

## Greetings from the MS ACTE President



Blaise King

*Submitted by: Blaise King*

It is an honor to serve you as the president of Mississippi ACTE. I want to start by expressing my deepest gratitude and respect to each of you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to Career and Technical Education (CTE) in

Mississippi.

I have to say Thank you! Thank you for the countless hours you invest in preparing our students for their future. Your efforts are tireless, and often behind the scenes, to ensure that our students receive more than an education. You ensure they receive a comprehensive, hands-on experience that equips them with the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Your dedication is the cornerstone of our success, and for that, I say thank you.

Beyond the thanks, I want to remind you who you are. You are the backbone of CTE. You are the ones shaping the workforce of your cities, counties, this state, and our nation. Your ability to inspire, motivate, and educate is unparalleled. You bring learning to life; you transform classrooms into dynamic environments where students can thrive and discover their passions. Your influence extends far beyond the classroom walls. You're impacting and changing families, communities, and industries across Mississippi.

As we embark on this new chapter, I want to encourage you to reflect on your purpose. CTE is more than just a career pathway; for some, it's the start of a career and a new path forward. For others it's a lifeline, offering them hope, direction, opportunity. I was asked a while back; what's the purpose of what we're doing here? Whether the person meant it this way or not; the question was thoughtful and timely. As I encourage you to reflect on your purpose, I want to take a moment and remind us of all that MS-ACTE is and the purpose of this organization. We are an education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares

youth and adults for successful careers. Our mission, as Mississippi ACTE, is to provide leadership in developing an educated, prepared, and competitive workforce. MS-ACTE is also here to serve you by being committed to enhancing the job performance and satisfaction of its members, increasing public awareness and appreciation for career and technical programs, and working to ensure growth in local, state, and federal funding for these programs by communicating and working with legislators and government leaders.

It takes more than just one person, or one board to do this. It is a collective pull in the same direction. I encourage you to remain actively involved and engaged in your respective affiliates, districts and organizations. Our engagement is the key to our students' success. Whether it's staying current with industry trends, incorporating innovative teaching methods, or fostering a culture of continuous improvement, your engagement will continue to drive everyone's success. It means building strong partnerships with local businesses and industries, ensuring that our programs are aligned with workforce needs. Most importantly, it means connecting with our students, understanding their dreams and aspirations, and guiding them on their journey.

As we move forward, I want to encourage each of you to embrace a heart of collaboration and community. Let us support one another, share our best practices, and celebrate our achievements. Together, we can continue to grow this robust network of CTE professionals dedicated to excellence in education. We are on the cusp of really big things for CTE in this state and across the nation. It's going to take each one of us pulling in the same direction to get this across the finish line. I implore you to ask questions, lean into challenges, and most importantly, get involved.

In closing, I want to reiterate my deepest gratitude and respect for your hard work and dedication. Your contributions are invaluable, and your impact is immeasurable. Continue to inspire, innovate, and empower the next generation. Together, we will shape the future of Mississippi and beyond.

# Greetings From the MS ACTE State Office



*Submitted by: Suzanne Kelly*

I hope your school year is off to a great start and that you are enjoying the fall semester. I am pleased to share that we had 1465 in attendance at the Annual Summer Conference in July. As we begin preparing for next year, all affiliate divisions will be looking for leaders to step up and assist the Presidents in planning professional development sessions that are relevant and interactive for all of the respective CTE pathways. **If you are interested in serving on a planning team for your program pathway, please contact your Affiliate Division President and/or the MS ACTE office.**

The national Achieve 100 Award membership deadline is quickly approaching. To qualify for this National ACTE Award, all CTE faculty must be active members by December 31. The application is located on the national ACTE website and the deadline for CTE Directors to complete the application is February 1. (Note: School districts’ websites are often checked by the national office to verify 100% memberships; therefore, please ensure your website is updated with current CTE personnel and former employees are removed.)

The Awards committee would like to encourage our state’s outstanding ACTE members to submit applications for the ACTE Excellence Awards. Please complete the application prior to **The Mississippi ACTE deadline, January 17th**. There are seven categories of awards and those who are selected as Mississippi ACTE Award winners then advance to the Region IV Conference which will be held April 23-25, 2025 in Oklahoma City, OK.

