

The Guide to

GulfCoastLiving

The Resource for South Mississippi Residents & Newcomers

2010-2011 Edition



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Who we are

Coast's identity a mixed bag

'A great place to live and work'

By PAM FIRMIN
pfirmin@sunherald.com



Pam Firmin

Want action? Want tranquility? Want variety?

All that plus great seafood, fun and cultural attractions, good schools, a viable economy and a caring community contribute to the Mississippi Gulf Coast's staying power.

Lots of folks who come here temporarily end up staying permanently, we're told, because they like the local people's spirit of friendliness, determination and optimism.

Reasons that bring them range from military service anytime over the past 60 years to volunteerism and work opportunities after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The latest newcomers include many volunteers who came after Hurricane Katrina to help rebuild and stayed.

End result is that the Coast is a composite of natives and newcomers, retirees and young professionals.

And varied entertainment venues, both man-made and natural, have something for just about everybody.

Start with the beautiful beaches, Lest Terns nesting in protected areas on some of them, and add 11 casinos, Gulf Island Water Park, the amazing Lynn Meadows Discovery Center, boat rides to Ship Island when porpoises swim alongside, canoeing on Wolf River and hiking on the Tuxachanie Trail in Desota National Forest.

The Coast offers nearly 25 golf courses; is home to the Mississippi Roller Girls, a women's flat track race team that plays in Biloxi, and The Mississippi Surge ice hockey team that plays at the Coast Coliseum. For a week every October, upwards of 5,000 old vehicles show up for Cruisin' The Coast and residents and visitors alike sit back and watch the spectacle from lawns, parking lots and the seawall along U. S. 90.

Pastimes like fishing, crabbing, building sand castles and picking blackberries qualify as natural resources.

THE FUTURE

On the horizon, more casinos are in the works. Buccaneer State Park will soon open its repaired and renewed water park

and the Salvation Army's Kroc Center on Lee Street in Biloxi promises an indoor water park in 2011. INFINITY is being built near Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, also with a 2011 target date, to be a state-of-the-art, one-of-a-kind interactive sea, earth and space laboratory for all ages.

A \$75 million Ocean Expo Learning Center complex is to be built in D'Iberville, to include marine mammal shows, aquarium exhibits and interactive adventures.

In business, new leadership gets a hand from established leaders through an organization called Coast Young Professionals for Business People Under 40 — with about 75 members — who are mentored by CYP organizers within the Coast Chamber of Commerce.

Depending on who's talking, the Coast may be identified as a military community or a fishing community or a tourist destination.

All of that's true.

MILITARY

Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, which opened in 1941, is the oldest of the Coast's military installations and the second biggest employer with 10,305 employees and a reported 2009 economic impact of \$1,102,801,359.

No. 1 employer on the list by Precis Marketing is Northrop Grumman Corporation in Jackson County, a military contractor that employs 12,300 people.

Add 5,253 employees at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, third largest employer, and 4,500 at NASA Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, fourth largest, and it's clear the presence of military folks has a lot of impact on the coastal population of 355,075.

Other top 10 employers on the list are Memorial Hospital at Gulfport with 2,894; Beau Rivage Resort Casino in Biloxi, 2,889; Singing River Hospital, Jackson County, 2,356; Imperial Palace casino, Biloxi, 1,989; Biloxi Veterans Administration, 1,780; and Chevron USA, Inc. in Jackson County, 1,569.

"All in all, it's a great place to live and work," says Rob Mims, public affairs officer for the Seabee Base. "The community is a great community as far as being military-friendly — and that's huge."

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Who we are

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FISHING

Long before the military was here, fishing was the primary livelihood, first with native Americans, then the Europeans who began arriving around 1699 and most recently the Vietnamese, who came for the fishing industry and made the Coast their new home after Saigon was captured in 1975.

Today their culture is embedded here along with the earlier Slavonians, Italians, Scots, Cajuns and, more recently, the Latinos.

A melting pot, historians call coastal Mississippi.

FESTIVALS

At festival time, however, heritage can be negotiable. Just as a familiar saying goes that on St. Patrick's Day everybody is Irish, many of the same fun-loving folks are Cajun for crawfish boils and fishermen for the blessings of the fleet.

Held in late spring near the start of shrimp season, blessing ceremonies involve colorfully decorated boats on the water viewed by thousands of spectators on the shoreline.

The Irish have no less than five organizations in five communities that once a year each name a colleen and grand marshal and put on a St. Patrick's Day parade.

Mardi Gras, of course, marked by lavish parades, parties, costuming and frivolity, is the biggest festival of them all. Not only does most every town have at least one parade, many neighborhoods hold their own. Mardi Gras can last up to two months, ending on Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Its date varies every year based on the date of Easter and in 2011 will be March 8.

TOURISM

All of the above combines to make the Coast a near perfect tourist destination.

Visual damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, for the most part, has been cleaned and cleared and restaurants and lodgings are once again plentiful.

In 2009, Harrison, Hancock and Jackson counties logged 4.5 million visitors, says Richard Forester, executive director of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau.

For this year, "Uncertainty is the problem," he says, based on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, "There is no way to set a goal. There are just too many uncertainties.

"For 18-30 months out, we'll be looking at effects of the oil spill.

"Whatever occurs, we stress we are still a viable destination of choice. Our beach, water, golfing resort, gaming, cultural and historical attractions and events are all worth seeing."

Communities

George County: Rural lifestyle is still, safe, slow-paced

By ROYCE ARMSTRONG
Sun Herald

Both long-time residents and newcomers to George County agree that the rural lifestyle found here is safe and goes along at a much slower pace than in other communities where they have lived.

Doug Lee brought his family to Lucedale 31 years ago when his children were in elementary school. He is the manager of the Wayne Lee Grocery and Market and has served several terms as Lucedale's mayor.

"George County is a good place to raise children because of the values here," Lee said. "It is a slowed down pace. It is a more church-oriented community. It has more old-fashioned values. The values of the older people here have been adopted by the middle generations."

Brother Bruce McKenzie, the pastor of the Shady Grove Baptist Church is a newcomer, having come to George County only one year ago. He is a native of Bogue Chitto, a small, rural, and unincorporated community in Lincoln County. Most recently he served as a pastor in a church in Denham Springs, La., near Baton Rouge.

"When I came to visit, it was like moving home," McKenzie said. "It is as rural here as it is in Bogue Chitto. My wife and I both grew up in a rural lifestyle, and we were glad to be moving back to a rural lifestyle. Businesses close down at noon on Wednesday. It is pretty unique that the businesses close down. You just don't see that in a more fast-paced place like Baton Rouge. It is almost like moving back to Mayberry."

McKenzie also appreciates that George County is a dry county and that it largely observes the old-fashioned blue laws.

"If people want alcohol, they are going to get it, but just because people want it, doesn't mean that we have to help them get it," McKenzie said. "The blue law thing is carried out here by choice and not by mandate."

McKenzie said one of the things that really sets George County apart is the attitudes of its citizens.

"Something that I was not expecting was the people. I knew that the people in the church would be welcoming, but even the people not affiliated with our church have been very warm and welcoming.

"I was not sure how life was going to be for my wife and my children," he said. "My children have already made some deep friendships. They are stay-

ing over at other children's homes or we have other children staying with us all of the time. It was not like that in Baton Rouge. Our life has been easier for us because of the friends that we have all made here in George County."

Payton Dudley moved to George County with his parents in 1948, when he was 3 years old. He has lived in the county most of the time since then, working for a time at the Ingalls Shipyard (now Northrop Grumman), and then as an insurance agent for more than 30 years. He and his wife raised two sons in the county.

"It is a good place to raise a family because of the lower drug problem," Dudley said. "It is quiet and people are friendly. We have got good schools, the hospital and doctors. We have got everything. We have a good shopping area and if people can't find what they need here, we are only an hour's drive from Hattiesburg, Mobile, Biloxi and Pascagoula.

"We have everything that you would want except an 18-hole golf course."

George County at a glance

COMMUNITIES

Agricola, Barton, Bexley, Central, Lucedale (the only incorporated city in George County), Rocky Creek, Twin Creek.

TRANSPORTATION

Two major highways will soon intersect in George County. U.S. 98 crosses Mississippi and runs into Alabama. Mississippi 63 begins on the Gulf Coast in Pascagoula and is being extended north, eventually to terminate in Tennessee. Work continues north of Lucedale on one of the last sections of this road to be completed.

The county is 45 minutes from Mobile Regional Airport and is roughly equidistant from three large metropolitan areas: Mobile, Pascagoula and Hattiesburg.

The county is currently served by two railroads. The Canadian National bisects the county with a line that runs between Hattiesburg and Mobile. It is intersected by the Mississippi Export Railroad which connects with the CSX which runs along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. There is preliminary discussion about running a line south from Waynesboro that would connect the Kansas City Southern to the Canadian National and Mississippi Export roads, turning Lucedale into a hub providing rail access

Continued on page 6

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Communities

Continued from page 4

George County at a glance

to four railroads.

COUNTY OFFICIALS

District 1 Supervisor: Fred Croom, (601) 947-7506

District 2 Supervisor and president of the board: Kelly Wright, (601) 947-7506

District 3 Supervisor: Sue Cochran, (601) 947-7506

District 4 Supervisor: Larry Havard, (601) 947-7506

District 5 Supervisor: Henry Cochran, (601) 947-7506

Chancery Clerk: Cammie Byrd, (601) 947-4801

County Attorney: Robert Shepard, (601) 947-7575

Meeting times: The George County Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. on the first Monday of each month and on the 25th of each month. If the 25th falls on a Saturday, the board meets the preceding Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, the board meets the following Monday. Meetings are held in the board room of the George County Courthouse at 355 Cox St., Lucedale, MS 39452.

LUCEDALE CITY OFFICIALS

Mayor: Doug Lee, (601) 947-2082

Ward 1 Alderman: Carrie Moulds, (601) 947-7902

Ward 2 Alderman: Lloyd Welford, (601) 947-4856

Ward 3 Alderman: Jessie Underwood, (601) 947-6701

Ward 4 Alderman: Payton Dudley, (601) 947-3229

Alderman at large: Louis Valentine, (601) 947-8186

City Clerk: Kathy Johnson, (601) 947-2082

City Attorney: Cheryl Cook, (601) 947-9990

Meeting times: The Lucedale Board of Aldermen meets at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall, 5126 Main St., Lucedale, MS 39452.

COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent: Dr. Barbara Massey

School Board: Larry McDonald, president; Ronnie Cooley; Wendell Fallon; Barkley Henderson; and David Nelson

The school board meets at 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

Administrative office: 5152 Main St., Lucedale, (601) 947-6993.

Agricola Elementary School: 6165 Mississippi 613 S. Lucedale, (601) 947-8447; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 494.

Benndale Elementary School: 5204 Mississippi 26 West, Lucedale, (601) 766-6341; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 206.

Central Elementary School: 14159 Mississippi 26 West, Lucedale, (601) 947-2429; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 518.

George County High School: 9284 Old Highway Road, Lucedale, (601) 947-3116; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 1,114.

George County Middle School: 330 Church St., Lucedale, (601) 947-3106; grades: 7-8; recent enrollment: 608.

L.C. Hatcher Elementary School: 689 Church St., Lucedale, (601) 947-3110; grades: K-3; recent enrollment: 415.

Lucedale Intermediate School: 159 Maple St., Lucedale, (601) 947-6065; grades: 4-6; recent enrollment: 297.

Rocky Creek Elementary: 2183 Rocky Creek Road, Lucedale, (601) 947-3886; grades K-6; recent enrollment: 523.

Hancock County: A nice place to live

By DONNA MELTON
dmelton@sunherald.com

From the state's only locally owned brewery to the largest rocket test complex in the United States, Hancock County is as diverse as the people who call it home.

The John C. Stennis Space Center, just inside the Louisiana/Mississippi line, hosts more than 30 federal, state, academic and private organizations as well as many technology-based companies, boasting a total workforce of more than 5,000.

Also at Stennis, the Infinity Science Center, with an anticipated 2011 opening, will offer visitors and resident alike the fun of exploring the farthest reaches of outer space, the uncharted depths of the oceans and the varied layers of the Earth.

The Silver Slipper Casino owns the only beach-front RV park on the Gulf Coast, while Hollywood Casino features an RV park and hotel, but also The Bridges, an Arnold Palmer-designed course is set among 600 acres of moss-draped Live Oaks, stately pines, magnolias and sweeping vistas of saltwater marsh.

The Garfield Ladner Municipal Pier is open for fishing, but it also provides a great location for picnicking and walking, with sweeping views of the Gulf.

Buccaneer State Park in Waveland and McLeod Water Park in Kiln both have RV slots and the usual outdoor amenities. Buccaneer has reopened for the

first time since Hurricane Katrina, but with limited use. Plans for the wave pool's return are in the works.

It's the outdoor activities that first lured Mark and Leslie Henderson to Hancock County in 2000. The water-loving couple moved from Starkville in 2000, and they opened Lazy Magnolia Brewing Company soon after.

And even when Hurricane Katrina destroyed their home in 2005, they rebuilt at the same site along their beloved Jourdan River.

Besides the many beaches, rivers and the bay for play, the Hendersons enjoy the Old Town art district as well as the many eateries appealing to every taste and budget.

"There's not just a lot of restaurants here, there's a lot of fabulous restaurants here," Mark Henderson said.

It was the magnitude of dining establishments that prompted him to open Lazy Magnolia in the first place, he said.

The Hendersons enjoy their proximity to bigger cities like New Orleans, while still experiencing the small-town, close-knit appeal Hancock County offers.

As an artist, Henderson values the many studios in Bay St. Louis available to show his work.

The county knows how to party, with parades celebrating Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day and Christmas and the special popular Paws on Parade for pet owners.

Hancock County at a glance

HANCOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS

Administrative Office: 17304 Miss. 603, Kiln, (228) 255-0376.

East Hancock Elementary: Grades K-5, 4221 Kiln-DeLisle Road, Kiln, (228) 255-6637; enrollment, 640.

South Hancock Elementary: Grades K-5, 6590 Lakeshore Rd, Bay St. Louis, (228) 467-4655; enrollment, 590.

Hancock North Central Elementary: Grades K-5, 6122 Cuevas Town Road, Kiln, (228) 255-7641; enrollment, 467.

West Hancock Elementary, 23350 Miss. 43, Picayune, (228) 586-6054; enrollment, 416.

Hancock Middle School: Grades 6-8, 7070 Stennis Airport Drive, Kiln, (228) 467-1889; enrollment, 1,030.

Hancock High: Grades 9-12, 7084 Stennis Airport Drive, Kiln, (228) 467-2251; enrollment, 1,250.

Hancock County Vocational Technical Center: 7180 Stennis Airport Drive, Kiln., (228) 467-3568.

Hancock County Public Officials:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

District 1: David Yarborough, (228) 493-3750

District 2: Rocky Pullman, board president, (228) 297-8868

District 3: Lisa Coward, board vice-president, (228) 216-0506

District 4: Steve Seymour, (228) 493-8085

District 5: Tony Wayne Ladner, (228) 669-7031.

County Administrator/Chancery Clerk: Tim Kellar, (228) 467-5404

Tax Assessor/Collector: Jimmie Ladner Jr., (228) 466-5791

County Attorney: Ronnie Artigues, (228) 467-5426

Meeting times: The Board of Supervisors meets at the Hancock County Government Complex, 3068 Longfellow Drive, Bay St. Louis. Meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the first Monday of the month and once in the middle of the month.

Communities

Bay St. Louis offers socializing, exercise and fun

By DONNA MELTON
dmelton@sunherald.com

Susie Veglia traveled the world before settling down in Old Town.

The Long Beach native first arrived in 1984, and after stints in Diamondhead, Waveland, New York City and even Asia, she is sure she has made the best choice. "It feels like home," she said.

Veglia, the human resources director and community liaison for Hancock County Development Commission, chose a spot that's ideal for food, fun and friends.

It's not unusual for her to stop in at Mockingbird Café for scones and teas after an exercise session upstairs at Earth Path Yoga. She might even hit the Old Town eatery for a Mockingburger later in the day, she said.

Festivals like Bridgefest and Crab Fest allow her to indulge in her favorites Bay activity – socializing with people.

It's the residents and business owners of Bay St. Louis that are the city's hottest commodity, she said.

"I like so many people here," she said.

Neighbors help each other and strangers in the tight-knit community, she said. And everyone she knows gets involved with important causes and activities to make their city better.

"If people aren't volunteering, they're donating," she said.

Along with the beach, the shops and people, Veglia is a definite fan of her city's vast selection of restaurants.

In Bay St. Louis, food is as much of an art form as the watercolors and sculptures

for sale and display throughout the town.

