By Paul Keane

Wayne County Board of Supervisors were told of the progress made by Pine Belt Mental Health in the area, along with the potential for certification and receiving of possible new funding shifts that could affect the program.

Jerry Mayo with Pine Belt told the board he appreciated the support the county gave the program each year, and nearly 600 people special across nearly 27,000 appointment helped were made in Wayne County during the last year. He also said a change in operations has helped keep law enforcement from having to address mentally ill patients quite as much as in past years.

In many cases, the mentally ill has been placed in county jail due to the fact that law enforcement had no other facilities to house them in until the patient could be helped by an agency.

Last year, the state transferred operation of the crisis centers to the criminal justice centers such as ours, Mayo said. “We have a crisis center in Laurel that serves Wayne County because of that crisis center, we have cut the number of involuntary commitments in Wayne County from 39 the previous year to 19 last year. This helps cut costs for the number of people in the jail that are having to be housed by the jail.

“Our goal is to keep them out of the state hospitals, if at all possible. This helps the state and for us to be able to invest in the number of people that we are able to treat within our community,” the board told the board.

Mayo also said the board that proposed changes in their local health and mental health could cause more people unable to obtain the services they need because of the increase in need for the crisis center.

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Women and Children's Home and Gardens in Hattiesburg.

For additional information on the event, contact

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The event, sponsored by

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