

INSIDE:	
Sports Shorts.....	2
Area Arts.....	3
Tending Your Garden	4
Living Healthy	5
Community Calendar	10
News Nuggets	11

Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

**Schools & Infrastructure
Legislative Focus**
Page 7

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Volume 5, Number 2

“Good News You Can Use”

February 14, 2017

API to close Wesson manufacturing facility

By Bob Arnold

A Wesson manufacturing facility, which has produced electrical components primarily for government and military use in aviation and weaponry since the 1950s under the names of different owners, will close at the end of next month.

Twenty-four persons are currently employed at the facility, which started operating in Wesson in 1953 as Potter Production Corporation in the vicinity of the town's water tower on Highway 51. After Spectrum Control acquired the Potter facility in 1998, the operation relocated to its current 50,000-square foot plant, a former garment factory just north of downtown Wesson on Highway 51, which it purchased from Copiah County. API Technologies, based in San Jose, California, acquired the Spectrum plant about six years ago and is consolidating the Wesson operation with its facilities in Pennsylvania.

In 1986, the State of Mississippi ordered



Wesson News

API Technologies plant in Wesson will close at end of March.

Potter to remedy PCB contamination found in soils surrounding the original plant site. Subsequently, it removed some 6,500 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil associated with capacitor production.

Since its beginnings, the Wesson plant has operated three departments -- a machine shop, sheet metal operation and capacitor manufacturing facility. Potter and Spectrum employed upwards of fifty persons at their Wesson locations before API started

down-sizing the workforce. Twelve of the current workers reside in Lincoln County, another half dozen are Copiah County residents and other employees commute from Amite, Lawrence and Simpson Counties.

Luke Johnson, operations manager at the facility, says he is trying to help the plant's current workers find jobs in the area. “We have a highly skilled and experienced workforce,” he points out. “The workers range in age from twenty-two-years-old to mid-fifties. A few of

them worked at the facility when Potter owned it. They are hard workers, who know the responsibilities that go with a job, and should be a welcome addition to any company's workforce.”

Like the captain on a sinking ship, Johnson says, “I plan to be the last one to leave the plant, say ‘goodbye’ to our workers, and lock the doors.”

“Our hope is, of course, that another company will take over the facility and be able to employ our people,” Johnson adds. “It's a spacious plant with a lot of expansion room on the surrounding acreage. We've been told other companies are looking at it, but there is nothing firm.”

Copiah County Economic Development District (CCEDD) Executive Director Arthur Lee Evans, Jr., confirmed that his organization and the Mississippi Development Authority are seeking prospective companies, which might want to take over the facility.

Chamber honors seven for local achievements

By Bob Arnold

The Mill Town Salon and Day Spa is Wesson's Business of the Year.

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce recognized the one-year-old business owned and operated by Angie Wade at its annual award presentations last month. Wade, assisted by her husband John, renovated the old Wesson drug store building on Highway 51 to create space for her business, which offers facials, massages, nail and hair services and sells personal care products. A graduate of Co-Lin, she has been a cosmetologist for thirty-four years and cites “courtesy, professionalism, individual attention, unique treatments and a great location” as keys to business success.

Also recognized were:

Socks for Heroes (SFH) as Organization of the Year. Cathy Stroud, who founded the group three years ago, explained that it collects and



Wesson News

Angie Wade (left) with her employees at the Mill Town Salon and Day Spa, were honored by Wesson Chamber of Commerce as Business of the Year.

distributes comfort items not usually supplied by the government to former military personnel now in Veterans Administration nursing homes in Mississippi and Louisiana. Bethany Carraway, Melanie Hall, Janet Currie and Tanya Jenkins helped her build its first campaign, which focused on

collecting primarily socks for veterans in the nursing home at Collins, Mississippi.

Ken Carraway, a Mississippi State Fire Academy certified volunteer, who has served as Chief of the Wesson Volunteer Fire Department since 2010, received the Community Service Award. He

is also a medical first responder, a member of the Radiological Emergency Preparation Team and Copiah County Rope Rescue Team, and has served as Scoutmaster of Wesson Troop 125 since 2010.

Lisa Smith, who was given the Wesson Attendance Center Educator the Year Award, is a secondary teacher, yearbook and Future Educators advisor, and junior high and high school pageant director at WAC, where she went to school before studying at Co-Lin. She earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi College and first taught in Lincoln County Schools. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Career and Technical Education and a member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Education Society.

Craig Hennington, given the Co-Lin Educator of the Year Award, is a 41-year Wesson resident and mathematics

cont. on page 10



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Twenty freshmen playing Co-Lin baseball

Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin baseball Wolves are entering their 2017 season with the goal of fast-paced, aggressive play, and fourth-year head coach Clay Smith has high hopes for his squad.

“We are going to be fast, aggressive, and do everything we can to get into scoring position as quickly as possible,” said Smith. “We have twenty freshman who are very energetic and love the game, so I expect this year to be fun.”