Eateries such as the Mockingbird or Buttercup on Second Street, Bogart's, Trapani's, Sycamore House, Lulu's and Cuz's offer fare as original as their names.

"It's a place where you can live, and be entertained, get exercise and go out to eat, and it's all right here," she said.

Gathering isn't just a pastime in the Bay, it's a recognized activity.

The monthly Second Saturday Art Walk in Old Town features art and live music and attracts crowds from across the region.

Local painters, potters, jewelry-makers and other artists shop their wares to the public while live music blasts from various street corners.

It's a block party every month.

Each Thursday, shoppers converge on the Main Street Market, a fresh market

outside at the corner of Main and Second streets where fresh fruit and vegetables, and locally produced items are sold.

Once a year, the city becomes a destination for "Cruisin' the Coast," which sees upwards of 5,000 cars come through town.

Within the city limits is the Hollywood Casino, with restaurants, shops and The Bridges, an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course on-site. Silver Slipper

Casino is nearby with a sweeping view of the Gulf and the Coast's only beachfront casino RV park.

A marina along Beach Boulevard is in the works.



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Bay St. Louis at a glance

City Hall: 302 U.S. 90, 466-8951
Mayor: Les Fillingame
City Council: 469-9121

COUNCILMEN BY WARD

At-large: William "Bill" Taylor
District 1: Doug Seal
District 2: Wendy McDonald
District 3: Jeff Reed
District 4: Bobby Compretta
District 5: Joey Boudin

District 6: Ray Kidd

BAY-WAVELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

District: 201 Carroll Ave., (228) 467-6621

Waveland Elementary: 1101 St.

Joseph, Waveland, (228) 467-6630; new school opening in the fall.

Crossroads Learning Center: 750

Bluemeadow Road, Bay St. Louis, (228)

467-6611.

North Bay Elementary: 602 Pine St., Bay St. Louis, (228) 467-4757; enrollment, 415

Bay-Waveland Middle School: 600 Pine St., Bay St. Louis, (228) 463-0315; enrollment, 400

Bay High School: 750 Bluemeadow Rd., Bay St. Louis, (228) 467-6611; enrollment, 500



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Jefferson Davis Campus
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 228-896-3355

Keesler Center
 P.O. Box 5008 • Keesler AFB, MS 39534
 228-432-7198

Naval Construction Battalion Center
 1800 Dong Xoai Avenue • Gulfport, MS 39501
 228-865-0675

Perkinston Campus/Central Office
 P.O. Box 548 • Perkinston, MS 39573
 601-928-5211

West Harrison County Center
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 228-868-6057



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Communities

Diamondhead offers golf and much more

By DONNA MELTON
dmelton@sunherald.com

Recognized as a golfer's paradise, Diamondhead is so much more than bunkers and fairways surrounded by houses.

Developers designed this Hancock County community in the 1970s to appeal to retirees, but it has slowly changed from a retirement community to an eclectic mix of first-time homeowners starting families to grandparents settling in for their golden years.

Named after Diamond Head, Hawaii, the island influence is most recognized by the road names and the architecture. Several community centers and even private homes share a Hawaiian look with kona/tahitian roof lines.

Incorporation plans have been halted by appeals, so for now the community continues to be run by a property owners association, which collects \$80 monthly from members.

In return, members enjoy a pair of golf courses, a tennis club, 11 pools, several parks, pavilions and a country club as well as community restaurants, grocery and specialty stores, a newspaper and several churches.

The Diamondhead Country Club features a pro shop and Birdie's American Bistro. Though located at the country club, the restaurant is

open to the public.

The public makes frequent use of the 5,400 square feet of meeting and banquet space for weddings and other events.

The 19th Hole Bar and Grill is adjacent to the golf pro shop, and it's not unusual to see residents enjoying cocktails and lighter dinner fare. It's also the place to go for live music and dancing on the weekends.

The club anchors two challenging 18-hole championship golf courses. The Pine offers well-placed bunkers and water that comes into play on many shots, while the Cardinal offers up wooded, gently rolling terrain with no parallel fairways and extra long sand bunkers.

Throughout the community, there are lighted soccer and baseball fields, large pavilions at Twin Lakes and eight tennis courts where league play and tournaments are the norm and summer youth clinics and group and private lessons are offered.

A marina area with boat storage gives access to the Bay of St. Louis, while a private airport is an added perk for the business travelers.

Louis and Pat Fuchs finished building their house in July 2005, only to watch Hurricane Katrina flood their new home the next month. They finally moved into it in Novem-

ber that year.

The Metarie, La., natives passed by the area for 15 years traveling between family in Louisiana and their home in Bogue Raton, Fla., but never stopped.

Then Pat Fuchs' cousin who had retired to Waveland suggested Diamondhead.

When they visited, they were immediately drawn in by the fountain and reflecting pool at the entrance.

"It really gives you a nice feeling for the place," she said. "It sets a nice tone."

Then they were hooked by the neat, clean layout of the community, she said.

Her husband is the golfer, while her grandchildren enjoy the pools and tennis courts. She's even tried a few of the continuing education classes offered at the community centers.

"If you want to be involved in something, you have it at your disposal," she said.

Fuchs said she and her husband frequent the country club for lunch, then jump in the golf cart for a quick trip to the 19th Hole Bar and Grill for dinner and beautiful views.

"We have really, really loved living here," she said.

Diamondhead at a glance

Diamondhead Property Owners Association (228) 255-1900.

Diamondhead Country Club, 7600 Country Club Circle, Diamondhead.

Desk/reservations: (228) 255-2918

Pro Shop: (228) 255-3910.

KEY RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Diamondhead Drive: the major street in the community, encircling both golf courses; mostly average-sized, one-story homes built within the past 10 years. Mazes of residential streets branch off from there.

The Oaks: One of the community's earliest developments; mostly small, one-story homes situated on cul-de-sacs.

Devils Elbow: Two- and three-story condominiums.

Waveland is a nice retreat by the beach

By DONNA MELTON
dmelton@sunherald.com

Artist Scott Blackwell wanted to live somewhere close to the beach, but didn't want crowds to intrude on his creativity. Waveland has suited him well.

Blackwell moved to the Hospitality City in 2000 with his wife, Dianna. They found a house surrounded by woods and friendly neighbors.

Until Hurricane Katrina, his business, Mombo Graphixx, was nearby on Coleman Avenue, but he had to relocate to U.S. 90. He gets more foot traffic now, but he misses being close to the water.

Blackwell discovered Waveland during one of his showings at a Bay St. Louis gallery 20 years ago. When it came time to make a move, he and his wife came here.

He likes the hometown feeling of the area and the eclectic mix of people he meets.

"You can belly up to the bar, and you'll have someone who's a plumber, someone who's a doctor or someone who digs ditches for a living and they'll sit around and talk," he said.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ELLIS ANDERSON

Wave Fest is an annual festival held in Waveland featuring various local artists, food and entertainment.

Waveland hosts a Christmas parade and a large St. Patrick's Day parade where visitors must dodge carrots, potatoes and even cabbages being tossed from the many green floats. The biggest parade, though, is hosted by the Krewe of Nereids, which easily attracts 15,000 people from South Mississippi and neighboring Louisiana.

In 2010, the city premiered Oysterfest, which coincided with the reopening of the Garfield Ladner Municipal Pier.

Later this year, Wavefest will make its return to Coleman Avenue.

Started in 2000, the giant block party was moved to a ball park for a while after Hurricane Katrina, but is making its way back to Coleman.

Waveland is also home to the only Walmart, Kmart and Lowe's in Hancock County and boasts several restaurants offering everything from barbecue joint fare to cozy Coast seafood eateries.

Buccaneer State Park has reopened for RV use and hopes to become a year-round vacation destination once again. Plans are in the works to rebuild the popular wave pool there.

Although Blackwell enjoys it all, it's the beach that feeds his soul.

Accompanied by Charlie, a black lab/golden retriever mix, he heads to the sand whenever possible.

"When I walk the beach, it soothes my mind," he said.

Continued on page 12

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Communities

Continued from page 9

Waveland at a glance

Waveland City Hall, 407 U.S. 90, (228) 467-4134.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: Tommy Longo

Ward 1 Alderman: Lili Stahler

Ward 2 Alderman: Ricky Geoffrey

Ward 3 Alderman: Brian Schmitt

Ward 4 Alderman: Charles Piazza

City Clerk: Lisa B. Plancharh

City Attorney: Gary Yarborough

Meeting times: The Waveland Board of Aldermen meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday and third Wednesday following the first Tuesday of the month at the Leo Seal Community Center, 527 U.S. 90, Waveland.

Harrison County: Rural living near a growing urban setting

By MELISSA M. SCALLAN
mmscallan@sunherald.com

When Paul McKay moved to Harrison County in 1965, there were four houses on the road, which was a dead end.

More people have moved into the county in the past 45 years, but McKay still likes being isolated from the heavy traffic and subdivisions that can be found in the cities.

“I was raised on a farm, and this was as close as you could get to a farm,” he said one recent afternoon while sitting on his back porch.

McKay and his wife moved into her parents’ home after the couple married in February 1965. They stayed in the house after her parents died. Since his wife died shortly after Hurricane Katrina, McKay spends his time between his home here and his camp in Louisville.

More people began moving into the county before Katrina, but “there’s more of it since the storm.”

The number of people moving into the county has slowed somewhat because of the economy and the fact that the Coast hasn’t seen a serious storm since Katrina. That suits McKay and most others who live in the area just fine.

The county offers a respite from the hubbub in the cities but still is close to the beach, recreational facilities and other amenities.

Last December, contractors finished installing the concrete walk between Biloxi and Pass Christian, and residents and tourists can once again enjoy walking and biking along the beach.

The parking garage on the north side of the Harrison County Courthouse will be complete by the end of this month, and contractors also are working on the new Justice Court building and a downtown library branch.

Work also recently began on the main branch of the library, which is being built in Orange Grove.

Harrison County at a glance

Background: At 581 square miles, Harrison is central among three coastal counties.

Main roads: The scenic U.S. 90 runs from the Biloxi Bay to the Bay of St. Louis.

Harrison County has five incorporated cities: Biloxi, Gulfport, Pass Christian, Long Beach and D’Iberville. It caters to tourists and gamblers with numerous golf courses, a 26-mile beach, family attractions, charter boats and an ever-increasing number of hotel rooms.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

District 1 Supervisor: Windy Swetman III, 435-8272

District 2 Supervisor: Kim Savant, 865-4122

District 3 Supervisor: Marlin Ladner, 867-6528

District 4 Supervisor: William Martin, 865-4204

District 5 Supervisor: Connie Rockco, 435-8272

Chancery Clerk: John McAdams, 865-4117

County Attorney: Tim Holleman, 863-3142

County Administrator: Pam Ulrich, 865-4070

Meeting times: The Harrison County Board of Supervisors meets twice a month at 9:30 a.m. and alternates meeting locations between the Gulfport courthouse (first Monday of the month) and the Biloxi courthouse (second Monday of the month). Mailing address: P.O. Drawer CC, Gulfport, MS 39502.

HARRISON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 11072 U.S. 49, Gulfport, (228) 539-6500.

Bel-Aire Elementary: 10531 Klein Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-7436; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 700-750.

Crossroads Elementary: 10453 Klein Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-6711; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 487

D’Iberville Elementary: 4540 Brodie Road, D’Iberville, (228) 392-2803; grades: K-4; recent enrollment: 729.

D’Iberville High School: 15625 Lamey Bridge Road, D’Iberville, (228) 392-2678; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 1,100.

D’Iberville Middle School: 3320 Warrior Drive, D’Iberville, (228) 392-1746; grades: 5-8; recent enrollment: 554.

Harrison Central Elementary: 15451 Dedeaux Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-2701; grades: K-3; recent enrollment: 600.

Harrison Central High School: 15600 School Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-2610; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 1,554.

Harrison County Alternative School: 11072 U.S. 49, Gulfport, (228) 539-5956; grades: 7-12; recent enrollment: 95

Harrison County Child Development Center: 94 29th St., Gulfport, (228) 863-0583; special education children of all ages; recent enrollment: 115.

Harrison County Vo-Tech Center: 15600 School Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-6652; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 325.

Lizana Elementary: 15341 Lizana School Road, Gulfport, (228) 832-1592; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 548.

Lyman Elementary: 14222 Old Highway 49, Lyman, (228) 832-2257; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 508.

North Gulfport 7th Grade: 4715 Illinois Ave., Gulfport, (228) 864-5326; recent enrollment, 464.

North Gulfport 8th Grade: 4715 Illinois Ave., Gulfport, (228) 864-8944; recent enrollment: 422.

North Woolmarket Elementary/Middle School: 16237 Old Woolmarket Road, Biloxi, (228) 396-3674; grades: K-8; recent enrollment: 849.

Orange Grove Elementary: 11391 Old Highway 49, Gulfport, (228) 832-2322; grades: 4-6; recent enrollment: 540.

Pineville Elementary: 5192 Menge Ave., Pass Christian, (228) 452-4364; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 222.

Saucier Elementary: 24052 First St., Saucier, (228) 832-2440; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 523.

Three Rivers Elementary: 13500 Three Rivers Road, Gulfport, (228) 831-5359; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 825.

West Wortham Elementary/Middle School: 20199 W. Wortham Road, Saucier, (228) 831-1276; grades: K-8; recent enrollment: 1,202.

West Harrison High School: 10399 County Farm Road, Gulfport; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 905.

Woolmarket Elementary: 12513 John Lee Road, Biloxi, (228) 392-5640; grades: K-6; recent enrollment: 408.

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Communities

Biloxi is known for more than just tourism

By MARY PEREZ

meperez@sunherald.com

The eyes of the world will be on Biloxi in August, as the Coast marks the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

The focus will be on what the city has accomplished in those five years since so many landmarks and historic oceanfront homes were damaged or destroyed.

Thanks to a restoration project, the Biloxi Lighthouse again shines inside and out. Morning tours let visitors inside the cast iron clad lighthouse to see the high water marks of Katrina, Camille and other hurricanes and climb to the top of the light room.

Just across the street the Biloxi Lighthouse Visitors Center is under construction and all around the city landmarks are being restored and infrastructure is being rebuilt to make Biloxi — one of the oldest cities in the United States — ready for new growth and development.

Biloxi long has been a tourist town, and visitors come to stay and play at eight of the Coast's 11 casinos. U.S. 90, affectionately known as Beach Boulevard, is one of the few roads in the country where people can drive along the shore and see the water. Also along the route are Katrina tree carvings that turned the oak trees that died from Hurricane Katrina's storm surge into

sea art.

Among the largest tourist attractions are the special events in Biloxi, including Mardi Gras parades, Smokin' the Sound power boat races, the Biloxi Seafood Festival and Cruisin' the Coast antique and classic car event. The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, designed by noted architect Frank Gehry, will open in East Biloxi in November.

Biloxi is home to the famed Hurricane Hunters, who fly into hurricanes, and the Flying Jennies, who save lives transporting troops and cargo in the Middle East. The airmen and staff at Keesler Air Force Base also volunteer thousands of hours every year in Biloxi.

Originally from Fayetteville, N.C., Capt. Randy Noel said he enjoys being assigned to Biloxi. "There's a good mix of things to do, ranging from the casinos to the Crawfish Festival," he said, along with a mix of local residents, military and tourists.

Originally from Southern California, Master Sgt. Juan Mederos said he likes that mix and being near the beach. Since the damage from Hurricane Katrina, the base now is one of the plum assignments in the Air Force, with its new BX and Commissary, an events center that opens in the fall and the largest LEEDS environmentally friendly housing community in the country.

Biloxi at a glance

Population: about 45,000

Background: French explorers claimed the area for France in 1699 and the city later was governed by England and Spain. The city is traditionally Catholic, giving Biloxi and New Orleans similar flavor in their food and festivals. By 1900, Biloxi was known as the Seafood Capital of the world and at one time more than 40 seafood factories operated in the city. Yugoslavian and Vietnamese immigrants came to work in the seafood factories.

Keesler Air Force base is known as the schoolhouse of the Air Force and trains about 25,000 students every year. The city's schools are among the best in the state.

Biloxi's Web site: biloxi.ms.us — provides city news, council agendas and community events.

Key road: U.S. 90, also known as Beach Boulevard

COMMUNITIES IN BILOXI

East Biloxi: Seven of Biloxi's eight casinos are here, along with the Biloxi Schooners and the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of art, which opens in November. The residential communities have been slow to rebuild since Hurricane Katrina since most homes have to be elevated.

Central and West Biloxi: Businesses are returning to the beach, with a new Walmart store coming near the Edgewater Mall. The Biloxi Lighthouse Visitors' Center is under construction.

North Biloxi: This area is primarily residential, with commercial areas near Interstate 10.

