

FOR MEMBERS OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OF MISSISSIPPI

TODAY

IN MISSISSIPPI

Empowering *Young Minds*

COMMUNITY GRANT
WINNERS

PICTURE THIS:
FAMILY FEASTS

BISCUITS
AND ROLLS

JANUARY 2026

NEWEST FLEET ALONG THE FLORIDA COAST



AMERICAN BUILT FOR AMERICA'S WATERWAYS

Set sail on a 9-day all-inclusive journey aboard our fleet of new small ships designed specifically to navigate the Florida Gulf Coast & Keys. With up to 130 guests, you'll enjoy an intimate onboard experience and the most spacious staterooms in the industry, each featuring a private balcony, perfect for enjoying the ever-changing scenery. Relax in elegant lounges and inviting social spaces as the tropical landscapes unfold before you—from sun-kissed St. Petersburg to the Caribbean flair of Key West, and the tranquil riverfront of Punta Gorda.

Call today for your FREE Cruise Guide
800-459-2596

Leadership for generations to come

We made it to another year. That means it's time for our annual legislative issue.

As a result of this special issue, readers can find the names and faces of the state senators and representatives who represent them in Jackson on the local pages of our publication.

For our cover story this month, we visited with Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson.

You'll notice that Watson's party affiliation is not mentioned in the story. He's a Republican for those that don't know. We didn't get into his political leanings because the story is not about politics.

Instead, we wanted to focus on something close to Watson's heart — youth leadership.

Helping to inform and educate Mississippi's future leaders is something that is near and dear to the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi (ECM) as well.

For more than 35 years, ECM has put on the Cooperative Youth Leaders program. Electric co-ops from all over Mississippi sponsor high school juniors, so they can learn about the cooperative business model, grow in their leadership qualities, and experience the democratic process at the state and federal levels by visiting the Mississippi and U.S. capital cities.

The students spend three days in Jackson in February for the Cooperative Youth Leaders Workshop and earn an all-expenses paid tour

of Washington, D.C., in June for seven days.

Watson has been a guest speaker at the workshop and participated in Cooperative Youth Leaders programs at local co-ops during his time as a public servant in state government.

As the Secretary of State, Watson also runs the department's Student Ambassador program, which exposes Mississippi high school students to voter education and civic awareness.

In the story, Watson explains how his own youth and background informed his future decisions about a profession and a desire to serve the public.

Watson and ECM's goal is one and the same — to assure Mississippi's youth give back to their home state and, through leadership, help make it a special place for generations to come.

Happy New Year from the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi!

We hope you enjoy the issue. 



by Michael
Callahan

*Executive Vice President/CEO
Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi*



Next in Picture This:

Generations



Send us a photo of grandparents with their grandchildren. At whatever age. The photos must be high-resolution JPG files of at least 1 MB in size. Please send the photo as an attachment to an email and send it to news@ecm.coop. Each entry must be accompanied by photographer or sender's name, address, and co-op.

Each entry must be accompanied by photographer or sender's name, address, and co-op.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Feb. 27. Select photos will appear in the April 2026 issue.

In This Issue



6 Southern Gardening

Camellias brighten any landscape

8 Outdoors Today

Bunny busters

10 Scene Around the 'Sip

Powering Possibilities grants celebrate community volunteers



15 Local News

20 Feature

Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson helps mold future leaders



26 Picture This

Family feasts

28 On the Menu

The biscuit variations

31 Mississippi Seen

Looking back through a filter of years

TODAY

IN MISSISSIPPI

The Official Publication of the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi

Vol. 79 No. 1

OFFICERS

Brian Long - **President**

Shawn Edmondson - **First Vice President**

Brian Clark - **Second Vice President**

Jeff Bowman - **Secretary/Treasurer**

Michael Callahan - **Executive Vice President/CEO**

EDITORIAL STAFF

Lydia Walters - **VP, Communications**

Steven Ward - **Editor**

Chad Calcote - **Creative Director**

Kevin Wood - **Graphic Designer**

Alan Burnitt - **Graphic Designer**

Jill Sowell - **Graphic Designer**

Whitley Daughtry - **Graphic Designer**

Chris Alexander - **Member Services Coordinator**

Andy Tuccio - **Media Solutions Director**

Steve Temple - **Social Media Director**

Julienne Sones - **Communication Assistant**

EDITORIAL OFFICE & ADVERTISING – 601-605-8600
For delivery questions or issues, call your local co-op.

Acceptance of advertising by *Today in Mississippi* does not imply endorsement of the advertised product or services by the publisher or Mississippi's electric power associations. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser.

• National advertising representative:
American MainStreet Publications, 800-626-1181

Circulation of this issue: 461,157

Non-member subscription price: \$9.50 per year.

Today in Mississippi (ISSN 1052-2433) is published 12 times a year by Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi Inc., P.O. Box 3300, Ridgeland, MS 39158-3300, or 665 Highland Colony Parkway, Ridgeland, MS 39157. Phone 601-605-8600. Periodical postage paid at Ridgeland, MS, and additional office. The publisher (and/or its agent) reserves the right to refuse or edit all advertising. The magazine is published for members of subscribing co-ops. The magazine is a benefit of membership.

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 507.1.5.2)

NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Electronic address returns requested.



www.facebook.com/TodayinMississippi



www.todayinmississippi.com



On the cover

Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson.
Photo provided by Watson's staff.

TODAY IN MISSISSIPPI IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Central Electric Power Association, Coahoma Electric Power Association, Coast Electric Power Association, Delta Electric Power Association, Dixie Electric Power Association, East Mississippi Electric Power Association, 4-County Electric Power Association, Magnolia Electric Power, Monroe County Electric Power Association, Natchez Trace Electric Power Association, North East Mississippi Electric Power Association, Northcentral Electric Cooperative, Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association, Pontotoc Electric Power Association, Singing River Electric, Southern Pine Electric, Southwest Electric, Tippah Electric Power Association, Twin County Electric Power Association, and Yazoo Valley Electric Power Association.

WARNING - WARNING - WARNING

If Your Hands, Arms, Feet, or Legs Are Numb - If You Feel Shooting or Burning Pain or An Electric Sensation - You Are at Risk Don't Let Creeping Nerve Death Ruin Your Life

Get The Help You Need - Here's What You Need to Know...

Purvis, MS - If you experience numbness or tingling in your hands, arms, legs, or feet or if you experience shooting or burning pain, this is important. Please read this carefully.

Peripheral Neuropathy is when small blood vessels in the hands, arms, feet or legs become diseased and tiny nerves that keep the cells and muscles working properly shrivel up and die.

Early-warning symptoms include tingling and numbness, mild loss of feeling in your hands, arms, legs or feet, inability to feel your feet, which increases your risk of foot-injury and falling.

More Advanced Symptoms Include...

- Loss of coordination & dexterity, which puts you at increased risk of accidents.
- Inability to feel clothing like socks and gloves.
- High risk of falling, which makes walking dangerous, and makes you more dependent on others.
- Burning sensations in your arms, legs, hands or feet that may start mild, but as nerves and muscles die, may feel like you're being burned by a blow torch.

Ignore the early warning signals long enough and you risk progressive nerve damage leading to muscle wasting, severe pain, loss of balance and a lot of staying at home wishing you didn't hurt.

When every step is like walking on hot coals, sitting still may be the only thing you feel like doing. But there's little joy in sitting still all day long.



Without treatment, nerve degeneration that begins with slight tingling or numbness may lead to a hot burning sensation and intense pain. Without treatment muscle wasting, loss of mobility and loss of independence is often the next stop.

Now here's the scary part....

- Nerve damage CAUSES cell damage.
- Cell damage SPEEDS UP nerve degeneration

Without treatment this can become a DOWN-WARD SPIRAL that accelerates.

The damage can get worse fast. Mild symptoms intensify. Slight tingling, numbness or lack of feeling can turn into burning pain.

Before you know it, damage can become so bad you hurt all the time.

Unless this downward spiral is stopped and nerves return to proper function - the damage to nerves and cells in the affected area can get so bad your muscles begin to die right along with the nerves and cells. And that sets the stage for weakness, loss of mobility, disability, and dependence on others.

If you have early warning signs of peripheral neuropathy, (tingling &/or numbness, loss of feeling or pain) it's CRITICAL you get proper treatment.

It's critical, because with proper treatment the symptoms can often be reversed. Without it, you are playing Russian Roulette with your health.

