On the Cover
“Memories of Yore,” a 4-H junior photography award winner by Natalie Gross, 13, of Lauderdale County. See page 16 for more winners from the 4-H Expressive Arts program.

Back Cover
The 4-H Museum in Jackson celebrated its grand opening in December. (Photo by Tom Thompson)

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Biological engineering major keeps athletics and academics in balance.

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The MSU Rose Garden is more than just a place to smell the roses.

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Development funds help MSU meet changing needs.
Building is an ongoing process on any university campus, whether it involves the remodeling of existing structures to meet changing needs or construction of new facilities.

Recent changes here at Mississippi State include the completion of a major renovation of the Colvard Student Union and the move by the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering to a new building.

Located on Creelman Street between Dorman Hall and McCarthy Gym, the new 40,000-square-foot, three-story agricultural and biological engineering building houses a program that is steeped in history and that is continuing to make history.

The agricultural engineering program at MSU is the oldest in the region, and the department includes one of the first biological engineering programs in the nation. The new building's state-of-the-art capabilities will advance learning opportunities for students pursuing careers that deal with many of the challenges facing the state, the nation and the world.

Students in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering are preparing to enter medical school, work in biomedical engineering companies, conduct research to develop new renewable energy sources, manage agricultural enterprises and enter a variety of other careers.

While building structures is important for any university, helping students prepare for the next stage of their lives is the focus of all the academic departments in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at MSU. Having the right facilities, dedicated faculty and strong academic programs makes graduates of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Forest Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine well prepared for their chosen careers.

MSU’s dedication to quality educational programs is not just limited to the Starkville campus. Branch stations of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station are located throughout the state, and the MSU Extension Service has offices in every county.

A new feature of Landmarks, 1/82, begins on page 26 of this issue. It profiles one of Mississippi’s 82 counties and the MSU facilities located in the county. Through those facilities, every Mississippian has access to MSU.
“I would like for my work to have direct application in human health. I am interested in studying the detection and prevention of cancer and other diseases.”

LAUREN BEATTY
When Lauren Beatty decided to go to a football game rather than visit the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she worried she made the wrong choice.

Then Mississippi State University beat the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa 24-16. Beatty was on the sidelines as a Bulldog cheerleader in that November 2006 game.

“The moment was priceless,” she said. “The Alabama fans left the stadium early because they knew they had lost.”

While sports won out over academics that time, that is not the norm for Beatty.

Filip To, associate professor and Beatty’s academic adviser in MSU’s Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, said she is an excellent, straight-A student.

“It is amazing how she can manage her time because she does everything very well,” To said. “She is very disciplined, and she is on time.”

Beatty, 21, is a senior studying biological engineering, with a biomedical emphasis and a math minor. She maintains a 4.0 grade-point average in this challenging field, and she is a coed cheerleader for the football and men’s basketball teams. She lives in Starkville but is originally from Newton. Her parents are Hamp and Kim Beatty of Starkville.

This is Beatty’s second year as a member of MSU’s biological engineering team competing in the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition at MIT. The team is working in the field of synthetic biology and competing with some of the most prestigious universities in the world.

Beatty documented the team’s work last year for the iGEM competition, and this year, again as an undergraduate, she is documenting and doing much of the lab work. The team is composed of both undergraduate and graduate students.

“She is very well-respected by her peers because she pulls her own weight and has a good work ethic,” To said. “She’s not a slacker.”

Beatty is in class 15 to 18 hours a week, and during the summer, she works in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

By Bonnie Coblentz

She has cheerleading practice 3 days a week for 2 hours during semesters. When national cheerleading competition nears, that practice time jumps to 10 hours or more a week. She cheers at all the football games each semester, and that often involves overnight travel to away games. During basketball season, she cheers at every men’s home game and postseason tournaments.

Cheering has almost always been part of Beatty’s life.

“From kindergarten to fourth grade, I was in the Newton Tiger Cubs, and we cheered at halftime of the high school football games,” Beatty said.

She cheered through junior high and high school, and all 4 years at MSU.

“Ms. Mabel Miller, my gymnastics coach since I was 4 years old, had the biggest role in preparing me to become a State cheerleader,” Beatty said. “She helped me maintain tumbling skills and exposed me to coed stunting, both necessary skills for being a college cheerleader.”

Beatty, who has attended MSU football games since she was 2, said the jumbo television screens in the stadium help her keep up with the on-field action while cheering.

After college, Beatty wants to pursue a doctoral degree in genetic research and one day become a professor. Fields within biomedical engineering include tissue engineering, molecular and cell biology, imaging and biomechanics.

“I would like for my work to have direct application in human health. I am interested in studying the detection and prevention of cancer and other diseases,” Beatty said.

Her academic adviser, speaking from 25 years of experience working with college students, said her options are limitless.

“She has an extremely bright future,” To said. “With her positive attitude, she has very good potential to be anything she wants to be.”

This year, she intends to go with her MSU lab team to the iGEM competition at MIT, even if it falls on an important football game weekend.
Roses are among the most popular additions to home landscapes, and the Veterans Memorial Rose Garden at Mississippi State University provides a panorama of traditional and new rose varieties.

The garden is located at the Highway 182 entrance to the R. Rodney Foil Plant Science Research Facility.

“Rose planting at the site began during spring 2006. By fall 2007, construction was complete, and more than 30 rose cultivars were established at the garden,” said Pam Collins, assistant professor and director of gardens in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. “The garden is designed to be an important part of the horticulture program at MSU and to be a resource for members of the general public who are rose enthusiasts or who just enjoy the beauty of a facility of this type.”

The garden offers several features:

- A central gazebo
- Raised-brick planting beds encircling the gazebo
- Paved walkways through the beds
- An arched bridge connecting the site to a visitor parking lot
- Three arbors
- Ornate brick and steel fence
- Americans with Disabilities Act compliant

The garden was designed by MSU landscape architect Darryl Ray. Volunteers from the Oktibbeha County Rose Society and the Oktibbeha County Master Gardener Program planted the first roses at the site.

The garden includes several classes of roses:

- Hybrid Tea
- Shrub
- Floribunda
- Ground Cover
- Grandiflora

“Most of the rose cultivars at the garden are on Jackson and Perkins understock or are hybrids developed by Louisiana hybridizer Eddie Edwards and grown on fortuniana rootstock,” Collins said. “These plants have good resistance to heat stress and plant diseases common in Mississippi.”

Most of the rose cultivars in the garden were donated by two major supporters of MSU’s horticulture programs.
“Well-known Mississippi rosarian James Mills, owner of K and M Nursery in Buckatunna, donated plants, as well as time and talent to the establishment of the garden,” Collins said. “Jackson and Perkins, a national full-service nursery, has provided plants and other support for garden. The company’s efforts have been coordinated by its north Mississippi sales representative, Dave Shanklin, a graduate of the MSU horticulture program.”

