

# Fall classes find more students in career and technical education

**MCEF**

As students prepare for a new school year, many are choosing career and technical education as their path to professional success.

Since 1996, that’s been the goal of the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation, which continues working with statewide coalitions in education, industry and government to build a ready workforce for Mississippi.

“MCEF is enjoying one of the most eventful years in our history as evidence by the increased enrollment in career and technical education programs,” said MCEF President Mike Barkett. “More and more Mississippians are realizing that CTE programs open doors to promising career paths in an industry that’s experiencing unprecedented growth.”

Boosting the number of CTE graduates is vital, he explained, because by 2019 Mississippi will need more than 80,000 craft professionals to meet the needs of the state’s growing construction and manufacturing industries. MCEF is helping Mississippi address this need by encouraging interest in technical-based careers and providing high-quality training programs to support the state’s workforce development goals.

Since the introduction of statewide competency standards last year, MCEF has been working closely with the Mississippi Department of Education to ensure that the state’s CTE centers achieve accreditation from the National Center for Construction Education and Research. Specifically, MCEF is conducting assessments to determine if programs are

NCCER-compliant and developing improvement programs for those falling short of competency standards.

“We’re positioning the state’s CTE programs for success by raising standards to reflect the higher demands being placed on these programs nationwide,” Barkett said. “This will also help position our graduates for greater success by preparing them to successfully compete for jobs wherever they go.”

Along with raising standards, MCEF staff members are updating CTE training materials to ensure that students are exposed to the latest construction tools, technologies and training methods, including a broadened emphasis on safety.

One of MCEF’s focus areas is helping remove the stigma that is too often associated with career and technical education. MCEF sponsors events designed to introduce junior-high and high school students to construction careers, including the Passport to Careers Expo each spring in Jackson and the USM Building Futures Summer Camp in July.

In addition, MCEF hosts an annual counselors’ workshop during which K-12 counselors from across Mississippi participate in hands-on building activities. The goal is to increase student enrollment in high school CTE programs by expanding knowledge of CTE programs and successful high-paying careers.

“We’re showing students, parents and counselors that modern construction and manufacturing jobs are cutting-edge, technologically advanced and academically

rigorous,” Barkett said. “By no means are these programs a last resort for students who can’t excel in traditional, four-year degree programs. To the contrary, they’re the first choice for students who are serious about their futures and want rewarding careers with opportunities for advancement.”

Barkett noted that many students who graduate from MCEF programs go on to complete four-year degrees in fields such as engineering and architecture. Others are interested in starting careers directly after high school, and thanks to the variety of training programs now offered in Mississippi, more than 20 percent of high school graduates successfully transitioned to careers last year.

“Over the last two decades, MCEF has helped transform career and technical education in Mississippi with the help of our statewide network of partners and stakeholders,” Barkett said. “The payoff is seeing more young people proudly choose career and technical education as their ticket to success. It’s one way Mississippi can reverse the ‘brain drain’ by offering rewarding, stable careers to our best and brightest.”

The mission of the non-profit MCEF is to promote careers, recruit capable individuals and train a quality workforce for the construction and manufacturing industries in the state of Mississippi.

MCEF also offers workforce training and credentialing in construction, industrial maintenance and manufacturing trades. Learn more at <http://mcef.net>.

# Mississippi Department of Transportation encourages everyone to make safety their top priority in school zones.

It is hard to believe, but school is almost back in session. The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) encourages everyone to make safety their top priority, especially in school zones.

Drivers can keep themselves and others safe by taking proper precautions, leaving earlier and avoiding distractions.

“Be alert in school zones and near school buses to keep Mississippi students safe,” said Melinda McGrath, P.E., MDOT Executive Director. “An accident can occur quickly if drivers are not cautious.”

During drop off and pick up times, schools can be busy with traffic. If possible, carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school. Use designated areas to avoid loading or unloading children across the street from their school.

Buses help move a large number of students. If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop paddle is extended, traffic must stop to allow children to safely cross the street. The area 10 feet around a school bus is the

most dangerous for children because visibility can be reduced. Stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus.

