



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025



280 Commercial Drive  
Post Office Box 499  
Newton, Mississippi 39345

CLARKE • JASPER • KEMPER • LAUDERDALE • LEAKE • NESHOBA • NEWTON • SCOTT • SMITH

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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2025**



**280 Commercial Drive**

**P. O. Box 499**

**Newton, Mississippi 39345**

**December 31, 2025**

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# **East Central Planning and Development District**

## **Board of Directors 2025**

### **Executive Committee**

**Wilson Hallman – President  
Curtis Gray – Vice President  
Nancy Chambers – Secretary  
Paul Mosley – Treasurer**

**Perry Duckworth  
Hilda Nickey**

### **Board Members**

**Loriann Ahshapanek  
Cindy Austin  
Jackie Bradford  
Kenneth Harris  
Ricky Harrison  
Gerald Keeton  
Keith Lillis  
Vernell Lofton  
Dot Merchant  
Robert Miles  
Joe Norwood**

**Sherline–Dansby Watkins**

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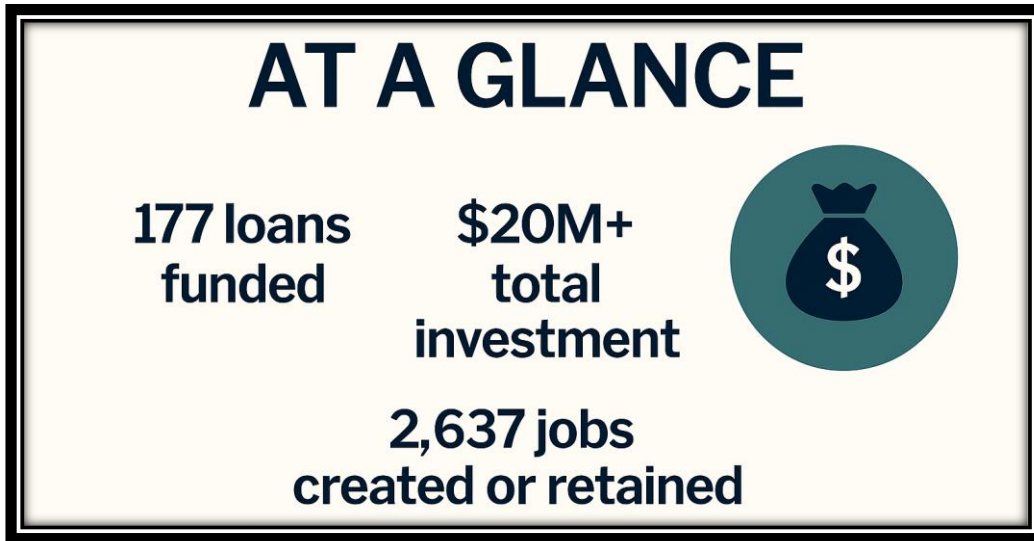
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# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES

## Job Development

### Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Programs



The Economic Development Administration (EDA) provided a Title IX Economic Adjustment Assistance grant to establish a revolving loan fund (RLF) in the nine counties of East Central Planning and Development District. The \$500,000 grant was combined with local funds of \$166,671 provided by the nine counties, making a total of \$666,671 to be used to promote business development by providing loans to businesses within Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, and Smith Counties. The loans are used to create jobs and are being paid back to the District and loaned again to other businesses. To date, 31 EDA loans have been made to local businesses, for a total of \$4,622,701 in loans. The loans, coupled with other loans and capital investments, have helped to create/retain 1,046 jobs.

In addition to the EDA portion of the RLF, the District also has funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for use within Kemper County, which is located within the ARC region. To date, 13 ARC loans have been made, for a total of \$1,569,000 in loans and 755 jobs created/ retained.

The State has a Minority loan fund program that is set up similarly to the other RLF funds and targeted toward minorities. To date 11 loans have been made totaling \$442,224 and creating/retaining 45 jobs.

The State legislature also allocated funds to be used for the Mississippi Small Business Assistance Loan Program (MSBALP) to benefit small businesses. To date, 91 loans from these funds have been made, totaling \$10,480,022 and creating/retaining 528 jobs.

The District also received a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) Program to establish an RBEG Revolving Loan Fund to supplement the District's current RLF program. The RBEG RLF assists small and emerging businesses in rural areas with a population of less than 50,000. To date, seven (7) loans have been made from these funds, totaling \$1,034,334 and 194 jobs created/retained.

In 2020, the District received \$1.4 million from EDA's CARES Revolving Loan Fund to establish a new Revolving Loan Program that temporarily has a lower interest rate and less requirements for match. To date, 13 loans have been made from these funds, totaling \$1,497,000 and 51 jobs created/retained.

In 2023 the District assumed the East Mississippi Development Corporation (EMDC) loan fund that included Mississippi Small Business Loan Program (MSBALP) with 7 active loans totaling \$337,457 and 13 jobs created/retained and a State funded Minority loan program with 4 loans totaling \$63,380 creating/retaining 5 jobs.

From all the above funding sources a total of 177 loans have been made, totaling \$20,046,118 and creating or retaining 2,637 jobs. They are in the counties of Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, and Smith.

## **East Central Planning and Development District Revolving Loan Fund Loan Review Committee**

**Jeff McCoy, Chairman**

Lauderdale County

**Frank Burt**

Clarke County

**Kenny Dickerson**

Neshoba County

**James Graham**

Newton County

**Carter Sims**

Jasper County

**Ned Rushing, RLF Secretary**

Leake County

**Jean Cox**

Scott County

**Michael Dudley**

Kemper County

**Newt Ishee**

Smith County

**David Vowell**

Neshoba County



### **U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

The District assisted in the administration of the previously funded project to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development

Administration (EDA) in 2025:

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) – Workforce Development Center (Scooba campus). \$3,000,000 EDA \$1,000,000 ARC; 2,000,000 EMCC; \$6,000,000 total project cost.

### **Delta Regional Authority (DRA)**

East Central Planning and Development District provides technical assistance to economically distressed communities who are trying to assess, plan, and implement projects aimed at improving the economic and social quality of life within the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) region. ECPDD assists with the DRA Federal Grant Program’s application processes which are focused on basic infrastructure development and transportation improvements, business development and job training services. Jasper and Smith counties are designated as DRA counties in the ECPDD area.



The District prepared and submitted the following State’s Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) applications to the Delta Regional Authority in 2025, which were **approved**

**City of Bay Springs** - Sewer line repairs. DRA \$216,080; local \$54,020.; total cost was \$270,100.

**Town of Taylorsville** - Sewer lagoon repairs. DRA \$400,000; local \$100,000 . total project \$500,000.

**Town of Raleigh** - To replace approximately 2,500 LF of 6” class-rated PVC water mains with new 8” PVC C900 (DR 18) water mains and appurtenant items. The project also proposes adding five fire hydrants at strategic locations. \$327,000 DRA; \$80,000 local; \$407,200 total project cost.

**Center Ridge Water Association (Smith County)** – To replace approximately 6 miles (32000 LF) of brittle, dilapidated asbestos cement (AC) pipe buried beneath existing roadways and old small pipes with new 4” PVC pipe of water lines along SCR 93, SCR 82, and SCR 19. \$311,944.96 DRA; \$76,224 local; \$388,168.96 total project cost.

The District also prepared and submitted the following Local Development District Community Pilot Program application to Delta Regional Authority in 2025:

East Central PDD – Funds to provide technical assistance such as grant writing, project development, and project management support to Jasper and Smith counties. \$23,000 DRA; \$23,000 total project cost.

**Approved**

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously funded DRA projects in 2025:

Jasper County - Industrial road improvements. \$100,000 DRA; \$28,400 local; \$128,400 total project cost.

City of Bay Springs -- Industrial Road Improvements - DRA \$183,960; local \$20,440; total project cost \$204,400. The City of Bay Springs requested additional funds from Delta Regional Authority in 2023 for the Industrial Park Road project. The City received additional local funds of \$80,000 from the Jasper County Board of Supervisors and \$24,000 from the City of Bay Springs.

Town of Heidelberg – Water well project. \$237,000 DRA; \$600,000 local; \$837,000 total project cost.

Town of Montrose – To provide water system improvements. \$343,784.20 DRA; \$37,380 local; \$381,164.20 total project cost.

Town of Mize - To request funds for the wastewater treatment project. \$281,750 DRA; \$125,673 CDBG; \$407,423 total project cost.



Polkville DRA Water Improvements

Town of Polkville – To complete Phase 3 of the asbestos cement waterline replacement project. \$233,640 DRA; \$25,960 local; \$259,600 total project cost.

## Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC)

The District prepared and submitted the following State Economic and Infrastructure Development (SEID) applications to the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) in 2025, which were **approved:**



Neshoba County - Construction of a new west access road into an undeveloped portion of the Neshoba County Industrial Park. \$475,000 SCRC; \$587,728 local; \$1,062,728 total project cost.

City of Newton – Highway 80 water main replacement. \$283,516 SEID; \$70,879 local; \$354,395 total project cost.

Town of Decatur – Water line replacement on Broad Street in Decatur. \$430,000 SCRC; \$110,000 local; \$540,000 total project cost.

