Rural Water System Assistance

- Water Board Management Training – Updated comprehensive curriculum for rural water system board members and coordinator of state health department mandated training.
- Peer Review System – Coordinator of Peer Review program that uses volunteer system operators to inspect deficient systems in an effort to increase their operational, financial, and managerial capacity.
- Customer Service Video for rural water systems developed to educate board members, operators, and other system employees in the proper ways to deal with difficult customers.
- Currently in the process of developing financial and managerial benchmarks based on primary data collected by MSUES and the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- Analyzing factors that should be considered in the consolidation of rural water systems.

Leadership Development

- Utilizing the Leadership Plenty curriculum to work with several different groups across the state including many health sector specific groups such as Medicaid areas of service, Mississippi State Department of Health field personnel, etc.
- Developing community leadership program curricula to be piloted in Oktibbeha County (home of Mississippi State University) and then rolled out to other communities in the state.
- Working with the Tri State Extension Initiative (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) to combine the best elements of several leadership curricula (including Leadership Plenty and Community Voices) to develop an exceptional curricula for limited resource audiences.

Health Sector Assistance

- Developed HealthConnect, a significant expansion of the Rural HealthWorks template with several new features designed to address the concerns of healthcare providers.
- More intensive market survey analysis provided to not only provide insight into what healthcare options that residents may or many not be using, but why they are or are not using those options.
- Integrated leadership development into the HealthConnect process.
- Develop health network and/or coalition strategic planning methodology used in HRSA/ORH planning grant.
- Developing provider planning and evaluation educational program using Kaplan’s Balanced Scorecard methodology.

Increased focus on general economic analysis

- Retail trade analysis
- Economic impact analysis
- Economic analysis of industrial waste products
Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Education Programming

- **Food Safety Training for Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Packers** – Staff from the Food and Fiber Center recently coordinated two training sessions to assist fruit and vegetable growers and packers in meeting customer requests for food safety certification. Areas covered in the one-day course were Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), good Handling Practices (GHP), Microorganisms of concern in production agriculture, Food Security/Bioterrorism Regulations, Food Safety Regulatory Agencies, USDA GAP/GHP Certification and Audit, and Guidelines for Developing a Food Safety Manual. Training manuals were provided to the participants.

- **Food as a Business Workshops** – Food as a Business workshops have been held in Greenwood, Brandon, and Starkville during the months of May and June. These workshops are designed to inform interested persons about starting a food processing business. Staff from the Food & Fiber Center presented topics related to marketing, profits and costs, labeling, legal issues, e-commerce, and business plan development. Representatives from the Mississippi State Department of health and Mississippi Development Authority also assisted with the training. Other highlights have been information about the “Make Mine Mississippi” program sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Ag and Commerce and personal testimonies from local retailers and manufacturers. A total of forty-eight people attended the workshops.

- **Central Farmers’ Market Consumer Survey** – The Food and Fiber Center recently completed a project for the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) to survey consumer awareness and acceptance of a new Central Farmers’ Market, to be located in Jackson, Mississippi, adjacent to the Fair Grounds. As part of the project, which was funded by a grant from MDAC, Dr. Ken Hood and Dr. Joe Jordan coordinated development of a survey instrument, distributed the survey, encoded and analyzed the responses, and delivered a final report to MDAC. The results will be used in developing marketing strategies and educating procedures planning to participate in the new market. The drawing above is a sketch of the newly designed building.

- **Garden Center Marketing Survey** – the Food and Fiber Center recently completed a marketing survey project for the Baddour Center, a residential community for adults with mild to moderate mental retardation. Through its greenhouse operations and retail garden center, located in Senatobia, the Baddour Center provides meaningful and productive work for its residents, as well as providing an important source of revenue for the Center. Working with Baddour administrators, Ken Hood and Joe Jordan developed a survey questionnaire to help management of the garden center better meet the needs of local customers. The results were presented at the Baddour Center in January.