Finally, I would like to thank those who submitted articles for the Fall issue of the Reporter. Our goal is to publish articles and CTE news from every school district in the state at least once per year. Therefore, we need everyone to share your program highlights along with student and faculty achievements with us throughout the year. Please email your photos and articles to [mississippiacte@gmail.com](mailto:mississippiacte@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions for the Spring Reporter is **January 31**.

# The Thriving Welding Program at Houston Career and Technical Education Center

*Submitted by: Teresa Moore*

The welding program at the Houston Career and Technical Education Center has seen remarkable growth over the past two years. Cole Dendy, a graduate of the program, is now working in the welding industry, as showcased in the photo taken at his work site (our own Topper Pride football field). Mayra Gonzalez, a second-year student, has been actively involved in various artistic projects, including the creation of a unique horseshoe Christmas tree.

The success of the program can be attributed to the strong partnership between the school and Steelpro, a local welding business. Mr. Jason Pickens, instructor, says Steelpro has been instrumental in supporting the program by donating scrap metal and providing job opportunities for the students. This collaboration has played a crucial role in the program’s expansion and the students’ professional development.

The welding program at Houston Career and Technical Education Center is an exciting and thriving initiative that continues to prepare students for successful careers in the welding industry.



# Lowndes County CTC's New Agreement With East Mississippi Community College for Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Classes

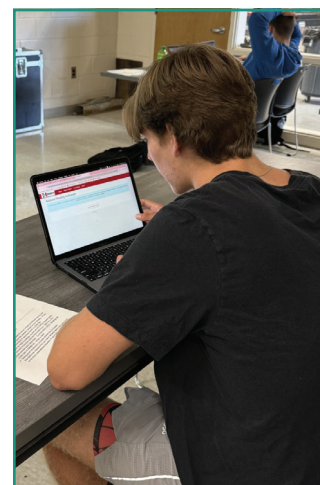
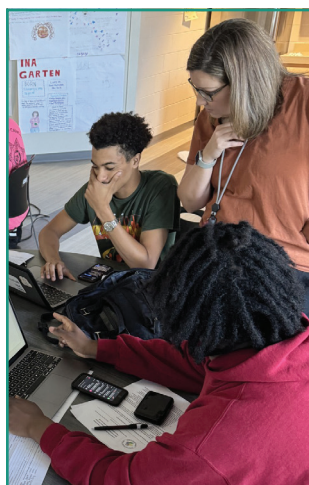
Submitted by: *Lea Ann Oglesby*

In July, the LCSD School Board approved an agreement with EMCC, finalized in August, enhancing dual-credit opportunities for students at the CTC. Susan McClelland, CTC director, expressed her enthusiasm: "We could not be happier to have some dual-enrollment, dual-credit opportunities for our students... We're thrilled to offer those opportunities in Welding and in Culinary Arts for this school year." She noted that this initiative has been a collaborative effort with LCSD Superintendent Dr. Sam Allison over the past five years.

Any LCSD student can enroll in two dual-credit classes at no cost, with additional classes available for just \$45, significantly reducing costs. Culinary Arts instructor Victoria Richardson remarked, "I'm so thankful all of my students' hard work will allow them to earn college credit while working on their high school diploma."

Welding instructor Jordan Hawkins encouraged students to take advantage of the agreement, explaining, "Their second year at the CTC is basically their first year at EMCC welding school... they're already earning their national credential before they graduate."

McClelland is also exploring more dual-credit options, highlighting existing agreements in Cosmetology. She noted that 81% of students who complete two years at the CTC pursue post-secondary education. "We just want to offer the most that we can to our students... It's building a bridge for high school students... to feed into EMCC," she said.



# Culinary Students Prepare Shrimp Scampi

Submitted by: *Dr. Terence James*



The culinary students at Vicksburg Warren School District's Career and Technical Center stepped out of their normal meal preparation and prepared shrimp scampi. Students received a generous donation from Stavis Seafood, a company located in Boston, Massachusetts. After hearing news of a summer culinary camp, Stavis Seafood representative Gonzalo Campos was inspired to help culinary students with preparing seafood meals. Students received a seafood donation of shrimp and cod. Pictured above are 2nd year students Aimie Greene, Azariah Walker and Mikhyd Sylvester sauteing shrimp that will be combined with pasta to make shrimp scampi. Students learned how to safely thaw, peel and devein shrimp during preparation of the seafood meal. Students will have the remainder of the semester to prepare the rest of the donated seafood under the direction of Chef William Furlong.

