



Success in hunting or fishing is measured differently by each individual. Some consider each outing a success if fish or game is brought home. Others consider success by the opportunity to get away from work or to be with a family member or friend. And each trip may be different. It may be that today's goal is to catch more fish than the other competitors while tomorrows pleasure will be found in watching a grandchild catch his first bluegill. Success means different things to different people and in different situations. Most of the time, I measure success by the opportunity to be outdoors. If I'm blessed to harvest fish or fowl, it's just icing on the cake. That doesn't mean that I don't hunt or fish hard. It's simply that I've learned that most of my trips bear no edible fruit. For some people, this is not good enough. It seems they have a constant competition going on with others, and if

they can't match the wits of the television personalities, then their trip is a failure.

Most of us measure other areas of our life the same way. The world we live in equates success with possessions, power, and popularity. We assume if any person has these, they must be successful. If that is true, what does that say about most of us? It says we must be failures. True success, however, is not measured by these things. It is measured by obedience; namely our obedience to God. Did I do today what God wanted me to do? If I can answer this question in the affirmative, I was successful. It doesn't matter if my performance was in front of thousands or one. It doesn't matter if it took great skill or if I just handed a cup of cold water to someone in need. The scope of my service doesn't matter to God. He only looks at my obedience. This means that none of us need ever look at what we do as menial or un-

Auditor's office begins New Year with momentum from concluded investigations

Press Release

State Auditor Shad White's office ended 2019 by securing convictions for Dana Beaman of Hancock County and Christy James of Wayne County in separate December court sessions. Beaman will spend at least six years in prison, and James was sentenced to at least five years of probation. Judges also ordered both women to repay taxpayers a total of over \$150,000.

Dana Sue Beaman was arrested by agents from the Auditor's office in July 2017 after she was indicted on multiple counts of embezzlement. Beaman stole over \$110,000 from taxpayers during her employment at the Hancock County Justice Court by altering court fee payment records. The Auditor's office has already recovered \$100,000 by filing a claim against Beaman's surety bond. She will resume repayment when she is released from prison.

Special Agents from the Auditor's office arrested Christy James in September 2019 after she was indicted for embezzlement. James pled guilty to stealing nearly \$40,000 by manipulating computer software used by the Wayne County Justice Court. The entire amount of

the demand – \$51,531.80 – has already been recovered by the Auditor's office.

In addition to these cases, the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor returned over \$1.8 million of stolen public money to taxpayers in 2019. The Auditor's office has also worked with prosecutors across the state to be sure stealing from taxpayers does not go unpunished, with judges sentencing embezzlers and fraudsters to over 300 years in state custody since Auditor White took office.

"We continue to request the strongest possible sentences at the end of our investigations to send the message that theft of public funds will not be tolerated in Mississippi," said Auditor White. "Since I have taken office, criminals we investigated have been sentenced to hundreds of years in prison. I want to thank investigators in my office for their hard work in 2019 and let taxpayers know we are ready to be even tougher on theft of taxpayer dollars in 2020.

Suspected fraud can be reported to the Auditor's office online any time by clicking the red button at www.osa.ms.gov or via telephone during normal business hours at 1-(800)-321-1275.

Rikard to leave MDEQ January 13

Press Release

Gary C. Rikard, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), announced that he is leaving the agency January 13, 2020.

Rikard has served as Executive Director since appointed by Governor Phil Bryant in September 2014. He previously worked at the agency as an Environmental Engineer and a Senior Attorney in the 1990s before practicing environmental law in the private sector.

"It has been my great honor

important. It also means that we all have opportunities to succeed and that what we do will never be compared with anyone else. God created us all to succeed. This doesn't mean our obedience is tied to our acceptance by God. It's not. Please don't make this assumption. Our obedience

*Local Hunter

(Continued from page 1.) (1.2-by-1.2 meter) blind and spotted a rattle attached to a snake that was only inches away, tucked into the slats of a pallet that served as the blind's flooring.

"I literally jumped into the chair because there was no way to get away. When I was in that chair I realized I had nowhere to go," he said.

The snake started striking at the shaky chair, he said. So he aimed at the creature through his deer rifle's scope and missed. He then put the gun close to the snake's head and fired.

He was left with a dead

County grads named from Hinds Community College

Press Release

Throughout three different ceremonies on Dec. 18, 2019, Hinds Community College awarded a total of 1,316 credentials to 958 graduates, with some graduates receiving more than one credential.

