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Crosby Arboretum near Picayune showcases native plants in their natural environment. (Photograph by Marco Nicovich)

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“Are you involved in agriculture?”

Most Americans answer that question with a definite “no,” until they’re asked the follow-up question: “Do you eat?”

The truth is, more Americans than you might think are directly involved in agriculture. Although fewer and fewer people are needed to actually produce food and fiber, more and more are needed to process and market agricultural products, to produce and service the equipment and other inputs needed on the farm, and to provide other services needed by the nation’s agricultural infrastructure.

At Mississippi State University, we are training the young men and women who will be the 21st century’s leaders in all aspects of agriculture and its support industries. Students enrolled in the array of programs available in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are preparing for careers as agronomists, fashion designers, entomologists, dietitians, florists and agricultural economists, among others. Graduates of the College of Veterinary Medicine will work in a variety of animal health fields, and students in the College of Forest Resources prepare for careers ranging from conservation officers to professionals in all aspects of furniture manufacturing.

The Focus section of this issue of Landmarks reports on the organizations available to students in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. Participation in these organizations gives students opportunities to develop leadership skills, learn more about their chosen professions and establish contacts that will be important as they begin their careers.

At MSU, educational opportunities are not limited to students enrolled in the traditional academic programs and does not end at the borders of the Starkville campus. There are reports in this issue of Landmarks on several of the university’s programs that provide services to individuals throughout the state, including the 4-H program’s work with children of military families and the recreational and educational activities available at the university’s Crosby Arboretum in south Mississippi.

The first priority of all of these programs, whether on campus, in the county MSU Extension Service offices or at the branch experiment stations located throughout the state, is meeting the needs of the people of Mississippi.

Vance H. Watson

Vice President’s Letter
Obesity is no small problem for Mississippians, and a program under way in the Delta addresses it by promoting healthy lifestyles among the state’s youngest residents: school children.

Mississippi State University Extension Service is partnering with its sister organizations in Louisiana and Arkansas for the program known as Delta HOPE—Healthy Options for People through Extension. Funded by a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant, the program involves educational efforts and evaluation in the Delta region by Extension agents from the three states.

“Obesity is easier to prevent than to treat,” said Deborah Little, program coordinator for Mississippi. “If we are going to make a difference, we need to reach the children before they develop unhealthy habits.”

Little is the curriculum and evaluation manager for the Extension Family and Nutrition Program at MSU. She said the program is an organized effort to help teachers incorporate nutrition and exercise curriculum in the classroom.
“Teachers don’t want or need another thing to do in their classrooms, but this curriculum encourages them to incorporate exercise into their regular lessons,” Little said. “For example, children may do jumping jacks or march in place while they work on their spelling or math lessons.” The program combines existing curricula called *Take 10!* and *The OrganWise Guys* to focus on physical activity and nutrition. By incorporating 10 minutes of exercise three times a week, children receive an extra 30 minutes of exercise they normally would not have received. Additionally, Little said research shows an active curriculum helps students stay on task.

After 26 years of teaching, Gwen Pettis knows what works for kindergarten children, and what does not.

“The activities actually help kids focus. The curriculum reinforces learning skills. We use chants as we move to help us count, recite information and practice beginning sounds,” Pettis said. “The children get excited when it’s time for *Take 10!* It’s a great way to remind ourselves to exercise. Still, some children get tired after just 10 minutes.”

Pettis appreciates anything that encourages physical activity at Batesville Elementary School.

“Currently, we do not have a physical education teacher, and recess is mostly free play,” Pettis said. “Students need physical activities in a structured setting.”

Pettis receives help from a cast of 10 characters, including Hardy Heart; Windy, the lungs; and the Kidney Brothers. Originally created apart from the *Take 10!* health curriculum, *The OrganWise Guys* help teach the basics of human physiology and how the body’s response to different foods and lifestyles.

Dr. Michelle Lombardo of Duluth, Ga., created the characters and said *The OrganWise Guys* are ideal for communicating health issues, inciting behavior change and enlivening the education process for any age group. The health material with the *OrganWise* program targets every age groups from ages 3 through senior adults.

Lombardo said this concept for teaching children was born out of adult health sessions she led as a health professional in the early 1990s. When adults learned that their health problems were 20 to 30 years in the making, they requested ways to help children make better choices to prevent future trouble.

“We want to help kids take responsibility for their choices and learn why certain choices are good or bad for their health,” Lombardo said. “Every child learns the four rules of *The OrganWise Guys*: low fat, high fiber, lots of water and exercise.”

“The Extension agents are essential in promoting this curriculum and making sure that the material is used,” she said. “After one teacher in a school begins using the program, it’s usually contagious because of how user-friendly the material is and how well it complements the existing objectives.”
Most homeowners go to a lot of trouble and expense to keep termites away, but a group of Mississippi State University scientists is inviting the ravenous Formosan subterranean termite to come and stay for dinner.

Researchers designed a field test at the McNeill Unit of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station in Pearl River County to study ways to help homes and other wooden construction resist the Formosan invasion. The test site includes four wooden structures and a small laboratory. McNeill is in an area of Mississippi currently infested by the Formosan termite. The expertise of Forest and Wildlife Research Center scientists in termite biology and wood preservation makes the site an ideal location for research on control techniques.

“The McNeill site is one of the few places in the world where the termite resistance of 4-by-8-foot building panels and associated wall framing can be tested in replicated studies,” said Terry Amburgey, a professor in the MSU Department of Forest Products.

Native to China and now established throughout Asia, the Formosan termite is believed to have entered the United States on ships returning from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam war.

The pests are thought to have entered the country through U.S. ports, including those along the Gulf Coast, as stowaways in wooden crates, pallets and various pieces of military equipment.

“For almost 40 years, the Formosan termite was a nearly invisible pest,” Amburgey said. “But during the past decade, it has caused millions of dollars in damage to homes and other structures in the New Orleans area alone.”

New Orleans is a virtual buffet for termites because of its hot, humid climate, densely packed wood-frame homes and other structures with thick, porous masonry walls. Even the ancient oak trees that line the city’s historic areas are falling victim to Formosans, which eat the wood in the center of the trees, leaving them susceptible to wind damage.

Larger in size and appetite than native termites, Formosans do not need to go into moist soil to survive. As a result, the usual soil treatments for termite control do not always work on them.

What the MSU scientists learn will help determine defenses against the costly pest.

“Tests conducted at McNeill will provide data needed by building product and termiticide manufacturers, code officials, architects, contractors..."
and entomologists to assure that houses built in Mississippi and other areas will have reasonable resistance to Formosan termites,” Amburgey said.

Research associate Michael Sanders began studying Formosans about 10 years ago when he was among a group of scientists called to Hawaii by the U.S. Navy to combat the pest in wooden poles supporting communication antennas.

“We have to change our approach when it comes to controlling Formosans,” he said.

One of the things the team learned in Hawaii was that the termites are attracted to active antennas but not to those that are inactive. The MSU scientists are using that information in research with electromagnetic frequencies to lure Formosans to specific locations, including those containing bait traps.

