

Next Issue: Celebrating the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board 125th Anniversary

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the YMDLB. Look for the next issue of the Levee Board's newsletter that will feature historical milestones and detail exciting events.



Visit Our Website



The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently launched a new website, reflecting a new look and updated information with easier navigation for users. The website 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 to see the new look.



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

LINKS & PARTNERS

Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
www.leveeboard.org

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers — Vicksburg District
www.mvk.usace.army.mil

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers — Memphis District
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

Waterways Experiment Station
www.erdc.usace.army.mil

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
www.home.mdwfp.com

USGS National Mapping Information
www.nationalmap.gov

Mississippi Forestry Commission
www.mfc.state.ms.us



The River's Edge

The official publication of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District **SPRING 2009 Vol. 3, Number 1**

YMDLB Remains Committed To Education Board Offers a Myriad of Opportunities for Students and Teachers

Almost 50,000 students are enrolled in public schools in the 10-county district of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. Combined with students attending private schools and those being homeschooled, the total climbs even higher.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board has made a commitment to educate both students and teachers on levee functions, flood control, and the history and responsibilities of the YMDLB. The board has also made it a top priority to help teachers make learning fun by offering essay contests, field trips, and other school outings.

"The board strives to educate youth, who in turn educate their parents, which creates a positive cycle," said Reggie Barnes, YMDLB education consultant. "Loris Johnson, education liaison, and I work hand-in-hand with the board to encourage citizens to take an active role in furthering their understanding of the levees."

One program that Barnes says is extremely popular among students is the fishing rodeo sponsored by the Levee Board in conjunction with Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. More than 250 students participated in the fishing rodeos held last year — one in the spring and one in the fall. Students



Above: Students and Levee Board staff members participate in a fishing rodeo.

from Coahoma County schools 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.

"Many of these young men and women have never held a rod and reel, much less baited a hook," said Sykes Sturdivant, president, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. "Through this partnership, we hope to influence these children's lives for

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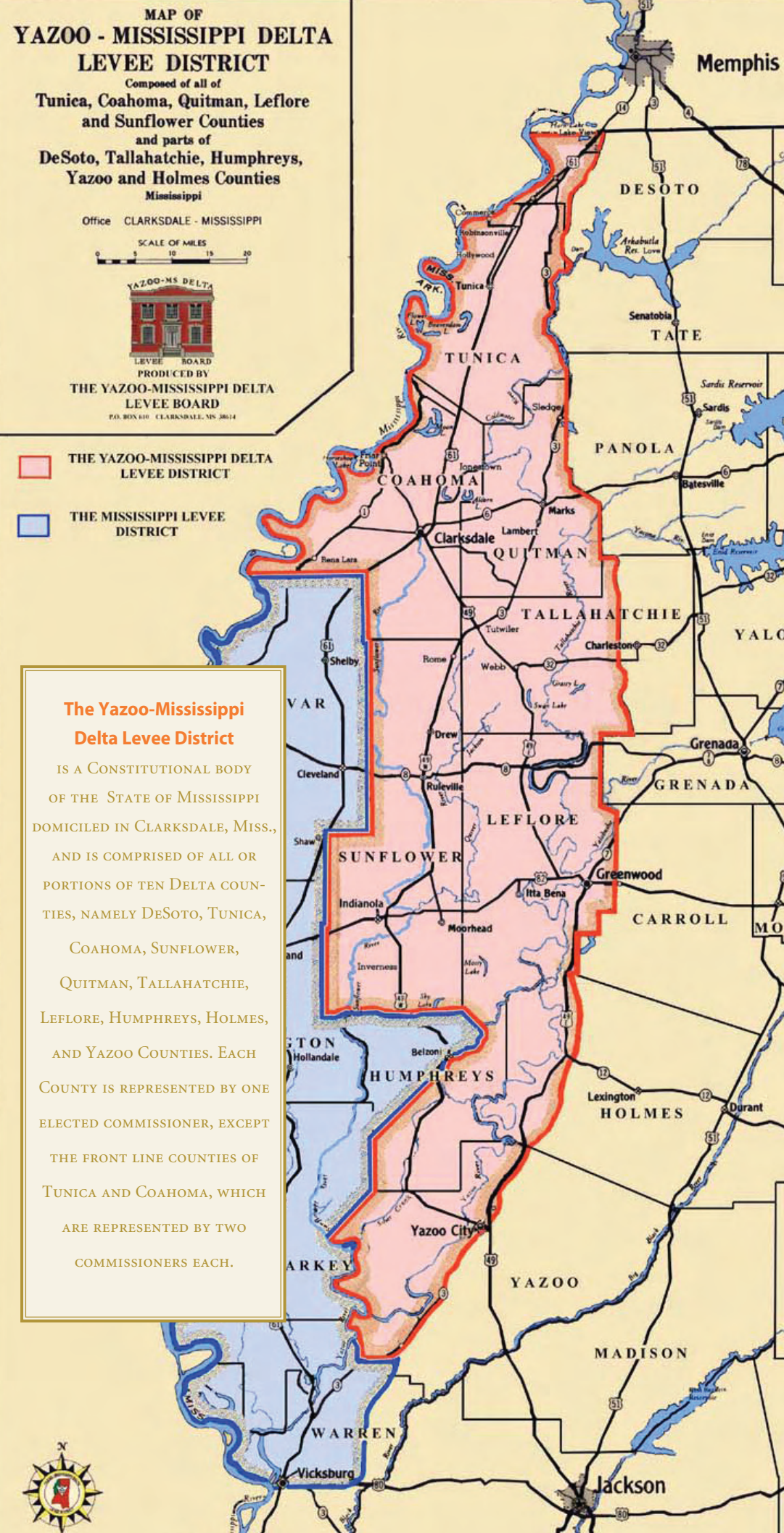
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The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District
IS A CONSTITUTIONAL BODY OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DOMICILED IN CLARKSDALE, MISS., AND IS COMPRISED OF ALL OR PORTIONS OF TEN DELTA COUNTIES, NAMELY DESOTO, TUNICA, COAHOMA, SUNFLOWER, QUITMAN, TALLAHATCHIE, 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.