Sophomores Tyler McLeod from Wesson and first baseman Kody Smith from Lawrence County High School are returning. McLeod played in thirty-five contests, spending time at nearly every infield role last season and batting .315. Joining them are freshmen Hayden White from Madison, Mississippi, who looks to see time in a shortstop role; Austin O’Flynn, an Oak Grove graduate, and Reggie Conner, a North Forest High School product, who can both expect time at third base. Other freshman infielders include Blake Estabrook from Terry, Kyle Whittington from Perkinston, Jaylyn Williams from Greenville, and Tyler Vroman from Vicksburg.

Returning to the outfield is Matthew Mordecai, a sophomore from Madison who led the Wolves last season with a .353 batting average and twelve doubles and crossed the plate twenty-three times to land MACJC All-State Second Team honors. Freshman Connor Wilkinson, a Warren Central graduate, Chandler Dillard from Madison, Mississippi, and Tyler Etheridge of Osyka, Mississippi, will join him in the outfield.

Behind the plate, J.T. Wright from

Laurel, Mississippi, is returning for his sophomore year after seeing action in thirty games in which he demonstrated phenomenal arm strength. Freshman CJ Estave from Franklinton, Louisiana, will also catch and likely be in the heart of the lineup with his solid bat.

Sidearm thrower Ryan Cullop from Hattiesburg and Steven Ginn from Bogue Chitto are returning as sophomores to pitch. After throwing 17.2 innings with nine strikeouts, Cullop will likely see time as a closer or make an appearance to get the team out of an inning. Ginn, while not a hard thrower, has movement, and is rarely hit, throwing sixteen innings last year with eight strikeouts. The

Co-Lin bullpen, however, is mostly filled with freshmen: Josh Stephens from Monticello, Gabe Smith and Christian Day from Natchez, Jordan Bowden from Jackson, Hunter

Fortenberry from Pearl, Zach James and Trammell Martin from Madison, and Blake Sigrest from Hammond, Louisiana.

In addition to head coach Clay Smith, the former Southern Mississippi and Belhaven assistant, Bryan Nobile returns to the Wolves as assistant coach for his thirteenth season. Joining the Wolves for his first season as assistant coach is Louisville, Mississippi, native Jack Edmonson. Edmonson, a former player at East Central Community College and Mississippi Valley, brings over five years of coaching experience to the staff. Edmonson has coached at East Central, Mississippi Delta, and Holmes Community Colleges, and looks to bring a new edge to the Wolves on the recruiting trail.



SCOREBOARD
January 10-February 13

Wesson High School Cobras

Basketball (Varsity)

Boy’s Record: 10-7. Recent Wins: Bogue Chitto. 74-67. Franklin County. 71-66. Jefferson County. 78-75. Recent Losses: Jefferson County. 65-53. Hazlehurst. 88-53. Port Gibson. 73-54. Wilkinson. 84-74.

Girl’s Record: 4-10. Recent Losses: Jefferson County. 70-26. Bogue Chitto. 63-25. Hazlehurst. 36-21. Port Gibson. 43-32. Hazlehurst. 68-35. Franklin County. 52-16.

Soccer (Varsity)

Boy’s Record: 8-8-1 Recent Wins: Crystal Springs. 3-2; 4-3. Loyd Star. 4-3. Recent Losses: Franklin County. 6-1.

Girl’s Record: 9-4-1. Recent Wins: Crystal Springs. 6-1; 13-0. Recent Losses: Franklin County. 2-1.

Co-Lin Wolves

Basketball:

Men’s Record: 9-8. Recent Wins: Coahoma. 77-66. Hinds. 99-91. South West. 73-72. Meridian. 73-72. Recent Losses: Gulf Coast. 81-79. East Central. 88-75. Pearl River. 88-77. Jones. 73-63.

Women’s Record: 14-2. Recent Wins: Coahoma. 96-42. Gulf Coast. 69-29. Hinds. 57-50. East Central. 81-64. Southwest. 65-49. Meridian. 76-70. Pearl River. 78-56 Recent Losses: Jones. 68-66

Smith heading to Delta CC



Special to Wesson News

Wesson High School Senior Pitcher/Mid-Infielder Jeremy Smith has signed to play on a full baseball scholarship for the Mississippi Delta Community College Trojan Baseball Team coached by Dan Rives. Pictured here are (front row, left to right) Johnny Smith (his father), Jeremy, Amanda Smith (his mother); (back row, left to right) Vance Windom (WHS assistant baseball coach), Steve Barrington (WHS assistant baseball coach), Seth Lofton (WHS head baseball coach) and Ronald Greer (WHS principal and athletic Director).

Upcoming Sporting Events

February 14-17

Mississippi High School District Basket Tournament at Franklin County.

February 14

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Delgado. 3 p.m.

February 15

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play East Central. 2 p.m.

February 16

Co-Lin basketball men & women Wolves play at Southwest. 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

February 17-18

Co-Lin softball Wolves play in Sun Chief Classic Tournament at Gulf Shores, Alabama, against Chattanooga State, Wallace Dothan, Snead State, Southern Union & Central Alabama.

February 17

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Holmes. 1 p.m.

February 18

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play Cathedral. 10 a.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play North Pike. 2:30 p.m.

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Panola College. 3 p.m.