“If we can attract them to a bait station rather than waiting for them to accidentally find one through foraging, it will be a huge advance in pest control,” Sanders said.

Other research at the McNeill site includes evaluation of the effectiveness of various insecticides and construction techniques in preventing infestations. The tests began in 2003 with termite colonies established at the site. Laboratory testing also is under way at the facility to evaluate the effectiveness of new preservative systems exposed to the termites.

Upcoming research at the site will include tests of commercial construction materials to determine how resistant they are to Formosans and other termites.

“We’re also studying the biology of the insect to learn how to better deal with this particular species,” Sanders said.
Crosby Arboretum: Preserving Natural Beauty

By Bob Ratliff

Senior curator Melinda Lyman, left, helps a visitor identify a plant at Crosby Arboretum.
Mississippi the way it was when European settlers arrived can only be experienced in a few places, and one is the Crosby Arboretum near Picayune.

Just a couple of minutes away from one of south Mississippi’s busiest roadways, the arboretum was established in 1980 as a living memorial to timber pioneer and philanthropist L.O. Crosby Jr. It was donated to Mississippi State University by the Crosby Foundation in 1997 and is one of only about 30 public arboretums in the United States.

“The Crosby Arboretum is one of the most unique plant conservatories in the Southeast,” said senior curator Melinda Lyman. “It allows us to explore native plant species and the ecosystems in which they thrive.”

The 64-acre site adjacent to Interstate 59 south of Picayune serves as the focus of activities and development, but the arboretum also manages six additional sites collectively consisting of about 1,000 acres throughout the Pearl River Drainage Basin, which stretches from near Jackson through southeast Louisiana and southwest Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.

The arboretum hosts activities for the MSU Extension Service Master Gardener program, as well as 4-H youth programs, various scouting events, and programs for children and adults almost every weekend.

The Picayune site, once a Depression-era strawberry farm, is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. It is not, however, a run-of-the-mill flower garden.

More than 700 species of native trees and shrubs, as well as wildflowers and grasses, thrive in the savannas, woodlands and aquatic displays. One of the most unusual wildflowers found at the arboretum is the pitcher plant, a carnivorous plant that traps and digests unsuspecting insects in its long, hollow leaf.

“Pitcher plants were once common from the Florida Panhandle to Louisiana, but today most of their habitat is being lost to urbanization,” Lyman said.

Because it showcases native plants in their natural environment, the face of the arboretum changes throughout the year and will continue to change as the landscape matures.

“It’s a more subtle design than most botanical gardens,” said Lynn Gammill, a member of the Crosby board of directors and daughter of L.O. Crosby Jr.
“There’s also something new to see each season, especially in the fall since the landscape is maturing and adding more fall color.”

A focal point at the arboretum is the award-winning Pinecote Pavilion, which serves as a starting point for tours, and a place for exhibits, performances and social gatherings. The pavilion has been designated a Mississippi landmark. The only other structure is the temporary building that houses staff offices, a meeting room and a gift shop.

Architect Tom Howorth of Oxford has drawn plans for a new visitor center that complements the natural surroundings.

“The new facility will help us be able to better accommodate the needs of the community and to conduct our outreach programs,” Lyman said.

A campaign to raise funds for the new visitor center is under way. Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign or the activities at the Crosby Arboretum can contact Lyman at (601) 799-2311, extension 22, or by e-mail at mlyman@ext.msstate.edu.
A recent survey conducted by Mississippi State University shows Mississippi civic leaders support establishment of urban and community forestry projects to enhance their communities.

Urban forestry focuses on the management of trees and forests in urban settings to foster social, environmental and economic benefits.

Scientists in the Forest and Wildlife Research Center conducted the survey of city and town government leaders and other community planners to identify community needs and issues relative to urban forestry.

“About one-third of the 159 respondents had initiated an urban and community forestry program prior to the survey,” said lead investigator and forestry professor Steve Grado. “However, the fact that the majority—73.6 percent—realized the need for such projects is good news for Mississippi’s cities and towns.”

Trees provide benefits that include air quality improvement, annual carbon dioxide reduction, increased annual net energy savings, storm water runoff reduction, floodwater storage, erosion prevention, increased property values, noise reduction, aesthetics, and wildlife benefits, among others, Grado added.

The survey found that funding was the most important factor in addressing urban and community forestry program needs, but most respondents had little awareness of funding sources for adopting their forestry plans.

“It’s clear we need to do a better job of communicating funding opportunities to city governments,” Grado said. “Our survey results also indicated a need for technical expertise in addressing tree care and implementation of community forestry programs.”

To assist municipalities in managing urban forests, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, in collaboration with MSU’s Forest and Wildlife Research Center and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, developed a Mississippi Urban and Community Forestry Management Manual and companion compact disc.

“The manual addresses issues and provides management guidance about urban and community forests,” explained Walter Passmore, urban forestry partnership coordinator for the Mississippi Forestry Commission.

The guide’s comprehensive information is one tool for civic and community leaders, municipal officials and citizens interested in community forestry needs, Passmore added.

Establishing urban and community forests often can generate immediate economic benefits and outweigh the initial costs, the experts said. Based on an analysis by the MSU Forest and Wildlife Research Center of fiscal year 2003-04, publicly maintained street trees produced nearly $1.25 million in tangible benefits for Hattiesburg, primarily through energy savings and improved air quality.

“The return on investment can be significant,” Grado noted. “In Hattiesburg, benefits amounted to an average of $111.24 per publicly maintained tree or approximately $22.73 for every resident. The city’s street trees returned $4.10 to the community for every $1 spent on their management.”
Knight Set to Head MSU Coastal Center

Patricia R. Knight has been named interim head of the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi.

Knight joined the staff of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station in 1997 as an assistant horticulturist at the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville.

Prior to assuming her current duties, she served as horticulture research coordinator for the Coastal Research and Extension Center. She replaces David Veal, who retired June 30 after 35 years of service to MSU.

“Patricia has a record of outstanding research and strong leadership of outreach programs that benefit the people of south Mississippi,” said Vance Watson, vice president of MSU’s Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. “She is particularly active in research and programs that bring economic benefits to the area’s commercial nurseries and other horticultural enterprises.”

As interim head of the Biloxi-based center, Knight supervises research and Extension professionals working with programs in horticulture, beef cattle, food safety, marine resources and youth education, among others.

Knight is an Alabama native who completed a bachelor’s degree in horticulture with an emphasis in landscape design at Auburn University. She also earned a master’s degree in horticulture at Auburn and a doctoral degree in horticulture at Virginia Tech.

Watson Named Interim Head of MSU Extension and Outreach

Mississippi State University’s vice president for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine has assumed additional duties as interim director of University Extension and Outreach.

Vance Watson is providing leadership for an organization that includes the MSU Extension Service, Division of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education and Office of Industrial Outreach Services. The retirement of Joe McGilberry, director of the MSU Extension Service since 2001 and head of University Extension and Outreach since 2003, became effective June 30. MSU President Charles Lee recommended Watson’s interim appointment at the July meeting of the Board of Trustees, State Institutions of Higher Learning.
A Mississippi State forestry alumnus is the new dean of the university’s College of Forest Resources and director of its Forest and Wildlife Research Center.

