





2008  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

2  
FROM THE MAYOR

5  
THE CITY COUNCIL

6  
FINANCE & RECORDS

8  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

10  
FIRE

12  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

14  
PARKS & RECREATION

16  
HOMELAND SECURITY

18  
PUBLIC WORKS

20  
POLICE

21  
ADMINISTRATION

22  
MILLAGE AND BUDGET

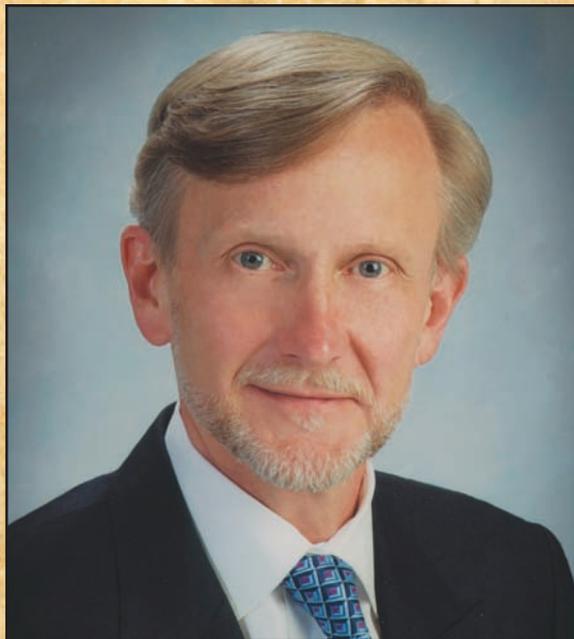
*Mid Foundation - Responsibility - Strength*

FROM  
MAYOR  
JOHN ROBERT SMITH

In Trenton, New Jersey, 10 percent of the city's workforce is being laid off. Oakland, California, is proposing to shut down City Hall one day a week and impose a hiring freeze. In Atlanta, 4,600 city employees will have their hours—and pay—cut by 10 percent. And in Sacramento, California, some employees will be required to take one unpaid day off every month. Across the country, and here in Mississippi, the economic crisis is taking a painful toll on cities and their ability to provide both essential services and economic development for their people. But here in Meridian, our newly adopted budget includes a raise for all city employees, a lower millage rate for property taxes and an increase in sales tax revenues. We won't be cutting services or laying off employees.

Certainly this will be a lean year for us. We are by no means immune to the economic forces that drive decisions about staffing and services. We find ourselves in a position envied by many other communities not by some fluke but by many years of careful management, restraint and balance in our financial decisions. We have made deliberate decisions to grow our local economy by investing public funds to spur private investment and development. One such technique has been Tax Increment Financing, used on a number of development

projects, which allows the bonds to be paid by the increased sales tax revenue and, at the same time, creates development projects that expand the city's property tax base. Our budget is developed each year using very conservative estimates, and we carefully monitor expenditures throughout the year. Our fund balance—or what some call a rainy day fund—is large enough to ensure a balance for emergencies but not so large as to have excess funds.



As this report documents, our departments are very creative and inventive in leveraging every dollar for maximum benefit and continuing to provide the programs and services our people deserve. Downtown development is being led by the newly created Alliance for Downtown Meridian, which puts the Main Street function into the private sector instead of city government and broadens the scope of downtown initiatives.

We're in the design phase for a new police station, a desperately needed facility for our officers and the public alike. City Hall is undergoing its transformation into the jewel it once was. Like most restoration projects, its time frame for completion has been extended, but it will be worth the wait. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History says it will be the most significant restoration in the state, and our people will have a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

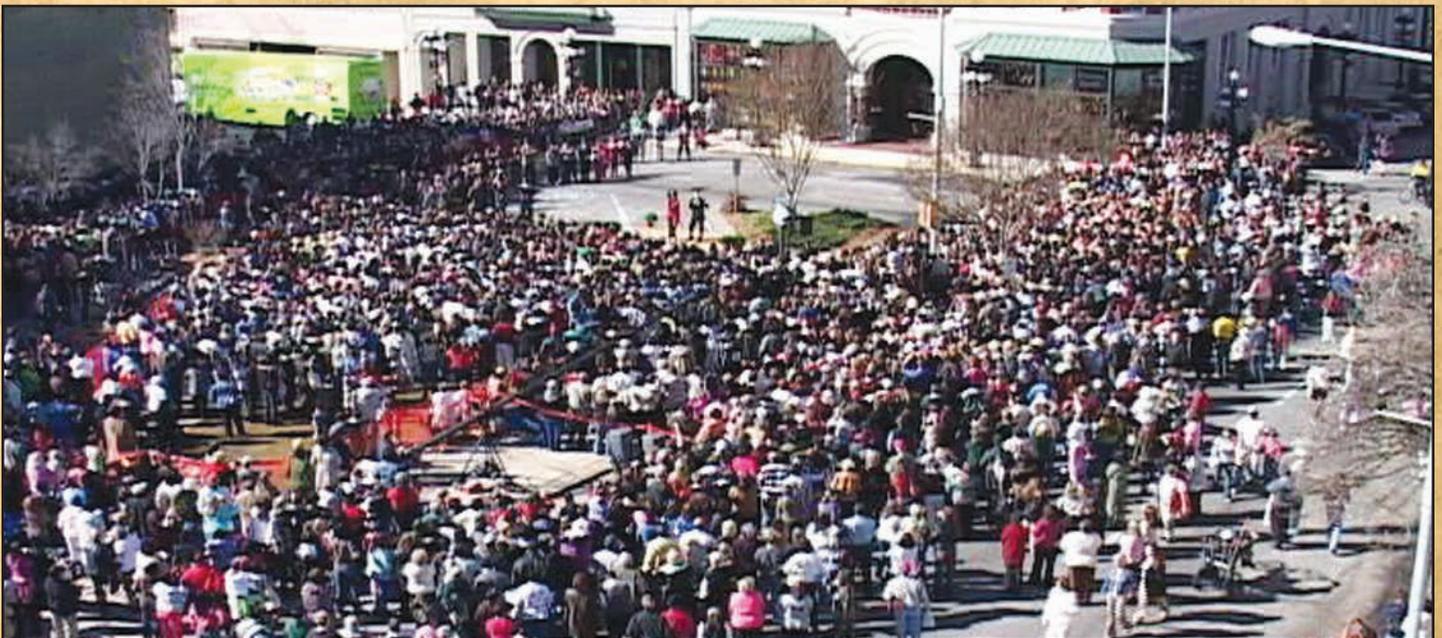
*Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol*



THOUSANDS OF ATHLETES AND THEIR FAMILIES MARCH DOWNTOWN FOR THE 2008 STATE GAMES OF MISSISSIPPI OPENING CEREMONY AND PARADE OF ATHLETES.