Once your nerve loss reaches 85%, odds are there's nothing any doctor can do to help.

The most common method your doctor may recommend to treat neuropathy is prescription drugs



Drugs like Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, & Neurontin are often prescribed to manage the pain. But, damaged nerves and dying cells do not heal on their own.

Pain pills do not restore healthy nerve function. They just mask the pain as the nerves continue to degenerate and cells and muscle continue to die.

Taking endless drugs and suffering terrible side effects that may damage your liver & kidney and create even more problems, is not a reasonable path. You deserve better.

Three things must be determined to effectively treat neuropathy. 1) What is the underlying cause? 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained? 3) How much treatment your condition will require?

With proper treatment, shriveled blood vessels grow back & nerves can return to proper function. How much treatment you may need depends on your condition.

At **Purvis Chiropractic** we do a complete neuropathy sensitivity exam to determine the extent of your nerve damage. The exam includes a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, & a detailed analysis of the findings.

Dr. Rob Acord, D.C. will be offering this complete neuropathy sensitivity exam for **\$47**. This special offer goes away at the end of this month as we have a limited number of exam appointments available.

Stop Hurting & Start Healing
Call Now to Schedule Your Complete
Neuropathy Sensitivity Exam with
Dr. Rob Acord, D.C.
(601) 794-0081

105 Main Street
Purvis, MS 39475

Gov. Mouton, and Debutante Camellia SHINE IN WINTER

If you're like me and try to have plants blooming in the yard throughout the year, you may value camellias like I do. This time of the year, my camellias brighten my landscape with their beautiful blooms.

Governor Mouton camellia, known scientifically as *Camellia japonica*, is an exceptional plant in my landscape that adds both beauty and drama. Its large, formal blooms with striking red and white variegation are a true spectacle.

The semi-double flowers of Governor Mouton are made up of numerous petals which combine to form a full, elegant flower that lasts for weeks. These blooms make a bold contrast against the rich and glossy dark green foliage. This foliage remains vibrant throughout the year, providing an evergreen backdrop that highlights the striking blooms.

I've planted mine in a spot with well-drained, acidic soil, which is crucial for camellia's health, and it enjoys the partial shade of my yard. Governor Mouton thrives in these conditions, as direct sunlight can sometimes cause the flowers to burn, especially during the warmer months.

This camellia blooms from fall to early spring, offering a burst of color during the cooler months when many other plants are dormant. It provides much-needed color as the days grow shorter and the landscape becomes quieter.

Aside from its beauty, the Governor Mouton is also a resilient plant, withstanding both colder winter temperatures and occasional drought once established.

My Debutante camellia, also known scientifically as *Camellia japonica*, grows alongside the Governor Mouton and offers a softer, more delicate look. Its large, peony-like blooms are a lovely blush pink, with the softest hint of white near the base of the petals.

Debutante's flowers have a light, delicate quality that makes them stand out without overpowering the rest of the garden. The petals are gently ruffled, adding to the feminine, graceful appearance of the blooms. Glossy, dark green leaves frame these blooms, ensuring they remain a focal point in my garden.

The Debutante camellia has large, peony-like flowers in a lovely blush pink and blooms from winter to early spring.





Governor Mouton camellias have semi-double flowers that bloom from fall through early spring.

Like the Governor Mouton, the Debutante camellia thrives in acidic, well-drained soil and partial shade. In my yard, it has grown into a well-rounded, compact shrub that makes an impressive presence at 6 feet tall.

What I love most about the Debutante is its winter to early-spring blooming period, which overlaps with the Governor Mouton. This provides a lovely, harmonious blend of red, white and soft pink tones, creating a beautiful, cohesive look in the garden.

These two camellias are a perfect pairing, each offering its own unique beauty — one bold and dramatic, the other soft and delicate. This sophisticated duo enhances my outdoor space.

Both camellias require minimal maintenance once established, but regular watering, especially during dry spells, helps to keep them healthy. I ensure the soil stays slightly acidic by adding organic mulch around the base of the plants, which also helps conserve moisture.

Occasionally, I prune back any dead or diseased branches to maintain the shrubs' shape and encourage healthy growth. The occasional feeding with a balanced, slow-release fertilizer also helps promote vigorous blooms and lush foliage.

Overall, these camellias are a joy to care for, and they provide year-round beauty, adding elegance and charm to my garden throughout the seasons. ✨

“

Governor Mouton camellia, known scientifically as *Camellia japonica*, is an exceptional plant in my landscape that adds both beauty and drama. Its large, formal blooms with striking red and white variegation are a true spectacle.



by Dr. Eddie Smith

Southern Gardening columnist Dr. Eddie Smith, a gardening specialist and Pearl River County coordinator with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, is an internationally certified arborist, Produce Safety Alliance certified trainer, and one of the developers of the Mississippi Smart Landscapes program that encourages the use of native plants in the landscape.

Bunny BUSTERS

Dogging wily rabbits to put more meat in the pot

Eager with high anticipation and adrenaline, I listened intently to frantic howling echoing across the Mississippi pine savanna and moving in my direction. Tensed for action, I heard something about 40 yards behind me. I turned just fast enough to catch a fleeting glimpse of a cottontail rabbit disappearing into a brushy thicket.

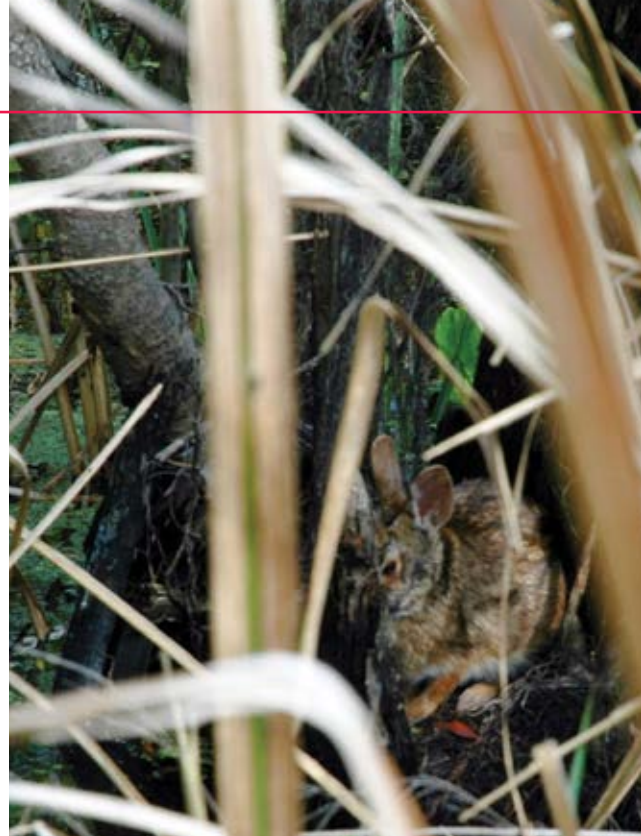
Since everything with teeth, claws, or talons likes a rabbit meal, the “bread of the forest” spends most of its time hiding in thick cover, especially during daylight. Most people hunt cottontails with dogs to roost rabbits from their lairs. Even helped by canines with acute noses, hunting rabbits can prove challenging.

With every predator trying to eat them, rabbits know how to disappear. They know every hole, thicket, and briar patch in their

home territory. They run a network of small trails and tunnels through the most impassable vegetation with ease. One never knows where one might emerge again.

Most people get into hunting rabbits with dogs because of family tradition. At an early age, they begin by following their fathers, grandfathers, or other relatives going back many generations. Later, they pass that heritage down to the next generation.

Dog people know and love the sound of their animals. They can pick out individual beagles from a howling pack. Frequently, dog enthusiasts hold informal competitions to see whose dog finds the first or most rabbits.



After releasing the dogs, hunters spread out to spots with reasonable visibility. Listen to the dogs and watch any openings where a rabbit might appear. Determine safe places to shoot and never fire until positively identifying the target and what's behind it. Something low to the ground and brown in heavy cover could be a dog, not a rabbit, so make absolute certainty of the target. When a rabbit bolts for cover, shooters must react quickly.

Each hunter should wear an orange cap and vest plus thick "brush-buster" pants. Also, communicate with each other so every person knows where all others stand. In dense cover, people might not see another person, even one wearing orange. Many hunting teams bring light, short-range radios to keep track of everyone and help keep up with the movements of hunters, dogs, and rabbits.