Vicksburg native George M. Hopper succeeds interim dean Bob L. Karr, who has retired after 29 years of service.

MSU’s College of Forest Resources includes the departments of forestry, forest products, and wildlife and fisheries.

Hopper has served for 11 years as head of the department of forestry, wildlife and fisheries at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He previously was a professor for 11 years in the department.

A specialist in hardwood silviculture and the biology of oaks, Hopper earlier worked for Mississippi State’s forestry department and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Anderson-Tully Lumber Co.

In addition to bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MSU, he holds a doctorate from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Besides holding the title of Society of American Foresters Fellow, he is president-elect for the Southern region of the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges.

Hopper’s appointment was announced jointly by Vance Watson and Peter Rabideau. Watson is vice president for agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine; Rabideau, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Watson said, “Dr. Hopper will lead the departments of forestry, forest products, and wildlife and fisheries toward national prominence in teaching, research and service.”

Added Rabideau: “He also will help strengthen the contributions of natural resources to the economic and environmental welfare of the people of Mississippi.”

“We have made considerable progress over the past three years in realigning the Mississippi State University Extension Service to accommodate changes in the needs of our constituencies and the budgetary reductions imposed by the Legislature,” Lee said.

Mississippi’s business and industry community, he added, has responded positively to efforts to better coordinate continuing education and industrial outreach efforts throughout the university.

“We must continue our efforts to better meet the needs of the people of our state if we are to enjoy their trust and financial support,” Lee said.

During the interim appointment, Watson will lead strategic planning activities focused on a comprehensive approach to teaching, research and extension programs throughout the MSU Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. He also will work with Provost Peter Rabideau to further involve academic units of the university in continuing education and outreach activities.

“I am honored by the opportunity to serve the university in this interim role until a permanent director is selected,” Watson said. “I look forward to working with the president to ensure that University Extension and Outreach has a vision and goals consistent with those of the broader university.”

An advisory committee soon will be established to help find a permanent director for University Extension and Outreach, Lee said. The unit’s director reports jointly to the vice president for agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine, and to the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Watson also is director of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He will continue to perform those duties.
Part of our goal is to provide youth development activities during family support group meetings. While adults are taking part in discussions, their children can be working on a variety of projects that will help them cope with the absence of a parent.

Leadership team member Taylor Barnett (above right) and 4-H associate Whitney Mathis (opposite page, left) helped 4-H members prepare “Hero Packs” of stuffed animals, stationery and other items for children of deployed reservists during the annual 4-H Club Congress on the MSU campus.

Mississippi’s military families are finding a nonmilitary organization in every county that is ready, willing and able to mobilize an army of volunteers to provide support for their children.

The Mississippi State University Extension Service 4-H program has received $30,000 for 2005 to expand youth development efforts among military families. The grant complements existing work taking place through a 10-year-old partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Army, as well as similar efforts in recent years with the Air Force.

Rae Wilkinson, a 4-H youth development professor with the MSU Extension Service, said the 4-H/military partnership began a decade ago to provide smoother transitions for families when they relocate to other bases. A $23,000 grant last year through the Children, Youth and Families At Risk project, part of the MSU Extension Service, enabled Mississippi to intensify efforts on the state’s military bases.

“The need has never been greater than it is today, especially for these families coping with the stress and uncertainty of deployments,” Wilkinson said. “4-H offers a structured support system that is already in place and ready to assist youth in military families and their parents.”

Whitney Mathis, Extension associate for the 4-H Military Project, said 4-H can be a vital component of family support groups all across the state.

Deployment Support...

4-H MOBILIZES FOR MILITARY KIDS

By Linda Breazeale
Photos by Jim Lytle

“Part of our goal is to provide youth development activities during family support group meetings. While adults are taking part in discussions, their children can be working on a variety of projects that will help them cope with the absence of a parent.”

Whitney Mathis
“Part of our goal is to provide youth development activities during family support group meetings. While adults are taking part in discussions, their children can be working on a variety of projects that will help them cope with the absence of a parent,” Mathis said. “Some may become involved in 4-H photography or computer projects, such as Web site development. Others may seek out horticulture projects like landscaping the local armory. We want to help youth find an enjoyable activity that will help them cope with the stresses they may be feeling.”

Mathis said the Extension Service also can provide resources for the adults to help with issues such as money management, parenting skills, separation anxiety and reunion stress. 4-H will be enlisting volunteers to assist with the military project in every Mississippi county.

Chief Melissa Tanksley of Mississippi’s National Guard said more than 3,500 soldiers have been deployed from across the state since the first of the year. She estimated about 7,000 children are affected in that group. About 2,500 soldiers are home or coming home from assignments.

“We have a huge education process taking place. Career military families tend to have better supports in place, but the Guard and Reserve families often feel isolated,” Tanksley said. “Some of the children affected may be the only ones in their classrooms who have a parent deployed. Their teachers and child-care workers need to understand what to watch for and be prepared for behavior changes.”

Tanksley said families of the National Guard and Reserve may not discuss family issues related to deployment with their children until departure is eminent.

“It’s easy for some families to be in denial that deployment will happen to them; then when it does, they are devastated,” Tanksley said. “Families need as much communication as possible to help address their concerns before, during and after deployment.”

Tanksley took part in a recent advisory committee meeting to organize the 4-H involvement with military families. In addition to Tanksley and Extension professionals, participants represented the Air National Guard, the Army Reserve and Keesler Air Force Base.

Juanita Warren of the Army Reserves estimated at least 5,000 Mississippi children are affected by deployments of reservists.

“The military likes to think we can take care of our own, but the truth is we need help,” Warren said. “I also believe many hands make light work. We need to work together.”

Marianne Breland of the Air National Guard said their military personnel tend to be very spread out, which increases the need for community support.

“Air National Guard deployments usually are different from some of the other groups; assignments may be shorter in duration but occur with less warning. Children are sometimes forgotten in the middle of the hectic activities of deployment,” Breland said. “Military parents experience pressure to be strong, but some face a confusing reversal of roles as children help console parents.”

Sheran Watkins, 4-H youth agent in Harrison County since 1994, knows the needs and challenges facing military families. In addition to overseeing the 4-H clubs at Keesler Air Force Base, she was deployed during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990 to Saudi Arabia for 10 months.

Watkins joined the Army Reserve as a means of paying for college. Married with a 6-year-old son, she had 72 hours to prepare for deployment. Her husband’s offshore job meant her mother had to assist with child care every other week.

“Our marriage survived the experience, but it took effort. Stress does not necessarily end when families are reunited,” Watkins said. “Families usually need something to help get their mind off the military situation, and 4-H is a perfect fit. For one thing, it’s affordable. Free.”

