

## A Gateway to Opportunity: SCMW Launches Digital Delivery System

South Central Mississippi Works Unveils SCMW.info and Statewide Tools to Revolutionize Workforce Services

On June 5, 2025, South Central Mississippi Works (SCMW) and its partners celebrated a transformative milestone with the launch of SCMW.info (a comprehensive digital platform designed to expand access to workforce services across the region). Held at the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) office in Pearl, MS, the event also marked the introduction of additional tools including a Mobile WIN Job Center and a network of digital kiosks.

“This is more than just a website or a kiosk, it’s a gateway,” said Robin Parker, Workforce Director at CMPDD. “It’s a way to remove barriers and create equitable access for every community we serve.”

Mike Monk, CEO of CMPDD, praised the region’s bold shift toward modernization. “Over a year ago, our local leadership recognized that access to opportunity shouldn’t be constrained by geography, transportation, or outdated systems,” he said. “They voted to build a digital delivery system that connects more people to training, coaching, and employment whether or not they can physically visit a job center. That decision was courageous, and as you’ll see today, it’s paying off.”

Patrick Sullivan, Chair of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), emphasized the significance of the effort. “SCMW didn’t settle for ‘how we’ve always done it. They took a bold step to prioritize outcomes over square footage,” Sullivan noted. “Progress can be uncomfortable, but it’s essential and



we’re seeing a culture shift take hold.”

Sullivan challenged attendees to go beyond simply launching new tools. “Having a kiosk or website isn’t the goal, using it to better serve people is. It’s time to activate, not just admire. We must ask ourselves: Are we preparing people for yesterday’s jobs, or tomorrow’s careers? Mississippi’s future depends on local leaders who are willing to lead change, not just react to it.”

The SCMW digital delivery system brings together local and state resources to ensure streamlined access to employment services, especially for rural and underserved communities. Attendees also heard from Benny Hubbard, Chair of the SCMW Local Workforce Board, Kelvin King, Vice-Chair of the SCMW Board of Commissioners, and Bill Ashley, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), who introduced

integrated state tools to complement the local effort.

This forward-thinking initiative is funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Accelerate MS, whose Career Coach program plays a key role in connecting Mississippians to high-wage, high-demand careers in priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, construction, logistics, and IT.

Training leaders from Hinds, Copiah-Lincoln, and Southwest Mississippi Community Colleges were also present, alongside partners from Build MS. These institutions power programs like Reconnect and Step Up short-term, skills-focused training designed to quickly prepare individuals for careers aligned with regional employer needs.

To learn more about the digital system and explore training opportunities, visit [SCMW.info](https://scmw.info).

## DRA Program Updates

DRA's investments help improve basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, job training, workforce development and economic development planning to support further economic development in communities across Mississippi. CMPDD staff are currently working with local municipalities and organizations on their applications to be submitted for the 2025 grant cycle. DRA is now accepting applications for the following grant programs: Critical Infrastructure Fund (CIF) and Strategic Planning. DRA is soon to announce the opening of the States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) and the new Supplemental Disaster Recovery Fund (SDRF). SEDAP awards are dedicated to improving public infrastructure in distressed and non-distressed communities with an emphasis on job creation. These projects can apply for a maximum of \$500,000. The SDRF program focuses on infrastructure recovery and resilience-building within DRA counties and parishes impacted by disasters declared during calendar years 2023 and 2024. Eligible SDRF

projects include basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure and flood control projects. CIF provides public infrastructure assistance for distressed and non-distressed counties and municipalities in the DRA region. These

projects can apply for a maximum \$2,000,000 grant amount. Strategic planning grants give public entities access to strategic planning funds to address long-standing issues and develop a roadmap for economic growth and opportunity. Applicants for this program have the autonomy to apply for a plan that fits the unique needs and challenges in their community. Eligible plans include, but are not limited to, economic development plans, utility rate studies, transportation plans, workforce development plans, and broadband deployment plans with a maximum grant award of \$150,000.



