

# Vice President's Letter



Success often depends on the ability to adapt to change. For Mississippi, a lot changed during the past year, and Mississippians are meeting the challenges posed by those changes.

Because of their strong ties to the land, Mississippians are used to adapting to meet variables in weather, threats from insects and other pests, and the market place. They also apply the same

skills to adapting new technology to meet their needs in the production of food and fiber.

As a land-grant school, Mississippi State University was founded with the mission of helping the state's citizens. That mission is carried out through teaching, research and outreach programs by the university's faculty and support staff.

One example of how the work of these men and women has helped row-crop producers in Mississippi and around the world is the development of the parabolic subsoiler. Gordon Tupper, an agricultural engineer with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at MSU's Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville, designed and built the tillage instrument to reduce the horsepower requirements for plowing through compacted layers below the soil surface. He made the design so simple that, in his words, "any machinery shop could build it."

Now retired, Tupper was recently among the inaugural list of inductees into the Farm Press Publications' Researchers Hall of Fame. There are hundreds of other current and past MSU faculty and staff who could be listed for their contributions to Mississippi, the nation and the world.

Recovery from hurricanes Katrina and Rita is one of the challenges currently faced by many Mississippians. MSU is using its resources to help with recovery in a variety of ways. Current research in the Department of Forest Products includes work with construction techniques to make houses better suited to the Southern Climate Zone. As part of that research, scientists are looking at ways to build houses that can better withstand high winds, including those associated with hurricanes.

As the state moves into a new era, university expertise, personnel and resources will play an important role in helping Mississippians meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

*Vance H. Watson*

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## 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*

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### LANDMARKS

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P.O. Box 9625  
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9625

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