“

Rabbit hunters don't need to sit still for hours. They can talk and move around. This social atmosphere makes rabbit hunting such a great way to introduce children or novices to the sport.

People who want to start hunting rabbits should find an experienced person to take them. After learning a few things and enjoying the sport, that individual might consider buying pups and training them. Pair young dogs with experienced ones, so the pups learn from the older ones.

Most rabbit hunters release their dogs on private lands, but many public properties in Mississippi hold abundant rabbit populations. Any place with thick undergrowth for cover where rabbits can elude predators with succulent foods to nibble should hold rabbits.

Rabbit hunters don't need to sit still for hours. They can talk and move around. This social atmosphere makes rabbit hunting a great way to introduce children or novices to the sport. Everyone gets a thrill from hearing the dogs and watching them work. ✱



by John N. Felsher

John N. Felsher is a professional freelance writer, broadcaster, photographer, and editor who lives in Alabama. An avid sportsman, he's written more than 3,300 articles for more than 170 different magazines on a wide variety of outdoors topics. Contact him at j.felsher@hotmail.com.

GRANT PROGRAM

celebrates local volunteers, nonprofits



A) Grant winner Julie Berry of Coast Electric. Berry's nonprofit of choice was CASA of South Mississippi. B) Jennifer Prince of Dixie Electric was chosen as a grant winner with her funds going to Mission at the Cross. C) Gwen Keys Hitt, a member of Southern Pine Electric, won a Powering Possibilities Community Service Grant. Hitt's nonprofit of choice is the Boys & Girls Club of Covington County.

Cooperative Energy, the generation and transmission cooperative for 11 local systems in Mississippi, has started a new annual community grant program in 2025 for members of their cooperatives who have made a positive impact in their communities.

The Powering Possibilities Community Service Grant celebrates volunteers who embody the cooperative principle of Concern for Community. These men and women dedicate their time and talents to making a positive difference in the lives of others. Through this program, Cooperative Energy and its 11 Member electric cooperatives honor outstanding community volunteers by awarding donations to qualifying nonprofit organizations selected in each cooperative's territory.

As part of this recognition, Cooperative Energy made a \$1,000 charitable donation in the winning member's name to their choice of nonprofit organization serving communities within the cooperative's service area.

This year, eight grants were issued to nonprofit groups that exemplify premiere community volunteer work.

Here are the winners.



JULIE BERRY – COAST ELECTRIC – CASA of South Mississippi

For over 11 years, Julie Berry has been a steadfast voice for the most vulnerable children in Hancock County. As a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), she has tirelessly dedicated herself to ensuring that every child she serves is heard, supported, and given the chance to thrive. Julie has advocated for 30 children during some of the most challenging times of their lives, and she has remained committed to each of them until they achieved permanency.

GWEN KEYS HITT – SOUTHERN PINE ELECTRIC – Boys & Girls Club of Covington County

Gwen Keys Hitt was a founding board member of the Boys and Girls Club of Covington County, helping to provide local children with a safe and nurturing place to grow. She has served as a former board member of the Covington County Chamber of Commerce, lending her wisdom and vision to strengthen local business and civic life. She is also an active member of the Friends of the Library group, supporting projects that enhance access to knowledge and resources for the community.

JENNIFER PRINCE – DIXIE ELECTRIC – Mission at the Cross

Jennifer Prince sparks positive change in the lives of individuals in Jones County where she, her husband, and family live. Through her work with Mission at the Cross in Laurel, men in alcohol and/or drug addiction are provided rehabilitation, residential housing, skills training, and an opportunity to turn their lives around and be a positive influence in their families and communities. Prince also works to provide the homeless with options for assistance and especially with women and children who have become homeless and have nowhere to turn.

LINDA SUE STUART – SOUTHWEST ELECTRIC – Mercy House Adult and Teen Challenge Ministries

Linda Sue Stuart established a non-profit group called Port Gibson Hands of Hope in 2012. Their first focus was to collect and deliver donated items to Welch, West Virginia. She collected clothes, kitchen goods, furniture and anything you can think of for a thrift store to sell to help the poor people there.

In the past few years, Stuart has joined forces with Mercy House Adult and Teen Challenge Ministries. The donated clothing and household goods now make a short trip to their thrift stores in the greater Jackson area.

JOHANNA WHITE – MAGNOLIA ELECTRIC – Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center

Johanna White plays an essential role with the Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center, a safe and welcoming place for children facing difficult times. She gives her time generously as an advocate in helping organize the local silent auction, the Bingo and Bubbly event, and most recently serving as a chairman of the annual fundraiser.

ROBERT WILLIAMS – TWIN COUNTY ELECTRIC – Born2Win

Robert Williams saw the challenges of young people giving up on themselves before they even had a chance to get started, families struggling to find resources, and potential left untapped. Out of his experiences and his love for people, he created Born 2 Win, an organization dedicated to restoring hope and building pride in the community. Through community events, educational support, health awareness, faith-based guidance, and strong partnerships, he creates opportunities that didn't exist before.

JOHN BAILEY – PEARL RIVER VALLEY ELECTRIC – Lighthouse Rescue Mission

John Bailey volunteers through numerous agencies giving his time to anyone and everyone he can. He is very involved with his church disaster response team, on the chainsaw team and on the feeding team. He goes in with the first groups doing clean-up, and he will go back weeks later to help feed the affected people. He is currently working on a project for Lighthouse Rescue Missions in Hattiesburg. Recently he donated his time to Cali's Smile out of Florence that helps kids with disabilities and their families.

YAZOO VALLEY ELECTRIC – FRAN TWINER – Manna House Ministries

Fran Twiner operates a local thrift store that sells donated clothing and household items. Every item sold directly supports the Manna House, a vital nonprofit organization that provides meals to those facing hunger in the area. Twiner not only manages the store, but also actively collects donations, ensuring that the store remains a sustainable source of funding for this essential cause. 🌱

MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT INSURANCE

- Plan pays 100% of all Medicare eligible hospital and physician services.
- One small yearly (\$257) Part B deductible
- No copays
- Use any hospital or physician anywhere that accepts Medicare, no restrictive networks.

LOW RATES FOR PLAN G

Female Age	(non tobacco) Mo. Prem.	Male Age	(non tobacco) Mo. Prem.
65	\$91.00	65	\$105.00
70	\$96.00	70	\$110.00
75	\$114.00	75	\$131.00
80	\$136.00	80	\$156.00

Rates vary slightly by zip code.
Rates include household discount.



**Senior Brokerage
SERVICES** — MADISON, MISS.

Joel P. Bianchi • Agent/Owner

601-853-0646

1-800-880-0646

www.seniorbrokerageservices.us



**ACCREDITED
BUSINESS**

A+
RATING

STOP WORRYING ABOUT LOSING YOUR MONEY

Let us help you recover your losses and move your money into an equity protected account with guarantees to grow and never lose again.
We also have 3 year and 5 year CD like annuities paying 5%



Leonard D. O'Mire

L.D. O'Mire Financial

Call For My 115 Page Growth Without Risk Safe Money Book
Visit our website: www.Idomire.com

Call Now **601-957-3841** or After Hours **601-209-3131**



Shea Kuhn

Cell: 601-540-5369

Guarantees subject to the claims paying ability of the Insurance Company. Surrender of the Contract may be subject to surrender charge or market value adjustment. Product not available in all states. This is a single premium deferred annuity. Interest rates are subject to change. Withdrawals prior to age 59 1/2 may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty.

Culotta Insurance & Investments | Serving Miss-Lou STATEWIDE Since 1992



CORY CAMERON RICHIE ZACH COLBY

1-844-AGENT4U

FIXED INDEXED ANNUITIES | MORE GAINS • NO LOSSES • SAFETY

UP TO 15% IMMEDIATE INTEREST BONUS ON DEPOSITS
ROLLOVER CD OR 401K TODAY!

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

SAFE RETIREMENT STRATEGIES, MEDICARE SUPPS, LONG-TERM CARE, MEDICAL & LIFE

How To Turn Your
401K
Into a
"Pension"

...with income payments for life.

Learn how to turn years of savings into steady, reliable income that lasts through retirement.

Call Steve Presley at (901) 314-6306



Millions of people just like you are turning some of their retirement savings into a permanent income stream for life! Call today to learn how.



Steve W. Presley
President

(901) 314-6306
presley1982@aol.com
stevenpresley.sageagent.io

Senior Management Group Inc.



Grower Direct



Grow Half-Dollar sized
**Muscadines
and Blackberries.**

We also offer over
200 varieties of fruit
and nut trees plus vine
and berry plants.



