



STENNIS SPOTLIGHT

The latest updates on SIG, policy, and politics

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**John C. Stennis
Institute of Government &
Community Development**

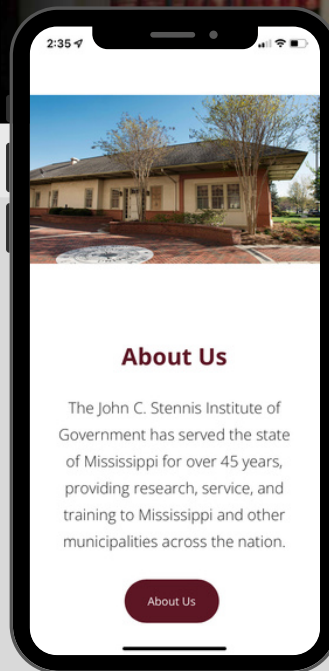
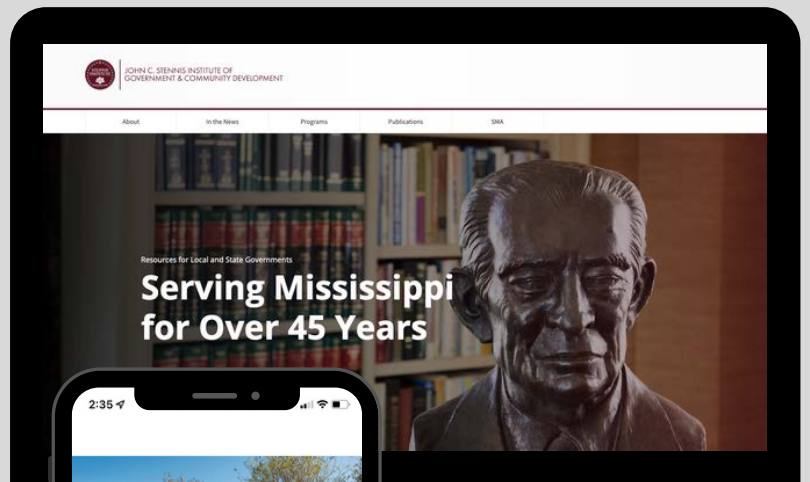
Executive Director: Dr. Dallas Breen

662-325-3328

sig.msstate.edu

382 Hardy Road

Mississippi State, MS 39762



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www.sig.msstate.edu



2022 SUMMER RECAP

By: Grace Troutman and Susan Jessop

The Stennis Institute had a very busy summer traveling all over the state. We went to various conferences and visited with towns as north as Corinth, and as south as Biloxi.



Chance McDavid (left) and Dr. Joe Fratesi at the MEDC conference in Biloxi, MS.

This past summer, Dr. Joe Fratesi and Chance McDavid attended Economic Development Council, Inc. (MEDC) conference in Biloxi, MS, where economic development professionals and chambers of commerce can gather. McDavid and Dr. Fratesi talked to conference attendees about economic development opportunities and different ways to enhance their counties and municipalities. Additionally, there were printed publications, facts sheets, information about available grant programs, and fliers about the First Impressions program.

Dr. Matt Peterson and Frank Riley attended the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) conference at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi, MS. Dr. Peterson attended to discuss and present the findings from the 2022 Mississippi First Responder Salary and Benefits Survey. The survey contained salary and benefit data for police and fire occupations for municipal and county governments across the state. He worked the booth for several days and spoke to the Mississippi County Administrators and Controllers Affiliate Group about the survey. While he was there, Peterson met with many elected county supervisors and county administrators, human resource directors, and other department heads from across the state. He focused on learning how to better assist county government authorities with information, presentations, and written reports that can serve as management tools to aid in human resources and personnel decision-making.



Frank Riley, at the MAS ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS convention in Biloxi, MS.



The Mississippi Municipal League (MML) conference is an event that our staff looks forward to each summer, as we are heavily involved in community development work. Our team cherishes the opportunity to work with leaders across the state to improve their respective communities.

Dr. Fratesi gave a presentation at MML titled "Moving Beyond Smoke Stacks: What Local Officials Can Do to Improve Their Economies." His presentation centered around the revitalization of small towns and rural areas. After laying out the fundamentals of local government jurisdiction, Fratesi described four areas communities can invest in to develop successful economies. Fratesi said, "If you don't brand your community, someone else will."

