

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board President Sykes Sturdivant Receives Volunteer Service Award



Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board President Sykes Sturdivant was the recipient of Volunteer Northwest Mississippi's President's Volunteer Service Award. The award, established by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, was given to 25 outstanding volunteers from eight counties. Sturdivant has served as Levee Board president for 14 years. He is a long-time member of the West Tallahatchie Habitat for Humanity and serves on the Emmett Till Memorial Commission.

Dabney, a gray fox squirrel, lives in a tree behind the Levee Board Building and has become the official Levee Board pet.



Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
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Clarksdale, MS 38614

• HAPPY HOLIDAYS •

The
Yazoo-Mississippi
Delta Levee Board
and Staff
wish the citizens
of our region
a safe and festive
holiday season!



The River's Edge

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FEMA Map Modernization Program Arrives in the Mississippi Delta

In fiscal year 2003, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began a multiyear map modernization project of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) under the National Flood Insurance program with a total cost of \$1.6 billion as appropriated by Congress. These new maps are referred to as D-FIRM, which stands for "digital FIRM." This fall, D-FIRM are being presented to local leaders of six Delta counties that include Coahoma, Humphreys, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Sunflower, and Yazoo. DeSoto, Tunica, and Holmes County D-FIRM have been finalized and are effective.

D-FIRM may trigger a number of potentially disruptive and costly impacts for the local Delta communities. Included among these are:

- Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements to obtain mortgage loans from federally insured or regulated lenders;
- New floodplain management regulation (building elevation, flood-proofing, and area development and construction delays);
- Potentially irreversible property value and local tax base declines;
- Business relocation and job loss.



D-FIRM have been finalized in several Mississippi counties. Shown is a view of the Mississippi River near Robinsonville in Tunica County.

In rural, sparsely populated areas such as the Delta, FEMA is reluctant to spend the time and monies necessary to gather necessary information for generation of sound, correct maps. Two major components available to FEMA that were not considered in generating the maps, and which drastically affect the accuracy of these maps, is the newly available LIDAR data just released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the restoration of the Yazoo River System through the Upper Yazoo Project. LIDAR is the integration of three technologies into a single system capable of acquiring data to produce accurate digital elevation models. These new models are accurate within 0.2 feet, while the old digital elevation models

used by FEMA in their map modernization project are accurate to only 5.0 feet. The Upper Yazoo Project is a federally funded project which began actual construction near Yazoo City in 1976 and has progressed upstream to just south of Mississippi Highway 32 in Tallahatchie County. The project is designed to restore the capacity of the Yazoo River system to original capacities by channel width improvement. These new capacity improvements have resulted in lower river stages when comparing similar flood events from differing years.

The Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board claims that FEMA is ignoring the new technology available to it in the development of D-FIRM and that *(Continued on page 6)*

