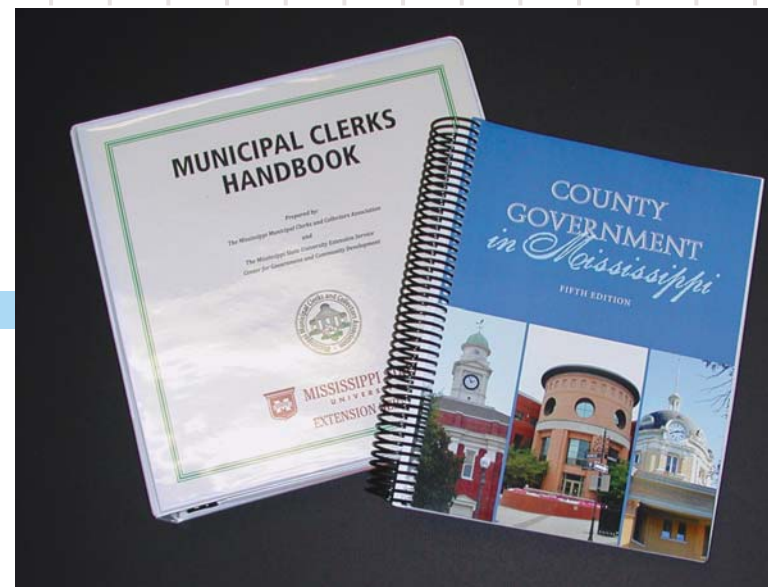
The Mississippi State University Extension Service has long been recognized as a national leader in training for local government officials.

A recent addition to GCD educational outreach is a partnership with the Mississippi Municipal League to make a broad range of courses on local government more accessible. Select courses are being scheduled at various county Extension offices throughout the state. This provides

officials easier access to training related to their duties, as well as the opportunity to participate in the Certified Municipal Officials Program.

Staff from GCD and Extension's Center for Technology Outreach are available to teach courses on the basics of local government operations, including purchasing, financial management, conducting a board meeting, emergency management, tourism development, and leadership. Current technology courses include social media, building and maintaining municipal websites, Internet safety and security, and online services.

GCD publications during 2015 included *Municipal Clerks Handbook* and *County Government in Mississippi* (fifth edition). Both are available online at gcd.msucare.com/publications.





Graduates of the 2015 Certified Appraiser School.



County Government

GCD-led educational sessions are held for county officials throughout the year at annual conferences and regularly scheduled seminars and workshops. Continuing education classes and technical support are available for county supervisors, chancery clerks, county administrators/comptrollers, county board attorneys, and assessors and appraisers.

One of GCD's largest training programs is for county tax assessors and appraisers.

There are 495 certified appraisers in the state, most of whom are county staff or elected officials. During 2015, 23 people earned certified appraiser licenses. Also during the year, 413 people attended legislatively mandated certified appraiser recertification courses in nine locations in the state to maintain their assessor licenses. More than 100 attended GCD-facilitated advanced appraisal training courses.

GCD also conducts, in cooperation with the Office of the State Auditor, certification to county purchase clerks, receiving clerks, and inventory control clerks who successfully complete their professional certification program.

2015 New Assessor/Collector Orientation Class



Emergency Preparedness Education

GCD works with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health to provide training, seminars, and workshops for local government and emergency management officials.

Services include:

- Continuing education and professional development certifications for local emergency managers in partnership with the Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association.
- National Incident Management System training in Incident Command System for elected and appointed local and state officials.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Throughout the year, GCD personnel and other trained emergency responders provide a variety of emergency preparedness classes facilitated by GCD.

During 2015, enrollment for those classes totaled more than 4,000:

- Incident Command System/Incident Management Team Training • **2,776**
- Interoperable Communication • **79**
- Long-term Recovery • **52**
- Wilderness, Remote/Primary Care During Disasters • **35**
- Whole Community Readiness • **289**
- Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management • **258**
- Mass Care/Mass Sheltering • **170**
- Information Security for Commodity Protection • **88**
- Local Emergency Planning Committees • **101**
- Local Exercises • **49**
- Emergency Alert Exercise • **400**



The Extension Disaster Education Network

GCD is the point of contact in Mississippi for the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). EDEN is a collaborative, multi-state effort by Extension services across the country to improve the delivery of services to citizens affected by disasters and to reduce the impact of disasters through research-based education. It also is the premier provider of disaster education resources delivered through the land-grant university system.

During 2015, GCD's Anne Hilbun represented MSU Extension in the State Emergency Operations Center during the statewide multi-day Grand Gulf Nuclear Station exercise. She also presented a poster session on Mississippi's Agricultural Disaster Recovery Centers during the 2015 Extension Disaster Education Network Annual Conference.

In addition to maintaining an ongoing Incident Command System training schedule, GCD's Tom Ball helped coordinate multiple sessions for state agencies and local officials focusing on establishing a statewide tactical plan for operating across organizational boundaries during large-scale emergencies.



GCD's Anne Hilbun and Tom Ball provide National Incident Management System training and emergency preparedness education for Mississippi's local elected and appointed officials, as well as others with emergency response roles.



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