Watkins said 4-H offers something for everyone. If parents are too busy and cannot take children to club meetings, the youth can be individual 4-H members and work on projects on their own. The 4-H military project also provides adult volunteers with fulfilling opportunities.

“Helping others is an excellent way to distract from problems or worries, and volunteering is a great way to support our military families,” Watkins said. “Whatever skill you have to offer, 4-H and our military families need you.”
The more than 2,000 students enrolled in the three academic units of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine come from every county in Mississippi, almost every state in the nation and more than 70 foreign countries.

While at the university, they have the opportunity to participate in almost 50 student organizations, ranging from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ Ambassadors to the forestry honor society Xi Sigma Pi.

“Students in the academic units of the division come from diverse backgrounds and their career goals are equally diverse,” said DAFVM Vice President Vance Watson. “They tend to excel in academics and in the extracurricular activities provided by the student organizations within the division, many of which are student chapters of national and international professional organizations.”

CALS Organizations

- Agricultural Economics Club
- Ag. Engineering Tech. Business Club
- Agricultural Pest Management Club
- Agronomy Club
- Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
- CALS Ambassadors
- American Institute of Floral Design
- American Society of Interior Designers
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- ASAE Student Club
- Associated Landscape Contractors of America
- Biochemistry Club
- Block and Bridle Club
- Dairy Science Club
- Fashion Focus
- Food Science Club
- Horticulture Club
- Human Development and Family Studies Club
- Human Sciences Association
- Institute of Biological Engineering
- Kappa Omicron Nu Honoray
- Landscape Architecture Honor Society
- MSU Cattlemen’s Club
- MSU Horseman’s Association
- MSU Rodeo Team
- National Agri-Marketing Assn. (NAMA)
- Poultry Science Club
- Pre-Veterinary Medical Club
- Society for Agricultural Leadership
- Student Dietetics Association
- Turf Club

Ambassadors Represent the College

Their name says it all—the CALS Ambassadors are truly the ambassadors for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

“The Ambassadors are a select group of undergraduate students who represent the college and the university,” said Ambassadors advisor Byron Williams. “They must have excellent communication, writing and speaking skills to carry out their duties, which include conducting tours of the college, writing thank you letters, and assisting with official functions of the college.”

The opportunity to work with both new students and alumni lets Ambassadors see Mississippi State University from two different perspectives, said Amanda Bousson, last year’s Ambassador president.

“The Ambassadors are in direct contact with students, helping them decide on a major and arrange their class schedules,” she said. “I also have truly enjoyed the breakfasts we have twice a year to honor our alumni. I love watching them interact with each other and talk about the ‘good old days,’ but even more exciting is to have the opportunity to meet someone who was in the same place I am 10, 20 or even 60 years ago.”

The current Ambassadors and advisors select new members through an application and interview process each spring.
To the casual observer, Block and Bridle may seem to be all about cattle and horses.

While the objectives of the club include bringing together students with an interest in livestock, Skip Glidewell, president of the MSU chapter, said Block and Bridle activities are really about preparing students for life.

“It’s a chance to meet like-minded people,” he said. “That’s important in helping a lot of students adjust to college life and to meet people they will know throughout their careers.”

Most of the members of Block and Bridle have majors in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science, but the organization is open to any MSU student. Glidewell is a senior agricultural information science major from Corinth.

“A club is only as good as its members,” he said. “To be in Block and Bridle you have to be willing to work and not everyone who applies gets in.”

With almost 100 members, Block and Bridle is the largest student organization in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The members participate in many activities during the school year, the biggest of which is the Bulldog Stampede, the annual MSU collegiate rodeo.

“The rodeo is managed by the students, so they get experience in advertising sales and other business activities associated with this type of event,” said Block and Bridle advisor Mike Martin, a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science. “They also get to meet students from other schools. The people they meet will be leaders in the livestock industry, so the friendships they make through participation in our and other student rodeos can last a lifetime.”

Block and Bridle places a strong emphasis on class work, and the combination of academics and fellowship within the organization creates a bond with Mississippi State.

“The organization helps instill a love of the university,” Martin said. “We have alumni who come back each year to attend or help with the rodeo.”
Keeping it Real in the World of Floral Design

Real world experiences are one benefit for members of the MSU student chapter of the American Institute of Floral Design.

“As members, students benefit from the Artist in Residence program that brings top floral designing professionals to campus to work with students,” said Lynette McDougald, faculty adviser to the AIFD student chapter. “The annual National Symposium and the Southern AIFD regional challenge also provide students the chance to learn from and work with experienced designers. During this year’s regional at the Grand Casino in Tunica, nine members of the MSU team assisted professional designers in crafting display arrangements for the four-day event.”

Three MSU seniors, Crystal N. Sizemore of West Point, Amber M. Adsit of Riceville, Tenn., and Kathryn C. Stephens of Tuscaloosa, Ala., took top honors during the regional.

“One of the great benefits of student AIFD membership is the chance to work with the latest in floral design, including products and ideas from Europe,” Adsit said. “Being a member of the student chapter keeps us up to date with the latest trends in the industry.

Floral industry contacts also are an important benefit of membership in the student AIFD chapter, said James DelPrince, associate professor of floral design and AIFD representative for the MSU student chapter.

“Through connections made while here at MSU, our students can go anywhere in the country and find someone they know,” he said. “Alumni of our student chapter have gone on to do such diverse things as owning their own floral shops, working for major retailers as Michael’s and Yankee Candle Company, and even working as a stylist for the Paula Dean’s Home Cooking show on the Food Network.”

Student Dietitians Get Career Experience

Cooking breakfast before dawn for a couple of hundred people may not excite most college students, but it’s an activity members of the MSU Student Dietetics Association look forward to.

“Our big fund raising events each year are the two College of Agriculture and Life Sciences alumni breakfasts,” said SDA president Caroline Jones, a senior from Memphis, Tenn. “Our members cater this event Homecoming Weekend in the fall and Super Bulldog Weekend in the spring. It’s a great way to get hands-on experience in food service and to get to know each other and the college’s alumni.”

The student organization has about 25 members and is affiliated with the 70,000-member American Dietetics Association. Speakers at its weekly meetings during the
Veterinary Students Enjoy Professional, Social Opportunities

Veterinary students are known for their discipline and commitment to studies, but occasionally they just need to have a little fun.

The Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the largest student organization at MSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine, conducts activities to fulfill both the academic and social needs of its members.

The social activities of the organization provide stress relief for students who must spend a great deal of their time studying and attending classes. In April, the first-ever SCAVMA Alpha Psi semi-formal was such a success that organizers plan to make it an annual event. Held at the Hotel Chester in Starkville, the event was open to the entire CVM student body, faculty members, spouses and significant others.

“We had a wonderful time at the semi-formal, and we’re already planning next year’s event, which we may decide to make a full formal,” said SCAVMA president Brian Maran. “It’s a great chance before school gets out to get together and have some fun.”

SCAVMA members also host pregame tailgates for each MSU home football game. Sponsored by Hill’s Corporation, these tailgates provide a time of fun and fellowship for students, faculty, staff and CVM alumni.