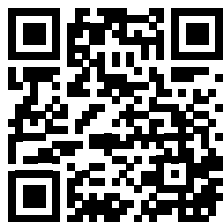
Ison's Nursery Since 1934

PO Box 190

Brooks, GA 30205

Free Catalog 1-800-733-0324 • isons.com

TODAY
IN MISSISSIPPI.com



START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT **SAFEGUARD YOUR WEALTH**

In times of economic uncertainty—when inflation rises, markets fluctuate, and long-term financial stability feels less predictable—many investors turn to gold as a dependable store of value. By holding a portion of your wealth in gold, you can help safeguard your portfolio and preserve long-term financial security, even when broader economic conditions are unclear.

American Gold Reserve is releasing Government issued **\$5 Gold American Eagles** completely free of dealer mark-up for only \$459 each. These beautiful \$5 Gold American Eagles are a perfect way to enter the gold market. They are set for immediate public release and **will sell out fast**.

**Since 2015, gold has surged over 400% —
outpacing both the S&P 500 and the Dow
during the same period.**

GOVERNMENT BACKED U.S. GOLD

- Teach the importance of wealth preservation.
- Great way to pass on wealth to children and grandchildren.
- A symbolic act of the commitment to your family.
- Gold provides your children and grandchildren with a built-in safeguard during times of financial instability.

PLACE YOUR
ORDER TODAY

\$459_{ea.}

Minimum order of 5 coins

LIMITED OFFER

Special arrangements on orders over \$50,000

Mention vault release code: **AMS-TM40**



24 hours - 7 days a week **1-866-852-3346**



**AMERICAN
GOLD RESERVE**
Strict limit of 10 per household, per lifetime. For new clients only.

FINALLY ... LIFE INSURANCE YOU CAN AFFORD

TOTAL OFFER

DETAILS

BUY \$100,000 LIFE INSURANCE

FREE INFORMATION



7460

PAY THE
AMOUNT OF

One Hundred Thousand Dollars

\$100,000.00

Non-Negotiable

MONTHLY RATES AS LOW AS:

ADULTS: \$3.49

CHILDREN AND
GRANDCHILDREN: \$2.17

EASY TO BUY

NO MEDICAL EXAM - SIMPLE APPLICATION

NO WAITING PERIOD

BUY DIRECT

SCAN QR CODE FOR A FREE QUOTE



SCAN TO
VISIT US
ONLINE

For Immediate Service Call 1-888-289-5600
Or Visit BeginGlobeInsuranceToday.com

PERSONAL OFFER CODE:

XCCX1681

\$100,000 Adult Life Insurance

- Rate schedule is based on your current age and is guaranteed for the life of the policy.
- Monthly rates as low as \$3.49.
- Coverage is also available for your spouse and other family members.
- Benefits will NEVER be canceled or reduced for the life of the policy if premiums are paid on time.

Policy Form #SRTC/SRTC R13 or R17, or #SRTC90MA in MA

\$30,000 Children's Life Insurance

- Rates are based on your children's or grandchildren's present age and never increase for any reason.
- Monthly rates as low as \$2.17.
- Benefits will NEVER be reduced or canceled if premiums are paid on time.
- Give your children a financial head start right now. Your policy builds CASH VALUE for your family's needs.

Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)

CHOOSE \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 OR UP TO \$100,000 COVERAGE

Luter's Supply



Buy & Take Home Same Day



- Tubs, Showers, Faucets, Sinks & More
- 14 Walk-in Bathtubs On Display
- World's Largest Walk-in Bathtub Store
(single location)



601-876-3455

Tylertown, MS

LuterSupply.com



PONTOTOC 662-489-3211 • Fax: 662-489-5156

BRUCE 662-983-2727 • Fax: 662-983-1335

P.O. Drawer 718 • 12 South Main Street, Pontotoc, MS 38863

P.O. Box 415 • 129 South Newberger Street, Bruce, MS 38915



PONTOTOC ELECTRIC HOSTS ANNUAL *Cooperative University*



On Nov. 19, 2025, students from each of the schools in PEPA's service area attended Cooperative University at PEPA's Pontotoc office. The event included demonstrations of line work, safety, automated metering, and even a scavenger hunt for items located in the PEPA Historical Museum.

Students interacted with each other during ice breaker games and a group project using magnetic tiles, popsicle sticks, and other items to construct a model substation, power lines, and homes.

PEPA Youth Leadership Advisor Jennifer Johnson said the event is the first step in choosing delegates for the three-part program. "We involved outside judges who observed the students in action in the sessions. The judges also interviewed the students one on one during the program."

Johnson said Leah Fields of South Pontotoc High School and Mary Alex Kakales of Bruce High School were chosen to continue on to the workshop in Jackson and later a tour of Washington, D.C. in the summer of 2026.



A. This group of students from schools in PEPA's service area learned about the work of an electric utility, heard from State Senator Kathy Chism, and enjoyed projects and activities at Cooperative University. **B.** Apprentice Lineman Clay Kidd and Ingomar High School student Ava Swords prepare to view Pontotoc from the lofty perch of the bucket. **C.** Ice breakers like this one helped students learn more about each other. **D.** Pontotoc High School students Barrett Lewis and Suzy Park work on their model of generation and transmission with the assistance of PEPA General Manager Frankie Moorman.

Pontotoc Electric Power Association
will be closed on Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, in observance of

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

A Pontotoc Electric dispatcher is on duty 24-hours a day, seven days a week. To report a power outage after hours or during the holiday, please call 662-489-6711 for Pontotoc and 662-983-2727 for Bruce.



MEET YOUR 2026 MISSISSIPPI ELECTED OFFICIALS

Pontotoc Electric Power Association salutes Mississippi's senators and representatives who represent our state in Washington, D.C. and at our state capitol in Jackson.



TATE REEVES
Governor



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Lieutenant Governor

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION



TRENT KELLY
First District
Representative



CINDY HYDE-SMITH
United States
Senator



ROGER WICKER
United States
Senator

NOW AVAILABLE

A free, interactive legislative app for Mississippi

The Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi offers an easy-to-use mobile app of Mississippi's state and federal elected officials. Look for "ECM Legislative Roster" in the Apple App Store. An Android version is also available through Google Play.



Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

SENATE



Sen. Nicole Akins Boyd

District 9:
Lafayette and Panola counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Sen. Kathy L. Chism

District 3:
Benton, Marshall, Pontotoc, Prentiss, and Union counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Sen. Chad McMahan

District 6:
Itawamba and Lee counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Sen. Benjamin A. Suber

District 8: Calhoun, Chickasaw, Lafayette, Pontotoc, and Yalobusha counties

Address:
P.O. Box 8
Bruce, MS 38915



Sen. Neil Whaley

District 10: Lafayette, Marshall, Tate, and Union counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Rep. Perry Bailey

District 23:
Calhoun, Lafayette, Pontotoc, and Webster counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Rep. Steve Massengill

District 13:
Benton, Lafayette, Marshall, Pontotoc, and Union counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Rep. Sam Creekmore

District 14:
Union County

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Rep. Jerry Turner

District 18:
Lee and Prentiss counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Rep. Justin Crosby

District 22:
Chickasaw, Monroe, and Pontotoc counties

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



Rep. Beth Luther Waldo

District 15:
Pontotoc County

Address:
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215



SLOW-COOKED *Satisfaction*

In honor of National Slow Cooker Month, we offer these recipes to make life a little easier. Treat yourself to some free time while your slow cooker does the work!



SLOW COOKER CHICKEN ALFREDO

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 3½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 pound fettuccine
- 3 teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 ounces Parmesan, *finely grated (extra for serving)*

Finely chopped parsley (garnish for serving)

In a large slow cooker, cover chicken with cream and broth. Add salt, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, black pepper, and onion powder. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on high until chicken is cooked through, about two hours. Transfer chicken to a plate and shred with two forks. Set aside.

Add fettuccine and butter to slow cooker and continue to cook on high about 20-40 minutes, depending on your slow cooker's heat level.

Return chicken to slow cooker along with Parmesan and toss to combine. Cook uncovered, until sauce clings to pasta, about five minutes. Top with parsley and more Parmesan before serving.