OPRAH WINFREY AND BOB GREENE INSPIRE A LARGE DOWNTOWN CROWD TO JOIN HER NATIONAL WEIGHT LOSS CAMPAIGN. DUMONT PLAZA AND SURROUNDING STREETS WERE JAMMED WITH FANS AND RESIDENTS PLEDGING TO LOSE WEIGHT.



*id Foundation - Responsibility - Strength*

FROM  
MAYOR  
JOHN ROBERT SMITH

municipal building they can cherish for many years. We've developed a beautiful landscaping plan for the front of City Hall, extending to 22nd Avenue, once the old buildings blocking the view come down. This city green will serve as a wonderful public space for festivals, concerts or quiet family outings.

Even without such an extraordinary city green, downtown hosted a number of events, including two that were truly unique. The first was the kickoff of Oprah Winfrey's national weight loss campaign. She chose Meridian because of our own "Just Lose It, Meridian" initiative.

4 Downtown was packed with more than 4,000 people the day Oprah was here. The second event was the opening ceremony for State Games of Mississippi. Watching thousands of athletes parade into downtown Meridian reminded us how special this place really is. Athletes, coaches and families from across the state got a taste of the Meridian's uniqueness.

Our efforts to be a leader in promoting weight loss and fitness got a big boost through a project funded by Blue

Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi. At Bonita Lakes, two children's playgrounds and a series of fitness stations around the upper lake were constructed, and now offer residents and visitors a wonderful opportunity to reach personal health goals in one of the most beautiful urban parks in our region.

Another initiative that underscores our commitment to fiscal responsibility and efficiency is our Green Team program. We gathered together representatives from every city department to craft a plan to help preserve the environment and save the city money. We wanted to lead by example—developing strategies for city government that would be fiscally smart and sustain our community. The Green Team came up with almost 90 specific recommendations and we've been implementing them as time and resources allow.

This report is a testament to the dedication of our employees and management and a reflection of what a city can achieve when it is smart, thoughtful and fiscally responsible.



*Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol*



THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL, FROM LEFT: GEORGE THOMAS, WARD 1; JOHN HARRIS, WARD 5; BARBARA HENSON, WARD 3; JESSE PALMER, WARD 4; AND MARY PERRY, WARD 2, PRESIDENT.

5



A RARE SIGHT—A DECEMBER SNOWFALL—TURNS BONITA LAKES INTO A WINTER WONDERLAND.

*id Foundation - Responsibility - Strength*

# FINANCE & RECORDS

6 A major upgrade to the city's hardware and software will make conducting business with the city a lot more user-friendly for our residents and customers. The Information Systems Division began working with a new company on a project to improve numerous processes, including cash collections and water bill processing. The project, which will take about 18 months to implement, will allow us to offer new services, including paying water bills by debit/credit card on the internet or at City Hall. The staff is also looking into remote deposit scanners that scan checks instantly, allowing them to be deposited in the bank quickly. This technology will add to efficiency and reliability and will improve cash flow. Developing a system for handling purchase requisitions online will further improve efficiency, as will a new system to assist in fixed assets management. During the year, the staff also upgraded e-mail servers and spam filters and implemented an archive process for e-mail.

For the 12th consecutive year, the Finance and Records Department was awarded the prestigious Certificate of Excellence for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Developing the CAFR each year is a time-consuming, painstaking process, and this national award reflects not only the detail that goes into the submission but also the monthly financial oversight and organized and efficient processes that underscore the city's financial operations.

In the Business Affairs Division, the staff in courts and records processed nearly 20,000 cases through the municipal court and provided misdemeanor and accident reports on



CITY EMPLOYEES FROM SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS WENT TO WORK TO HELP OTHERS DURING UNITED WAY'S DAY OF CARING. TOP PHOTO, REPAIRING PICNIC BENCHES AT THE BOY SCOUTS' CAMP BINACHI. ABOVE, HELPING TO ORGANIZE DISPLAYS AT THE SALVATION ARMY THRIFT STORE.

request. The office implemented a new filing system designed to make operations more efficient. The other major function within Business Affairs is the responsibility for purchasing. Staff members processed more than 8,500 purchase orders and completed more than 30 competitive bid

processes. The staff strictly adheres to bid procedures, including use of an extensive bidders' list to ensure the city gets the best possible prices. The division also issued nearly 2,000 business licenses and provided assistance to the Taxicab Advisory Board. Staff received the city's property taxes, entered them into the financial system and performed a reconciliation at the end of the fiscal year.

*Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol*



THE RENOVATION OF MERIDIAN'S HISTORIC CITY HALL CONTINUES, WITH THE BIG UNVEILING SCHEDULED FOR THE SPRING OF 2010.



*id Foundation - Responsibility - Strength*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

New construction continues to broaden the economic base of the community. The value of the 873 construction permits issued by the Inspections Division rocketed to nearly \$80 million, compared to \$30 million just three years ago and \$66 million last year.

All that development means the processing of applications and other documents through the Planning Division. Our staff worked on such projects as the Midtowne Apartments downtown, the N.E.W. Call Center, the new 9th grade building at Meridian High School, the Brookshire Building demolition, a Walgreens at Broadmoor Shopping Center, the Silver Care Call Center, the Hardin Foundation relocation and the Drury Inn development.