- **Electronic Retailing: Selling on the Internet Workshop** – The 5th Electronic Retailing: Selling on the Internet Workshop was held in Meridian on February 18. Local sponsors included East Mississippi business Development Corporation, Meridian Community College Webb Hall, Mississippi State University Extension Service – Lauderdale County, Mississippi State University - Mississippi State University – Meridian Campus Business Services, Mississippi State University Small Business Development Center, and the Southern Rural Development Center. Ninety-seven entrepreneurs learned how to effectively use the Internet as a new market channel for their businesses. The Workshop was part of a USDA grant received by the Food & Fiber Center for ongoing e-commerce educational programs targeting rural small businesses in the state. To date 223 people...
have attended training sessions. Three additional workshops are planned for the fall due to the demand for e-commerce training for small rural businesses in the state.

- **Southern Bio-Products Conference** – the Mississippi Biomass Council teamed up with the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Alcorn State University to organize the Southern Bio-Products Conference held at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, MS, March 4-6. The conference was supported by a U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) award to the Mississippi Development Authority-Energy Division (MDA-ED). Other sponsors were Mississippi Alternative Energy Enterprise, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and Electric Power Associations of Mississippi. The focus of the conference was on products produced from biomass materials. The General Session brought special attention to new developments in federal bio-programs. Concurrent technical sessions focused on Feedstock Management, Biofuels, Alternative Chemicals, Polymers, Green Power, and Other Bio-Products. The Wrap-up session provided opportunities for participants to discuss new industry directions and opportunities for bio-products industries.

**Government Training and Assistance Programs**

- The Center for Governmental Training and Technology has led the development and implementation of educational programs for county and municipal officials with over 150 programs being provided each year ranging from ½ day workshops to 2 week certification seminars
- Provides specialized educational programming targeted to newly elected and appointed county supervisors, county board attorneys, chancery clerks, tax assessors, and tax collectors.
- Serves as the primary education and training resource to the following governmental associations:
  - Building Officials Association of Mississippi (BOAM)
  - Mississippi Assessors and Collectors Association (MACA)
  - Mississippi Association of County Administrators/Comptrollers (MACAC)
  - Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys (MACBA)
  - Mississippi Association of County Engineers (MACE)
  - Mississippi Association of Governmental Purchasing/Property Agents (MAGPPA)
  - Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS)
  - Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
  - Mississippi Chancery Clerks Association
  - Mississippi Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers
  - Mississippi Municipal League (MML)
  - Mississippi State Tax Commission
  - Municipal Clerks and Tax Collectors Association of Mississippi (MCCA)
- Provided Continuing Legal Education accredited workshops for county board attorneys.
- Responsible for developing and coordinating certification programs and the educational workshops associated with these workshops for:
  - Municipal Clerks
  - Assessment and Appraisal personnel
  - County Purchasing Clerks
o County Receiving Clerks
  o County Inventory Control Clerks

- Provided technical assistance to counties and municipalities in a variety of areas related to local government management, law, and practice.
- Provided website development and maintenance for the following local governmental organizations:
  o Mississippi Assessors and Collectors Association (MACA) – http://www.mstax.org/maca
  o Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys (MACBA) – http://www.MACBAnetwork.org
  o Mississippi association of Supervisors (MAS) – http://www.MASnetwork.org/mc
  o Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) Minority Caucus – http://www.MASnetwork.org/mc
  o Mississippi Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers – http://www.mstax.org/msiaao
  o Municipal Clerks and Tax Collectors Association of Mississippi (MCCA) – http://www.mscityclerks.org
  o Mississippi First Responders – http://www.msfirstresponders.org
  o Mississippi Civil Defense and Emergency Management Association – http://www.mcdema.org

- Provides the following major publications that are updated as appropriate
  o County Governments in Mississippi, 3rd Edition (2004)
  o County Government Legal Digest (2003; with Office of the State Auditor)
  o Mississippi Municipal Audit & Accounting Manual (2003; with Office of the State Auditor)
  o Mississippi County Financial Accounting Manual (2002; with Office of the State Auditor)
  o Municipal Government in Mississippi (2001; to be updated in 2005)
  o Mississippi appraisal Manual (1998; with Mississippi State Tax Commission)
  o County Election Officials’ Handbook (1999; with Office of the Secretary of State)