

JULY 2026



Central Update

*A Quarterly Publication of
Central Mississippi Planning &
Development District*

CMPDD Announces \$34.1 million in MPO Grant Awards for 22 Metro-Area Transportation Projects



The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) announced the selection of 22 transportation projects to receive \$34.1 million in federal grant funding to improve transportation infrastructure throughout the Jackson metropolitan area in May. Combined with more than \$15 million in local matching funds, the selected projects represent a total investment of more than \$49 million in the region's transportation network.

Eligible jurisdictions within the MPO planning area, which includes portions of Hinds, Madison, and Rankin Counties, submitted applications to CMPDD in January 2026. CMPDD staff evaluated and scored each application using project-specific criteria designed to prioritize projects that address regional transportation needs, improve safety, preserve existing infrastructure, and reduce traffic congestion.

Based on those evaluations, the highest-scoring projects were recommended for funding and approved by the MPO during its May 13th meeting.

The 22 selected projects address a variety of transportation priorities across the region. Several projects are focused on reducing congestion and improving traffic flow, including intersection improvements at Gluckstadt Road and Calhoun Station Parkway and the widening of Yandell Road. Other projects will preserve and enhance existing infrastructure

through roadway resurfacing improvements and bridge repairs along corridors such as Old Canton Road in Jackson, Pinehaven Drive in Clinton, Louis Wilson Drive in Brandon, and the upper and lower Spillway bridges. Safety improvements are also a major component of this investment and include projects such as the addition of a raised median along Highway 51 in Ridgeland and the construction of a roundabout on East Metro Parkway in Flowood. Other projects support expanded multimodal transportation options, including a new multi-use path along Flowood Drive from Airport Road to Liberty Road.

Funding for these projects is provided through the MPO's Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, a federal funding program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation that provides annual transportation funding to urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. Within the Jackson metropolitan area, these funds are administered through the MPO transportation planning process coordinated by the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District.

For more information about the project selection and regional transportation planning activities, visit www.cmpdd.org.

*(for a list of grants awarded, see **MPO Grants** on p.2)*

MPO Grants *(continued from p.1)*

Jurisdiction	Project Description	MPO Grant Funds Awarded	Local Match Committed
Brandon	Value Road Overlay: Highway 80 to Old Highway 471	\$720,000	\$180,000
Brandon	Louis Wilson Drive Overlay: Highway 18 to Highway 80	\$2,200,000	\$550,000
Brandon	Highway 18 at Orleans Way Geometric Improvements and Traffic Signal Upgrades	\$1,596,000	\$399,000
Byram	Wynndale Road Overlay: I-55 to Terry Road	\$489,650	\$249,850
Byram	Springridge Road Overlay: Terry Road to Davidson Drive	\$489,797	\$249,913
Clinton	Pinehaven Drive Overlay: Near Berry Drive to Williamson Road	\$1,082,620	\$463,980
Flowood	Medical Parkway Overlay: Airport Road to Flowood Drive	\$896,000	\$224,000
Flowood	Flowood Drive Overlay and Multi-Use Path Construction: Airport Road to Liberty Road	\$2,195,000	\$2,195,000
Flowood	East Metro Parkway Roundabout at Park Way	\$2,380,000	\$1,020,000
Flowood	East Metro Parkway at McKenzie Lane Raised Median	\$920,000	\$230,000
Flowood	Old Fannin Road at Flowood Drive Dedicated Southbound Right Turn Lane Geometric Improvements with Traffic Signal Upgrades and Multi-Use Path Realignment	\$1,592,000	\$398,000
Gluckstadt	Gluckstadt Road at Calhoun Station Parkway Geometric Intersection Improvements and Traffic Signal Upgrades	\$760,000	\$190,000
Hinds County	Old Canton Road/Canton Mart Road Overlay: E County Line Road to I-55 Frontage Road	\$3,264,738	\$816,184
Madison	Highland Colony Parkway Overlay: Madison City Limits to Highway 463	\$1,747,900	\$749,100
Madison County	Yandell Road Widening N Old Canton Road to Bainbridge Crossing	\$5,000,000	\$6,100,000
Pearl	Bierdeman Road Overlay: Old Brandon Road to Highway 80	\$146,300	\$62,700
Pearl	Childre Road Overlay: I-20 to Highway 80	\$585,200	\$250,800
Pearl	Flynn Drive Overlay: Patterson Drive to the Pearl City Limits	\$184,800	\$79,200
PRVWSD	Upper and Lower Spillway Bridge Repairs	\$1,184,137	\$296,034
Rankin County	Fox Hall Road Bridge Replacement	\$1,133,000	\$283,250
Rankin County	Fannin Landing Circle Overlay: Old Highway 471 to Northshore Parkway	\$1,948,100	\$834,900
Ridgeland	Highway 51 Raised Median Access Management West County Line Road to Rice Road	\$3,600,000	\$900,000

City Clerks and Central MS Mayors Association

The Central Mississippi Mayors Association (CMAA) 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.