## Hazard Mitigation Planning

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local jurisdictions to maintain an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to maintain grant eligibility for certain pre- and post-disaster grant programs available through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Early summer thunderstorms have recently brought high winds and frequent lightning to Central Mississippi, which highlights the need for mitigation planning. All jurisdictions are reminded to review their adopted Hazard Mitigation Plans

annually to ensure accuracy with current visions and needs and to account for any development or population changes that might have occurred that could increase or decrease a community's risk to a particular hazard.

Predicting where the next disaster will occur and how severe its impact will be on a community is difficult. Given the right conditions, natural disasters, such as tornadoes and flash floods, can occur at anytime and place. Their human and financial consequences can be significant. Mitigation Planning is intended to assist communities in determining

their risks to natural disasters and developing an action plan to address the known risks by lessening the impact of natural disasters when they take place. Currently, CMPDD Planners are assisting Mississippi State University, Mississippi Valley State University, University of Mississippi Medical Center, and Copiah County with a 5-year update to their Hazard Mitigation Plan. CMPDD planners will be reaching out to governments that have a Hazard Mitigation Plan expiring soon and will remain available to assist local governments with their annual reviews.

## City of Brandon Adopts Comprehensive Plan and Begins Zoning Review

The City of Brandon has officially adopted a new Comprehensive Plan, setting a long-term vision for growth, development, and community well-being. This milestone reflects months of collaboration among city leaders, residents, and planning professionals.

The Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies to guide land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and community services over the next 20 years. The plan emphasizes preserving Brandon's character while preparing for continued population growth and regional development pressures.

With adoption of the plan, the city is now moving into the next critical phase, updating its zoning ordinance. This review

will ensure that local zoning regulations align with the newly adopted goals and policies. Modernizing the zoning code will help Brandon support appropriate development, protect established neighborhoods, and attract desired investment.

Public engagement will remain a central part of the zoning process. Residents, business owners, and community stakeholders will have opportunities to share input as the city works to implement the plan's vision in a clear, consistent, and fair manner.

City officials encourage the community to stay involved as this important work continues.



## Highlights from the 2025 Annual MAPDD Conference

This past April, the Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts (MAPDD) held its 2025 Annual Conference at the Beau Rivage Resort in Biloxi. With more than 740 attendees and 30 generous sponsors, this year's conference was one of the largest and most successful gatherings to date.

The conference is organized by CMPDD, which serves as staff for the Association. CMPDD's staff members worked behind the scenes throughout the week managing the registration desk, coordinating session logistics, and ensuring that all events and activities ran smoothly.

Designed to help local leaders address challenges and uncover new opportunities, the conference offered 34 educational sessions on key topics impacting communities across Mississippi. From policy updates to caring for the elderly to grant opportunities to workforce development, the sessions were informative, timely, and well attended.

### Key sessions included:

- Legislative Updates from the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) and Mississippi Municipal League (MML), covering important policy changes and local government priorities.
- 2025 HR Outlook: 10 Workplace Shifts Every Employer Must Know, helping organizations navigate changes in the modern workforce.
- Community and Economic Development Grant Panels, where experts shared best practices for winning and managing federal and state grants.
- Disability Etiquette and Beyond Barriers in the Workplace, which emphasized inclusivity and accessibility for all Mississippians.
- Vulnerable Person Abuse and Neglect and Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults, addressing protection and advocacy for at-risk populations.
- Who's Caring for the Caregiver, shining a light on the emotional toll and needs of those who support others.
- Virtual Dementia Tour, offering powerful insights into aging care.

Featured speakers included Joe McKinney of the National Association of Development Organizations, Jamie Miller of the Gulf Coast Business Council, and Matthew Chase of the National Association of Counties.

