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Volume 8, Number 2

"Good News You Can Use"

February 11, 2020

"Be authentic," Katie Dixon urges

By Bob Arnold

"Dream big and be the authentic you," Katie Dixon, Hattiesburg restaurateur and nationally recognized chef by television's *Master Chef*, told attendees at Wesson Chamber of Commerce's 27th annual banquet last month.

"You'll have bad days and amazing days, but falling on your face is an opportunity to grow," she said. "With a passion for what you do, anything is possible. Know what you want to reach, aim for the prize -- the target -- and make your mark."

Some 150 persons, including community leaders, business owners, state and local legislators and aldermen and educators, heard her advice at the banquet, which also was a venue for recognizing local people and organizations that made their own marks -- the Wesson Garden Club as Organization of the year, Ed and Sharon Ashley as Wesson Ageless Heroes, the late William Brown for community service, Wesson Volunteer Fire Department for public service, Janice Mullen Smith as Wesson Attendance Center (WAC)

Educator of the Year, Anita Cliburn as Co-Lin Educator of the Year and the Carpenter Shop as Business of the Year.

Dixon, a Brookhaven native, said she learned the lessons she was preaching in her winning bid to become Mississippi's 2002 Miss Hospitality, launching and operating Birdhouse Cafe, a popular Hattiesburg spot that offers a range of power food like acai bowls, vegan soups and house-made almond milk; and cooking competition that brought her national recognition on television's *Master Chef*.

Dixon's rise on *Master Chef* started with audition cooking and interviews in which she stood out among 22,000

competitors and subsequent competition among the top 80 and then top 40 chefs. In the end, after reaching the show, she "dared to be authentic" even though it may have cost her the win.

"They wanted me to be Southern belle, but I didn't want to make Southern fried chicken, because that's not what I am passionate about. When I decided to make healthy chicken, I knew I might not win the show, but opportunities came from that. The good Lord made us all different. Dare to be authentically you."

At tables adorned with Mardi Gras decor created and arranged by Janet Currie, the Chamber's outgoing president and proprietor of the Another

Time. . . . Another Place gift shop, the banquet attendees also heard Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw, Dr. Jane Hulon, Co-Lin president and WAC Principal Marilyn Phillips talk about how the town and its key institutions are making their marks.

Shaw cited the \$350,000 public library renovation project, a planned new \$300,000 police department facility, continued development of the municipal park and Wesson Garden Club tree planting.

Hulon pointed to a \$6 million Career Tech Center at the Co-Lin Simpson County location, a diesel laboratory on its Natchez campus, a new president's home, interior renovation of Elsey Hall and upgrade of athletic facilities at Wesson. Phillips noted the 92 percent graduation rate at WAC -- sixth best in the state, sixty-five 2019 Wesson High School graduates who received \$578,000 in scholarships and emphasis on assisting students in raising their ACT scores to qualify for scholarships.

The litany of local accomplishments underscored the rationale for Dixon's remarks that followed:

"What you do matters!"



Katie Dixon
Special to Wesson News

Committees to do Chamber work

By Bob Arnold

Seeking to involve more persons from the community who are not part of the organization and engage its current membership in doing its work, the Wesson Chamber of Commerce intends to establish a number of working committees during 2020.

In the past, the Chamber board has largely planned and implemented its activities, but "things will change this year," Marty Stroud, incoming president of the group, says.

The Chamber's new officers and board members were introduced at its annual banquet last month. In addition to Stroud, they are

- Brent Duguid, Vice President



Wesson News

News Wesson Chamber of officers and board members (left to right) are Laura Smith, Marty Stroud (president), Nora Berch, Marilyn Britt (treasurer), Libby Kirton (secretary), Philip Knight, Brent Duguid, Dr. Steven Liverman, Dr. Stephanie Duguid and Stephen Ashley.

- Libby Kirton, Secretary
- Marilyn Britt, Treasurer
- Board members Laura Smith, Nora Berch, Phillip Knight, Stephen Ashley, Dr. Stephanie Duguid and Dr. Steven

- Liverman, MD
- Emma Anderson will continue to assist at Chamber events and play a ceremonial role as Founder's Day Queen until her successor is selected

Chamber honors groups & people

By Bob Arnold

A 45-year old carpentry business that started in a cow barn is Wesson's 2020 Business of the Year.

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce honored The Carpenter Shop, its founder Jimmy Keys, who continues to work for the company, and Keith and Desiree Hart, its current owners, at its annual banquet.

Outgoing Chamber President Janet Currie said the company "can make anything from wood," adding that increasing numbers of home builders and improvers seeking custom woodwork have paced its growth. "Word-of-mouth advertising you can't Google has helped build its stellar reputation," Currie added.

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Community Calendar

February weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 48 degrees F (one degree above average) with precipitation of 4 inches (one inch below average). **February 12 - 16:** Rainy periods; cold, the mild. **February 17-21:** Sunny, cold. **February 22-26:** Rain, the sunny, cold. **February 27-29:** Rainy, mild.

FEBRUARY 11

Diabetes support group. Meets weekly on Tuesdays. Education Annex at King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven. 1:30 p.m. For information, call Natalie Ybarra at 601-835-9489.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary Post 2618 meet. \$5 for meal. VFW Hall on Industrial Park Road, Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

Copiah County Master Gardeners meets. Mississippi State University Extension Office at Gallman. 5 p.m. business meeting.

American Legion John Edwards Post 12 meets. All members, veterans and their spouses are welcome. Jimmy Furlow Senior Citizens Center. 4 p.m. For information, call 601-835-8137.

NAMI 4Rivers family support group meets on the second Thursday of each month. Free, confidential and peer-led, the group includes caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Cannon Hall at First Episcopal Church, Brookhaven. 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.