City of Forest – Highway 80 and Fountain Road sewer improvements. \$423,700 SEID; \$105,925 local; \$529,625 total project cost.

City of Morton - Funds for sewer system improvements, SCRC funds \$441,833; local \$123,484.47 Total cost \$565,217.47

Meridian Community College (MCC) – Assist with funding the Transportation Technology Center. \$500,000 SCRC' \$1,400,000 MCC; \$1,900,000 total project cost.

The District assisted with the administration of the previously funded SEID projects in 2025:

Clarke County – Infrastructure improvements for Howard Industries to include installing a turn-lane and signalization along Highway 145/South Archusa Avenue. 200-1000 jobs to be created. \$500,000 SEID; \$468,322 other match; \$968,322 total project.

Wechsler Foundation (Saving Wechsler School, 1951 Addition, City of Meridian – Construct a caterer's kitchen in the Wechsler School 1951 addition. \$95,587 SEID; \$1,104,413 other match; \$1,200,000 total project cost.

Neshoba County – Construct public restrooms at Burnside Park. \$312,000 SEID; \$76,000 local match; \$376,000 total project cost.

Town of Lake – Rehabilitation of the Highway 489 pump station. \$175,428 SEID; \$43,857 local; \$219,285 total project cost.

## Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)



**ARC Revolving Loan Fund** - The District has RLF funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for use within Kemper County, which is located within the ARC region. To date, 13 ARC loans have been made, for a total of \$1,569,000 in loans and 755 jobs created/ retained.

## ARC Applications

The District prepared and submitted the following ARC full applications in 2025:

Kemper County (Kemper County Site Development Grant) - Funds to make a pad ready site for anticipated 100,000 sq. ft. building at the County's 40-acre industrial site on Highway 45. \$400,000 ARC; \$100,000 County; \$500,000 total project cost. **Approved**

Kemper County School District (Kemper County School Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Project) – Purchase of new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment for a new Career and Technical Education Program. ARC 32,794.86; \$8,198.71 local; \$40,993.57 total project. **Approved**

Town of Dekalb – Needed improvements to their Number 2 wastewater lagoon that serves the Stennis Industrial Park and surrounding area. \$368,000 ARC; \$92,000 local; \$460,000 total project cost. **Pending**

## ARC Administration

The District assisted in the administration of the following previously funded ARC projects in 2025:

Kemper County School Digital Media Center - To purchase two (2) camcorders and three (3) cameras for the Kemper County High School Digital Media Center's use. \$7,717 ARC; \$1,929 local; \$9,647 total project cost.

Kemper County School System - Kemper County School Simulator Dummies Project to purchase Alex Pro-Simulators for the Kemper County High School Science program. ARC \$72,000; local \$18,000; Total project cost \$90,000.

Kemper County Gas Line – To extend the existing gas service from the existing tap to the Mark Cobb Road to Highway 16 that will service East Mississippi Community College (EMCC). \$240,000 ARC; \$60,000 local; \$300,000 total project cost.

Town of Scooba - Improvements to the Town's wastewater lagoon, Lagoon Dike Stabilization Cell No. 1-3. \$300,000 ARC; \$550,000 other; \$850,000 total project cost.

Town of Scooba – Acquisition of three (3) generators. \$124,800 ARC; local \$31,200; \$156,000 total project cost.

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) – Industrial Workforce Training Center – Scooba Campus; \$1,000,000 ARC; \$4,917,526 local; \$5,917,526 total project cost.

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) (Hawkins Health Sciences Center Renovation) – Remodel and renovate Hawkins Vocational and Technical Center, constructed in 1974, to house the nursing programs. \$2,350,607 ARC; \$587,653 local; \$2,938,260 total project cost.

### **Ready Appalachia**

The District assisted in the administration of the following previously funded Ready Appalachia – A Community Capacity-Building Initiative grant in 2024.

East Central PDD – Funds to hire additional staff to service Kemper County. Grant would cover salary, fringe, indirect costs, travel, and registrations for two years. \$200,000 ARC; \$200,000 total project cost.

### **ARC POWER Initiative**

The District prepared and submitted the following ARC POWER Initiative Application to ARC in 2025:

Kemper County – Extension of natural gas services from a gas line tap at the TVA substation towards Scooba in Kemper County. \$1,500,000 ARC; \$375,000 County; \$1,875,000 total project cost. **Pending**

### **ARC – READY Grants to Grow**

The District prepared and submitted the following ARC- READY Grants to Grow applications in 2025:

Kemper County Retail Strategies Assessment – Conduct a retail strategies assessment of Kemper County including the municipalities of Dekalb and Scooba. \$100,000 ARC; \$100,000 total project cost. **Approved**

ECPDD GIS Mapping for Kemper County - Conduct GIS mapping of the public utilities for the Town of Dekalb and the Town of Scooba. \$100,000 ARC; \$100,000 total project cost. **Approved**

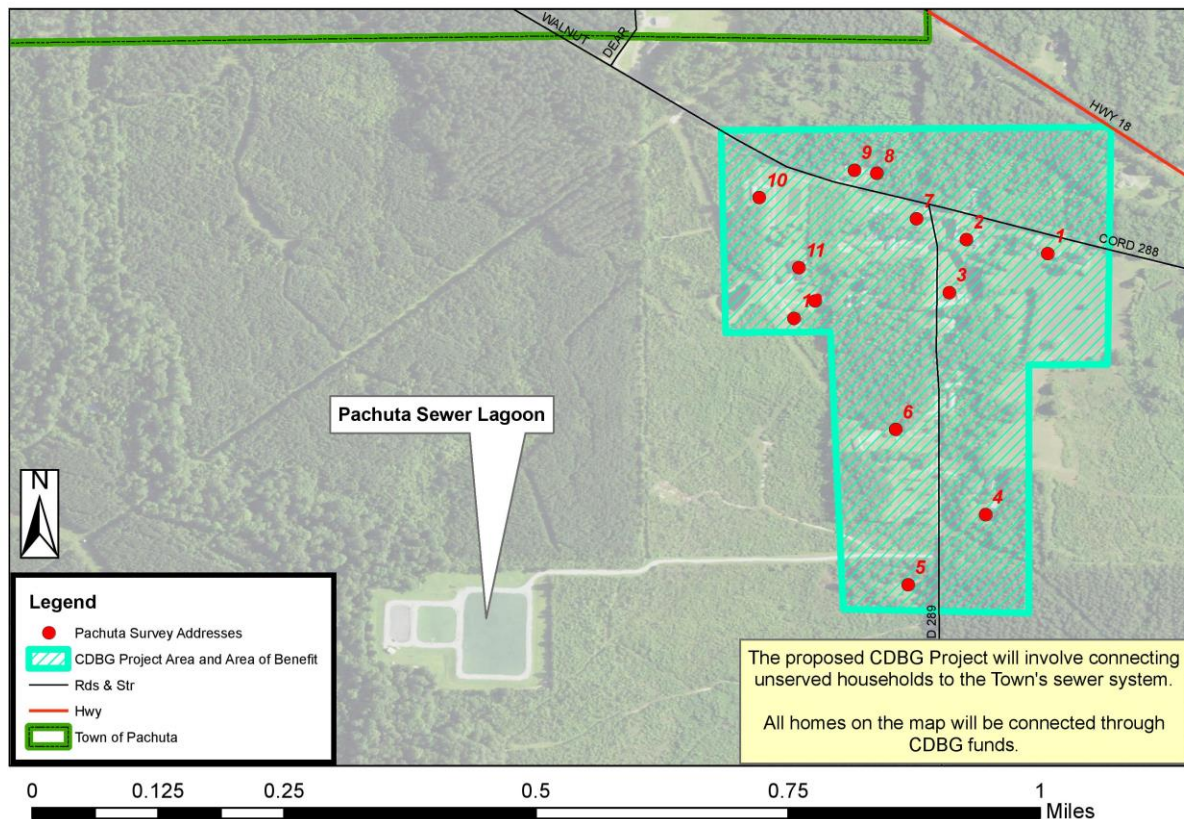
Town of Scooba - To develop a strategic plan for the Town of Scooba, \$75,000 ARC; \$75,000 total project cost.

## Geographic Information System (GIS)

The GIS program has been used to enhance planning programs and project applications and surveys, such as CDBG, for the District area. Staff utilize GIS software, digital photography, mapping techniques, and global positioning equipment.

