

## GIS Training Class At Delta State

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board has experienced rapid growth during the past 10 years in its mission to provide services to the communities in its 10-county district. Expanded services include land management, asset management survey, public education, policy management, and emergency preparedness.



Above: YMDLB staff received introductory training in the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) data collection and software at Delta State University Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information Technology.

In the spring, YMDLB staff received introductory training in the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) data collection and software at Delta State University's Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information Technology. The Center is under contract with the YMDLB to develop a five-year plan for the Board's current GIS system, and the training was part of Task One in the plan.

"The development of a five-year plan for the Board's GIS is critical to ensuring effective collaboration with rapidly growing communities within the Board's jurisdiction, various internal departments and sister organizations, and agencies throughout the region," said Kelly Greenwood, Board CEO.

The plan will evaluate existing YMDLB department needs and develop a framework to incorporate GIS software and hardware to provide greater efficiency in delivering department services.



Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District  
P.O. Box 610  
Clarksdale, MS 38614

### LINKS & PARTNERS

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District  
[www.leveeboard.org](http://www.leveeboard.org)

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers — Vicksburg District  
[www.mvk.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil)

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers — Memphis District  
[www.mvm.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil)

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers — Five Day River Forecasts  
[www.mvm.usace.army.mil/hydraulics/docs/nws/msrv3.txt](http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/hydraulics/docs/nws/msrv3.txt)

Waterways Experiment Station  
[www.erdc.usace.army.mil](http://www.erdc.usace.army.mil)

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks  
[www.home.mdwfp.com](http://www.home.mdwfp.com)

USGS National Mapping Information  
[www.nationalmap.gov](http://www.nationalmap.gov)

Mississippi Forestry Commission  
[www.mfc.state.ms.us](http://www.mfc.state.ms.us)



# The River's Edge

The official publication of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District **SUMMER 2008 Vol. 2, Number 2**

## Recent Flooding Of Mississippi River Wreaks Havoc River Reaches 10-Year Flood Marker But Levees Maintain Protection

A swollen Mississippi River wreaked havoc across the state in April, but levees in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District held firm.

The river passed the 10-year flood marker at the Tunica RiverPark, and the river rose above flood stage in several places for nearly three weeks.

Tunica County recognizes the official flood stage of 34 feet on the Memphis, Tenn., gauge. Since the historical flood of 1927, when the river crested at 45.80 feet in Memphis and the state of Mississippi became the scene of one of the worst natural disasters in American history, there have been 10 flooding events along the river to levels over 39 feet on the Memphis gauge. The latest was when the river crested at 40.76 feet on March 14, 1997. The Mississippi River crested at 38 feet this past April.

Tunica County Sheriff K.C. Hamp and Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board officials restricted entrance to the Tunica Cut-Off, closed the mainline levee to all but essential traffic, and State Health Department officials issued a Boil Water Alert to the community. Floodwaters claimed the lives of two Tunica Cut-Off residents, and the Tunica Board of Supervisors issued a Recommended Evacuation Order for residents in the community. Approximately 400 citizens maintain or live in properties



Above: The Mississippi River passed the 10-year flood marker at the Tunica RiverPark in April.

at the local lake that lies on the unprotected (west) side of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee in Tunica County.

An emergency shelter opened for Tunica Cut-Off residents who evacuated their homes. The shelter, which was located in Dundee with the assistance of the American Red Cross, closed after receiving no displaced residents. The G.W. Henderson Recreation Center in Tunica was also opened, then closed after no one

*Continued on page 6*

### INSIDE

Recent Flooding .....	1
Contact Information and Board Members .....	2
YMDLB District Map .....	2
Storm Damage Recovery After Tornado .....	3
Teacher Education .....	4
YMDLB Web Site Update .....	4
Colonel Smith Visits .....	4
Indian Bayou Cleanout .....	5
Washington, D.C., Visit .....	5
Legislative Reception .....	6
Recent Flooding (Cont.) .....	6
Scholarship Contest Winners .....	7
Supt. of Operations Retires .....	7
GIS Training Class .....	8

