



April News and Updates

MEC: Education and workforce training go hand-in-hand

By Dennis Seid Daily Journal

Scott Waller was pleased, but not surprised by the fact that the vast majority of people in Tupelo and Lee County think the area workforce is being properly prepared for the future.

Waller, president of the Mississippi Economic Council, led the statewide MEC Tour through the All-America City on Friday.

As the MEC has done at other stops, attendees were polled on several topics. In Tupelo, of those polled at the Elvis Presley Birthplace, 79 percent said they believed workers were getting the training they needed.

“That number is probably the highest we’ve tracked anywhere in the state,” Waller said.

One of the key messages he brought was that career technical education was paramount. While the focus on it has increased over the years, the momentum must continue, Waller said.

Asking the audience what they thought was the greatest need and focus – a high school diploma, a four-year degree or career technical education – the overwhelming response (80 percent) was on career tech education.

Read the entire story [here](#).



Scott Waller speaks to the crowd at CDF's Wake Up Tupelo. Photo Credit: Daily Journal

Assistant teacher program was launched by former Journal publisher

By Cristina Carreon Daily Journal

In Mississippi, the teacher aide program started in Lee County in 1977. Under longtime former Daily Journal publisher, the late George McLean, assistant teachers were placed in the first-grade classes of Lee County schools.

“Lee County students were scoring in the bottom quartile in the nation on reading achievement at the elementary ages,” said former Daily Journal publisher Billy Crews, who oversaw the initial program.

At that time, Crews worked in a community service capacity for McLean. Crews oversaw the reading program, providing testimony of its results to Gov. William Winter.



George McLean

McLean invested approximately \$100,000 to hire assistant teachers for each classroom to support classroom teachers, increase time on task for students and to raise reading levels in Lee County schools.

Read entire story [here](#).

SECF Member Highlight

By Lewis Whitfield

*Senior Vice President, CREATE
Foundation*

Convening power is one of the greatest assets a foundation has -- by leveraging its reputational capital, funders can bring people from different sectors, and possessing different viewpoints, together for conversations that boost a sense of community and can even inspire collaborative action.

The CREATE Foundation in Tupelo, Mississippi, recently tapped into its convening power by [holding a summit for educators and business leaders](#) to discuss how schools in the region are addressing the needs of students and connecting them with jobs.

The foundation's senior vice president, Lewis Whitfield, spoke at the event. He said the summit aligned well with the foundation's mission.

"CREATE Foundation's Commission on the Future of Northeast Mississippi has been focused on lifting the personal incomes of the people of our region -- primarily by helping improve the educational attainment levels of our population," he said. "Community foundations are a great source of data on key issues. Moreover, they are uniquely positioned to provide a forum for nonthreatening discussion of these underlying data and the issues. We believe in being a convener and catalyst for these discussions, but we also realize that without cooperative community partners our effectiveness would be limited."



The summit has a long history. For more than a decade, the foundation has invited leaders from 32 public school districts in 17 counties to come together and examine the issue of drop-out rates while also spreading best practices. However, the foundation has also invited educators to bring along representatives of other sectors.

Read entire story [here](#).



WHAT DO A **BUSINESS OWNER**, AN **ECONOMIC DEVELOPER**, AND AN **EDUCATOR** SAY ABOUT A SKILLED WORKFORCE? SEE VIDEO BELOW.



WHAT SKILLS ARE MOST IN DEMAND?

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

Summer programs open health career exploration; Applications due soon

By Michaela Gibson Morris



This summer, students from middle school through college will have opportunities to explore health careers at North Mississippi Medical Center-Tupelo. To learn more, [click here](#).

New Albany schools recognize high schoolers accepted into paid internships

By Cristina Carreo



New Albany High School junior John Davis is active in journalism activities such as photography and videography, but the 17-year-old is preparing to intern with military systems company Hyperion this summer through a new internship initiative.

Through the combined efforts of area industries, economic planners, nonprofit organizations and the school district, Davis will learn about military technology this summer while getting paid a real wage, and will graduate with college credit.

Read entire story [here](#).

OUR OPINION: Region has significantly improved dropout rate

Dropout rates across Mississippi – and particularly Northeast Mississippi – have declined dramatically over the past dozen years, thanks to an intentional effort to combat them.

That includes the CREATE Foundation’s annual Dropout Prevention Summit, which brings together school district leaders from throughout the region to share ideas for getting students to stay in school and earn their diplomas. The event has brought a sharp focus on dropout reduction over its 12-year history, and data clearly highlights its success.

Since 2006, the dropout rate for Mississippi schools has been cut nearly in half from 17.6 percent to 10.1. Back in 2006, only eight of Northeast Mississippi’s 32 school districts had a dropout rate in the single digits, with 11 districts having a rate above 20 percent. Today, 25 Northeast Mississippi districts are in the single digits, only one is above 12.7 percent, and none are higher than 17.4 percent.

Read the entire story [here](#).



Northeast Mississippi Career Expo
In affiliation with Pathways2Possibilities

October 1-3, 2019

Sponsored by the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund at CREATE

BECOME A SPONSOR

Planning meetings for Imagine the Possibilities Career Expo 2019 have begun!
Mark your calendars for October 1-3!

Interested in sponsoring the event?
Contact Albine Bennett at 844-8989 or click on the button below for more information.

[ITP 2019 Sponsorship Opportunities](#)



Announcing the hiring of
Rebecca Nelson

Director of Volunteer
Northeast Mississippi



Contact her at
662-432-0158 or
rebecca@unitedwaynems.org

volunteernems.org

Why do you give?

Judy and I have been making our charitable contributions for years through our Advised Fund at CREATE - whether it be to the church, St. Jude Hospital, our high school alma mater or to unexpected needs such as tornado relief in Tupelo recently and in neighboring Smithville a few years ago. CREATE handles all of the details and paperwork and, most important, respects and follows our charitable wishes to the letter.

- Larry Kirk

OUR MISSION

CREATE Foundation is committed to improving the quality of life for the people of Northeast Mississippi through:

- Building permanent community endowment assets
- Encouraging philanthropy and managing charitable funds contributed by individuals, families, organizations and corporations
- Strengthening the regional community development capacity
- Taking a leadership role on key community issues and impacting the region through gifts and targeted grant-making

CREATE Foundation | 662-844-8989 | 662-844-8149 | www.createfoundation.com