Woolmarket: The population of Biloxi moved north after Katrina, yet this area has retained its rural atmosphere and most homes have acre lots or larger. As the city extends water and sewer service to the area, commercial development is expected to follow near the I-10 interchange.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

City Administrator: David Staehling, (228) 435-6314

Ward 1 Council: George Lawrence, (228) 547-5811

Ward 2 Council: William "Bill" Stallworth, (228) 547-2135

Ward 3 Council: Lucy Denton, (228) 547-5851

Ward 4 Council: Clark Griffith, (228) 547-1611

Ward 5 Council: Tom Wall, (228) 547-5815

Ward 6 Council: Edward Gemmill, (228) 547-513

Ward 7 Council: David Fayard, (228) 392-5816

City Clerk: Karen Brashier, (228) 435-6257, citycountil@biloxi.ms.us

Meeting times: The Biloxi Council meets the first, third and fourth Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. at the council chambers on the second floor of City Hall, 140 Lameuse St. (Temporarily meeting at Community Development Building, 676 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. while City Hall is under renovation.)

Mailing address: PO Box 429, Biloxi MS 39533

BILOXI SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 160 St. Peters Ave., (228) 374-1810; district enrollment: 4,695

Biloxi High School: 1845 Richard Drive, (228) 435-6105; grades 9-12

Biloxi Career Technology Center, 1845 Richard Drive, (228) 435-6318

Biloxi Junior High: 1424 Father Ryan Ave., (228) 435-1421, grades 6-8

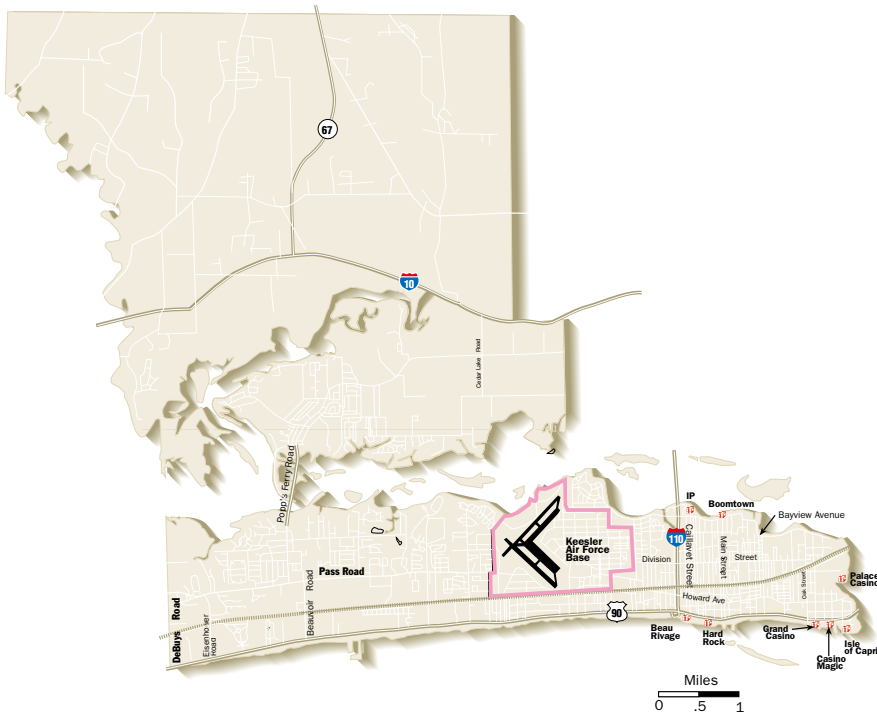
Biloxi Elementary schools: grades K-5
Gorenflo: 771 Elder St., (228) 436-5145

Jeff Davis: 340 St. Mary's Blvd., (228) 436-5110

North Bay: 1825 Popp's Ferry Road, (228) 435-6166

Popp's Ferry: 364 Nelson Road, (228) 436-5135

Editor's note: Biloxi School District has proposed closing three schools starting in August 2010: Michel Sixth Grade, 1400 Father Ryan Ave., Nichols Elementary at 590 Division St. and Beauvoir at 2003 Lawrence Ave.



Communities

Business is booming in D'Iberville

By MARY PEREZ
meperez@sunherald.com

It has been a year of ribbon cuttings and ground-breaking ceremonies in D'Iberville, with the opening of The Promenade shopping complex and plans for a new downtown becoming construction of a Town Green and Visitors' Center and other projects.

"We're setting the stage for an incredible city I know we're going to be," said R.J. Deno, owner of Doris' Hot Tamales on First Avenue. His mother, Doris Deno, served her tamales in D'Iberville for 32 years, longer than D'Iberville has been a city.

Incorporated in 1988, D'Iberville is at the crosshairs of Interstate 10 and 110, making it a Mecca for retail development. In 2009, Target and other national retail chains and restaurants opened at The Promenade and more development is on the way to that intersection. Oceans Expo, an interactive marine life attraction, will be built on the

southwest side and another shopping complex is planned for the southeast side.

At the waterfront, four casino sites are approved and city officials are eager to see a casino get financing and start construction.

Meanwhile, the Town Green and Visitors' Center is under construction and the Scenic Overlook will provide a place for residents and visitors to fish and enjoy the Back Bay. Also planned in that area is a French market reminiscent of New Orleans.

That's going to be a very charming asset to our community," said Deno. "When you keep the old downtown alive, you can't go wrong."

A large addition to City Hall is also under way and Central Avenue in the Old Town is getting a major facelift.

Deno said as D'Iberville grows, the city retains its hometown feeling while welcoming a new uptown flair.



Continued on page 19

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Singing River Electric Power Association: 11187 Old 63 South, Lucedale; (601) 947-4211.

HARRISON COUNTY

Biloxi

Coast Electric Power Association: 920 Cedar Lake Road, Suite S, Biloxi; 228-388-3109, 1-877-769-2372.

Mississippi Power: 195 Reynoir St., Biloxi; 1-800-

532-1502.

Gulfport/Long Beach

Coast Electric Power Association: 14082 U.S. 49, Gulfport; 228-832-1761, 1-877-769-2372.

Mississippi Power: 2829 13th St., Gulfport; 1-800-532-1502.

Pass Christian

Coast Electric Power Association: 1005 U.S. 90, Bay St. Louis; 228-467-6535, 1-877-769-2372. (offices located in Hancock County, but services Harrison county as well.)

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Kiln
Coast Electric Power Association: 18020 Mississippi 603, Kiln; 1-877-769-2372.

JACKSON COUNTY

Ocean Springs
Mississippi Power: 711 Church St., Ocean Springs; 1-800-532-1502.

Gautier
Singing River Electric Power Association: 500 U.S. 90 East, Gautier; 228-497-1313.

Pascagoula
Mississippi Power: 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula; 1-800-532-1502.

PEARL RIVER COUNTY

Picayune
Coast Electric Power Association: 6375 U.S. 11

North, Picayune; (601) 798-5013, 1-877-769-2372.
Mississippi Power: 114 Elizabeth St., Picayune; 1-800-532-1502.

Poplarville
Coast Electric Power Association: 4679 Mississippi 53 South, Poplarville; (601) 795-2361, 1-877-2372.

Mississippi Power: 201 West Cumberland, Poplarville; 1-800-532-1502.

STONE COUNTY

Mississippi Power: 625 West Central Ave., Wiggins; 1-800-532-1502.
Pearl River Valley Electric 422 East Pine St., Wiggins; (601) 928-7277.

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Continued from page 17

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896-7500, 1-800-371-5417.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay St. Louis
Bay St. Louis Utilities Dept.: 688 U.S. 90, Bay St.
Louis; 228-469-0009.

Waveland

Waveland Gas and Water Dept.: 335 Coleman Ave.,
Waveland; 467-9248.

JACKSON COUNTY

Ocean Springs

Center Point Energy: 2019 East Pass Road, Gulfport;
896-7500, 1-800-371-5417.

Gautier & Pascagoula

Pascagoula Utilities Dept.: Downtown Plaza, 622
Delmas Ave., Pascagoula; 228-938-6633.

PEARL RIVER COUNTY

Picayune

Center Point Energy: 2019 East Pass Road, Gulfport;
896-7500, 1-800-371-5417.

Picayune Utility Department: Picayune, 815 N.
Beech St., Picayune; 601-798-9776.

STONE COUNTY

Center Point Energy: 2019 East Pass Road, Gulfport;
896-7500, 1-800-371-5417.

Propane gas

Blossman Gas Inc.: Bay St. Louis, Waveland, 228-467-
6441; Biloxi, D'Iberville, 228-392-2470; Gulfport, Long
Beach, Pass Christian, 228-864-1162; Ocean Springs,
228-872-8747; Pascagoula, 228-762-2962; Lucedale,
(601) 947-3403; Wiggins, (601) 928-4492.

Magnolia Gas: Serves Harrison, Hancock, Stone,
Pearl River counties and the city of Ocean Springs, Pass
Christian: 228-255-0175.

Neill Gas Inc.: 11207 Lorraine Road, Gulfport, MS
39503, 228-832-2111

Water and sewer

GEORGE COUNTY

Rocky Creek Utilities: 1197 Rocky Creek Road,
Lucedale, MS 39452; (601) 947-4302.

Southeast Greene Water Authority: Rt. 5 Box 217,
Lucedale, MS 39452;
(601) 394-5246.

Estabuchie Utility Association: 795 Leeville Road,
Petal; (601) 582-8959.

HARRISON COUNTY

Biloxi

Southwest Water Company: 228-392-8407.

Westwick Utilities: 14601 Lemoyne Blvd., Biloxi;
228-388-7880.

D'Iberville

City of D'Iberville Water & Sewer Dept.: D'Iberville
City Hall, 10383 Auto Mall Parkway; 228-392-5524.

Gulfport

Gulfport Water and Sewer Dept.: 1422 23rd Ave.,
Gulfport; 868-5720.

Long Beach

Long Beach Water Dept.: 645 Klondyke Road, Long
Beach; 228-864-8531.

Pass Christian

Pass Christian Utilities Dept.: 112 West Second St.,
Pass Christian; 452-3312.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay St. Louis

Bay St. Louis Utilities Dept.: 688 U.S. 90, Bay St.
Louis; 228-469-0531.

Diamondhead

Diamondhead Water & Sewer: 4425 Park Ten Drive,
Diamondhead; 228-255-5813.

Kiln

Kiln Water District: 16148 Fire Dept. Road, Kiln;
228-255-2595.

Waveland

Waveland Gas and Water Dept.: 315 Coleman Ave.,
Building 3, Waveland; 228-467-9248.

JACKSON COUNTY

Ocean Springs

Ocean Springs Water and Sewage Dept.: City Hall,
1018 Porter Ave., Ocean Springs; 228-875-6666.

Coast Water Works: 2786 Pass Road, Biloxi; 228-
388-4342.

Total Environmental Solutions: 8717 Edgewater
Blvd., Ocean Springs; 228-875-3561.

Gautier

Gautier Utility District: 3305 Gautier-Vancleave
Road, Gautier; 228-497-4283

Pascagoula

Pascagoula Utilities Dept.: 622 Delmas Ave., Pasca-
goula; 228-938-6633.

PEARL RIVER COUNTY

Pearl River Central Water Association, P.O. Box 419,
McNeill; 601-798-3103.

Sunny Oak Water Association: 13 Floyd Moody
Road, Poplarville; 601-795-3170.

STONE COUNTY

Wiggins

City of Wiggins: City Hall, 117 First St., Wiggins;
601-928-7221.

Telephone

Local service: Provided by AT&T; 1-800-288-2747.

Long-Distance Service — Customers have the
option of selecting a long-distance company from a
variety of providers. For information, refer to your
telephone directory.



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Communities

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D'Iberville at a glance

Population: About 8,000

Background: Incorporated in 1988, D'Iberville was named for the French explorer who came to the area in 1699. The French later gave the area to Spain, and many of the original D'Iberville families have Spanish surnames.

The area has a history of commercial fishing, lumber and produce and seafood processing plants are still a part of the city's economy.

Since Hurricane Katrina, residents have moved inland from the Coast to new apartment complexes and subdivisions in D'Iberville. The city's farmer's market is popular, along with a boat launch, a new senior center and many recreational sports teams.

Key road: Central Avenue

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

City Manager: Michael Janus, (228) 392-7966, mjanus@diberville.ms.us

Mayor: Rusty Quave, rquave@diberville.ms.us

Ward 1 Councilman: Brenda Broussard, bbroussard@diberville.ms.us

Ward 2 Councilman: Henry Toncrey Jr., htoncrey@diberville.ms.us

Ward 3 Councilman: Teddy Harder, tharder@diberville.ms.us

Ward 4 Councilman: Stephen Furney - sfurney@diberville.ms.us

Councilman at large: Joey Bosarge - jbosarge@diberville.ms.us

City Council liaison Robertson: lrobertson@diberville.ms.us

City Clerk: Mary Lee Williams

Meeting times: D'Iberville City Council meets at 3:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month and at 6 p.m. on the third Tuesday at City Hall, 10383 Auto Mall Parkway.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 7619, D'Iberville, MS 39540

D'IBERVILLE SCHOOLS

D'Iberville students attend Harrison County School District.

Gulfport offers recreation, retail and variety in subdivisions

By ANITA LEE

calee@sunherald.com

The state's second-largest city is putting Hurricane Katrina in the history books as major reconstruction projects are completed and derelict buildings cleaned up or torn down.

Millions in federal recovery dollars have been spent on reconstruction. Most visible are a facade grant program for historic downtown buildings and a wind-resistant public safety center near city hall.

Mayor George Schloegel, known for his green thumb, also is making sure the city is beautifully landscaped.

Check out the gardens around City Hall and the new streetscape plantings downtown.

Bob Sawyer, owner of Trinity Investments, spends most of his waking hours downtown, where new restaurants and bars are bringing in crowds.

"Downtown is really coming alive," Sawyer said. "There is a lot to do now, especially if you enjoy the nightlife. The food is fantastic. There's just so much more going on now than one year ago. It's just quadrupled."

To the west, the 92-acre VA property on U.S. 90 has been deeded to the city and renamed Centennial Plaza, because it was originally developed for the state's centennial celebration, derailed by World War I. The city is hoping to attract developers to the site.

Community centers also have been reconstructed, as has

Grass Lawn, a historic home on U.S. 90 that is used for public events.

Work continues on a first-rate small craft harbor on the Mississippi Sound and improvements to neighboring Jones Park. To the west, the state port is planning a major expansion and port elevation to 25 feet above sea level. Gov. Haley Barbour has said port expansion is the biggest economic development project in state history.

The city has 34 parks and water recreation areas. The biggest is Gulfport's sportsplex on 250 acres north of Interstate 10. The sportsplex property includes Gulf Islands Water Park, soccer and softball facilities.

Gulfport has long served as a retail hub in South Mississippi. U.S. 49 and Pass Road are the city's main retail corridors.

Gulfport also has a strong military presence. The city is home to the Seabee's Naval Construction Battalion Center and the Air National Guard Combat Training Center.

Resident Rose Johnson was born and raised in North Gulfport, a historic community she is working to help restore through the North Gulfport Land Trust.

The Land Trust is restoring homes and buildings in the neighborhood, and has planted a community garden.

"It's where I was born and raised," Johnson said. "It's my home, and it's a place that I want to always continue to live. I want to make it a better, clean, more attractive place here in North Gulfport for generations to come."

Gulfport at a glance

Pre-Katrina population: 73,340

Post-Katrina population: 70,500

Background: Gulfport was incorporated on July 28, 1898. Four years later, the harbor was completed and the Port of Gulfport became a working seaport. The annexation of the Orange Grove area in 1994 helped make Gulfport the second largest city in Mississippi.

Gulfport has two founding fathers. The first was a Southerner, William H. Hardy, who named and platted the city and a vital railroad only to have his dream smashed by a financial depression. The second was Joseph T. Jones, a Pennsylvania oil tycoon, who poured millions into building the city and port.

Key roads: U.S. 90 and U.S. 49

COMMUNITIES IN GULFPORT

Downtown: Once the hub of the city, of-

icials hope to see it return to prominence again with businesses, apartments and restaurants.

Orange Grove: This area has seen a population and business explosion in recent years and is the site of much of the city's retail business, including Prime Outlets and Crossroads Shopping Center.

Bayou View: Featuring thousands of homes on large lots that were built before the construction boom that followed casinos, Bayou View has no major thoroughfares and contains a number of churches, schools and businesses.

Turkey Creek: This historic community was named for the drainage basin that covers 28 square miles in Gulfport, Long Beach and Harrison County. Since the 1994 annexation, residents have fought to have drainage problems fixed and recently secured a 1,600-acre conservation ease-

ment that will be preserved in perpetuity in exchange for 162 acres of wetlands lost to a new expressway.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: George Schloegel
Chief Administrative Officer: John Kelly, 868-5770

Ward 1 Councilman: Kenneth L. "Truck" Casey Sr.