COMMISSIONERS

B. Sykes Sturdivant, *President*  
Tallahatchie County

Bishop David Cotton, *Vice President*  
Holmes County

Kent Haney  
Coahoma County

Robert P. Sayle, Jr.  
DeSoto County

N. Craig Brewer, III  
Leflore County

Bobby Rushing  
Sunflower County

David Williams  
Tunica County

Willie Gregory  
Coahoma County

Ralph Sewell  
Humphreys County

Jerry Caffey  
Quitman County

Clarence Cariker  
Tunica County

Caesar Felton  
Yazoo County

Kelly Greenwood  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Chief Engineer*



INQUIRIES TO:

The Office of the Chief Engineer  
c/o Kimberly B. Easley  
Secretary, Executive Assistant

TELEPHONE: 662-624-4397

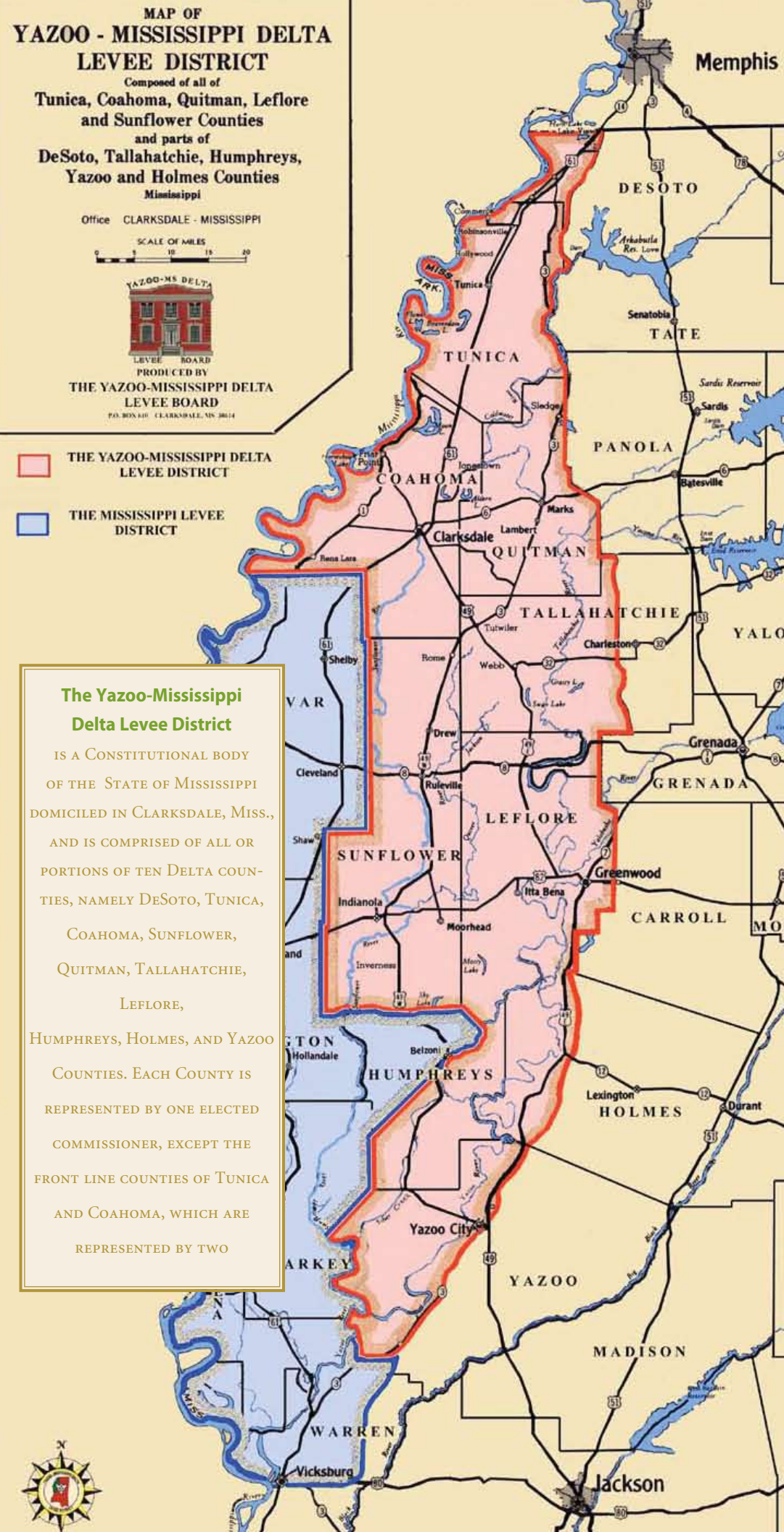
FAX: 662-624-2450

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 610  
Clarksdale, MS 38614

SHIPPING ADDRESS: 140 Delta Avenue  
Clarksdale, MS 38614

E-MAIL: ymdlbbellsouth.net

WEB SITE: www.leveeboard.org



# “The Beast” Cleans Up After Recent Tornado

## YMDLB-Owned Machine Used To Turn Fallen Trees Into Mulch

On Saturday, May 10, a tornado and straight line winds hit the northern portion of Coahoma County. By the following Thursday afternoon, workers with the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and Coahoma County road department were virtually finished breaking down the majority of fallen trees and limbs.

The task was so quickly completed with the help of “The Beast” — a specialized wood chipping machine able to convert trees up to 30 inches in diameter into mulch with ease. Owned by the YMDLB, The Beast was purchased in 2005 and assisted with Hurricane Katrina cleanup. Its primary mission on the coast during the months following the disaster was helping to clear debris from state parks in Hancock County to allow FEMA to locate trailers for temporary housing.

The YMDLB is the only public entity in the state to own and operate this piece of equipment — and it is the only one in the state with such a capacity to support the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Jamie Roberson, YMDLB emergency management director, mobilized 28 staff members, and in only one and a half days, debris removal in the town of Coahoma was completed, followed by work at Friars Point.

“I was very pleased with the work that was accomplished in the areas that were affected by the tornado,” Roberson said. “This was the first time to use The Beast since Katrina, and our staff knew just what to do.”