“Never pass a bus from behind or from either direction if you’re on a two-lane road. Traffic should be completely stopped so children can safely cross the street,” McGrath said.

Motorist should also remember to share the road with pedestrians and bikers. Always yield to pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections, especially when flashers are blinking in a school zone. For bikers, motorists should only allow at least three feet of space when passing.

Pedestrians and bikers can do their part to safely arrive at school by being predictable and not making sudden movements around traffic. Pedestrians should use sidewalks and pay attention to traffic signs. Bikers should always ride in the same direction as traffic and wear appropriate safety gear.

“There are many ways to get to school,” McGrath said. “When people travel with caution and care, every-

one can reach their destinations safely.”

Children learn from their parents and peers. Setting a good example and practicing safety can help create a positive transportation environment.

For more information about school zone safety and to download a free coloring book for children, visit [www.GoMDOT.com/safetyeducation](http://www.GoMDOT.com/safetyeducation). Follow and like @MississippiDOT on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook for more back to school safety tips.

# Drive to get medical marijuana on 2020 ballot

Associated Press

The woman whose daughter’s name is on Mississippi’s marijuana oil law has begun a drive for a state constitutional amendment allowing medical marijuana use.

A news release says Ashley Durval registered an initiative Monday with the Mississippi Secretary of State’s Office.

Her group, called Mississippians for Compassionate Care, must collect at least 86,185 certified signatures over the next year from across the state to get Medical Marijuana 2020 on the statewide ballot in 2020.

The Legislature passed Harper Grace’s Law in 2014, removing marijuana extract oil from the Mississippi’s list of controlled substances. Harper Grace Durval has a rare form of epilepsy. She was 2 years old when the law was passed.

Durval says that her daughter has not yet been able to get the oil for treatment.



# Mississippi families living in public housing now protected from secondhand smoke exposure

*Governor Phil Bryant issues proclamation recognizing July 30 as Smokefree Public Housing Day*

Secondhand smoke is a serious health threat and can linger in rooms and even travel between homes in multi-unit housing. There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and today Mississippi residents in public housing should be protected by a new smoke-free housing rule from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that goes into effect today.

To celebrate the smokefree housing rule, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant issued a proclamation recognizing July 30, 2018 as Smokefree Public Housing Day in the state of Mississippi.

The proclamation, ar-

ranged by a coalition of organizations includes the American Lung Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

“Everyone deserves the opportunity to lead a healthy life, and ensuring homes are free from the risks of secondhand smoke is a critical step for the health of residents,” said American Lung Association Health Promotions Specialist Rochelle Culp Thompson. “This is especially true for children and those who are more vulnerable to the impact of secondhand smoke, such as those living with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmo-

nary disease. Today we’re making a healthier future for Mississippi and our nation.”

In November 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a rule requiring all federally-owned public housing to become smokefree by July 30, 2018. This rule will protect close to two million Americans nationwide from being exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes, including 690,000 children. The American Lung Association celebrates this long-awaited health protection, following more than a decade of advocacy for the passage of the rule as well as support for the implementation of smokefree housing

policies in local public housing authorities.

In Mississippi, it means protection for residents in 50 local public housing agencies. The American Lung Association is educating residents about the dangers of being exposed to tobacco smoke.

The American Lung Association is training staff and residents to become Cessation Navigators. Cessation Navigators are individuals trained to speak to residents about tobacco use and connect them with resources to help them quit smoking. Additionally, individuals are being trained to become Certified Freedom From Smoking (FFS) Facilitators, who will be able to conduct on-site cessation classes for residents.

“Today we celebrate this important step to protect the health of residents in Mississippi, and we know we’ll see the health benefits for years to come,” said Thompson.

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Corn	Sep 18	2018 Aug	3.67	0.11	3.56	0.05
Soybeans Sidon	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	8.91	-0.35	8.56	0.06
Soybeans G'wood	Aug 18	2018 Jul	8.75	-0.12	8.63	0.04
Soybeans G'wood	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	8.91	-0.26	8.65	0.06
Soybeans Minter City	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	8.91	-0.27	8.64	0.06
Rice	Sep 18		11.955			-0.050
Rice	Nov 18		11.935			0.050
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