February 20

Co-Lin basketball men & women Wolves play Meridian. 6 p.m. & 8 p.m.

February 21

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Bishop State at William Carey College in Hattiesburg. 4 p.m.

February 23

Co-Lin basketball men & women Wolves play at Pearl River. 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

February 24-25

Co-Lin softball Wolves play in Meridian (Mississippi) Tournament against Shelton State, Northwest Florida, LSU Eunice, Spoon River & Marion Military.

February 24

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Northeast. 1 p.m.

February 25

Wesson High School varsity softball Cobras play at Columbia. 10:30 a.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play at Germantown. 12 Noon.

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Jones. 2 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play at Vicksburg. 3 p.m.

February 27

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play at Natchez. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

February 28

Co-Lin softball Wolves play Mississippi Delta. 2 p.m.

Wesson High School tennis Cobras (boys & girls) play Enterprise. 4:30 p.m.

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play at Bogue Chitto. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball junior varsity & varsity Cobras play Loyd Star. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

March 2

Wesson High School tennis Cobras (boys & girls) play Loyd Star. 4:30 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play Enterprise at West Lincoln. 5:30 p.m.

February 27-March 2

Mississippi Association of Community and Junior College State Basketball Tournament.

March 3

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play Warren Central. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

March 4

Wesson High School baseball junior varsity & varsity Cobras play Lawrence County. 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Gulf Coast. 1 p.m.

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Baton Rouge. 1:30 p.m.

March 6-7

Co-Lin golf team participates in Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges tournament at Northwood Country Club, Meridian, Mississippi.

March 6

Wesson High School tennis Cobras (boys & girls) play at West Lincoln. 4:30 p.m.

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play Puckett. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

March 7

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Jones. 2 p.m.

Co-Lin softball Wolves play at Southwest. 3 p.m.

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play Bogue Chitto. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Southwest. 6 p.m.

March 9

Wesson High School tennis Cobras (boys & girls) play at Magee. 4:30 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball junior varsity Cobras play Crystal Springs. 5 p.m.

March 10

Co-Lin softball Wolves play at Meridian. 1 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play at Crystal Springs. 4 p.m.

Wesson High School varsity and junior varsity softball Cobras play Loyd Star. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

March 8-11

Region XXIII community and junior college Basketball Tournament at Mississippi College.

March 11

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play George County at Hattiesburg. 11 a.m.

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Highland. 1 p.m.

Wesson High School baseball varsity Cobras play at Hattiesburg. 1:45 p.m.

March 13

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Delgado. 3 p.m.



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Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During January, Wesson Police
Department activity encompassed:

Response to:

- One identity theft
- One residential burglary
- One stolen firearm
- One attempted burglary
- One aggravated assault, simple assault
& malicious mischievous
- Six vehicular accidents
- One petit larceny
- One harassment
- One dog bite
- One simple assault involving a juvenile

Citations & arrests:

- Seven speeding
- Three marijuana possessions
- One possession of drug paraphernalia
- One contempt of court warrant
- One theft of utilities
- Six no drivers license violations
- One child restraint
- One littering
- One expired drivers license
- Two expired tags
- Two public drunkenness
- One no insurance
- One careless driving

On school days, the Wesson Police
Department facilitates traffic flow at
Wesson Attendance Center with officers
on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
and 3:30 p.m.

Do we need a large performing arts venue?

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Do we need to start thinking about how to create a big time venue for the performing arts in our area? Perhaps an amphitheater in downtown Brookhaven or close to it. A multi-use facility that will seat a thousand people, with professional lighting and sound and a group of volunteers willing to serve as a stage crew, ticket-takers and selling concessions.

A recent experience spurred my dreaming along these lines. That experience last month was hearing the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra (MSO) perform a program of music by the great Austrian composer W.A. Mozart. It was a wonderful night of splendid music, and the venue was sold out. As typical of the orchestras of the Classical Period (1750-1820), the personnel of MSO was cut to match the demands of the master's music -- basically strings with a few winds. I was very happy that two of the three works performed that night were among my favorite pieces. Having taught music appreciation at Co-Lin for sixteen years, I grew quite fond of Mozart.

Mozart was a child prodigy who, at the age of five, began touring the world as a harpsichord and violin artist playing for royalty and music greats. He started composing his six-hundred-work catalogue at this time. Unfortunately, Mozart's lifestyle, and the time in



which he lived, contributed to his death in 1791 at the age of thirty-six.

Which brings me back to my initial question. The venue for the MSO concert was the historic Haven Theatre in Brookhaven. Three hundred tickets were sold, and every seat in its John Landress Auditorium was occupied. People from all walks of life, from the very young to the not so young, from Wesson, Hazlehurst and Natchez attended, reaffirming my belief that an audience will show up if you give them a quality performance.

The MSO performance was brought to Brookhaven by Highway 55 Events, LLC, a new organization operated by two young visionaries -- Troy Douglas and Trey Waterloo. Douglas says their philosophy is to bring shows to Brookhaven and southwest Mississippi rather than have our patrons go out of the area to see quality performances. On the night of "Mozart by Candlelight," downtown Brookhaven restaurants were busy before and after the performance. The dollars spent by the audience stayed at home.