The rose garden is used for a variety of activities, including:

- A teaching resource for the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
- A research site for MSU students and Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station scientists
- Self-guided tours by the public
- Programs for garden clubs and other organizations by MSU personnel
- Weddings and other private events by appointment
- Virtual tours of the rose gardens are available on the Web at rosegarden.msstate.edu.
MSU Student Team
Promotes Healthy Beef
By Robbie Ward

Beef kabobs, Philly cheesesteaks and juicy steaks can be part of the menu of people looking to lose weight.

Some people think they can’t lose weight or maintain a healthy lifestyle that includes beef, myths Mississippi cattlemen and others in the industry want to dispel. In fact, beef is an excellent source of protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium and phosphorus.

People can dine on roasts, burgers and other beef products when looking for healthy foods. They just need to be aware of portion size and seek out lean cuts of beef, nutritionists say.

Another myth includes the high cost of beef products. Few beef cuts cost as much as filet mignon. An assortment of beef cuts go easy on the pocketbook.

Lean beef products can be tasty and affordable staples in anyone’s diet, whether they want to lose weight or just maintain a healthy lifestyle.

That’s what 10 Mississippi State University students plan to tell people across the state. Called the Beef Team, the students will take knowledge of beef’s nutrition, recipes and portion size to schools, trade shows and supermarkets around the state. Serving as ambassadors for the beef industry, members of the Beef Team promote the food by visiting a cross section of the state to discuss its benefits.

The Beef Team is sponsored by the Mississippi Beef Council and three university departments—animal and dairy sciences, communication, and food science, nutrition and health promotion. Federal law requires all beef producers to pay a dollar for each animal sold, and much of this money goes toward beef education, promotion and research.

The Beef Team visits people of all ages and demographics to discuss the importance of a good diet and how beef can be a part of it. Earlier in the semester, the students attended an orientation to prepare them to speak to people throughout the state.

To help prepare them for answering questions, the students learned about food safety, consumer perceptions, beef preparation and cooking techniques and retail cuts from MSU professors and the university’s chef.

Tony Garcia, a senior from Brandon, expanded his knowledge of cooking beef. Mostly a burger and steak kind of eater, Garcia said he looks forward to learning more about preparing beef to add variety to meals. He said while preparing to inform others about beef’s health benefits and different recipes, he’ll learn more for himself.

“This will show me more about what’s out there for people to include in their meals,” Garcia said before taking sample of beef stew. “I’ve been mostly a burger and steak kind of person.”

During the Beef Team’s orientation, Sammy Blossom, Mississippi Cattleman Association executive vice president, visited to see beef spokespeople in action. Watching students prepare such meals as Mexican soup, spaghetti and meatballs and chili, Blossom said he felt confident about these “beef ambassadors” connecting with the public.

“These students will help kids understand that good diet is so important, and beef can be a part of it,” Blossom said.
In September 1977, the three commercial TV networks, ABC, CBS and NBC, launched 22 new shows, most of which did not survive the season. While not on one of the big three networks, a show that premiered in the fall of 1977 has survived and continues to inform and entertain its target audience.

*Farmweek*, a 30-minute weekly production of the Mississippi State University Extension Service aired for the first time on Oct. 3, 1977, on what was then Mississippi Educational Television, now Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

“Those of us in Extension wanted a television program as part of our educational service for Mississippi farmers,” said Bill Bost, Extension director from 1962 to 1981. “The late Charlie Deaton, the Leflore County representative in the Mississippi Legislature, had the same idea and suggested in 1976 that we approach ETV about carrying such a program. We followed through on his suggestion, and a year later we had a crew of professionals ready to put the program on the air.”

A nationwide search was conducted to find the right host for the program, and veteran newsman and Missouri School of Journalism graduate Bruce L. Johnson was hired as the program’s director and anchor. During the summer of 1977, Johnson began all the tasks associated with creating a TV program, not the least of which was selecting the right name.

“We kicked around a lot of ideas for a name that conveyed the fact that this was a program with current news about agriculture,” said Johnson, now a video producer for a Maryland school district. “*Farmweek* seemed to be the right choice, and it’s gratifying to see that the name still sends the right message about the show’s content.”

Reporter Tyson Gair and market reporter Mike Windham were hired to complete the Farmweek news crew, which was part of the Extension Information Services headed by Ralph Ballew.

Through an agreement with Mississippi ETV, the Extension crew would video tape about 10 to 15 minutes of news stories from around the state. This footage would then be incorporated into a program taped in the ETV studios in Jackson on Monday about 2 hours before it was broadcast at 7:30 the same night. In addition to the prerecorded stories, the program contained about 10 minutes of agriculture-related news, 5 minutes of commodity market news and 2 minutes of weather.

“It was a challenge to cover stories from all around the state and make the drive from MSU to Jackson each week to tape the show,” Johnson said.

Covering the entire state was, however, an adventure for the three young broadcast journalists, none of whom had a farm background.
“We were learning more about farming and agricultural enterprises than anyone else, traveling across the state doing ‘fun things’ and getting paid to do it,” said Windham, now a financial consultant in his hometown of Brookhaven. “We were working with professional-grade equipment, the best on the market at the time. The ETV people were absolute professionals at what they were doing and protective of the quality of what they aired.”

Gair, now retired, took over duties as Farmweek’s main anchor and producer in late 1979 and continued to lead the show’s news team for the next 10 years.

“Although I was born in the South, I actually grew up in Caracas, Venezuela, so I did not have a farm background,” Gair said. “To me, however, my lack of farm experience was a strength. I went into every story and onto every farm with a sense of curiosity that someone who was brought up on a farm would not have had, but with the goal of putting together a solid news program that provided vital, needed information to the farmers and consumers of Mississippi.”

With changes in technology have come changes in the production and delivery of Farmweek. Production was moved to the TV Center on the MSU campus in 1991, and the show is produced by the Office of Agricultural Communications.

Moving production to campus also opened up opportunities for student workers to gain journalism and broadcast experience by working on the program. At least three of those students now have successful careers in those fields. The show’s first student worker, Neely Tucker, is a writer with the Washington Post. Jennifer Zeppelin entered broadcasting as a Farmweek student worker and is a broadcast meteorologist with a TV network affiliate in Denver, Colo. Kevin Ivey is general manager of engineering and technology with Peavey Electronics.

While production technology, sets and other parts of Farmweek have changed over the years, the focus of the program remains the same—service to the people of Mississippi.

“We present timely news that’s relevant to Mississippi,” said Farmweek managing editor and co-anchor Artis Ford, who joined the production team in 1983. “We air the obvious ‘big news,’ but we also look for the subtle changes in political policies or trends that will have big effects on Mississippi agriculture and forestry in the future.”