Outside the classroom, attendees enjoyed memorable events like the TRIO Golden Gator Golf Classic, the Early Bird Reception at the Biloxi Town Green, and the lively Gala Reception featuring music by The Mixed Nuts. The conference wrapped up on a high note with a humor-filled closing session led by Jody Fuller, comedian, speaker, writer, and soldier.

Thanks to all who attended, sponsored, and contributed to this outstanding event. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year! Be sure to mark your calendar for April 21-24, 2026.

## Planning Work Across Region Continues

CMPDD continues its ongoing efforts to support cities and counties throughout the region in preparing for future growth. CMPDD is actively working with the communities of Crystal Springs, Clinton, Madison, Simpson County, and Benton on comprehensive planning and zoning projects.

Each of these projects is tailored to reflect the unique needs and goals of the local community. Whether addressing infrastructure needs, managing residential and commercial growth, or preserving local character, CMPDD's planning efforts aim to provide a foundation for long-term success.

Comprehensive plans help communities define where and how they want to grow, while zoning ordinances serve as the legal framework to implement those plans. In many cases, CMPDD is assisting with both the development of updated plans and the modernization of outdated zoning codes.

These planning projects involve extensive research, mapping, and public input. CMPDD staff are working closely with local officials and citizens to ensure each community has a practical, achievable plan for the future.

As these efforts progress, CMPDD remains committed to providing professional guidance that reflects local priorities and promotes sustainable development across Central Mississippi.

## City Clerks and Central MS Mayors Association

The Central Mississippi Mayors Association (CMMA) met in March, and the City Clerks Association met in June. These groups shared best practices with each other and discussed issues that directly affect their jobs and municipalities. CMPDD staff discussed current and future grant and planning opportunities that can be used to better serve their communities.

# CMPDD's Medicaid Waiver Program Update

The Elderly & Disabled Medicaid Waiver (E&D Waiver) is a statewide program designed to provide in-home assistance to qualified Medicaid beneficiaries. Beneficiaries must be 21 years of age or older. They must qualify by either SSI Medicaid or 300% of SSI Medicaid. They must require assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, eating, ambulation and/or transferring, or instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) such as laundry, light housekeeping, errands, and/or assistance on community outings. Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Social Workers (LSW) work together as a team to assess the referred client, submit for approval of services to the Division of Medicaid (DOM), then manage and coordinate the approved services for all clients.

*If a beneficiary does not qualify for SSI Medicaid and is enrolled on any Waiver program, the monthly income limit for 2025 is \$2,901 (before deductions). The income limit is evaluated and adjusted accordingly each year.*

Tuesday, April 22, 2025, through Friday, April 25, 2025, marked the Case Managers' attendance to the annual MAPDD Conference that was held at the Beau Rivage Hotel & Convention Center. A variety of sessions with topics that enhanced their knowledge base were offered and well attended.

The second week of May was designated as National Nurses' Week. The Nurses employed at CMPDD were recognized during Medicaid Waiver's monthly staff meeting. Each RN received a personalized plaque that reflected CMPDD's appreciation of their dedication and service.

CMPDD's Waiver and Workforce Investment divisions continue partnerships to employ Social Workers who have received their bachelor's degree in social work, and are



seeking to work as a licensed social worker case manager. The salary-based 12-week program provides dedicated study time, information, preparation for taking the licensure exam, and supervised observation of case management home visits. Trainees also receive the traditional benefits of insurance coverage, leave time accrual, as well as other employee benefits. At the end of the 12-week training period, and passing the licensure exam, the trainee will automatically transition to a permanent LSW Case Manager position.

The Home & Community-Based Services Elderly and Disabled Waiver's Administrative Codes have been updated and published on the Division of Medicaid's website. The updated Administrative Codes were effective June 1, 2025. The updated codes establish requirements and guidelines for all providers across all five (5) different Waiver programs.

\*Individuals who own an agency and are seeking to become a Medicaid Waiver service provider should contact the Division of Medicaid, Long-Term Care Bureau at 601-359-6141.