While the social activities do help relieve stress for students, SCAVMA’s main goal is to encourage students to be involved in the future of the veterinary profession.

“SCAVMA is a professional organization that operates locally the way the American Veterinary Medical Association does nationally. SCAVMA is more involved with the student body, organizing social events, providing extra educational opportunities and guiding the philosophy of the student body through discussions and guest lectures,” Maran said. “Guest speakers discuss a variety of topics, including ethics and the different political and legislative agendas that affect veterinarians.”

Maran said the goal of these guest lectures is to provide key role models to discuss how best to practice veterinary medicine. SCAVMA invites speakers to discuss topics that are relevant to all veterinary students, and the six specialty organizations under SCAVMA’s umbrella bring speakers who focus more on each club’s interests. Maran said students are encouraged to join a specialty club that relates to their career goals.

The two largest student organizations under SCAVMA are WEZAAM, which stands for Wildlife, Exotic, Zoo, Avian and Aquatic Medicine, and the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Other specialty clubs include the Veterinary Business Management Association, the Student Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society, the American Association of Feline Practitioners, the Food Animal Practitioners Group, Christian Veterinary Fellowship and Alpha Psi, the national veterinary social fraternity.

“In veterinary school, we all have to learn the same things and go through the same curriculum. Participating in SCAVMA and the specialty student organizations provides an avenue for us to learn more about the particular areas we’re interested in,” Maran said. “Another major benefit is that everybody here is motivated, which helps drive you in areas you may feel you lack knowledge or skills.”

Seventy-one of the 72 freshman CVM students are members of SCAVMA, and Maran said the membership typically is well above 90 percent of all CVM students.

Drs. Robert Linford and John Tyler serve as SCAVMA faculty advisers. Linford said the top-quality student leaders of SCAVMA make his job very simple.

“Our students practically operate the entire organization...
themselves. They’re very good. We just periodically give advice on organizational procedures and financial matters,” Linford said. “With some student organizations, there is a potential for disagreements, but our students all get along really well.”

In addition to being exposed to nationally known speakers, Linford said a major benefit to SCAVMA membership is that, as members, students are able to purchase liability insurance through the parent American Veterinary Medical Association at a much-reduced price.

“This insurance is required for students in their junior- and senior-year externship rotations,” Linford said. “It’s difficult for them to obtain externships without liability insurance because veterinarians are reluctant to let uninsured students come in and work for them.”

Linford said SCAVMA members also participate in a national continuing education meeting each year. At this symposium, members have the opportunity to learn, have fun and meet veterinary students from all over the country.

Wildlife Law Enforcement Club is Hands-on Experience

Patrolling Chadwick Lake to inform anglers of fishing regulations and permit requirements is one of the many activities of the Wildlife Law Enforcement Club.

The club patrols the lake and obtains catch and effort information from the users as part of their on-the-job training activities. Club members coordinate patrols with the MSU Campus Police and local conservation officers of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

“This opportunity has changed the focus of our club’s activities from fundraising to concentrating on job training activities,” said Mike Thrash, senior wildlife law enforcement student. The lake patrol, as well as monitoring the game check stations in the MSU John W. Starr Memorial Forest, gives students an opportunity to work side-by-side with law enforcement officers.

In addition to these campus activities, members receive annual pistol and rifle training from the Starkville Police Department and participate in the Conservation Law Enforcement Internship program with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

“The Wildlife Law Enforcement Club gives its members many opportunities to network with professionals in the law enforcement field,” said Kevin Hunt, club advisor. “From attendance at professional meetings such as the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to the forensics workshop sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Berryman Institute, the students learn about law enforcement careers from the professionals.”

The MSU Wildlife Law Enforcement Club was the first student organization inducted into the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association.
Forestry Chapter Hailed as the Best in the Nation

The MSU student chapter of the Society of American Foresters is more than a club at MSU; it has been honored as one of the outstanding student chapters in the nation for the last nine years. To follow the trend, the student chapter web site has won first place in the web site competition for the last two years.

“It is truly more than a club,” said Donald Grebner, club advisor. “The students attend scientific meetings where they network with those in the profession and have many opportunities to give back to the community through civic-minded endeavors.

“Our goal is to not only be appreciative to what has been given to us, but to engender a sense of civic responsibility to its members,” Grebner added.

The chapter has adopted part of Highway 25 South to pick up trash as part of Mississippi’s Adopt-A-Highway program. Chapter members also help with local food drives for the needy and in the recent past made donations to the Palmer Home for Children.

There is an opportunity for fun in MSU’s SAF. Each year chapter members participate in forestry competitions at the Association of Southern Forestry Club’s annual conclave. The annual conclave hosts an estimated 300 student lumberjacks from 14 universities testing their skills in a variety of physical and technical events.

Chapter member Eric Ezell, who competes in the crosscutting event, said “It was a lot of fun and it gave you an opportunity to meet peers from other universities.”

Developing future leaders and forestry professionals is a chapter goal. The chapter hosts project learning tree events in local schools, sponsors student participation in MSU student leadership development workshops, and sends chapter officers to the SAF Leadership Academy in Nebraska each year.

Chapter President Dan Prevost said the SAF Leadership Academy was “a great experience,” and that it “built confidence and taught many practical leadership skills.”

MANRRS Offers Career Development

Minority students in natural resources and agriculture now have an opportunity to network with professionals in their fields through the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences.

Established at MSU in 2001, MANRRS prepares students for leadership roles by involving them in activities, educational opportunities and job readiness training, as well as facilitating internships and permanent employment.

MANRRS is a national organization established to develop a network between minority natural resources and agriculture students and professionals from academic institutions, government and industry.

The MSU MANRRS chapter has 23 student members from nine departments and two colleges. Students attend the annual MANRRS Conference and Career Fair. Students also participate in fund-raising activities and a can drive during the holidays.

Wildlife Society Offers Variety

The MSU student chapter of the Wildlife Society competes in identifying everything from frog calls to duck wings as part of the Southeastern Wildlife Conclave. These competitions give the MSU chapter a sense of team camaraderie in field events such as dendrology, archery, obstacle course, radio telemetry and the canoe race.

The Wildlife Society is an international, nonprofit scientific and educational organization serving professionals in all areas of wildlife conservation and resource management. Membership in the student chapter provides students with the tools they will need to be effective in school and on the job, said club advisor Ben West.

Members of the MSU student chapter attend professional meetings and help host events such as the National Wild Turkey Federation Banquet.

“The student chapter is designed to allow students the opportunities to network with professionals and help determine their niche in this challenging and dynamic profession,” West said.

Through meetings, special projects and other functions, students become familiar with wildlife management techniques; become aware of local, national and international natural resources issues; and gain valuable experience in the wildlife profession.
When her little sister died shortly after being diagnosed with breast cancer, grief wasn’t the only emotion Peggy Crawford felt.

“My younger sister, Marsha, died at 45 years old, within 50 weeks of learning she had breast cancer. That really ticked me off,” Crawford said. Marsha left an 8-year-old daughter behind.