During the past three decades, Farmweek reporters have been on almost every type of farm in Mississippi, including cotton, soybean, catfish and all the others anyone would expect. They also have visited many of the more unusual agricultural operations, such as those producing worms, mushroom rooms and llamas.

Most of all, Farmweek has kept pace with viewers needs.

“The program now presents a lot more information tailored to home owners and land management,” Ford said. “It can be anything from growing trees to improving wildlife habitat on a viewer’s property.”

For people who may not farm but do have a home landscape they want to improve, Farmweek has Southern Gardening, a segment featuring MSU Extension horticulturist Norman Winter.

The current Farmweek team includes Ford, markets editor and coanchor Leighton Spann, who has been with the program 14 years, and Southern Gardening producers Brian Utley and David Lack. The latest addition to the team is feature segment producer Amy Taylor, who joined the program in 2007 after graduation from the University of Southern Mississippi with a degree in broadcast journalism.

“I enjoy traveling Mississippi to cover agricultural news because it is a chance to learn what is new in the ag industry,” she said. “During the past year, I have seen amazing technological advances and learned things about agriculture that I never even imagined.”

Although Farmweek is now three decades old, an eternity for a TV program, it is not showing its age, said coanchor Spann.

“The original idea behind Farmweek was service to the people of Mississippi, and that is what we still provide,” he said. “Although agriculture has changed, there is remains a strong connection to the land in our state and Farmweek will continue to be a program for viewers who get their living and recreation from the resources of Mississippi.”
Mississippi catfish producers want consumers to eat lots of their product, but when those consumers are predatory birds, it’s time to get out and patrol the ponds.

Double-crested cormorants are large, black migratory seabirds related to pelicans. They can be up to a yard long with a wingspan of more than 4 feet. They seem to have an endless appetite for fish, especially young pond-raised catfish.

Jim Steeby, aquaculture specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said cormorants prefer fish 5-7 inches long, although they feed on ones as large as 10 inches.

“If you didn’t do anything, they could eat you out of house and home. In 3 weeks, they could clear a 10-acre pond of small fish,” Steeby said. “The only reason they don’t eat that many fish is we don’t give them a chance to.”

Catfish producers use a variety of methods to scare cormorants off their ponds and keep them moving, including loud noises from “screamers” or “bangers,” propane cannons, and strings placed across catfish ponds about 60 yards apart.

Cormorants and pelicans need about 100 yards of open water to take off and land, and these strings limit what is available to the birds.

One of the most successful harassment techniques being used against cormorants is roost dispersal. Steeby said cormorants typically sleep in the cypress breaks at night, and if they are repeatedly disturbed as they roost, they usually move on.

“You have to use a whole variety of things to keep them at bay,” Steeby said. “They have really good eyesight and really good clocks in their heads, and they arrive the moment they know the farmer is leaving.”

Cormorants take up residence in and around Mississippi’s wetlands and aquaculture ponds in late November to early December, and they usually don’t leave until the following March.

“It takes a good deal of man-hours and fuel to patrol the ponds and keep the birds from spending a significant amount of time on the ponds,” Steeby said. “But if you don’t take these measures, the amount of fish they consume will be very high.”

Another tool in the fight against profit-eating cormorants is depredation, or the legal killing of predatory birds.

“The largest thing we do in the fight against cormorants is harassment, but to make that work well, you do have to take some birds,” Steeby said. “We don’t really put a dent in the population, but it keeps the birds dispersed from the ponds.”

Valerie Burton, an aquaculture biologist with Wildlife Services within the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said cormorants in Mississippi were first counted at roost in 1990. There were 28,584 birds that year. 2004 was the peak cormorant year, with 81,873 counted at midwinter roost. In 2007, that number was 67,455.
Producers with aquaculture depredation order Form 37 on file with Wildlife Services can kill as many cormorants as needed on their farms to protect their ponds.

“Cormorants caused Mississippi catfish producers $10.3 million in losses by eating 1,350 metric tons of fish in the 2000-2001 cormorant season,” Burton said. “They ate 1,780 metric tons of catfish for a $13.7 million loss in the 2003-2004 season.”

Burton said extensive efforts are being made in their summer nesting grounds around the Great Lakes to limit cormorant reproduction. In the winter feeding grounds farther south, catfish farmers and others are trying to reduce the number of these predatory birds and move them off aquaculture ponds.

“If we were effective and pushed just 10 percent of the cormorant population to the Mississippi River where they feed on shad and other native fish, that would save the Mississippi catfish industry $1.2 million to $1.5 million a year,” Burton said.

Catfish farmers can help their own cormorant control efforts by reporting to Wildlife Services the number of cormorants they kill on their ponds each year. Not only is this a legal requirement of the depredation order, but Wildlife Services can kill only 25 percent of what farmers report taking each year.

**MSU Student Tracking the “Crow of the Sea”**

**By Karen Brasher**

Nearly 1,500 miles from home, Mississippi State University student Jennifer Chastant finds her way through the cormorant nests on the Lake of the Woods Island in Kenora, Ontario, Canada, to pick out the largest bird.

The Alpharetta, Georgia, native measures, bands and records the notorious predator, which has a 52-inch wing span, as part of research started more than 20 years ago to determine the impact of double-crested cormorants on natural resources, fisheries and aquaculture operations.

The MSU graduate student is banding the young birds to track their movements and better understand the species’ seasonal migration patterns.

“It’s my job to examine the entire region from eastern Lake Ontario to the Lake of the Woods to develop a more comprehensive overview of the birds,” Chastant said. “By understanding their reproductive rate and migratory patterns, we can develop better computer models to develop strategies that will keep their populations under control.”

Understanding the sleek, black water bird, whose name is derived from Latin for “crow of the sea,” is important to the 370 catfish farmers in Mississippi. Cormorants can dive up to 60 feet to retrieve their food. Researchers in MSU’s Forest and Wildlife Research Center estimate the predators cost the state’s catfish growers more than $10 million a year.

To contend with the wildlife/human conflict, in 1998 the United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a depredation order authorizing freshwater aquaculture producers in the Southeast to harass or kill cormorants preying on their fish stocks.

Chastant, under the direction of wildlife and fisheries assistant professor Richard Minnis and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center research wildlife biologist Tommy King, records specifications of each banded bird for tracking if they are spotted in Mississippi.

This is the second year of her study, measuring eggs, counting birds, recording banding data and photographing seasonal changes in their plumage.

“When it wasn’t raining and foggy, I was out on the island, looking for leg bands and collecting data on the number of eggs in a nest,” Chastant said.

The study will allow biologists to determine where the birds nest, their movements during the breeding season, dispersal of young and their preferred wintering grounds.

“The bands help researchers track the birds’ annual migration patterns,” Chastant said.