Since May, 2016, Highway 55 Events has had three successful shows, all, so far, held at the Haven. When Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, its first event, sold out two shows, Douglas and Waterloo knew they were on to something. Maybe something big. Because of that first success, sponsors have started to contribute to allow even bigger and better shows.

Here's the kicker: Douglas says Highway 55 Events could have sold six hundred tickets for the MSO concert if there were a venue large enough. Yes. The FEMA Building and The Lincoln Civic Center are large enough for the audience size, but the acoustics are not

good enough for a play or orchestra. So why not a large facility to serve our area? It's really not such a far-fetched suggestion. It's happening in Brandon and closer to home, on a smaller scale, at the theatre at Lake Chautauqua in Crystal Springs. Not only does Crystal Springs have the stage at the lake, it is building a multipurpose stage in its new downtown park.

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, a mysterious voice whispers from the corn field: "Build it, and they will come." Why not here?

Until next time, friends, support the arts.

P.S.: I'd be remiss not to mention the passing of Sue Minter, a leader of the area arts community. Minter was instrumental in forming the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild, a faithful member of Redeemer Episcopal Church and could be seen frequently on the stage of Brookhaven Little Theatre. She inspired us all and certainly will be missed by James, her husband, and Walker, their son, and the many friends who loved her.



Special to Wesson News

Mississippi Symphony Orchestra
featured solo flutist Amulet Strange in its
"Mozart by Candlelight" performance at
the Haven Theater.

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Prune and plant your roses now

By Guest Columnist Rebecca Bates

It's time to prune roses! Most roses need some annual pruning to maintain an attractive shape, remove dead wood and encourage vigorous growth and blooming. This is generally done from the last week of January through mid-February.

For Hybrid Tea and grandiflora roses, use sharp, by-pass type pruners. By-pass type hand pruners make clean cuts and minimize damage to the stems. Should you need to cut canes larger than one-half inch in diameter, use loppers.

Prune out all diseased or dead canes, cutting them back to their point of origin. Weak, spindly canes the diameter of a pencil or less should be removed in the same way. A good rose bush should have four to eight healthy canes the diameter of your finger. Cut these canes to about twenty-four inches from ground level.

Old garden roses that are ever blooming, landscape roses such as Knock Out, floribunda roses and polyanthas may also be pruned now. These roses, in general, have

more pleasing shapes without severe pruning. Typically, cut them back about one third of their total height.

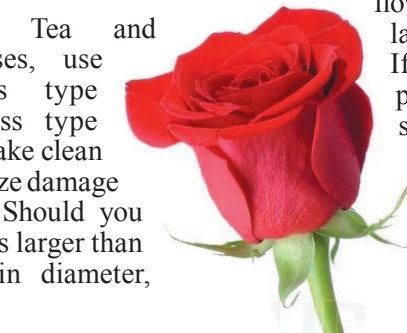
Any roses that are not ever-blooming – including many climbing and rambling roses, such as Lady Banks, Dorothy Perkins and Blaze – should not be pruned now. These produce flowers in one big flush during late spring and early summer. If pruned now, they will produce few if any flowers in spring. It's best to prune them in mid-summer.

Most nurseries already have rose bushes in stock, and now through mid-March is a great time to plant them.

Early planting allows rose bushes to become established before they begin to bloom.

This increases the number and quality of the flowers, and the bush is better prepared to deal with summer heat. Plant your roses in a sunny, well prepared area that has excellent drainage.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rebecca Bates is the Mississippi State University Agricultural Extension Agent based in Brookhaven at the Lincoln County Court House.



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Choose one step to better heart health

By Guest Columnist
Dr. Stephanie Duguid

The perfect gift this Valentine's Day is the gift of heart health. February is American Heart Month, a good time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make the small changes recommended by the Center for Disease Control and the American Heart Association that can lead to a lifetime of heart health.



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, one in four deaths are caused by heart disease. While Americans of all backgrounds are at risk for heart disease, African American men, especially those who live in the southeast region of the United States, are at the highest risk, according to the Center for Disease Control. Additionally, more than forty per cent of African Americans have high blood pressure, a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. The good news: Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions.

Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for people to make healthier choices. That's why during American Heart Month, Million Hearts is encouraging people -- particularly African American men -- to take charge of their health and start one new heart-healthy behavior that can help reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke. Make a difference in your community. Spread the word about strategies for preventing heart disease, and encourage people to live heart healthy lives.

Here are some small steps that can make a big difference:

- Schedule a visit with your doctor to

talk about heart health. It's important to schedule regular check-ups even if you think you are not sick. Partner with your doctor and health care team to set goals for improving your heart health.

- Add exercise to your daily routine. Start off the month by walking fifteen minutes, three times each week. By mid-month, increase your time to thirty minutes, three times each week.

- Increase healthy eating. Cook heart-healthy meals at home at least three times each week, and make your favorite recipe with lower sodium. For example, swap out salt for fresh or dried herbs and spices.

- Take steps to quit smoking. If you currently smoke, quitting can cut your risk for heart disease and stroke.