## New Addition to the Aquaculture Program

Submitted by: Billy Carroll



The Moss Point Career & Technical Education Center's Aquaculture program has received two exciting additions: 300 speckled trout from the Gulf Coast Research Lab and 400 hybrid striped bass from the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Students will raise these fish throughout the school year, with plans to release them in the spring. This hands-on experience offers students the opportunity to learn about fish biology, water quality, and environmental conservation. The speckled trout project, a key species in the Gulf Coast, helps enhance local fish populations, while the hybrid striped bass, known for their fast growth, provide another layer of educational complexity.

This program prepares students for careers in aquaculture and teaches them valuable skills in conservation. As the year progresses, students will monitor the fish's growth and contribute to local ecosystems by releasing the fish back into their natural habitats in the spring. This program continues to offer valuable, real-world learning opportunities for students interested in marine science and environmental management.

## MPSD Launches Dual Credit CTE Courses

Submitted by: Billy Carroll (Original Article Published by WLOX)

The MPSD CTE has become the first on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to offer Dual Enrollment Credit for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, thanks to a partnership with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College - Jackson County Campus. Students can now earn college credit in two courses: Introduction to Welding Safety and Early Childhood Profession, which are designed to give them a head start on their college education.

CTE Director Billy Carroll emphasized the significance of this opportunity, highlighting that the program not only prepares students for immediate careers but also provides a pathway to higher education. Welding Instructor Cynthia Harris noted that the dual credit experience helps students overcome fears about college by giving them a preview of college-level expectations.

Superintendent Dr. Oswago Harper praised the initiative, acknowledging that this program has been in development since Mr. Carroll's arrival as CTE Director. The school aims to expand these offerings in the future.

This groundbreaking initiative marks a significant step forward for Moss Point High School, offering students practical skills and early college credits that will benefit them long into the future.

## Duck, Duck, Build

Submitted by: Kimberly Vaughn

Students in the Vicksburg Warren Career & Technical Center Carpentry & Construction program took part in a collaboration effort with the Eagle Ridge Conference Center & Resort to build duck houses to place along an adjoining lake and pond. Brock Hass, Director of Eagle Ridge Conference Center & Resort, stated, "Hinds Community College sought to increase the natural beauty of Raymond Lake as it borders both our Golf Course and Eagle Ridge Conference Center & Resort. Ideas were considered and a decision was made to collaborate with Mr. Mark Mitchell, Secondary Carpentry Instructor at the Vicksburg Warren Campus, on crafting wood duck houses. The duck houses would encourage migration of native duck species and increase the serenity and beauty of the Lake. Materials were provided by the College to help facilitate this project. The wood duck houses are a valuable addition to the College and the craftsmanship has been excellent."



Mr. Mitchell coordinated with his students and tasked them with building the houses as part of their in class projects. Twelve of the bird houses were placed along the perimeter of Raymond Lake and the other six at McKenzie pond.

# Safety First: A Cross Curricular Training

*Submitted by Kimberly Vaughn*

In Career & Technical Education programs, safety training is important in preparing our students for the workforce. CTE is one of the few places students are able to learn essential employment skills, including safety. Mr. John McRight, the new Carpentry instructor at the Vicksburg Warren Career & Technical Center collaborated with the energy and welding programs to provide their students with an additional component of safety training, the full body safety harness. The utilization of full body safety harnesses can be found in multiple career fields centered around these CTE programs. Mr. McRight shared with the students the importance of a properly fitted harness and the results of an ill-fitting harness before allowing the students to try it on for themselves.



# Newton Culinary Arts

*Submitted by Kevin Carter*

The Newton Career Center has recently completed a significant renovation of its culinary arts classroom, enhancing the educational experience for aspiring chefs and culinary professionals. Under the guidance of Chef Vernita Wash, who has been with the center for five years, the revamped space promises to provide students with state-of-the-art facilities and resources.

