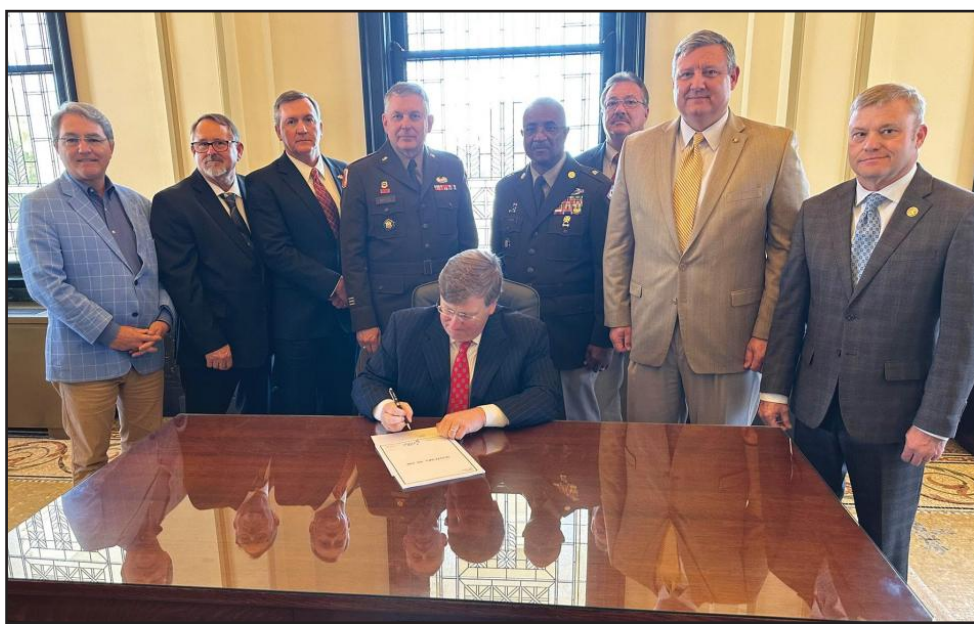


Governor Reeves Signs Three Bills Supporting Military Service Members and Families



JACKSON, Miss. – Governor Tate Reeves today signed Senate Bill 2649, Senate Bill 2700, and House Bill 49. The three bills improve quality of life and reduce regulatory and financial burdens for military service members and their families.

“Our nation is a beacon of freedom and democracy thanks to the heroic courage and sacrifice of our military service members and their families. For that, all of Mississippi is grateful,” said Governor Tate Reeves.

“My administration will always be committed to supporting our military service members and their families, and that’s why I was proud to sign these three important pieces of legislation.”

SB 2649 makes it easier for beneficiaries of life insurance policies where the insured is a member or veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces (including the National Guard or Reserves) to receive benefits.

SB 2700 exempts qualified homeowners whose spouse served in the United

States Armed Forces and was killed or died on active duty, including in training, from property taxes on their primary residence.

HB 49 makes it easier for the children of active-duty service members who were born in Mississippi to obtain a resident lifetime sportsman hunting and fishing license. The legislation eliminates the 18 consecutive month residency requirement for the lifetime sportsman hunting and fishing license and reduces the licensing fee by over 33%.

Peggy’s Ponderings

Well, Elvis Pecksley has made himself at home here on the ranch and he has two new friends living here with him, Priscilla and Lisa Marie. He loves them. They are Rhode Island Red hens and they too, love him.

The girls came to the farm last week, a day before the bad storm we had fly through here. They were settled in their coop the day before and were very content eating corn chops and bugs, worms, etc.

Early the next morning when the storm blew through we looked out the back door and the chicken coop and red chickens were flying through the air and not from their own laws of nature but by the air force of Mother Nature. The coop smashed to the ground as the hens got airborne and were propelled several feet. Elvis was not in the foray so he just stood in the rain and wind and crowed over and over as he ran through the onslaught of nature trying to catch his

new girl friends. When the storm was over and we could go outside and look for our poultry we found them in the hedge bushes beside our house all huddled together suffering from “Chicken Shock”.

I’m happy to let you know that all of our fowl friends are fine but the hen house was destroyed. My son-in-law has really good “Eddie Engineering” and he doggedly put the broken puzzle back together better than before.

Now the hens and rooster have a very nice house to keep them from the weather and predators but will you believe they roost on our back door steps every night and can you imagine the shambles and litter that cover our top step EVERY MORNING. They seem to be afraid to sleep in the new little coop as it might explode again. I admittedly don’t know much about chickens but I researched and found that the Rhode Island Red hens are the most egg productive of all hens.

We’ve yet to find one egg! I think it might be because of the trauma and stress.

As we checked on our house in town later that day we discovered that one of our many tall pine trees had uprooted and insinuated itself into the roof of our garage behind our house right next to the tennis court. Half of the giant pine was sticking out the top of the garage and the other part was inside on the floor of the storehouse.

I’m thankful there were no hens or roosters involved here but the wind sure did cause havoc for us and several of our neighbors when the squall blew through as it downed trees, blew off roof tops and did lots of damage to properties. I hope you and your homestead still have a roof over your head and no damage or stress to your fowl friends.

Our lights have gone off out here and are usually off for several hours and it seems it’s always at the time I am cooking supper. I figured out a way to finish a pot of slow cooking vegetables. Light several small votive candles inside the spaces in a muffin tin and sit your pot on top and it will continue to simmer.

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



Peggy Sims

Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
Executive Director
of Wildlife Mississippi

Bats

One of my, and my wife’s, favorite past times is to sit on the front porch after dinner and watch the 60 or so bats leave from behind the shutters on the front of our home.

Dr. Merlin D. Tuttle, the founder and executive director of Bat Conservation International, is one of our nation’s foremost authorities on bats. Bat Conservation International has created an educational video titled Building Homes for Bats. It is narrated by Dr. Tuttle and features some very successful bat house builders. They explain how they attract bats.

“Why attract bats?” you ask. Not only do bats reduce insect pests, but they are also fascinating to watch. When people, who are often frightened by bats close to their homes, realize how many insects are being eaten nightly by these flying mammals, they usually want the bats to stick around.

Wildlife biologists have helped many homeowners remove bats from their attics and transfer them to bat

houses on an outside wall of the house or to a high pole in the yard. By placing a piece of plastic or netting where the bat enters the home, bats are able to fly out because the sheet is open at the bottom, but they are blocked upon return. A bat house placed close to the old hole will provide them a new home.

The video also includes a bat house building workshop that explains how to build a bat house. The house provides vertical roosting chambers set 3/4 of an inch apart, a peaked roof to keep out rain, and a grooved panel at the bottom, “to give bats a leg up, so to speak, when coming in for a landing.”

In Mississippi, bat houses should be painted a light color so the house will not absorb a lot of heat. They should be mounted on high metal poles or a building near a water source, like a lake, pond, creek, or river.

Plans for bat houses, with precise, clear instructions, may be ordered online at www.batcon.org or by calling 1-800-538-BATS.

“We continue to make a lot of progress in educating people about saving bats,” Dr. Tuttle said. “But it’s an uphill battle because of the exaggerated headlines people still see about bat rabies.”

Contrary to what you have heard, bats will not fly into your hair nor are they more likely to carry rabies than any other wild animal. “In the last 20 years, we’ve averaged 1.5 human cases of bat rabies per year in the United States and Canada,” he said.

There are 1.5 million bats living under the Congress Avenue bridge in Austin, Texas. “If bats are even remotely as dangerous as people say they are, people would be dying like flies in Austin,” he said. “But we haven’t had a single problem.”

James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their web site is www.wildlifemiss.org.

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