- Take medication as prescribed. Talk with your doctor about the importance of high blood pressure and cholesterol medications. If you're having trouble taking your medicines on time or if you're having side effects, ask your doctor for help.

- Encourage activity in school. Motivate teachers and administrators to make physical activity a part of the school day. This can help students start good habits early.

Stay heart healthy, so you can be there for your loved ones. It is time to prioritize your health! Million Hearts is challenging you to start one new heart-healthy behavior. Healthy is strong!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Assistant Dean of Academic Instruction and the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Division Chair at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.

LIVING +HEALTHY+

New faces are throwing hats into Wesson race

Special to Wesson News

With the filing deadline on March 3 for June 6 Wesson municipal elections, Mayor Alton Shaw is facing at least one opponent, Rosa Harris, and possibly a second, Marty Stroud; Alderman-at-Large Ric Crockett is facing Stephen Ashley; and Alderman John Welter, Jr., is facing Jarrad Ashley.

All candidates run as independents and there are no primaries. Candidates for Mayor and Alderman-at-large must submit a petition at City Hall with signatures of at least fifty Wesson citizens. Ward Aldermen candidates must submit petitions with at least fifteen signatures of citizens in their wards.

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2005 Ford Ranger Edge Super Cab, 6 cyl, 5 speed, Bright Red, Sharp;
2011 Chevrolet Impala LTZ, Leather Seats, Spoiler, New Tires, SHARPI;
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2009 Dodge Dakota Club Cab SXT, 6Cyl, Auto, New Tires, Sharp!;
2000 Dodge Ram 1500 Club Cab One Local Owner, Low Miles, Bed Liner, Tow Pkg, Nice;
2011 Honda Accord EX-L, Leather, Sunroof, Local Trade, Non Smoker, Super Nice;
2012 Nissan Rogue, EX AWD, Navigation, Sunroof, Leather, Backup Camera, Super Nice;
2013 KIA EX Optima Sunroof, Leather, One Owner, Loaded, Super Nice;
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2006 Toyota Sienna Van, Super Nice and Well Cared For, Second Row Buckets, Third Row Seats, Clean

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Education, infrastructure & budget present conundrum

By Guest Columnist Megan Bland

For 90 days out of each year, 122 members of the House of Representatives and 52 Senators gather in Jackson to handle the state's business by approving a constitutionally mandated balanced budget and passing laws necessary for the continued operation of the State. During the 2017 regular session of the Mississippi State Legislature, they are grappling with the results of past decisions, facing issues such as a \$51 million revenue shortfall in the State's current budget, aging infrastructure statewide, and a complex and underfunded formula for education.

So far this session, the House of Representatives has passed campaign finance reform that limits the appropriate use of campaign donations to campaign business and prohibits the pocketing of funds leftover in campaign accounts by the candidates. However, the bill's prescribed reporting system only applies to contributions or expenditures in excess of \$200 and applies the honor system to most expenditures less than that amount. Some Democrats argue that the bill did not go far enough to control campaign spending, but the widely bipartisan bill, described as necessary by Speaker Philip Gunn, is expected to be signed into law before the end of the current session.

On the \$51 million budget shortfall -- equal to less than one per cent of the total budget, lawmakers are considering two main questions -- one, why were income tax receipts and sales taxes lower than expected for FY2017, and two, how can they fill the revenue gap without raising taxes? Many Democrats argue that the revenue gap is a direct result of Governor Bryant's tax cuts for businesses across the state to attract job creators, such as large corporations and manufacturing plants. The Governor and Republican lawmakers counter that the tax cuts were both necessary and profitable, but the profits are latent and Mississippians must be patient. One proposed long-term solution for the FY2018 budget is to create a leaner, less intrusive state bureaucracy by cutting and consolidating state agencies based on their past performances. However, a barrier to this type of approach is the effect of the shortfalls on the state's infrastructure development, management funds and education system, all of which are showing signs of decay because they have not been adequately funded in recent history. The Legislature has enlisted the help of two outside groups since last year's session, one focusing on increasing state revenue, and the other on education reform. They

have provided research, insight and proposed solutions to the legislature, which now must consider their opinions and how best to apply them to Mississippi in the form of laws. In their deliberations, Mississippi lawmakers may be aiming at a moving target as future federal programs and funding related to education and infrastructure are on the agenda in Washington.

Federal decisions are likely to affect Mississippi, which relies on federal funds to supplement many programs, including education and infrastructure.

In Mississippi, the education system has floundered due to a variety of problems, including inadequate funding, a shortage of teachers, and test-based teaching. In 1997, the Mississippi legislature passed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) to create a formula-based funding system for Mississippi's education system. However, MAEP has only been fully funded twice since its passage twenty years ago. As lawmakers attempt to improve the state's education system, it is difficult to determine if MAEP's failures are due to an inadequate formula or a result of inadequate funding. Infrastructure in Mississippi has declined over the years as well. Mississippi lawmakers

are beginning to take note, and have called for enhanced programs and funding for the repair and promotion of Mississippi's roads and bridges. Although infrastructure projects such as the maintenance of roads or building of bridges is widely accepted as a boost to overall employment and the economy, the high costs associated with massive infrastructure projects can deter their implementation. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle agree that infrastructure should be priority during Mississippi's 2017 regular session. With massive revenue shortfalls, however, members of a fiscally conservative legislature will be forced to break campaign promises or present creative solutions to meet the needs of Mississippi infrastructure programs.