Drive Away Hunger for Seniors

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, October 15, 2026

www.cmpdd.org/golf/



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.

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

Team Registration
\$600

Team registration will cover a 4-person team

Individual Golfer
\$150

This will cover one golfer who will be paired with other players

Tournament Sponsor
\$2,500

Top tier placement of logo on all event advertising and promotion

Signage at the tournament

Social media promotion on all platforms and flyer

One (1) golf hole sign

Team (4 players) tournament entry

Eagle Sponsor
\$2,000

Second tier placement of logo on all event advertising and promotion

Signage at the tournament

Social media promotion on all platforms and flyer

One (1) golf hole sign

Team (4 players) tournament entry

Lunch Sponsor
\$1,500

Signage with logo displayed in the food area

Social media promotion on all platforms and flyer

Birdie Sponsor
\$500

Name on the Beverage Carts

Social media promotion on all platforms and flyer

Hole Sponsor
\$200

A sign will be located on the course with your company logo

Older Americans Month Senior Prom Celebrates the Golden Years

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) Area Agency on Aging celebrated Older Americans Month in grand style by hosting its annual Senior Prom and bringing together older adults from across the seven-county service area for an afternoon of elegance, fellowship, and celebration.

This year's event embraced the theme "Serving Up the Golden Years," recognizing the invaluable contributions, resilience, and wisdom of older adults throughout Central Mississippi. Hundreds of seniors gathered dressed in their finest attire to enjoy music, dancing, delicious food, door prizes, and special recognitions in an atmosphere filled with laughter, joy, and lasting memories.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the crowning of the Senior Prom Queen, Ms. Hattie Harris, whose grace and radiant spirit embodied the essence of Older Americans Month. Family members, friends, and fellow attendees applauded as she received her crown, sash, certificate, and bouquet, making for a truly memorable moment.

The celebration also featured entertainment, opportunities to reconnect with friends from neighboring communities, and plenty of dancing as attendees filled the dance floor. Beautiful gold and black décor transformed the venue into an elegant ballroom, creating the perfect setting for seniors to celebrate life, friendship, and healthy aging.

"Older Americans Month is about recognizing the countless ways older adults strengthen our families, communities, and our state," said Dr. Chelsea B. Crittle, Aging Division Director for the Central Mississippi Area Agency on Aging. "Our Senior Prom is more than a social event, it is an opportunity to celebrate our seniors, reduce social isolation, encourage active aging, and remind them how valued and appreciated they are."



Events such as the Senior Prom support the Area Agency on Aging's mission of promoting independence, enhancing quality of life, and encouraging meaningful social engagement among older adults. Research continues to show that opportunities for social interaction contribute to improved emotional well-being, increased physical activity, and healthier aging.

The Central Mississippi Area Agency on Aging extends its sincere appreciation to the staff, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners whose dedication made this year's celebration a success. Their

commitment ensured that every senior in attendance experienced an afternoon filled with dignity, joy, and unforgettable memories.

Older Americans Month reminds us each year that aging is not simply about growing older, it's about continuing to live with purpose, staying connected, and celebrating the remarkable contributions older adults make every day.

Here's to honoring our seniors and celebrating the Golden Years!

Career Coach Program Continues to Build Momentum Across the Central Mississippi Region

The Career Coach program continues to make a meaningful impact across the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District by connecting high school students with career exploration, workforce readiness resources, and individualized guidance for life after graduation.

During Program Year 2026, Career Coaches recorded 6,939 career planning sessions, 5,054 unique interactions, and 7,195 repeated interactions with students across the region. These numbers reflect both the broad reach of the program and the continued demand for consistent, one-on-one career support in local high schools.

Through the program, students are receiving valuable assistance with career pathway planning, postsecondary education options, training opportunities, apprenticeships, internships, and direct connections to local workforce needs. By helping students better understand the opportunities available in their own communities, the Career Coach program is strengthening the connection between education and employment throughout Central Mississippi.

