

Old school vs. Big new brain

I am of the old school. I was taught to use a typewriter, a manual typewriter, a calculator for adding, subtracting, and multiplying. I kept a bookkeeping ledger, by hand, for many years, and if I do say so, I was pretty good at all the figures. When we began our retail grocery business, I was THE OFFICE! I was receptionist, bookkeeper, secretary, switchboard operator, and general girl Friday.



Peggy's Take

We started out in our home office with me keeping account of three stores. I prepared a payroll, by hand every week, and kept up with all the other office duties. And all this time running my

household and taking care of three children. My life was rather hectic but right outside my sliding glass doors was a nice cool swimming pool that I could always jump in and relax for a few minutes before resuming my duties.

As time went by and we added more stores to our chain, I had to bring in parttime help and we still stayed on schedule with her sitting across the desk from me, sharing our space. Then one day we decided it was just too much for "by hand" and we called in a computer expert and added a simple program to do our payrolls. I can't remember exactly how much

time it took for me to understand and be able to use the big new "brain" that would take the place of my idled noncomputer brain, but it took quite a while.

Now everything I or maybe all of us do is dependent on one of these central processing units. I am still of the old school. I got a new phone not too long ago and I am constantly asking my grandson how to do this or that, things so simply that an idiot should know but I still have to ask. And don't even get me started on my big desk computer that sits on my office desk. I am constantly calling my children and saying, "I lost my column somewhere in my computer. Can you help me find it?" Of course, they tell me two or three moves to make and there it is!

We had our televisions installed yesterday in our cabin. Dish spent the entire

day setting up our cable and internet. Well, half of the day. The other half was trying to teach me how to work our smart TV and get on the internet. I feel sure the nice guy working with me wondered if I ever even went to school. I finally learned how to get on WIFI and turn on my television. However, when I left yesterday afternoon, one of the televisions

only showed on the screen in a small box about twelve inches in diameter. Oh well, "Sam could you come and fix my television for me?" Lunch meals are just a run through and grab thing for us but we really get tired of sandwiches so sometimes I made tuna salad with crackers and mine is so good.

TUNA SALAD - 1 large can of water packed tuna,

completely drained. To this add one chopped apple, with peel, one chopped celery rib, 1/2 diced red onion, 2 chopped boiled eggs, 1/2 cup of sweet pickle relish, and 3/4 cup of mayonnaise, salt and garlic pepper. Mix well and serve on a bed of lettuce and we eat with saltines.

Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.

Entergy Mississippi Customers Can Receive Free Virtual Tax Prep

Volunteers will help qualifying customers claim their Earned Income Tax Credits

Press Release

JACKSON, Mississippi - As part of its commitment to empower low-income customers, Entergy Mississippi is once again helping those who qualify for federal Earned Income Tax Credits claim the money they have earned.

Entergy is also continuing its partnership with community advocates to support free IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance tax preparation services for qualifying customers. Funding for this effort is provided through shareholder contributions and does not impact customer bills.

At local VITA sites, IRS-certified volunteers from Entergy Mississippi and community partners are available to help residents who earn \$57,000 or less determine if they qualify to receive the tax benefits. Qualifying families can receive as much as \$6,700 through EITC.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the nation's most effective tools for lifting low-income workers and their families above the poverty line. The federal government estimates EITC

lifted 5.6 million people out of poverty, including 3 million children. However, it is estimated that one out of five people who qualify for the EITC fail to claim it.

Entergy's goal is to help increase the amount of federal money returned to Mississippians by raising awareness of the credit and supporting VITA sites to help customers avoid high fees and refund-anticipation loans.

Since 2009, Entergy has helped return \$280 million to 160,000 residents throughout the company's utility service area in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. In Mississippi, nearly 33,000 Entergy customers have received more than \$71 million.

"Services provided through the VITA program help power lives for our customers, who can gain long-term benefits by claiming EITC," said Lea Turnipseed, Entergy Mississippi vice president of customer service. "By putting our customers' hard-earned money back in their pockets, we help improve their lives, create opportunities and strengthen our communities."

Qualified customers can

get their taxes prepared for free by IRS-certified volunteers at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance tax preparation sites. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many VITA programs are offering drop-off tax preparation services. Contact the provider in your community to confirm available services. VITA site locations are available at entergy.com/freetaxhelp.