The Beast is housed in Rena Lara and requires an 18-wheeler truck to transport it to the work site.

In addition to saving time and manpower, breaking down fallen trees into mulch allows the wood to be recycled and reused by citizens of the community for flower beds and various other landscaping purposes.

The emergency management depart-

ment of the YMDLB is a supporting agency for MEMA, meaning that The Beast, as well as other equipment and manpower, can be summoned by MEMA in times of major disasters such as Katrina to assist with cleanup. The Board possesses nearly \$10 million of heavy equipment such as bulldozers, excavators, front-end loaders, and The Beast and helps assist with storm cleanup efforts in neighboring counties in addition to

the maintenance and repair work they perform on the levee system.

“The Levee Board commissioners and staff want to help fellow Mississippians in a time of need,” said Sykes Sturdivant, YMDLB president. “It is amazing how well-equipped for a disaster this team is, and we are extremely proud of their unselfish actions and tireless efforts to help citizens in our state recover.”



Top Photo: “The Beast” — a specialized wood chipping machine — converts trees into mulch. Middle and Above: Crews work to remove fallen trees and limbs in the northern portion of Coahoma County after a tornado hit in May.

## Teacher Education

One of the primary goals of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is public awareness and community service. Recently, the Board conducted a Business and Industry Education Day, sponsored by the Clarksdale Municipal Schools. Teachers from several



local schools attended the one-day seminar to hear presentations from YMDLB staff members Bill Sheppard, assistant chief engineer; Loris Johnson, education liaison; Reggie Sims, levee ranger; Jamie Roberson, emergency management director; and Tim Wilkins, public access manager.

## Visit Our Web Site

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently launched a new Web site, reflecting a new look and updated information with easier navigation for users. The Web site continues to carry pertinent information, including historical information, flood misconceptions,



and a profile of the YMDL district and commissioners. Updated information includes district maps, important news, past issues of the newsletters, and links to our partners. Visit [www.leveeboard.org](http://www.leveeboard.org) to see the new look.