Instead of remaining angry, Crawford started BATTLE, an acronym for Breast Cancer Awareness To Teach Ladies Early detection.

“Nine years ago, I sat down with my good friend Glenda Gregory, who was the Winston County Extension home economist, and asked her if she would partner with me on this,” Crawford said. “We devised our protocol for BATTLE and began getting out information on the program.”

Crawford was a member of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians Alliance, a group of physicians’ spouses. For the first several years of the program, that organization teamed up with the Mississippi State University Extension Service to provide breast cancer awareness programming. Last year, the Winston County Medical Center became a BATTLE partner.

Crawford and Gregory saturated the state with information in those first years on breast cancer awareness and prevention. The program was so successful that the two women were invited to the Information and Quality Healthcare Foundation in Jackson to explain the program’s success.

“We were the best in the state per capita for women 50 to 65 years old getting mammograms done. We kept that record for seven years—we just lost it this year by a fraction of a point to Ackerman,” Crawford said. “That’s because of this program.”

Gregory’s decision to become involved with BATTLE also was motivated by family; her mother had breast cancer, which was detected by a mammogram. Gregory said that experience showed her the importance of women having yearly mammograms. She said the program’s impact on Winston County women and men has been tremendous.

“When we started out with the program, 34 percent of the ladies in Winston County over the age of 65 received mammograms. The last report we got showed around 67 percent received mammograms,” Gregory said. “I don’t know that BATTLE was the sole reason for this increase, but I do know it has made an impact on the ladies.”
Gregory said the program is a result of two people getting involved in an awareness program and the county embracing it.

"Without the support of individuals, businesses, doctors and the hospital, this program could not have been such a success. In the last few years, a planning committee was formed. This committee meets to plan our luncheon and shares in the work pulling it all together," she said.

Local doctors approve of the program and support it by purchasing tables at the BATTLE luncheon and fashion show. The first BATTLE luncheon was held six years ago and served 32 guests. Now that number has grown to 325, with only space limiting further growth.

"The first luncheon we had, the idea was to buy a ticket for yourself and one for an underserved person who might not normally have an annual mammogram. The next year, we started selling tables to businesses and individuals. A table seats six people, and sponsoring one table allows six people to eat, receive information on breast cancer prevention and see the fashion show," Gregory said.

The luncheon features a well-known breast cancer-related keynote speaker, often a survivor or relative of a survivor. Crawford said the first keynote speaker was a young man whose presentation was called "What it’s like when your mother has breast cancer."

"There wasn’t a dry eye in the room—men and women were crying," she said.

For the fashion revue, breast cancer survivors model clothes from stores in Winston County. As each model walks the runway, an emcee tells how long the model has been a survivor. The program is such a success that other Mississippi counties now hope to start their own BATTLE groups. Crawford credits the program’s success to the firm grasp breast cancer has on people’s lives.

"Everyone is touched by breast cancer in some fashion because we all have a mother, a grandmother, a sister, a wife—and even our daughters can get this disease," Crawford said.

Though she lost her own sister, Crawford’s hope is that awareness will prevent other young women from losing their lives.

"We really believe that when God closes one window, He opens another one somewhere," she said. "If Marsha hadn’t died, I wouldn’t have gotten involved with BATTLE."

SUMMER BREEZES BRING CROP THREAT

It's been a long and winding path, but Asian soybean rust finally reached Mississippi this summer.

Left untreated, the fungal disease can destroy a soybean crop by completely defoliating plants. As its name indicates, the disease first appeared in Asia in 1902 and spread to Australia and then southern Africa on wind currents. Asian soybean rust reached South America in 2001. Brazil has been especially hard hit, with millions of dollars in crop losses in the past four years.

The first spores of the disease in the U.S. were found in Louisiana during November 2004. The first confirmed case of the disease in Mississippi was found July 13, 2005.

Because of the advanced warning that the soybean disease was moving toward the U.S., agronomists and other crop scientists had time to prepare for detecting its presence. Scientists have been scouting kudzu and other wild host plants for the disease.

Sentinel plots also have been used as an early warning system. The small plots of soybeans were planted throughout Mississippi and other producing states ahead of the regular growing season and monitored closely.

MSU Extension soybean specialist Alan Blaine said producers have the right tools, including fungicides, to fight rust.

"Rust probably is going to become a part of our lives," he said. "Producers will have to treat for it or plant something else."

Blaine also noted differences between the situation in Mississippi and the one in Brazil that will likely reduce the impact of rust in soybeans here.

"We have a winter; they don’t," he said. "The cold weather will have a limiting effect on the disease."
RESEARCH PROVIDES TOOLS FOR FISH PRODUCTION

“These two treatments are preventative. You’ve got to plan ahead to manage the problem.”

CRAIG TUCKER

Photos by Marco Nicovich
By Bonnie Coblentz

The right tools give catfish producers an edge in the battle against production problems, and research is providing those tools.

Ongoing research at Mississippi State University’s Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center focuses on several aspects of catfish production. Two major problems facing producers are trematode infestation and off-flavor. Researchers have found that one chemical applied in the correct dosage can help producers win battle against both problems.

David Wise, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station research professor, works with fish health. He said trematode infection is a significant problem among many catfish ponds in the state.

“It’s kind of a sleeper problem in a lot of ponds, and it can creep up on you,” Wise said. “Severe infections cause high mortality rates and are easy to recognize, but mild infections can be easily overlooked. Even though mild infections don’t directly result in deaths, they dramatically increase the incidence of other infectious diseases and can reduce feeding rates by as much as 40 percent.”

Channel catfish used in commercial production are one step in the complex life cycle of the trematode. Catfish are infested at the free-swimming cercariae stage when these organisms penetrate the skin and form a cyst.

The life cycle of this parasite starts when the adult trematode, located on the intestinal wall of the American white pelican, releases eggs into ponds. The eggs hatch and produce miracidiae, which infect the first intermediate host, the ram’s horn snail.

Cercariae released from infected snails infect catfish and can be observed as small raised bumps under the skin of the fish. In ideal water temperatures, infected snails can release thousands of cercariae per day and will continue to shed these until the snails die.

Trematode control focuses on ridding a pond of these disease-carrying snails. Hydrated lime and copper sulfate are both safe for catfish and effective at killing snails.

“Originally we looked at pond margin treatments using hydrated lime to kill the snails around the edges of the pond,” Wise said. “We applied hydrated lime at the rate of 1 pound per linear foot of pond. It’s messy, but it can be used during the summer and won’t kill the desirable algae blooms.”

Further research showed that copper sulfate is cheaper and safer to use, but it does kill desirable summer algae blooms. However, it can be used later in the year to treat the whole pond and can very effectively rid a pond of snails.

“Repeated toxicity trials found that we could kill close to 100 percent of the snails in a pond using copper sulfate applied with a chemical boat while not losing any fish and having no effect on dissolved oxygen or bloom,” Wise said. “You have to apply it when the water temperatures are still warm, but after the summer algal blooms are gone.”