Southcentral Mississippi Works is especially proud that the program will continue into Program Year 2027 with funding support from AccelerateMS. This continued investment will allow SCMW to build on the program's success and maintain career coaching services for students across the region.

While all high schools in the CMPDD district are not currently participating in the Career Coach program, SCMW remains committed to expanding access and strengthening partnerships with school districts, employers, community colleges, and workforce partners. The continued support from AccelerateMS provides an important opportunity to sustain and grow this work so more students can receive guidance, encouragement, and practical information as they prepare for their futures.

The success of the Career Coach program demonstrates the importance of early career awareness and strong local partnerships. By meeting students where they are and helping them plan for what comes next, SCMW is supporting a stronger workforce pipeline for the Central Mississippi region.

2025 CDBG Grant Environmental Review

In February of 2026, five (5) of our local governments (Edwards, Crystal Springs, Braxton, Pelahatchie, and Terry) were awarded Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for various projects such as road repaving, wastewater improvements, water improvements, and drainage improvements. CMPDD has been working on behalf of awarded local governments to complete the environmental review process for each grant as required by HUD. We hope to have the review complete sometime in July. As described by HUD, "An environmental review is the process of reviewing a project and its potential environmental impacts to determine whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards. The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have an adverse environmental or health effect on end users."

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2026:

For the 2026 CDBG cycle, five (5) 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 projects include improvements to water, wastewater and drainage systems, and streets.

The City of Mendenhall has applied for \$599,668 for critical improvements to the city's roadways. If awarded, the project will consist of paved and unpaved roadways. This will include base repairs and roadway leveling to make travel on roadways safer for citizens.

The Town of Bolton has applied for \$599,909 to make town-wide sewer improvements. If awarded, the project will clean, replace, and inspect all sewer lines.

The City of Magee has applied for a \$574,387 grant for sewage rehabilitation and drainage improvements. If awarded, the project will clean and inspect lines, rehab

nine (9) manholes, and repair three (3) points of localized pipe failure. This will happen along Fifth Avenue NE, North Hill Drive, Twelfth Street NE, Johnson Lockhart Drive NE, and Eighth Street NE. Fifth Avenue will also have drainage improvements that include new curb inlets, storm drainage piping, roadway repair, and increased hydraulic capacity to eliminate the localized flooding along Fifth Avenue and McLaurin Drive.

The City of Pearl has applied for \$750,000 to replace the deficient galvanized water lines and related appurtenances to meet current municipal standards. Bailey Acres, Pearl Dr, Cunningham Dr, Marbury St, Earl St, Valentour Rd, Bates Cir, Joseph St, and Vera St are affected by the deficient water lines.

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

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES START WITH YOU.

VOLUNTEER YOUR SERVICES.
CHANGE LIVES.
STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY.



**YOUR TIME.
THEIR
TOMORROW.**

Be the reason
someone lives
healthier and
independent.

BECOME A COMMUNITY CHAMPION FOR OLDER ADULTS.

Share your expertise. Deliver hope. Create lasting impact.

We're looking for organizations and professionals to volunteer their services and programs at no cost. Your partnership helps older adults live healthier, stay connected, and maintain their independence.



ALL SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED AT OUR NUTRITION SITES

— convenient locations where older adults gather, connect, and thrive.

SERVICES WE NEED



PERIODIC HEALTH SCREENINGS

Blood pressure, weight, BMI, glucose screening, flu shots, and immunizations



MENTAL HEALTH & GRIEF SUPPORT

Provide compassionate support and resources to help individuals navigate life's challenges.



TRAINERS ON RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION, GRIEF

Educate and empower others to recognize warning signs and connect individuals to help early.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Artists, musicians, fitness instructors, teachers — to lead programming at no cost.



VITA (VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE)

Help older adults file taxes and access refunds and credits they've earned.



FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Credit unions, banks to deliver basic financial literacy and empower smart financial decisions.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- ✓ Improve health outcomes in our community
- ✓ Support seniors in living independently
- ✓ Build meaningful partnerships
- ✓ Expand access to essential services
- ✓ Make a lasting impact

INTERESTED IN PARTNERING WITH US?

Contact

Chelsea B. Crittle, PhD, Aging Division Director!



Call: 601-321-2147



Email: ccrittle@cmpdd.org

Let's work together to bring your valuable services to older adults across Central Mississippi.

YOUR SKILLS. THEIR WELL-BEING. A STRONGER COMMUNITY.

Together, we can make a difference.

CMDC BULLETIN

Commissioner De'Keither Stamps, President of the Central Mississippi Development Company, Inc. (CMDC), announced the approval a new loan.