FEBRUARY 13

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon. Stacie Cross from Brookhaven speaking about the American Cancer Society -- its research work, patient resources and 106 years of care giving in communities. \$5. Co-Lin Thames Center. 10:30 a.m.

Wesson Lions Club meets. Co-Lin Student Cafeteria. 5:30 p.m. (Board). 6:30 p.m. (Membership).

FEBRUARY 15

Downtown Jazzed Up, Brookhaven Mardi Gras party. Cajun cook off. Jumpies & face painting for kids. Beignets. Beads for everyone. Second line parade. Downtown Brookhaven. Street dancing. 4 p.m.-9 p.m.

FEBRUARY 17

Blood drive every second and fourth Monday. King's Daughters Medical Center Hospital Annex. 1 p.m.- 6 p.m. Call 800-817-7449 for information.

Beginner clogging classes for persons of all ages beyond five-years-old are held every Monday night. A small fee is charged each month. Brookhaven Recreation Department on Highway 51. Call 601-833-3791.

FEBRUARY 18

"Myths of World War II," Institute for Learning in Retirement workshop will be led by members of the Co-Lin Centurions, a club focused on history scholarship. \$3. Co-Lin Thames Center. 10 a.m.

American Legion Post #79 meets. American Legion Lodge on Main Street, Wesson. 6:30 p.m. For information, call 601-563-5438.

FEBRUARY 25

Institute for Learning in Retirement day trip to Meridian will feature a tour of the MAX (Mississippi Arts & Entertainment Experience) and lunch at the historic Weidmann's Restaurant. \$105. Departs Co-Lin Thames Center at 7:15 a.m. Call Co-Lin Program Coordinator and Events Coordinator Julie Wright (601-643-8705/julie.wright@colin.edu) and Tricia Russell (601-643-8702/tricia.russell@colin.edu).

FEBRUARY 27

Wesson Lions Club membership meeting. Co-Lin Student Cafeteria. 6:30 p.m.

MARCH 3.

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon with entertainment provided by Brookmont String Plus, a 20-member dulcimer musical group. \$10. Co-Lin Thames Center. 10:30 a.m.

"Salvation Key Chains," an Institute for Learning in Retirement crafts workshop led by Patsy Berch. \$10. Follows the luncheon at Co-Lin Thames Center at 12:30 p.m.

Wesson Board of Aldermen meet. Wesson City Hall. 6 p.m.

MARCH 6

Goin' To Town Car Show sponsored by Fielder's Pro Shop and Brookhaven Tourism Council starts and continues on March 7. Vehicles of all sorts. More than 200 entries expected. Pre Entry \$10. \$15 day of show. Don't town Brookhaven. Call T-Tommy at 601-833-8620 or Brookhaven-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce at 601-833-1411.

CONTINUING

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at convenient times seven days of every week. First United Methodist Church, 215 West Cherokee Street, Brookhaven. Open meetings are Mondays at noon and Tuesdays (Big Book Study), Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Closed meetings are Wednesdays and Fridays (Big Book Study) at noon and Thursdays and Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

Overeaters Anonymous meets every Tuesday. Church of the Redeemer Episcopal, downtown Brookhaven. 6 p.m. Call 601-754-0213 for information.

Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild members work on projects every Thursday of the month from 9 a.m.-12 noon at the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Public Library in the Vernon Room when it is available.

Email Community Calendar items to bobarnold@wessonnews.com

Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During January, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

Responses to:

- Three motor vehicle accidents
- One general information report
- Two stalking incidents
- One simple assault
- One malicious mischief
- One stolen firearm

Arrests & citations for:

- Two expired tags
- Two driving without a license or with a suspended license
- Four no insurance violations
- One possession of a controlled substance
- One open container violation
- One noise ordinance violation
- One stop sign violation
- One person picked up on a warrant for home repair fraud
- Three citations for city ordinance violations

Wesson Police conduct nightly business checks. On school days, they facilitate traffic flow at Wesson Attendance Center, with officers on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

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Legislature, businesses, elections & police

Special to Wesson News

Legislature convenes. Mississippi lawmakers convened the 2020 legislative session in early January and will continue their work in Jackson until May 10, having almost a month and a half longer than last year to hash out a budget. Thousands of bills, ranging from Medicaid expansion to increasing teachers' pay, prison reforms, changing the state flag and letting college athletes profit from their likeness, will be introduced, with most of them dying in committee and never discussed in the House or Senate.

New businesses. An array of new businesses have opened in Wesson over the past year, and the Wesson Chamber of Commerce banquet last month provided an opportunity to celebrate them.

Outgoing Chamber President Janet Currie cited five new additions to the local economy: Loddie Jane's Monograms and More, whose proprietor is Laura Smith. Phil-Am Produce, a fruits and vegetables store operated by Wilma Turnbo on Highway 51 in front of the Mill Town Mall. Steel Outdoors and Alpha Machine & Welding, metal fabricators owner and managed by Dwayne McLemore. McLemore also opened a retail outlet for big name brand bows and archery supplies. A fashion nails service operated by Haley Andrews in the Mill Town Mall. Park Place Ice Cream operated by Michael and Jennifer Johnson across from the

municipal park.

Precinct change. Mississippi primary elections are March 10, and Wesson voters will cast their ballots at a new polling precinct then and during future elections. The precinct will move from its long-time home at Wesson City Hall to the American Legion Post #79 Hall at 1014 Main Street in Wesson, District 2 Copiah County Election Commissioner Frances Taylor reports.

WPD hires. The Wesson Police Department (WPD) has hired two new officers -- Jeremy Tolle, full time, and Kelsey Evans, part time, and has assigned Ron Boyce to enforcing codes and ordinances for the town. Tolle will attend the 12-week training program for police officers at Pearl in May and Evans will attend the part-time officers police academy in Simpson County. Part time WPD Officer Terrell Davis has resigned.