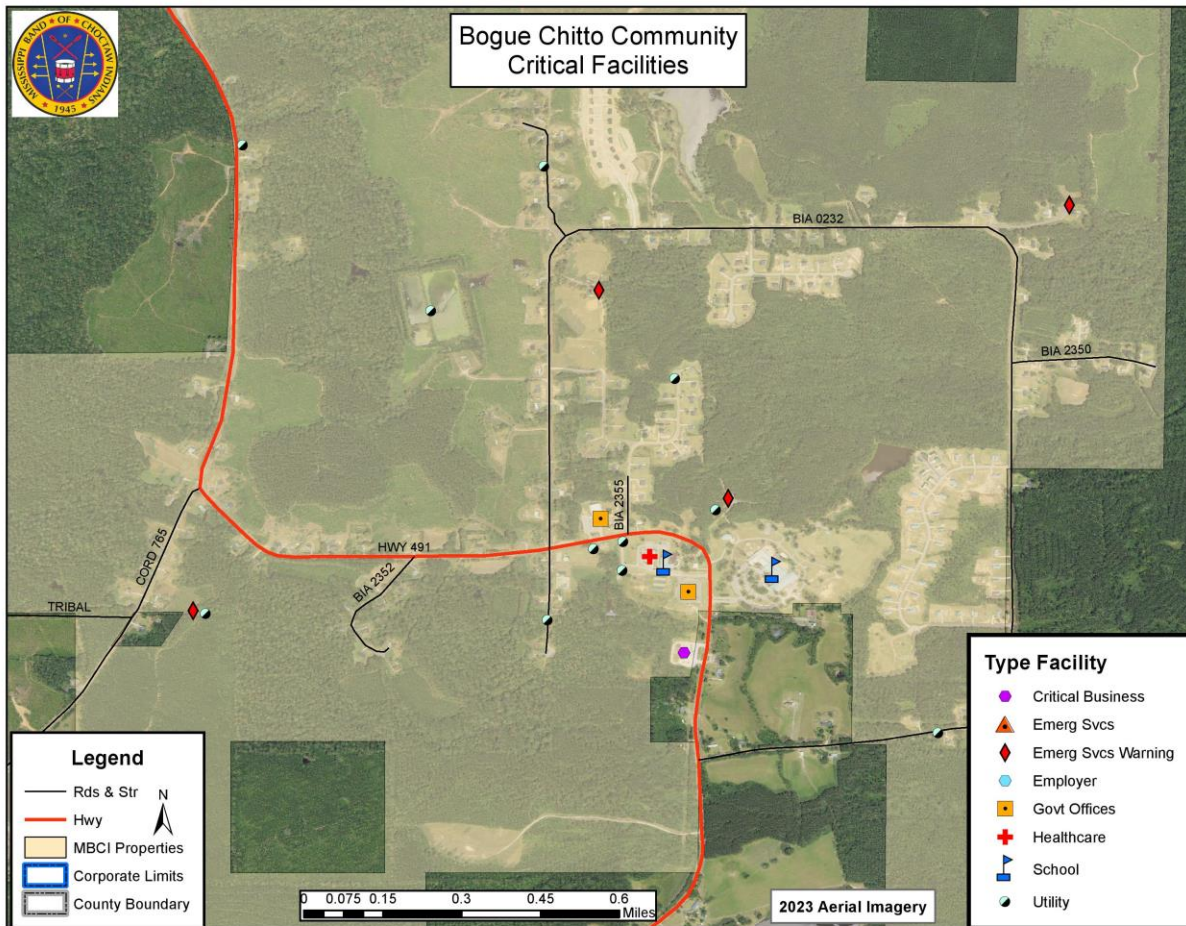
In addition to mapping minority areas and substandard housing areas, GIS staff utilizes the GIS program to plot housing units on maps to complete random surveys. Random surveys are used to determine the low- and moderate-income percentages for CDBG project applications (see map below).

**Pachuta CDBG Sewer Improvements Project  
Unserviced Households Map (by Survey Number)**

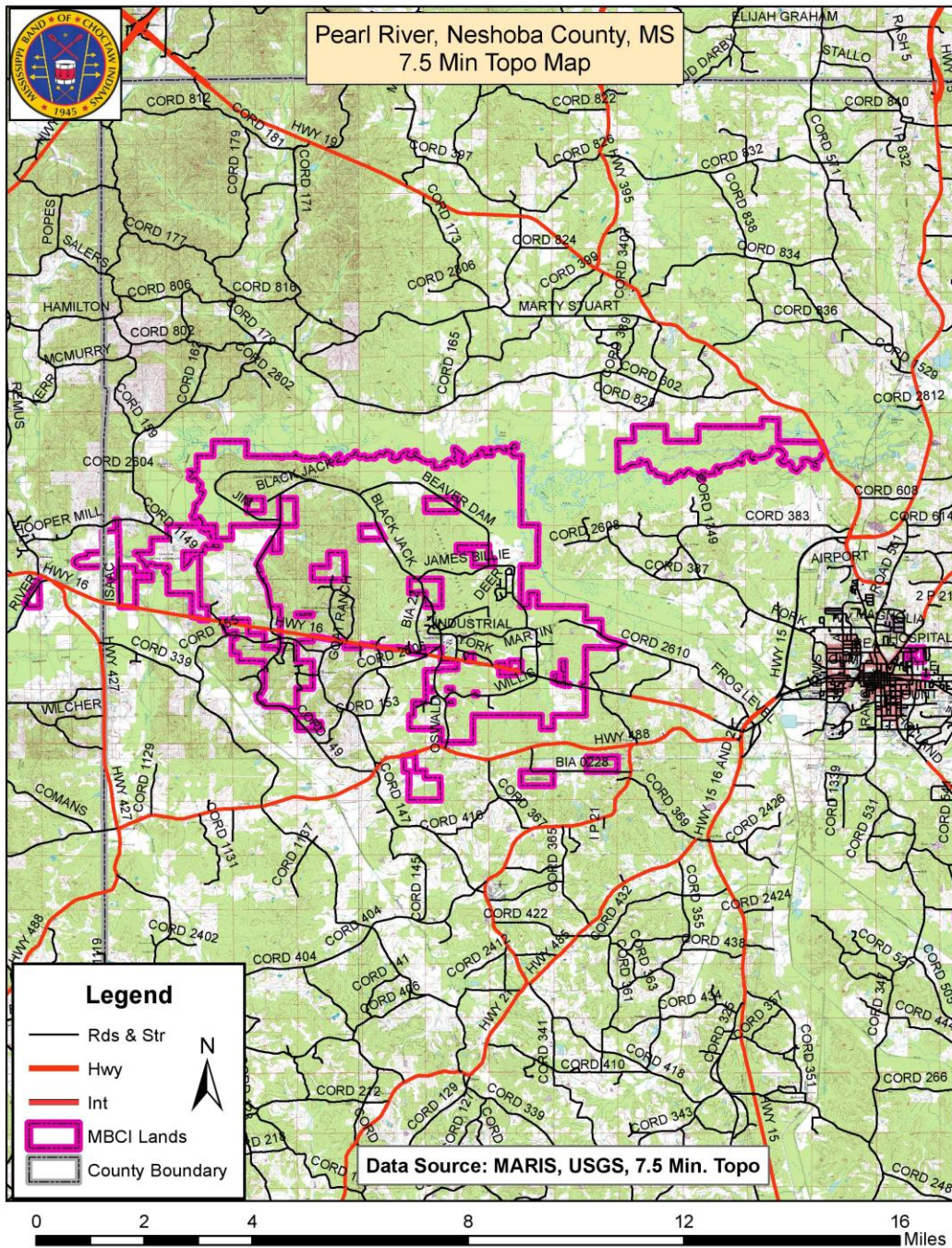


The GIS program has been an integral part of the redistricting process for the Boards of Supervisors, Municipalities, Justice Courts, Constables, Election Commissions, and School Districts.

District staff assisted with redistricting plans based on the 2020 Census for Clarke County, City of Quitman, Jasper County, Town of DeKalb, Leake County, City of Meridian, City of Philadelphia, City of Newton, City of Morton, and Smith County.



The GIS staff is available to prepare current road maps and other specialized maps for counties, municipalities, and emergency service providers, as well as hazard mitigation planning.



## Other Public Facilities and Environmental Improvements

### Mississippi Development Authority

#### Community Development Block Grant Program Public Facilities

The following 2024 CDBG Public Facilities applications were submitted to the Mississippi Development Authority in 2024 and **approved in 2025**:

Clarke County – ADA improvements to the County’s multi-purpose building. \$180,000 CDBG; \$20,000 local; \$200,000 total project cost.

City of Bay Springs - ADA in the downtown area. \$598,642 CDBG; \$598,642 total project cost.

City of Forest – Sewer improvements. \$750,000 CDBG; \$749,890 local; \$1,499,890 total project cost.

Town of Sylvarena – Water distribution improvements. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost.

The following 2025 CDBG Public Facilities applications were submitted to the Mississippi Development Authority in 2025:

Village of Pachuta – Service services to unserved households in Pachuta. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

Town of Shubuta – Townwide sewer improvements. \$599,996 CDBG; \$599,996 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

Jasper County – Additional funds for Beaver Meadows Fire Department construction. \$100,000 **Approved**

Town of Louin – Water improvements for the Town. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

Town of Dekalb – Townwide wastewater improvements. \$598,900 CDBG; \$598,900 Total project cost.

Town of Scooba - Additional funds for the sewer lagoon project. \$23,000 **Approved**

Lauderdale County – Construction of a fire station in District 2 of Lauderdale County. \$470,290 CDBG; \$300,000 local; \$770,290 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

City of Philadelphia – Building renovations to Multi-County Community Service Agency building. \$642,120 CDBG; \$100,000 local; \$742,120 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

Town of Union – Wastewater treatment improvements in the town. \$599,983 CDBG; \$599,983 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

City of Morton – Sewer improvements in the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue area. \$750,000 CDBG; \$75,000 local; \$825,000 total project cost.