The approval was for MS Pizza, LLC, which will operate as Pop's Diner. The loan was for \$124,000 of a \$314,544 project under the United States Small Business Administration's 504 Loan Program. The proceeds of this loan will finance the purchase of an existing building and a new HVAC system for a restaurant in Poplarville, Mississippi. This will serve as the borrowers' first location in Poplarville, Mississippi and will create the equivalent of 10 full-time new jobs in the private sector.

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

<u>TERM (YEARS)</u>	<u>INTEREST RATE</u>
10 (June 2026)	5.79%
20 (June 2026)	6.17%
25 (June 2026)	6.11%

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 5.50% 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. See the tab labeled "Small Business Loans."

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.

During National Nurses Week, May 6-12, 2026, CMPDD recognized their 25 RN Case Managers during the monthly Medicaid Waiver staff meeting. Each nurse received a customized tote organizer as a token of appreciation for their commitment and continued contributions.

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, and 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.

*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.

City of Brandon Adopts New Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

After an extensive review and update process, the City of Brandon officially adopted a new Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, replacing the City's previous ordinance that had been in place since 2016. The new ordinance was adopted by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen on April 6, 2026.

The updated ordinance modernizes the City's development regulations and provides a clearer framework for managing future growth while preserving the character of Brandon. The new regulations streamline zoning procedures, improve organization and readability, and update development standards to better address current land use trends and emerging issues facing growing communities.

The ordinance includes revised zoning districts, updated definitions, modernized development standards, and new tools that will help guide investment and redevelopment throughout Brandon. By establishing clear and predictable regulations, the City is better positioned to accommodate continued residential and commercial growth while protecting established neighborhoods and promoting high-quality development.

CMPDD staff worked closely with officials, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and stakeholders throughout the update process to ensure the ordinance reflects the community's vision and long-term planning goals.

CMPDD Working with Advanced Manufacturers to Build Pre-Apprenticeship Model

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District is working with advanced manufacturing companies and workforce partners to develop a pre-apprenticeship model designed to connect students and adults to training, paid work experience, and long-term career pathways.

A pre-apprenticeship program helps prepare individuals for success in a Registered Apprenticeship or related employment opportunity. These programs typically include career exploration, industry-aligned classroom training, hands-on work experience, supportive services, and a clear next step into employment, additional training, or apprenticeship. For participants, the model provides an opportunity to learn about high-demand careers while building the skills and confidence needed to enter the workforce. For employers, it creates a more reliable pipeline of work-ready talent.

CMPDD's approach builds on the existing STEP UP model, which includes career exploration and recruitment, sector-based skills training, paid work experience with industry partners, and a "next best step" for each participant. The framework is designed to serve high school students, career changers, and unemployed or underemployed adults

while helping local manufacturers meet current and future workforce needs.

The model also aligns with national standards for high-quality pre-apprenticeship programs. These elements include transparent entry and success requirements, alignment with skills sought by local employers, industry-recognized credentials, hands-on work-based learning, career and academic supports, and transition opportunities into Registered Apprenticeship.

CMPDD is working with partners to shape a repeatable model that can be used across the region's advanced manufacturing sector. Planning includes training curriculum, instructors, facilities and equipment, transportation, recruitment and selection, training stipends, internship wages, work experience, and placement options. By defining these components early, CMPDD and its partners can build a program that is organized, employer-driven, and responsive to the needs of both participants and industry.

CMPDD plans to pilot the pre-apprenticeship model during the upcoming school year with companies throughout the metro area. The pilot will provide an opportunity to test the model, strengthen employer partnerships, and

further align training and work-based learning opportunities with the needs of local advanced manufacturers.

The need for this type of workforce pathway is clear. Advanced manufacturing companies require employees with technical skills, durable skills, and exposure to modern workplace expectations. At the same time, many students and adults are looking for practical ways to enter high-wage careers without knowing where to begin. A pre-apprenticeship model helps bridge that gap by combining training, employer engagement, and real-world experience into one coordinated pathway.

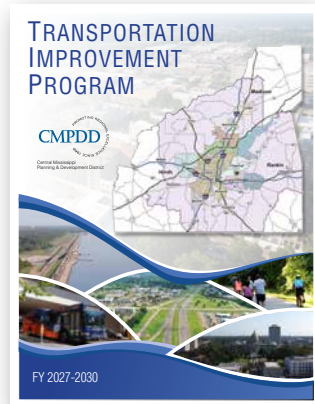
As this work moves forward, CMPDD will continue collaborating with manufacturers, education providers, career coaches, and workforce partners to strengthen the talent pipeline for Central Mississippi. The goal is to create a model that opens doors for participants while helping local companies compete, grow, and invest in the region's future workforce.