Wise said any total pond treatment is a risky process, but this is a well-researched, targeted approach to treating an infected pond if margin treatments during the summer did not eliminate the problem.

Research also has shown that copper sulfate is a useful chemical in the battle against another significant problem in catfish production: off-flavor. Trained taste panels describe the flavor of catfish in terms of boiled chicken breast, sweet corn or pecan. Off-flavor is defined as any other flavor that is undesirable. The most common off-flavors are described as musty, or earthy.

Craig Tucker, MAFES researcher, said blue-green algae are the primary culprits for off-flavor. Research has shown that both copper sulfate and diuron are effective at eliminating these algae from treated ponds while leaving the fish safe for human consumption.

“Both chemicals are EPA approved, and when used correctly, are quite safe,” Tucker said. “These two treatments are preventative. You’ve got to plan ahead to manage the problem.”

Tucker said correcting an off-flavor problem that is detected when the fish are ready to harvest can take from a few weeks to more than a year. The best method is to control the blue-green algae in the period before harvest by selectively killing the undesirable algae while encouraging the growth of the desirable algae and phytoplankton.

“We finished a three-year study of copper sulfate in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture,” Tucker said. “We found you can be pretty successful in managing off-flavor if the producer thinks ahead about his production and harvesting schedule, and uses the chemicals in the way we recommend.”

MAFES and USDA researchers have evaluated hundreds of chemicals in the laboratory and dozens in pond tests to determine their effectiveness at preventing off-flavor. Further research could give producers more tools to fight this significant problem.

To learn more about ongoing MSU research on catfish production issues, visit the Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center online at www.msstate.edu/dept/tcnwac/.
Fulbright Award

Provides International Fashion Experience
Clothing designers and manufacturers around the world can benefit from the work of an award-winning Mississippi State University professor, thanks to a prestigious award.

Phyllis Bell Miller, associate professor of human sciences, traveled to Bulgaria this summer on a Fulbright Scholarship for teaching and research. While in the East European nation, she will collect information for an Internet database of the country’s traditional dress. She will also assist students in designing current fashions based on traditional dress.

“Bulgaria will be the prototype for a database of traditional dress and folk costumes from around the world,” Miller said. “The Bulgarian fashion industry is growing, and I want to stimulate international interest in the industry itself as well as in the country’s traditional styles and colors.”

The veteran member of MSU’s School of Human Sciences pioneered the art of apparel design on personal computers in the 1980s.

Her programs have been used by teaching institutions, manufacturers and the U.S. Navy, among others. She has worked with the developers of AutoCAD, a computer program originally used by architects and engineers, and has modified the program for the apparel industry.

Miller has already traveled to 33 countries collecting information on both men’s and women’s national dress, colors and customs.

“The Fulbright scholarship will allow me to collect information at museums and cultural sites throughout Bulgaria,” she said. “I’m especially interested in collecting information that will allow designers to make exact color matches.”

The Fulbright organization was established by Congress in 1946 to enhance mutual understanding among nations of the world.

Miller traveled to Bulgaria’s capital, Sofia, in July to teach at the Bulgarian Academy of Fine Arts from September until returning to MSU in early February.

At Mississippi State, she teaches courses in computer-aided design for Apparel, Textiles, and Merchandising and for Interior Design.

Miller received a certificate from the Academy Nvart, School of French Couture in Michigan, and earned her bachelor’s degree in clothing and textiles from Mundelein College in Chicago. Her master’s degree is in design and rehabilitation from Michigan State University, and she earned a doctorate in design and journalism at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
Employees of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine were recently honored with Rosalind and Rodney Foil Teamwork and Louis and Doris Wise Support Staff awards for outstanding service.

The awards are presented each year in honor of the former DAFVM vice presidents and their wives.

Recipients of the 2005 Foil awards are Peter Ryan and Scott Willard, both associate professors in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science. The 2005 recipient of the Wise Secretarial/Clerical award is Linda Kopszywa, executive secretary in the Southeast District Extension Office in Biloxi. This year’s winner of the Wise Professional Non-faculty award is Tracy Brown, facilities manager at the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Verona.

Scientists receive William M. White Awards

Two scientists in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine are recipients of 2005 William M. White Special Project Awards.

Brent Fountain, an assistant professor in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion, and Maria Tomaso-Peterson, an assistant professor in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, received their awards during the annual DAFVM Summer Celebration.

The White awards are presented on behalf of the late William M. White, an Oktibbeha County dairy farmer, agricultural leader and university supporter. The awards provide financial support for research projects that further the development of agriculture and agribusiness in Mississippi.
In today’s world of fast-paced change, the strategies of the past are no guarantee of future success. Just ask any electronics manufacturer who is still selling videotape players in the DVD era.

The Extension Service is no exception. In fact, as a provider of nonformal educational programs for adults and youth, Extension’s primary role is to be an agent for change. By helping people learn new skills and assimilate new information, Extension educators help their clients survive and thrive by adjusting to the demands of a changing economy and a changing society.

The key to Extension’s success has been and will continue to be based on taking “a dose of its own medicine”—to assimilate new information, learn new skills, and constantly adjust in order to remain valuable to its clients.

As they have done for more than 90 years, Extension professionals will remain alert to the changes in the world around them and create new ways to carry out the organization’s longstanding mission.

Consider how today’s younger generation goes about getting information. While our traditional clientele of 30 years ago, now in their 50s through 80s, turned first to printed material, their county agents, their neighbors, and local radio and TV stations for information and guidance, today’s younger clientele go first to the Web. Rather than stop by the county Extension office for a publication, they type a few words into an Internet search engine and within a few seconds have access to 100 or more documents on the topic of interest.

The kind of information and guidance people need also has changed. While Extension agents of bygone decades carried in their heads much of the information their clientele needed, that is simply not possible anymore. Today’s farmer requires complex information about precision application equipment driven by computers and global positioning systems. They need to know the prospects for the soybean crop in Brazil and the projected demand for cotton in China. As a result, today’s Extension educators are more specialized in the information they provide and are taking on the role of conduits to reliable sources of expertise and information.

And it’s not just technological change. Families, children, communities, and social structures are vastly different today and are continuing to change. Extension educators are called on to provide relevant and timely information on issues impacting the lives of all Mississippians. They do this through educational programs in areas such as healthy living and lifestyles, nutrition, parenting, youth development, family resource management, e-commerce, and business planning, among others. Other Extension programs address the needs of communities through leadership development, strategic planning and identification of new businesses. Whether at the individual or community level, all Extension programs are designed to help our citizens improve the quality of their lives.

To rise to the new challenges, Extension professionals constantly strive to better understand the needs and circumstances of those they serve. They’re reaching out beyond their traditional areas of expertise to tap all the vast knowledge within the university. They’re creating new program delivery strategies, including videoconferencing and the Internet, to deliver information and provide education to people wherever and whenever they are available to learn.

Extension must continue to dream big and work hard to sustain the success achieved over its first 90-plus years.

