

# Vice President's Letter



The opening sentence of the First Morrill Act of 1862 states, "An ACT Donating Public Lands to the several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts."

The legislation introduced by U.S. Representative Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont granted each state 30,000 acres of public land for each member of Congress it was apportioned based on the 1860 census. The land grants were in the new U.S. territories in the West and were to be sold and the proceeds

invested in a perpetual endowment fund to support colleges of agriculture and mechanical arts in each state.

A second Morrill Act in 1890 established additional land-grant schools.

Today there are 73 universities in the land-grant system. An additional 23 Native American tribal colleges also operate as land-grant institutions.

It's good company to be in. The roster of land-grant schools includes the University of California, Purdue, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Rutgers, Cornell and Virginia Tech. Mississippi's land-grant institutions are Mississippi State University and Alcorn State University.

The purpose of the land-grant system has always been to provide the education and research needed to move the nation forward and to make it secure in its ability to produce food and fiber and to build the cities, transportation systems and other infrastructure needed by a great nation.

The borders of a campus do not bind land-grant schools. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the Extension system, which placed representatives of the land-grant institutions in every county to provide educational programs and research information at the grass-roots level.

Land-grant schools have always used the latest technology in their teaching, research and outreach missions. In the early days, they were researching and teaching ways to harness the power of steam, then gasoline and other energy sources. Today, Mississippi State University and other land-grant universities are leaders in communication technology.

The Internet and other communication tools are important in helping the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at MSU accomplish its mission of service to the people of Mississippi. The Division's Web site, MSUcares.com, is a direct link to MSU for anyone looking for information about academic or continuing education opportunities, news from the units in the Division, research results and other information.

We use technology, however, only to supplement, not replace, people. Extension personnel are available in each county to provide educational programs and to assist with questions on a variety of topics. Beginning on page 4 of this issue of *Landmarks*, you can read about how young farmers in Yalobusha County are benefiting from support and encouragement from their county Extension director.

Work with Gulf Coast shrimp fishermen by MSU research scientists and Extension professionals at the Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi is another example of how Division personnel adapt to meet the needs of individuals. Their story begins on page 6.

Keep these stories in mind when you hear that Mississippi State University is a land-grant school.

*Vance H. Watson*

Vance H. Watson

## MISSISSIPPI LANDMARKS

Research, Education and Outreach in the Division of  
Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine

*Landmarks is published quarterly by the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University*

- Robert H. Foglesong    **President**
- Vance Watson    **Vice President**  
Dean, College of Agriculture and  
Life Sciences  
Director, Mississippi Agricultural  
and Forestry Experiment Station  
Interim Director, University Extension  
and Outreach
- George Hopper    **Dean, College of Forest  
Resources**  
Director, Forest and Wildlife  
Research Center
- Kent Hoblet    **Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine**
- Landmarks is produced by the Office of Agricultural  
Communications.
- Bob Ratliff    **Editor**
- Robyn Hearn    **Assistant Editor**
- Annette Woods    **Graphic Designer**
- Linda Breazeale  
Bonnie Coblentz    **Writers**  
Keryn Page
- Jim Lytle  
Marco Nicovich    **Photo Editors**  
Tom Thompson

For a subscription to *Landmarks*, address change or letter to the editor, write to

**LANDMARKS**  
Office of Agricultural Communications  
P.O. Box 9625  
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9625

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability, or veteran status.

Available on the World Wide Web  
[www.dafvm.msstate.edu/landmarks](http://www.dafvm.msstate.edu/landmarks)