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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

From the Director's Chair by Sonny Simmons

For the most part, Panola County has been very fortunate during these challenging economic times we have all been forced to deal with over the past few years. The result of our efforts has created a good situation, and somewhat of a bad situation. The good situation is the fact that we now have commitments for the creation of some 600+ new jobs over the next three years with new investments exceeding \$180 million. The bad situation is, due to our successes, we are now facing the fact that we do not have any modern marketable buildings available that exceed 25,000 sq. ft. and the availability of green-field space with the necessary infrastructure to support industrial development is also very limited. You have probably heard that we, along with the county and the city of Batesville are currently working on trying to put a plan together to move forward with the construction of the Airport Industrial Park. In reality, this has been in the works for quite a long

period of time now. In my opinion, we should be much further along on getting this tract of land ready for occupancy. But, due to budget restraints and the economy, which none of us has any control, the project has been delayed. The question now is--do we move forward and get this done in a timely manner so we don't loose projects, or do we wait and take the chance on losing projects to other communities that have sites that are ready to occupy? There is an old saying that nothing stays the same, either you move forward or you fall backward. I would like to see us continue to move forward and create new job opportunities and encourage new investment. But, if we don't act now, we will be like so many other communities that delay critical investments that lead to growth. To make money, you have to invest money. The Partnership is committed to continue making the necessary investments that will lead us to sustained growth.

Sponsor Spotlight



TRI-LAKES
MEDICAL CENTER

Tri-Lakes Medical Center Great Care, Right Here.

It's simple: When it comes to your health, you want to know you'll be cared for well. At Tri-Lakes, we've restructured our medical center to provide you with healthcare solutions you can count on. From a major overhaul of our Emergency Room which includes a 100% all clinical team, with Emergency Room certified physicians and local clinical staff to a total redesign of our surgical services with trusted

surgeons such as Drs. Lovelace, Kirk, Rosenkrans and Purhoit, we are changing what you can expect at Tri-Lakes.

Local physicians are investing their time and money to ensure that Tri-Lakes is the community's hospital. That means locally controlled healthcare by physicians and healthcare professionals you've known for years.

Come see us for your next medical need. From labor/delivery and pediatrics to a top-notch ER and behavioral health facility, Tri-Lakes

serves the physical and emotional health of our surrounding community.

Located at 303 Medical Center Drive in Batesville, Tri-Lakes is one of the foremost medical facilities in North Mississippi. For more information, please call (662)563-5611 or visit www.trilakesmc.com.



Farm Bureau's February Mixer

February's After Hours Business Mixer was held at Farm Bureau Insurance Agency on Tuesday, February 16th. As always, the Farm Bureau family was a gracious host and the food was delicious! Door prizes were donated by Crawford's Business Products, Plaza Jewelers, O'Daley's Grill & Ale, Squared, and Farm Bureau.

Join us for the March mixer will be held at Zaxby's on Tuesday, March 23rd from 5-7 p.m.

The Junior Auxiliary of Batesville will host the April Mixer at SQUARED in Downtown Batesville on Thursday, April 8th. This will commemorate the organization's JA Week celebration.

If your business would like to host an upcoming mixer, please contact Gloria Westbrook at 662.563.3126 or gloriawestbrook@cablone.net.

Save the Dates!

The Partnership has some great events coming your way this spring so mark your calendars with these special dates!

The civic clubs of Panola County have nominated their special ladies for this year's Panola County Miss Hospitality contest. The contest will be held on April 11th at Panola

Partnership. While the contest is closed to the public, we ask that you support this event by getting your nominations in today!

The Panola Partnership Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held on the evening of Thursday, April 15 at 211 Main Hall & Gardens in Como. After a brief report from our

outgoing board president, Dr. Steven Shideler, and CEO Sonny Simmons, the crowd will be entertained by [Magician Dennis Watkins!](#) We look forward to another exciting banquet with delicious food from Como Steakhouse. Invitations will be mailed out later this month, so please make plans to attend!

Small Business Assistance

A new page has been added to our website—"Assistance for Small Businesses". Be sure to check it out for the most recent information on starting and improving your small business!

Panola Partnership, Inc. works hand-in-hand with the University of Mississippi's Small Business Development Center to assist new

entrepreneurs and existing small businesses. This new webpage will be updated monthly with the newest schedule of events for the UMSBDC.

The UMSBDC's website has information about going into business in Mississippi, business assistance, investor assistance and frequently asked questions about going

into business. Please contact UMSBDC directly, for more information.