Above: Teachers attend the Levee Education workshop, held each year since 2005 at Delta State University.

Teachers Learn About the Levee

YMDLB Partners with Delta State to Offer Teacher Workshop

If rivers could talk, their words would fill the pages of numerous books.

From the evolution of the levee system to the break of 1927, the rivers are rich in history, and the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board wants to make sure that history is known.

Through its Levee Education Workshop for Teachers, teachers of grades K-12 have met every summer since 2005 to gain experience on the function of the YMDLB, levee history, and how levee maintenance is important to everyone in the region.

Dr. Luther Brown with the Delta Center for Cultural Learning at Delta State oversees the program. Teachers are allowed to apply for scholarships to cover room and board during their stay. The workshops are comprised of presentations on the significance of the Levee Board, creating a curriculum for their respective classrooms, and seeing the historic site where the levee broke.

“The levee break of 1927 was truly a defining moment not only in American

history but in Delta history,” Brown said.

Reggie Barnes, education consultant to the YMDLB, says that the gist of the Levee Board’s education committee is to educate the public on why the board exists and what it means to the community.

“Most voters were not even aware that there were elections for the YMDLB commissioners,” Barnes said. “So a campaign was started involving school teachers to educate students on the basics of the levee: the history of them, how they work, and what part the river plays.”

According to Barnes, approximately 18 teachers participated in the three-day workshop its first summer. In 2006, with funding from the National Geographic Society, the workshop was expanded to 20 days. In 2007 and 2008, it went back to its original three-day status.

“The workshops are a good tool to provide teachers information that is disseminated to the students who in turn educate their parents,” Barnes said. “This is how we are able to flow information

out into the community.”

To effectively reach the students, teachers are divided into groups to create potential lesson plans for use in their classrooms.

“Each module should be approximately one classroom session long and should engage students in learning about the river and the Levee Board, while being as interactive as possible,” Brown said. “They should identify specific learning outcomes and explain how learning will be measured. They should also include a complete lesson plan that can be followed successfully by all teachers.”

At the end of the program, one lesson plan is chosen to be implemented.

“Feedback from the teachers about this program has been extremely positive, and we think that the program will definitely grow as it progresses,” Barnes said.

For more information on the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board Workshop, contact Loris Johnson, education liaison, at 662-624-4397.

Scholarship Winner



Shernikio Bellamy, senior at Coahoma County High School, was recognized at the February Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board meeting. Bellamy received a \$700 college scholarship from the board for her essay entitled, "We Would Not Exist Without It," which won a recent competition held by the board. Pictured above are (L to R) **Lisa Dixon**, history teacher at Coahoma County High School; **Sykes Sturdivant**, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president; **Bellamy**; and **Bishop David Cotton**, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board vice-president.

Educational Workshops

(Continued from page 1)

the better by giving them the chance to try a new experience, one they might enjoy and pursue on their own."

YMDLB members and staff and MDWFP employees volunteer at these events, and the board hopes to make these outings bi-annual events.

The YMDLB also finances tours for students in the third through 12th grades within the 10 counties served. Students and teachers visit the YMDLB office, ride on an actual levee, and tour the Tunica RiverPark and Museum. Lunch is provided to all students and chaperones, and transportation costs are covered. Thus far, during the 2008-2009 school year, the board has provided 10 tours and served more than 400 students.

"The levee tours play such a tremendous role in educating students on the history and make-up of the levees in our area," Johnson said. "The students are able to see, hands-on, such an important aspect of their heritage and their hometowns."