The Planning staff, in conjunction with the Public Works Department, began implementation of a Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) grant for dam repair at Bonita Lakes. The total project cost is just over \$2 million, with \$1.78 million of that coming from the grant. Our staff was also successful in securing a \$190,000 grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation for a study on returning to

two-way streets downtown and improving traffic signals. This study is but one of many initiatives by the city's Green Team, including the removal or alteration of unnecessary traffic devices to improve fuel efficiency.

Partial funding has been secured for Phase 2 of the traffic study for the Medical District area. This study will pave the way for creation of a "campus" for the downtown hospitals over the next 20 years. Planning staff processed the donation of two surplus city lots to builders of affordable housing and the acquisition of 34 tax-forfeited parcels, also to be used for affordable housing. A total of 20 derelict properties in the new Project Pride area were identified, and the staff is going through the process of acquiring and demolishing the structures. Our staff also assisted six new homeowners with grants through MDA. The \$10,000 grants provide the down payment for the purchase of an existing home or construction of a new one.

A \$2,500 grant is being used to develop an interactive web site resource containing information on each building in the downtown historic district, with the goal being to better market and manage these resources. A total of



HARRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SECOND-GRADER QUALYNN DESMOND DISPLAYS HER WINNING ENTRY IN THE "WHAT GREEN MEANS TO ME" CONTEST IN CONJUNCTION WITH MERIDIAN BECOMING THE FIRST CITY IN MISSISSIPPI TO GO GREEN.

8

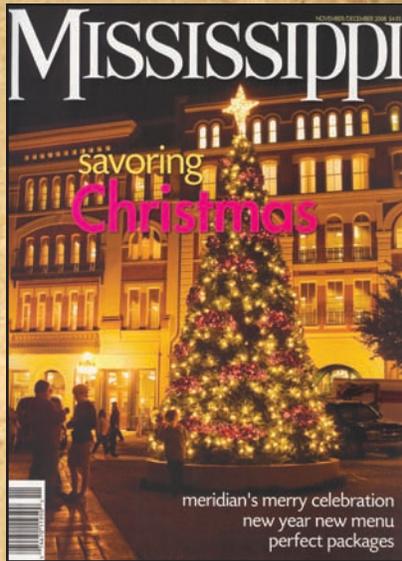
seven cast, bronze plaques were purchased and mounted on historic buildings downtown. Each plaque contains the building's name, address, date constructed and information of historical interest.

The division was awarded a grant from the Mississippi Forestry Commission that allowed the planting of more than 100 trees on 23rd Avenue and Poplar Springs Drive. Additional street trees were planted throughout the city and at Bonita Lakes, while 2,000 shrubs and ground cover were installed in beds

along 22nd Avenue. For our many urban forestry initiatives, the City of Meridian was designated as a Tree City USA for the 18th consecutive year by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

A first for the community was the staging of the

opening ceremony of the State Games of Mississippi in downtown Meridian. Coordinating the influx of thousands of athletes, fans and coaches; the dramatic torch lighting; and a giant fireworks display was a challenge handled by the Cultural Affairs Division, in concert with the State Games staff. Another first was the hosting of the Sunfish Triathlon at Bonita Lakes, instead of at its previous Okatibbee Lake site. The event attracted more than 250 participants, many of them from other communities, and organizers were so pleased with the Bonita venue that they've already asked to return next year. Other firsts were the celebration of National



Train Day at Union Station and Meridian's designation as a Preserve America Community, reflecting the city's commitment to historic preservation.

Annual favorites included the Threefoot Arts Festival, Arts in the Park, the Christmas Tree Lighting and Merry Meridian festivities, and the Cellular South July 4 Pops Concert by the Meridian Symphony Orchestra, capped by the city sponsored fireworks show.

Keeping our community clean and



TOP PHOTO, MERIDIAN'S "MERRY" CELEBRATION WAS FEATURED AS MISSISSIPPI MAGAZINE'S HOLIDAY COVER STORY. ABOVE, AN EXAMPLE OF THE EXTENSIVE PLANTING OF TREES—THESE AT THE AIRPORT I-20/59 INTERCHANGE—USING GRANTS FROM THE MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION.

encouraging beautification requires a real commitment from the community. In the past year, more than 118,000 hours were logged by volunteers who collected 1.3 million pounds of debris; cleaned 200 miles of streets, roads, highways,

railroad tracks and shorelines; distributed 10,000 flower bulbs; and cleaned 26 illegal dump sites. One of the biggest clean-up efforts was the Great American Cleanup, a two-day program that resulted in the removal or recycling of 61,000 pounds of debris. Keep Meridian/Lauderdale County Beautiful continued its tradition of awarding a total of \$10,000 in mini-grants to schools, community development clubs, garden clubs and churches. These grants are used for projects ranging from outdoor classrooms and vegetable gardens to conservation field days and expressive art with environmental themes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

# FIRE

The construction and opening of the new No. 8 Fire Station on Highway 19 South at Bonita Drive underscores the commitment of the Fire Department to provide quick response and professional service to every area of the city, in this case in the rapidly growing southeastern section of Meridian. The level of service was also bolstered with the purchase of a state-of-the-art rescue pumper to replace an aging pumper no longer recognized by the insurance rating bureau.

The new engine boasts dual-foam capabilities along with a compressed air foam system that puts out fires more quickly than water alone, reduces the amount of water needed and lowers the chance of the fire rekindling. This same type of suppression system was installed on our rescue truck, giving it the capability of producing 1,000 gallons of firefighting foam.

In an effort to keep our children safer, the department took an aggressive stance against the sale of novelty lighters. These lighters, in shapes attractive to children—like cute animals, little trucks, trains or musical instruments—can seriously harm a child if ignited. Even unsuspecting adults

have purchased them as toys, never realizing the devices were actually lighters. Gathering information from other fire departments that have tackled this problem, our firefighters developed an ordinance banning such lighters—legislation that was quickly adopted by the Meridian City Council and signed by the mayor. Meridian is the only city in the state to have adopted this type of ordinance. The Fire Prevention Bureau also worked with Meridian public schools to get a new program put into the curriculum for grades K-8. The

“Risk Watch” program teaches youngsters about all aspects of safety in their daily lives.

