STENNIS SPOTLIGHT

The latest updates on sig, policy, & community!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



The Stennis Institute will be celebrating 50 years of public service next spring!

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter) to stay up to date with our 50th anniversary celebration.

@StennisInstitute

@JCStennisInst

John C. Stennis Institute of Government



MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

On July 21st the Stennis Institute traveled to Biloxi, MS for the 94th Annual Mississippi Municipal League Conference! The Mississippi Municipal League is a voluntary group of Mississippi cities and towns with a mission to serve its members through legislative advocacy, benefits programs, training and educational opportunities, and multiple publications. Several staff led presentations focusing on community development, human resources and compensation, and municipal issues

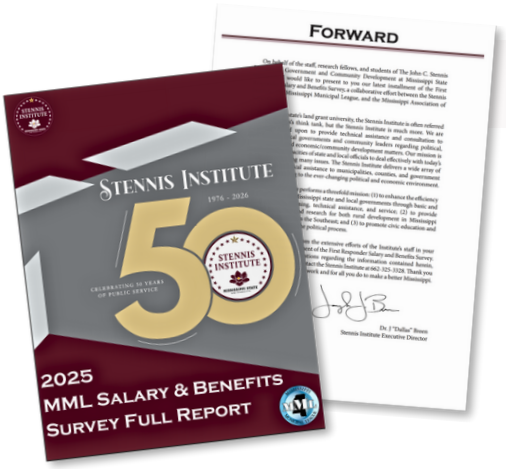
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Stennis Institute Assistant Director for Community Development, Dr. Joe Fratesi, served as a panelist during the Create Foundation's Communities of Excellence State of the Region event in May!



ASPIRE is MDA's annual team-based development program designed to help 4-6 Mississippi communities address specific opportunities leading to economic progress. Using a collaborative process to enhance local alignment with MDA's statewide objectives, and in partnership with MSU's Stennis Institute, local teams will identify and drive sustainable projects forward to positively improve long-term economic development efforts.



APPLIED RESEARCH

As part of its legislatively funded mission to support local governments, the Stennis Institute conducts a biennial Municipal Salary Survey to help Mississippi cities and counties make informed personnel decisions. The survey analyzes local wage trends, compares salaries across similar communities, and provides customized compensation plans including cost estimates and recommendations for new positions based on local labor market conditions.

GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

The Stennis Capitol Press Forum is an ongoing series hosted in Jackson that brings together state leaders, journalists, and community members for meaningful conversations on current issues. This season's speakers included Former Governor Haley Barbour, Chair of the MS House Ways & Means Committee Trey Lamar, Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann, State Auditor Shad White, House Speaker Jason White, Agriculture Commissioner Andy Gipson, and Entergy Mississippi CEO Haley Fisackerly, each offering valuable insights into their work and priorities for Mississippi.







LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The 2025 State Executive Development Institute (SEDI) took place May 18-23, bringing together rising leaders in Mississippi state government for a week of intensive leadership training. Hosted by the Stennis Institute, SEDI focuses on public policy, organizational management, and professional development to strengthen executive leadership across the state.

The 2024-2025 cohort of the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy graduated in May, with Mississippi State University President Dr. Mark Keenum serving as keynote speaker. Immediately following, the 2025-2026 cohort began their leadership development journey under the guidance of Dr. John Harper.



STENNIS-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION VISITS THE MISSISSIPPI STATE CAPITOL

JACKSON, MS

The Stennis-Montgomery Association is a non-partisan student organization housed within the Stennis Institute. SMA is dedicated to fostering civic engagement among students. Named in honor of distinguished MSU alumni, Senator John C. Stennis and Congressman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, SMA brings students from diverse academic backgrounds together to promote civic involvement on campus.



One of the missions of SMA is to get students involved with government at every level. The academic year begins with hosting local government officials and gradually expands to meeting with state and federal representatives as the year progresses. In February, Stennis-Montgomery Association members had the incredible opportunity to visit the State Capitol in Jackson. While there, we connected with Mississippi State House and Senate members, MSU alumni, and other young professionals. We met with Starkville representatives, Senate Public Property Committee Chairman Bart Williams, House Education Committee Chairman Rob Roberson, leaders from the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), chairs of the Finance and Appropriations Committees, and other elected officials and key figures from across state government. One of our favorite parts of this trip is giving students the chance to connect face-to-face with the elected officials whose decisions impact their everyday lives. Members had the opportunity to ask questions, share their thoughts, and witness the day-to-day functions of the Mississippi state government.





@MSU_SMA **@SMAMSU** **STENNIS-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION**

STENNIS-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NETWORKING TRIP

WASHINGTON, DC

MARCH 30TH - APRIL 4TH 2025



A central part of the Stennis-Montgomery Association experience is our annual networking trip to Washington, D.C., where students engage with members of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation, MSU alumni, and professionals working in public service. To be considered for this opportunity, students must complete original research through the Mitchell Memorial Library's Mississippi Political Collections and write a paper exploring a specific aspect of either Congressman G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery's or Senator John C. Stennis's political career.