For more information on Elderly & Disabled Waiver services, please contact CMPDD's Mississippi Access to Care (MAC) Center at 1-844-822-4622. Or contact Teresa Burrell-Shoto, RN, Case Management Director at 601-855-5914 or [tburrell@cmpdd.org](mailto:tburrell@cmpdd.org).

## CMPDD Reviews Critical Urban Freight Corridors

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recently reviewed and updated its list of Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) during its May meeting. This important step comes as the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) prepares to update the State Freight Plan, which serves as a strategic guide for freight investments statewide.

Critical Urban Freight Corridors are federally designated roadways within urbanized areas that play a significant role in the movement of goods and freight. These corridors help

connect key freight facilities such as distribution centers, intermodal yards, and manufacturing hubs to the larger transportation network, which include interstates and major highways.

With the growth of e-commerce, manufacturing, and logistics across the Jackson metropolitan area, ensuring that the region's freight corridors are current and aligned with regional and state priorities is crucial. Reviewing and refining the CUFC network ensures that the region is keeping pace with evolving freight needs, addressing congestion points, and identifying corridors where improvements may be needed to

accommodate freight-related traffic.

The updated list of CUFCs will be submitted to MDOT for consideration as part of the State Freight Plan update. This coordination ensures that Central Mississippi's freight priorities are well-represented at the state level and that future freight investments align with the region's economic development goals.

For more information on Critical Urban Freight Corridors or the MPO's freight planning activities, contact CMPDD's MPO staff at 601-981-1511 or visit [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org).

# Planning for Tomorrow's Transportation: CMPDD Continues to Update the Region's Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Jackson Urbanized Area, began working in 2024 to update the MPO's long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). As part of this process, CMPDD has been working with a consultant team over the last few months to complete a comprehensive assessment of the region's current conditions and identify future needs. This assessment evaluates how well the existing transportation system is working and where improvements are needed. The findings will help shape future transportation policies and projects to keep the region's roads safe, efficient, and reliable over the next 25 years.

## Existing System Conditions Analysis Shows:

- Over 3.8 million vehicle trips occur daily in the MPO region.
- Interstates carry the most traffic, but many principal arterial roads are experiencing regular congestion.
- Most interstates and bridges are in good condition, but many non-interstate routes have pavement conditions rated as fair or poor.
- Between 2019 and 2023, nearly 77,000 crashes were reported in the region, including 380 fatalities and over 1,600 serious injuries. The majority were rear-ended and angle crashes, often at intersections.

## What the Future Holds with continued population and job growth:

- Daily trips are expected to grow nearly 30% by 2050
- Vehicle miles traveled will rise 36%.
- Traffic delays could increase by over 170% if no additional improvements are made beyond those already funded.

## Why This Matters:

The long-range MTP is updated every five (5) years and looks ahead 25 years to ensure that our transportation system supports future growth and meets the needs of residents and businesses. The current needs assessment will help CMPDD and local leaders prioritize areas where investments are most needed, whether that means easing traffic congestion, improving road conditions, or making streets safer.

As the MTP update continues, you will have opportunities to stay engaged and provide input. CMPDD encourages you to follow the plan's progress and help ensure the region's transportation future is safe, connected, and prepared for tomorrow's demands. For more information, contact CMPDD at 601-981-1511 or visit, [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org).

## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Updates

For the 2025 CDBG cycle, seven (7) municipalities successfully applied for Public Facilities funding. Mississippi's CDBG Public Facilities program provides municipalities and counties funding for public infrastructure needs. Eligible CDBG Public Facilities and Economic Development projects include improvements to water, wastewater and drainage systems, and streets.

The City of Mendenhall has applied for \$700,000 for critical improvements to the city's water system. The project will raise the existing 250,000-gallon Bowen Road Elevated Tank by approximately 30 feet to align with the hydraulic grade of the city's two (2) other elevated water tanks.