Smith County – ADA improvements to the historic Smith County Courthouse. \$635,382 CDBG; \$63,581.68 local; \$698,963.68 total project. **Site Visit Held**

Town of Raleigh – Water improvements in the Turner Chapel area of Town. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost.

Town of Taylorsville – Sewer improvements in a low-income area of Town. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost. **Site Visit Held**

### **Mississippi Development Infrastructure Program (DIP)**

The District prepared and submitted the following Mississippi Development Infrastructure Program (DIP) applications in 2025:

Clarke County - Infrastructure improvements, including but not limited to land purchase, construction, water and street improvements for Howard Industry. \$4,622,929 DIP; \$3,000,000 ACE; \$1,252,652 CAP loan; \$8,875,581 total project cost. **Approved**

The District assisted with the administration of the previously funded Mississippi Development Infrastructure Program projects in 2025:

Clarke County – Water, sewer and parking improvements for the expansion of Howard Industries in Quitman, MS. 200 potential new jobs. \$404,980 DIP; \$50,497 local; \$455,477 total project cost.



**Jasper County DIP Hol-Mac Parking Lot Improvements**

Jasper County – Parking lot improvements for Hol-Mac – approximately 31 new jobs. \$212,349 DIP; local \$21,349; Company \$1,000,000; total project cost \$1,233,698.

City of Philadelphia – Building renovation to the Viking Metals building and create 15 new jobs. \$75,000 DIP; \$7,500 local; \$990,231 company investment; \$1,072,731 total project cost.



**Philadelphia DIP Viking Metals**

**Mississippi Site Development Grant Program**

The District submitted the following Mississippi Site Development Grant Program (SDG) application to the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) in 2025 which were **approved**:

**Kemper County** – Perform due diligence on entire site for Weyerhaeuser-Sucarnoochee Site including wetland delineation, cultural resources survey, Phase 1 environmental assessment, endangered species survey; perform property survey onsite and prepare title search. \$48,750 SDG; \$48,750 local; \$97,500 total project cost.



**Smith County SDG site**

**Scott County** – To construct an all-weather access road and necessary wetland mitigation at a new industrial site in Lake. \$250,000 SDG; \$733,000 local; \$983,000 total project cost.

**Smith County Economic Development District** – To make drainage improvements to a new industrial site in the Taylorsville Industrial Park. \$50,000 SDG; \$81,250 local; \$131,250 total project cost

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously funded Mississippi Site Development Grant Program application to the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) in 202:

Neshoba County – Building pad and road improvements for Neshoba Industrial Park. \$250,000 MDA; \$250,000 local; \$500,000 total project cost.

Scott County – To perform due diligence activities at a new industrial site in Lake. \$118,250 grant; \$118,250 local; \$236,500 total project cost.

### **Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Program (CAP)**

The District prepared and submitted the following Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Program (CAP) Loans in 2025:

Clarke County - Infrastructure improvements, including but not limited to land purchase, construction, water and street improvements for Howard Industry. \$1,252,652 CAP loan; \$4,622,929 DIP; \$3,000,000 ACE; \$8,875,581 total project cost.

**Approved**

Town of Heidelberg – Purchase of fire truck. \$150,000 CAP loan; \$150,000 local; \$70,000 State Fire Marshall; \$370,000 total project cost. **Approved**



Clarke County Howard Industries groundbreaking, June 2025

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously CAP Loans in 2025:

Clarke County – Purchase of five (5) fire trucks. \$1.2 million CAP; \$150,000 Rural Development; \$180,000 Rural Fire Truck Acquisition; \$1,530,000 total project cost.

Town of Montrose – Funds for payment to the railroad. \$40,000 CAP loan; \$7,253 local; \$47,253 total project cost.

Town of Marion – Wastewater Treatment Improvements. \$860,000 CAP; \$860,000 total project cost.

City of Meridian – Renovations to the Frank Cochran Center located in historic Highland Park. \$1,250,000 CAP; \$1,877,001 other; \$3,127,001 total project cost.

### **Mississippi ACE Fund**

The District prepared and submitted the following Mississippi ACE Fund application to the Mississippi Development Authority in 2025:

Clarke County - Infrastructure improvements, including but not limited to land purchase, construction, water and street improvements for Howard Industry. \$3,000,000 ACE; \$1,252,652 CAP loan; \$4,622,929 DIP; \$8,875,581 total project cost. **Approved**

**CDBG Project Administration** - The District assisted with the administration of the following CDBG Public Facilities (PF) projects in 2025:

Clarke County – ADA improvements to the County’s multi-purpose building. \$180,000 CDBG; \$20,000 local; \$200,000 total project cost.

City of Quitman - To provide wastewater improvements to the City of Quitman. \$450,000 CDBG; \$450,000 total project cost.

Town of Shubuta - Drainage improvements. \$449,053; \$449,053 total project cost.

Town of Stonewall - Sewer system improvements. \$449,900 CDBG; \$449,900 total project cost.

Jasper County - Construction of a fire station. \$600,000 CDBG; \$95,373 local; \$695,373 total project cost.

City of Bay Springs - ADA in the downtown area. \$598,642 CDBG; \$598,642 total project cost.

Town of Heidelberg – Construction of a water well to benefit the entire Town. \$600,000 CDBG; \$237,000 local; \$837,000.

Town of Montrose - Water system improvements. \$324,100 CDBG; \$324,100 total project cost.

Kemper County - ADA improvements to the Kemper County Courthouse. \$600,000 CDBG; \$75,000 other; \$675,000 total project cost.

Lauderdale County – To make ADA improvements to the Frances W. Davidson Memorial Homeless Shelter. \$138,493 CDBG; \$158,492 local; \$296,985 total project cost.

City of Meridian – Sewer improvements to a low-income area of Meridian as required by the Consent Decree with EPA. \$582,917.76 CDBG; \$2,088,528 local; \$2,671,445.76 total project cost.





Leake County – To repair/resurface St. Anne Road. \$722,447.42 CDBG; \$72,244.74 local; \$794,692.16 total project cost.

City of Carthage – Sewer improvements. \$651,607 CDBG; \$218,000 local; \$869,607 total project cost.

City of Newton – Sewer improvements. \$587,269 CDBG; \$587,269 total project cost.

Town of Decatur – Water improvements for the Town. \$674,964 CDBG; \$1,808,464 local; \$1,808,464 total project cost.

## At a Glance



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PROJECTS

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# \$10,759,993

CDBG FUNDS

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# \$5,598,078

LOCAL FUNDS

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# \$16,357,471

TOTAL FUNDS

Scott County – ADA improvements to Scott County Courthouse. \$750,000 CDBG; \$75,086.24 local; \$825,086.24 total project cost.

City of Forest – Sewer improvements. \$750,000 CDBG; \$749,890 local; \$1,499,890 total project cost.

Town of Lake – Sewer lagoon improvements. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost.

Town of Mize - To make required improvements to the wastewater sewer plant. \$450,000 CDBG; \$450,000 total project cost.

Town of Sylvarena – Water distribution improvements. \$600,000 CDBG; \$600,000 total project cost.



**Leake County CDBG PF Road Improvements**



**Lake CDBG PF New Wastewater Treatment Plant**



**Decatur CDBG PF Water Improvements**

**Decatur CDBG PF Water Well**



**Scott County CDGG PF ADA Courthouse Improvements**

## Other Projects

### Mississippi Department of Public Safety

The District prepared and submitted the following **2026 Occupant Protection Grant** applications to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Office of Highway Safety in 2025:

City of Carthage – To continue the Carthage Police Department’s Occupant Protection Program. \$15,000 MOHS; \$15,000 total project cost. **Approved as a Police Traffic Services (PTS) grant.**

City of Philadelphia – To continue the Philadelphia Police Department’s Occupant Protection Program. \$10,536 MOHS; \$10,536 total project cost. **Approved**

The District prepared and submitted the following **2026 Impaired Driving (DUI)** applications to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Office of Highway Safety in 2025:

City of Philadelphia – To continue the Philadelphia Police Department’s Alcohol Countermeasures Program. \$67,500 MOHS; \$67,500 total project cost. **Approved**

### Justice Assistance Grants (JAG)

The following 2024 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) applications were submitted to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety in December 2025:

Clarke County – Clarke County Sheriff Department proposes to purchase radios in the amount of \$4,950; total Project Cost: \$4,950

City of Quitman– The Quitman Police Department proposes to purchase a radio, Class A uniforms, vehicle equipment to outfit a Dodge Durango in the amount of \$4,870 JAG; \$4,870 total project cost.

Town of Enterprise – The Enterprise Police Department proposes to purchase radios. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Stonewall – to purchase a vehicle laptop, corresponding equipment and accessories for the Stonewall Police Department. \$4,607 JAG; \$4,607 total project cost.

Jasper County – To purchase four (4) body cameras, corresponding equipment and accessories for the Jasper County Sheriff’s Department. \$3,796 JAG; \$3,796 total project cost.