Symphony seeks players. The Ole Brook Wind Symphony needs woodwind, brass and percussion players as its April spring concert approaches (the date has not been set). Its practices, which are on Tuesday nights and run for about two hours, started in the Alexander Junior High band room in Brookhaven last month. In addition to the spring concert, it also performs during the holiday season. The Brookhaven-based community wind symphony is looking for new members at least 15 years old who just like to play. Professional ex-

NEWS NUGGETS



Special to Wesson News

The Theta Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International of Copiah and Lincoln counties presented the 2019-2020 Red Rose Award to Dr. Stephanie Duguid (left), Co-Lin Dean of Academic Instruction. The Red Rose Award recognizes and promotes the work of women whose accomplishments have benefitted education and the status of women in educational leadership roles. Presenting the award is Polly Ann White, president of Theta Chapter.

perience is not necessary.

Second Amendment Sanctuary. Lawrence County's Board of Supervisors has joined a growing national movement to adopt Second Amendment sanctuary county resolutions. In passing the resolution, the Board voted to oppose any efforts to "unconstitutionally restrict" Second Amendment Rights through any "legal means at its dispos-

al," such as withholding public funds or directing local law enforcement authorities not to enforce an "unconstitutional law." Mississippi Sheepdogs is advocating adoption of the measure across the state.

Nominated for honor. Mandy Hart Case, Co-Lin Automation and Control Technology Instruction is a finalist to receive the 2020 American Technical Education Association (ATEA) Instructor of the Year Award. In March, she will travel to the ATEA national conference at Camden, New Jersey, where the recipient will be announced. Automation and control technology is an engineering program with a broad range of applications in which students find jobs in the medical field and manufacturing. Case received her Associates Degree at Co-Lin, earned a BS in industrial and manufacturing engineering at Louisiana State University and worked for the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and United Parcel before coming to Co-Lin in 2015.

Lottery sales. Last month, some 1,350 retailers across 82 counties in Mississippi, including convenience, grocery and tobacco stores, casinos and barber shops, started selling Powerball and Mega Millions lottery tickets in addition to scratch-off tickets they have been selling since late last year. Over the next decade, up to \$80 million a year from lottery proceeds will help fund Mississippi roads and bridges, and revenues beyond \$80 million will support public education through the state's Education Enhancement Fund

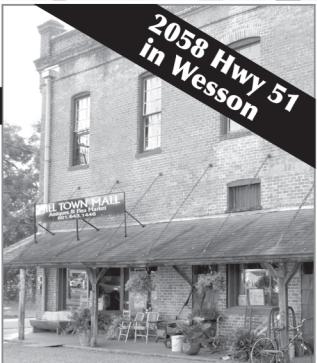
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Literary event to focus on food, gardening

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

It's time once again for The Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration. Begun in 1990 by Co-Lin and sponsored now by the college and Mississippi Department of Archives and History with support of the Natchez National Historical Park, the Celebration annually presents a theme-based lecture series enhanced by films, field trips, workshops, exhibits, book signings, concerts, and discussions. The Celebration begins February 27 and runs through February 29 at various Natchez locations. This year's theme is "Visits, Vittles and Vines: the Culture of Southern Hospitality," underscoring its focus on food and gardening.

The Celebration has won numerous awards for its outstanding programming, including a Cultural Olympiad Award, Best Event of the Year Award at the Governor's Conference on Tourism, the Mississippi Tourism Award, the Mississippi Historical Society's Award of Merit, the Mississippi Humanities Council Humanities



Wesson News

Achievement Award, the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi Award, and the 2011 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

The Celebration is made possible by the Mississippi Humanities Council through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a \$100,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant that was successfully matched dollar for dollar.

There will be lectures and smaller focus meetings throughout the weekend, all free to Celebration attendees. Dr. Jane Hulon, Co-Lin president, will welcome the guests at the opening ceremony at 8:30 a.m. on February 27 at the Natchez convention Center. Joining Dr. Hulon will be Darryl Grennell, Mayor of Natchez and Sandra Barns, Co-Lin Natchez Vice President.

This year, the Thad Cochran Award for Achievement in the Humanities will be presented to Ann J. Abadie, professor emeritus at the University of Mississippi, and founding member of the Southern Foodways Alliance, The Southern Foodways Alliance is based at the University of Mississippi and is part of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, which collects oral

histories, produces films and podcasts, publishes great writing, sponsors scholarships, mentors students, and stages events that serve as progressive and inclusive catalysts for the greater South.

The Celebration will hear Adrian Miller of Denver, award-winning author of *Soul Food* and most recently, *The President's Kitchen Cabinet*. It will also present the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence to well-known and gifted chef and author, Martha Hall Foose. Foose, a native of the Mississippi Delta, is a James Beard Award Winner for American Cooking, author of several books on food, a prolific story teller and former Executive Chef at the Viking Cooking School.

Chef Robert St. John and watercolorist Wyatt Waters from Mississippi Public Broadcasting's (MPB) "Palate to Palette," who travel the state sampling foods from the Delta to the Coast and painting local scenes along the way, will be sharing their adventures and show clips from their show.

Additionally "Thinking of Home: The Faulkner House and Rowan Oak," a short film by Larry Wells and Kathleen Wickham will be screened at 5:30

p.m. on Thursday.

Felder Rushing, MPB's "Gestalt Gardener" will spread his knowledge of Southern plants with his presentation of "Over and Under the Fence: Southern Gardening as Social Glue" and John Grady Burns, Natchez author and floral designer, will discuss "Southern Garden Design."