Training, always a top priority, was turned up a notch with the appointment of a battalion chief to serve as a full-time training chief. The chief of training works to coordinate training

opportunities at the Public Safety Training Facility, ensuring our firefighters get the maximum amount of training without causing staffing problems while they’re attending classes. Several groups of classes graduated from courses offered at our local facility by the Mississippi State Fire Academy.

During the year, firefighters responded to more than 3,300 calls, including 101 structural fires, 232 other types of



MERIDIAN WAS THE FIRST CITY IN THE STATE TO BAN THE SALE OF NOVELTY LIGHTERS SUCH AS THESE.



THE NEW NO. 8 FIRE STATION, ABOVE, OPENED IN 2008. BELOW, CHILDREN DISCOVER WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A FIRE-FIGHTER AS PART OF THEIR TOUR OF THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION.



as the Mississippi director of the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs Board of Directors, which is a division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. These appointments are not simply honorary positions. They enable the chief and the entire department to gain valuable information about current trends, technology and funding opportunities at all levels of

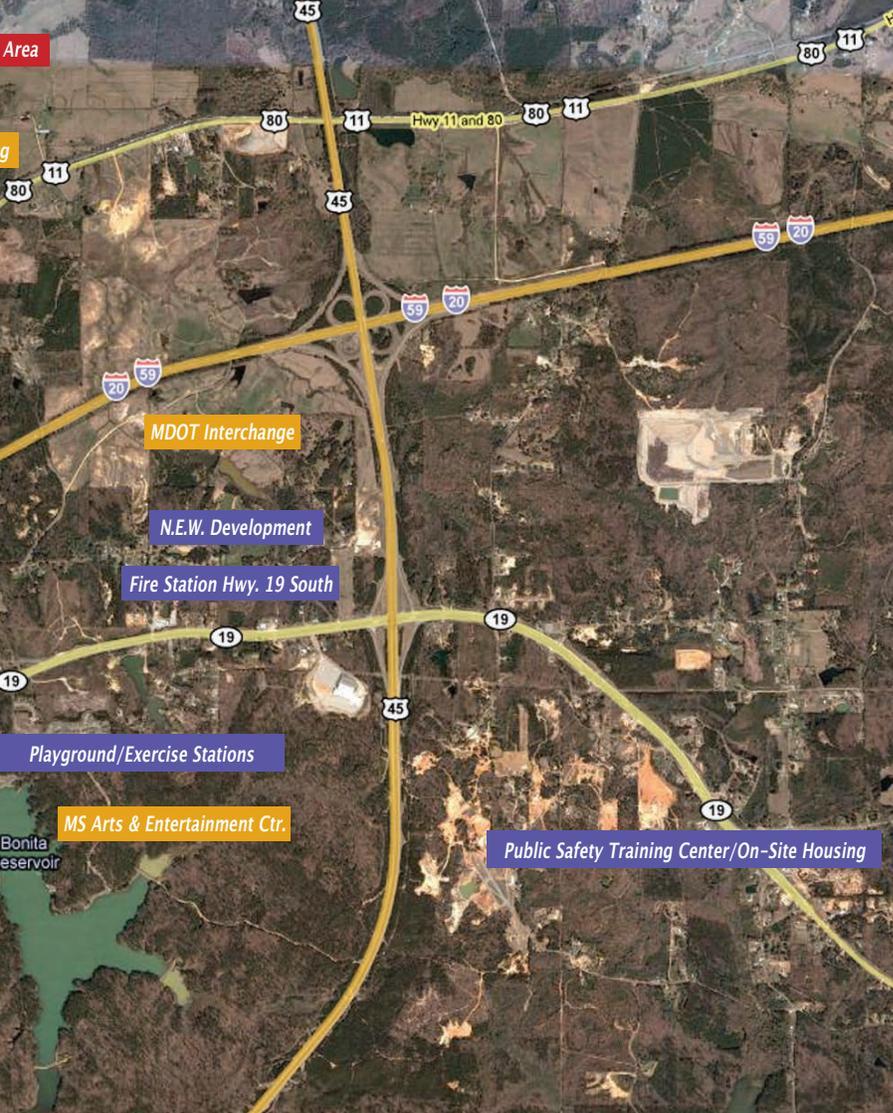
fires and more than 2,000 emergency medical service calls. Inspectors performed inspections on nearly 3,000 structures.

The fire chief was elected east central vice president of the Mississippi Fire Chiefs Association and was selected to chair its Legislative Committee. He was also selected to serve

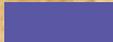
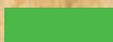
fire service. This knowledge positions our department to take advantage of the full spectrum of resources available to us.

*Mid Foundation - Responsibility - Strength*





# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

	
COMPLETED	IN DESIGN
	
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	PROPOSED

## Completed Projects

- Public Safety Training Center On-Site Housing
- Fire Station on Highway 19 South
- Playground/Exercise Stations at Bonita
- Water, Sewage, Road to N.E.W. Call Center (not on map)
- Test/Polymer-Coated Asphalt by Temple Theatre (not on map)

## Projects Under Construction

- City Hall Renovations
- Hope VI Street Infrastructure & Improvements at Victory Village

Old Bell South Building  
 (Open)  
 Jewell Paper Building  
 (Kress Building)  
 Museum  
  
 (not on map)  
  
 (not on map)  
 (not on map)  
 Buildings Downtown



# PARKS & RECREATION

When the alarming news broke that Mississippi is the fattest state in a fat nation, our Parks and Recreation staff decided to take action. They developed a program dubbed “Just Lose it, Meridian,” which challenged 1,000

14 people to sign up and pledge to lose 10 pounds each, for a city-wide total of 10,000 pounds. We almost met the goal and certainly attracted a lot of attention. Staff for Oprah Winfrey learned of our program and decided Meridian was the perfect launching place for Oprah’s own national weight loss challenge. On the day Oprah came to town, thousands of fans committed to losing weight thronged Dumont Plaza. Meridian was prominently featured on Oprah’s show the following week, giving an incredible amount of positive national exposure not only to our weight loss effort but also to our entire community.