Ward 2 Councilman: Libby Milner Roland

Ward 3 Councilman: Ella Holmes-Hines

Ward 4 Councilman: F.B. "Rusty" Walker IV,

Ward 5 Councilman: Ricky Dombrowski

Ward 6 Councilman: R.Lee Flowers

Ward 7 Councilman: Cara Lero Pucheu

City Attorney: Jeff Bruni, (228) 868-5812

Meeting times: The Gulfport City Council meets at 2:30 p.m. the first and third

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Gulfport at a glance

Tuesday after the first Monday of each month. All meetings are held in the council chambers on the second floor of City Hall, 2309 15th St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 1780, Gulfport, MS 39502.

GULFPORT SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 2001 Pass Road, (228) 865-4600.

Anniston Avenue Elementary: 2314 Jones St., (228) 896-6309; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 526.

Bayou View Elementary: 4898 Washington Ave., (228) 865-4625; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 606.

Bayou View Middle School: 212 43rd St., (228) 865-4633; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 725

Central Elementary: 1043 Pass Road, (228) 865-4642; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 373.

Gaston Point Elementary: 1526 Mills Ave., (228) 865-4656; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 320.

Gulfport Central Middle School: 1310 42nd Ave., (228) 870-1035; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 520.

Gulfport High School: 100 Perry St., (228) 896-7525; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 1,102

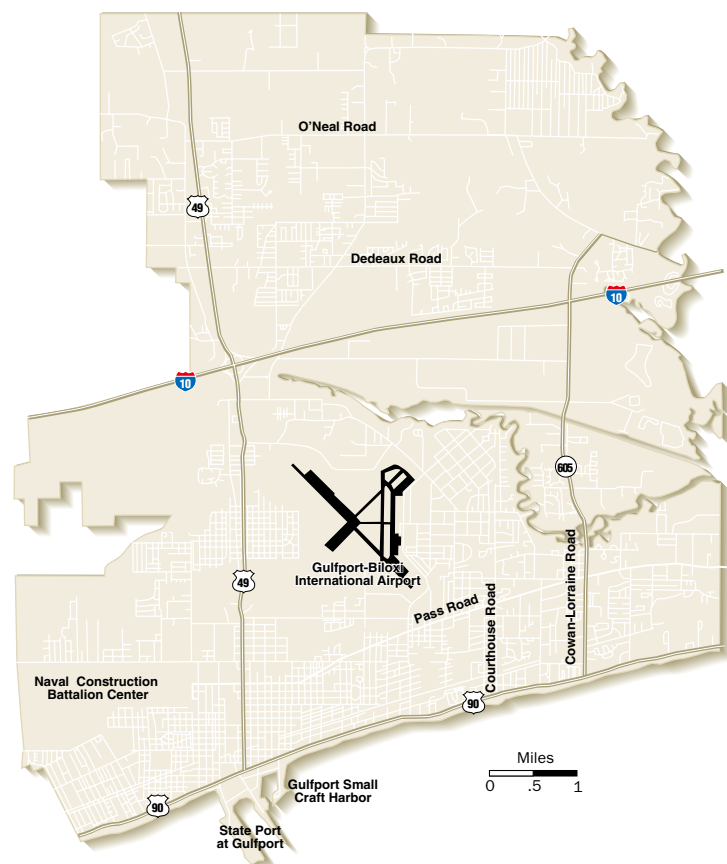
Gulfport High Ninth Grade: 100 Perry St., (228) 896-1475.; 467

The Learning Center: 1215 Church St., (228) 897-6045; grades: 3-12; recent enrollment: up to 50.

Pass Road Elementary: 37 Pass Road, (228) 865-4659; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: : 300.

Twenty Eighth Street Elementary: 3136 46th Ave.; K-5 300

West Elementary: 4051 15th St., (228) 870-1025; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 378



‘The Friendly City’ lives up to its name in Long Beach

By MELISSA M. SCALLAN
mmscallan@sunherald.com

When Sami Taylor and John Scranage lost their home and their business during Hurricane Katrina, there never was any question that they would rebuild both in “The Friendly City.”

Their home was near the University of Southern Mississippi, and their business was on Jeff Davis, and the couple said they wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.

“It’s the people, the beach, the comfort zone with businesses, so to speak,” Taylor said, adding that there is an easygoing attitude in this city of 17,000.

The couple owns The Stone Man & The Gem Lady and said they make friends with everyone who comes in, something they say is easy to do in Long Beach.

“This is home,” Taylor said. “After the storm we rebuilt the house and decided to re-open our business. It isn’t just the visibility. People don’t want to go home after they’ve been here.”

Recovery has been slow in Long Beach, as it has in other cities along the Coast. The city lost most of its homes and businesses south of the railroad tracks. The recession and the cost of insurance hasn’t helped spur growth, city officials and residents say.

But life is improving. Jeff Davis Avenue was opened to traffic in February after being closed for months. Contractors also are working on repaving the streets surrounding downtown. Improvements, such as curbs and gutters and street lights, will be complete this month.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN FITZHUGH

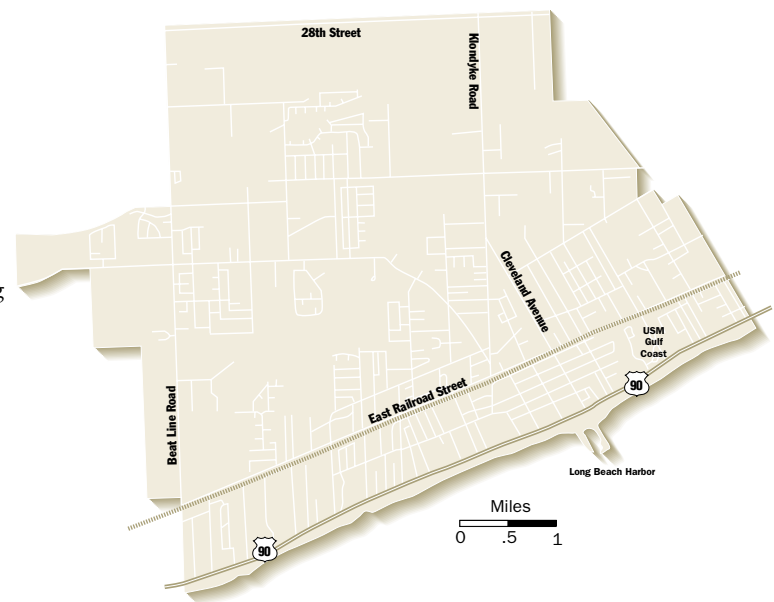
Jeff Davis Avenue is in the heart of Long Beach.

The new City Hall will be finished in July, and in January the school district opened the new Harper McCaughan Elementary School on Pineville Road.

This spring the city awarded the contract to build a town green where Harper McCaughan used to be on Jeff Davis. The \$1.6 million project should be finished by the end of this year or early in 2011.

Taylor and Scranage said they wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.

“Most of the people are very warm, friendly and helpful,” Taylor said.



Communities

Long Beach at a glance

Population: 17,000

Background: Got its big start in the lumber days after the ancient yellow pine forests were chopped down. By the early 1900s this was the self-proclaimed Radish Capital of the World, producer of the much-coveted Long Red that looked like a carrot and was favored in Northern beer halls. When it was dethroned by the button radish, Long Beach became a popular residential community with a reputation for good schools.

Key roads: U.S. 90 and Jeff Davis Avenue

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: Billy Skellie, (228) 863-1556

Ward 1 Alderman: Gary Ponthieux, (228) 216-4183

Ward 2 Alderman: Bernie Parker, (228) 868-2116

Ward 3 Alderman: Kaye Couvillon, (228) 324-4090

Ward 4 Alderman: Ronnie Hammons Jr., (228) 863-3626

Ward 5 Alderman: Mark Lishen, (228) 575-8583

Ward 6 Alderman: Carolyn Anderson, (228) 863-8082, (228) 868-1139

Alderman at large: Leonard Carrubba Sr., (228) 229-3524

City Clerk: Rebecca Schruff, (228) 863-1556

City Attorney: Jim Simpson, (228) 863-6534, ext. 2

Meeting times: The Long Beach Board of Aldermen meets at 5 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Long Beach School District administrative office on Commission Road.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 929, Long Beach, MS 39560. The new City Hall on Jeff Davis Avenue is scheduled to be completed in July.

LONG BEACH SCHOOLS

Editor's note: In April, the Long Beach School Board voted to restructure the schools because of state budget cuts. The new configuration goes into effect this fall.

Administrative office: 19148 Commission Road, (228) 864-1146.

Harper McCaughan Upper Elementary: 113 Quarles St., (228) 863-0478; grades: 4-6.

Long Beach High School: 300 East Old Pass Road, (228) 863-6945; grades: 9-12.

Long Beach Middle School: 204 N. Cleveland Ave., (228) 864-3370; grades: 7-8.

Quarles Elementary: 111 Quarles St., (228) 864-3946; grades: K-3.

Reeves Elementary: 214 St. Augustine Drive, (228) 864-9764; grades: K-3.



PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM COLGIN

Fish right off the pier in Pass Christian harbor.

Pass Christian is a small town with a big heart

By EVELINA SHMUKLER
Sun Herald

This small town of about 4,500 residents is both close-knit and welcoming, historic and renewed.

Pass Christian's new post-Hurricane Katrina City Hall should open this year; it overlooks the city's historic harbor, which has been and remains a busy portal for the Gulf's bounty of shrimp, oysters, fish and crabs.

Pass Christian residents enjoy living on or near the water, Gulf, river and bay, and the recreational, professional and culinary opportunities that affords. One of the city's most anticipated events is the annual St. Paul Seafood Festival, which takes place at the start of every summer.

The Pass Christian Yacht Club, a private sailing club overlooking the Pass Christian Harbor, is the second-oldest yacht club in the United States and is known as the birthplace of yachting in the South. Founded in 1849, the current club was rebuilt after Katrina and reopened in May 2008.

One of the Gulf Coast's largest oyster reefs is just off shore, so fresh oysters are readily available at the harbor, which many of the oyster boats call home. The Pass, as locals call it, was even named after one of its water features: a deep-water pass by the same name in the Mississippi Sound. That pass apparently got its name from Nicholas

Christian L'Adnier, one of the early French settlers in the area. (The Coast's many Ladners are descendants of the early L'Adniers).

In the 1800s, Pass Christian became a popular summer destination for families from New Orleans, who built grand summer homes on Scenic Drive, overlooking the Gulf. Many of those homes were destroyed in the Coast's major hurricanes, including Katrina in 2005 and Camille in 1969, but many remain, including the Blue Rose, an exquisitely restored mansion overlooking the harbor that is one of the Coast's most popular wedding spots. Pass Christian also has one of the area's other destinations for weddings and events, Oak Crest Mansion Inn, which is in north Pass Christian, just outside the city limits. The gazebo in War Memorial Park is also a popular spot for scenic weddings.

"I think that there's something about the whole city, driving along this six miles of beachfront that's both beautiful and scary sometimes — people still fall in love with it, and they're drawn back again and again and again," said Sally James, who was born and raised in Pass Christian and is now the city's librarian. She has met many visitors in the years since Katrina, some of whom have even remained to call the Pass home or a second home. She feels they were

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Communities

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drawn in by the warmth and friendliness of the people.

“They like the beach, they like the beautiful houses, but they love the beautiful people in Pass Christian,” she said. “It’s a place where they’re always going to get a friendly smile. They’re going to be treated as a friend.”

In Pass Christian, people are “always glad to see you, they’re glad you’re here. You just connect,” said Sydney Wall. She and her husband Steve began spending weekends in Pass Christian in the mid-1990s and moved here full time in May 2008 after they retired.

“Besides the beauty of the water and the scenery, I think it’s the strong identification everybody here has with the place that makes you want to be a part of it,” Sydney said. Folks here, even newcomers, are rooted in the city, she said, which lends a sense of permanence to a place that is, in actual fact, still rebuilding. “That’s the specialness of it. There’re a lot of other places we all could be, but we’re here, because we feel a connection to the longevity of Pass Christian, to the rootedness and the commitment of the people who are here.”

This sense of community is evident in the many events in Pass Christian annually. In addition to the Seafood Festival, the city hosts a Blessing of the Fleet every year. Other popular events include Art in the Pass, a juried art festival that takes place in the spring in the city’s War Memorial Park, and Celebrate the Gulf, a marine education festival that is usually held on the same weekend, also in the park. The city also has a holiday celebration, Christmas in the Pass, the first Friday in December, and the St. Patrick’s Day walking parade was recently restarted after a Katrina-prompted hiatus.

But the city is perhaps best known for its annual Mardi

Gras Parade, hosted by the St. Paul Carnival Association, which brings thousands of revelers to the streets of downtown Pass Christian on the Sunday before Mardi Gras.

Pass Christian is also known for its strong school district, one of the top ranked in the state. The Boys & Girls Club of the Gulf Coast’s Qatar Center in Pass Christian, at 220 Church Street, offers both afterschool and summer programs. The school district also operates a day care for children from six weeks old to four years old. The day care, Pass Christian Elementary School, Pass Christian Middle Schools and the Boys & Girls Club were all completed last year and share a campus in downtown Pass Christian, just across the street from the recently rebuilt Trinity Church.

The new Pass Christian Public Library, set to open this year, is just down the street. When it opens, it will have more than 30,000 new books, audiobooks, movies and other items for all ages. It shares a campus with the City Hall municipal complex and the court; all of the buildings will look out into a central courtyard that is sure to become a popular destination for city functions.

War Memorial Park is already a popular spot for events public and private, from festivals and school trips, to birthday parties and picnics. Saturday mornings, the Pass Market meets on a spot overlooking the Gulf, with fresh produce, crafts and art on offer. The park also features four wood carvings by Marlin Miller, who transformed some of the park’s dead trees into whales, a parrot and a soaring eagle. The eagle was dedicated in honor of the late Col. Lawrence E. Roberts, a Tuskegee Airman and the father of hometown favorite Robin Roberts, co-host of Good Morning America.

In addition to offering some inviting spots for a picnic, from the park to the beach, the Pass has a growing

number of restaurants, from Shaggy’s at the harbor to the more upscale French Charley’s Café and Wine Bar across the street. There’s also New York-style pizza at the newly opened Chili Willie’s Pizzeria and Mexican fare at Lucio’s, both on Davis Avenue. Sisters Marina Café, recently opened at the harbor, offers New Orleans-inspired dishes, and Pirate’s Cove, on Market Street directly across from the east entrance to the harbor, has some of the Coast’s best po-boys. The Pass Christian Isles Golf Club in Timber Ridge also serves food and is open to the public.

In other words, there’s always a place to get a cold drink, hot meal and warm welcome.

“We have such a laidback way,” said James. “If at all possible, you try not to let life take too much out of you or take too much from you. I think you learn that after moving here — it just rubs off on you.”

Pass Christian at a glance

Current population: 4,400-4,500.

Key roads: U.S. 90, Second Street, Scenic Drive, Menge Avenue, North Street

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: Leo “Chipper” McDermott, (228) 452-3310

City clerk: Val Isabelle, (228) 452-3311

City attorney: Malcolm Jones, (228) 861-9368

Meeting times: The Pass Christian Board of Aldermen meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Until the municipal complex is completed, the Board meets at the Hancock Bank Community Room, 113 Davis Ave.

Mailing address: P.O. Drawer 368, Pass Christian, MS 39571.

PASS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 6457 Kiln-DeLisle Road, (228) 255-6200.

Early Childhood Center: 205 Leovy Avenue; ages 6 weeks - 4 years old; \$125/week for infants; \$115/week for older children, plus \$100 registration fee; (228) 452-5210.

Pass Elementary School: 270 W. Second Street; (228) 452-5200; grades K-5; recent enrollment: 349

DeLisle Elementary School: 6303 W. Wittmann Road, (228) 255-9681; grades K-5; recent enrollment: 405

Pass Christian Middle School: 280 W. Second Street, (228) 452-5220; grades 6-8; recent enrollment: 350.

Pass Christian High School: 720 W. North Street, (228) 255-6211; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 510.



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Jackson County continues to grow

By KAREN NELSON
knelson@sunherald.com

The population shift to north and central Jackson County has continued in the years since Hurricane Katrina and county resources have followed it.

Members of the Board of Supervisors, who oversee spending and capital improvements in the county, have made recreation improvements in recent years in Hurley, Vancleave and St. Martin to accommodate the demand in these areas.

This includes tennis courts for St. Martin, Vancleave and Lum Cumbest Park near Hurley. Splash pads are in at Lum Cumbest Park, which has also received new adult softball fields and soccer fields. Splash pads are also going in at the new St. Andrews park in south Jackson County and a park in Moss Point.