The Levee Board also sponsors scholarship essay competitions and has awarded more than \$15,000 to 12th grade students in the district.

The YMDLB's involvement does not stop at the student level. The board has also partnered with the Delta Cultural Center at Delta State University to create a teachers' workshop, held each summer since 2005. Dr. Luther Brown, of the Delta Center for Cultural Learning at Delta State University, and his staff compile information that is structured around the Mississippi Delta and its inhabitants. (See story on page 3).

Plans for involvement in education within the community are ongoing. "We have many exciting projects in the works," Sturdivant said. "The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board will continue to make education within our schools and our community a top priority."



Above: Hunter Morris, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board District crewman, helps a Coahoma County student unhook her fish at a recent fishing rodeo.

Commissioners Recognized for Years of Dedication and Service

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently recognized three commissioners for their dedication and years of service. Jerry Caffey of Quitman County served as commissioner for 35 years; Ceasar Felton of Yazoo County, for eight years; and Kent Haney of Coahoma County, for four years. "We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to these three citizens for their years of public service supporting the efforts of providing flood protection to the Mississippi Delta," said Sykes Sturdivant, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president. "They were all faithful and diligent in their attendance and participation in meetings



Above: Jerry Caffey of Quitman County. Above Right: Ceasar Felton of Yazoo County. Right: Kent Haney of Coahoma County.



All are pictured with Sykes Sturdivant, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president.

and constantly provided insight and wisdom to the board."



Resolution Adopted for Ollie Mohamed

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently recognized the life and work of the late Ollie Mohamed by adopting a resolution in his honor. The former state senator represented Holmes, Humphreys, and Yazoo counties for more than 20 years during different terms beginning in 1964. A veteran of World War II, Senator Mohamed exemplified a high standard in his many roles as a leader in the Mississippi Delta. "Senator Mohamed supported the flood control works in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District, and the Board of Levee Commissioners — as well as the citizens of the entire Mississippi Delta —



Pictured at left are family members of Ollie Mohamed and Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board members (L to R seated) Susan Watson, Annell Mohamed, Lee Ann Moore, (back row) YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant, David Mohamed, Sarah Goldberg, Tom Moore, Ollie Mohamed Jr., Liz Rogers and YMDLB Vice-President Bishop David Cotton.

Pictured below is YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant and Annell Mohamed.

benefited from his service," said Sykes Sturdivant, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board president. "The entire board commends him for his role as an outstanding citizen and offers our sympathy to his family for loss."



Legislative Reception

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board recently hosted a legislative reception at the Old Capital Inn in Jackson, Mississippi.



Above: (l-r) YMDLB Assistant Engineer Bill Sheppard, Commissioner Bobby Rushing, and Commissioner Ralph Sewell.



Above: (l-r) YMDLB President Sykes Sturdivant, Representative Greg Ward, and Cindy Sturdivant.



Above: (l-r) Commissioner Bobby Rushing, Senator Hillman Frazier, and Stella Walker.



Above: (l-r) Charles Barron and Representative Joe Gardner.



Above: (l-r) Representative Dirk Dedeaux and Representative Larry Byrd.



Above: (l-r) Senator W. Briggs Hopson, Senator Alan Nunnelee, and YMDLB Environmental Specialist Richard Herring.

Daffodils Donated to Garden Club

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board Forestry Department recently donated its time to the Clarksdale Garden Club. Levee Board employees helped club members plant more than 1,200 daffodils around the city, including the downtown area. “We were happy to donate the use of our equipment—as well as our manpower,” said Sam Hobart, YMDLB forestry director. “We appreciate the donation that the Garden Club made to make our town a more beautiful place, so it was only fitting that we help out.”



Left: A member of the Clarksdale Garden Club plants a daffodil bulb in the downtown area.



Right: Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board staff members drill holes for the Garden Club.



Sunflower River Cleaning

“The Beast” Put To Work



“The Beast” and other machines were recently used to help clear the banks of the Sunflower River in Clarksdale.

Last summer, the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board cleared the banks of the Sunflower River between Second Street and State Street in Clarksdale. To take care of the fallen trees and brush piles, the Levee Board used The Beast, the specialized wood chipping machine that the board purchased in 2005. The Beast was first used to assist with Hurricane Katrina cleanup on the coast and again in May in Northern Coahoma County after a tornado and straight line wind left

downed trees and limbs.

The Beast left piles of wood chips reaching nearly 20 feet in height along the banks of the Sunflower River. “City commissioners were grateful for our efforts and passed a motion at their July meeting thanking us for our assistance,” said Kelly Greenwood, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board CEO. “They hoped that through efforts such as this, the Sunflower River could be better utilized and an asset to the area.”

New Board Members

Three Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board members were recently elected.



William H. Dodd Jr., Yazoo County



Fred Robinzine Jr., Quitman County



Ted Winters Sr., Coahoma County