A commitment to keeping fit has propelled the annual Moonlight Run into one of the largest such events in the state. Last year’s run included more than 300 participants, making it the biggest event of its type ever held in Meridian.

The number of participants in classes at the Meridian Activity Center and the Velma Young Community Center hit an all-time high. Classes are extremely varied—everything from Japanese language classes to pole exercises to

storytelling with puppets—and they attract people of all ages. We’ve also continued to offer Saturday workshops to make recreational opportunities available to more people. The annual Kids’ Fishing Derby was also a big hit, attracting more children, parents, volunteers and sponsors to Sykes Park than ever before.

Our community’s loyal volunteer base makes our youth soccer, baseball and girls’ softball programs among the best in the state. Leagues and events are offered to children from ages 4 to 18 and, as athletes leave childhood, plenty of adult sports leagues keep the

older crowd fit and active. Meridian hosted the 2008 Youth State Soccer Tournament, which brought 120 teams to town from across the state. The Meridian Youth Soccer Organization board worked hard to make this an outstanding tournament, and plans to host it again when the new



PARTICIPANTS GET IN SHAPE DURING A POLE EXERCISE CLASS AT THE MERIDIAN ACTIVITY CENTER.

FROM LEFT, MAYOR JOHN ROBERT SMITH,  
AL ROSENBAUM AND BRUCE MARTIN  
AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A \$25,000  
PROJECT TO HELP COOL THE DENTZEL  
CAROUSEL HOUSE AT HIGHLAND PARK.



concession stand/restroom facility is completed at the soccer complex. Another huge tournament was the United States Tennis Association League's Tennis Mississippi Adult Mixed Doubles Championship, which brought 46 teams and more than 700 people to Meridian for a three-day event played on 21 different courts around the city.

Children, adults and even the carousel animals are now a lot cooler in the Dentzel Carousel House at Highland Park. Thanks to generous donations from the Community Foundation of East Mississippi and the Bruce Martin family, along with city funds, seven mini air-conditioning units were installed. As a result of this \$25,000 project, thousands of people benefit from reduced heat in the building during the scorching summer months. Cooler temperatures also help preserve the carousel animals, original oil paintings on the carousel, and the building itself.

Renovations, repairs and upgrades were also completed at other recreational sites. The dam at Sykes Park was repaired and four new, small picnic pavilions were built with assistance from the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors. The old and outdated irrigation system at the Jaycee Soccer Complex was overhauled, and continued improvements to the fields were carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Division. At Lakeview Golf Course, the hundreds of trees planted to replace ones destroyed by hurricanes are healthy and growing and, in a few more years, will have a positive impact on play and on the look of the course.



CLASSES OFFERED AT THE MERIDIAN ACTIVITY CENTER AND VELMA YOUNG COMMUNITY CENTER ARE VARIED AND CHALLENGING. ABOVE, A PARTICIPANT IN A CANING CLASS LEARNS HOW TO REFURBISH A DAMAGED CHAIR.

# HOMELAND SECURITY

The Highland Park Pool House was packed with furry friends instead of kids in swimsuits in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav. Assisting the American Red Cross in providing shelter for 350 evacuees, Homeland Security transformed the pool house into a pet shelter. Providing temporary housing for the pets of evacuees is a new mandate from the federal government. Also enhancing our emergency management capabilities, a new feature was added to the CodeRED system.

Meridian residents can opt to add a weather warning to the service, which provides for telephone warnings activated for such emergencies as



MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL RESPONSE TASK FORCE 2 TAKE PART IN A TRENCH RESCUE CLASS, DURING WHICH THEY LEARN TO WORK SAFELY IN CONFINED SPACES BY STABILIZING WALLS.

chemical spills, lost residents, evacuation notices or any event that necessitates rapid warning to our residents.

The Public Safety Training Facility forged an agreement with the Meridian Shooting Club to allow citizens to shoot on the ranges during designated times, and the new dorms at the facility are now being used to house students and instructors for classes. The dorms provide a safe place for up to 20 people in training to stay on-site. And there has certainly been plenty of training. A total of 142 classes were held, and the ranges were

used for 116 days of training involving 19 different agencies. The training facility held the first basic firefighter class since

*Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol*



TASK FORCE TEAM MEMBERS USE TRAINING THEY RECEIVED TO STABILIZE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH AFTER A LARGE SECTION OF GROUND COLLAPSED BENEATH THE 100-YEAR-OLD BUILDING.

2001 and the fourth in Meridian's history, resulting in the graduation of eight new firefighters. Other training included structural collapse classes and a trench rescue class, a physical agility test for inspectors and code enforcement officers, two storm spotter schools for city employees, and a shoot house instructor school. The training staff also built an obstacle course on the trails in the woods at the facility.

Our staff worked with the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security to combine the Regional Response Teams into task forces, with the City of Meridian serving as the leader of Task Force 2. Team members took full advantage of the training they received in trench rescue and collapsed structure classes during an incident at First Christian Church downtown. When a large section of ground under the church collapsed, our team worked to stabilize the 100-year-old building so engineers and crews could safely work under the structure. Our team also spent nine days in Clarke County, assisting county, state and federal agencies after an explosion in an underground pipeline.

Homeland Security serves as the lead department in the city's Green Team program. Coordinating the efforts of a team consisting of employees from each city department, the staff helped craft a list of nearly 90 objectives that will help the city become more environmentally responsive and efficient. The Green Team hosted the kickoff of the program on Earth Day, has made numerous educational presentations throughout the community and continues to monitor the progress in achieving the objectives set out in the plan.



HOMELAND SECURITY CREATED TEMPORARY SHELTER FOR PETS DURING HURRICANE GUSTAV.