The Whispering Pines county golf course in Hurley is steadily making improvements refurbishing holes and upgrading golf carts.

Water and sewerage improvements have also followed the population shift in a hope of encouraging people to build on higher ground since Katrina.

And the county has steadily been building back and improving an assortment of boat launches and the piers on waterways all around the county.

Jackson County is home to major rivers and bayous, popular creeks and three beach fronts, inviting natural recreation options and providing lots of waterfront property — 23 miles in Gautier alone.

The Pascagoula River, the longest undammed river in the lower 48 states, meets the Mississippi Sound in Jackson County.

Although this made hundreds of homes vulnerable to Katrina's surge, water is a major part of the county's legacy. Many live on or near the water, have boats or have jobs that are tied to the water. Those who don't, play on it whenever they can or simply enjoy seeing it as they drive the many bridges and water-view roads in the county.

The county is home to The Pascagoula River Audubon Center on Frank Griffin Road and the Grand Bay National Estuarine

Research Reserve on Bayou Heron Road, both in Moss Point. The Grand Bay NERR has completed construction of its visitor's center and classrooms, the "greenest" state building in Mississippi and an example of the many ways to save resources. Audubon is working toward building a new nature center. Both speak to the value of the county's natural resources.

Southern Jackson County also is home to the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge and the Gulf Islands National Seashore. The refuge spans 19,000 acres north and south of Interstate 10 and has a visitor's center off Gautier-Vancleave Road north of I-10 in Gautier. GINS includes a visitor's center in Ocean Springs and a string of barrier islands in the Mississippi Sound.

The county is also known for its industry — a major Northrop Grumman shipyard, industrial row east of Pascagoula with a new Liquefied Natural Gas terminal under construction and Chevron's Pascagoula Refinery, one of the largest in the U.S. and expanding.

Jackson County has Trent Lott International Airport in Moss Point, where Northrop Grumman Aeronautics helps build military drone airships.

Hurley, a residential community in northeast Jackson County, was growing strong before Katrina, but since the storm has experienced phenomenal growth with an increase in subdivisions and single-family homes on large lots.

It is home to a strong school system and the county's Whispering Pines Golf Course.

Glenda Walker has lived in Hurley all her life. And now she's enjoying watching her grandchildren grow up there.

The drive to the nearest city is about 30 minutes, but you get used to it, she said. Driving home from work to the country gives her time to unwind.

"I can't imagine living anywhere else," she said. "The community is family-oriented and faith-based . . . with people close by that you can rely on."

She said churches, schools and sports in the area work together to make sure children are safe and thrive.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF MOSS POINT

View of Escatawpa River from Moss Point's Riverfront Park.

Jackson County at a glance

Background: Jackson County, at 736 square miles, is Mississippi's easternmost coastal county. There are rivers and bayous and wetlands aplenty. It has no casinos. Jackson County has four incorporated cities, a port and is one of the state's most industrialized counties. The county has communities in the unincorporated areas once dominated by country homes, or small farms and pecan orchards. But more and more these unincorporated communities are sprouting subdivisions.

JACKSON COUNTY COMMUNITIES

Fontainebleau in southern Jackson County includes the sprawling subdivision Gulf Park Estates, a wide variety of newer residential groups, plus the established St. Andrews and Pinehurst. The children who live here attend the Ocean Springs School District, one of the best in the state.

Latimer, on the west side of the county, lies north of Ocean Springs and St. Martin and still offers country living, though it is growing with subdivisions, apartments and condo projects.

Tucker Road, recently widened, is the doorway to Latimer, and it bustles with gas

stations and hotels near the Interstate, but as Tucker Road moves north, the home lots get bigger and the flurry of everyday traffic drops off as visitors get closer to country living.

St. Martin, north of Ocean Springs along Interstate 10, took a heavy blow from Katrina and is still recovering. Residents who haven't rebuilt are making their property available to denser population projects such as condos, which might better withstand a surge along the waterfront.

Vancleave, in the north-central portion of the county, has very few small parcels for sale since Katrina increased the area's popularity to homeowners. Vancleave is home to the county's Conrad Mallette Horse Arena and ball field complex and hosts the annual Mule Pull festival.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

District 1 Supervisor: Manly Barton, (228) 769-3403

District 2 Supervisor: Melton Harris, (228) 769-3170

District 3 Supervisor: Mike Mangum, (228) 762-7641

District 4 Supervisor: Tommy Brodnax, (228) 769-3457

Jackson County at a glance

District 5 Supervisor: John McKay, (228) 769-3378

Chancery clerk: Terry Miller, (228) 769-3499

County Board of Supervisors' attorney: Paula Yancey, (228) 769-3371

County administrator: Alan Sudduth, (228) 769-3089.

Meeting times: The Jackson County Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. each Monday on the second floor of the old portion of the courthouse, 3401 Magnolia St., Pascagoula.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 998, Pascagoula MS 39568.

JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 12210 Colonel Vickrey Road, Vancleave, (228) 826-1757.

East Central High School: 21700 Slider Road, Moss Point; (228) 588-7000; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 840.

East Central Lower Elementary: 5621 Mississippi 614, Moss Point; (228) 588-7060; grades K-2; recent enrollment: 608.

East Central Middle School: 5404 Hurley Wade Road, Moss Point; (228) 588-7009; grades 6-8; recent enrollment: 660.

East Central Upper Elementary: 5400 Hurley Wade Road, Moss Point; (228) 588-7019; grades 3-5; recent enrollment: 622.

St. Martin East Elementary: 7508 Rose Farm Road, Ocean Springs; (228) 875-3204; grades K-3; recent enrollment: 664.

St. Martin High School: 10800 Yellow Jacket Blvd., Ocean Springs; (228) 875-8418; grades 8-12; recent enrollment: 1,078.

St. Martin Middle School: 10900 Yellow Jacket Blvd., Ocean Springs; (228) 818-4833; grades 6-7; recent enrollment: 862.

St. Martin North Elementary: 16308 LeMoyné Blvd., Biloxi; (228) 392-1387; grades K-3; recent enrollment: 659.

St. Martin Upper Elementary: 10910 Yellow Jacket Blvd., Ocean Springs; (228) 818-2849; grades 4-5; recent enrollment: 596.

Vancleave High School: 12424 Mississippi 57, Vancleave; (228) 826-4701; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 743.

Vancleave Lower Elementary School: 12602 Mississippi 57, Vancleave; (228) 826-5982; grades K-2; recent enrollment: 619.

Vancleave Middle School: 4725 Bulldog Lane, Mississippi 57, Vancleave; (228) 826-5902; grades 6-8; recent enrollment: 584.

Vancleave Upper Elementary School: 13901 Mississippi 57, Vancleave; 826-4581; grades 3-5; recent enrollment: 610.

Gautier looks toward the future

By LEIGH COLEMAN

Sun Herald

The roots of the citizens of Gautier are as deep as the stately Live oaks that line more than 70 miles of waterfront in this budding city on the Coast.

From Gulf breezes to the twists and turns of the inland bayous, the natural beauty and quality of life in Gautier beckon modern-day "settlers" to enjoy the serenity and amenities Gautier has to offer.

The city is in the midst of rebranding itself to bring newcomers to the area.

New facilities and improved roadways are in the final stages of completion.

A massive layer of Astroturf provides the finishing touches to a new sports pavilion under construction in Gautier.

The Mississippi Coast Sports Pavilion is the brainchild of Dr. Brad Troutman, a heart physician for children and a soccer coach.

The ultra modern building is located on a 1-acre plot along U.S. 90 in a vacated warehouse-sized building.

The new, open-air sports pavilion will feature a 140-by-85-foot field, warm-up bays, a media bay to watch sports, lighting, concession areas, dressing rooms, walking tracks and other amenities.

The space is designed for soccer, lacrosse, dodge ball, soccer, tennis, volleyball and other games and sports.

Schools in Gautier are thriving with motivated faculty members at the helm.

The district has award-winning programs and academic opportunities in and out of the classroom for students.

Bill Slone, a math teacher at Gautier Middle School, recently won the Troops to Teachers award for teaching excellence.

"These students are eager to learn," Slone said. "The schools are packed with talented students and teaching is what I have always wanted to do."

Gautier High School's mock trial is an academic program making headlines.

The team will be advancing



Gautier City Hall

to the state competition this year.

Gautier is the only public school in Jackson County advancing to the state competition.

The city is also experiencing a boost in the local economy, job growth, rezoning, goals for 2010 and new \$5.2 million facelift for the downtown area.

The 2-mile stretch along U.S. 90, between Johnson and Beasley roads, will have new lighting, decorative land-

Continued on page 26



Communities

Continued from page 25

scaping, new medians and a 10-foot pathway along the north and south side.

A citywide repaving project to widen the highway is also nearing completion.

Pedestrian friendly pathways and economic plans for new businesses are planned to bring new residents to the city.

Residents like Richard Cowin call Gautier home because of the small town flavor.

“I have lived here most of my life because of the location and the hometown feeling I have here,” Cowin said.

“Everybody knows everyone else. The neighborhoods are real neighborhoods with people helping people like after Katrina. We all cooked out together and took care of each other. It is a great place to live.”

The city has fresh- and salt-water fishing, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, award-winning schools, campgrounds and two premier golf courses.

Steeped in history, the city boasts the gracious homestead that Fernando Gautier established in 1867 at the mouth of the Pascagoula River Basin. The town still stands as a hallmark of the city that now bears his name.

Home also to The Old Place,

a legendary home built by the Gautier family on 12-acres of land sheltered by Live oak trees, is a popular venue used for weddings, parties, community events and meetings.

The Mississippi Sandhill Crane refuge is tucked away within the city limits. The massive property consists of three separate land areas covering a total of more than 19,000 acres in extreme southeast Mississippi.

The refuge protects the limited nesting range of the endangered Mississippi sandhill crane, and its unique wet savanna habitat.

The refuge offers wildlife-oriented recreational activities such as hiking, photography and education. Because the Mississippi sandhill crane is endangered, and both the cranes and the wet pine savanna are sensitive to disturbance, most of the refuge is closed to the public.

Whether you are considering locating a business or other development, or seeking a community to call “home,” Gautier offers a growing business climate and quality of life for the family, employees and business development.

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Communities

Gautier at a glance

City Hall: 3330 U.S. 90, Gautier, MS 39553; (228) 497-8000

E-mail address: gautiergautier-ms.gov

Web site: www.gautier-ms.gov

Population: Approximately 19,500

Slogan: Once visited you may never want to leave

Mayor: Tommy Fortenberry

City Manager: Sidney Runnels, (228) 497-8000

City Clerk: Linda Green, (228) 497-8014

CITY COUNCIL

Alderman at Large: Don Nash

Ward 1 Councilman: Johnny Jones

Ward 2 Councilman: Hurley Ray Guillotte

Ward 3 Councilman: Gordon T. Gollott

Ward 4 Councilman: Scott D. McFarland

Ward 5 Councilman: Adam Colledge

City Attorney: Amy St. Pe, (228) 497-8000

Regular meeting schedule: City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall, 3330 Highway 90.

GAUTIER SCHOOLS

*Gautier is a part of the Pascagoula School District and will have a new school called Gautier Sixth Grade Academy housed at Gautier Middle School next year. It will have its own entrance and principal.

Pascagoula School District: 1006 Community Ave., Pascagoula, MS 39568, (228) 938-6495

Superintendent: Wayne Rodolfich

Gautier Elementary School: 505 Magnolia Tree Drive, (228) 522-8824; grades K-5; recent enrollment: 197

Gautier Middle School: 1920 Graveline Road, (228) 522-8800; recent enrollment: 767

Gautier High School: 4307 Gautier-Vancleve Road, (228) 522-8780; grades 9-12, recent enrollment: 892

College Park Elementary: 2617 Ladnier Road, (228) 522-8830, recent enrollment: 385

Martin Bluff Elementary: 1306 Roys Road, (228) 522-8835, recent enrollment: 436

Singing River Elementary: 4601 Gautier-Vancleve Road, (228) 522-8835, recent enrollment: 454

Moss Point: An eclectic mix of business, nature and waterways

By LEIGH COLEMAN

Sun Herald

Moss Point is better known as the “magic city by the river” to locals here.

Year round events are held on the riverfront to celebrate its prime location, which is surrounded by water. This growing city connects to the Pascagoula River estuary, the Escatawpa River, and various bayous and other areas of protected marshland.

Moving to the rhythm of the tides, Moss Point has been a vibrant river town since the mid-to-late 1800s.

It is one of the cities on the Coast that is experiencing economic growth.

Many small businesses and large industrial companies are opening their doors with the help of city leaders and a new director of economic development.

The city also enjoys a rich history to go along with an economic boom.

It was originally named “Mossey Point” by early settlers.

Today, the city has a population of nearly 16,000 people and a county population of nearly 137,000.

Residents say Moss Point has a colorful sense of community with a coveted “on-the-move” spirit blended with tranquil, natural beauty and unique charm.

Moss Point also enjoys small-town warmth and friendliness, while focusing on ecotourism activities

and sustainable development.

“I have been living in Moss Point my entire life because my family is here and I love the small town flavor,” said resident Meaghan Little.

City leaders are working furiously to redesign Moss Point into a tourist destination.

As visitors veer off I-10 they will see the new Pelican Landing Convention Center.

Many community and statewide events are held at the large facility located on the riverfront.

Many attractions along the wide-open natural areas are already luring visitors and avid bird watchers to the area.

The Pascagoula River Audubon Center is one of the gateways to the Pascagoula River.

Visitors flock to this area to bird watch or learn about its habitats and or visit the river basin throughout the year.

Apart from providing visitors and students direct exposure and experience within such a rich environment, the center serves as a hands-on site for environmentally friendly activities as a window to nature.

“People who have grown up here drive over the bridge all the time and see the marsh and the river, and say, ‘One of these days I’m going to get out there.’

Continued on page 28



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D'IBERVILLE

Communities

Continued from page 27

When they finally do, they're amazed," said Mark LaSalle, director of the Pascagoula River Audubon Center in Moss Point.

Paul and Kaye Doyle are long-time residents.

Paul Doyle is also an Audubon Master Naturalist and supports a number of programs at the Center.

On any given day, Doyle can be found greeting visitors and giving them the "nickel" tour of the Center or driving up with a friend.

"This place is full of life and nature. It doesn't get any better than this," Doyle said.

The Moss Point School District is redeveloping its curriculum and mission. Moss Point schools are growing and becoming award-winning institutions. Superintendent Kim Staley said he believes educating a child is more than a test score.

"We have students going on to college and in order to fulfill

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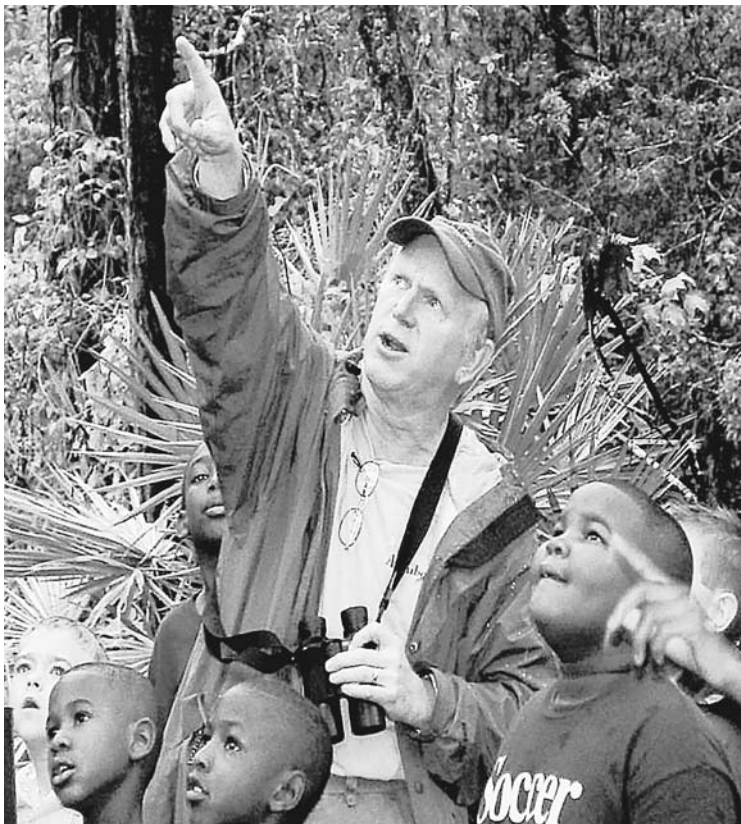
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Communities



Eco-tours are a favorite to embrace the area's habitat and natural waterways.

our new mission statement we must develop the entire student both mentally and physically," Staley said.