The remodeling project aimed to create a more modern and efficient learning environment. New equipment, including advanced cooking stations, updated appliances, and improved workspaces, has been integrated into the classroom. These upgrades will enable students to hone their skills using the latest culinary technology, preparing them for the demands of the industry.

Chef Wash, who has played a crucial role in shaping the culinary program, expressed her excitement about the new classroom. “This renovation not only enhances our facilities but also reflects our commitment to providing students with the best possible training. We want them to feel inspired and prepared as they embark on their culinary journeys,” she said.

In addition to the physical upgrades, the curriculum is being expanded to include more hands-on experiences, guest chef demonstrations, and partnerships with local restaurants. This approach ensures that students gain real-world insights and connections within the culinary community.

As the Newton Career Center continues to evolve, the newly remodeled culinary arts classroom stands as a testament to its dedication to fostering talent and creativity in the culinary arts. With Chef Vernita Wash at the helm, students are set to thrive in an environment that encourages innovation and passion for cooking.

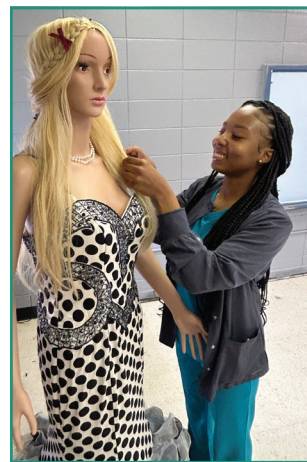


## Natural Haircare & Braiding Class

Submitted by Kevin Carter



The Newton Career Center is excited to introduce a Natural Haircare & Braiding class, designed to equip students with specialized skills in natural haircare techniques and professional braiding. Taught by Mrs. Tabbotha Adams-Jones, a seasoned cosmetologist with over 30 years of experience. The Natural Haircare & Braiding class will provide students with hands-on training and in-depth knowledge in this growing field.



Mrs. Adams-Jones brings her extensive expertise in natural hair textures, braiding styles, and hair health to the classroom, ensuring students receive high-quality, practical instruction. This new offering is

part of Newton Career Center's ongoing commitment to providing students with diverse career opportunities in the beauty and cosmetology industry.

The Natural Haircare & Braiding course will cover everything from foundational braiding techniques to advanced styling for various hair textures, allowing students to build the skills necessary to succeed in the natural haircare industry. Whether students are looking to launch a career in cosmetology or enhance their existing skill set, this course provides a valuable opportunity to learn from a respected expert in the field.

## Oxford Students Compete at FFA Expo

Submitted by: Duncan Gray

Four Oxford High School students from Oxford Horticulture and Natural Science program traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana, to represent the state of Mississippi at the 97th annual National FFA Convention & Expo.

Oxford High School students Lilly Ambrose, Uno Estialbo, Meghan Goins, and Anastasiia Sikorska competed in the Floriculture Career Development Event, showcasing their skills as both individuals and as a team. The competition required them to identify various plants, craft flower arrangements, take a general floriculture knowledge exam, and engage in a collaborative team activity that highlights their knowledge and skills of the floriculture industry.

In April, the team competed and excelled in the state FFA competition, held at Mississippi State University. They won first place in the Floriculture Career Development Event. This fall, they diligently worked and practiced multiple times a week to prepare for the prestigious national convention.

Mr. Ken Hearn, Oxford High School horticulture teacher, said, "Having students compete in FFA Career Development Events (CDEs) is one of my favorite aspects of my job. Not only is it rewarding when they do well, but as an educator, it enables me to truly measure the progress of my students."

Additionally, Mr. Hearn explained, "By competing in CDEs, students demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they have learned throughout my program and match them against students from across the state and nation. It's really impressive what these students are able to accomplish, and there is no doubt that they will benefit from this experience, regardless if they decide to pursue a career in the horticulture industry or go into an unrelated field."

The National FFA Organization is a school-based national youth leadership development organization of more than 945,000 student members as part of 9,163 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The FFA mission is to make a positive



difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

The Horticulture program partnered with Oxford Floral, who generously donated their time and expertise. The team at Oxford Floral also donated supplies for the students to utilize when they practiced.