Dr. Peterson led the "Classification and Compensation Studies for Local Government Officials" roundtable, discussion, focusing on municipal finance issues. Specifically, it provides an overview of how compensation and pay equity studies can help a community or entity be more competitive when hiring new talent. Additionally, Peterson presented the data and findings from the 2022 Mississippi First Responder Salary and Benefits Survey.

Dr. Breen gave his annual presentation on municipal governance. This year, his presentation was titled: "Forms and Functions of Municipal Organizations." This presentation and workshop informed newly elected and currently serving elected officials on the primary responsibilities, accountability, and processes of local government. Breen said, "it's a privilege to have the opportunity to present this vital information to elected officials. We want to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge necessary to most effectively serve their respective communities."

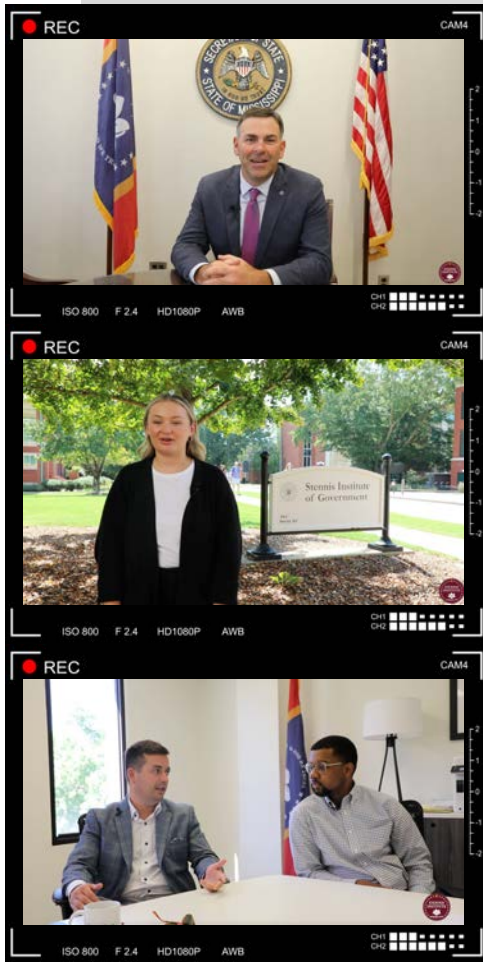


From top to bottom: Members of the Stennis Institute at the booth; Dr. Matt Peterson's roundtable session; Dr. Joe Fratesi presenting; Dr. Dallas Breen and Johnny Mack Morrow discussing Stennis Institute functions at the booth.

SO YOU WANT TO RUN FOR OFFICE?

VIDEO SERIES

By Grace Troutman



From top to bottom: Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson; Stennis Institute Graduate Assistant Erin Bailey; John Morgan Hughes and LaDarion Ammons of Ten One Strategies

The Stennis Institute is proud to introduce a video series titled: “So You Want to Run for Office?” The video speakers discuss everything one might need to know in order to navigate the electoral process and have careers in a myriad of governmental arenas, from lobbying and campaign management to state agencies and think tanks.

The first video released will feature Michael Watson, Mississippi’s Secretary of State. He emphasized the importance of voting and paying attention to local offices. The Secretary of State’s website contains helpful information, forms, and deadlines that candidates need to know to run for office.

A follow-up video compiles information about the Republican and Democratic parties of Mississippi, as well as their general platforms, to determine which party affiliation best aligns with your values. After determining a party affiliation, the next important step for candidates is to see what offices they can run for. Offices up for election in 2023 are all statewide offices, county offices, and county district offices. The third video in the series discusses roles and responsibilities of county offices.

The following segment of the video series takes a deep dive into the world of campaign managing and political fundraising, a crucial part of the campaign, no matter the level. Jordan Starnes, of Direct Impact Solutions, and LaDarion Ammons and John

Morgan Hughes of Ten One Strategies, discuss what goes on behind the scenes of a campaign, including tips and tricks first-time candidates need to know. They explained what qualities make a successful candidate, strategies for running an effective campaign like time commitments and structure, and the realities of the campaign trail. All three emphasized the importance of having a heart for public service, and running to better Mississippi.