RED BEANS AND RICE

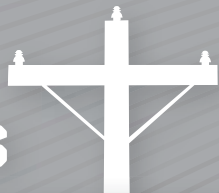
INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound dried red beans
- 3 cloves garlic, *chopped*
- 7 cups water
- ½ pound Andouille sausage, *sliced*
- 1 green bell pepper, *chopped*
- 3 tablespoons creole seasoning
- 1 medium onion, *chopped*
- hot cooked rice
- 3 celery stalks, *chopped*

sliced green onions (garnish for serving)

Place first eight ingredients in a four-quart slow cooker. Cook, covered, at high for seven hours or until beans are tender. Serve with hot cooked rice. Add garnish if desired.

PEPA LINEMAN APPRENTICESHIP ACHIEVEMENTS



Apprentice Linemen **Jacob Beard** (*left*) and **Jimmy Moore** moved to year four in the Lineman Apprenticeship program at PEPA. Congratulations to both of them!



THE SOFTEST BEDDING ESSENTIALS YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE!

REVERSIBLE COVERLET WITH COORDINATING SHEETS

FROM ONLY **\$4.99**
 WAS ~~\$19.99~~ USE CODE **BHDPJ3**

EXCLUSIVE
 A-B | BH STUDIO
 SHEETS,
 COLORS FOR A-B

MARINE BLUE

OCEAN BLUE

LIGHT AQUA

TURQUOISE

IVORY

PEACOCK

BLUE SMOKE

NAVY

SAGE

AVAILABLE IN
 EXTRA DEEP
 SHEETS FITS
 MATTRESSES UP
 TO 18" DEEP

RASPBERRY

GARNET

CHOCOLATE

CORAL

NOW AVAILABLE
 IN TWIN XL &
 CALIFORNIA KING

MAIZE

TERRACOTTA

TAUPE

19 COLOR
 OPTIONS IN
 6 SIZES

DARK GRAY

DUSTY
 LAVENDER

PLUM

7 COLOR OPTIONS
 IN 3 SIZES
 SEE MORE COLORS
 ONLINE AT
 BRYLANEHOME.COM

REVERSIBLE
 ALLOVER
 QUILTING

C-D | BH STUDIO
 QUILTED COVERLET,
 PEACOCK/TURQUOISE

SAVE
 UP TO
70%

COLORS FOR C-D



OCEAN BLUE/
 MARINE BLUE



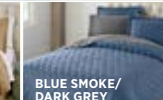
PLUM/DUSTY
 LAVENDER



GOLD /
 MAIZE



TAUPE/
 IVORY



BLUE SMOKE/
 DARK GREY



CHOCOLATE/
 LATTE

A-B | EXCLUSIVE BH STUDIO SHEETS Polyester microfiber is soft to the touch and easy-care. Machine wash. Imported. 19 colors.
A | SOLID SHEET SET 14" pocket and fits mattresses up to 16" deep.
1580-10501-0602
 Twin 39" x 75", 3-pc. set was 59.99 **NOW 16.99**
 Twin XL 39" x 80", 3-pc. set was 59.99 **NOW 16.99**
 Full 54" x 75", 4-pc. set was 69.99 **NOW 19.99**
 Queen 60" x 80", 4-pc. set was 79.99 **NOW 22.99**
 King 78" x 80", 4-pc. set was 89.99 **NOW 24.99**
 Cal King 72" x 84", 4-pc. set was 99.99 **NOW 26.99**

B | SOLID EXTRA-DEEP SHEET SET
 16" pocket and fits mattresses up to 18" deep.
1580-10511-0602
 Twin 39" x 76", 3-pc. set was 69.99 **NOW 19.99**
 Twin XL 39" x 80", 3-pc. set was 69.99 **NOW 19.99**
 Full 54" x 76", 4-pc. set was 79.99 **NOW 22.99**
 Queen 60" x 80", 4-pc. set was 89.99 **NOW 24.99**
 King 78" x 80", 4-pc. set was 99.99 **NOW 26.99**
 Cal King 72" x 84", 4-pc. set was 109.99 **NOW 29.99**

C-D | EXCLUSIVE BH STUDIO BEDDING Elevate any room with our two-tone, reversible quilted bedding. Polyester. Machine wash cold. Imported. 7 colors.
C | REVERSIBLE QUILTED COVERLET
1580-36033-0602
 Twin 66" x 86" was 99.99 **NOW 29.99**
 Full/Queen 88" x 90" was 119.99 **NOW 34.99**
 King 104" x 90" was 139.99 **NOW 39.99**
D | QUILTED SHAM **1580-36038-0602**
 Standard 20" x 26" was 19.99 **NOW 4.99**
 King 20" x 36" was 29.99 **NOW 6.99**

FREE SHIPPING

USE CODE **BHDPJ3**
 SEE DETAILS BELOW*

CALL **1.800.528.5150** OR GO TO **BRYLANEHOME.COM** & FOLLOW THESE 4 EASY STEPS:

1 GO TO:
 BRYLANEHOME.COM

2 FIND AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE
 CLICK CATALOG TO ORDER FROM CATALOG



3 TYPE IN YOUR ITEM NUMBER



4 HIT SEARCH

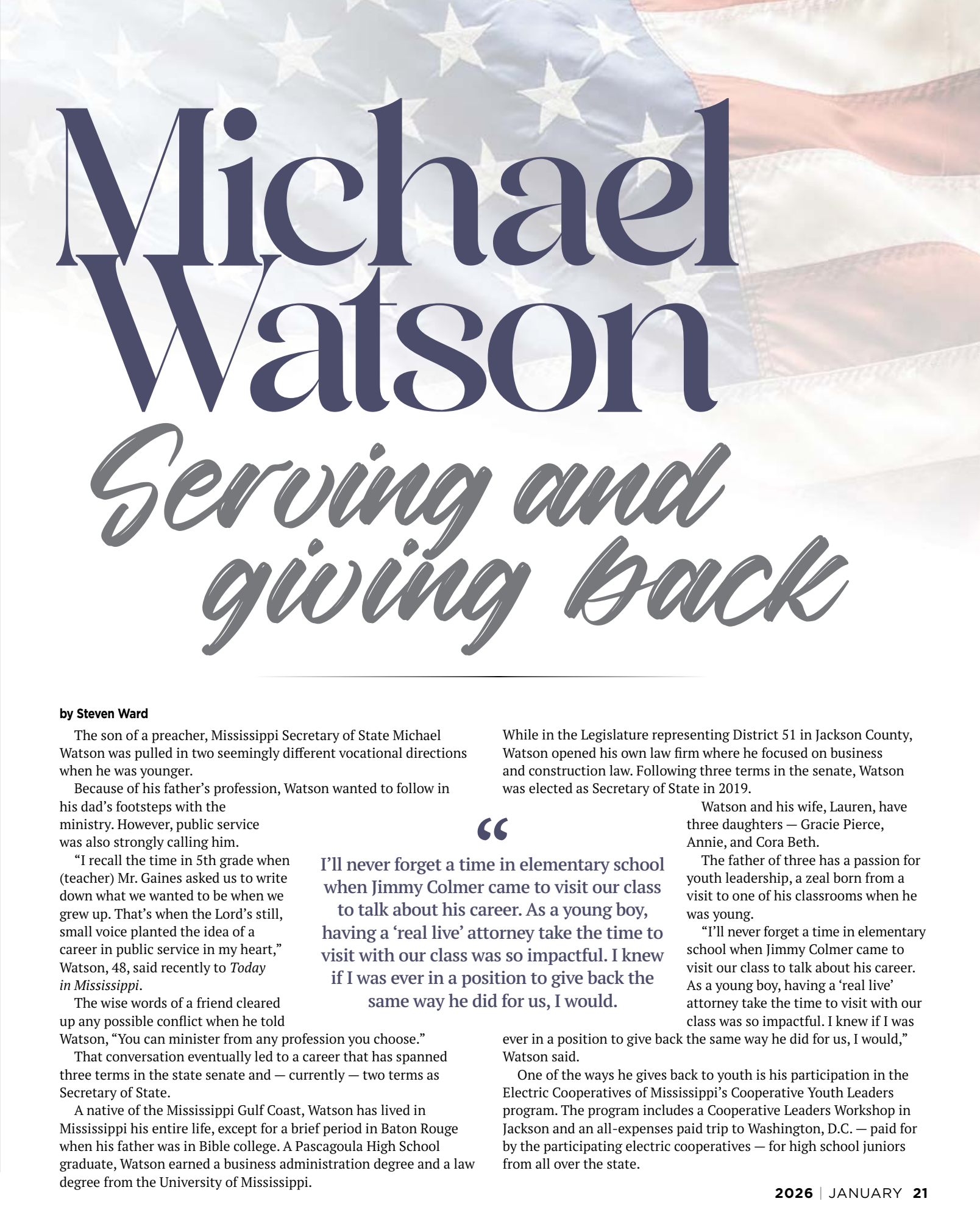


BrylaneHome®

Use code BHDPJ3 to get the advertised pricing offer and get free shipping on your order. Free shipping applies to standard shipping only, not including any additional shipping surcharges. Shipping upgrades additional. Discount is priced as marked in checkout. Not applicable to gift cards or prior purchases. May not be redeemed for cash or combined with other offers. Returns credited at discounted price. Offer only applies to in stock items, excluding clearance and final sale. Order by phone, 1-800-528-5150. Expires 02/26/2026.