While officials in Canada are concerned primarily with impacts to habitat, it is along the Mississippi River where the main human/wildlife conflict is introduced. Tens of thousands of birds arrive annually to spend the winter feeding on fish stocks contained in commercial aquaculture ponds.

To determine where the birds originate, Chastant is working with staff from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Canadian Wildlife Service and USDA to band 1,500 cormorants a year at the three study areas.

Funded by the Berryman Institute—a research center in the Forest and Wildlife Research Center dedicated to resolving human/wildlife conflict—Chastant has found that out of three to five eggs per nest, fewer than two of the birds will survive to migrate south in the fall.

“Cormorants typically don’t start breeding until age 3 and will continue to reproduce for the next 15 years before reaching a ripe old age of 20,” Chastant said.

Cormorants are related to pelicans and have an orange pouch. The inside of the bird’s mouth is bright blue, and cormorants have distinctive crest feathers, which only appear during breeding season. A colony of the birds makes a colorful and noisy display when it’s time to attract a mate.

“They’re hilarious, they’re clumsy and stumble around a lot on land,” Chastant said.
Any Mississippian can turn a sandwich and a trip to the county Extension office into a learning experience.

Each Thursday from noon until 1 p.m., county Extension offices receive Quick Bites live, interactive video feeds from Mississippi State University. There is a new topic each week, and the topics are as varied as the state of Mississippi, said Extension distance education coordinator Susan Seal.

“Not only do you have the opportunity to learn about topics ranging from herb gardening to Tai Chi, but participants also have the chance to ask questions and interact with the person teaching the class and with other participants,” Seal said. “Most of the programs originate on the MSU campus and feature an Extension Service specialist or other university professional.”

Extension offices in each of Mississippi’s 82 counties are equipped to receive the interactive video feeds. Recent topics have included a cooking demonstration by MSU chef Roland Parny and lessons on floral design by university florist Lynette McDougald.

Each month’s topics are sent to the county Extension offices in advance so they can be publicized locally. Warren County Extension Director John Coccaro includes the Quick Bites schedule in the information he sends to the local paper.

“The number of people who participate from week to week varies with the topic,” Coccaro said. “Our conference room seats 50 people, and it was almost full for the Tai Chi program.”

Other popular Quick Bites program topics in Warren County have included genealogy and how to turn tea willows. The program is attracting the attention of people who have never participated in other activities offered by Extension, Coccaro said.

“Quick Bites programs are popular with retirees, but because they are offered during the noon hour, working people can bring a sandwich to eat while they watch the program and be back at work in an hour,” he said.

Making university-based information available to the public is the mission of the Extension Service, and Seal said Quick Bites uses the latest technology to accomplish that mission.

“The program began in 2006 as an in-service training tool for Extension personnel, but we soon realized that some of the computer training and other classes could be of interest to the general public,” she said. “By using the interactive video capability in each county office, our specialists and other presenters can reach a statewide audience without having to travel long distances.”

Each program includes a presentation that lasts about 45 minutes, followed by a question and answer session the rest of the hour. The program is free to the public by calling the local Extension office to reserve a space.
When presented with a mysterious animal death, a group of dedicated technologists at Mississippi State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine spend their time looking for a few good clues.

By working together over the years in the Clinical Pathology Laboratory, Missy Bolin, Heather Peavy, Nicole McBrayer, Margaret Sanborn and Aleah Arney have a camaraderie that allows them to quickly provide information necessary for diagnosis and treatment.

“Many times we know what’s probably wrong with an animal before the veterinarian actually does because we analyze the samples and see the clinical evidence first,” Bolin said. “We don’t know what the results may be because the treatment is determined by the clinician.”

The main purpose of the laboratory is to focus on pathology, or the cause, development and consequence of diseases, but the seriousness of their job does not drain the life out of the staff. The group gets together to celebrate birthdays, holidays and brown-bag lunches.

“We really enjoy working with one another, and sometimes we finish each other’s thoughts or sentences because we’ve been a team for 3 years,” Arney said.

The laboratory is part of CVM’s Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, but staff members have opportunities to assist specialists in different situations. These situations include:

- An oncologist wanting to know if an animal patient is healthy enough to withstand a new treatment;
- A small, private veterinary clinic needing special diagnostic services for a patient; and
- A project manager needing health-care maintenance of animals on the MSU South Farm.

Second-year veterinary students add to their clinical pathology knowledge by working in the laboratory for one summer, Bolin said. Their assistance allows the lab to provide 24-hour service to the veterinary hospital at peak periods.

While the staff must spend most of their time in the laboratory running tests for analysis, they aren’t so far removed from caring about the animal patients.

“If an animal has been at CVM for a long time, we know the name because we see it on the lab sheets,” said Sanborn. “Even though we don’t see the animals, we still build bonds with them.”
Each year, about 100,000 Mississippi young people participate in 4-H programs ranging from projects dealing with plants and animals to programs involving computer science and new technology.

Several thousand Mississippi 4-H'ers also combine their interests in horticulture, livestock and other projects with 4-H Expressive Arts programs. Through these programs, youth develop poise, confidence, and self-esteem through drama, art, photography, literacy and musical expression. Communication skills, creativity and critical thinking are enhanced through participation in the arts.

During the past year, Mississippi 4-H'ers performed two dramas for elementary children across the state. *Forever Friends* and *Sarah and the Magical Mix-Up* encourage literacy and positive character traits via the story lines.

Creative writing workshops and contests allow youth participants to put imagination on paper and strengthen their writing skills.

On the following pages are examples of projects completed and entered in 4-H expressive arts competitions during 2007.
"Benchwarmers"
Belle Failla, age 11, Pearl River Co.
Junior Photography Exhibit - Digital

"Outside Looking In"
Walquile Tamayo, age 11, Lauderdale Co.
Junior Photography Exhibit - Digital

"Finale"
Laurie Gross, age 16, Lauderdale Co.
Senior Photography Exhibit - Film

"Stemmed Star"
Lydia Burns, age 17, Lauderdale Co.
Senior Photography Exhibit - Film

"Hanging Around"
Caitlin Myrick, age 13, Perry Co.
Junior Photography Exhibit - Digital
“The Lure of the Rose”
Wesley Brown, age 11, Tishomingo Co.
Entomology Art and Photography Contest - Photo

“Hay Play”
Rebecca Byrne, age 11, Tate Co.
Overall Junior Horse Photo Contest - Digital

“Efflorescence”
Marc Dupont, age 16, George Co.
Horticulture Photography Contest - Digital

“Licked with Sun”
Sarah Burns, age 12, Lauderdale Co.
Horticulture Photography Contest - Digital

“Melancholy”
Laurie Gross, age 17, Lauderdale Co.
Senior Photography Exhibit - Film
"Texture of Iris"
Lydia Burns, age 17, Lauderdale Co.
Horticulture Photography Contest - Digital