# PUBLIC WORKS

While the Public Works Department issued a staggering 2,900 work orders—more than one-third of those in the Street Division alone—sometimes the little things are the most important. Before the start of the school year, the sign shop staff repainted all school-area street markings and checked all speed limit and school crossing signs for correct placement. Electricians also checked traffic signals in school areas for proper timing and cycling. All these measures helped ensure the safety of our schoolchildren.

18 Through a grant, the division completed a “Clean and Clear” project in Gallagher Creek, from Highland Park south to Sowashee Creek and from the park north to the North Hills Street area. This process was repeated in Shears, Town and Magnolia creeks. Street crews continued to work in the Victory Village phase of the Hope VI public housing development, building storm drain inlets, curbs and gutters. In preparation for Hurricane Gustav, the staff cleaned inlets and gutters for better water runoff, cleared debris from under bridges and assisted the Red Cross in getting ready for evacuees. Crews also repaired potholes, made cuts for utility repairs, installed and repaired traffic signals, installed or repaired sidewalks, swept the streets and sprayed for mosquitoes.

A continuing challenge for the division is drainage problems. Our crews completed more than 230 work orders for drainage problems such as clogged culverts, inlets, storm drains and ditches. Crews also maintained regular routes to cut grass in ditches and sides of roadways; removed or

pruned trees; and installed street signs, markers and striping on city streets.

Treating 2.1 billion gallons of water and conducting more than 28,000 tests, the Freshwater Division staff had its commitment to excellence rewarded with a perfect score from the Mississippi State Department of Health, which issues an annual capacity assessment. This achievement marks the seventh time in eight years the division has achieved a perfect score—a feat unmatched by any other water system of our size. At the plant, a new chlorine control system was installed, while an upgraded computer control system and new sludge-holding tank are slated for the coming year.

The division’s work is not all about tap water, however. As overseers of the waters and grounds at Bonita Lakes, our staff assisted with the installation of playground and exercise equipment around the park, a project made possible with a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield. The staff also hosted Arts in the Park, the State Games, Sunfish Triathlon, Walk for Diabetes, Heart Walk, Run for Hope, Radio Controlled Sailboat Racing, the July 4 Pops in the Park and a number of other events.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant treated more than 3.4 billion gallons of water, while the east Meridian plant that services NAS Meridian treated more than 89 million gallons. Keeping the main plant efficient and safe prompted several projects, including the removal of five unused radioactive flow meters, with the assistance of the Mississippi Health



NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT WAS INSTALLED AT BONITA LAKES BY PUBLIC WORKS.

Department, plus the installation of a new lighting system in the engine room, and replacement of underground, electrical feeder cables located between the three substations. Two of these substations will need to be replaced. Major repairs were made to the emergency generator, although a larger one is needed to run the entire plant in the event of power outages. The division also purchased two new samplers that will enable us to comply with Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality rules, and a new storage area was built so small tools and equipment can be secured.

New projects in the community almost always involve the staff in the Engineering Division. Our staff worked on the new No. 8 Fire Station and the Hope VI development for the Meridian Housing Authority; and did surveying, mapping and research for the restoration of our 1915 City Hall. Teaming up with Homeland Security, the staff did GPS mapping of all buildings at the Public Safety Training Facility and developed emergency evacuation plans for Bonita Lakes with the placement of numbers to be used as location devices on gates in the park. Staff members completed traffic counts of 28 intersections downtown, to be used in evaluation and design of the new traffic signal system controls proposed for

downtown. They also worked on construction staking for capital improvement projects, reviewed plans for major developments and subdivisions, and updated maps.

In the Utility Billing Division, the eighth annual Consumer Confidence Report, mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency, showed once again that the City of Meridian meets or exceeds all federal and state requirements. The report can be read on the city's web site at [www.meridianms.org](http://www.meridianms.org). The staff billed in excess of \$12.4 million in water, sewer and garbage fees and boasted a collection rate of 99.56 percent. The meter change-out project continues, with 1,096 meters replaced last year. The total number of new, "touch-read" meters is now more than 4,500, leaving 11,800 still needing to be replaced. The meter-reading devices used by the staff continue to be retrofitted for long-range reading capacity. This new feature allows meters to be read even if they're behind locked gates, in deep pits, at locations with dangerous dogs or where cars are routinely parked over meters.

Meridian's twice-yearly Household Hazardous Waste Day is a service being used by more and more local residents. Organized by the Sanitation Division, the events allow

# POLICE

Residents of Meridian now have instant access to information about criminal activity in their neighborhoods and the entire city. The Police Department entered into a contract with a web-based company, *CrimeReports.com*, which allows citizens to go to a web site, enter their address and get updated on any criminal activity in that neighborhood. The service is free of charge, and Meridian is the first city in the state to offer this valuable tool to our residents.

The department is now in the design phase of our long-awaited new police station. Members of the department's administration are working closely with the architects to ensure the new facility meets both current and long-term needs of the department. The new police station will also be home to the city's Emergency Operations Center, which is used during natural disasters such as hurricanes or any other event requiring citywide coordination of services.

The Mississippi Police Board of Standards and Training has officially recognized Meridian as an accredited, part-time police training academy. The first class included trainees from the Meridian, Philadelphia and Scooba Police Departments. This designation is important not only because it provides training for part-time officers but because it is also a first step in one day being able to train and certify full-time police officers for our own department and others around the state. It also underscores the professionalism and high standards of the department's Training Division.

The department was awarded nearly \$200,000 in grant funding in 2008. These funds were used to assist in DUI



MERIDIAN NOW HAS AN ACCREDITED, PART-TIME POLICE TRAINING ACADEMY.

enforcement, domestic violence programs, Neighborhood Watch, seatbelt enforcement and special enforcement details. Grants are a valuable resource in providing a broad range of police services to our residents, and we continue to actively seek additional grants to assist in law enforcement efforts.

