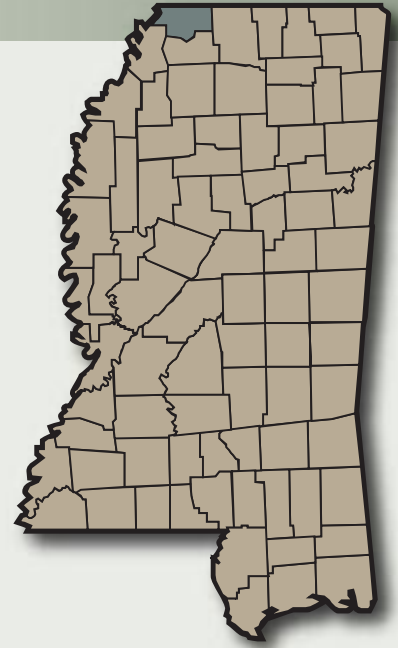


1/82: DeSoto County



Bob Ratliff



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County Seat: Hernando

Population: 107,199 (2000 census). The DeSoto County Economic Development Council estimated the 2007 population at 148,568.

- Municipalities:**
- Southaven
 - Horn Lake
 - Olive Branch
 - Hernando
 - Walls

Commodities: Corn, cotton, soybeans, wheat and rice are all produced in the county. The DeSoto County Soil and Water Conservation District estimates the county has 80,000 acres of forests, 90,000 acres of cropland, 19,000 acres of pastureland and 67,000 acres of urban areas.

- Industries:**
- Logistics/Transportation/Warehousing
 - Tourism
 - Educational Services
 - Manufacturing

- Natural Resources:**
- DeSoto County has numerous lakes and waterways, including Arkabutla Lake, which is home to the Arkabutla State Waterfowl Refuge.
 - The Mississippi River forms part of the county's western boundary.

- History Notes:**
- Artifacts link the county with prehistoric groups of Woodland and Mississippian Indians.
 - Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto passed through the area in 1542.

- The county was organized in 1836.
- In 1909, the state's first county "agriculture agent" was hired by the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors.
- The current courthouse in Hernando is the county's fourth. It was built in 1940-41.
- The seven murals in the DeSoto County courthouse depict scenes of DeSoto and other early explorers of the area and were painted for the historic Gayoso Hotel in Memphis. They were donated to the county in 1952 by the Goldsmiths department store chain.

- Attractions:**
- The county features numerous golf courses.
 - Snowden Grove Park in Southaven, built in 1999, is a 17-field, baseball-only facility with many features previously found only at professional stadiums. The park hosts the Dizzy Dean Baseball World Series in the 8, 9, 13, Soph., Jr. and Sr. divisions.
 - Boat landings and other facilities for recreational activities are located on Arkabutla Lake and other waterways in the county

Did you know? The DeSoto County courthouse is rumored to be haunted, possibly by the ghost of Hernando DeSoto.

"Growing up in southern Florida, where rapid growth often occurred without adequate planning, I've been impressed with Desoto County's commitment to plan for the future. The county has a long-range plan in place that specifically includes parks and open spaces, as well as a county-wide green belt, for our children and grandchildren to enjoy."

Sandra Slocum, county Extension director