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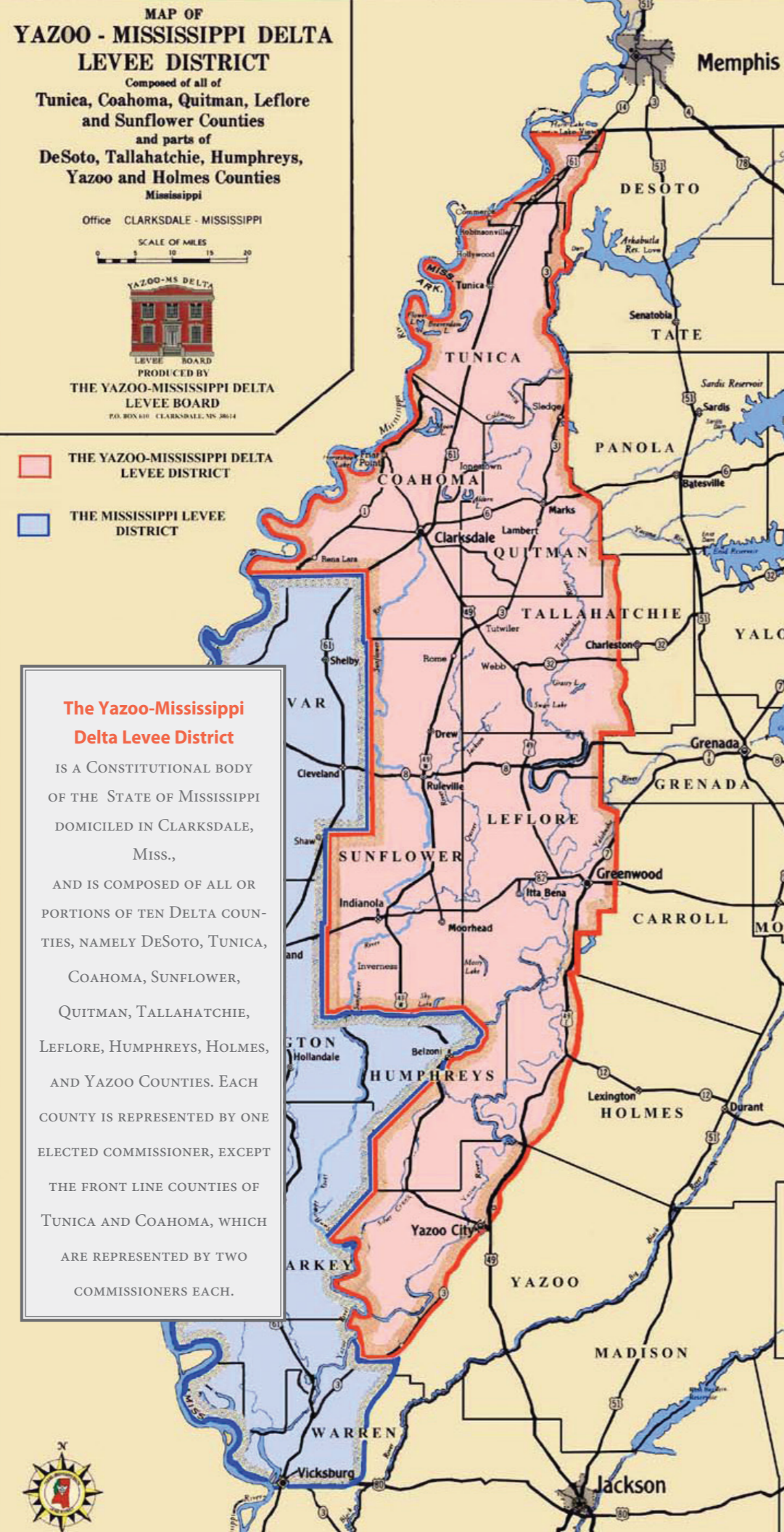
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The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
IS A CONSTITUTIONAL BODY OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DOMICILED IN CLARKSDALE, MISS., AND IS COMPOSED OF ALL OR PORTIONS OF TEN DELTA COUNTIES, NAMELY DESOTO, TUNICA, COAHOMA, SUNFLOWER, QUITMAN, TALLAHATCHIE, LEFLORE, HUMPHREYS, HOLMES, AND YAZOO COUNTIES. EACH COUNTY IS REPRESENTED BY ONE ELECTED COMMISSIONER, EXCEPT THE FRONT LINE COUNTIES OF TUNICA AND COAHOMA, WHICH ARE REPRESENTED BY TWO COMMISSIONERS EACH.



Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board Receives Statewide Forestry Award

Board Honored During MS Forestry Commission's Celebration of Trees Event

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board received recognition from the Mississippi Urban Forest Council and the Mississippi Forestry Commission during the annual Celebration of Trees statewide awards event last summer.

The Levee Board has partnered with the Mississippi Urban Forest Council for the past four years by providing seedlings at educational events held by the forestry council across the state. In addition, the Levee Board has provided trees planted by Urban Forest Council volunteers in areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina. To date, more than 315,000 trees have

been planted across the state.

Jeff Carson (pictured above far right), Levee Board assistant forester, received the award on behalf of the Levee Board. "The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is committed to bettering not only the communities where we live and serve but also our great state of Mississippi," said Sykes Sturdivant, Levee Board president. "Trees play an important role in the quality and growth of our cities and towns, including aesthetic value, flood reduction, and lower energy costs."

Sam Hobart, Levee Board forester, oversees the harvesting of 300,000 to

400,000 hardwood seedlings annually at a seven-acre nursery owned and operated by the Levee Board.

Out of this harvest, 60,000 seedlings are given away to public and private entities.