Mississippi's lawmakers are sure to remain busy through the end of this year's session on April 2, 2017. With the budget shortfall expected to impact many already-underfunded state agencies and programs, it is likely that the issues of 2017's session will linger, lacking long-term solutions, for many sessions to come.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Megan Bland is a native Mississippian, attorney and political analyst for the United States House of Representatives. Contact her at megan.lea.bland@gmail.com.



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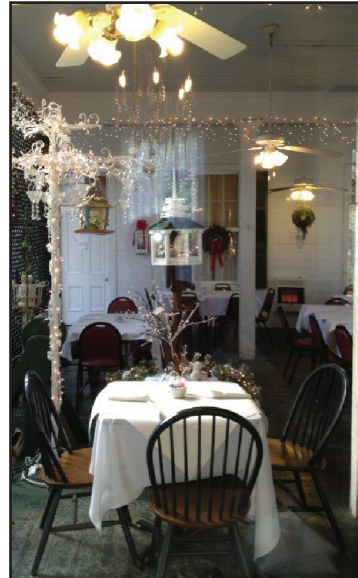
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Construction begins on women's residence hall



Special to Wesson News

Artist's rendering of new Co-Lin women's dormitory.

Special to Wesson News

Construction of a new Co-Lin women's honor residence hall on the Wesson Campus has begun, with completion scheduled in Spring 2018.

"We are looking forward to providing our women with a new modern dormitory," said Co-Lin President Dr. Ronnie Nettles. "It will be the first new dormitory built for

women in over 45 years."

The 22,000 square foot two-story residence hall will have 28 double bedrooms (space for 56 students), an apartment for a residence hall supervisor, an elevator, study area and laundry facilities. It will have a floor plan similar to the one at Bates Hall, the men's honors residence hall that was built in 2012. Each room will have a private bath, single beds

and mattresses, armoire/dresser, desk and chair. The rooms also will have Internet and cable access. Students living in residence must have above a 21 or above ACT score and maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

Dean of Students Brenda Smith said the new women's residence hall is based on the success of Bates Hall with additional benefits of more spacious bathrooms and an elevator. Honor students will

enjoy the private bathrooms and the central location on campus.

Architect for the \$4.6 million project was Architecture South, P.A. Paul Jackson and Son, Inc. of Brookhaven is the general contractor. The Bureau of Building, Grounds and Real Property Management and the Department of Finance and Administration are overseeing the construction project.

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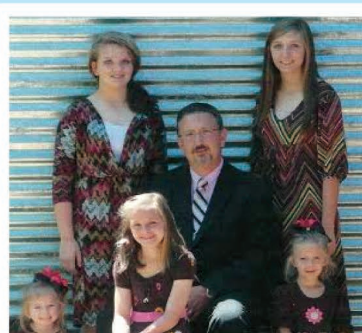
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Community Calendar

February weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 49 degrees F (two degrees above average) and precipitation of four inches (one inch below average). February 12-19: sunny, then rainy, turning warm; February 20-22: sunny, warm; February 23-25: T-storms, then sunny, cold; February 26-28: showers, cold.

FEBRUARY 14

Valentines' Day

Registration deadline for February 21 Beginner Outlook (9 a.m.-11 a.m.) and Intermediate Outlook (1 p.m.-3 p.m.) scheduled at Co-Lin Thames Center. \$10 fee for each class. For information contact Toni Dobbins at 601-643-8716.

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon, with performer to help celebrate Valentine's Day. Ask History workshop follows. Random questions about history will be asked and answered by participating members based on information provided in advance. Thames Center at Co-Lin. Luncheon starts at 10:30 p.m., with workshop at 12:30 p.m.

Diabetes support group. Meets weekly on Tuesdays. Education Annex at King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven. 1:30 p.m. For information, call Natalie Ybarra at 601-835-9489.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary Post 2618 meet. \$5for meal. VFW Hall on Industrial Park Road, Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 15

Brookhaven artist and retired Co-Lin art instructor Tom Ross will present a gallery talk about the exhibit of his works throughout February. Gertrude Mutton Building at Co-Lin. 11 a.m. Exhibit hours are from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, contact Janet Smith at (601) 643-8482.

FEBRUARY 16

Fifty Plus Club luncheon meeting. Kimberly Vance, co-owner of Pondera Financial Group, Ridgeland, Mississippi, will speak about retirement and estate protection, long-term care, wills versus trusts, asset protection, power of attorney and health care directives. Anderson Building at Co-Lin. 10:30 a.m.

The Widows Support Group meets at the Jimmy Furlow Senior Center in downtown Brookhaven. The group supports and encourages widows in their walk through the grief process and offers programs on pertinent issues related to their situation.. 5 p.m. For information, contact facilitator Betty Vaughn- Furlow at Bvaughnfurlow@gmail.com or 601-540-4308.