The Town of Braxton has applied for \$572,306 to repair town-wide road infrastructure. The project will repair and resurface Harrisville Braxton Road,

Pinola Braxton Road, Birch Street, Dogwood Lane, West Main Street, East Main Street, Pine Street, Quail Ridge Road, Memorial Drive and Holly Lane.

The City of Crystal Springs has applied for \$646,669.73 to repair existing water lines in the Austin Circle and Freetown Community. The project will install new water lines located beneath the roadway and install new fire hydrants.

The Town of Edwards has applied for \$556,250 to improve town-wide drainage issues. The project will address flooding issues by installing new inlets and storm drainpipes along Utica Street to Main Street and Winters Street to the front of the Post Office.

The Town of Pelahatchie has applied for \$600,000 to repair the town's wastewater infrastructure. The project will rehabilitate and upgrade multiple pump stations throughout the town's

wastewater collection system.

The Town of Puckett has applied for \$525,000 to improve ADA compliance with the Town Hall. The project will include restroom renovations and installing an elevator to meet current ADA standards.

The Town of Terry has applied for \$600,000 to improve the town's lagoon facility. The project will repair and install critical systems to the wastewater treatment plant as well as clean and remove sludge buildup. North Utica Street, Fourth Street, and Georgetown Circle will each receive an additional pump to restore operational functionality.

CMPDD staff continues to work with our local municipalities and organizations to prepare for 2026 CDBG Public Facilities and Economic Development applications.

# Community Voices Shape the Future of Aging Services at the FY 2026 Public Hearing

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District/ Area Agency on Aging (CMPDD/AAA) held its Annual Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2026 on June 11, 2025, at the City of Pearl Senior Center. The hearing had 168 participants. This well-attended event served as a critical platform for the Mississippi Department of Human Services/State Unit on Aging, older adults, caregivers, service providers, and community stakeholders to share input on the priorities and programs that impact the aging population across the region.

The purpose of the public hearing was to gather community feedback on the proposed FY 2026 Area Plan on Aging, which outlines the goals, services, and strategies for supporting older Mississippians throughout CMPDD's seven-county service area. These services include nutrition programs, in-home support, transportation, caregiver respite, legal assistance, health promotion, and long-term care ombudsman services.

Representatives from CMPDD/AAA presented updates on current programming, funding allocations, and future initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for seniors. Attendees were invited to offer comments, voice concerns, and suggest enhancements to existing services. The dialogue reflected a strong commitment from both the agency and community to ensure the needs of older adults are met in meaningful responsive ways.

Chelsea B. Crittle, Ph.D., Aging Division Director at CMPDD, expressed appreciation for the community's engagement: "We are deeply grateful for the overwhelming turnout at this year's public hearing. The voices of older adults and their advocates are vital to the planning process, and their insights help us shape programs that are equitable, accessible, and impactful."

The hearing also included an overview of the Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and how the agency is



leveraging local partnerships to deliver high-quality services to the aging population. Attendees had the opportunity to speak one-on-one with staff, complete feedback forms, and learn more about volunteer opportunities and resources available through the Area Agency on Aging.

The City of Pearl Senior Center provided a welcoming and accessible venue for the event, underscoring its role as a hub for senior services and community involvement. By hosting the public hearing in a neighborhood-based setting like the City of Pearl Senior Center, CMPDD emphasized its commitment to staying grounded in the communities it serves. This local approach fosters trust and ensures that services remain responsive to real-life needs.

CMPDD/AAA plans to incorporate the public feedback received into the final draft of its FY 2026 Area Plan, which will be submitted to the Mississippi Department of Human Services for approval on August 1, 2025.

For more information about the Area Agency on Aging or to get involved in future public input sessions, visit [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org) or contact the Aging Department directly at 601-981-1516.