There will be several ticketed events as well, including a luncheon at the Carriage House, tours, and "Dinner with Hamilton & other Broadway Hits," with a special Broadway cast performing selections from "Hamilton: An American Musical" and other hit Broadway musicals during a seated dinner.

Emily Williams is in her first year at the helm of Celebration, after serving in several roles in past years. "It's a bit overwhelming, but this will be a great celebration this year," she says. For further information on events go to nlcc@colin.edu.

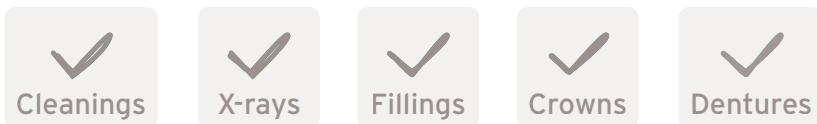
I highlighted just few of the many events that are going on, and challenge you to see how many you can attend. That's it for now my friends. Support the arts.

EDITOR'S NOTE: R. Shaw Furlow is a local composer, musician and arts promoter. He produces an internet-based video show -- From the Shadyside -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region.



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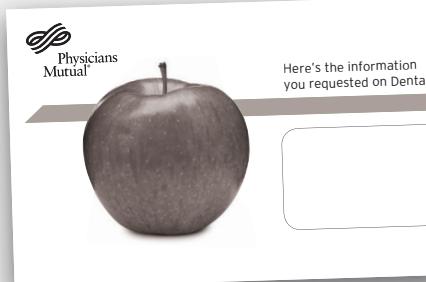


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Party celebrates Mardi Gras

Special to Wesson News

The Brookhaven-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce (BLCCC) will host area Mardi Gras celebrants again for the fourth consecutive year on Saturday in downtown Brookhaven.

Downtown Jazzed Up, which BLCCC inaugurated in 2017, returns to Brookhaven on February 15 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. with an array of family-friendly events, including a Cajun cook off, jumpies and face painting for kids, a New Orleans style beignets cafe, a second line parade led by a jazz band and street party with dancing, plus anything else participants in the festivities want to bring to the party. "And there will be beads, beads and more beads," says BLCCC and Tourism Council Program Director Katie Nations.

From 4-6 p.m., downtown Brookhaven visitors can sample Cajun food entries vying to win the cook off and enjoy beignets and coffee at a sidewalk cafe hosted by 39th District Mississippi State Senator Sally Doty in front of her law office. Children can romp and play in a play area with jumpies, games and entertainment.

At 6 p.m., the second line parade begins -- a tradition that traces to New Orleans brass band Mardi Gras parades in which second liners, twirling a parasol or handkerchief in the air, jumped in, following the "main line"



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or "first line" primary section of the parades just to enjoy the music behind the members of a group with a parading permit and the brass band. It has been called "the quintessential New Orleans art form -- a jazz funeral without a body." In general, the New Orleans second line parades also lack the slow hymns and dirges characteristic of jazz funerals. In Brookhaven, there will just be second liners following a brass band playing festive jazz. People who cannot or will not walk in the

parade are encouraged to ride bikes, golf carts and scooters decorated for the occasion.

The celebration concludes with a street party from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Four Way Stop will provide music for dancing.

Individuals and restaurateurs alike can enter their specialty Cajun foods in four categories -- gumbo, jambalaya, etouffee and red beans and rice -- in the cook off. An overall winner and winners in each category will be recognized.

Senator Doty's beignet cafe returns for the second year in front of her law offices at 213 S. Railroad Avenue in Brookhaven following its inaugural success last year when she offered it spontaneously to the party.

"We invite others to follow the Senator's example, and bring a contribution to the party as you like to make it bigger and better," says BLCCC's Nations.

To enter the cook off or for information, call 601-833-1411 or email admin@brookhavenchamber.com.



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People pace economic development

Special to Wesson News

When Arthur Lee Evans, Jr., director of the Copeiah County Economic Development District (CCEDD) looks back on 2019, he recalls the hot summer day when some 300 persons turned out to learn about and apply for thirty jobs at the former Advance Auto warehouse and trucking depot, which Premier Transportation had just taken over to house a new national distribution facility.

"People are the center of our industrial recruiting efforts -- particularly the Copeiah County workforce," says Evans. "Our workforce is skilled, ready to work, and wants to work. The Premier event dramatically showcased the enthusiasm of our workers."

Evans doesn't know how CCEDD industrial development activities will bear fruit in 2020, but he is confident they will because of these people.

Among other things, Evans believes several existing Copeiah County industrial employers may be expanding this year in the wake of what he describes as two important "wins" in 2019 -- the location of the Georgia-based Premier Transportation warehouse and trucking operations at Gallman and expansion of Steel Outdoors and Alpha Machine & Welding, metal fabricators moved by Dwayne McLemore from his Hazlehurst backyard, into the former API Technologies facility at Wesson.

Both Premier and McLemore's plants are breathing new life into vacated industrial space, while providing jobs in Copeiah County. "These were two big wins," Evans says.

Premier Transportation, headquartered at Forest Park, Georgia, near Atlanta, is an irregular route common and contract carrier, which specializes in providing integrated transportation and logistics solutions to the retail and consumer products industries nationwide. Steel Outdoors sells more than thirty products throughout the United States, including varied types of deer feeders, deer blinds, fire pits and cookers and met-



Office manager Brenda Harper and Executive Director Arthur Lee Evans, Jr. keep work of Copeiah County Economic Development District on track.

al art. Alpha Machine & Welding engineers, builds and installs custom metal products for saw mills, food plants and other industrial customers located predominantly in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

At Wesson, McLemore also opened a retail outlet for bows and archery supplies, targeting a multi-state regional market.