Working out of a nursery in Coahoma County, Levee Board employees are responsible for the growth and upkeep of nine different tree varieties, including persimmon, cypress, magnolia, cherry bark oak, willow oak, and water oak.

Hobart and his crew plant between 600 and 1,000 acres of trees per year to reforest Levee Board property.

Outstanding Maintenance Award



Pictured are (left to right) Kelly Greenwood, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board CEO; Sykes Sturdivant, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president; Col. Tom Smith; Melissa Mullen; Loy Hamilton; and Board Attorney John Henson (seated).

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently received the 2009 Outstanding Maintenance Award from the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Melissa Mullen and Loy Hamilton represented the Memphis District in the award presentation.

Helping Hand Award



Pictured are (back row, left to right) Shane Strider, Jeff Carson, Darron Banks; (front row, left to right) Garden Club President Eve Ann Boschert and Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board Forester Sam Hobart.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently received a Helping Hand Award from the Clarksdale Garden Club for assisting with the beautification of Clarksdale by planting flowers around the city.

Art Contest Gallery

Teacher Workshop



The Delta State University Delta Center for Culture and Learning conducted a three-day workshop funded by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. Fourteen Delta State teachers participated in the workshop on the Mississippi River and flood control. The workshop was held at the Levee Board offices, and participants also visited the site of the levee break, near Scott, that created the Great Flood of 1927. Teachers then created a lesson plan entitled "The Mighty River and the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board," to educate students on the impact of the Mississippi River and the role and objectives of the Levee Board.

Donahoe Honored



Pictured are (left to right) Sykes Sturdivant, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president; Bobby Rushing, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board commissioner representing Sunflower County; and Edgar Donahoe.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently honored Edgar Donahoe of Sunflower County. Donahoe has allowed the Levee Board the use of his pond in Sunflower County for three fishing rodeos, including those attended by students from Sunflower, Leflore, Holmes, and Yazoo County schools. The fishing rodeos are jointly sponsored by the Levee Board and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.



Best in Show — Aubrey Williams, St. George's Episcopal Day School, Clarksdale

Delta Arts Alliance Contest Winners

This year, the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board partnered with Delta Arts Alliance to hold an art contest open to any student in kindergarten through second grade who attended a public or private school within the 10-county district. Artwork was to include any mammal or reptile common in the Mississippi Delta. First through third places and one best of show were the rankings for each group. First through third place winners and the best of show winner and their classmates were treated to an all-expense paid trip to the Tunica Riverpark and Museum in Tunica.

Fishing Rodeo

Students and senior citizens recently tried their hands at casting lines at the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Fishing Rodeo. Residents of S.L.A. Jones Center in Clarksdale, along with fourth and fifth graders from R.H. Bearden Elementary School in Sumner and Myrtle Hall Elementary School in Clarksdale, were bused to Mile 78 Landside, one of 26 public fishing holes within Coahoma and Tunica counties, to try their hand at catching a prize-winning catfish. Bobby Rushing, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board commissioner representing Sunflower County, is pictured with volunteers and participants.



2nd Place — Shia Cooper, Walls Elementary, Walls



1st Place — Aliyah Haggan, Kirkpatrick Elementary, Clarksdale



3rd Place — Jennifer Garcia, St. Francis Catholic School, Greenwood



Winners and Participants

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board Fall 2009 & 2010 Essay Contest Winners

2009 — Students submitted essays on the topic of *Youth Leadership: Change Agents for the Mississippi Delta's Future.*

- First Place – Jonathan Davis – Yazoo
- Second Place – Malcolm McBee – Leflore
- Third Place (tie) – Jessica Smith – Quitman
- Third Place (tie) – Sha'Quana Giles – Quitman
- Nadia Gill – Tunica
- Aisha Saffold – Holmes
- Keiunna Thompson – Leflore
- Shemika Brinkley – Quitman
- Tate Collums – Quitman
- Kendrick Hoskins – Tallahatchie
- Shana Pinkston – Humphreys
- Dillion Lowry – Tunica
- Torian Watts – Quitman
- Tony Schnadelbach – Coahoma
- Kaila Peggs – Coahoma

2010 — Students submitted essays on the topic of *Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board, Then and Now: 126 Years of Flood Control.*