ACT FAST! SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER PLUS FREE SHIPPING!



The background of the entire page is a faded, high-angle view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The title text is overlaid on this background.

Michael Watson

Serving and giving back

by Steven Ward

The son of a preacher, Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson was pulled in two seemingly different vocational directions when he was younger.

Because of his father's profession, Watson wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps with the ministry. However, public service was also strongly calling him.

"I recall the time in 5th grade when (teacher) Mr. Gaines asked us to write down what we wanted to be when we grew up. That's when the Lord's still, small voice planted the idea of a career in public service in my heart," Watson, 48, said recently to *Today in Mississippi*.

The wise words of a friend cleared up any possible conflict when he told Watson, "You can minister from any profession you choose."

That conversation eventually led to a career that has spanned three terms in the state senate and — currently — two terms as Secretary of State.

A native of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Watson has lived in Mississippi his entire life, except for a brief period in Baton Rouge when his father was in Bible college. A Pascagoula High School graduate, Watson earned a business administration degree and a law degree from the University of Mississippi.

While in the Legislature representing District 51 in Jackson County, Watson opened his own law firm where he focused on business and construction law. Following three terms in the senate, Watson was elected as Secretary of State in 2019.

“

I'll never forget a time in elementary school when Jimmy Colmer came to visit our class to talk about his career. As a young boy, having a 'real live' attorney take the time to visit with our class was so impactful. I knew if I was ever in a position to give back the same way he did for us, I would.

ever in a position to give back the same way he did for us, I would," Watson said.

One of the ways he gives back to youth is his participation in the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi's Cooperative Youth Leaders program. The program includes a Cooperative Leaders Workshop in Jackson and an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. — paid for by the participating electric cooperatives — for high school juniors from all over the state.

Watson and his wife, Lauren, have three daughters — Gracie Pierce, Annie, and Cora Beth.

The father of three has a passion for youth leadership, a zeal born from a visit to one of his classrooms when he was young.

"I'll never forget a time in elementary school when Jimmy Colmer came to visit our class to talk about his career. As a young boy, having a 'real live' attorney take the time to visit with our class was so impactful. I knew if I was



A

The program teaches the students leadership skills, an opportunity to meet state lawmakers in Jackson as well the state's congressional delegation in the nation's capital. The program also teaches students about how electric cooperatives work and operate including a co-op's role in the community they serve.

"As a preacher's kid and former youth minister, I have always had a heart for service and young people. Through my role as a senator and the Secretary of State, I have been fortunate enough to be invited to speak to this group of leaders on almost an annual basis," Watson said.

Watson said he is always amazed at the thoughtful, in-depth questions the delegates to the Cooperative Youth Leaders program ask.

"Students are often dismissed for lack of engagement, but I'm here to tell you, we have some of the best and brightest right here in our state. Whether it's ways to get involved, how to improve race relations, or combatting brain drain, our youth are actively looking for ways to make Mississippi and each other better," Watson said.

Watson also runs a youth leadership program in the Secretary of State's office.

The Secretary of State's Student Ambassador program is a unique opportunity where students with a passion for leadership and state government are equipped to return to their schools as proponents of voter education and civic awareness. Through regular interactions with Watson, other leaders from the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office, state and local officials, and business and industry leaders, students who complete the program receive a first-hand account of state government in action, establish a network of like-minded peers from across the state, and experience the processes which ensure Mississippi is a better place for generations to come.

When asked about the stories of former leadership students from both programs that stand out to him, Watson said there are many worth remembering.

"While I could tell you story after story of students who have gone through the program and then continued on to an honors college, an internship in Washington, D.C., or even crowned Miss USM, the most impactful was a student who opened up to me and said she never had anyone try to help her or invest in her. When I can make a small difference in someone's life or change the trajectory of their future, that's what it is about!"



B



C



D



E



F

Watson also said he loves how both leadership programs cross connect.

"Since this is the fourth year of the Ambassador program, I have met several students at the Cooperative Youth Leaders program who have expressed interest in applying for the ambassador program. These students are being mentored and have their cups filled not just once or twice but year after year. I'm confident in Mississippi's future knowing these students will be leading the way," he said.

Still, there is his main job as Secretary of State, ensuring voting and elections statewide are fair. The elections division is one of eight divisions he is responsible for, including business service and regulations and the public lands division.

Watson said the hardest part of the job is balancing his work life and family life.

"I have a wife and three beautiful girls at home. I often feel the strain of being present for my family while ensuring I'm giving the people of Mississippi 110%," Watson said.

Public service is the job he was meant for, he said, because he loves helping people.

Watson said he also loves to give back.

"When I think of all the mentors who poured into me and made me the person I am today, I am thankful I have the opportunity to give back in a little way." 🌸

A) Michael Watson visits Keesler Air Force Base B) Watson reads to students at Obama Magnet Elementary School in Jackson during Read Across America Week. C) Watson takes a photo with Cooperative Leaders program students at the workshop. D) SOS Student Ambassadors attend the National Association of Secretaries of State Conference in Biloxi. E) Watson speaks to a group of SOS Student Ambassadors. F) Watson speaks to students at Singing River Electric's Cooperative University. G) The Watson family. Wife Lauren (middle), Gracie Pierce (back right), Annie (front left), and Cora Beth (front right).



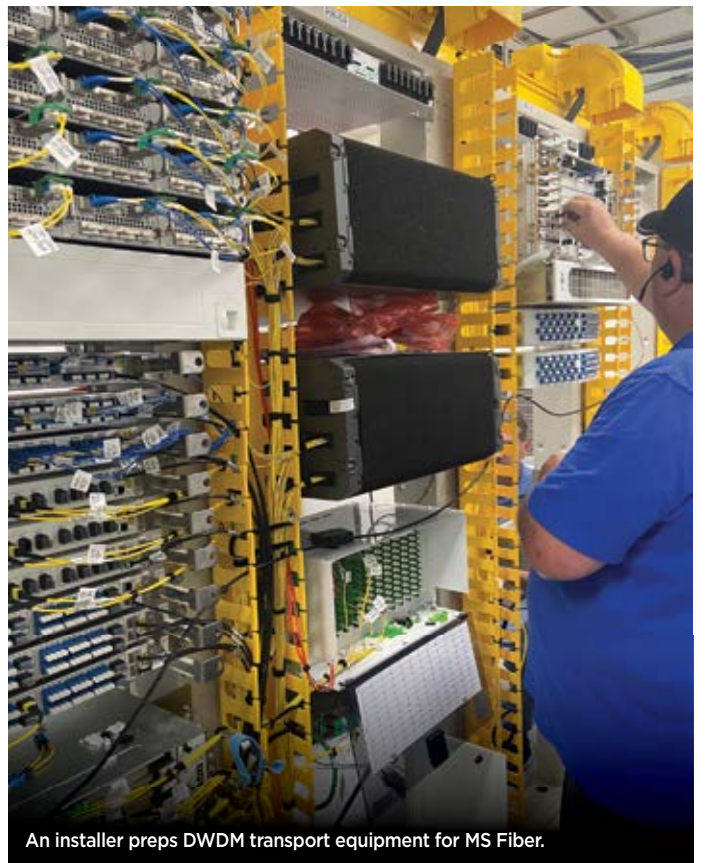
G

For more information about Watson, the student ambassador program, and the Secretary of State's office, visit sos.ms.gov.



MS FIBER.

A new
kind of
cooperation
among
cooperatives



An installer preps DWDM transport equipment for MS Fiber.

by Steven Ward

The most rural parts of Mississippi now have reliable, affordable internet thanks to the power of cooperative-owned middle mile infrastructure. That's exactly what's happening across Mississippi where 17 high speed internet companies, owned by local co-ops, have united to form MS Fiber LLC.