Staley said in Moss Point, students are the greatest resource.

"I firmly believe that those of us in Moss Point who serve the children of the District must share in this philosophy to ensure our students are successful."

Currently there are six elementary schools, a high school and junior high school in Moss Point.

The city of Moss Point has numerous tourist attractions, which include the De Soto National Forest and access to Shepard State Park.

Moss Point Oaks Bed and Breakfast is one of the oldest surviving dwellings in the River City.

The quaint home offers two guest rooms with private baths, large front porch, a 900 square-foot deck with a hot tub, and a sunny breakfast nook. Oak, camellia, pecan and magnolia trees grace the grounds and a scattering of informal gardens are featured for guests to enjoy and commune with nature.

Newcomers can also venture in to the past of the city by visiting the Fort Morgan Historic Site and continue to join in the local festivals that are celebrated by the natives.

Moss Point at a glance

Population: About 16,000

Slogan: "Building a World Class River City"

Mayor: Aneice Liddell, (228) 475-0300, (228) 366-0249 and/or (228) 475-3110

MOSS POINT ALDERMEN

Ward 1 Alderman: Sherwood Bradford, (228) 474-1934

Ward 2 Alderman: Ruby Nettles Hill, (228) 285-0092

Ward 3 Alderman: Robert H. Byrd Jr., (228) 475-3828

Ward 4 Alderman: Shirley Dubose Chambers, (228) 475-7848

Ward 5 Alderman: Thomas Hightower, (228) 475-4978

Ward 6 Alderman: George H. Martin, Jr. (228) 475-2169 (from previous administration and will continue with future administration)

Alderman At-Large: Houston Cunningham

City Clerk: Adlean Liddell, (228) 475-0300

City Attorney: Nathan Bosio, (228) 762-2272

Meeting times: The Moss Point Board of Aldermen meet at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall, 4412 Denny St.

MOSS POINT SCHOOLS

Administrative Office: 4924 Church St., (228) 475-0691, Superintendent Kim Staley

Alternative Learning Center: 6601 Orange Grove Road, (228) 475-3543, grades 7-11

Charlotte Hyatt Elementary: 4524 Welch St., (228) 475-2172, grades K-6; recent enrollment: 142

East Park Elementary: 4025 McCall St., (228) 475-9866; grades K-6; recent enrollment: 290

Escatawpa Elementary: 4208 Jamestown Road, (228) 474-3300; grades K-6; recent enrollment: 560

Kreole Elementary: 6312 Martin Luther King Blvd., (228) 475-3719; grades K-6; recent enrollment: 380

Magnolia Junior High School: 6601 Orange Grove Road, (228) 475-1429; grades 7-8; recent enrollment: 440


Moss Point High School: 4913 Weems St., (228) 475-0691; grades 9-12; recent enrollment: 929

Orange Lake Elementary: 9717 Old Stage Road, (228) 475-7348; grades K-6; recent enrollment: 160

West Elementary School: 3524 Prentiss Ave., grades K-6; recent enrollment: 221

** (At the end of the 2009/2010 school year some elementary schools will be combined).

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Ocean Springs: Now a destination

By LEIGH COLEMAN

Sun Herald

Nestled along the eastern shore of Biloxi Bay, perfectly situated on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, is the city of Ocean Springs.

Taking a stroll down the oak tree-lined avenues and streets of Ocean Springs is contagious.

Many residents say they fall in love with the pedestrian-friendly area after just one visit.

Home to some 17,000 residents, Ocean Springs has a reputation as an “arts community.”

Along the historic and secluded downtown area several art galleries and shops line the streets plying shiny wares new and old alike.

Considered a dining destination, Ocean Springs is also home to a number of unique restaurants, relatively uncommon in surrounding communities.

Some of the older shops in the area bring a feeling of nostalgia to patrons.

Several local bands are also born here and consider this city as their home venue after the big tour dates kick off.

Cheri Salvetti is a longtime resident of Ocean Springs. She started several bands in the area.

“The people here love music, and they enjoy the arts,” Salvetti said.

“It is truly a place where you can enjoy the finer things in life.”

Ocean Springs was the hometown of the late Walter Inglis Anderson, a nationally renowned painter and muralist.

The Walter Anderson Museum is the caretaker of the famous Anderson Murals and the building features the works of George Ohr, Walter Anderson and many other local artists.

The city plays host to several outdoor festivals, including the popular Peter Anderson Festival and The Herb and Garden Festival.

Eric Zala, a longtime resident of Ocean Springs and an up-and-coming movie producer, says nothing compares to the quaint lifestyle the city has to offer.

“Having grown up in Ocean Springs,

then moving to New York City for college, then Los Angeles and Orlando for work I’ve experienced living in radically different places,” Zala said.

“I decided to move back to Ocean Springs, because our children growing up knowing their grandparents, being close to family, once a common thing has grown rare in modern society.

“Recalling growing up in Ocean Springs and having Tom Sawyer-Huck Finn-esque adventures around town – wanting that for my own kids. Then there’s the appeal of the small-town community, which at times feels remarkably small, vs. urban anonymity.”

Zala said the artistic, creative vibe of the city is what really pulled him back home.

“There’s a feel here that’s unique, unlike any other, part local Southern, coastal culture, and it’s people here, part the atmosphere of the land, of nature . . . warm, dark and mysterious, all at the same time. Some lucky visitors sense it, too, so I know this isn’t simple nostalgia talking. It’s a special place.”

Residents boast about the historical roots going back to the 17th century.

So much so, the city reenacts the discovery of their fine city every year on Front Beach, complete with characters in full costume.

Ocean Springs is one of the oldest cities in the United States. It was founded in 1699, under the authority of King Louis XIV, as Fort Maurepas by Pierre LeMoynes d’Iberville.

City leaders recently rebuilt the historic Fort Maurepas

on Front Beach Drive, which features a play structure reminiscent of the ship used by the city’s French founders, an outdoor stage and picnic areas.

Here you will find that locals and tourists alike can still purchase freshly caught shrimp, fish, crabs and oysters because of the thriving seafood industry and the abundant waters of Ocean Springs’ backyard, the Gulf of Mexico.

Kayaking along the newly opened Blueway Trail on Fort Bayou and sailing in the bay waters has become a favorite recreational activity for many residents and visitors.

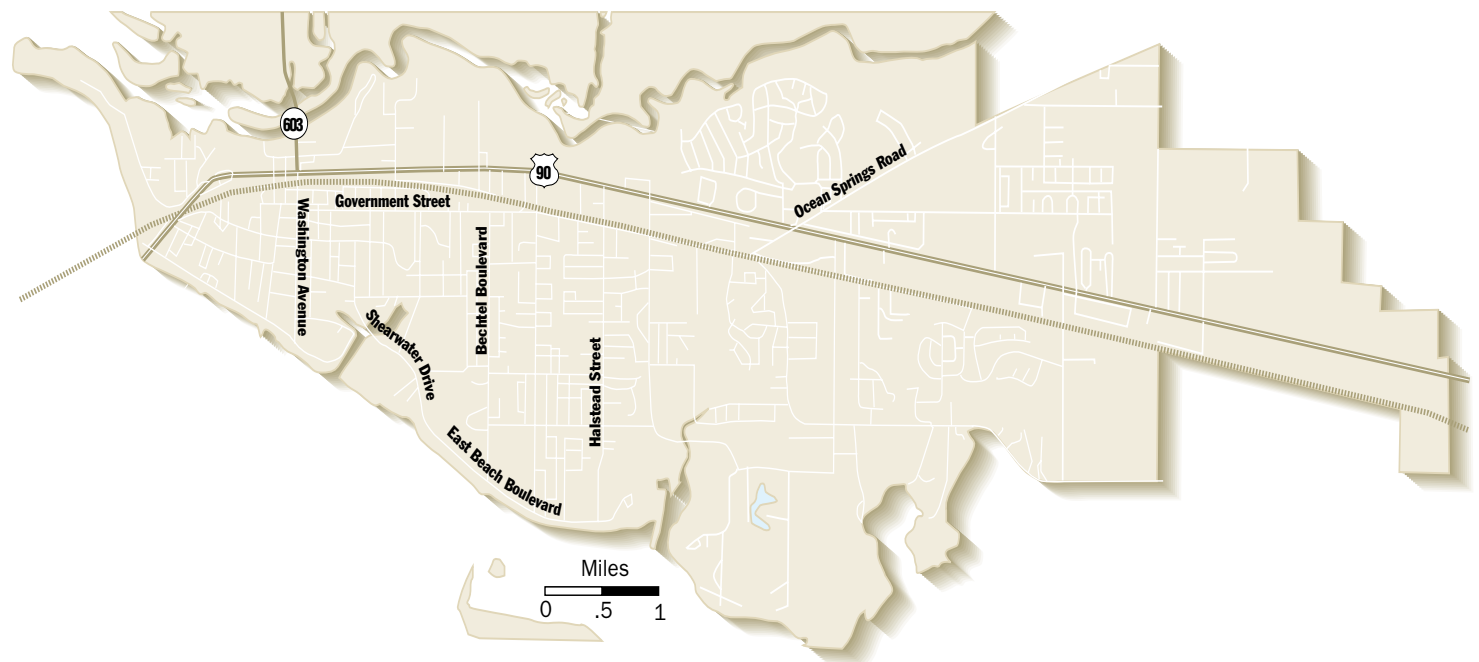
“When you grab a kayak and take a ride along the waters here you can experience all of nature and our rich habitat,” said Melissa Johnson of South Coast Paddling Company in Ocean Springs.

“Kayaking is becoming very popular here. Whether you paddle for exercise or for the view Ocean Springs is the place to hit the water.”

In the past 300 years, Ocean Springs has grown to include the areas of Latimer, St. Martin, Gulf Hills, Gulf Park Estates and St. Andrews.

Many newcomers say the school district, which is one of the highest ranked in the state, is what draws many to the city.

Other attractions that add to the city’s charm include the Ocean Springs Yacht Club, the Chester M. McPhearson Jr. Pier, the Mary C. O’Keefe Cultural Center, Ocean Springs Fresh Market, the historic train depot, Shearwater Pottery, Gulf Islands National Seashore, May Fest and the Renaissance Faire.



Communities

Ocean Springs at a glance

NATURE/RECREATION

Gulf Islands National Seashore: 3500 Park Road, (228) 875-0823, ext. 100

Public beaches, fishing, harbor/boating activities: East Beach and Front Beach

Gulf Hills Golf Club: 13701 Paso Road, (228) 872-9663

St. Andrew's Golf Course: Golfing Green Drive, (228) 875-7730

Walter Anderson Museum of Art: 510 Washington Ave., (228) 872-3164

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: Connie Moran

Ward 1 Alderman: John Gill

Ward 2 Alderman: Matt McDonnell

Ward 3 Alderman: Chic Cody

Ward 4 Alderman: Greg Denyer

Ward 5 Alderman: Jerry Dalgo

Ward 6 Alderman: James R. Hagan

Alderman-at-large: Troy Ross

City Clerk: Shelly Ferguson, (228) 875-4236

City Attorney: John Edwards, (228) 875-5400

Meeting times: The Ocean Springs Board of Aldermen meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday

of each month at City Hall, 1018 Porter Ave.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 1800, Ocean Springs, MS 39566.

OCEAN SPRINGS SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 2300 Government St., (228) 875-7706.

E.H. Keys Technology Center: 2401 School St., (228) 872-3411; grades: 9-12.

Magnolia Park Elementary: 3500 Government St., (228) 875-4263; grades: K-4; recent enrollment: 781.

Oak Park Elementary: 2230 Government St. (228) 875-5847; grades: K-4; recent enrollment: 708.

Ocean Springs High School: 2320 Government St., (228) 875-0333; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 1,708.

Ocean Springs Middle School: 3600 Hanshaw Road, (228) 872-6210; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 1,275.

Pecan Park Elementary: 504 Hanley Road, (228) 875-2851; grades: K-4; recent enrollment: 657.

Taconi Elementary: 711 Magnolia Ave., (228) 875-4367; grades: 5 (only); recent enrollment: 435.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEIGH COLEMAN

Sailing in Ocean Springs is a popular recreational activity.

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Communities

Pascagoula is a picturesque place to live

By MARGARET BAKER
mbbaker@sunherald.com

Long known as an industrialized fishing community, the Flagship City's picturesque rivers, bayous and Gulf Waters are main attractions for residents and visitors who come to the area to partake in fishing, boating and other recreational activities.

Residents and visitors say the natural waterways promote their interest in spending much of their time outdoors, usually on the sandy beaches throwing Frisbees, playing volleyball or even taking a stroll with friends or pets on a portion of the sandy beaches set aside for pet owners to enjoy.

Many residents take time to enjoy leisurely bike rides along the various waterways or to enjoy outdoor fun at the city's waterfront Beach Park, with additional recreational activities, including a Slash Pad and playgrounds for children to enjoy, all nestled amid large Oaks to provide the perfect mix of shade and sunshine.

A Katrina memorial is a featured highlight denoting in its presentation the rising water levels when Hurricane Katrina came ashore on Aug. 29, 2005, leaving most of the city underwater.

City Manager Kay Kell said a lot of people still don't think of Pascagoula as a waterfront community, though it's a gateway to some of the best freshwater and saltwater fishing in South Mississippi.

Since Katrina, the city has re-created its downtown district to include specialty shops and trendy restaurants that offer anything from local art to crafty collectibles and delectable coffee mixers.

The city has new and improved parks and sitting areas for local residents and visitors to enjoy and a newly constructed skate park that's always attracting newcomers as well as a historic pathway in the making, complete with scenic downtown streetscapes to add local charm to the area.

There's new events, including an annual Live Oak Festival, and a new senior center and recreational parks featuring lighted fountains for those nighttime strollers.

A new pier sits along Beach Boulevard, where million-dollar waterfront homes destroyed in Katrina are now rebuilt and lining the streets of waterfront community, and for visitors, a new bed & breakfast is open reminiscent of earlier days in the heart of the downtown district.

The construction phase for redevelopment of the city's Pascagoula Riverfront is under way along with efforts to build a new Beach Promenade pushing forward as well as the construction of additional boat ramps, and green space for casual gathering with picnic areas and other attractions.

"Pascagoula is a diverse city along the Mississippi Gulf Coast that offers unique possibilities for living, working and playing," City Councilman Frank Corder said of the community he has loved since childhood. "And our city is

poised for progress. Visitors to our city will leave impressed with the opportunities that are here, whether it be doing business, living or playing."

Many refer to the city as one that is family-oriented with a long-standing tradition of shipbuilding and pride in the industry that works to provide protection to the country as a whole.

Omigene Taylor Griffis wouldn't live anywhere else.

"My father moved us here when the local shipyard was growing," she said. "I've been here since 1942. We raised our children here. My house flooded in Katrina, and I lost everything but I'm still here. I like the weather. I feel at home in Pascagoula. It's a comfortable settled place to live."

Lorene Copeland, a resident since 1952, echoes the sentiment, describing as one that's "inviting" to newcomers with a "pleasant atmosphere for everybody."

There's also national attractions that keep residents and visitors coming to town to visit, including the young people's World Series sporting event that draws in hundreds of people every year.

As for development, the French Colonial-style Merchants & Marine Bank continues to be a flagship for downtown redevelopment, with the 40,000-square-foot building reminiscent of those on Jackson Square in New Orleans.

If that's enough, the city continues to trumpet its industrial might with jobs peaking over the years at Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, First Chemical and Mississippi Phosphates. Chevron's Pascagoula Refinery on the outskirts of the city in Jackson County also is moving forward with plans to double in size.

Coast Guard cutters are in place at the former site of Naval Station Pascagoula. And the city has been recognized nationally for its flood management efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Waterfront redevelopment plans are moving forward fast to include a mix of retail shops, restaurants and small business. The construction of the waterfront parking garage is already under way. And two alternative

housing plans offer affordable housing options for post-Katrina residents.

In addition, old public housing complexes have been redeveloped to include senior housing, a community center, retail shops, small business, market-rate town homes and single-family dwellings. The city also is moving forward with plans to develop a beachfront pavilion and marina along with walking areas at the Point.

Under construction or already built are first-rate condominiums along with new or renovated apartment complexes. Those who live and work here say the city's family-oriented atmosphere along with its natural bayous, rivers and Gulf waters continue to be the main attraction, with outdoor fun a common thread among residents.

There's also a birding pier, and the historic Jolly P. McCarty Art Depot downtown, which serves as an art gallery featuring the works of the Singing River Art Association. There's a specialty coffee shop, and the Old Spanish Fort, also known as the La Pointe-Krebs House, is set to open once renovations are complete.

Trisha Keen grew up in Pascagoula and isn't planning to go anywhere.

"I love the beautiful weather, and the local restaurants are good," she said. "The beaches are wonderful, and Pascagoula has good school system. It's home."