Of the fall graduates, 158 achieved cum laude, 3.2 to 3.59 grade point average; 95 achieved magna cum laude, 3.6 to 3.99 GPA and 124 achieved summa cum laude, 4.0 grade point average.

Holmes County students are listed below:

Zquarius Thomas of Cruger; Otis Groves and Rodrevious Harris of Goodman; Erica Bullock and Allijahjuan Wade of Lexington; Devante Burks, Jerry Hodges and Joyce Nash of Pickens; Markiea Malone of Tchula and Marquest March of West.

to serve as MDEQ's Executive Director during the past five years. I want to thank Governor Bryant for the opportunity and privilege to lead the agency that has meant so much to me. After thoughtful consideration and prayer, I have decided to step down. This is a difficult decision as it is incredibly hard to give up something you love, but my family and I decided it is time to move on to the next chapter of our lives.

"The past five years have been some of the most enjoyable of my life. I have such

is not a requirement for our relationship, but only a result of it. This makes doing what God asks us to do a privilege and not an obligation. So, the next time God calls your number, know that not trying to set you up for failure, but for a great success.

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4.5-foot (1.3-meter) snake and ears that rang most of the day. He also now has plans to update the blind.

"That ground blind will have a solid wood floor in there," Ginn said. "I'm putting ¾-inch plywood in it and sealing it. I won't be sitting on a pallet again, that's for sure."

Ginn quipped later, "In 2019 I was selected over hundreds of rodeo announcers to go on out to national finals rodeo in Guthrie, Oklahoma. With my regular career, I was nominated and voted safety professional of the year through the Associated Builders and Contractors Organization and it takes me shooting a stupid snake to get national recognition!"

great respect and admiration for the MDEQ staff, and the friendships that I have made will be lifelong. I have truly enjoyed coming to work," said Rikard.

Rikard earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Christian Brothers University, completed graduate studies in environmental engineering at the University of Mississippi School of Engineering, and holds a juris doctor degree from the

University of Mississippi School of Law. He is a native of DeSoto County and, along with his wife Karen and their daughter Laura, resides in Madison, Mississippi.

MDEQ is responsible for protecting the state's environment and administers most of the U. S. EPA programs, including air, water and waste management activities; monitors, models, and regulates water use; and functions as the state geological survey.

MDE invites applicants for Mississippi Teacher Residency Program

Press Release

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) invites aspiring teachers to apply to be a member of the next cohort of the Mississippi Teacher Residency (MTR) program, which is a two-year commitment that combines coursework and on-the-job training to prepare prospective educators for the teaching profession.

Applications for the 2020-21 school year will be accepted January 3 through February 3, 2020.

The MTR program is part of a statewide strategy to expand and diversify the teacher pipeline, so that all students have teachers who are well-prepared, appropriately licensed and can serve as role models. It is specifically designed for candidates who want to become a teacher but are not currently enrolled in an educator preparation program.

MTR applicants must have an associate degree or at least 60 college credits

from a degree program with a minimum 2.75 grade point average. Men and women of color, veterans from the Armed Forces, and junior college graduates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Teacher residents will complete a two-year undergraduate elementary education and special education program while working alongside an experienced teacher mentor in one of four participating districts. The project is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Each MTR Resident will receive a full degree scholarship to a selected MTR-sponsored university; support in Praxis and Foundations of Reading licensure examinations; one-on-one teacher mentors; and ongoing professional development throughout MTR program.

The application can be found at <https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/MTR> or call (601) 359-1743 for more information.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE RURAL AREA PROGRAM

The Mississippi Valley State University Mass Transit Program of Itta Bena, Mississippi, is considering applying to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division, for assistance through its Rural Area Program to provide public transportation services within the following counties, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, and Washington. Funding is available to state agencies, local public bodies and agencies thereof, non-profit organizations, operators of public transportation services in locations other than urbanized Area, and, under special circumstances, private operators of public transportation on a competitive basis to undertake eligible transportation activities.

The goals of the Rural Area Program are: to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized Area to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation; to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban Area; to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized Area through the coordination of programs and services; and to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

The purposes for which these funds can be used are capital purchases that include such items as support vehicles, communication equipment, wheelchair lifts, etc.; administrative costs that include such items as salaries, office supplies, insurance, etc.; and operating expenses that include such items as driver's wages, fuel, oil, etc. More specific details regarding eligible activities, program requirements and the program criteria will be provided at a public hearing which will be held at **The City of Tchula Court Room, 1027 Main Street, Tchula, MS 39169 on January 10, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

The purpose of this hearing will be to obtain citizen input into the development of the application.