"Picture Perfect Puddle"
Mollie Sellers, age 13, Perry Co.
Junior Photography Exhibit - Digital

"The Buzzz, On Flies"
Nichole Abrams, age 11, and Shelley Rae Edwards, age 11
Chickasaw Co.
Junior Horse Team Demonstration Contest

"Yummy to My Tummy"
Cody Newsome, age 14, Madison Co.
Overall Senior Horse Photo Contest - Digital

"Saddleback Caterpillar out to Lunch"
Lauren Chatelain, age 10, Hancock Co.
Entomology Art and Photography - Sculpture
Keundra Washington, age 14, Adams Co.  
14- to 18-Year-Old Dairy Poster Contest

Eric Bordelon, age 10, Pearl River Co.  
8- to 10-Year-Old Dairy Poster Contest

“Beauties in the Bamboo”  
Merry Johnson, age 15, Tishomingo Co.  
Entomology Art and Photography Contest - Painting

Ashley Swearingen, age 13, Lauderdale Co.  
11- to 13-Year-Old Dairy Poster Contest

“Refreshed”  
Marc Dupont, age 16, George Co.  
Horticulture Photography Contest - Digital
“Whisper in the Dark”
Kathryn Stillman, age 17, DeSoto Co.
Overall Senior Horse Art Contest - Painting

“4-H, A Timeless Tradition”
Jordan Lee, age 8, Warren Co.
Overall Junior Poster Art Contest

Pretty Cow Contest Winner
Rachel Harris, age 8, Pearl River Co.
Mississippi State Fair

“4-H, A Timeless Tradition”
Michelle Gourley, age 14, Webster Co.
Overall Senior Poster Art Contest

“Ribbons of 4-H”
Caroline Grissom, age 11, Stone Co.
Overall Junior Horse Art Contest - Wall Hanging
“Can you guess what I chose for my very first pet? I’ll give you a clue. It is small and cuddly. It has three colors mixed into its fur, orange, black and grey. Now can you guess? Here’s one more clue. It has very sharp claws. You guessed it! My pet is a cat.”

From 4-H Imagination on Paper Creative Writing Contest entry by Shelly Guy, age 13, George Co.
State Winner

“I’m always drawing comic strip characters and then thinking of things for them to say or do. I feel like these characters are my friends, and I like to keep writing stories about them. Winning this contest made me realize it could be more than a hobby.”

Tara Roberts, age 15,
George Co.
4-H Imagination on Paper Creative Writing Contest

“Fading”
Leah Burns, age 10, Lauderdale Co.
Horticulture Photography Contest - Film

“My Trip to Brazil”
Cody Bridges, age 12, Perry Co.
Horticulture Photography Contest - Group of six film photos
Family forests are disappearing at the rate of nearly 4 acres a minute, according to a recent survey by the U.S. Forest Service.

While urban sprawl explains some of the disappearance, much of the problem is a lack of proper forest management skills.

As the current generation of forestland owners passes land to their heirs, that generation is not prepared to manage the land, said Andy Londo, research and extension professor in the Mississippi State University Department of Forestry.

“A forest management plan is key to saving money, increasing profits and decreasing taxes on family forests,” Londo said.

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation, along with the U.S. Forest Service, recently completed a survey of the next generation of family forestland owners and found that heirs who will inherit the land are often professionals living far away, have weak bonds to the land and have little involvement in management of family forests.

To combat this apparent knowledge gap and save family forests, the MSU Extension Service has produced a publication to help landowners manage their family forest.

“With over 300,000 private landowners managing nearly 19 million acres, the publication, Managing the Family Forest in Mississippi, is timely,” Londo said.

Funded by a grant from the Mississippi Forestry Commission, the publication features the importance of management planning, best management practices, hardwood and pine management, forest economics, taxation, harvest and marketing.

“To many landowners, forest management means only managing for timber production,” Londo said. “However, in its broadest sense, forest management includes aesthetic values, wildlife, water quality and just enjoyment of owning timberland.”

Landowners must manage their forests for the values most important to them so that they get the maximum benefits from their property, Londo added. The publication assists landowners in developing a management plan, beginning with determining their individual objectives.

“A management plan is like a road map,” Londo said. “If you go on a trip without a map or directions, you may eventually reach your destination; however, most of the time you take a few wrong turns along the way.”

Similarly, landowners who conduct management activities without a plan can often make costly wrong turns or mistakes that will take years to overcome, Londo added. Timber is a valuable commodity, and landowners cannot afford to ignore the importance of properly managing their forestland. The publication also provides numerous contacts to help landowners along the way.

“Landowners can get assistance through a variety of state agencies, professional foresters and forestry organizations,” Londo said. “For instance, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, through the Forest Stewardship Program, can produce management plans for landowners.

“We want this publication to provide landowners with up-to-date information that will help them manage their forests responsibly,” Londo added.

While reading the publication will not make landowners professional forest managers, it will help them understand what professionals recommend and why. Hopefully, the publication will help forests stay in the family and ease the transition for new forestland owners, Londo said. Managing the Family Forest in Mississippi is available through county Extension offices.
Sixteen projects were completed across three counties in less than 72 hours when Mississippi Master Gardeners set Operation Swarm in motion last October.

Most of the public landscapes in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties were damaged or destroyed after the onslaught of the waves and winds of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This time, however, the weather cooperated for positive change on the Gulf Coast.

More than 100 Master Gardener volunteers from several states enjoyed sunshine and balmy temperatures as they dug holes, spread mulch and set plants as part of Operation Swarm. Mississippi Master Gardeners asked their counterparts to participate in a 3-day work period, said Lelia Kelly, horticulture specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Kelly, who is Extension coordinator for the Mississippi Master Gardener Program, worked with members to create the swarm after individuals across the United States were persistent in offering to help rebuild coastal landscapes. Extension offices in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties worked with local Master Gardeners to assess job proposals from the community.

“Master Gardeners are people who never meet a stranger,” Kelly said. “They work as a team, and they are selfless in their desire to get things done.”

Michele Venturi, a member of a Master Gardener group at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, drove up with gloves and tools at 8 a.m. the first day of the swarm. She and other Master Gardeners painstakingly picked out glass shards before replanting flower beds at Pineville Elementary School in Pass Christian and the Children’s Library in Long Beach.

“My initial impression was of just how many lots for homes and businesses there were with nothing left,” she said. “One of the Master Gardeners from Harrison County told me Katrina picked up her house and moved it three blocks away.”

Many volunteers marveled at Venturi’s enthusiasm and passion to help others in need.

“When this lady from Illinois showed up eager to go to work, we all thought, ‘Wow!’” Kelly said. “Michele was a worker and didn’t quit until everything was finished.”