## PLANNING 101

*Join us for basic training related to  
Comprehensive Plans and Zoning.*

### Topics to be discussed:

- What are your duties related to planning
- What is a Comprehensive Plan & a Zoning Ordinance
- Common definitions and why are they important
- How to use these documents
- Legal and Ethical Scenarios

### Where:

Central MS Planning and Development District Main Office  
1020 Centre Pointe Blvd, Pearl, MS 39203

### Who should attend:

- Planning/Zoning Commissioners
- Zoning Administrators and Staff
- Elected Officials

### When:

Friday, October 10th, 2025  
8:30-12:00

# CMDC BULLETIN

CMDC is pleased to announce the continued construction of the Hotel Whiskey project in Long Beach, MS. The project utilized the SBA 504 loan program. The project will create five (5) new jobs in the private sector.



*Hotel Whiskey,  
Pass Christian, MS*

CMDC is a commercial lender certified by the U. S. Small Business Administration and works with local banks and other financial institutions in providing debt capital for small businesses. CMDC provides fixed rate low interest long term financing for small businesses and saves thousands of dollars in debt service on fixed assets. This type of financing removes the problem of variable rate financing on long-term assets. Many economic forecasters are certain that interest rates will rise. These predictable interest rate increases will not negatively impact the cash flow of those small businesses

that have fixed rate low interest loans through the U. S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 504 Loan Program. The most recent fixed interest rates under this loan program were:

## **SBA 504 Loan Program Interest Rates**

<b><u>TERM (YEARS)</u></b>	<b><u>INTEREST RATE</u></b>
10 (June 2025)	6.21%
20 (June 2025)	6.39%
25 (June 2025)	6.37%

Also, CMDC serves as the Loan Review Board for the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District's (CMPDD's) Minority Business Enterprise Loan Program (MBELP). MBELP receives its funding from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA). The interest rate on loans made through this program to a minority owned business is currently 5.00% per annum. The term of a loan can be up to 15 years depending on the use of the loan proceeds (commercial buildings, equipment, inventory, working capital, etc.)

Commissioner De'Keither Stamps invites bankers, commercial loan officers, business owners, real estate developers, and general contractors to contact Dwayne Perkins at 601-981-1625, or visit our website at [www.cmpdd.org](http://www.cmpdd.org). See the tab labeled "Small Business Loans."

## **Building What's Next: A Front-Row Seat to Mississippi's Economic Future**

On June 6, 2025, more than 30 trainees and interns from South Central Mississippi Works' Information Infrastructure Pre-Apprenticeship (I2PA) and summer internship program stepped into a world few ever experienced: the inner workings of a data center under construction. Through partnerships with local educators and workforce leaders, students toured the Amazon Web Services (AWS) site in Madison County, where five (5) state-of-the-art data centers are currently in development.

Walking through an active construction zone offered an extraordinary glimpse into the future electrical and mechanical systems in progress, innovation unfolding in real time. For these students, it wasn't just a tour; it was a moment of realization about the scale and

possibilities of the tech-driven economy.

Following the site visit, AWS's Joe Lackey and leaders from Yates Construction participated in a panel discussion, sharing their personal career journeys. Their paths varied from traditional trades to technical degrees, but all were built on grit, opportunity, and purpose. Their message resonated with the fact that there is no single route to success, and there's more than one way to build a meaningful career in Mississippi.

The discussion underscored not just what's being built at AWS, but who it's being built for, the next generation of skilled workers rising right here in our communities.