Premier and the McLemore companies are part of a robust and diversified Copeiah County industrial sector encompassing forestry, poultry, manufacturing, including metal fabrication, plastics and chemicals; and trucking and distribution. While CCEDD focuses on building this industrial sector, Evans also seeks to support the county's municipal officials, who work on building the commercial sector.

"Last year, new restaurants -- Popeyes in Crystal Springs and Dumps Barbeque in Wesson -- and retailers, like

Dollar Market in Georgetown -- boosted local tax bases as well as provided employment opportunities in the commercial sector," Evans says.

An unemployment rate that fluctuated between 5.5 percent and 6.5 percent during 2019 testifies to Copeiah County's economic health and ability to keep people employed.

Co-Lin and the Job Corps program are important job training components that equip the Copeiah County workforce to meet business needs. And a key factor over the past few years in advancing the county's economic health, Evans notes, has been CCEDD's partnership with Co-Lin to make Copeiah County a Certified Work Ready Community -- and, in the process, promote its skilled workforce.

The program of ACT, the Iowa-based testing service that works broadly in lifelong learning to help people achieve their potentials for success in schools and workplaces, features the

WorkKey Assessment. Co-Lin administers the exam, through which the county's emerging workforce (i.e., high school and college students), existing and transitional workers earn National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC) by demonstrating their competency in essential workplace skills -- critical thinking, mathematical reasoning and problem solving; and reading and comprehending graphic materials and written information to solve problems and make decisions. Employers are not only attracted by the skilled workers, but can use data generated by the WRC certification process to build better job descriptions for recruiting employees, identifying qualified job applicants and pinpointing skills gaps for training workers.

Workers aren't the only Copeiah County people asset in economic development, Evans points out, lauding the county's "business-friendly" community, including a board of supervisors that will work with prospective employers on infrastructure and tax issues and leadership in both the public and private sectors that cooperate in welcoming new businesses. Evans singles out Mayors Linda Harris (Beauregard), Sally Garland (Crystal Springs), Russ Dubose (Georgetown), Shirley Sandifer (Hazlehurst), Alton Shaw (Wesson) and their aldermen, "who work hard on commercial development even as they struggle with issues around streets, water and sewage."

To spread the word about Copeiah County, Evans' primary tool is a web site -- www.copeiahworks.com/economic-development -- that also touts the county's industrial park at Gallman, central location geographically in the country, convenience to an interstate highway, water, rail and air transportation along with the workforce.

"I am optimistic about things happening in Copeiah County during 2020," Evans summarizes. "We have a lot of assets, but our people make the difference."

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Tennis teams look for good years



Co-Lin men's tennis team.

Special to Wesson News



Lady Wolves tennis team.

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Under new first-year head coach Dana Hale, Co-Lin's men and women tennis teams are looking for good years in a new tennis court complex.

The 2020 Lady Wolves are looking to defend their 2019 MACJC/NJCAA Region XXIII Championship, while Hale says the men's goal is "to compete in every match that we play and pick up some upsets a long the way."

Two sophomores will boost the men -- Jordi Morey from Barcelona, Spain, and a Jones College transfer, who is skilled in every discipline of the game, with strong first and second serves that set up wins; and Skyler Rasberry from Wesson, who brings talent and a strong mental game to the court.

Two Wesson freshman are among the

new faces that will help the men -- Samuel Boutwell, a tough competitor from Enterprise High School, and Andrew Hulon, a stoic player who outlasts opponents with his patience. Other new faces on the men's team are Duncan

Falvey, a Brookhaven native who is not only skilled in many areas of the game, but keeps the atmosphere light and fun; Preston Ivy, a Magee native who plays a long game on the court and, like Hulon, outlasts opponents with his patience; Tyler Leggett, another Enterprise High School product and a very strong doubles player; John Ready, a freshman from Monticello who is very aggressive at the net and uses his height and strength to his advantage; and Ju-

lian Toloza, a Bogota, Colombia, native with a lot of pop in his racquet, and has a very strong serve and great volley game.

"Our men had a good showing in fall pre-season play," says Hale. "We have a great group of guys who will work well together and are very diligent about practice."

Three defending state champions return to the women's squad for their sophomore campaigns -- Paula Coronado, a Bogota, Colombia, native, who won the doubles state title a year ago, with her big serve and strength in every aspect of the game; Madison Shows, a Simpson Academy graduate from Mendenhall, who is a leader on and off the court, and

picks her shots nicely; and Madison's twin sister McKenzie Shows, a powerhouse player, strong and aggressive at the net.

New to the women are three freshmen who look to make an immediate impact on the lineup -- Susana Patino from Bogota, Colombia, who is solid in every facet of the game, an aggressive net player and a coach on the court; Gracie Phillips, a Copiah Academy graduate, who is a team leader and solid player; Britany Barnett, a Brookhaven native, who will be exciting to watch.

"This team is good enough to reach and win the state tournament again," says Hale. "We have set the bar and we want to get back to that level and compete in the regional tournament. Our returners set the tone for our team."

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Job fair highlights economic development



Wesson News

By Bob Arnold

Job seekers, including Co-Lin students and members of the public off-campus, will meet the people with the jobs at Co-Lin's annual matchmaking event next month. The Pathways Job Fair will bring a record number of employers to the college's Thames Center on the Wesson campus on March 19.

"It will be the biggest event since Co-Lin started matching job seekers to employers, with some 100 companies on hand to hire needed workers or at least start conversations with prospective employees," says Stephenie Sullivan, the college's Workforce Education director.

"It's an opportunity for job hunters to learn about employment opportunities throughout the seven-county Co-Lin district, including summer work programs, internships and apprenticeships; network with representatives of leading employers in Mississippi, and actually apply for jobs."

Prior to the event, Co-Lin will offer its students assistance in creating winning resumes and sharpening their interview skills, Sullivan says.