At Pineville, the activity of the Master Gardener group aroused the curiosity of schoolchildren and teachers, Venturi said. One teacher asked if the group needed help. The answer, of course, was a resounding “yes.”

“One little boy squatted down on the edge of the bed and gently placed pansies in the holes we had dug,” Kelly said. “He told us that he had never planted a flower. Perhaps we have inspired a future horticulturist.”

Venturi said she was inspired by the selflessness of Gwen Jones, a determined volunteer from Covington, Tenn., who had a truck filled with daylilies, daffodils and irises she dug for her trip to Mississippi. Jones is a member of Master Gardener groups in Shelby and Tipton counties.

Since she expressed a desire to work with projects involving children, Jones worked with Venturi and others on the flower beds at Pineville Elementary and the Children’s Library. She also taught children at the DeLisle/Pass Christian Elementary School about daffodils and prepared a bed for them to plant bulbs.

“I give the people on the Gulf Coast a lot of credit for their perseverance at rebuilding their community one project at a time,” Jones said. “Their pride and their sense of purpose are overwhelming.”

Before she left, Jones told local Master Gardeners to keep her posted when they host another swarm.

Kelly said the outpourings of assistance and donations for the swarm were heartwarming. Master Gardener groups, garden clubs and countless individuals contributed more than $30,000 for plants and gardening supplies purchased at local businesses in the three counties.


“The people on the Coast are so grateful to the Master Gardeners for their help in getting the area back to normal,” Kelly said.
Landowners Find Hidden Value in Their Own Backyards

By Karen Brasher

Some housing prices may be sagging, but Mississippi landowners may need to look no further than their backyards to find hidden property value, according to a recent Mississippi State University study.

The study found that properties throughout the state with outdoor recreational opportunities increased in value, particularly in the Mississippi Delta. In fact, the results indicated that recreational uses increased land prices by an average of $333 per acre or 36 percent of the property value.

Scientists in MSU’s Forest and Wildlife Research Center worked on the study with members of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

“We surveyed appraisers representing 100 properties totaling about 33,000 acres,” said Daryl Jones, assistant Extension professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Total sales value of the properties with recreational opportunities was more than $41 million. Appraisers reported that the sales value of the same properties without recreational uses would have been about $31 million, Jones added.

“Recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, camping and bird watching brought an additional $10 million to the state’s economy in 2006,” Jones said.

The most desired characteristics were bottomland hardwood forests, mixed pine-hardwood forests and wildlife supplemental food plots.

“The findings indicate that land buyers are seeking these forest types and are willing to pay higher property prices to acquire them for wildlife-related recreation,” Jones said. “Also, properties that included specific management for wildlife produced higher sales revenue.”

Important recreational uses on these lands included hunting, off-road vehicle access, horseback riding and wildlife watching, Jones added. Ninety-three percent of properties were bought by those wanting to hunt white-tailed deer or with the intention of leasing the property to deer hunters. Populations of rabbits, wild turkey, waterfowl, squirrels, mourning dove and bobwhite quail were also selling points.

The survey looked at lands purchased for recreational use from 2002 to 2005. Appraisers were asked to report on characteristics of the property, to estimate the value of the properties without recreational uses and to report the selling price of the property.

“Seventy percent of the properties were in the Delta,” Jones said. “Revenues from hunting leases are usually greater in this region compared to other regions of the state.”

The next phase of the study will include examining regional differences in property valuation, Jones added. Scientists also plan to offer formal training for rural land appraisers and financial lenders in property valuation related to potential recreational uses.

“This will include the value of game species present, wildlife habitat types and quality, and other indicators that compose quality outdoor recreation,” Jones said.

While timber value was not analyzed in this study, other forestry studies have found that practices that increase timber quality and yield also benefit wildlife populations and enhance recreational opportunities.

“Landowners who are interested in increasing their potential land sales values might consider conserving native forest types and implementing habitat management practices to increase wildlife populations, thereby enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities on their lands,” said Ian Munn, forestry professor and expert in forest economics and management. “The information collected during this study emphasizes the importance of management of hardwood forests for long-term recreational and timber use.”

The study results are also valuable for local and state decision makers.

“The data from the study will help with impact assessment and planning of most development projects, such as urban expansion, public works projects and highway construction,” Munn said. “Authorities must weigh economic benefits to local economies from proposed projects against the loss in ecological functions and values in economic terms. Before this study, little empirical information existed addressing this issue, which complicates regulatory decision making.”

Economic data used in conjunction with ecological data from the study can help produce sustainable land use and development, especially in hurricane-impacted coastal zones and the state’s active floodplains, Munn added.

### DeSoto County

**County Seat:** Hernando

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

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

**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
Two journal articles published in 2007 caught my attention. Both were in the August 2007 issue of *Science*, which brings to the forefront changing trends in research and a historical perspective on how “high-impact” science is conducted.

The first, “The Cha Cha Cha Theory of Scientific Discovery” by Daniel Koshland, previously of the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California, Berkeley and past editor of *Science*, focuses on the three categories of scientific pursuits: charge, chance and challenge.

All three of these pursuits should be nurtured in the research environment, whether the research falls in the category of being directed to uncover how something works (charge), stems from a serendipitous finding that leads to something bigger (chance), or is focused on trying to explain something that remains a scientific mystery (challenge). Chance is probably the hardest to foster, as it usually happens by accident, but as Louis Pasteur said, “Chance favors the prepared mind.”

Creating a research environment that allows all of these pursuits to take place is the hallmark of a research institution and something the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State, I believe, cultivates among its faculty.

Currently I wear two hats: associate professor in the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences and interim head of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. From this unique perspective, I see team-centered, mentor-like momentum within DAFVM that creates opportunities to empower faculty in “Cha, Cha, Cha” scientific pursuits.

I see it in the internal granting programs that help generate the data needed for larger extramural submissions or to test often high-risk hypotheses, perhaps with no guarantee of a pay-off, that might not be funded through traditional mechanisms. I also see mentor programs for young faculty that help “demystify” aspects of the university environment that many don’t really understand. I see broad attempts to maximize resources through the consolidation of research resources and a trend toward team-oriented research initiatives. This is addressed by the second article, “The Increasing Dominance of Teams in Production of Knowledge” by Wuchty, Jones and Uzzi.

This article, recently circulated by Life Sciences and Biotechnology Institute Director Shane Burgess to some MSU research faculty, highlights the trend toward more frequent citations and impact from research conducted by teams rather than individuals. Collaborative, team-oriented research maximizes resources, broadens the scope of research that can be conducted, and takes advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of teams.

We support and encourage faculty involvement in multi-state regional research projects whose primary mission is to facilitate projects of larger scope and broader application than single-institution or single-investigator research.