This groundbreaking and bold partnership gives co-ops the power to control their own networks, freeing them from dependence on middle mile providers that don't share their commitment to community values.

"Each of our goals is to provide affordable and reliable internet service, and we did not want our ability to serve our customers to be totally reliant upon outside companies, many of which do not share our customer-centered values," said Brad Robison, president of MS Fiber. Robison is also the CEO/General Manager of Tallahatchie Valley EPA and TVIfiber.

"We made the decision that we must not be held hostage by other companies on access, pricing, or service."



Each of our goals is to provide affordable and reliable internet service, and we did not want our ability to serve our customers to be totally reliant upon outside companies, many of which do not share our customer-centered values.

"Middle-mile" is a term used to describe an internal infrastructure network designed to bring the power of the worldwide web directly to Mississippi.

The outside providers controlled pricing, dictated terms of service, and in some cases delivered poor performance. Outages could last for days with little explanation, and co-ops sometimes faced price hikes, access denials, or a lack of basic communication.

"We treat our fiber networks like we do our electric distribution networks. If it's down, we get it fixed," Robison said.

Because co-ops prioritize maintenance, reinvestment, and service — not shareholder returns — reliability is significantly higher than what many telecommunications companies typically provide. When issues arise, co-ops communicate in real time and respond quickly, mirroring the mutual-aid model used on the electric side. This stands in stark contrast to traditional outside providers, where long outages and limited transparency are common.

The partnership also delivers major financial benefits. With shared scale — representing more than 230,000 subscribers — co-ops also gain purchasing power that was impossible when negotiating as stand-alone systems.

"By handling middle-mile transport ourselves, co-ops have dramatically reduced costs for last-mile service providers across the state. No longer burdened by inflated direct internet access (DIA) prices or unreliable connections, co-ops can pass savings directly to subscribers while improving overall service quality," Robison said.

MS Fiber is positioned to serve cell towers, regional banks, national retail chains, and other multi-location businesses. This additional revenue doesn't just strengthen the network — it directly benefits co-op partners and ultimately Mississippi subscribers.

"MS Fiber is the only organization in the United States where all electric co-ops that are participating in internet have come together

to create, and ultimately construct, a middle mile network. There are several states that are in various stages of forming or building a middle mile network, but to my knowledge, we are the first to have all participating co-ops online," Robison said.

The corporation was formally established in March 2023, and work began on creating the network architecture. Construction and equipment installation began in 2024 and by Jan. 1, 2026, all members of MS Fiber are receiving service.

Steve "Doc" Williams, MS Fiber's vice president of network engineering, said all his team members work in synchronization for the growth and operational excellence of the network.

That work includes installing new hardware in the field, troubleshooting optical cable issues, and the continued monitoring, performance, and analysis of the entire network.



"We are all responsible for monitoring and problem resolution when a problem arises. We also work closely with Tier 1 internet carriers to incorporate best-in-class internet transit services to all 17 electric cooperatives and other potential clients," Williams said.

Williams said the MS Fiber work of today sets the stage for progress in years to come.

"We will witness success in providing fast and extremely reliable data transport and virtual routing services for education, health/telemedicine, and financial and retail institutions across the state, and we will be able to do all of this in areas that were previously considered difficult to reach due to the forethought of the 17 co-ops that participate and their extremely robust fiber optic builds," Williams said.

MS Fiber is already winning accolades for its vision.

Earlier this year, MS Fiber was named the winner of the 2025 Innovate Award at the annual Digital Innovation event in Tupelo. MS Fiber was recognized for its visionary contributions in bringing cutting-edge, digital infrastructure and connectivity solutions to north Mississippi.

MS Fiber isn't just a network, Robison said, it's a movement.

"It represents a commitment to community values, customer service, and technological independence. Personally, I feel it's more reliable to depend on, and be partners with, our fellow co-op owned internet companies in Mississippi rather than outside providers that don't share our same standards," Robison said.

"Ten years from now I see flourishing cooperative internet subsidiaries that have secured their ability to provide reliable internet service at an affordable price. We will offer tremendous opportunities for cutting edge technology that is owned, operated, supported and staffed by Mississippians." 🌿



1. **Yvette Lott** of Summit; Magnolia Electric member.

2. **Barbara Bishop** of Meridian; East Mississippi EPA member.

3. **Jackie Boteler** of Florence; Southern Pine Electric member.

4. **Ann Jenkins** of Meridian; East Mississippi EPA member.

5. **Cindy McManus** of Hazlehurst; Southern Pine Electric member.

6. **Kelly Perkins** of Seminary; Southern Pine Electric member.

7. **Teresa Lott** of Perkinston; Pearl River Valley Electric member.

8. **Amanda Minor** of Vancleave; Singing River Electric member.

9. **Christina Brumfield Mitchell** of Summit; Magnolia Electric member.

10. **Melanie Battise** of Biloxi; Singing River Electric member.



11. **Debbie Cluney** of Sontag; Southern Pine Electric member.
12. **Niecy Shanks** of Columbus; 4-County Electric member.

13. **Sue Bennett Moore** of Cruger; Delta Electric member.
14. **Julie Hornsby** of Hattiesburg; Pearl River Valley Electric member.

The Farmhouse Kitchen

with
Vicki Leach

In With The Old, Out With The New

Every now and then as I am looking for a specific recipe in my files I will come across one I haven't seen in years. I'm spurred on to spend the next few hours (or few days) rambling around the kitchen doodling in foods we haven't had in a while. All the old things become new again, and I'll add some long lost favorites to my list of things to cook regularly. It becomes a cathartic exercise to remember the who and what and when and where. We are all biologically wired to form strong memories around food. These particular recipes have some really special moments attached to them in my family. I'm sharing them with you hoping that you will spend a little time glancing backwards for a little bit. Ramble around your kitchen doing the favorites you did once upon a time, and make some new memories! Happy New Year! 🌿



by Vicki Leach

Vicki Leach is a full-time chef/culinary instructor at Mississippi State University in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion. She teaches Science of Food Preparation, Foodservice Organization, and Quantity Food Production. She lives in a 130-year-old farmhouse that speaks to her old soul.

Angel Biscuits

(yeast biscuits) with quick,
easy cinnamon roll variation

Called Angel Biscuits, these classics were popular decades ago, and they showed up on every holiday table. A mixture of a biscuit and a soft yeast roll, they melt in your mouth with the softness of a southern biscuit and the flavor of yeast roll. Treat it like biscuit dough — gently. I use half for biscuits and half for cinnamon rolls, so you get to decide which you prefer to make. If you divide the dough and make both variations, you will make 15 to 18 biscuits and about 15 cinnamon rolls. I also space my biscuits/rolls, so they'll "kiss" as I bake them. I like soft sides.

You need some extra flour for cutting out biscuits/rolls, and some extra sugar, melted butter, and cinnamon for the cinnamon rolls.

INGREDIENTS

Mix together in a large bowl
and stir together well:

5 cups all-purpose flour
5 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda

Cut in (use a pastry blender):
1 cup shortening

Combine in a small measuring
cup, and proof:

¼ cup warm water (¹⁰⁵ to ¹¹⁵ degrees)
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon yeast

Pour into flour mixture, along
with the above yeast mixture:

2 cups buttermilk

Stir the yeast and buttermilk gently into the flour mixture with a fork until just combined and holding together (treat this like a biscuit dough). Turn onto a lightly floured countertop and knead gently several times (don't overwork it) until the dough holds together. Here's where you decide if you want biscuits, cinnamon rolls, or both.

FOR BISCUITS:

Pat dough out onto a lightly floured surface about ¾ inches thick. Cut into biscuits. Place in a buttered glass baking dish (my favorite way) or a parchment-lined baking sheet. Allow to rise for about 30 minutes. Bake at 425 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes until lightly browned. Brush tops with melted butter. Serve hot. Entire recipe will make close to 30 biscuits.

For CINNAMON ROLLS:

Using half the dough at a time, press into a 9x12-inch rectangle about ½ -inch thick. Spread with 2 tablespoons of very soft/melted butter and sprinkle with 4 tablespoons of sugar and a couple of teaspoons of cinnamon. Roll up jelly roll style from the long side. Remember this is a biscuit dough and will be soft. Roll and tuck slowly. Use a serrated knife and cut into 1 ½ inch slices. Place each into sprayed and buttered glass baking dishes (again, my favorite way), or onto a parchment lined baking sheet. Allow to rise for 30 minutes before baking at 425 degrees in the oven for 12-15 minutes. Brush with butter and drizzle with a powdered sugar glaze (1/2 cup confectioner's sugar and 2 teaspoons of milk). Serve hot. Entire recipe will make 24 to 30 cinnamon rolls.