The event is an important part of Co-Lin's economic development mission geared to preparing a skilled labor force in its district, including traditional classroom work leading to Career Tech degrees for regular students, short-term certificate programs for workers, ongoing activities to connect with employers and meet their workforce needs, and partnering with economic developers and local government officials who recruit industrial and commercial employers. The Co-Lin district encompasses Adams, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln and Simpson counties.

New this year will be a day-long Entrepreneurial Summit in June for persons who have started or want to start and operate their own businesses. Co-Lin is still planning the event, but the college expects to partner with a state agency to produce it.

"We're talking about basic Entrepreneurship 101 -- a roadmap on starting and sustaining businesses that introduces resources and connects to people who can assist," says Sullivan.

Co-Lin's Workforce Education program will also continue to offer its fa-

miliar training menu geared to preparing emergency medical technicians, nurses, medical and legal assistants; and welders. Increasingly, however, Co-Lin will take its courses off the Wesson campus, Sullivan says.

"We're going to students so they don't have to come to us," she explains. Recent medical assistants training at Natchez and nursing assistants training at the Co-Lin Simpson County Center and in Franklin County highlight the approach. This semester, emergency medical response courses and nursing assistants training will be offered in Franklin and Lawrence counties.

Continuing as well is Co-Lin's support of the ACT Work Ready program. In all seven Co-Lin district counties, emerging, existing and transitional workforces have been certified as Work Ready as a result of performance by employees and job seekers on the WorkKeys Assessment administered by the college.

"We're now focused on maintaining the Work Ready status of the counties and helping economic developers and employers use data generated by the testing," Sullivan says.

Building partnerships and relationships with businesses and other employers is the ground of all this Co-Lin economic development activity -- the job fair, trainings, the Work Ready program -- and their engagement with the Workforce Education division of the college is up twelve percent as the result of road shows and a constant presence of people on the ground, Sullivan says.

On April 16, Co-Lin will honor them for their contributions to the college's work -- especially their participation in the job fair -- at its annual Business Appreciation Breakfast at the Thames Center on the Wesson campus.

"We'll start a new round of road shows in October," says Sullivan. "At these two hour lunch and learn events, we remind business and economic leaders about who we are and what we can do for them. Co-Lin officials, including Dr. Jane Hulon, the college president, and state agency representatives are on hand. Our Workforce Education people also remain in close contact with employers and economic leaders in the college district, on the ground every week in each of the seven counties."

Keeping your heart healthy

By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

February is Heart Month, and a good time to think about what conditions affect our heart and increase our understanding of them towards opening the lines of communication with our doctors.



Special to Wesson News

There are many conditions that affect the heart. Heart attacks, arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythm), cardiomyopathy (issues with the heart muscle), and congenital heart defects (heart conditions we have since birth) are directly related to heart health. Many other conditions, as well, including, but not limited to, cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure, can lead to heart disease, heart attack, or stroke.

We can control diet, exercise, smoking, and alcohol consumption that are related to our heart health, while factors such as age, hereditary, and gender that are also related to our cardiovascular status

cannot be controlled.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made in the liver and other cells. It is found in certain foods such as dairy products, eggs, and meats. We need some cholesterol to function properly, as it helps to support cell walls and to produce hormones and bile, which assists in digesting fat. There is good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. Lean fats such as avocados and nuts tend to be sources

LIVING +HEALTHY+

of good cholesterol, while fats from red meat and fried foods tend to be sources of bad cholesterol. We only need a limited amount of either type. When we have too much cholesterol, plaque -- a thick, hard substance which forms in arteries -- can impede blood

flow, leading to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and heart disease, including high blood pressure, angina (chest pain), and heart attacks.

We think about Type 2 diabetes as a condition related to challenges with glucose levels (sugar) and insulin. Individuals with type 2 diabetes, however, are at least 65 per cent more likely to die from some form of heart disease or stroke. Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease or a stroke than adults without diabetes.

Blood pressure refers to the pressure our blood places against the walls of arteries when our heart is pumping. When it is too high, it can lead to heart related issues, and stroke. High blood pressure results from plaque build-up, salt intake, smoking, stress, and more.

Know your numbers:

- Total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dL. LDL (bad) cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/dL while HDL (good) cholesterol should be more than

50 mg/dL. If you don't know your numbers, consult your doctor.

- Diabetes can be evaluated by measuring your fasting blood levels first thing in the morning. Your reading should be less than 100 mg/dL. If you are consistently higher than 100mg/dL, check with your doctor.

- Blood pressure should be read as the systolic pressure (heart contracting) over the diastolic pressure (heart at rest). That means it should be some number less than 120 over some number less than 80. Anything over 120/80 needs to be discussed with your physician.

Ask questions, understand how conditions are related, and see your doctor on at least an annual basis. Visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org for more information.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Dean of Academic Instruction at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.