City of Bay Springs – To purchase mobile radios, corresponding equipment and accessories for the police department. \$5,702.60; JAG; \$5,702.60 total project cost.

Kemper County – To purchase training simulation guns, corresponding equipment and accessories for the Kemper County's Sheriff's Department. \$4,903 JAG; \$4,903 total project cost.

City of Meridian – Handheld radios for the Meridian Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Marion – To purchase three (3) vehicle laptops, corresponding equipment and accessories for the Marion Police Department. \$5,710.65 JAG; \$5,710.65 total project cost.

Leake County – Equipment and supplies for the Leake County Sheriff's Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost

City of Carthage – To purchase Class A uniforms for the Carthage Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Lena – The Lena Police Department proposes to purchase a printer and copy paper. \$1,245 JAG; \$1,245 total project cost.

Newton County – Explosive Handler and Breaching Course for three (3) deputies of the Newton County Sheriff's Department. \$4,425 JAG; \$4,425 total project cost.

City of Newton – To purchase weapons, holsters, and weapon lights for the Newton Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

City of Union – The Union Police Department proposes to purchase a radio, laptop, weaponry, and weaponry accessories. \$5,153.50 JAG; \$5,153.50 total project cost.

Town of Decatur – The Decatur Police Department proposes to purchase single cell partitions for vehicles. \$4,506 JAG; \$4,506 total project cost.

City of Philadelphia – The Philadelphia Police Department proposes to purchase a thermal optic and gas masks. \$4,391 JAG: \$4,391 total project cost

Scott County- To purchase 10 red-dot reflex sights for the Scott County Sheriff's Department. \$4,900 JAG; \$4,900 total project cost.

City of Forest- To purchase five (5) breathalyzers for the Forest Police Department. \$3,375 JAG; \$3,375 total project cost.

Town of Lake- To purchase three (3) handheld radios for the Lake Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Sebastopol – To purchase equipment for the police department. \$4,314.82 JAG; \$4,314.82 total project cost.

City of Morton- To purchase handheld radios for the Morton Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Smith County- To purchase two (2) long-range portable radios for the Smith County Sheriff's Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Mize – To purchase two (2) intoximeters and accessories, ammunition, E-Citation paper and a Solar Powered speed sign for the police department. \$5,473.88 JAG; \$5473.88 total project cost.

Town of Raleigh – To purchase one (1) body worn camera and two (2) flashlights for the Raleigh Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Taylorsville – To purchase five (5) bulletproof vests for the Taylorsville Police Department. \$5,000 JAG; \$5,000 total project cost.



**Radios purchased by Raleigh Police Department using FY23 JAG funds**

These applications are **pending**.

The District prepared and submitted the following Law Enforcement Official (LEO) Grant Program applications to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety in December 2025:

City of Bay Springs – To purchase four (4) radios for the Bay Springs Police Department. \$5,702.60 LEO; \$5,702.60 local; \$11,405.20 total project cost.

City of Newton – To purchase 10 tasers for the Newton Police Department. \$17,676 LEO; \$17,676 local; \$35,352 total project cost.

Smith County – To purchase lights and sirens for patrol vehicles for the Smith County Sheriff's Department. \$13,470.50 LEO; \$13,470.50 local; \$26,941 total project cost.

These applications are **pending**.

**U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)**

The following 2025 Bulletproof Vests Partnership (BVP) Grant applications were submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice in December 2025:

Town of Enterprise - To purchase two (2) bulletproof vests for the Enterprise Police Department. \$1,000 BVP; \$1,000 local; \$2,000 total project cost.

City of Quitman - To purchase four (4) bulletproof vests for the Quitman Police Department. \$2,000 BVP; \$2,000 local; \$4,000 total project cost.

Town of Stonewall - To purchase two (2) bulletproof vests for the Newton Police Department. \$900 BVP; \$900 local; \$1,800 total project cost.

City of Bay Springs – To purchase six (6) bulletproof vests for the Bay Springs Police Department. \$2,964 BVP; \$2,964 local; \$5,928 total project cost.



City of Meridian – To purchase 16 tactical vests for the Meridian Police Department SWAT Team. \$14,400 BVP; \$14,000 local; \$28,800 total project cost.

Leake County – To purchase six (6) bulletproof vests for the Leake County Sheriff's Department. \$3,000 BVP; \$3,000 local; \$6,000 total project cost.

City of Carthage- To purchase four (4) bulletproof vests for the Carthage Police Department. \$2,000 BVP; \$2,000 local; \$4,000 total project cost.

**Meridian Police Department BVP-funded vest**

Town of Lena - To purchase one (1) bulletproof vest for the Lena Police Department. \$500 BVP; \$500 local; \$1,000 total project cost.

City of Philadelphia – To purchase eight (8) bulletproof vests for the Philadelphia Police Department. \$4,000 BVP; \$4,000 local; \$8,000 total project cost.

Town of Decatur - To purchase two (2) bulletproof vests for the Decatur Police Department. \$1,000 BVP; \$1,000 local; \$2,000 total project cost.

City of Newton – To purchase two (2) bulletproof vests for the Newton Police Department. \$1,000 BVP; \$1,000 local; \$2,000 total project cost.

City of Morton – To purchase 10 bulletproof vests for the Morton Police Department. \$5,000 BVP; \$5,000 local; \$10,000 total project cost.

Town of Lake – To purchase two (2) bulletproof vests for the Lake Police Department. \$911.22 BVP; \$911.22 local; \$1,822.44 total project cost.

Town of Raleigh – To purchase five (5) bulletproof vests for the Morton Police Department. \$2,500 BVP; \$2,500 local; \$5,000 total project cost.

Town of Lena - To purchase one (1) bulletproof vest for the Lena Police Department. \$500 BVP; \$500 local; \$1,000 total project cost.

These applications are **pending**.

The District prepared and submitted the following FY 25 COPS Hiring Program grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), in 2025:

City of Forest – To hire three (3) additional officers for the Forest Police Department. \$117,841 local; \$353,522 COPS; \$471,363 total project cost. **Approved**

#### MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks

The District prepared and submitted the following Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant applications to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks in 2024:

Town of Montrose – Additional funds for the construction of the walking trail. \$1,005 RTP. **Approved**

City of Philadelphia – Renovation of Northside Park Trail. \$95,680 RTP; \$24,320 local; \$120,000 total project cost. **Approved**

Town of Lake -- Depot Park Trail. \$119,792 RTP; \$29,948 local; \$149,740 total project cost.

Town of Marion – Construct a new walking trail in a new recreational area behind the Marion Town Hall. \$120,000 RTP; \$50,500 local; \$170,500 total project cost.



Philadelphia RTP Burnside Park Trail

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously funded RTP grants in 2024:

Jasper County – To construct a non-motorized walking trail in the Paulding community (east Jasper County). \$120,000 RTP; \$44,475 local; \$164,475 total project cost.

Town of Heidelberg – Renovations to the existing non-motorized single-use trail. \$89,294 RTP; \$24,056 local; \$113,350 total project cost.

Town of Montrose – Renovations to an existing RTP funded trail. \$38,448 RTP; \$10,052 local; \$48,500 total project cost.



Montrose RTP Trail

Lauderdale County -To construct a 3400 LF walking trail around the new West Lauderdale sports complex. \$120,000 grant, \$30,000 match. \$150,000 total project cost.

Town of Sylvarena – Construct a new walking trail. \$96,000 RTP; \$24,000 local; \$120,000 total project cost.

The District prepared and submitted the following Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant applications to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks in 2024 that were **approved in 2025**:

City of Quitman – Improvements to the tennis courts. \$40,150 LWCF; \$40,150 local; \$80,300 total project cost.

Town of Marion – Construction of a recreation complex to include pickleball court, basketball courts and equipment, and a new playground. \$87,500 LWCF; \$87,500 local; \$175,000 total project cost.

The District also assisted with the administration of the following previously funded Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants in 2025:

Jasper County – Assist with purchase of playground equipment and park amenities at the Paulding Recreational Park. \$35,000 LWCF; \$35,000 local; \$70,000 total project cost.

Town of Louin – Playground equipment improvements. \$50,000 LWCF; \$25,000 Town; \$25,000 Jasper County; \$100,000 total project cost.

City of Forest – Construction of a soccer complex. \$402,188 LWCF; \$402,188 local; \$804,376 total project cost.

Town of Mize - To make improvements to the playground area, to provide handicap accessible playground equipment and to make the restrooms handicap accessible. \$50,000 LWCF; \$50,000 local; \$100,000 total project cost.



**Mize RTP Trail and LWCF Playground**

### **Mississippi Department of Archives and History**

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously funded Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) Community Heritage Preservation Grant (CHPG) grants in 2025:

Kemper County – Repair the roof on building perimeter, rebuild two original skylights, patch the third-floor stucco, and restore the third-floor original window frames. \$312,000 CHPG; \$78,000 local; \$390,000 total project cost.

City of Meridian – Repairs to the Dentzel Carousel House, roof, windows, exterior woodwork and provide fire protection. \$400,000 CHPG; \$100,000 local; \$500,000 total project cost.