Wesson Lions Club meets. Student cafeteria conference room at Co-Lin. 6:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 21

Copiah County Master Gardeners monthly meeting. Mississippi State University Extension Office at Gallman. 6 p.m.

American Legion Post #79 meets. American Legion Lodge on Main Street, Wesson. 6:30 p.m. For information, call 601-563-5438.

FEBRUARY 20

President's Day

FEBRUARY 22

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. Testing at Co-Lin Thames Center from 8:45 a.m.-12 noon. Participants must register in advance with Kristina Stephens (601-643-8707). Also March 8.

Institute for Learning in Retirement Yoga Class and movie. Yoga Class starts at 10 a.m. followed by light lunch and the movie, *The Hollars*, at 1:30 p.m. The movie, filmed in the Brookhaven area with local people in the cast, is about a struggling New York City artist who must navigate the small middle-American town he left behind when he returns on news of his mother's illness. Co-Lin Thames Center.

FEBRUARY 23

Wesson Lions Club meets. Student cafeteria conference room at Co-Lin. 6:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 24

African America History program. Wesson Attendance Center old gymnasium. 9 a.m.

FEBRUARY 25

Mardi Gras celebration in downtown Brookhaven. Food. Music. Art. Railroad Park.

FEBRUARY 27

Blood drive every second and fourth Monday. King's Daughters Medical Center Hospital Annex. 1 p.m.- 6 p.m. Call 800-817-7449 for information.

FEBRUARY 28

Beginning Copperplace Calligraphy starts and continues on March 7, 21 & 28. The introductory class sponsored by Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild will be taught by Cathy O'Rear. Participants will learn to use a dip pen, bottled ink & paper to create elegant letterforms. Fee is \$60 plus \$20 for supplies (mail to Kathy Behan, 1119 Kraner Lane, Brookhaven 39601). Lincoln County Public Library. 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. For information, email cathleen.orear@gmail.com.

MARCH 2

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon will feature Area Horticulturist Donna Beliech, who will talk about raised bed gardening. Creative Rocks workshop follows. Lin Wellford from Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas, an author, artist and teacher, will teach about painting rocks, a subject about which she has written and discussed on national television. Cost to be determined. Thames Center at Co-Lin. Luncheon starts at 10:30 p.m., with the workshop at 12:30 p.m.

MARCH 3

Adult CPR & First Aid. American Heart Association classes cover cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic first aid technique. \$20 fee. Registration deadline is February 24. Co-Lin campus. 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Contact Toni Dobbins at 601-643-8716

MARCH 7

Stay Fit at Home: No Gym Needed. Kristi Watts will offer nutrition and exercise tips. \$15 fee. Co-Lin campus. 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Contact Toni Dobbins at 601-643-8716.

Wesson Board of Aldermen meet. City Hall. 7 p.m.

MARCH 8

Institute for Learning in Retirement presents *Porches & Private Eyes*, a movie filmed in Brookhaven with a local cast. In the film, three Brookhaven women investigate the mysterious disappearance of a townsman. Thames Center at Co-Lin. 9 a.m.

MARCH 13

Spring break starts at Wesson Attendance Center & continues through March 27. School resumes March 20.

CONTINUING

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at convenient times seven days of every week. First United Methodist Church, 215 West Cherokee Street, Brookhaven. Open meetings are Mondays at noon and Tuesdays (Big Book Study), Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Closed meetings are Wednesdays and Fridays (Big Book Study) at noon and Thursdays and Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild members work on projects every Thursday of the month from 9 a.m.-12 noon at the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Public Library in the Vernon Room when it is available.

Email Community Calendar items to:

Bobarnold@wessonnews.com.

cont. from page 1

Chamber honors seven for local achievements

instructor and assistant golf coach at Co-Lin. He graduated from WAC and Co-Lin and earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Southern Mississippi and William Carey University. He started his teaching career at Sumrall Attendance Center and is a recipient of Co-Lin's Howell Garner High Performance and Ann Bradberry Faculty Awards.

Sharon Langley, the Ageless Hero of the Year, came to Wesson in 1970 with her then-husband Wade Alexander. She taught English for more than forty years at Hardy Junior High in Jackson, Forest High, Crystal Springs, Bastrop, Louisiana, her home town, and Co-Lin. She is the recipient of many awards and a veteran of voluntary service. For the past fifteen years, she has taught line dancing and fitness classes as a volunteer. After the death of her first husband, she was married to the late Charles Langley, long-time Wesson American Legion Post commander, for ten years.

Lisa Jackson, Public Servant of the Year, is a recent addition to the Wesson Police Department and has worked in law

enforcement since 2001, when she was hired by Hazlehurst Police Department as a patrol officer. As a Deputy Sheriff in Copiah County (2002-2005) and Pike County (2005-2008), she was attached to the Southwest Mississippi Narcotics Task Force, which she rejoined in 2011 and now serves as Deputy Commander.