I was asked recently why publications in some areas of the agricultural life sciences often have many authors instead of one or two investigators. I cited the above-referenced manuscript and indicated that in today’s research environment, it is increasingly difficult to have the high level of expertise with all the tools needed to achieve one’s research agenda, and it is often too costly to shoulder alone.

I have often known about and occasionally instigated discussions that pit “old” approaches against “new” technologies—applied vs. basic research, traditional weights and measures vs. genomics-proteomics-metabolomics technologies, and so on. It is apparent to me that programs that can blend the traditional with the state of the art and use the right tools for the right reasons have the most impact.

At a recent Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) meeting, several researchers were debating the merits of various state-of-the-art technologies in solving a particular problem associated with livestock growth. They were trying to clarify the appropriate endpoint for their seemingly complex study when a more seasoned investigator said, “Why don’t you weigh them?”

The simplicity of his approach left the group in stunned silence. His solution was correct in defining the end result, and everyone knew it. While the “simple” tool (in this case, a scale) may tell you what happens, it may not tell you why or be able to take you to that next level of understanding and discovery. Often more complex tools are needed to “Cha, Cha, Cha.” We, however, must not forget that agricultural research, in the end, is about translation—something the seasoned investigator understood well.

All research can has some degree of impact, sometimes immediate and sometimes not until years later as a piece of a larger puzzle. However, a program that uses the right tools for the job and then translates findings to the layperson is a commodity in and of itself.

In agriculture, much like the achievements in the biomedical sciences, the broader impacts of commodity-oriented research by nature have the potential for great impact. Research that improves productivity or production efficiency or leads to new commodity development can change the world we live in.

Now, that is high-impact science and takes teamwork to accomplish.
MSU Fundraiser Leads National Organization

Keith Gaskin, the senior development officer for Mississippi State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, is serving this year as president of the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals (AVAP).

Gaskin, a certified fund-raising executive, has served the MSU Foundation in various fund-raising roles since 1997. A native of Laurel, he holds a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master’s in public policy and administration from MSU. He also has completed certification in fund-raising management from the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy.

The AVAP works to support and enhance the professional skills of development officers, alumni directors and public relations staff members at the nation’s colleges and schools of veterinary medicine.

In addition to his duties as AVAP president, Gaskin will be serving on the advancement committee for the Washington-based Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, an American Veterinary Medical Association affiliate that coordinates national and international affairs for all 32 teaching and research facilities in the United States and Canada.

“Keith has a proven track record of successful fund raising at MSU, and we are pleased that he is being recognized by his peers on a national level,” said veterinary dean Kent Hoblet, in congratulating Gaskin on the honor.

Outdoor Magazine Honors MSU Professors, Alumnus

Two Mississippi State University professors and an MSU alumnus are included in Outdoor Life 25, a group of leaders, innovators, conservationists and unsung heroes who have made major contributions to hunting, fishing and other outdoor sports.

Richard M. Kaminski, Marty Brunson and James Earl Kennamer are among the 25 selected by readers of Outdoor Life magazine for their leadership, innovation and conservation efforts. This is the first year for the award.

A wildlife and fisheries professor and interim associate dean, Kaminski has spent his career studying waterfowl and educating future professionals. He has mentored more than 75 graduate students, authored numerous publications and secured more than $4 million in grants for research and educational projects. The most recent grant funds an undergraduate scholarship for students studying waterfowl and wetland conservation.

In 2006, Ducks Unlimited awarded Kaminski its Lifetime Achievement and Service Award in Wetlands Conservation, and The Wildlife Society named him a lifetime fellow earlier this year.

Extension professor Marty Brunson is the driving force behind Catch-A-Dream, a national organization based at MSU that arranges and finances outdoor adventures for children suffering from life-threatening illnesses.

Chartered in 2003, the Catch-A-Dream Foundation is the vision of the late

MSU Faculty Member, Student Take Top Regional Honors

A Mississippi State faculty member and a doctoral student at the university are being recognized for respective achievements by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA).

In recent SEAFWA competition, College of Forest Resources associate professor Jeanne Jones was cited for the best wildlife research report that she and four colleagues prepared on bird communities found in two Mississippi agricultural land bases.

Jones’ coauthors included Mississippi State professor emeritus Dale Arner, postdoctoral associate Jarrod Fogarty, university alumnus Jimmy Taylor, and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks biologist Dave Godwin.

Also, Katie Edwards of Starkville received the best student visual display award. Competing among a field of 13, the Chantilly, Va., native’s presentation illustrated amphibians’ use of manmade wetlands and stream-connected floodplain pools found on public forestlands of north Mississippi.
Mississippi outdoorsman, author and sculptor Bruce Brady. Since its inception, the organization has granted more than 200 hunting and fishing trips to gravely ill children aged 18 and younger from 43 different states.

“We are fortunate to have professionals such as Rick and Marty who make such fine contributions to natural resources professions,” said Vance Watson, vice president for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine.

MSU alumnus James Earl Kennamer also received the Outdoor Life 25 honor. Kennamer, senior vice president of conservation programs for the National Wild Turkey Federation, received master’s and doctoral degrees in wildlife and fisheries from MSU.

Since joining the nonprofit organization in 1980, Kennamer has forged partnerships between hunters and wildlife agencies, corporations and conservation groups in an effort to restore wild turkey populations across North America. His work has helped increase turkey populations from 1.3 million to more than 7 million.

MSU Profs, Grad Student Honored for Research at Regional Meeting

Two faculty members and a doctoral student in Mississippi State University’s College of Forest Resources are top winners in a recent regional research competition.

Wildlife and fisheries assistant Extension professor Bronson Strickland and professor Steve Demarais received the Best Peer-Reviewed Publication and Best Technical Publication awards at the recent annual meeting of the Wildlife Society, Mississippi Chapter.

Heath M. Hagy of Starkville was honored for the best student oral presentation at the meeting.

Strickland and Demarais, along with Larry Castle, are authors of an article entitled “Antler Regulation Effects on White-Tailed Deer on Mississippi Public Hunting Areas.” Printed in the Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, their research report describes the effects of a statewide antler regulation on the age structure, antler characteristics and production of male white-tailed deer.

“Yes, Antler Restrictions to Manage for Older-Aged Bucks” was the faculty colleagues’ entry that received the best technical article recognition. Published by the MSU Extension Service, it was developed for wildlife biologists and managers to explain the logic behind antler restrictions, as well as the pros and cons of antler restrictions as a management tool.

Hagy’s presentation focused on waterfowl food abundance, depletion and use during winter in managed wetlands in the Mississippi Delta.

Under the direction of wildlife and fisheries professor Richard M. Kaminski, the Frederick, Okla., native began work on his terminal degree at MSU last fall after completing a master’s degree from North Dakota State University.

MSU Professor Named International Forestry Fellow

Ian A. Munn of Mississippi State is a new fellow of the Society of American Foresters.