### **Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)**

The District prepared and submitted the following Solid Waste Assistance Grant (SWAG) applications to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in 2025, which were **approved**:

Leake County – To help pay the salary and benefits of the Solid Waste Enforcement Officer. \$33,610.69 SWAG; \$33,610.70 local; \$67,221.39 total project cost.

Scott County – To continue the white goods collection sites. \$18,258.61 SWAG; \$18,258.61 total project cost.

Smith County – To help pay the salary and benefits of the Solid Waste Enforcement Officer and to pay for the cleanup of illegal dump sites. \$20,317.52 SWAG; \$20,317.52 total project cost.

The District assisted with the administration of the following previously funded Mississippi Municipality and County Water Infrastructure (MCWI) grant applications in 2025:

City of Quitman - Stormwater improvements. \$427,168 MCWI; \$213,583 ARPA LFRF Match; \$305,396 local match; \$946,147 total project cost.

Village of Pachuta – Water improvements. \$91,445 MCWI; \$45,722 local; \$137,167 total project cost.

Town of Shubuta - Storm water improvements. \$199,820.58 MCWI; \$99,439.42 local ARPA; \$299,250 total project cost.

Town of Stonewall – Wastewater improvements. \$399,398 MCWI; \$199,699 local match; \$599,097 total project cost.



**Stonewall MCWI Wastewater Improvements**



**Heidelberg MCWI Wastewater Improvements**

Town of Heidelberg – Wastewater improvements. \$78,667 MCWI; \$39,333 local match; \$118,000 total project cost.



**An unexpected visitor at for the Kemper County MCWI Water Line Project**

Kemper County – To provide drinking water to eastern Kemper County. \$1,186,019 MCWI; \$1,186,019 local ARPA; \$2,372,038 total project cost.

Town of Dekalb - Water improvements. \$478,000 MCWI; \$239,000 local ARPA; \$717,000 total project cost.

Town of Scooba – Water improvements. \$337,000 MCWI; \$168,500 local match; \$505,500 total project cost.

Lauderdale County - Water and sewer to new industrial area (Jimmie Rogers Parkway project). \$2,050,000 MCWI; \$2,050,000 local ARPA; \$4,100,000 total project cost.



**Marion MCWI Sewer Lines**

Town of Marion - Sewer improvements. \$600,000 MCWI; \$300,000 local ARPA; \$900,000 total project cost.

Town of Decatur - A new water well. \$533,332 MCWI grant, \$266,666 ARPA local match, \$1,143,002 SRF grant/loan; \$1,943,000 total project cost.

Town of Hickory - Water improvements. \$260,104 MCWI; \$130,052 local ARPA; \$390,156 total project.



**Scooba MCWI Water Improvements**

Town of Union - Water improvements to the water treatment plant and elevated tank repairs. \$682,733 MWCI, \$341,368 ARPA LFRF local match, \$118,772 local match; \$1,142,873 total project cost.

City of Forest – Sewer system improvements. \$1,146,432.50 MCWI; \$1,146,432.50 local ARPA; \$2,292,865 total project cost.

Town of Lake – Wastewater treatment lagoon improvements. \$104,589 MCWI; \$74,373 local ARPA; \$20,000 local funds; \$198,962 total project cost.

Town of Raleigh – Water and sewer improvements. \$693,760 MCWI; \$3446,880 local ARPA; \$1,193,532.50 local funds; \$2,234,172.50 total project cost.



**Forest MCWI Sewer Improvements**



**Mize MCWI Water Improvements**

Town of Mize – Water improvements. \$158,000 MCWI; \$79,000 local ARPA; \$237,000 total project cost.

Town of Polkville – Water system controls. \$91,350 MCWI; \$45,675 local ARPA; \$10,000 local funds; \$147,025 total project cost.

Town of Taylorsville – For system-wide water improvements. \$612,154.48 MCWI; \$306,077.24 local ARPA; \$10,000 local funds; \$928,231.72 total project cost.

### **Mississippi State Department of Health**

The District assisted with the administration of the previously funded ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure Grant RWAIG projects in 2025:

Townsend Water Association (Kemper County) – Water line replacements. \$701,000 RWAIG; \$701,000 total project cost.

### **Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)**

The District prepared and submitted the following Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application in 2025:

Clarke County – Purchase a 125kW natural gas fixed generator for the #911 Office. \$67,500.90 HMGP; \$7,500.10 local; \$75,000 total project cost. **Approved**

The District also assisted with the administration of the previously funding Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) projects in 2025:

Village of Pachuta – To purchase a warning siren. \$31,234.04 HMGP; \$10,411.35 local; \$41,645.39 total project cost.

City of Newton – To purchase two (2) generators for the sewer system. \$86,031.75 HMGP; \$28,677.25 local; \$114,709 total project cost.

City of Morton – To purchase a weather warning siren. \$32,041.70 HMGP; \$3,560.19 local; \$35,601.89 total project cost.

Town of Lake – To purchase two (2) generators for the water system. \$48,000 HMGP; \$16,000 local; \$64,000 total project cost.

Town of Mize – To purchase two (2) generators for the Town. \$12,837.24 HMGP; \$1,426.36 local; \$14,263.60 total project cost.

Town of Polkville – To purchase three (3) generators for the Town. \$46,479.76 HMGP; \$15,493.25 local; \$61,973.01 total project cost.



Morton HMGP Siren

### **USDA – Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service Program**

The District prepared and submitted the following Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Application (REDLG) applications to USDA-Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service Program in 2024 that was **approved in 2025**:

Kemper County – Extension of natural gas services from a gas line tap at the TVA substation towards Scooba in Kemper County. \$2,000,000 RDLG loan; \$300,000 REDLG grant; \$60,000 EMEPA; \$700,000 County; \$3,060,000 total project cost.

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

The District prepared and submitted the following 2024 Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant applications to FEMA in December 2024 that were **approved in 2025**:

Reformation Volunteer Fire Department (Leake County) – To purchase PPE and equipment. \$67,752.86 AFG; \$3,387.64 local; \$71,140.50 total project cost. **Approved for PPE. \$40,400 AFG; \$2,020 local; \$42,420 total project cost.**

City of Morton -- To purchase five (5) sets of turnout gear for the Morton Volunteer Fire Department. \$25,114.29 AFG; \$1,255.71 local; \$26,370 total project cost. **Approved for \$22,857.14 AFG; \$1,142.86 local; \$24,000 total project cost.**

Town of Polkville – To purchase PPE and equipment for the Polkville Volunteer Fire Department. \$38363.70 AFG; \$1,918.18 local; \$40,281.88. **Approved for PPE. \$20,488.46 AFG; \$1,024.43 local; \$21,512.89 total project cost.**

### **Mississippi Office of Homeland Security**

The District prepared and submitted the following State Homeland Security Program grant application to the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security in 2025:

Town of Heidelberg – Purchase a deployable camera to provide overwatch for large events, crowded areas, etc. that can be monitored in real time. \$40,000 MOHS; \$40,000 total project cost. **Pending**

City of Newton – To purchase five (5) handheld radios for the Newton Police Department. \$8,848 MOHS; \$8,848 total project cost. **Approved for \$15,000**

Town of Union – To purchase 10 handheld radios for the Public Works Department. \$30,000 HSGP; \$30,000 total project cost. **Approved**

Smith County – To purchase a portable surveillance camera system for the Sheriff's Department. \$23,485 MOHS; \$23,485 total project cost. **Approved**

The District prepared and submitted the following Non-Profit Grant Program application to the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security in 2025:

East Central PDD – Surveillance system, electronic access control, perimeter lighting upgrades, and alarm system to make the East Central PDD building more secure. \$91,579 MOHS; \$91,579 total project cost. **Pending**

### **U.S. Department of Defense**

The District prepared and submitted the following Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP) grant application to the U.S. Department of Defense in 2025:

Lauderdale County – Rabbit Road improvements. \$7,820,000 DCIP; \$7,820,000 total project. **Pending**

## **Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT)**

The District prepared and submitted the following Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant applications to the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) in 2025:

Lauderdale County – Construction of a walking trail along the north bank of Sowashee Creek (Phase II) Grand Avenue to 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, including lighting, pedestrian bridge, and addition of a raised sidewalk across existing MLK Drive bridge. \$1,328,000 MDOT; \$332,000 local; \$1,660,000 total project cost.

Town of Scooba – Improvements to Downtown Scooba to connect sidewalks from downtown to EMCC campus and provide enhanced lighting throughout the path. \$407,531.20 MDOT; \$101,882.80 local; \$509,414 total project cost.

These applications are **pending**.



**Scooba TAP Sidewalk Improvements**

## **Mississippi Forestry Commission**

The District prepared and submitted the following 2025 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program application to the Mississippi Forestry Commission in 2025:

Town of Stonewall – Purchase coveralls, red gear bags and gloves for the fire department. \$4,439 grant; \$4,439 total project cost. **Approved**

## **National Parks Service**

The District assisted with the administration of the previously funded National Park Service project in 2025:

Wechsler Foundation (Lauderdale County) – Continued renovations to the 1951 portion of the Wechsler School building. \$750,000; \$750,000 project cost.