**University of Mississippi
Small Business
Development Center
Toll Free: 1(800)725-7232
E-mail: umsbdc@olemiss.edu
Website: [www.olemiss.edu/
depts/umsbdc](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/umsbdc)**

Batesville SpringFest set for May 14-15

Plans are underway for the 12th Annual Batesville SpringFest set for the weekend of May 14-15.

Local civic clubs, churches and other non-profit organizations wishing to participate as a vendor at this year's festival are encouraged to attend the Vendor Informational Meeting set for Thursday, March 11 at 3:30 p.m. at the Panola Partnership office.

Details for the Miss SpringFest Pageant are being finalized so look for further

information in upcoming newsletters and online.

The carnival rides and games will be back this year to entertain children of all ages.

The Panola County Humane Society will once again host the 3rd Annual Batesville SpringFest 5K "Racing for Paws" on Saturday, May 15th at 8:00 a.m. Registrations are currently being accepted online at www.racesonline.com.

The Junior Auxiliary of Batesville will host its annual Kids Korner and games at the gazebo

on Saturday, May 15th.

The Batesville Main Street Program and the SpringFest committee are working hard to make this favorite community event one of the best in history.

Sponsorship forms have been mailed and are due March 26th.

Be sure to check out the latest information on "Batesville SpringFest" at www.panolacounty.com or follow us on Facebook or MySpace.

Mississippi S.T.E.P.S. Program

At the Industry Meeting last month, Cindy Martin with the MDES introduced a new initiative, Mississippi STEPS: Subsidized Transitional Employment Program and Services, to aid small businesses in meeting their workforce needs while providing employment during these tough economic times. Mississippi STEPS, a joint venture between the Mississippi Department of Human Services and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, will subsidize the wages of a new employee hired by any public hospital, private non-profit or for-profit entity in the state over a six-month period. The

program, which is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will begin October 2009 and continue through September 2011. Mississippi STEPS is a program specifically designed to benefit both the employee and employer. The program is designed to place workers in jobs that will result in full-time employment, as well as increase the skill level of the eligible participant. The program covers an employee's salary at 100 percent at the beginning of the six-month period, and the subsidy decreases in "steps" over six months.

Although the program is open to any

public hospital or private business, preference will be given to small businesses. Eligible employees must have at least one child under the age of 18 and earn within 250 percent of the federal poverty line.

Any questions regarding STEPS should be directed to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security local office at the WIN Job Center at (662) 563.7318 or by e-mail at ahoskins@mdes.ms.gov.

To see a detailed explanation of the Mississippi STEPS program, click [here](#).

Census2010 Corner

You can make a Difference!

As an influential business leader, you can raise awareness of and encourage participation in this historic event. With your help, the Census Bureau will continue to produce accurate data, which will directly affect the quality of life in your community.

Complete Count: The Importance of Census Data

Businesses use demographic and economic census data to locate retail stores, new housing and other facilities. Every year, the federal government can allocate more than \$400 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data. Census data guide

local decision-makers on where to build new roads, hospitals, housing, schools and more. Census data determine representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and in state and local governments.

The United States Postal Service will deliver census questionnaires to households during the month of March!

DO YOUR PART!



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

New Members and Coming Events

Welcome to our New Members

Cable One

(Cable/Phone/Internet)
Missy Ryan and Kay Bullock
285 Highway 6 West
Batesville, MS 38606
662.563.8111
www.cableone.net

Northwest Mississippi Bottled Water & Coffee

(Vending/Distribution)
Ken Murphey
P.O. Box 1792
340 Clark Street
Clarksdale, MS 38614
662.627.2224

Walgreen's

(Pharmacy)
John Pope, Store Manager
105 Highway 51 North
Batesville, MS 38606
662.563.2855
www.walgreens.com

Coming Events

March 6 (7:00 p.m.): Junior Auxiliary's 36th Annual Charity Ball @
Panola Country Club with The Ben Shaw Band

March 9 (4:30 p.m.): Batesville Main Street Board Meeting

March 11 (8:00 a.m.): Panola Partnership Ambassadors' Meeting

March 11 (3:30 p.m.): SpringFest Vendor Informational Meeting
@ Panola Partnership office

March 23 (5-7 p.m.): March After Hours Business Mixer @ Zaxby's

March 25 (5:00 p.m.): Boys and Girls Club Steak & Chicken Dinner @
Batesville Civic Center-Coach Houston Nutt & Deidra Shores

April 3: Sardis Annual Spring Fest and Open Car Show

April 8 (5-7 p.m.): April After Hours Business Mixer @ SQUARED
hosted by Junior Auxiliary

April 11: Panola County Miss Hospitality Contest

April 15: Panola Partnership's Annual Banquet at 211 Main Hall &
Gardens in Como



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