Other residents credit the easy-going nature of those who live here as one of the city's main attractions.

Katrina destroyed or damaged more than 400 homes and 1,000 apartment units in the city, resulting in an estimated 15 percent decrease in its population of about 26,000. Those numbers are starting to creep back up.



Communities

Pascagoula at a glance

Pre-Katrina population: 26,200

Background: County seat, named for a tribe of Indians, translated as “Bread People.” Its newest spurt of residents came with the location here of a Navy homeport, but Pascagoula got its big push much earlier from lumber. The old communities of Scranton and Pascagoula combined in 1910 to become a town. As the pine forest diminished, Pascagoula turned its eyes toward boat building and today has the giant Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, which fills many military contracts and is the state’s largest industrial employer. Chevron USA also has a refinery here. Other cities have looked to Pascagoula as a model city for a relatively inexpensive fix to the city’s water woes. Residents now enjoy bottled-quality water delivered to their taps.

Key road: U.S. 90

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Mayor: Robert H. “Robbie” Maxwell, (228) 938-6614

City Manager: Kay Kell, (228) 938-6614

Ward 1 Councilman: Robert Stallworth Sr., (228) 769-1470

Ward 2 Councilman: George Wolverton Sr., (228) 769-2823

Ward 3 Councilman: Joe Abston, (228) 762-4041

Ward 4 Councilman: Frank Corder, (228) 623-1236

Ward 5 Councilman: Jim Milstead, (228) 762-8645

Councilman at large: Harold Tillman Jr., (228) 235-0899

City Clerk: Brenda Reed, (228) 938-6615

City Attorney: Eddie Williams, (228) 938-6605

Meeting times: The Pascagoula City Council meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at City Hall, 603 Watts Ave.

Mailing address: P.O. Drawer 908, Pascagoula, MS 39568

PASCAGOULA SCHOOLS

Administrative office: 1006 Community Ave., (228) 938-6491.

Arlington Elementary School: 3511 Arlington St.,

(228) 938-6552; grades: pre-K-5; recent enrollment: 367.

Beach Elementary School: 633 Market St., (228) 938-6428; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 114.

Central Elementary School: 1100 DuPont Ave., (228) 938-6559; grades: K-5; recent enrollments: 263.

Cherokee Elementary School: 4102 Scovel Ave., (228) 938-6547; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 326.

College Park Elementary: 2617 Ladnier Road, Gautier, (228) 522-8829; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 373.

Eastlawn Elementary School: 2611 Ingalls Ave., (228) 938-6431; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 379.

Gautier Elementary: 505 Magnolia Tree Drive, Gautier, (228) 522-8824; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 212.

Gautier High School: 4307 Gautier-Vancleave Road, Gautier, (228) 522-8783; grades: 9-12; recent enrollment: 902.

Gautier Middle School: 1920 Graveline Road, Gautier, (228) 522-8800; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 487.

Jackson Elementary School: 3203 Lanier St., Pascagoula, 938-6554; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 279.

J.C. Exceptional School: 4311 Hospital Road, (228) 762-1457; ages: 3-21; recent enrollment: 42.

Lake Elementary School: 4503 Willow St., (228) 938-6422; grades:K-5; recent enrollment: 113.

Martin Bluff Elementary School: 1306 Roys Road, Gautier, (228) 522-8850; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 443.

Pascagoula High School: 1716 Tucker St., (228) 938-6451; grades:9-12; recent enrollment: 1,083.

Singing River Elementary: 4601 Vancleave Road, Gautier, (228) 522-8835; grades: K-5; recent enrollment: 434.

Trent Lott Middle School: 2234 Pascagoula St., (228) 938-6465; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 264.

William Colmer Middle School: 3112 Eden St., (228) 938-6473; grades: 6-8; recent enrollment: 572.

Area shopping developments

SUN HERALD

Here’s a glance at the area’s major shopping developments:

Crossroads Shopping Center — 15189 Crossroads Parkway, Gulfport. Just to the north and east of U.S. 49 at Interstate 10 in Gulfport. Power center featuring Cinemark Tinseltown theater, restaurants and stores.

Edgewater Mall — (228) 388-3424; 2600 U.S. 90 in Biloxi. The Coast’s largest enclosed shopping center at 900,000 square feet and nearly 90 retail shops.

Edgewater Village — 2650 U.S. 90 in Biloxi, across the street from Edgewater Mall.

Prime Outlets — (228) 867-6100; just to the south and west of Interstate 10 and U.S. 49 in Gulfport. State’s largest outlet center, with a full-service food court, a children’s playground, and more than 60 stores.

Singing River Mall — (228) 497-6910; 2800 U.S. 90 in Gautier. Indoor mall has a five-screen United Artists movie theater and more than 50 stores.

Lakeview Village & Indian River Plaza — Sangani Boulevard between Mississippi 15 and Lamey Bridge Road, just off I-110, in D’Iberville.

Shopping center with a 14-screen movie theater, The Grand, restaurants and a variety of stores.

The Promenade — 3821 Promenade Parkway; junction of Mississippi 15 and I-10 in D’Iberville; variety of stores.

Transportation

SUN HERALD

Airlines — Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport; located at 14035-L Airport Rd., (228) 863-5951 or (866) 447-8259, email flygpt.com; comand is served by five airlines:

AirTran; www.AirTran.com; reservations, (800) AIR-TRAN;

American Eagle; www.AA.COM; reservations, (800) 433-7300;

Branson Airexpress; www.bransonairexpress.com; reservations, (888) 359-2541;

Continental Airlines/Continental Express; www.continental.com;

Delta Airlines/Delta Connection; www.delta.com; reservations, (800) 221-1212;

US Airways; www.USAirways.com; reservations, (800) 428-4322;

Vision Airlines; www.visionairlines.com; reservations, (877) 359-2538.

Trains — Amtrak; Amtrak stations are located in Picayune and Hattiesburg. Call (800) 872-7245 for details and reservations; www.amtrak.com.

Interstate buses — Greyhound; stops made in Biloxi and Gulfport only. (Greyhound handles the scheduling for Trailways.) Biloxi, (228) 436-4335; Gulfport, (228) 863-1022.

Local buses — Coast Transit Authority; daily public bus service on the Coast via U.S. 49, Pass Road and other major routes. Details: 896-8080. Also a variety of specialized services for senior citizens and the disabled.

Taxis — Biloxi City Cab, (228) 385-7777; Gulf Coast Checker Cab, (228) 432-1824; Yellow Cab, (228) 396-5110; D.J. Shuttles & Tours, (601) 544-7539 or (866)466-3365.



PHOTO BY JOHN FITZHUGH
Mason Parrish, 3, of Hurley, left, and Lathan Smith, 3, of Pascagoula play on the beach near the new Beach Pier in Pascagoula.

Communities

Pearl River County: Small-town flair

By LEIGH COLEMAN
Sun Herald

The winding path of the Pearl River serves as a 116-mile boundary between Mississippi and Louisiana, in its lower reach near the Gulf of Mexico.

Pearl River County was officially organized in February 1890 on lands taken from Marion and Hancock counties.

The county is in the Picayune metro area with an estimated population of 51,835.

Officials say this was an increase of 6.61 percent from the 2000 census.

County residents are just 45 minutes away from the Gulf waters and the unique charm of New Orleans.

Most of the residents say the hometown flavor around the county draws people to the area.

Large open fields in the country, horse ranches and long walking trails provide a quiet lifestyle for residents.

"I have lived in this area my whole life," said longtime resident LaRue Mitchell.

"There are friends and family everywhere around me and the small-town feeling is great. Plus, we are right near New Orleans. You cannot beat the location."

Packed with history, the large county also has a claim to fame.

Country music band "Pearl River" named itself after this river.

Officials say Pearl River County is growing today at a great pace.

From its early beginnings in the 19th century the county placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of preparing its citizens for a better future.

Educators boast about the county's strides in technology in the local schools and the Pearl River Community College.

Dennis E. Penton has served in the Pearl River County School District as Superintendent of Education since November 2001.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE LACY

There are plenty of parks and green space to enjoy in Pearl River County.

Under Penton's leadership, he has prioritized services to support district efforts to improve student performance and accountability.

"This has included emphasis in reading and math, networked all schools in the district to provide Internet and technology access to students and teachers and ensuring safe school campuses," Penton said.

Penton said schools in Pearl River County are successful without cost to taxpayers.

The district currently has the lowest tax increase in 12 years.

Newcomers looking to spend their golden years in Pearl River County have the homes at Tierra Lago to consider.

The community of fine homes consists of hillside lots, surrounding a 38-acre lake.

Residents say the peaceful living, fishing and boating are just part of the leisure life at Tierra Lago.

Pearl River County is also home to many parks like Friendship Park, which hosts soccer and baseball tournaments, and Jack Read Park, which has the Picayune Farmers Market.

Another addition to Pearl River County is the Mississippi Army National Guard Armory and Readiness Center.

Pearl River County at a glance

Population: Approximately 60,000

County seat: Poplarville

PEARL RIVER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

*All offices can be reached by calling (601) 403-2300 or (601) 749-7700

District 1 Supervisor: Anthony Hales

District 2 Supervisor: Charles Culpepper

District 3 Supervisor: Hudson Holliday

District 4 Supervisor: Patrick Lee

District 5 Supervisor: Sandy Kane Smith

Regular meeting schedule: The Pearl River County Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. on the first, second and last Monday of each month at the Pearl River County Courthouse board room at 204 Julia St., Poplarville, MS 39470

Pearl River County Administrator: Adrain Lumpkin

Chancery Clerk: David Earl Johnson

Circuit Clerk: Vickie Harriel

Tax Assessor: Gary Beech

Pearl River County Sheriff: David Allison

PEARL RIVER COUNTY COMMUNITIES

Barth, Caesar, Carriere, Chinquapin, Crossroads, Cybur, Derby, Fords Creek, Hawthorne, Henleyfield, Hickory Grove, Hillsdale, Industrial, Juniper Grove, McNeill, Mill Creek, Millard, Nicholson, Nortac, Orvisburg, Ozona, Palestine, Picayune, Poplarville, Red Top, Richardson, Rowlands, Savannah, Sellers, Silver Run, Tyler, West Poplarville, White Sand and Young.

HISTORICAL PLACES

Bings Ferry, Camerons Ferry, Centre, Gum Landing, Jackson Landing, Kimballs Store, Leighdon Bluff Ferry, Pine Grove Station, Pools Bluff Ferry, Proctor Plantation, Riceville, Strahans Ferry and Yamacraw

PEARL RIVER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pearl River Central High School: 7407 Mississippi 11, Carriere, MS 39426, (601) 798-1986, recent enrollment: 923

Pearl River Central Middle School: 7391 Mississippi 11, Carriere, MS 39426, (601) 798-5654, recent enrollment: 834

Pearl River Central Upper Elementary: 1592 Henleyfield-McNeill Road, Carriere, MS 39426, (601) 798-2864, recent enrollment: 742

Pearl River Central Lower Elementary: 116 Alphabet Ave., Carriere, MS 39426, (601) 799-4519, recent enrollment: 712

Pearl River County School District Center for Alternative Education: 461 Burgetown Road, Carriere, MS 39426.

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Rev. Barbara J. Hunter, Pastor
19221 Pineville Rd.,
Long Beach, MS 39560
228-864-4248
www.lutheranonline.com/giclbms

 Sunday School 8:45 am
(not during summer)
Worship 10:00 am
Nursery and attendant provided
Disability accessible

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

Long Beach, MS
Fr. Louis Lohan, Pastor
(228) 863-1610

Saturday Vigil Mass
5:15p.m.

Sunday Masses
7:30 and 9:30a.m. and 6:00p.m.

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Q. Carr
8467 Canal Road, Gulfport
Located 1 1/2 Miles from Gulfport Seabee Base
863-6993

Independent Fundamental Baptist Church
1611 King James Bible
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Sunday Night Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday Night 7:00 PM
Nursery and Transportation All Services
Servicemen Welcome
Servicemen's Lunch Every Sunday at 12:30

St. Joseph Catholic Church

12290 DePew Road
Gulfport — 832-3244

Rev. George Murphy, Pastor
www.stjosephcc.com

Weekday Mass 8:00 a.m.
Weekend Masses
5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil
8:00 & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Holy Days 8:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Jarnes R. Curtis, Pastor
Betty Weaver, Associate Pastor

WORSHIP
8:30 am.....Liturgical Worship
11:00 amLiturgical Worship
11:00 am ..Contemporary Service

5007 Lawson Avenue • Gulfport
(228) 863-2717

Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church

228 S. Beach Blvd ~ Bay St. Louis
228-467-6509

Saturday Vigil Mass.....5:30 p.m.
Sunday Masses.....8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass.....7:00 a.m.
Saturday Mass.....7:30 a.m.

Confessions Saturday
4:30-5:30 p.m. or by appointment
Disability accessible

First Baptist Church of Windsor Park

6108 Washington Ave.
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

228-875-6870

Pastor, Eddie Lambert
Sunday School 9:45a.m.
Morning Worship 11a.m.
Evening Worship 6p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting
Services 7p.m.

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church (LCMS) GULFPORT

Dr. Jeffrey Dukeman, Pastor
1301 31st Avenue • Gulfport

864-6264

Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:45 a.m.

For a listing of Catholic churches in the Diocese of Biloxi, visit www.biloxidiocese.org or call 228-702-2100

Church of the Good Shepherd

5169 Eppy Ave.
Long Beach, MS
228-452-8318

Sunday Services 10:00 am
Sunday evening youth & adult groups 6:00 pm
Weekly Bible Studies

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228-832-2834

Sunday Morning Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship 5:00 PM
Sunday Bible Study 10:30 AM
Wednesday Night Meeting 7:00 PM

GATEWAY UNITED METHODIST

Corner of Highway 49 & South Swan Rd., Gulfport

228-832-0135

Sunday School - all ages, 10:00am

Coffee Time @ 10:45am

Worship 11:00am • Nursery Provided

Youth Ministry at 5:00pm

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www.gatewayumc.com



Bel-Aire Baptist Church, SBC

15080 Dedeaux Road • Gulfport – 832-1966

(1/2 mile east of Hwy 49/Dedeaux Road Intersection)

www.belairebaptist.org

Sunday Worship Service..... 9:00 am
Sunday School all ages..... 10:30 am
Sunday Evening Service..... 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Service 6:00 pm
Youth Weds. Worship Service..... 6:00 pm

Nursery provided for all services.

AWANA - September - Sundays at 5:00 pm

Upward Soccer begins next month - call office immediately for your registration info!

Communities

Picayune: 'Just like Mayberry'

By LEIGH COLEMAN

Sun Herald

Picayune is a peaceful city located in Pearl River County, which is nestled in the southern tip of west Mississippi.

Residents say the city reminds them of "Mayberry" because it is a place where everyone knows your name.

Located along the Hobolochitta Creek, which flows into the Pearl River, about 10,500 people call Picayune home for many reasons.

The wide-open plots of land form a city that has its rural atmosphere and hometown values, yet has its own cultural, educational and recreational amenities.

As a bonus, New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast and their cultures are less than an hour's drive away.

There are many surrounding communities that are within a 10-minute drive from the heart of Picayune.

The gentle rolling hills, clean air and water, and short winters contribute to an easy-going country atmosphere that makes residents and visitors feel right at home.

"I love living here because of the small town atmosphere and the safe feeling I have here," said resident Patricia Blanchard.

"Visitors feel right at home when they visit us. It is like a little Mayberry here."

Priscilla McQueen feels the same way.

As one of the managers of Seal's Market in Picayune, Priscilla McQueen believes Picayune brings people together.

"This city has people who really care about each other," McQueen said.

"Seal's Market is kind of a hub of activity for the area. People come here and they can see friends and sit and talk or grocery shop together while talking about the day."

Picayune is also somewhat of a "Bible Belt."

It has more than 30 churches representing all major denominations.

Residents say churches and church related activities are an important aspect of life in the community, and in large part contribute to the friendly atmosphere and hometown values of the community.

"It is close to everywhere you want to be," said resident Jeff Cassagne.

"New Orleans, Keesler and country living are all right here."

Leisure living in Picayune includes year-round recreational and cultural activities.

The city celebrates many festivals here, which include Poplarville's Blueberry Festival where you will hear local story telling, music and feast on many dishes using blueberries.

Other interesting opportunities range from out-doors

activities of hunting, fishing, golf and tennis, to cultural activities such as the "Picayune On Stage" little theater group that produces five plays each year.

The climate is one of the most enjoyable aspects of life in Picayune.

It allows year-round outdoor activities of hunting and fishing, gardening, or simply loafing under your favorite shade tree.

While residents enjoy a change of seasons, the winters are relatively mild and there are 246 days between the big frosts.