Rachel Odom, of Frontier Strategies, and Aimee Garner, of PolitiCap, talk about fundraising and the financial components of a campaign. Along with general discussion of the campaign, they discuss the different types of advertisements, including social media, television ads, and phone calling. Look at the campaign finance guide on the Secretary of State’s office for all Mississippi regulations.

The series will debut on the Stennis Institute’s [YouTube channel](#) and [website](#) on Thursday, December 1, 2022. Stay turned to SIG’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for more information about running for office throughout the month of December and the candidate qualifying period, January 3, 2023 through February 1, 2023.

TURNING *First* IMPRESSIONS INTO LASTING IMPRESSIONS

JOHN C. STENNIS INSTITUTE

By: Erin Bailey

Have you ever had the urge to enhance your hometown but did not know where to start? The Stennis Institute's First Impressions (FI) program provides the first step in helping a community reach this goal. FI is an opportunity for passionate residents to improve their community's appearance, quality of life, and economic vitality. FI allows a community to see itself through the eyes of a first-time visitor and provides the structure and opportunity for those passionate residents to make a visual impact on their community.

FI begins with a visit from a Stennis Institute research team who explore and evaluate the community's appearances, access to services, friendliness, and community attributes. Once these volunteers have grasped their "first impression" of the town, they turn their experience into a presentation for the community. This presentation consists of many images taken throughout the town that allow residents to see their community from an outsider's perspective. After the presentation, a group of residents called an "action team," will form and develop a project that enhances their community's appearance and overall quality of life. Many people have the passion and insightful ideas that it takes to improve a community, but rarely have a platform to turn that insight into action.

A misconception that often turns people away from serving their community is that large, costly projects are the only way to make a difference. A FI action team can impact their community by starting with something as small as hosting a clean-up day in their area. If waste is a primary problem affecting the overall appearance of the community, a clean-up day can result in immediate change. A FI project can also look like painting a mural, installing a community welcome sign, or painting a prominent town building. A unique aspect of FI is that the Stennis Institute encourages communities to implement these projects based on the resources, team composition, and local capacity that is already available to them. The idea of FI is that "no project is too big or too small if there is good motive, great heart, and a few tools behind it." Members of the Stennis Institute ensure that such projects, large or small, are seen all the way through.



From top to bottom: Soso, MS; Brittney Perkins in Byram, MS; Swinging Bridge in Byram, MS; Chance McDavid in Byram, MS; Hawkins Field Historical Marker in Jackson, MS

MEET OUR NEW STUDENTS

By: Mary Martha Willson

The Stennis Institute gained two talented students this year! We are excited to have them here as they bring new ideas and fresh talent to the office.

JOHN BOX



John Box is a new Graduate Research Assistant from Calhoun, Georgia. He graduated from Mississippi State with his undergraduate degree in business information systems in 2020, and he is working towards a master's in information systems.

While at SIG, his main focus is working on creating policies for cyber security and electrical infrastructure in Northeast Mississippi. John wanted to work at SIG to find a more personalized education to complete his master's. When he's not working in the office, John likes to duck hunt, fly fish, work with 3D printers, and build motorcycles.

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Originally from West Point, MS, Susan Jessop is a current freshman majoring in marketing. Susan Jessop is involved with Day One Leadership on campus, where she is completing a service project for Sudduth Elementary School in Starkville, MS. Her team's project is to paint walls with chalkboard paint and turn them into student highlight boards. She also volunteers at the school every Thursday and works with one of the first-grade teachers and her class. At the office, Susan helps with many of the administrative duties. Her mother, Julie, is a professor at Mississippi State, and her father, Mark, is a retired global treasurer who worked for Amway. In Susan's free time, she likes to play piano, hang out with her friends, and take taekwondo.

SUSAN JESSOP



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

MEET BRITTNEY PERKINS

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE I

By: Grace Troutman



Brittney Perkins is a member of the community development team at the Stennis Institute. She was born in Columbus, Mississippi, but with her father serving in the navy, she lived in multiple places across the United States. She returned to her roots for her education, proudly earning each of her degrees from Mississippi State. In 2014, Perkins earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communication. Prior to her master's degree, she accepted a job as Conference Management Leader at the National Association for Ethnic Studies. This is where her interest in public service emerged. As she developed professionally, she found that her desire to assist members of various communities grew and began to extend to areas of policy and governance. Due to these interests, she decided to pursue a Master of Public Policy and Administration, starting her position as a graduate research assistant at the Stennis Institute in 2018. As of December 2021, she began working her full-time position as a Research Associate While she works towards her Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration.