# Human Resource Development

## Area Agency on Aging

East Central Planning and Development District is the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for nine (9) counties in east central Mississippi: Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott and Smith Counties. East Central AAA strives to provide a comprehensive system of home and community-based services and elder rights protection at the local level. Services are designed to meet the needs of priority groups, including people aged 60+, low-income, rural, minority, and low-income minority.







**Nutrition** - Twenty-three nutrition sites funded with Title III funds are operated within the nine-county area, providing nutritious lunches to approximately 471 congregate participants. Approximately 1,165 homebound people are provided with home-delivered meals within the District area. This program provides a nutritionally balanced meal five days a week for persons 60 years of age and older.

Nutrition sites are in the following locations:

Clarke County  
 Jasper County  
 Kemper County  
 Lauderdale County  
 Leake County  
 Neshoba County  
 Newton County  
 Scott County  
 Smith County

Enterprise, Quitman, Shubuta, Stonewall  
 Bay Springs, Heidelberg, Stringer, Rose Hill  
 Bailey/Ft. Stephens, DeKalb  
 Wechsler, East End  
 McMillan Park  
 Linwood, Longino  
 Decatur, Newton  
 Forest, Morton  
 Mize, Polkville, Raleigh, Taylorsville

## AT A GLANCE

 <p><b>Nutrition Services</b>  <b>471</b> older adults received congregate meals  <b>1,165</b> homebound seniors received home-delivered meals each week</p>	 <p><b>Transportation</b>                  Approximately <b>145</b> riders supported each month                  Estimated <b>1,700</b> rides monthly for medical visits, grocery shopping, bill-pay, and access to essential services</p>	
 <p><b>Information &amp; Referral / Outreach</b>  <b>1,650</b> individuals assisted providing <b>2,180</b> units of service</p>	 <p><b>Homemaker Services</b>  <b>163</b> homebound seniors approximately <b>950</b> hours of assistance each month</p>	 <p><b>Ombudsman Services</b>  <b>2,303</b> residents served in <b>22</b> nursing homes and <b>12</b> personal care facilities</p>
 <p><b>Medicaid Waiver Case Management</b>                  Approximately <b>1,500</b> individuals received in-home and community-based service</p>		



**Breast Cancer Awareness Event at Enterprise Senior Citizen Center**



**Line Dancing Lesson at Newton Senior Citizen Center Christmas Party**

Transportation - Bus service is provided to people sixty years of age and older in the following counties: Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott and a portion of Smith. Rides, which serve approximately 145 people each month, providing approximately 1,700 rides, are provided for grocery shopping, doctors' visits, visits to other social services agencies, such as Social Security, Welfare Department, Neighborhood Services Center, etc., and for paying bills and visiting Nutrition Sites. The buses were obtained with funding provided through the Mississippi Department of Transportation, under Section 5310, which provided eighty percent (80%) of the funding to purchase vehicles and equipment. Operating costs are provided through Title III of the Older Americans Act.

Information and Referral/Outreach – The I&R/Outreach program provides information to 60+ clients about available services and resources in their communities. The I&R and Outreach programs utilize a toll-free telephone line (1-800-264-2007) for the convenience of older people seeking information about services and benefits available to them. A Program Specialist is employed for each of the District's nine counties and is responsible for assessing the senior citizens' needs and linking them with an agency or organization that can help meet those needs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, homemaker services, referral for nutrition and transportation services, home weatherization, home health care, disaster-related services, and emergency financial assistance applications for heating. Some 1,650 people benefit from these services, providing 2,180 units of service.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - This program is designed to provide meaningful employment training to those people 55 years of age and above. Currently, East Central is allocated 25 slots under the National SCSEP.

Homemaker Services - Homemaker services are provided to those homebound elderly who are unable to perform the simple tasks required for daily living. Services are currently provided to residents in all the

District's nine counties. Approximately 163 people are receiving this service, with approximately 950 hours of service being provided monthly. Currently twelve (12) Homemakers are employed for this program.

Ombudsman Services - Ombudsman services are available to nursing home residents throughout the nine-county area. The program is designed to ensure the quality of life for residents in long term/personal care facilities and addresses concerns or issues that may affect their wellbeing. Twenty-two (22) nursing homes and 12 personal care facilities are served each month. The program currently serves approximately 2,303 residents.

Medicaid Waiver Case Management - Case management is the planning, arrangement, and coordination of appropriate community-based services to be provided to clients under the elderly and disabled program as an alternative to nursing home placement. Eligible services include case management, homemaker services, personal care services, adult day care, respite care, and home delivered meals. Approximately 1,500 people are receiving this service.

SHIP - The State Health Insurance and Assistance Program provides information and referrals to the elderly regarding Medicare, Medicaid, and questions or concerns about health care coverage.

Legal Assistance - Legal assistance refers to legal advice by a licensed lawyer, including, to the extent feasible, counseling or other appropriate assistance by a paralegal or law student under the supervision of a licensed lawyer, and includes counseling by a non-lawyer where permitted by law. The service targets those elderly people with economic and/or social needs. The overall purpose of legal assistance is to assist older people in identifying possible legal problems and to assist them in the legal process to resolve those problems.

Respite - Respite care is the providing of temporary relief time for the regular or primary caregiver (spouse, child, relative) of an ill, infirm, functionally impaired older individual or dementia patient who requires constant in-home care.

A Matter of Balance (Fall Prevention) – A Matter of Balance (Fall Prevention) is an evidence-based falls management program offered at **no cost** to participants. A *Matter of Balance* is an 8-week group training that emphasizes practical ways to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels. Participants learn to view falls and the fear of falling as controllable, set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and exercise to increase strength and balance.



**Matter of Balance Class at Newton Senior Citizens Center**

Walk With Ease -- The Walk with Ease Program is a six (6) week course that combines self-paced walking along with information about health-related topics. The objectives of the program are to improve balance and strength, improve arthritis symptoms, increase strength, increase walking pace, and to improve confidence in one's ability to manage arthritis symptoms.

## Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council

James Young, Chairman

Ned Rushing

Bill Freeman

Kenyatta Pearson Lockett

Janice Mills

Jimmy Nix

Greg Butler

# PLANNING, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, AND RESEARCH

## Redistricting

District staff continues to meet with the municipalities and counties to determine the need for redistricting ward lines because of the 2020 U. S. Census.

## Clearinghouse

The District continues its role in serving as the regional clearinghouse for proposed programs and projects.

## MBCI

Staff members continue a close working relationship with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

## ARC

The District assisted the Appalachian Regional Commission in developing plans and project applications for Kemper County.



**DRA Leadership Training 2025**

## DRA

The District assisted the Delta Regional Authority in developing plans and project applications for Jasper and Smith counties.

## SCRC

The District assisted the Southern Crescent Regional Commission in developing plans and project applications for Clarke, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, and Scott counties.

Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) - District Supervisors Meeting



**MAS Spring Regional Training Meeting**

Elected officials from the nine-county district and staff of East Central PDD, Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, and Mississippi Association of Supervisors attended the annual District Supervisors Meeting. Each year, ECPDD, in cooperation with the Mississippi Association of Supervisors and the Cooperative Extension Service, hosts a workshop/training meeting with the Supervisors and other County officials. Legislative issues and concerns are discussed and ECPDD gives a report on project activities in the area.

Mississippi Municipal League (MML) - Regional Meeting

Municipal officials from throughout the District and staff of East Central PDD and the Mississippi Municipal League attended the annual Regional MML Meeting. Each year, ECPDD, in cooperation with MML, hosts a workshop/training meeting with the Mayors and other municipal officials. Legislative issues and concerns are discussed and ECPDD gives a report on project activities in the area.



**MML New Officials Training**

## East Central Mississippi Mayors Association

The East Central Mississippi Mayors Association is a non-partisan group of mayors from across east central Mississippi working together to coordinate municipal planning, share information, address common challenges, and strengthen relationships among local governments.

East Central Planning and Development District serves as Secretary/Treasurer for the Association, assisting with scheduling and planning quarterly meetings, collecting member dues, and managing correspondence for the chair.

## Census Information



The District serves as the area State Data Center Affiliate and has access to census information maintained at the State Data Center at the University of Mississippi. The District has detailed data for each of our nine counties on the general population, housing, income, and socio-economic characteristics.



## ADMINISTRATION

East Central Planning and Development District is governed by an eighteen-member Board of Directors responsible for establishing the policies of the organization. Board members serve without compensation, and each term of office is one year, with no limit on successive terms. The Board convenes quarterly, or more frequently as necessary, with written notice provided prior to each meeting.

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board and is charged with implementing its resolutions, directives, and policies. The Executive Director oversees the overall administration and management of the organization, while all staff members operate under the Executive Director's supervision.