Thanks to AccelerateMS and regional partners including Holmes

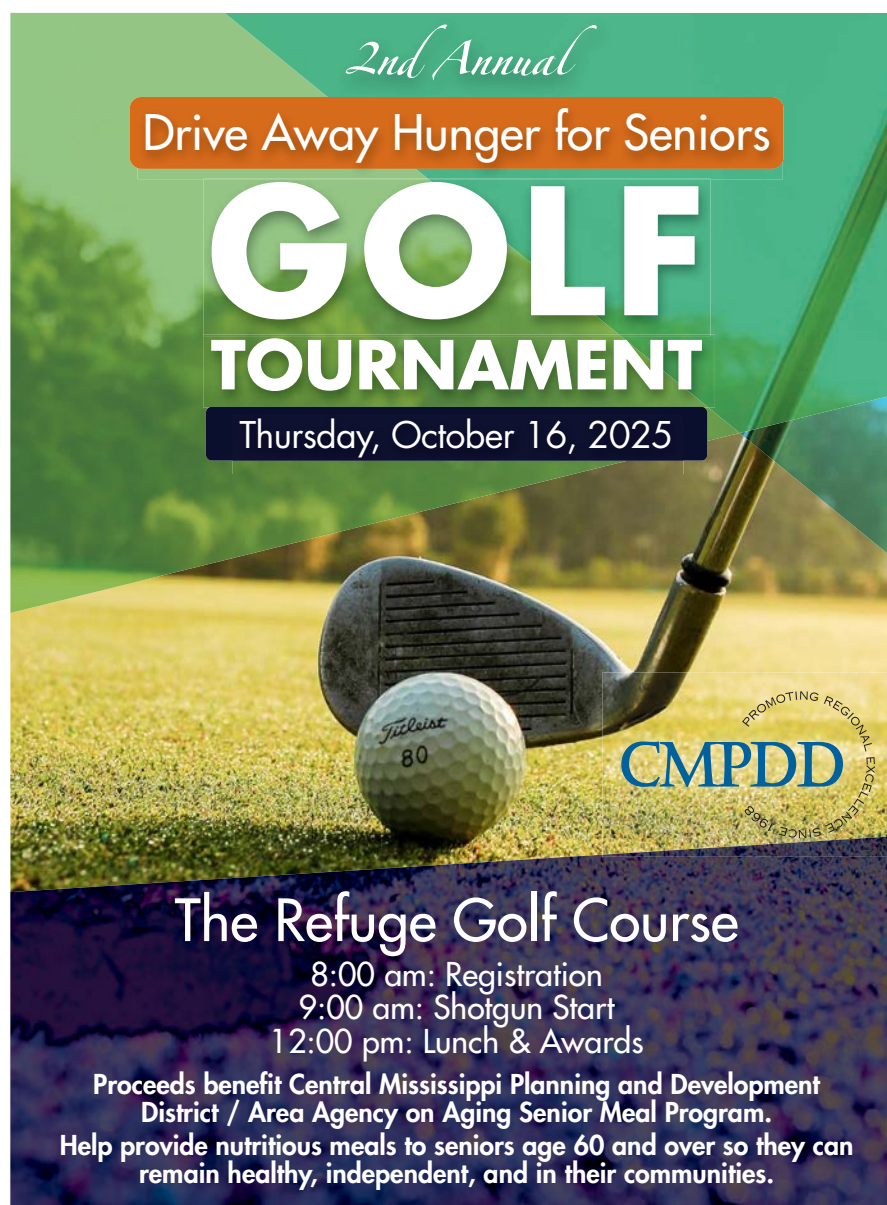


and Hinds Community Colleges and Build Mississippi, students have access to short-term, industry-driven training in sectors like construction, HVAC, and information infrastructure. These are not just programs, they are pathways to high-wage, high-demand careers that are shaping the state's economic future.

CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
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*2nd Annual*  
**Drive Away Hunger for Seniors**

# GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, October 16, 2025

**CMPDD**  
PROMOTING REGIONAL EXCELLENCE SINCE 1968

## The Refuge Golf Course

8:00 am: Registration  
9:00 am: Shotgun Start  
12:00 pm: Lunch & Awards

Proceeds benefit Central Mississippi Planning and Development District / Area Agency on Aging Senior Meal Program.  
Help provide nutritious meals to seniors age 60 and over so they can remain healthy, independent, and in their communities.



[cmpdd.org/golf/](http://cmpdd.org/golf/)

For more information contact  
Chelsea Crittle, Aging Division  
Director at 601-981-1516

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