

While the County suffers with many problems, not everything is bad. In fact, the County enjoys a number of success stories demonstrating the ability and skills of the employees to excel in a time of short budgets.

The Hinds County Public Works Department recently received national accreditation by the American Public Works Association (APWA), becoming the 72nd municipal agency in North America and the first County in Mississippi to do so. Accreditation provides a systematic approach to perform an objective assessment by an independent entity and is a visible indication that the agency complies with the recommended practices established by the American Public Works Association. Accreditation demonstrates their commitment to making continuous improvements in the management and operations of this department by providing high quality and cost-effective services to the County.

The benefits of achieving accreditation include:

- Commitment to the citizens of Hinds County that the Public Works operations will be the best possible
- Reducing liability claims
- A formal recognition of a well run agency
- Encouraging employee involvement
- A mechanism to evaluate the organization process
- A target for improving operations
- Public recognition of public works functions
- Justifying budget requests
- Instilling pride in personnel
- Raising national public works profiles
- Benefits in personnel recruitment
- Encourages documentation of policies
- Encourages improvement of procedures
- Raising competencies in public works

If issues exist with your street requiring repair, remember that is a budget issue – never doubt the enthusiasm of the initiative of the Public Works employees.

Another very exciting good news story involves a tremendous reduction in the medical expenses for inmates. In 2008, the Board and Sheriff's Department witnessed spiraling inmate medical cost, budgeted \$3,069,682 and crossed our fingers. Working together, the Board, Dan Gibson, and Sheriff's medical staff began a review of the entire process. We hired a new pharmacy and employed Gulf Guaranty to handle inmate billing to Medicare. Making use of all discounts and disallowing some charges the budget dropped in the ensuing years, leading to a budget figure of \$1,800,000 in the FY 2012 budget (a \$1,269,682 savings since 2008). Continuing on past learning, the FY 12 budget continues this downward trend. From October through January, medical billing totaled

\$1,607,137, but the County paid only \$135,345 after disallowed billing and discounts – an 83.01% savings YTD.

Over the last eight years, the County and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) worked together in support of the Hinds County Obsolete Computer Recycling and Training Project. The project is led by the BOS and the Public Works Department and implemented by the Hazardous Materials Management Program at Jackson State University. The purpose of this program is to train high-risk groups, create jobs for low-income families, educate the public of the proper disposal of computers and their peripherals, prevent dumping of obsolete computers in landfills, save land space, and conserve natural resources. Since 2002, the program collected 9,712 CPUs, 9,013 monitors, 2,886 printers, 3,883 mice, 587 laptops, and 6,475 keyboards – equaling over one million pounds of computer equipment. During the nine-year life of the program, 3,264 computers were returned to various churches, low income families, day care facilities, after school programs, non-profits and several departments on the JSU campus. With a waiting list of 900 organizations and families, this value added program greatly assists those in need in the technological requirements of today.

Contact District 4 Supervisor Phil Fisher by phone (601) 826-4006 or by e-mail [pfisher@co.hinds.ms.us](mailto:pfisher@co.hinds.ms.us)