"We are a peaceful community where both personal safety and property are equally respected and protected," said longtime resident Ben Long.

"Picayune enjoys a very low crime rate and everyone feels safe and we look out for each other."

The Picayune Police force is composed of 34 individuals, 22 of which are uniformed officers.

Residents like to share the city motto with visitors: "A precious coin in the purse of the South."

The motto stems from a Spanish coin called a picayune by the French inhabitants of New Orleans, the city was originally chartered in 1904.

Then known as a railroad stop on the Norfolk-Southern line where steam engines were added for the trip north, up the steepening grade, the city quickly grew at the height of the timber boom as giant stands of virgin yellow pine were cut and shipped all over the world in the early 1900s.

The StenniSphere is located less than 15 minutes from Picayune, which offers exhibits and stage shows.

The Shay Locomotive was used in the lumber industry



in Picayune from 1925 until 1950 and is on display next to the Picayune Chamber of Commerce Building on Mississippi 11.

Residents look forward to the Picayune Street Fair every year.

The fair is held twice a year on the first full weekend of April and again in November.

The Street Fair draws in excess of 250 vendors from the local area as well as from eight to 10 nearby states, featuring crafts, antiques and collectibles.

Picayune at a glance

City Hall: 815 N. Beech St., Picayune, MS 39466

(601) 798-9770; Mon.-Thurs., 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Population: About 10,500

Slogan: New South, Old Charm

Mayor: Ed Pinero, mayer@picayune.ms.us

Interim City Manager: Harvey Miller, citymanager@picayune.ms.us

PICAYUNE COUNCIL MEMBERS

District 1: Larry Watkins, lwatkins@picayune.ms.us

District 2: Lynn Bogan Bumpers, lbumpers@picayune.ms.us

District 3: Jason Todd Lane, jlane@picayune.ms.us

District 4: Larry Breland, lbreland@picayune.ms.us

District 5: Wayne Gouget, wgouget@picayune.ms.us

Regular meeting schedule: The Picayune City Council meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall.

Greater Picayune Area Chamber of Commerce: 201 Mississippi 11 North, Picayune, MS 39466, (601) 798-3122

Picayune Main Street Inc.: www.picayunemainstreet.com

PICAYUNE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative office: 706 Goodyear Blvd., (601) 798-3230

Nicholson Elementary School: 1887 Mississippi 11

South, Nicholson, MS 39463, (601) 798-6309, grades K-6, enrollment: 511.

Roseland Park Elementary: 1610 Gilcrease Ave., (601) 798-6824, grades K-6, enrollment: 527.

South Side Lower Elementary: 400 S. Beech St., (601) 799-0683, grades K-2, enrollment: 238.

South Side Elementary: 1500 Rosa St., (601) 798-1105, grades 3-6, enrollment: 288

West Side Elementary: 111 Kirkwood St., (601) 798-3625, grades K-6, enrollment: 444.

Picayune Junior High School: 702 Goodyear Blvd., (601) 798-5449, grades 7-8, enrollment: 587.

Picayune Memorial High School: 800 Fifth Ave., (601) 798-1380, grades 9-12, enrollment: 1,101.

Communities

Poplarville: Southern hospitality and blueberries everywhere

By LEIGH COLEMAN
Sun Herald

The small city of Poplarville is rich in Southern hospitality, history and has plenty of blueberries growing in the fields.

Located deep in Pearl River County the wide-open spaces within the city limits makes for a perfect home for country living.

Residents say they move in and feel right at home.

The back yards are full of blueberries ripe for the picking.

So, blueberry pie, ice cream and treats are baked fresh every day.

The city of Poplarville also serves as the seat of Pearl River County and can be accessed by Mississippi highways 11, 26 and 53, and by Interstate 59.

It is located within an hour of the Coast, Hattiesburg and New Orleans.

Nestled in the lush pasture of Poplarville is an elite herd of cattle and horses at the 7L Farms and Land Company at Windy Hills.

Horse Haven is also home to 100-plus, top-quality Paso Fino horses.

From trail horses to the highest caliber of show horse, Horse Haven can meet any desire you may have to saddle up or catch a glimpse of real farm life.

The small city also plays host to one of the most popular festivals in the state.

The Blueberry Jubilee is an arts and crafts fair held the second Saturday in June of each year.

Located in downtown Poplarville the Blueberry Jubilee attracts about 10,000 visitors each year.

The event also features arts and crafts, storytelling, live entertainment, lots of food and down-home Southern hospitality.

Poplarville saw an influx of residents after Hurricane Katrina hit the Coast in 2005.

Resident Regina Koehn is one of the residents of Poplarville who was transplanted

from Pass Christian after the storm.

Her family lost their home to the storm surge and decided to pick up and move to Poplarville.

“I think the country living and small-town feeling is what keeps us here,” Koehn said.

“Everyone knows everyone else. Our neighbors are spread out, because there is so much land but we all take care of each other. It is a great place to raise a family.”

Poplarville, the county seat, can trace its history to 1879 when the first United States Post Office was established there.

The Post Office was set up in a store owned by “Poplar” Jim Smith, a local land owner, who got his nickname from the Poplar Springs Branch where he built his home.

Smith’s house was located behind where Gandy’s Sunflower Store now stands.

Smith’s son-in-law wrote the Postmaster General submitting the name “Poplarville” after the store’s owner’s nickname.

The name was accepted.

By 1884, Poplarville was approved as an incorporated town.

Later that year the city organized Poplarville High School, which added grades 9 and 10 to the graded school system.

The award-winning schools continue to attract newcomers to the area.

Jacqrin Clark competed in the Fatima Festival 5K Run in 2010 where she placed third in her age group and posted her personal best time of 27.07 minutes.

For her, Poplarville is a great place to run and stay in shape.

“I started running with my husband about two years ago,” Clark said. “I just fell in love with it. There’s nothing better than putting on my shoes and putting a couple of miles under my feet.”



One of the biggest attractions in Poplarville is its annual Blueberry Jubilee.

Poplarville at a glance

Mayor: Billy Spiers

City Hall: 200 Mississippi 26 East Poplarville, MS 39470; (601) 795-8161

Population: About 3,000

City Clerk: Jody Stuart (601) 795-8161

City Attorney: Martin Smith

POPLARVILLE ALDERMEN

Shirley Wiltshire (601) 795-2972

John Grant Jr. (601) 795-8415

John Sherman (601) 795-4827

Bill Winborn (601) 795-4291

Byron Wells (601) 795-6744

Meeting times: The Board of Aldermen meets at 5 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall, 200 Mississippi 26 East

Police Chief: Charlie Fazende (601) 795-4447

Fire Chief: Kris Foster (601) 795-2200

General Superintendent: Sam Hale (601) 795-8161

POPLARVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative office: 302 South Julia St., Poplarville, MS 39470

Poplarville High School: 1 Hornet Drive, Poplarville, 601-795-8424, grades 9-12, recent enrollment: 620

Middle School of Poplarville: 6 Spirit St., Poplarville, 601-795-1350, grades 6-8, recent enrollment: 523

Poplarville Upper Elementary: #1 Todd Circle, Poplarville, 601-795-8303, grades 3-5, recent enrollment: 498

Poplarville Lower Elementary: 804 South Julia St. Suite A, Poplarville, 601-795-4736, grades K-2, recent enrollment: 534

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Wiggins/Stone County offers laid-back lifestyle

By Rebekah Goolsby
SUN HERALD

A love of small towns and a shared spirit of community brings together the residents of Stone County and attracts the county's numerous visitors.

Both visitors and residents have a varied number of options when it comes to dining and shopping at local establishments.

Downtown Wiggins embodies the qualities of a small town with its eateries The Frosty Mug and Wintzell's Seafood & Steak House.

Tim Thibideau, current owner (along with his wife, Jan) of The Frosty Mug, reopened the restaurant after it had been closed for a year and a half.

Tim, who had originally moved from a small town in Michigan, raved about small towns and the different kind of integration.

"Everyone is more involved with each other, and they also support local restaurants because they know how important it is to have businesses that keep locals in town," Tim said.

The restaurant can be reached by taking South Magnolia drive off U.S. 49, and just south of The Frosty Mug on South Magnolia is Wintzell's Seafood & Steak House, owned by Henry and Joyce Wintzell and operated by the family.

Kim Wintzell, Henry's sister-in-law who is known as the "face of Wintzell's," said she loves the open hearts and attitudes of Stone County's residents.

"Being from a different city and moving here, my family was so well received," Kim said. "All the different communities of Stone County truly believe in loving their neighbors as themselves."

Back on U.S. 49 and traveling south you'll come across a former sawmill site, now home to the Sawmill Family Restaurant. The restaurant, built entirely

out of poplar, is a homage to the traditions of Stone County and serves home-style Southern cooking and boasts some peculiar décor.

An alligator carved out of a cypress log sits as a memento of a past Pine Hill Festival, the annual Stone County festival that features bands, antique cars, a talent show, a soapbox derby and an art show.

It was at one of these art shows that a Louisiana sculptor came to put on a demonstration of carving logs. The previous owner of the restaurant offered up a cypress log, the sculptor got to work and produced the life-size sculpture of an alligator that now guards the American flag in the Sawmill.

"It was one of the conditions when I bought the restaurant," Elaine Beckham said. "The alligator had to stay with the restaurant."

Besides the rich history of the county, Beckham speaks of the people of Stone County and their willingness to share and give to others.

"In a smaller county it's supposed to be harder to raise money for schools and charities, but everyone enjoys giving back to the community and helping for whatever cause they can," Beckham said.



Leaving the town of Wiggins and traveling further south on U.S. 49, leads you to McHenry, home of The Pecan House. Owned by Phyllis and Billy Shoemake, the Pecan House sells about 40 different concoctions, their No. 1 sellers being the praline pecans and honey roasted pecans. The store also sells decorations, gifts and gift baskets of their pecans.

"McHenry and Wiggins are really starting to grow together," said Phyllis Shoemake. "And they're growing in a good direction."

Shoemake said that even though fitness centers, stores and restaurants seem to pop up overnight in Stone County, it never

seems to lose the small-town atmosphere. She also talks about the Perkinston campus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, which has plenty of events year-round that helps bring together residents and visitors.

Outdoors in Stone County there is much to see and do. The county is home to Flint Creek Water Park and also a large portion of the DeSoto National Forest.

You'll never forget the experience of Stone County, the friendly faces of its residents and the quote, painted proudly on the wall in Wintzell's that embodies the county's character. "We might not have it all together, but together we have it all."

Stone County at a glance

Slogan: Unique is normal here.
Web site: www.stonecounty.com
City Hall: 117 North First St.
Wiggins, MS 39577
(601) 928-7221

Population: Approximately 5,000
Slogan: Working Together for a Better Wiggins
County Courthouse: 323 E. Cavers Ave.
P.O. Drawer 7, Wiggins, MS 39577
(601) 928-5266

STONE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

District 1 - Clark Byrd
District 2 - Daniel Harris
District 3 - Lance D. Pearson
District 4 - Wendell Patton, Sr.
District 5 - Dale Bond, President of the Board of Supervisors

Regular Meeting Schedule: The Stone County Board of Supervisors meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 9 a.m.

Chancery Clerk: Gerald W. Bond
Comptroller - Brian Ross; (601) 928-5266
Circuit Clerk: Kenny Hatten; (601) 928-5246
Sheriff: Mike Farmer; (601) 928-7251

STONE COUNTY COMMUNITIES

Perkinston, Bond, McHenry, Wiggins, Beatrice, Big Level

STONE COUNTY OFFICIALS

Mayor: Jerry Alexander
City Clerk: Johnette Cook
City Aldermen
District 1 - Darrell Berry

District 2 - Gene Alexander
District 3 - Derrick Gates
District 4 - Thomas Hall
At Large - Joel Miles

STONE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent: James Morrison
Superintendent's office: 214 Critz Street,
Wiggins, MS 39577, (601) 928-7247

Perkinston Elementary School: 40 Second St., Perkinston, MS 39573, (601) 928-3380
Principal: Tonya Bolton
Assistant Principal: Samantha Farmer
Recent Enrollment: 621

Stone Elementary School: 1652 East Central Ave., Wiggins, MS 39577, (601) 928-5473
Principal: Jackie Spruill
Assistant Principal: Inita Owen
Recent Enrollment: 787

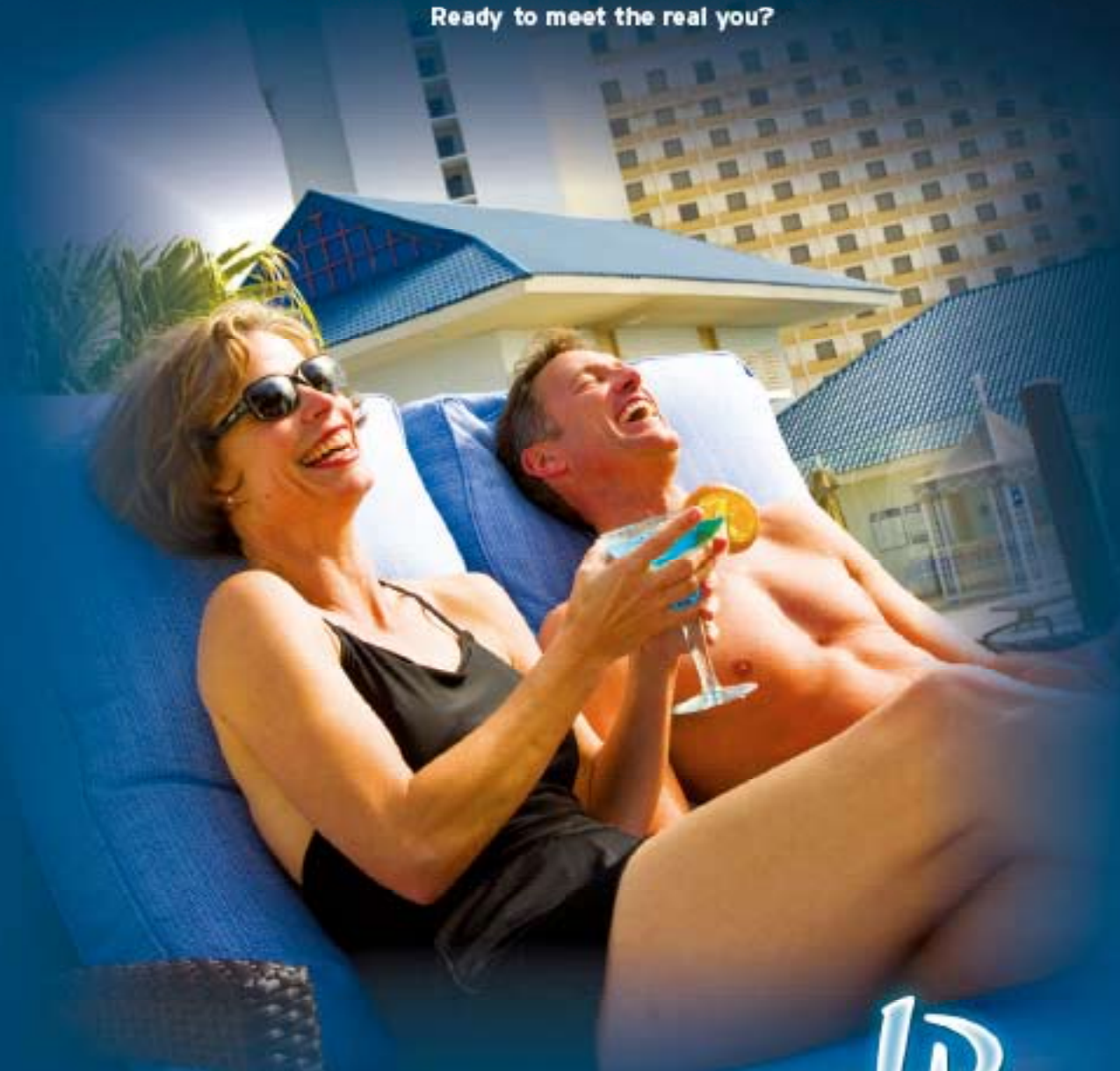
Stone Middle School: 532 Central Ave., Wiggins, MS 39577, (601) 928-4876
Principal: Mike Gavin
Assistant Principals: Laura Butler and Shauna Breland
Recent Enrollment: 645

Stone High School: 400 East Border Ave., Wiggins, MS 39577, (601) 928-5492
Principal: Hope Hendry
Assistant Principals: Adam Stone and Vanessa Dedeaux
Recent Enrollment: 769

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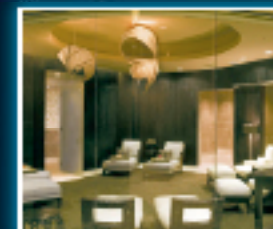
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