- Charnel Williams – Humphreys
- DeAndrill Smith – Leflore
- Justin Burton – Sunflower
- Nicholas Hurst – Sunflower
- Casanda Anderson – Sunflower
- Melanie Hughes – Sunflower
- Darrius Moore – Coahoma
- Jay Salter – Coahoma
- Quiondriya Gee – Coahoma
- Margaret Duhon – Coahoma
- Jennifer Ray – Quitman
- Chrisa Doss – Quitman
- Julian Crawford – Yazoo
- Stewart Bridgforth – Yazoo



Pictured is Jonathan Davis, student at Manchester Academy in Yazoo City and first place 2010 essay contest winner, with Levee Board Education Liaison Loris Johnson and his parents Mary Carol and Steve Davis.

FEMA Map Modernization Program

(Continued from page 1)

inaccurate maps are being presented to the public and will impact insurance rates and land use across the Delta.

“We have appealed to the United States Congress, FEMA, the CORPS, and the newly initiated Commission on Levee Safety about the potential inaccuracies of the new D-FIRM,” said Levee Board CEO/Chief Engineer Kelly Greenwood. “Several forms of legislation have been introduced in the House of Representatives to both delay map implementation and/or mandatory insurance purchases.”

The Mississippi Flood Map Modernization Initiative Team is conduct-

ing flood risk open houses across the state, along with personnel from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program requires that a community adopt the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps into a local flood damage prevention ordinance that meets the minimum standards as issued by FEMA. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in communities that participate. However, there is legislation before Congress to remove this

subsidy and force residents within the special flood hazard area to pay full actuarial rates for flood insurance policies. In some cases this could result in an annual premium of \$300 increasing to \$3,000.

“Using flawed or inaccurate maps to rate insurance premiums for special flood hazard area residents is totally unreasonable. The least that FEMA can do is use the most recent and advanced technology and science to develop the most accurate maps for rating flood insurance premiums for one of the most economically challenged areas of the country, the Mississippi Delta,” Greenwood said.

Drainage Channels Cleared in District 5 of Leflore County



This drainage channel in Leflore County was recently cleared by the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board has helped to alleviate flooding by clearing drainage channels throughout District 5 in Leflore County. Many of the channels were bogged down with silt and plugged with beaver dams. About 15-20 miles of channels were cleared, allowing the channels to take water away more quickly during heavy rainfall. Levee Board Commissioner Craig Brewer represents Leflore County and worked with county administrators and supervisors to approve the project. The Levee Board also helped the county by cleaning debris away from bridges in Schlater, a project that would have cost the county an estimated \$30,000.

Ditch Clean-out Project Completed at Rosa Fort High School in Tunica County



Clean-out at Rosa Fort High School has helped prevent flooding at the school.

The Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently completed a ditch clean-out project in Tunica County at Rosa Fort High School. David Williams, Levee Board commissioner representing Tunica County, coordinated the request for the project to help prevent flooding at the school. In 2005, the Levee Board cleaned out ditches behind the school, and crews have now completed clean-out of the remainder of the ditches, totaling approximately 600 yards.

YMDLB Assists with Fayetteville Express Pipeline LLC

Levee Board Responsible for Earthworks Portion in Coahoma County



The Fayetteville Express Pipeline LLC runs from Conway County, Arkansas, to Panola County, Mississippi. Shown are scenes from Coahoma County.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board assisted with heavy earthwork construction for a portion of the Fayetteville Express Pipeline LLC, an 185-mile pipeline originating in Conway County, Arkansas, and terminating at an interconnect with Trunkline Gas Company in

Panola County, Mississippi. The Levee Board built the earthworks portion on its property in Coahoma County to prepare the area for pipe-laying. After FEP completes the installation of the 42-inch diameter pipeline, the Levee Board will then go back and sod and seed the

surface for protection. The pipeline system is designed to help meet future energy needs, contribute to energy independence and stability, and stimulate economic growth. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.



Sunflower River Project Underway Near Clarksdale



The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is one of several entities contributing to the Sunflower River weir project, offering in-kind support of manpower and equipment. The Levee Board will assist in debris removal from the Sunflower River near the base of the bridge on Friars Point Road at Lee Drive (pictured). Logs and other debris were putting extra pressure on the bridge's pilings.