A professor in the Forest and Wildlife Research Center, he is being honored by the international organization for contributions to the society and forestry profession.

“Dr. Munn is considered an expert on forest resource economics and management,” said Jim Shepard, forestry department head. He routinely is called upon to provide forestry-related expertise to the state Tax Commission, helping to lead training seminars for county tax assessors.”

Munn annually works with tax commission officials to survey more than 2,000 private and industrial landowners to determine the value-in-use of Mississippi’s extensive forestland.

The Society of American Foresters is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world.

“Ian is an exceptional professor and researcher,” Shepard said. “A course he teaches on professional practices is considered the capstone class of our forestry curriculum. Over the years, he greatly has transformed the course, enabling students to work directly with landowners to develop management plans for their properties.”
Animals have a profound influence on nearly every aspect of our lives as humans and we on theirs.

Reports show that Americans spend approximately $40.8 billion each year on pet products, veterinary care and animal charities. Recent research indicates that human happiness, good health and emotional stability are directly related to the relationships individuals hold with their family pets.

The faculty and students at the College of Veterinary Medicine Health Center recognize the impact of the human-companion animal bond, and they understand that these pets are considered family members by their owners.

When a companion animal passes away, an owner can feel lost. That loss is a reminder that even with special attention, a pet cannot always be saved from injury and disease. There is much to be learned, taught and practiced in veterinary medicine despite the phenomenal discoveries and advances of the last 25 years.

The fund for Companion Animals Require Excellence (CARE) at the MSU CVM was created in 1989 to assist in addressing the need for constant advances in veterinary medical teaching, research and services.

Many veterinarians across the region make gifts to the fund in memory of clients’ pets. Pet owners who want to make a difference in companion animal health can also support the fund through outright gifts or as part of estate planning.

“More and more individuals use this program to memorialize the pets of friends or relatives. Frequently, pet owners make their own gifts to the college when they learn their pets were memorialized by others through the fund for CARE,” said Melissa Montgomery, CVM advancement coordinator.

A longtime supporter of the fund is Dr. William S. Nalley, a veterinarian from Long Beach.

“We have a tremendous response from owners who are very touched that we are willing to donate money on their pets’ behalf. I feel that CARE is a valuable service that helps ease the pain of losing a pet,” Nalley said.

To learn more about how you can support the CARE fund in memory of a deceased pet or in honor of a living companion animal contact Melissa Montgomery at 662-325-5170 or Keith Gaskin at 662-325-3815.
Department Head Invests in Education

Bruce Leopold, head of the university’s wildlife and fisheries department in the College of Forest Resources, is one Mississippi State faculty member who believes in giving back to the institution.

For a number of years, Leopold has consistently supported the university through financial commitments. The reason he gives is quite simple—the 20-year faculty veteran says he’s reciprocating the commitment Mississippi State has made in him.

“MSU and its administration welcomed me into its fold from the first day I walked into my office and has continued with that level of support. My professional development as a research scientist, then as department head since 2000, is because of the tremendous support I received from MSU,” Leopold said.

A recent gift of property from Leopold—approximately 140 acres in Noxubee County—will become part of Mississippi State’s Bulldog Forest program, which allows landowners to create a lasting heritage by giving land to the College of Forest Resources. The Bulldog Forest properties are used as living laboratories in which forest management practices provide teaching, research and demonstration opportunities for students of all ages. The land holds special meaning for Leopold.

“There is something magical each time I walk on it, and I realize that it belongs to me. Also, land is one commodity that is limited on this planet, but it continually produces products such as wildlife and timber,” he explained.

“I know the College of Forest Resources will take good care of the land and will enjoy the income it will generate many, many years after I pass on,” Leopold said. “It’s a way of ensuring that groups of young professionals will benefit from my good fortune and success as a wildlife biologist, and it is the one way I can return something to an institution that I love deeply.”

Future earnings from the property will support an endowed scholarship for wildlife and fisheries majors. Additional proceeds will endow the Leopold Fund for Excellence which may support endowed positions, scholarships and fellowships, faculty development, equipment and other enhancements within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

There are numerous options for supporting the College of Forest Resources. For more information, contact Jeff Little, the college’s development director, at jlittle@foundation.mssstate.edu or 662-325-8151.

Bakers Nurture Relationship with University Through Scholarship

A picture of Old Main hangs on the wall of Bill Baker’s home in Starkville as a reminder of his time spent at Mississippi State.

After transferring from then-Holmes Junior College, the Montgomery County native spent his first year at then-Mississippi State College as a resident of the massive dormitory. His second-floor room faced the east, looking out over the parade grounds.

The overwhelming majority of students on campus at that time were World War II veterans like Mr. Baker. A 1950 agriculture graduate, the education he received and the relationships he developed along the way translated into an invaluable part of his life.

When Old Main burned in January 1959, Mr. Baker was working with the Louisiana State University Extension Service, where he spent 5 years as an associate. He devoted the next 48 years to the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. He was first active in making long-term farm loans and later switched to selling insurance and investments throughout northeast Louisiana, the Mississippi Delta and south Mississippi.

Mr. Baker and his wife Cleo lived in Louisiana for a number of years before moving to Greenville. They have been married for more than 50 years and share many things, including a respect for Mississippi State.

“My wife and I feel very strongly about the education our universities provided, which enabled us to earn a living and serve our communities,” he said. “We are now in the process of giving back as our resources will allow.”

With proceeds from an outright gift and an annuity, the Bakers have established the William D. and Cleo W. Baker Endowed Scholarship in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Because Mr. Baker was knowledgeable about gift annuities, they decided to use this giving method since it would also provide income for them.

“We gave a life insurance policy at Iowa State, and we wanted to do something along those lines for MSU as well,” Baker said. “It is our pleasure to provide resources for someone else.”

Mrs. Baker is a 1938 graduate of Iowa State with a Bachelor of Science in home economics and a 1941 graduate of Kansas State University with a master’s in home economics. She worked for the Duluth State Teachers College in Duluth, Minn., and later for LSU as an instructor in home economics. She concluded her active professional career as the head dietician at Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville. She also served a term as state president of the Mississippi Dietetics Association.

The Bakers became Starkville residents in 1992 after his retirement. The move was Mrs. Baker’s idea, but he was definitely on board. The couple and their three children enjoy attending MSU events, and Mr. Baker serves as a volunteer ticket-taker for home baseball games as part of his commitment to the Starkville Lions Club.

The Baker scholarship will benefit full-time undergraduate students enrolled in the college with preference given to applicants within the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences or the nutrition majors in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion. The scholarship is an open fund in the MSU Foundation that may be increased through additional contributions. For more information, contact Jud Skelton, director of development for the agriculture college, at 662-325-0643 or jskelton@mssstate.edu.
It’s all in the name. Check it out for news and information from the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine.