

# DEVELOPMENT CORNER



James C. Kennedy

By Karen Brasher

Waterfowl- and wetlands-related teaching, research, and service will continue at Mississippi State University indefinitely thanks to a significant gift from Cox Enterprises Inc. chairman and chief executive officer James C. Kennedy.

Kennedy, a native of Hawaii, recently established the James C. Kennedy Endowed Chair in Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation in the College of Forest Resources at Mississippi State University.

The first endowed chair in the college, the Kennedy Chair will continue leadership in the waterfowl and wetlands arena.

"This gift demonstrates Mr. Kennedy's dedication to conservation and his support of waterfowl and wetland resources," said George Hopper, dean of the College of Forest Resources.

Kennedy, a long-time conservationist and philanthropist, recently launched a new initiative, Cox Conserves. The program seeks to reduce the annual carbon footprint or greenhouse gas emissions of Cox Enterprises by 20 percent in the next 10 years. Since 2000, the company has eliminated the production of 118,000 tons of greenhouse gases.

"The reason I decided that Cox should be more involved in conservation is our long history of being a great corporate citizen and the idea that if everyone does a little, we can make a difference," Kennedy said. "Given the challenges facing future generations, I believe that man's impact on the environment is incredibly important and we have to do something."

Kennedy's fondness for waterfowl is demonstrated widely but locally in Mississippi in his conservation-easement property, York Woods, near Charleston. When Kennedy is not residing in Atlanta and running Cox Enterprises—one of the nation's leading media companies and providers of automotive services—he enjoys time at York Woods in the Mississippi Delta.

"I find great pleasure in restoring land and improving habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife," Kennedy said. "York Woods is a retreat for me and a place that I enjoy hunting and relaxing outdoors."

Kennedy's passion for conservation can also be found in his consistent support for increasing waterfowl and wetlands habitat, serving on the executive board of Ducks Unlimited Inc. and as former president of Wetlands America Trust. In 2003, he and wife Sarah were recognized as the Philanthropists of the Year by the Greater Atlanta Chapter of the Association for Fund-raising Professionals,

# MSU

## Announces Waterfowl and Wetlands Chair

in recognition of their many generous contributions to the community.

"My grandfather, James M. Cox, former Ohio governor and U.S. presidential candidate, instilled in me the need to serve your community," Kennedy said.

The endowed chair at MSU is one way that I can give back and ensure that future generations will have waterfowl and wetlands, and people to study and steward these valuable natural resources, Kennedy added.

An endowed chair is a distinguished university program linked to a select faculty position filled by an outstanding scholar and teacher, as judged by rigorous, nationally accepted standards. The minimum giving level for an endowed chair at MSU is \$1.5 million.

"To my knowledge, only one similar endowed university waterfowl program currently exists nationwide," Hopper

said. "The Kennedy Chair is the first endowed waterfowl and wetlands university chair in the 14 states of the Mississippi Flyway along the Mississippi River and its tributaries."

Mississippi is an important state for waterfowl, and MSU has a nationally respected program in wildlife science and management; hence, it is fitting for the college to house the chair, Hopper added.

Throughout the United States and Canada, university programs focused on waterfowl and wetlands are declining in number, according to Bruce Leopold, head in the department of wildlife and fisheries.

"The decline in university waterfowl programs was one of Mr. Kennedy's major reasons for establishing the chair. The chair and associated program will ensure in perpetuity that the university will continue to provide needed research to improve waterfowl habitat and populations," Hopper said.

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