Chocolate Fingers

Makes
about 20

This is basically a biscuit recipe with the addition of some cocoa powder and sugar. Make these any shapes you want. A pretty white chocolate and dark chocolate drizzle will elevate them a little, too.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons sugar
4 tablespoons cocoa powder
4 tablespoons shortening
½ cup milk
Butter for brushing (optional)
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, and cocoa powder together. Cut in the shortening with a pastry blender. Using a fork, stir in the milk to make a shaggy dough. Don't over-mix or beat because the fingers will be tough.

Turn out onto a very lightly floured countertop and knead gently for about 10 turns. Again, be gentle with the dough. Knead it enough for it to hold together. Pat out into a rectangle that's about ½ inch and 6 inches wide. Using a floured pizza cutter, cut into half lengthwise, then into 1-inch fingers.

Place on a parchment lined baking sheet, making sure to space them, so they don't run together as they bake.

Bake at 425 degrees in an oven for about 12-15 minutes. Remove from oven and brush with butter if desired, then sprinkle with some confectioners' sugar. Eat while they are warm.

Events open to the public will be published free of charge as space allows. Submit details at least two months prior to the event date. Submissions must include a phone number with area code for publication. Email to news@ecm.coop. **Events are subject to change.**

Indoor Community Market. Jan. 7 and Feb. 4. Biloxi. The event will be held at the St. Martin Community Center at 15008 Lemoyne Blvd. The market is a mixture of arts, crafts, food, clothing, handmade goods, and resell items. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free parking and entry. Details: 228-217-8033.

The Inspirations concert. Jan. 16. Petal. The concert will be held at First Baptist Church Runnelstown, 9211 Highway 42 at 7 p.m. No admission cost, but a love offering will be taken. Wyatt Austin, The Inspirations' bass singer, will preach at the church on Jan. 18. at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Details: 601-583-3733.

"Diary of a Wimpy Kid -The Musical" Feb 12 -15. Pearl. Pearl Community Theatre will put on the production at The Pirate Auditorium, 180 Mary Ann Dr. Details: 601-214-1888 or visit pearlcommunitytheatrems.org.

Space to Create Writing Retreat. Feb. 26 to March 1. French Camp. Connect with other writers, move forward with writing goals, enjoy time to write, and get feedback on your writing. The retreat will begin at 4 p.m. on Feb. 26 with check in and a dinner at 6 p.m. and will conclude March. 1. The deadline to apply is Feb. 6. Details: Email erinulerich@gmail.com or visit spacetocreatewritinglife.wordpress.com.

Mid-South Military History & Civil War Show. March 6 and 7. Southaven. The South's oldest military history show, will be at the Landers Center on I-55 and Church Road, Exit 287. Open March 6 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and March 7 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 each day for adults, a two-day pass for \$15, and children 12 and under free. Parking is free. Vendors from across the country will have quality artifacts from the American Revolution through the 20th Century available to buy, sell, or trade. These include books, documents, prints, uniforms, weapons, relics, photographs, and Native American items. Musicians, re-enactors, and food trucks will be on site. On Saturday, historians will speak on topics from the American Revolution, Civil War, and World War II. Civil War re-enactors with a cannon will be there as well. Details: 901-832-4708 or email dwharrison@aol.com.

**FIXED ANNUITY GUARANTEED 5.65% FOR 5 YEARS.
CALL TO SEE IF YOU QUALIFY! RATES WON'T LAST LONG!**

GULF SOUTH GUARANTY, INC.

Specializing in Retirement Planning, Long Term Care Insurance, Life Insurance, Annuities, IRAs, 401k Rollovers

"Safety and opportunity on the same dollar at the same time"

NO MARKET LOSSES. SAFETY OF PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST. BEST RATES AVAILABLE.

www.gulfsouthguaranty.com

Call me direct at **228-452-7676**



Glen J. Pelas

FREE CONSULTATION

Gulf South Guaranty, Inc. • 228-452-7676



Gulf South Guaranty, Inc.

Serving the LA and MS coast since 2002.

ACCREDITED BUSINESS

TODAY
IN MISSISSIPPI.com



ADVERTISE IN

TODAY

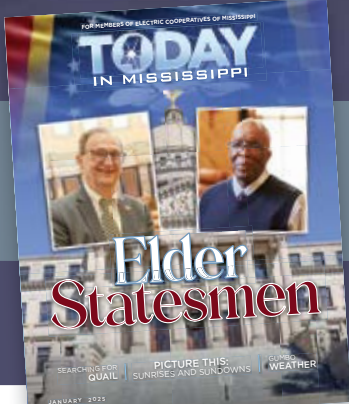
IN MISSISSIPPI

Find out how you can reach a readership of more than

450,000

households and businesses

Email news@ecm.coop






KNOWING *what you don't know*

Happy New Year! I'm sure someone else said it before, but the first time I saw it was in an article by Orly Hood. His assessment of life went something like, "If I knew I was going to live this long, I'd taken better care of myself." Well, I don't know if I would have taken better care of myself, but when I was a young man, I gave very little thought to being as old as I am now.

Someone on Facebook put it like this, "It was a lot more fun being in my 20s back in the 70s than being in my 70s here in the 20s." One time

We're coming out of a great example of that with Christmas. I remember the excitement of Christmases I had as a child. I try to generate that feeling for the kids, no matter how old I am. Not by doing the same things, necessarily, but recreating the same atmosphere of excitement and expectation. That's how we relive our youth. We pass on to others the good things we gleaned from life along the way.

“

I figure we'd all be that way if we could pick a day of our younger life and go back to observe. It all would be a lot more wonderful in retrospect than it seemed while we lived it because we're looking back through a filter of years.

Heading into the new year, I find myself in a position I never even thought about before now. With the passing of my brother this year, I am now the oldest person in my family on my mother's side. There is no one left to call to refresh my memory about events of the past. I'm it. I wonder now, if all the elders in my family, when they got to be the oldest, knew no more about life than I do.

Scary thought to start the new year! ❄️



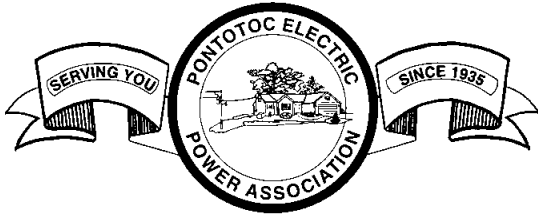
by Walt Grayson

Walt Grayson is the host of "Mississippi Roads" on Mississippi Public Broadcasting television and the author of two "Looking Around Mississippi" books and "Oh! That Reminds Me: More Mississippi Homegrown Stories." Walt is also a reporter and 4 p.m. news anchor at WJTV in Jackson. He lives in Brandon and is a Central Electric member. Contact him at walt@waltgrayson.com.

I asked my mama if she'd like to go back and do it again. I no sooner had asked the question when she snapped back a quick, "No!" It would be too much to have to live through it all over, she said.

I can see her point. Now, if I could leave out the unpleasanties, I might try going back and reliving a day or two. But I'd probably end up like Emily in the play, "Our Town." After Emily (spoiler alert!) dies, she is allowed to go back and observe one day in her life. Others in the afterlife try to warn her against that choice. But she chooses her 12th birthday. Now, it's been a while since senior English in high school, so my memory is a bit fuzzy, but Emily discovers the most mundane things that happened that day were miraculous in hindsight.

I figure we'd all be that way if we could pick a day of our younger life and go back to observe. It all would be a lot more wonderful in retrospect than it seemed while we lived it because we're looking back through a filter of years. We're eyeing events of that day from what we learned from those experiences. The mistakes taught us lessons, and the good things are what we've tried to pass down to our families.



"Pioneers In America's Rural Electrification"

GET TO KNOW YOUR **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Download a free, interactive
legislative app for Mississippi

*Look for "ECM Legislative Roster" in the Apple App Store.
An Android version is also available through the Google Play Store.*

The Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi offers an easy-to-use mobile app,
which provides information on Mississippi's state and federal elected officials.



ecm.coop