The annual SMA trip took place during the last week of March this year, right in the heart of peak cherry blossom season in the District! Throughout the week, we had the opportunity to meet with Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, Senator Roger Wicker, Congressman Bennie Thompson, Congressman Trent Kelly, and Congressman Michael Guest. We also connected with young alumni working both on and off Capitol Hill, seasoned professionals with invaluable experience, and our Mississippi partners at Entergy. Highlights from the week included a visit to the White House where we met with current staff members, a briefing with the D.C. Mayor's Office to learn about their approach to local governance and community development, and even a trip up the road to catch a Baltimore Orioles game!



RESEARCH ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Rachel Carpenter
MBA 2025 Graduate

2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Alexandra Williams - President
Holden Mattison - Vice President
Mac Hamilton - Secretary





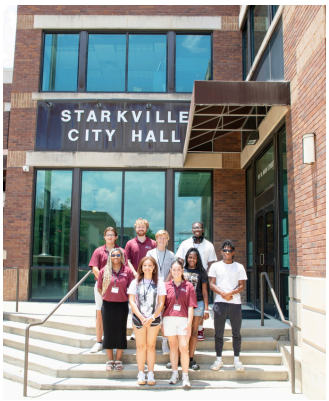
JUNIOR CIVICS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

JUNE 21ST - 27TH 2025



This summer, the Stennis Institute welcomed high school students from across the state to participate in the second annual cohort of the Junior Civics Leadership Academy. Over the course of seven days, students explored the foundations of civics, community development, and the workings of local, state, and federal government through hands-on experiences and engaging instruction.

Each morning, members of Mississippi State's Political Science and Public Administration faculty and Stennis Institute staff led lectures and discussions. The rest of the day was filled with interactive activities and simulations designed to bring civic education to life. Students visited Starkville City Hall to meet with Mayor Lynn Spruill and also connected with the Oktibbeha County Administrator, Attorney, and Tax Assessor & Collector. They also met with the the Starkville and MSU Police Departments to learn about the different layers of public safety and law enforcement. The group also had the opportunity to meet with Starkville-area legislators, including State Senator Bart Williams and State Representative Rob Roberson.





Midweek, the JCLA cohort traveled to Jackson to tour the Mississippi State Capitol, meet with elected officials, and speak with professionals working in state-level policy. They also spent the afternoon exploring Mississippi history and culture at the Two Mississippi Museums.

JCLA continues to serve as an incredible outreach opportunity, showcasing the potential of high school students and giving them a preview of life as a Mississippi State student. Participants stayed in residence halls, dined at campus dining facilities, and met with various departments across the university to get a firsthand look at the Bulldog experience. Each student received three elective credit hours from Mississippi State University.

Mississippi State Alum and 2021 NCAA Baseball National Champion, Tanner Allen, keynoted the closing ceremony held in the Omaha Club at Dudy Noble Field.

@JCLA.SIG

JUNIOR CIVICS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



WHAT'S NEW & WHAT'S NEXT



UPCOMING & IMPORTANT DATES

NOV 04 — Regular Special Election Day

DEC 02 — Special Election Runoff Day

JAN 12 — Stennis-Capitol Press Forum

The 2026 State Executive Development Institute will be hosted **May 17th - 22nd, 2026**. The State Executive Development Institute is an executive style, graduate level, program offered by the Stennis Institute for over 20 years. The Institute is designed to prepare mid to upper level state and local government executives to be more effective leaders. Nominations will open in January!

THE 2026 JUNIOR CIVICS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WILL BE HOSTED ON MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY'S CAMPUS **JUNE 13TH - JUNE 19TH, 2026.**

APPLICATIONS WILL OPEN IN THE SPRING!


Kendall Sanders
Graduate Research Assistant


Brady Bolling
Graduate Research Assistant


Kaylin Vollenweider
Graduate Research Assistant


Miracle Ratliff
Graduate Research Assistant


Ross Mitias
Business Administration


Braydon Jakins
Aerospace Engineering


Alex Martin
Political Science & Philosophy


Peyton Seals
Psychology


Mac Hamilton
Political Science


Holden Mattison
Political Science


Anne Preston McRae
Political Science

JOIN US IN WELCOMING THESE STUDENTS TO OUR STENNIS FAMILY!

Ross Mitias, Braydon Jakins, Alex Martin, Peyton Seals, Mac Hamilton, Holden Mattison, and Anne Preston McRae have joined us as undergraduate research assistants.

Kendall Sanders, Brady Bolling, and Kaylin Vollenweider have transitioned from undergraduate to graduate research assistants. Miracle Ratliff has joined us as a Graduate Research Assistant!

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
JOHN C. STENNIS INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

The John C. Stennis Institute of Government & Community Development

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