Replacing officers who leave the department has been made considerably easier and faster through the continuation of the lateral transfer program. This valuable recruitment tool allows us to hire seasoned law enforcement officers who transfer from other agencies without having to go through the long selection process of the Civil Service system. These officers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our department and we also continue to seek new recruits to join the ranks and become some of the best-trained officers in the state.

Our specialized units continue to excel in their efforts. The Motorcycle Unit officers competed and were top finishers in the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Association's motorcycle competition in Gulfport and a statewide competition in Jackson. The Interstate Criminal Enforcement Unit had another successful year with its aggressive program to remove illegal drugs and contraband from our interstate highways.

*Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol*

# ADMINISTRATION

## Temporary City Hall Offices • 2412 7th Street

### *Mayor*

601.485.1927 • 601.485.1911 fax  
www.meridianms.org

### *Executive Staff*

- Chief Administrative Officer  
601.485.1929
- Equal Opportunity Officer  
601.485.1962
- Human Resources Director  
601.485.1934 • 601.485.2585 fax
- Assistant for Governmental Affairs  
601.485.1819
- Risk Manager  
601.485.1887

### *City Council*

Clerk of Council  
601.485.1959 • 601.485.1913 fax

### *Finance & Records*

601.485.1946 • 601.485.1979 fax  
Divisions: Administration, Business Affairs, Collection, Finance,  
Information Systems, Utility Collection

## Community Development

723 23rd Avenue  
601.485.1910 • 601.484.6813 fax  
Retiree Recruitment: 800.585.3722  
Divisions: Administration, Cultural Affairs, Inspection,  
Keep Meridian/Lauderdale County Beautiful, Planning, Union Station

## Union Station

1901 Front Street  
601.484.6841 • 601.484.6849 fax

## City Attorney

505 Constitution Avenue  
601.693.2393

## Homeland Security

1180 Sandflat Road  
601.484.6890 • 601.484.6895 fax

## Fire

2500 14th Street  
601.485.1822 • 601.485.1035 fax • Emergency: 911  
Divisions: Administration, Prevention, Suppression, Investigation

## Police

2415 6th Street  
601.485.1893 • 601.484.6832 fax  
Divisions: Administration, Animal Control, D.A.R.E., Investigation,  
Patrol, Training

## Parks & Recreation

1720 Jimmie Rodgers Drive  
Highland Park  
601.485.1802 • 601.485.1851 fax  
Divisions: Administration, Concessions, Lakeview Golf Course,  
Grounds Maintenance, Programs

## Public Works

311 27th Avenue  
601.485.1920 • 601.485.1864 fax  
Divisions: Administration, Engineering, Freshwater Treatment, Fleet  
Maintenance, Sewer Collection, Solid Waste Contract Coordinator,  
Street Maintenance, Utility Billing, Wastewater Treatment,  
Water Distribution Lines, Traffic Control Devices

EDITOR: MAUREEN LOFTON

DESIGN: KIM GIANAKOS  
GRAPHIC PRINT & COMMUNICATION  
MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

PRINTING: BROWN PRINTING CO., MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

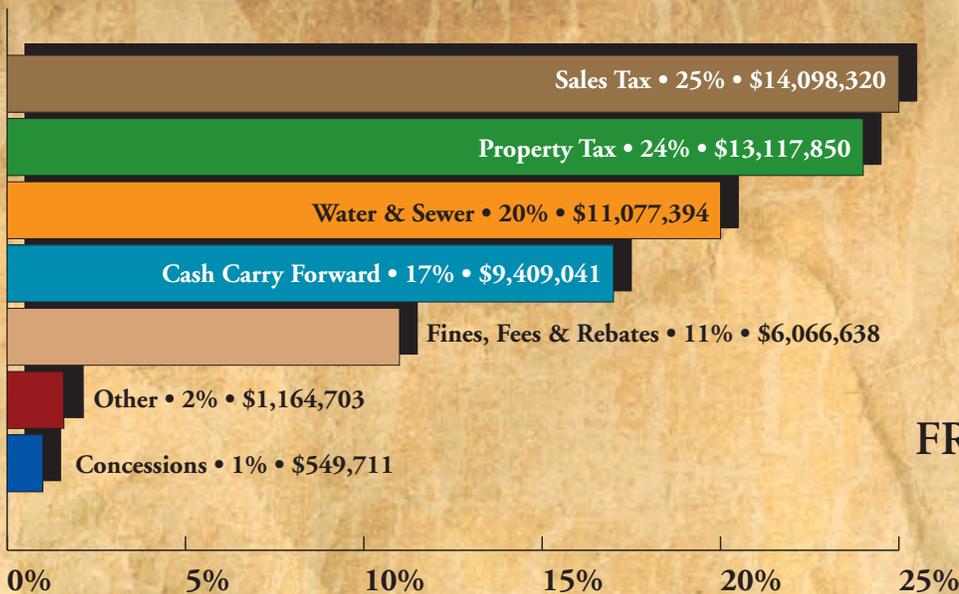
PHOTOGRAPHY:

MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL - GWYNNE PIERCE

OPRAH IN MERIDIAN - SCOTT SHEPPERD

MERIDIAN GREENING - KIM GIANAKOS

PHOTOS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR  
BY CITY OF MERIDIAN STAFF