Perkins works on a variety of projects with the community development team. On an average day, she finds herself involved with some aspect of the First Impressions Program. Perkins is also working to become a Certified Strategic Doing Workshop Leader, which will further solidify her skill set under this “agile strategy” framework. With these sharply tailored skills, she is capable of assisting communities further by helping them move towards measurable outcomes while being able to adjust along the way. In addition to her work with First Impressions, Perkins assists in research efforts related to economic and community development, such as evaluating social capital within rural communities for families and individuals living at or below the federal poverty line.

“ I ENJOY BEING ABLE TO TRAVEL AROUND THE STATE AND EXPERIENCE ALL THE HIDDEN TREASURES HERE IN MISSISSIPPI WHILE WORKING WITH AMAZING COMMUNITY LEADERS, MEMBERS, AND ORGANIZATIONS. ”

Outside of her life at SIG, Brittney enjoys spending time with her family. She has a close-knit relationship with her family and is happy to be a short drive away from many of them in Columbus. She resides in Starkville with her 2-year-old dog Maslow. In addition to loving travel in the state of Mississippi, Perkins collects keychains from all the states she has visited.

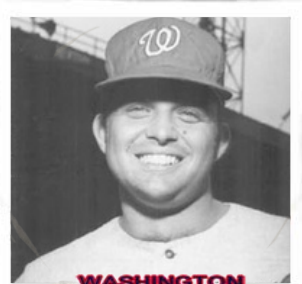
PRO-INSTRUCT CAMPS

By: John Box

Baseball is America's Pastime – enjoyed and watched throughout the United States. The sport has deep roots in the country and Mississippi alike. Pro-Instruct held its first baseball camp on September 11, 2022. Coined the Jim Miles Youth Baseball Camp, the day-long camp successfully hosted over 90 children from east central Mississippi.

A team of former MLB baseball players, political figures, and community members helped establish the camp. Jim Miles, a former Washington Senators pitcher, who went head-to-head with legends like Micky Mantle, spearheaded the camp. Randy McGillberry, a man who made his way from Saraland, Alabama, to the bright lights of the Kansas City Royals, and Donovan Hand of the Milwaukee Brewers, also came to Eupora to impact young baseball players. Johnny Mack Morrow, a Project Manager at SIG, along with other coaches and legislators, partnered with former players to influence community growth in Mississippi. Pro-Instruct is working to involve current and former Major League Baseball players at future camps alongside current college and junior college baseball players from surrounding schools, current stand-out high school players, and other local politicians or political figures.

These influential guests with immense experience are invited to teach the participants valuable techniques and life skills they picked up throughout their illustrious careers. As Morrow and McGillberry attest, kids might not always listen to parents and coaches at camps, but when a professional walks out onto the pitch, they listen without him having to say a word to get their attention. A fluid camp was necessary for the group, leaving room for participants to interact with the guest and players. This camp style allows young baseball players to freely ask guests about life lessons they may have picked up along their journey. The Pro Instruct team wholeheartedly wants kids to learn from the best, obtain life lessons, develop their future, and leave better people by the end of each camp.



From top to bottom: Jim Miles; Randy McGillberry; Donovan Hand

The camp has no entry fee, as the hosting municipality completely funds it through local vendors. Pro Instruct camps are open to ages seven to fourteen with no restriction on skill or experience. These events will take place in French Camp, Mathison, Maben, Eupora, and Ackerman. Since the first camp, other communities have expressed interest in hosting their own Pro Instruct event.

If you are interested in signing up for the next event please contact your area's "commissioner" Vince Tenhet in Mathiston, Jamie McCain in Eupora, and James Turner in Ackerman.



Baseball Camp at East Webster High School in Maben, MS.

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**So You Want to Run for Office?
Video Series**
SIG Social Media Accounts



Stennis Institute Holiday Brunch
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Stennis Depot
382 Hardy Street
Mississippi State, MS 39762



Leadership Union County
11:00 a.m.
New Albany, MS



Christmas Holidays
*The Stennis Institute will be closed beginning
Wednesday, December 21. We will resume regular
business hours on Monday, January 2.*