Joe McGilberry retired June 30 following an Extension career spanning almost 30 years, the last four of which were as director of the MSU Extension Service.
In recent weeks the Mississippi State family has had the pleasure of witnessing many of its young men and women finish their degrees and accept long-sought after college diplomas. After sitting on both sides of the aisle, so to speak, I can honestly say that it is almost as gratifying to watch a graduation ceremony at Mississippi State University as it is to be part of one. Both instances have left me with a sense of hope for the future and a renewed admiration for my alma mater.

In the decade that has passed since I received my diploma, Mississippi State University has grown in so many ways that it would take far more room than I’ve been allotted in this article to describe them. New academic buildings have sprung up seemingly overnight, and older ones have taken on new faces inside and out. The Sanderson Center has taken the place of the tin gym, and our athletic facilities have become competitive with any in the nation. The MSU family has done its utmost to make sure that this campus is an attractive, student friendly, academically and athletically competitive institution. MSU has succeeded.

While new and improved facilities will forever be a priority, our immediate focus is on education and making sure that the individuals who come to teach and study at MSU have the support that they need to succeed. To address these needs, the university has launched State of the Future: The Mississippi State Campaign. As the name implies, the focus is on the future of this university, which is of course, our students and our faculty.

Both the College of Forest Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine have set lofty goals in this campaign. The College of Forest Resources has set a goal of $14.75 million, while the College of Veterinary Medicine intends to reach $19.7 million. The majority of these funds in each college will go towards endowed scholarships and fellowships, as well as endowed faculty positions. These funds will allow us to maintain and recruit top educators and students. Both the CFR and the CVM have reputations for excellence in their fields, and in order to maintain and grow that reputation, it is vital that we all become involved in the State of the Future.

Jeff Little
Assistant Director of Development
College of Forest Resources
College of Veterinary Medicine

CVM Establishes Pegasus Partners Endowment Fund

The Pegasus has been a symbol of the College of Veterinary Medicine for 30 years, but the flying horse’s history extends far into the past.

From the tenth to the eighth century, B.C., the Pegasus graced Greek and Roman art objects. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the winged horse became a symbol of poetic inspiration and artistic creation.

To the College of Veterinary Medicine at MSU, the Pegasus represents a passion to improve the health and well-being of animals for the benefit of the animals, their owners, industry and society. This is achieved by providing compassionate, world-class health care and diagnostic services, while also training students and veterinary professionals and encouraging them to embrace and perpetuate the college’s vision.

The Pegasus Partners Endowment has been established to help the College of Veterinary Medicine build a solid foundation for our enrichment activities. Funds raised will help attract top students and faculty, support new research endeavors and enrich the college’s innovative programs. One of the first contributors to the endowment was Dr. James A. Brett of Montezuma, Ga., a member of MSU’s CVM class of 1983.

“I am very grateful for the education that I received from MSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine,” Brett said. “Supporting this fund is a way for me to give back and help provide stable funding for the college.”

The goal for the endowment is $2.5 million. Only the interest earned on this account will be used to assure an annual resource to enhance college-wide activities. With the MSU Foundation’s spending rate of 4 percent, the college will generate $100,000 annually from the new fund.

Contributions of $10,000 or more in gifts and pledges will qualify donors as Pegasus Partners. These gifts can be made in annual installments over a three- to five-year period. Each donor will receive a Pegasus Partner statue and an engraved nameplate on the college’s donor recognition wall.

For more information on the Pegasus Partners Endowment and how you can become a Pegasus Partner, contact Jeff Little at (662) 325-8151.
Wild Turkey Group Expands Conservation Efforts

In 1990, a group of Jackson-area sportsmen concerned about the future of the wild turkey in Mississippi formed the Greater Jackson Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Led by passionate turkey hunter Boyd Burrow, the chapter soon became one of Mississippi’s best fund-raising conservation organizations.

Upon Burrow’s sudden, unexpected death in 1996, the organization’s annual golf tournament was renamed in his honor. One of the goals for the Boyd Burrow Memorial Wild Turkey Scramble became raising funds to create a scholarship in his name. “People knew Boyd, even if he didn’t know them,” said Bobby Cleveland, a close friend of Burrow. “That’s just the type of person he was. The man ate, slept, drank, talked, and lived for turkey hunting. His dedication to turkey hunting and conservation was overwhelming and well represents the chapter’s efforts to preserve the turkey hunting tradition.”

In 2004, after a successful fund-raising year, the Jackson chapter achieved another one of its goals with the creation of the Boyd Burrow Greater Jackson Chapter NWTF Endowment Fund in MSU’s College of Forest Resources and the Boyd Burrow Greater Jackson Chapter NWTF annual scholarship.

“Boyd would have really appreciated this,” Cleveland said. “He would want to help young people with the same love of nature as he had.”

Through its scholarships, the Greater Jackson Chapter of the NWTF hopes to continue enhancing wildlife habitat and to ensure the long-term sustainability of conservation efforts in Mississippi. At the same time, the scholarships pay homage to Boyd Burrow, the “turkey guy” who believed in society’s obligation to appreciate and conserve our wildlife heritage.

To learn more about how you can establish an endowed scholarship in the College of Forest Resources, contact Jeff Little at (662) 325-8151.

Researcher’s Legacy Lives on at MSU

The home of one of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ most generous donors is filled with mementoes of a life filled with world travel.

Winifred B. Hartwig has lived a long and fulfilling life. At age 93, she remembers every painting and statue that decorates her home in Greenville and the stories that go along with them. Hartwig tells of paintings she acquired while traveling with her husband Edgar in Brazil and Argentina, and of statues from India and Egypt carved from wood and stone.

“The people of these countries were always so nice to us,” Hartwig recalls. “I think it was because they knew Edgar was doing his best to help them.”

Edgar E. Hartwig, who died in 1996, spent most of his life conducting research on soybeans, trying to increase their yields and profits. He was a researcher at MSU’s Delta Branch Research and Experiment Station in Stoneville, where he became renowned worldwide for his success as a soybean breeder. This success eventually earned him the moniker “the father of soybeans” in the Southern United States. However, in addition to his many years of service at Stoneville, Hartwig also shared his specialized expertise with the developing agricultural regions in countries such as Egypt, Brazil and India, where he taught them how to grow the protein-rich legume.

“Edgar loved the work he did,” said Hartwig. “Mississippi State was very good to us, and I wanted to show my appreciation and give something back.”

When most people give to a university, they will give a little here and there. Some may even give more to specific academic areas, but few make substantial gifts. Hartwig, on the other hand, has made a generous bequest of her entire estate. The bequest will be used by Mississippi State to honor and continue her late husband’s lifelong work in soybean research by establishing an endowed chair, as well as graduate assistantships, in the college’s Department of Plant and Soil Sciences.

In addition to supporting soybean research, Hartwig also has created a Fund for Excellence in her specific field of interest, human sciences. Earnings from the fund will be used to provide student scholarships, as well as general support for the faculty, staff and students in the School of Human Sciences.

For more information on contributing to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, please contact Jud Skelton at (662) 325-0643.