Companies interested in learning more about the pre-apprenticeship model or participating in the upcoming pilot may contact Michael Curran at mcurran@cmpdd.org.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Releases Proposed 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program for Public Review and Comment

Public Comment Period Open July 6 – August 4, 2026

CMPDD on behalf of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is inviting residents, stakeholders, and community partners to review and provide comments on the proposed 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



The TIP is a federally required planning document that identifies a multi-year schedule of transportation projects that have received a commitment of federal, state, and/or local funding. The program includes planned investments in highways, bridges, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian

facilities, and other transportation improvements throughout the MPO planning area.

The public comment period will begin Monday, July 6, 2026 and remain open through Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The proposed document is available for review on the CMPDD Transportation “Get Involved” webpage at www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/.

Ways to Submit Comments

Online:

Submit comments using the Transportation Comment form available on the CMPDD website, www.cmpdd.org/transportation/get-involved/.

Email:

mpo@cmpdd.org

Mail:

CMPDD MPO
1020 Centre Pointe Boulevard
Pearl, MS 39208

Following the close of the public comment period, all comments received will be presented to the Intermodal Technical Committee and Metropolitan Planning Policy Committee for consideration before the MPO takes action on the proposed TIP.

Public participation is a vital component of the regional transportation planning process. Community input helps ensure transportation investments reflect local priorities and address the current and future mobility needs of the region.

For additional information or assistance in submitting comments, please contact CMPDD at (601)981-1511 or mpo@cmpdd.org.

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). 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 anyplace. 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 do take place. Currently, CMPDD Planners are assisting Richland, Brandon, Florence, Flora, Clinton, Ridgeland, Rankin County 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. CMPDD Planners remain available to assist local governments with their annual reviews.



EDA Training

In July 2026, CMPDD staff will attend EDA training in Atlanta. This training will enable our staff to better assist our local governments with EDA funding opportunities and application processes.



2026 ANNUAL MAPDD CONFERENCE

More than 760 Attend MAPDD 2026 Annual Conference

The Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts (MAPDD) hosted its 2026 Annual Conference April 21–24, 2026, at the Beau Rivage Resort & Convention Center in Biloxi, Mississippi. The event welcomed more than 760 attendees from across the state and was supported by 32 sponsors, making it one of the largest and most successful conferences in the association’s history.

The conference is organized and staffed by CMPDD personnel. CMPDD’s staff members worked behind the scenes in the weeks leading up to the conference and throughout the week of the event managing conference registration, coordinating session logistics, and ensuring that all events and activities ran smoothly.

The annual conference brings together elected officials, local government representatives, state and federal agency partners, economic and community development professionals, aging services providers, planners, workforce development specialists, and numerous other stakeholders to exchange ideas, discuss emerging issues, and strengthen partnerships that benefit communities throughout Mississippi.

This year’s conference featured 38 educational sessions covering a wide range of topics, including artificial intelligence, federal and state grant funding opportunities, workforce development, a Mississippi 2026 Legislative Session update, economic development, understanding the Older Americans Act Final Rule, reporting Medicaid

fraud, planning for caregivers, legal rights and protections for vulnerable adults, understanding Mississippi’s Home and Community Based Waiver programs, and resources available to support small businesses.

The conference opened with nationally recognized educational leader and Pearl Public School District Superintendent Chris Chism, who shared insights into the practical applications of artificial intelligence and its growing role in improving organizational effectiveness. Sally Doty, Director of the Mississippi Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility (BEAM), provided attendees with an update on Mississippi’s broadband expansion efforts, highlighting ongoing investments designed to expand connectivity and strengthen communities throughout the state. Dr. Lavon Gray also delivered an engaging presentation focused on transforming workplace conflict into opportunities for growth and collaboration by equipping participants with practical strategies to navigate difficult conversations and strengthen organizational relationships.

The annual conference continues to serve as an important forum for collaboration, innovation, and professional development. CMPDD extends its sincere appreciation 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 20-23, 2027.



Internships Open Doors for Central Mississippi Students

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development District is helping students gain valuable workplace experience this summer through a successful paid internship program made possible with funding from AccelerateMS.