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Lincoln County development accelerates

Special to Wesson News

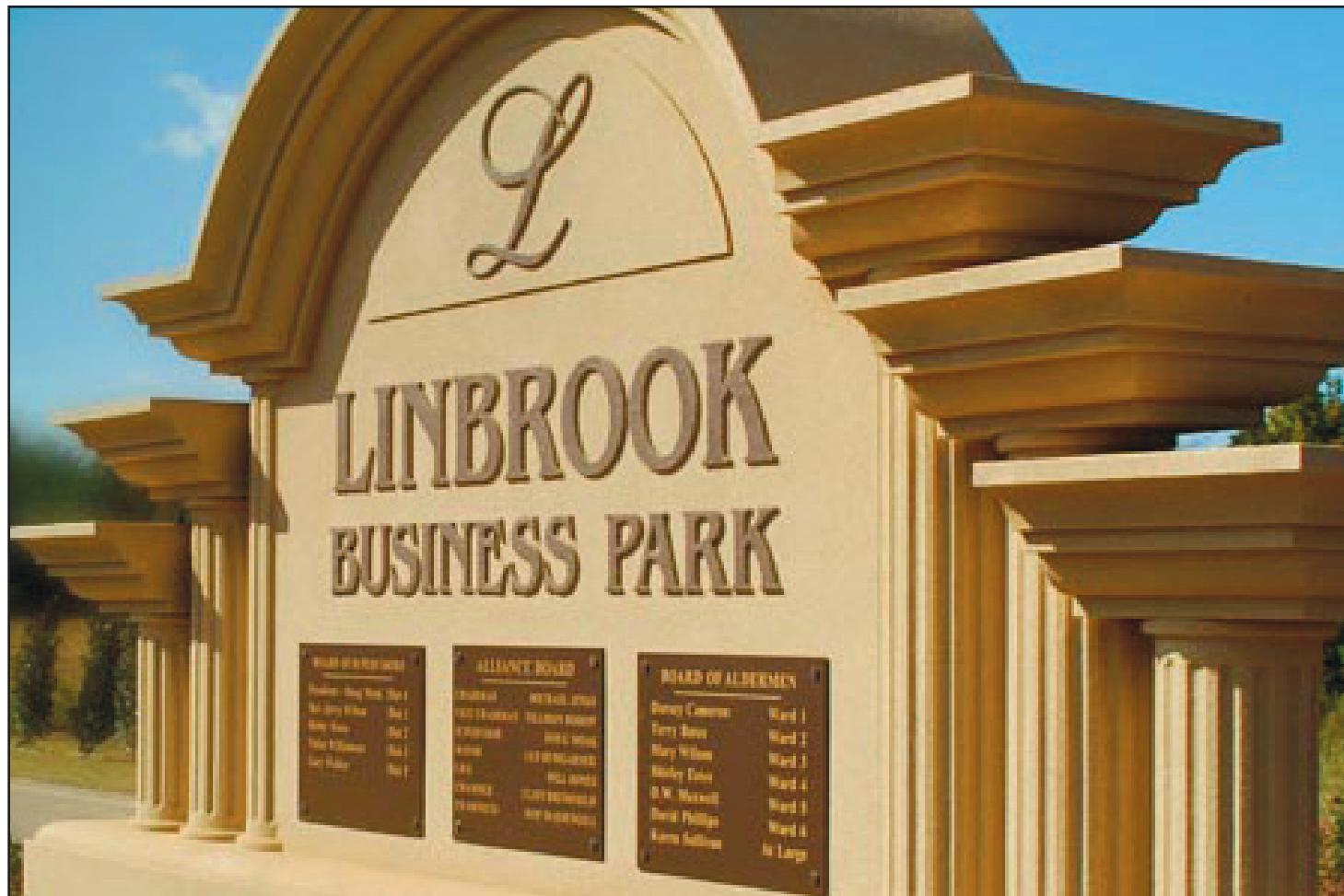
"Since I started working on economic development in Brookhaven and Lincoln County, I have never been so excited about the prospects," says Garrick Combs, executive director of the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce (BLCCC) and the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Economic Development Alliance (BLCEDA).

Combs hopes BLCEDA will have more than one important project to announce in the coming weeks, with the speed and momentum of decision-making by industrial organizations exploring a presence in Brookhaven and Lincoln County accelerating following a "busy, but slow" year.

The uncertainty of the election in Mississippi last year slowed business development, Combs recounts. "With the first Democratic candidate for Governor in recent years, who had a good shot at winning, the Mississippi election offered a choice of continuing the low tax/small government/incentives economic development strategy of Republicans and a new direction," he points out. "Until November, the development decision-makers didn't know on what kind of field they would be playing. The election results meant it would be largely the same."

With the continuity of state economic development policies assured since November, BLCEDA has been extremely busy working on projects, and Combs doesn't expect things to slow down, even with a Presidential election looming. Because states apply federal programs, their elections are particularly important for business developers, he explains.

In the 2020 environment, further development of Linbrook Business Park will be a priority for Combs. BLCEDA has a \$75,000 grant from Southwest Mississippi Electric Power and Mississippi Development Authority to create a 100,000 square foot pod-ready site in its 400-acre industrial park at the west end of Brookway Boulevard near Home Depot to build interest of companies in locating facilities in Brookha-



Special to Wesson News

ven and Lincoln County. An industrial building can be quickly erected on a construction-ready land-cleared pod with utility hookups.

"The idea is to get back to where we were a couple of years ago when a speculative industrial building in Linbrook Business Park drove 91 percent of our industrial development activity," says Combs. "A pod-ready site is about twenty percent to thirty percent of the cost of constructing a spec building. It's a big first step, and may be the only step we need to take." McClane Southern located operations in the former Linbrook spec building constructed to lure industrial tenants in 2016.

If industrial development activity slowed down a bit last year, commercial development continued to be strong, particularly in the Brookhaven

downtown area.

"Renovation started -- and will soon be completed -- on the old Lofton's department store on Whitworth Avenue in downtown Brookhaven, creating a mall for retailers and offices," Combs says. "In Brookhaven, Magnolia Blues Barbeque will move to the old Fred's store downtown and establish at least two other related food businesses there, and Harbor Freight has already started its retail tool business at the old Fred's store on Brookway Boulevard. Two new restaurants will also open in downtown Brookhaven -- Croutons, a soup and salad cafe on Railroad Avenue in the old Pasta Junction location, and a Mexican luncheon restaurant in the former Georgia Blues Bakery location."