The staff provides comprehensive support to counties, municipalities, functional committees, advisory groups, task forces, and other partners throughout the District. This support includes conducting studies, identifying needs, developing strategies, and assisting with the implementation of programs and projects. ECPDD is staffed as follows:

## EAST CENTRAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT STAFF

<b>KAWANA MCCARY</b> Executive Director	<b>TANYA KING</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>JAKAYLEA BENNAMON</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>MONICA LOGAN</b> Program Aide
<b>PATSY BLALOCK</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>BETTY MCGOWAN</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>SHANTEL BODY</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>STEPHANIE MCLAURIN</b> Receptionist
<b>JENIFER BUFORD</b> Economic and Community Development Director	<b>JENNIFER MORGAN</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>LEVERA CHAPMAN</b> Office Manager	<b>PAULA MYERS</b> Accountant
<b>JO ANN COLE</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>SUSIE PARKER</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>CAY CLARK</b> Fiscal Officer	<b>JULIA PATTON</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>ROSIE COLEMAN</b> Aging Division Director	<b>CLARRISSA ROBINSON</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>LYNNETTA COOKSEY</b> Project Developer	<b>JOSIE ROBINSON</b> Nutrition Coordinator
<b>CYNTHIA ELLIS</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>PATRICIA SMITH</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>DEMARUS EVANS</b> Project Developer	<b>BRIANA SPEED</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>MALITHIA FORD</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>LATORRIA TOWNER</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>DAMIEN FRANKLIN</b> GIS Specialist	<b>BREUNA TOWNSEND</b> Supportive Services Coordinator
<b>JASON FRULLA</b> Business Loan Manager	<b>TERESA TULLOS</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>KATERINA GRAY</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>LOUISE WALLAGE</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>ROBERT HAMRICK</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>NICOLE HAMILTON-WARREN</b> District Ombudsman
<b>STEPHANIE HARRIS</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>GINNY WATKINS</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>SHEKELIA HOLLIDAY</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>BRIDGET WEBSTER</b> Social Worker/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>TAMMY HOWSE</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager	<b>DEQUITA WILLIAMS</b> Registered Nurse/Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
<b>ALICE DAWKINS-HOPSON</b> Medicaid Waiver Supervisor	<b>ANNIE LOIS WILSON</b> Custodian
<b>ROSALIND JONES</b> I&R /SHIP Coordinator	

# COOPERATION WITH OTHER GROUPS

## Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts

The District participated as a member of the Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts (MAPDD) during the past year. As a member of the Association, it participated in programs and business pertaining to the monthly meeting of the ten Planning and Development Districts in the state. The monthly association meetings have been invaluable to the Districts for information sharing on programs and activities and as a coordination point for a united voice from the Districts.



## Other Committee Activities

The District is a member of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and is also a member of the Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts. The District also participates with the Mississippi Economic Development Council (MEDC), Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI), and Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC).



ECPDD Staff and Board Members attended the NADO & DDAA Conference in Washington, DC



ECPDD Staff and Board Members attended the Annual NADO Conference in Salt Lake City

## Workshops on Community Development

East Central Planning and Development District staff members have attended several workshops on the Community Development guidelines, regulations, and procedures for the application and administration of CDBG projects.

The District serves as a flow-through for information and technical assistance for Community Development projects and works with many towns and counties in the preparation of CDBG applications. ECPDD staff members have been involved in the administrative activities of CDBG recipients and expect to continue working with the towns and counties that receive community development grants. East Central Planning and Development District staff members have attended several workshops on the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) guidelines, regulations, and procedures for the application and administration of DRA projects.

### State

The District has received cooperation and assistance from various state offices. This working relationship has been especially beneficial in making better coordination with the various federal and state programs and agencies with which we deal. Some of the state offices most frequently involved include the Mississippi Development Authority (CDBG), Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), Department of Archives and History, Department of Public Safety, Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Department of Employment Security, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Department of Human Services, Division of Medicaid, and the State Board of Health.

### Other Agencies

Besides the Economic Development Administration, some of the other federal-related agencies with which we work closely and well are the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health and Human Services, Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Authority, Southern Crescent Regional Commission, and USDA Rural Development. Local agencies include city and county governments, chambers of commerce, East MS Business Development Corporation, Mid-Mississippi Development District, Community Development Partnership (Neshoba County), Leake County Industrial Development Authority, Kemper County Economic Development Authority, Smith County Economic Development District, and others.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS

As a part of the District's continuing public relations efforts, staff members circulate throughout the District, meeting and talking with local, municipal, and county officials concerning their problems and the availability of services from the District.

The District also developed an audio-visual presentation that is presented to interested groups throughout the District and at regional and statewide conferences, forums, and seminars.

News releases with photographs, where possible, are distributed to weekly and daily newspapers when developments of interest occur relating to District programs and staff activities.

In addition, the District's website ([www.ecpdd.org](http://www.ecpdd.org)) has information on District activities.

The District maintains its headquarters at the geographic center of the District in Newton and greets visitors with courtesy and hospitality and provides prompt, efficient, and friendly responses to inquiries regarding information and assistance.

# FUTURE PROGRAMS

The District hopes that it will be able to operate basically the same programs in the future that it has during the past year, and will continue to make special efforts to develop new jobs and better paying jobs for our work force, assist our communities in improving their facilities and making them more attractive to their current residents and prospective industrialists, seek to help upgrade the vocational and educational skill levels of our people, and help the elderly obtain the services that they need for better health and enjoyment of life.

# SERVICES

## Technical Assistance

Providing technical assistance to local governments is a very important function of East Central Planning and Development District. Few communities in the area can afford to pay staff to deal with the overflow of demands on local officials for services as well as the ever-present state and federal requirements governing these programs.

The District provides assistance in preparing grant applications, meeting state and federal program requirements, planning and developing projects utilizing U.S. Census and other data and providing implementation and administration to local officials.

## Clearinghouse Coordination

The District serves as the Regional Clearinghouse for federal programs. This means that certain applicants for federal assistance notify the District of their intentions to file an application. After receiving this notification, which should include a description of the project, the District in turn notifies local officials, agencies and individuals who might have an interest in the proposed project or know of any conflicts, duplication of efforts, or environmental effects which the proposed project might create. After allowing ample time for responses, the District informs the applicant of any request for further information about the project and encloses any comments that have been received regarding the project. Also, as part of its review procedure, the District reviews the project considering any comprehensive planning programs which might affect the project area to determine if the project is in conformance with these plans.

Its role as Regional Clearinghouse helps keep the District organization abreast of most federal activities and projects proposed throughout the District. The staff takes a responsible role in helping to coordinate federal assistance programs by preventing duplication and overlapping of efforts and provides a forum for discussion to iron out any conflicts or inconsistencies between project proposals. It also provides an opportunity for the organization to assure itself that District projects are in conformity with the District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The following is a listing of those additional projects reviewed during the reporting period concerning public facilities, programs, and environmental improvements within the East Central Planning and Development District. The inclusion of a project on this list does not necessarily constitute the funding of a project. District staff members have been involved in these projects in varying degrees, ranging from providing information, to conducting regional clearinghouse reviews and comments, to completely formulating the application.

## Clearinghouse

PROJECT	COUNTY	FEDERAL AGENCY	FEDERAL FUNDS	TOTAL COST
Kemper County Public Library	Kemper	USDA – Rural Development	\$600,000	\$800,000
Philadelphia Transit	Neshoba	MS Department of Transportation	\$719,645	\$1,173,740
East Central Planning and Development District / Area Agency on Aging	Newton	Federal Transit Administration	\$206,803.20	\$258,504

# East Central Planning and Development

## District Board of Directors

<p><b>*Wilson Hallman, President</b>          Smith County Director          5944 SCR 539          Raleigh, MS 39153</p>	<p>Sherline Dansby-Watkins          Kemper County Director          Post Office Box 188          Dekalb, MS 39328</p>	<p>Cindy Austin          Smith County Director          Post Office Box 39          Raleigh, MS 39153</p>
<p><b>*Curtis Gray, Vice President</b>          Jasper County Director          37 CR 317          Heidelberg, MS 39439</p>	<p>Joe Norwood          Lauderdale County Director          612 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S          Meridian, MS 39301</p>	<p>Loriann Ahshapanek          Director At Large          8403 Hwy. 488          Carthage, MS 39051</p>
<p><b>*Paul Mosley, Treasurer</b>          Clarke County Director          P. O. Box 616          Quitman, MS 39355</p>	<p>Dot Merchant          Leake County Director          Post Office Box 72          Carthage, MS 39051</p>	<p>Vernell Lofton          Director at Large          P. O. Box 62          Rose Hill, MS 39356</p>
<p><b>*Nancy Chambers, Secretary</b>          Director at Large          P. O. Box 298          Forest, MS 39074</p>	<p>Keith Lillis          Neshoba County Director          12601 Road 383          Philadelphia, MS 39350</p>	<p>Kenneth Harris          Director At Large          343 Sand Springs Road          Newton, MS 39345</p>
<p><b>*Perry E. Duckworth</b>          Director at Large          Post Office Box 729          Taylorsville, MS 39168</p>	<p>Ricky Harrison          Newton County Director          11972 Hickory-Little Rock Rd.          Decatur, MS 39327</p>	<p>Gerald Keeton          Director at Large          P. O. Box 555          Morton, MS 39117</p>
<p><b>*Hilda Nickey</b>          Director at Large          P. O. Box 62          Conehatta, MS 39057</p>	<p>Jackie Bradford          Scott County Director          174 Bradford Lane          Forest, MS 39074</p>	<p>Robert Miles          Director at Large          6606 Highway 13          Morton, MS 39117</p>

\*Executive Committee