Also due to COVID-19, customers may qualify for an Economic Impact Payment, also known as a "stimulus check," of \$1,200. Customers who didn't receive a stimulus check in 2020 may be able to claim the payment as the Recovery Rebate Tax Credit on their tax return filed in 2021 for tax year 2020.

Free tax preparation services are provided at VITA sites throughout the 2021 tax season. In some VITA locations, local community partners are offering appointments for tax preparation services, drop-off tax prep services, financial coaching, budget workshops, free legal services and more. For more information, visit entergy.com/freetaxhelp

Mississippi students surpass the nation with record-breaking graduation rate

MDE Communications News Release

JACKSON, Miss. - Mississippi high school students achieved a record-breaking graduation rate of 87.7% in 2019-20, surpassing the most recent national rate of 85%.

School- and district-level graduation rates can be found in the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) report released March 11, *District Graduation and Dropout Rates for the 2021 Accountability System*.

Highlighted achievements from 2019-20 include:

* The statewide drop-out rate fell to an historic low of 8.8%, a decrease from 13.9% in 2014.

* The graduation rate for students with disabilities reached an all-time high of

55.4%, more than double the rate of 23.2% in 2014.

The 2019-20 graduation report supports the significant academic gains Mississippi students have been making since the state fully implemented higher academic standards in 2014.

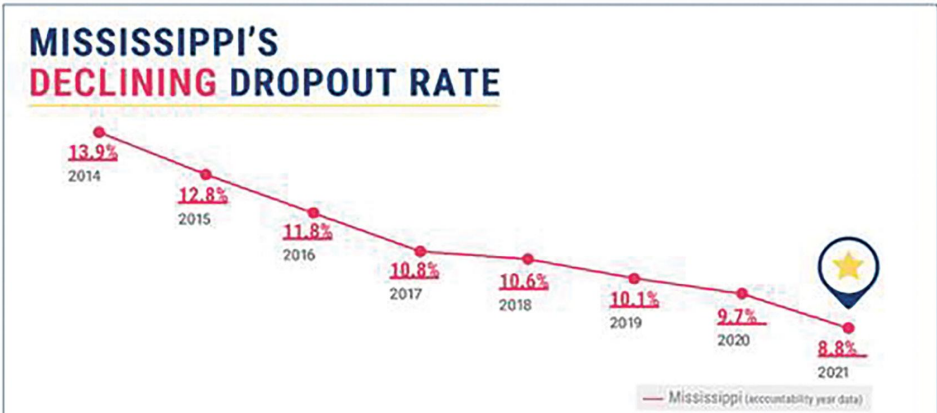
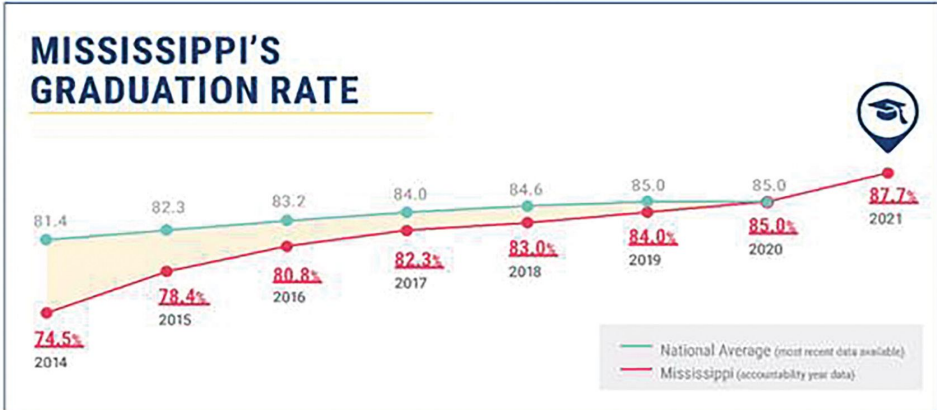
"Mississippi students are recognized nationally for the tremendous academic growth they have achieved in recent years," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. "I am incredibly proud of our state's teachers, school leaders and parents, who have committed themselves to ensuring students complete high school prepared for college, postsecondary training, the military and the workforce."

High school students now

have the opportunity to earn an endorsement with their high school diploma. Starting in their freshman year, students choose whether they want to work toward a traditional diploma, or take additional classes to earn an academic, distinguished academic or career and technical education endorsement. Students can earn more than one endorsement.

Each diploma option prepares students to be successful after graduation, whether that be in the workforce, a career and technical training program, the military or college.

Students who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from a public high school automatically qualify for admission into any of the state's public universities.



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