Coming soon to downtown Brookhaven, too, will be capital investments in

permanent facilities and equipment for special events and concerts, such as permanent staging and seating, Combs reports. The spending is enabled by funds from the two percent hotel-motel tax, which support the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Tourism Council. Collections have increased three-fold from \$6,000 over the past thirteen to fourteen months as a result of marketing efforts targeted to the Memphis and Jackson areas.

Sullivan's Grocery also moved into the closed PigglyWiggly location on Highway 51 in Brookhaven last year, but Combs says grocery businesses remain an opportunity for Brookhaven and Lincoln County, with many residents going elsewhere to shop.

"Things are happening," summarizes Combs. "It's exciting."

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cont. from page 1

Chamber honors groups & people

ed. It now operates at a facility with a modest storefront on Spring Street.

"The business has been a consistent asset to Wesson," Currie said.

The Chamber also honored:

- Wesson Garden Club as Organization of the Year
- Ed and Sharon Ashley as Wesson Ageless Heroes
- The late William Brown for community service
- The Wesson Volunteer Fire Department for public service
- Janice Mullen Smith as Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) Educator of the Year

• Anita Cliburn as Co-Lin Educator of the Year

Wesson Garden Club

"has planted what grows in Wesson," Chamber member Marilyn Britt said. It started in 1934 and currently has 40 members and sponsors Butterbeans, a club involving children and youth. In recent years, it has maintained a garden in the center of town on Highway 51, landscaped areas around Welcome to Wesson signs, the Old School Community Center, public library and fountain garden

grounds; and conducted a garden therapy program. In the coming months, it plans to extend a tree planting program that turns Wesson into a virtual arboretum. Its moto, Britt said, is "to make the world a bit better because we lived in it."

Ageless Heroes Ed and Sharon Ashley met at Packard Electric in Wesson in 1977 and have lived in Wesson since their marriage.

A native of Brookhaven, he has lived in Wesson all his life. She grew up in Brookhaven after moving there with her family from Sayre, Pennsylvania, where she was born. Throughout their lives, they have felt called to minister to others -- feeding the homeless at Cup of Soup in Jackson, cooking for Wounded Warriors, maintaining a food pantry, supplying furniture to those in need, serving Thanksgiving dinner at Wesson Baptist Church, cooking appreciation meals



Sharon and Ed Ashley.



Chamber's Libby Kirton (right) presents Wesson Attendance Center Educator of the Year Award to Janice Mullen Smith.



Volunteer fire fighters accept Public Service Award.



Garden Club members accept Organization of the Year Award.

for policemen and fire fighters, preparing pop corn and serving hot chocolate at public events. "They say 'you cannot outgive God,' but they keep finding ways to serve Him," Chamber member Stephen Ashley said.

Community Service Award recipient William Brown died in December, but survives in the memories of school children and their parents who knew him as the resource officer at Wesson Attendance Center, where he befriended them -- particularly kids in trouble -- and others who knew him as a father, husband, grandfather, friend, pastor, sheriff's deputy and goodwill ambassador. Born in Clayton, Louisiana, in 1940, Brown settled in Wesson in 1982, made a career in law enforcement, starting as the Wesson Police Department's African American Officer certificate from the Police Academy at Pearl, Mississippi, in 2004. He was active in Union Grove Baptist Church, where he served as a Deacon and served seven churches in the area Baptist community as president of their Sunday School Institute. He served as president of the Wesson Lions Club.

Public Service Award recipients included the fire fighters at Wesson Volunteer Fire Department, many of whom have regular jobs, but may be called out to protect members of the community at night or in the early morning. "It's not a job for everyone," incoming Chamber president Marty Stroud said. "It requires physical stamina and sharp mental awareness."

Wesson Attendance Center Educator of the Year Janice Mullen Smith has thirty-one years of experience teaching fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, and the past ten years teaching sixth grade reading at WAC. A 1975 Wesson High School graduate, she received an Associates of Arts degree from Co-Lin in 1986, a BS in Elementary Education from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1988, an MA in Elementary Education from Mississippi College in 2000 and a Reading Specialists Degree from the University of Southern Mississippi after studies from 2004 to 2006. She and her husband Tommy Joe Smith have four grown children, twelve grandchildren and five great grandchildren. She is an active member of Clear Branch Baptist Church and Wesson Garden Club.

Co-Lin Educator of the Year Anita Cliburn is one of two Anatomy & Physiology instructors. A Wesson native, she graduated from Wesson High School and Co-Lin, earned a BS in Biology and MS in Science Education at Millsaps College and the University of Southern Mississippi and studied at the Princeton University Molecular Biology Summer Outreach Program and Cornell University Institute for Biology Teachers. Before moving into her current work at Co-Lin, she was biology lab coordinator at the college and was an Anatomy & Physiology and Biology instructor as Crystal Springs High School. She is a member of the Mississippi Science Teachers Association, the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society, the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society and Alpha Epsilon Delta Honor Society. She has been named to Montclair Who's Who in Collegiate Faculty and Who's Who Among Collegiate Faculty, received the Co-Lin High-Performance, Lamp Lighters and NISOD awards; and recognized as Academic Instructor of the Year and Phi Theta Kappa Faculty Scholar.

"Although her students say her class is very challenging, they always come back and thank her for her dedication and high expectations," said Chamber member Brent Duguid. Cliburn is a member of Wesson Baptist Church. She and her husband Ed die and have two sons, John-Michael and Matthew.



William Brown, Jr. accepts posthumous Community Service Award from Chamber's Philip Knight.



Chamber's Brent Duguid presents Co-Lin Educator of the Year Award to Anita Cliburn.



Outgoing Chamber President Janet Currie (right) presents Business of Year Award to (left to right) Carpenter Shop owners Desiree and Keith Hart and founder Jimmy Keys.