

Ag Commissioner Gipson announces MDAC's new Wild Hog Control Program

Press Release

On Thursday, August 27, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced a new Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) program, the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP).

Commissioner Gipson was joined by Mississippi House of Representatives Agriculture Chairman Bill Pigott, Mississippi State Senate Agriculture Chairman Charles Younger, and Mike McCormick, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

"We are excited to launch the first-of-its-kind state agriculture department-led invasive feral hog trapping initiative," said Commissioner Gipson. "After a full year of public education, research and outreach through the Commissioner's Wild Hog Challenge, MDAC is launching the Wild Hog Control Program, which will provide farmers, ranchers

and landowners with the resources and training necessary to effectively combat the rise of destructive wild hogs in Mississippi."

During the 2020 Legislative Session, MDAC was authorized to operate programs to fight nuisance wildlife species on private agricultural and forestry lands. The WHCP will involve the coordinated trapping and control of feral hogs on private farm and timber land throughout Mississippi. Working at the request of local farmers, this program will include training and technical assistance for farmers on the most effective methods to trap and control destructive wild hogs on their farm. Following training, one or more WHCP "smart" trapping systems may be set up on the farm, and farmers, or their designees, will be trained on the remote monitoring methods and best practices for effective trapping.

"In Mississippi alone, wild

troopers will be assigned to saturation patrols to combat speeding and distracted driving issues. Drivers need to be mindful of the fact that bad decisions regarding impaired driving can result in serious consequences. Loss of employment, legal fees and possible jail time can take huge tolls on families. In order to remove impaired drivers and promote seatbelt usage, safety checkpoints will be established throughout the holiday period.

During the 2019 Labor Day enforcement period, MHP investigated 131 crashes including 3 fatalities and made 216 D.U.I. arrests. We encourage everyone to practice proper social distancing and wear masks as we continue to battle COVID-19. Working together, we can ensure all motorists and families will enjoy the last holiday weekend of the summer and arrive at their destinations safely.

hogs cause more than \$60 million in damages annually. As I've said many times, we already know the problem and now we are taking meaningful action to curb the invasion of hogs on farmlands. The WHCP will fight the scourge of wild hogs on behalf of Mississippi farmers and ranchers. I want to thank Mike McCormick and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation for their indispensable support, and I want to thank Representative Pigott, Senator Younger and the entire Mississippi legislature for their support in this en-

deavor," said Commissioner Gipson.

MDAC acquired the first set of "smart" traps in August 2020, and currently these traps are being used in a 30-day test period in southwest Mississippi. The traps are powered by Mississippi-based HogEye Camera Systems which allow for remote trapping capability wherever there is cellular signal. Once the test phase is completed, MDAC will open an application period in late September for farmers to submit trap-use applications. Submitted applications will be ranked based on number of acres available for trapping and historical agricultural losses caused by wild hogs on the

property. Rotation of traps will occur approximately every 30-60 days, depending on use and success. MDAC will collect and analyze data including trap locations, program effectiveness and number of wild hogs harvested.

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation provided key support to the program with the acquisition of additional traps that will be deployed across the state. "Feral hogs continue to cause tremendous damage to ag land across all regions of Mississippi. We are proud to support MDAC's effort to offer assistance to private landowners. I believe intensive trapping is necessary to truly suppress feral hog pop-

ulations," Mike McCormick, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

MDAC will continue to work with state and federal partners such as the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks; USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; and Mississippi State University. These partners are vital in determining where nuisance wildlife management is needed the most across the state, with agricultural damage having the highest priority.

Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp for more information. If interested in participating in the Wild Hog Control Program, contact Chris McDonald at chris@mdac.ms.gov.

Mississippi Highway Patrol set for Labor Day travel enforcement period

Press Release

The Mississippi Highway Patrol will begin the 2020 Labor Day Travel Enforcement Period on Friday, September 4 at 12:01 a.m. and conclude Monday, September 7 at midnight.

In an effort to enforce traffic laws and reduce traffic crashes, MHP will participate in Operation Crash Awareness and Reduction Effort during the holiday period. As part of Operation C.A.R.E., all available

"NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX LEVIES FOR THE UPCOMING FISCAL YEAR FOR THE TOWN OF GOODMAN"

The Town of Goodman will hold a public hearing on its proposed budget and proposed tax levies for the fiscal year 2021 Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 4:00 p.m., at the Goodman Town Hall located at 9912 Main Street, Goodman, MS.

The Town of Goodman is now operating with projected total budget revenue of \$486,000. \$65,000, or 14% of such revenue is obtained through Ad Valorem Taxes. For the next fiscal year, the proposed budget has total projected revenue of \$ 497,650. Of that amount, 13% or \$70,000 is to be financed through a total ad valorem tax levy.

The decision to not increase the ad valorem tax millage rate for the fiscal year 2021 above the current fiscal year's ad valorem tax millage rate means you will not pay more in ad valorem taxes on your home, automobile tag, utilities, business fixtures and equipment and rental and real property, unless the assessed value of your property has increased for the fiscal year 2020.

The Town of Goodman millage rate remains the same as last year at 37.78.

Any citizen of the Town of Goodman is invited to attend this public hearing on the proposed budget and tax levies for the fiscal year 2021 and will be allowed to speak for a reasonable amount of time and offer tangible evidence before any vote is taken.

Send in your news!

The Holmes County Herald welcomes reader submissions for news, events and photos for publication in our weekly newspaper. To submit items, email to: hcherald@gmail.com

Please include all pertinent details, dates, location, name of the event or occasion, all associated people, organizations or groups, reason for event or occasion and NAMES OF ALL PEOPLE PICTURED IN ANY PHOTOGRAPH.

We look forward to hearing from you!

-Holmes County Herald Staff