## Colonel Thomas Smith Visits Levee Board



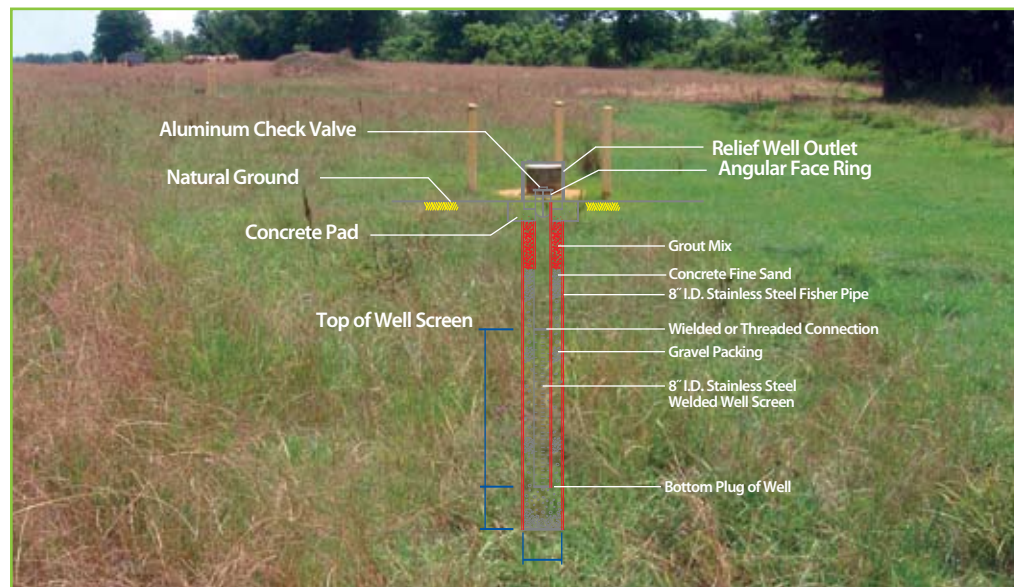
Above Left: Colonel Thomas Smith visits with Kelly Greenwood during a recent visit. Above: Colonel Smith visited portions of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District.

Colonel Thomas Smith, district commander for the Memphis District Corps of Engineers, recently visited with the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board to view sand boils and the installation of sack loops around several boils near Rena Lara in Coahoma County.

“The board has initiated a request for a new relief well project at the Rena Lara site,” said Kelly Greenwood, YMDLB CEO. “The treatment of sand boils consists of building a sack loop around them to raise the water level within the loop to a height sufficient to stop or minimize the discharge of material. A low place is left in the loop for a spillway on the side toward natural drainage.”

Smith, along with other Corps officials Dennis Abernathy, Ronnie Smith, and Patsy Fletcher, also toured the Board’s forestry shop at Moon Lake. Colonel Smith’s tour ended with a stop at the Hill House Relief well project to observe actively flowing relief wells.

## Relief Well Detail for 8" Diameter Wells



## Washington, D. C.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board traveled to Washington, D.C., for its annual appropriations meeting. Members of Congress were updated on progress and projects of the YMDLB.



Above: (l-r) U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran; West Higginbotham, agricultural legislative officer for Sen. Cochran; and YMDLB Commissioners David Cotton and Robert Sayle.



Above: (l-r) U.S. Rep. Leonard Boswell (Iowa, Dist. 3); John Paul Woodley, asst. sec. of the Army for Civil Works; and YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant.



Above: (l-r) YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant, YMDLB CEO Kelly Greenwood, and Cade King Clurman of U.S. Rep. Chip Pickering's office.



Above: (l-r) YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant talks with Karis Gutter in U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson's office.



Above: (l-r) YMDLB Attorney John Henson, President Sykes Sturdivant, CEO Kelly Greenwood, and West Higginbotham, agricultural legislative officer for U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran.



Above Front Row: (l-r) Kelly Greenwood, Sykes Sturdivant, U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, David Cotton. Back row: Mark Simmons, John Henson, Bobby Rushing, Ralph Sewell, and Robert Sayle.

## Indian Bayou Cleanout Project

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board assisted with the massive cleanup effort of Indian Bayou in Sunflower County. Using machinery supplied by the YMDLB, officials removed huge masses of alligator weed from the south fork of Indian Bayou between Westside Drive and the Alexander Avenue bridge. The short-term plan was to remove as much vegetation as possible from the troubled stream and then mount an aggressive control plan in the future. Indian Bayou is part of the Yazoo River System. Shown are photos of the clean-up.



# Legislative Reception

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently hosted a legislative reception at the Old Capitol Inn in Jackson. Shown are scenes from the evening.