The program is connecting students with employers across a wide range of industries, giving them the opportunity to explore career pathways, build employability skills, and gain hands-on experience in professional work environments. Through paid internships, students are able to earn income while learning directly from local employers and developing a stronger understanding of career opportunities available throughout Central Mississippi.

This summer's internship placements reflect the strength of the region's employer partnerships and the growing demand for work-based learning opportunities. Participating worksites include manufacturing, energy, engineering, automotive, forestry, defense, and other high-demand sectors.

Internship placements include students working with Batesville Manufacturing, McNeely Plastics, Electrolux Professional, Capital Ortho, Nissan, Continental Tire, Weyerhaeuser, Hitachi Energy, ERDC, Raytheon, and other regional partners. The program also includes several targeted internship opportunities through Nissan, including placements connected to Jackson Public Schools, HBCU



students, community college students, and automotive career pathways.

In total, the internship program includes more than 100 paid student placements this summer. Among those opportunities, 25 students

are participating through the Nissan/JPS partnership, with three (3) students already receiving permanent job offers to begin work after graduation.

These outcomes demonstrate the value of early career exposure and strong collaboration between education, workforce, and industry partners. For students, internships provide a chance to apply classroom learning in real-world settings, develop professional confidence, and make informed decisions about future education and employment. For employers, the program creates an opportunity to build relationships with emerging talent and strengthen the local workforce pipeline.

CMPDD appreciates the continued support of AccelerateMS, whose funding has made these paid internship opportunities possible. By investing in students and connecting them to local employers, the internship program is helping prepare the next generation of workers while supporting the long-term economic success of the Central Mississippi region.

DRA Update

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) visited the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) to conduct a Mississippi Local Development District (MS LDD) training session for planning and development districts across the region. The training brought together representatives from multiple PDDs to strengthen collaboration, enhance understanding of DRA programs and funding opportunities, and share best practices for supporting economic and community development initiatives. The session provided valuable guidance on program requirements, grant administration, reinforcing the partnership between DRA and Mississippi's Local Development Districts in advancing sustainable growth and improving communities throughout the state.



CEDS Update

CMPDD has already begun working on updating the 2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan for our region. EDA requires that our plan be comprehensively updated every 5-years and annual updates completed between the 5-years revision. EDA describes CEDS as a resource that "contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a place-based, regionally driven economic development planning process."

During July, CMPDD will hold one meeting in each county in our district where elected officials and other economic development constituents can share thoughts and ideas that contribute to the CEDS being a comprehensive and representative plan for the region.

If the name and address of the recipient needs to be updated, please contact our office at 601-981-1511.

Seniors Enjoy Fresh Healthy Choices Through Farmers Market Partnership



Fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy living were on display as older adults from across Central Mississippi visited the Mississippi Farmers Market to redeem their Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) benefits. The event highlighted the partnership between the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) Area Agency on Aging and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) to improve access to locally grown, nutritious foods for older Mississippians.

Participants enjoyed shopping among colorful displays of fresh produce while interacting directly with Mississippi farmers and vendors. The program not only provides seniors with access to healthy foods but also supports local agriculture by encouraging the purchase of fresh, Mississippi-grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey.

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program is designed to promote

better nutrition among older adults while increasing awareness of the importance of healthy eating. Through this partnership, eligible seniors receive benefits that can be used at authorized farmers markets and roadside stands throughout the state.

“Our partnership with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce continues to make a meaningful impact on the lives of older adults throughout our region,” said Dr. Chelsea B. Crittle, Aging Division Director for the Central Mississippi Area Agency on Aging. “The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program not only provides seniors with access to fresh, nutritious foods, but it also creates opportunities for social engagement, physical activity, and support for our local farmers. It’s truly a win-win for our communities.”

Throughout the day, seniors filled reusable market bags with fresh tomatoes, peaches, squash, melons, and other seasonal produce while enjoying the vibrant atmosphere of the Mississippi Farmers Market. Many participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to purchase fresh, locally grown foods that contribute to healthier lifestyles and greater food security.

The Central Mississippi Area Agency on Aging remains committed to enhancing

the health and well-being of older adults by connecting them with programs and resources that promote independence, wellness, and quality of life. Partnerships like this one with the MDAC demonstrate how collaboration can create lasting benefits for seniors and strengthen communities across Mississippi.

The Central Mississippi Area Agency on Aging encourages eligible seniors to participate in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program each season and take advantage of the many health benefits that come from incorporating fresh, locally grown produce into their daily diets. For more information on the Farmers Market Vouchers, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 601-981-1516.

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Volume 41

Number 3