At the awards ceremony and banquet, Chamber president Stephen Ashley also presented the organization's new board of directors and announced upcoming events. Members of the new board include Ashley, Carolyn Smith, Deemie Letchworth, Melissa Meredith, Mike King, Marilyn Britt, Angie Moore and Janet Currie. Chamber events during 2017 include a Spring Meet & Greet, an opportunity to enjoy the food of local vendors with friends (March 23); Founder's Day, which will feature entertainment, contests, a parade and community party (April 28 and 29); and the Headlights & Tailpipes Car Show (September 16).

Heather Sophia, the meteorologist for WLBT 3/Fox 40 in Jackson, compared the storms of weather and the storms of life and lifted up the importance of faith as featured speaker.

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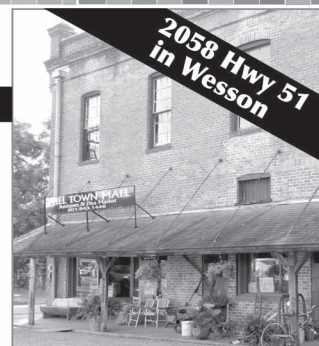
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Special to Wesson News

Comments sought. The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) is receiving a public comments on revisions to the Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) for Science through an online process. SBE is seeking to encourage stakeholders to read the standards and provide either supportive comments or actionable feedback on any concerns. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a nonprofit education policy think tank, rates the current science standards “C.” Mississippi teachers reviewed “A” rated standards from other states to develop the new ones. A team of Mississippi educators, content specialists in Science and higher education representatives will evaluate comments and MDE will develop a final standards proposal to be piloted during the school year, with full implementation scheduled for August 2018. Visit: <https://mississippi.statestandards.com> to make comments.

Graduation rate improves. For the third consecutive year, Mississippi high school graduation rates inched closer to the national average. The four-year graduation rate is now 82.3 percent compared to 83.2 percent nationally. The drop-out rate dipped for the third consecutive year to 10.8 percent from 11.8 percent as school districts worked to encourage students to stay in school. “The MDE has strategically focused on professional development around higher

standards of learning and literacy to build the capacity of our teachers,” says Rosemary Aultman, chairman of the Mississippi State Board of Education. “The Board has also opened multiple pathways for students to earn a diploma.”

Literary & film festival. An array of authors, filmmakers and other artists will discuss the people, places, and pivotal events that shaped the history and culture of Mississippi from statehood through the Civil War, civil rights movement and beyond at Co-Lin’s Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration from Thursday, February 23, through Saturday, February 25. The theme is *Mississippi: A Literary Journey*. Investigative journalist Stanley Nelson and literary scholar Dr. Peggy Prenshaw will receive Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards. Mark Brockway and Tim Givens will premier *Mississippi Madame: The Life of Nellie Jackson*, their film documentary on one of Mississippi’s famous madams, at 7:00 p.m. Thursday followed by a panel discussion. On Friday, Dr. Chester Morgan focuses on Mississippi statehood; William Ferris of the Center from the Study of the American South presents “The South in Color: A Visual Journal;” Denise Gee speaks on food and entertaining in Mississippi, and Martha Rossignol presents “My

Triumph” about her pivotal role in integration and coming of age in the Civil Rights Era. The final day features “A Conversation with Richard Grant,” author of *Dispatches from Pluto: Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta*; “A Conversation with Sally Jenkins” on *State of Jones*, in which she wrote about the defiance of Newt Knight and Jones County, Mississippi, to the state’s succession from the union during the Civil War. Alysia Burton Steele from the Meek School of Journalism at the University of Mississippi and Nancy Kay Sullivan Wessman respectively will discuss their books, *Delta Jewels: In Search of My Grandmother’s Wisdom* and *Katrina, Mississippi: Voices from Ground Zero* about Hurricane Katrina and its impact on the Mississippi

Gulf Coast. Co-Lin founded the annual literary and cinema festival and now supports it with The Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration Commission, The Mississippi Humanities Council, The City of Natchez Mississippi, Adams County, Mississippi, and The Department of Archives and History. Only three events require tickets: *Music of the People* on Friday at 8:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church (\$15, with proceeds benefiting preservation efforts at Holy Family Catholic Church and First Presbyterian Church in

Natchez) and two Saturday events -- an NLCC luncheon at the Carriage House at 11:30 a.m. (\$30 per ticket) and a benefit cocktail buffet honoring the event speakers and award winners at historic Glen Auburn at 5:30 p.m. (\$60 per ticket). Email nlcc@colin.edu or call 601-446-1208 or 601-446-1274 to purchase tickets.

Turner to direct maintenance. The Wesson Board of Alderman has named Brad Turner the town’s Maintenance Supervisor to take over the duties of Mark Brown, who resigned as Public Works Director in October after fourteen years. Turner’s new responsibilities will encompass Wesson’s water and sewer operations, maintaining streets and cleanup following storms. Turner came to the Wesson area in 1982 with his parents when he was four years old and grew up in Beauregard, where he continues to reside. He graduated from Wesson High School in 1997, attended Co-Lin and graduated with a degree in construction engineering from the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg when he was 26-years-old, while working part-time building houses in the area. While directing Wesson public works operations, Turner will also be taking online and on-site courses provided by the State of Mississippi to become fully certified in managing water and sewer facilities. Turner is the father of two children, Ty, 8, and Kendall, 4.

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