Above: (l-r) MS Rep. Joe Gardner (Dist. 11) and YMDLB Asst. Chief Engineer Bill Sheppard.



Above: (l-r) MS Sen. Kenneth Jones (Dist. 21), YMDLB Consultant Stella Walker, MS Sen. Willie Simmons (Dist. 13), and Charlie Horhn, dir. of external affairs, U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson's office.



Above: (l-r) MS Sen. Eugene Clarke (Dist. 22) and YMDLB Levee Ranger Bobby Reed.



Above: (clockwise from front) YMDLB Commissioner David Cotton, Mary Cotton, Nellie Sewell, Ralph Sewell, Jessie Mae Rushing, and Mary Felton.



Above: (l-r) MS Sen. Lydia Chassaniol (Dist. 14) and MS Rep. Linda Whittington (Dist. 34).



Above: (l-r) YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant, Dawn Carson, and YMDLB Asst. Forrester Jeff Carson.

## Recent Flooding

(Continued from page 1)  
chose to use it.

“The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District has a long history of erecting, maintaining, and operating a system of levees to protect the people and property of the Delta from the damages caused by the elevated waters of the Mississippi River as well as interior rivers and streams,” said David Williams Jr., YMDLB commissioner for Tunica County. “The Levee Board continues to update its tactics for dealing with the region’s flooding issues, providing safety and peace of mind for the citizens in the 10-county district.”

The Board is constitutionally responsible for the constant preparation and improvement of plans for emergency operations of the mainline levee and interior



streams within the district, to better ensure these features are able to withstand maximum anticipated flood events and deliver their benefits to the citizens of the district.

“Flood control is a very dynamic process, and for 200 years the people of the Delta have made steady progress toward making a better place for themselves and future generations,” said Clarence Cariker, YMDLB commissioner for Tunica County.



Top Left: Rock Quarry. Top Right: Tunica RiverPark Museum. Above: Seabrook Blue Hole.

## YMDLB Sponsors Scholarship Contests



Pictured are: (l-r) Loris Johnson, YMDLB education liaison; YMDLB commissioner Bobby Rushing of Sunflower County; Shere Vere Walker, a senior at Coahoma Agricultural High School; and YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant. Walker received the first-place essay award and a \$700 scholarship to a junior college or university within the state of Mississippi.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently announced the winners of two 2008 Scholarship Competitions.

The contests were open to any high school senior in the 10 counties represented by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board — DeSoto, Tunica, Coahoma, Sunflower, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Leflore, Humphreys, Holmes, and Yazoo. Applicants must plan to attend a college

or university following high school, have a 2.5 or higher GPA and three letters of reference.

Students entered one essay by writing from 300 to 500 words on the “Economic Impact the Mississippi River has on the Economy of the Delta” or four other topics.

All entries were judged by a five-member panel representing the counties served by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board.

### Additional Essay Competition Winners — \$500 Scholarship Recipients



Winners also included Tallahatchie County residents - Jarvious Grayson and Jamekia Hillard from West Tallahatchie High School and Chelsey Kennedy from Strider Academy. They are pictured to the left with YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant.



Ruleville Central High School student Sarita Robinson-Ruffin also received a scholarship. She is pictured with Bobby Rushing, YMDLB commissioner for Sunflower County, and James Johnson, principal of Ruleville Central High School.



Winners also included Clarksdale High School Student Nakita Jones, who received a certificate from Willie Gregory, Coahoma County YMDLB commissioner; Lee Academy student Warren Huggins, who was recognized by Willie Gregory and Kent Haney, Coahoma County YMDLB commissioners; and Amanda Elzy High School student Sherry Green, who is pictured with Rev. David Cotton, YMDLB vice-president and Holmes County commissioner.

## LOOKING BACK

### Supt. of Operations Wayne Mabry Retires After 25 Years of Service



The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently honored Wayne Mabry, superintendent of operations, who retired from the staff after 25 years of service. Family and friends attended the reception. Pictured from left to right are: YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant, Trey McCullough, Becky Mabry, Wayne Mabry, Dwana McCullough, Jeremy Mabry, Amy Mabry, and YMDLB CEO Kelly Greenwood. Grandsons Ethan, Hunter Wayne, Jordan, and Tyler are also pictured.