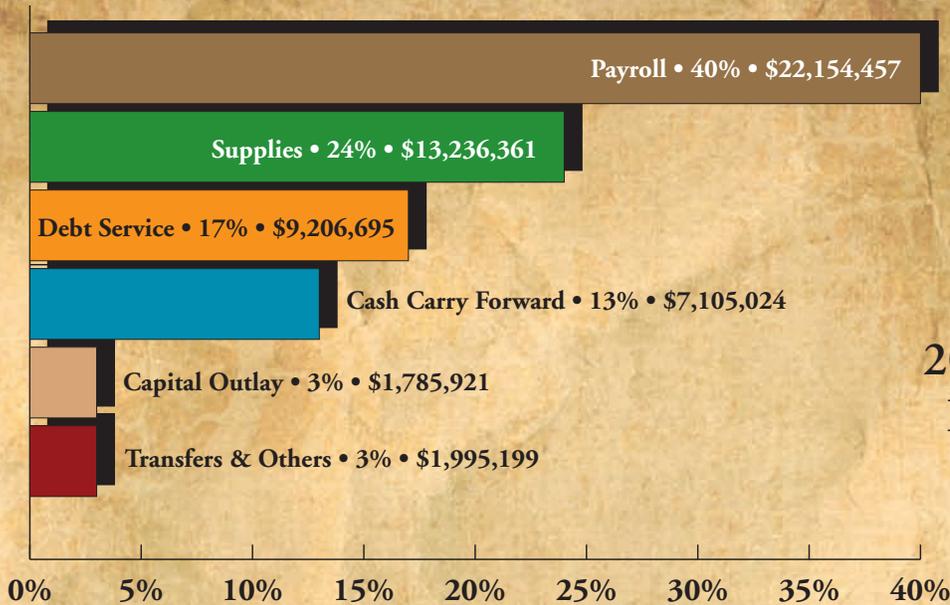


## 2008 FUNDS FROM ALL SOURCES

## MILLAGE COMPARISONS

GOVERNMENT SERVICES	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
General Fund (Including Parks & Recreation)	23.44	25.86	28.69	30.39	30.39	30.19	29.56	30.51	33.23	29.71
Fire/Police Retirement	7.45	5.28	4.79	4.60	4.49	4.79	5.05	5.40	5.66	5.75
General Municipal Retirement	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Total (Excluding Bond & Interest)	33.89	34.14	36.48	37.99	37.88	37.98	37.61	38.91	41.89	38.46
Bond & Interest	15.25	15.00	15.01	12.09	12.20	12.10	12.47	11.17	11.19	12.38
Total (City, Government & Service Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	49.14	49.14	51.49	50.08	50.08	50.08	50.08	50.08	53.08	50.84
CITY SCHOOLS	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Separate School District	54.24	52.91	52.68	52.50	54.38	54.38	53.30	54.00	54.40	49.89
Meridian Community College (Support & Enlarge)	6.16	6.57	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
Bond & Interest	2.95	3.77	4.70	2.87	0.92	2.99	3.35	1.87	6.68	6.09
Total (For Schools Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	63.35	63.25	64.38	62.37	62.30	64.37	63.65	62.87	68.08	62.98
Total (All Operations Receiving Ad Valorem Tax)	112.49	112.39	115.87	112.45	112.38	114.45	113.73	112.95	121.16	113.82
County	42.26	43.11	43.11	43.06	42.50	44.79	45.45	47.67	48.44	50.61
GRAND TOTAL	154.75	155.50	158.98	155.51	154.88	159.24	159.18	160.62	169.60	164.43

Stewardship - Balance - Dedication - Sol



## 2008 USE OF FUNDS BY BUDGET TYPE

# MUNICIPAL BUDGET 2009

YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

### REVENUES

Licenses & Permits	\$ 3,030,000
Inter-Governmental	14,870,000
Charges for Services	2,325,500
Fines & Forfeits	1,180,000
Miscellaneous	630,000
Balance End of Prior Year	3,600,000

Tax Levy Required to Support General Fund	8,478,000
---	-----------

TOTAL GENERAL FUND AVAILABLE CASH & ANTICIPATED REVENUES \$34,113,500

Water Fund	12,900,000
Lakeview Golf Course	444,150
Concessions	42,700
Union Station	478,350
Waste Collection & Disposal	2,557,700
Homeland Security	563,300
Arts District Parking Garage	227,000

TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS 17,213,200

DEBT SERVICE 4,300,000

TOTAL REVENUES FOR ALL CITY FUNDS \$55,626,700

### EXPENDITURES

General Government	\$ 3,568,275
Finance & Records	3,346,570
Community Development	1,694,450
Parks & Recreation	2,538,150
Public Works	7,767,725
Police Department	7,936,380
Fire Department	<u>6,511,950</u>

Cash Reserve for FY 10 Operations 750,000

TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES \$34,113,500

Water Fund	12,900,000
Lakeview Golf Course	444,150
Concessions	42,700
Union Station	478,350
Waste Collection & Disposal	2,557,700
Homeland Security	563,300
Arts District Parking Garage	227,000

TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS 17,213,200

DEBT SERVICE 4,300,000

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM ALL CITY FUNDS \$55,626,700

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

On Earth Day, beautification volunteers partnered with the Meridian Council of Garden Clubs to provide litter bags and literature at the welcome center in Toomsba and helped kick off the city's greening initiative at Dumont Plaza. The Keep Meridian/Lauderdale Beautiful Commission hosted an appreciation luncheon for the volunteers and partners who make vital contributions to a cleaner community, and they marked National Public Lands Day by planting flowers, picking up debris, cleaning bird houses and serving lunch to 150 volunteers.

A trainload of Christmas spirit pulled into Union Station last year, as Kansas City Southern's Holiday Express Train made a stop in Meridian. The festive, six-car train featured beautifully decorated box cars, Christmas music and visits with Santa and his elves for local children. Union Station was the ideal location for the 2008 Rail Summit, which included presentations by passenger rail leaders such as former Massachusetts governor, Michael Dukakis, and Amtrak president, Alex Kummant. More than 225 business meetings, training sessions, banquets, parties, receptions and reunions were held at the station. The arrival and departure of Greyhound buses, Amtrak trains and Meridian Transit buses moved 300,000 people through the station.

Since the inception of the Retiree Recruitment program, 136 households have relocated to Meridian, two of them in the past year. While the Retiree Recruitment Division received more than 3,700 inquiries, staff took steps to even further increase our community's visibility with retirees. Two videos were added to the city's web site; a new marketing DVD was distributed to all 13 Mississippi welcome centers; and brochures were widely distributed to area hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds and parks, and to summer visitors to the State Games and Fourth of July festivities. We honored our local retirees with the annual Retiree Celebration, attended by more than 450 retirees, who enjoyed dinner, dancing and door prizes.

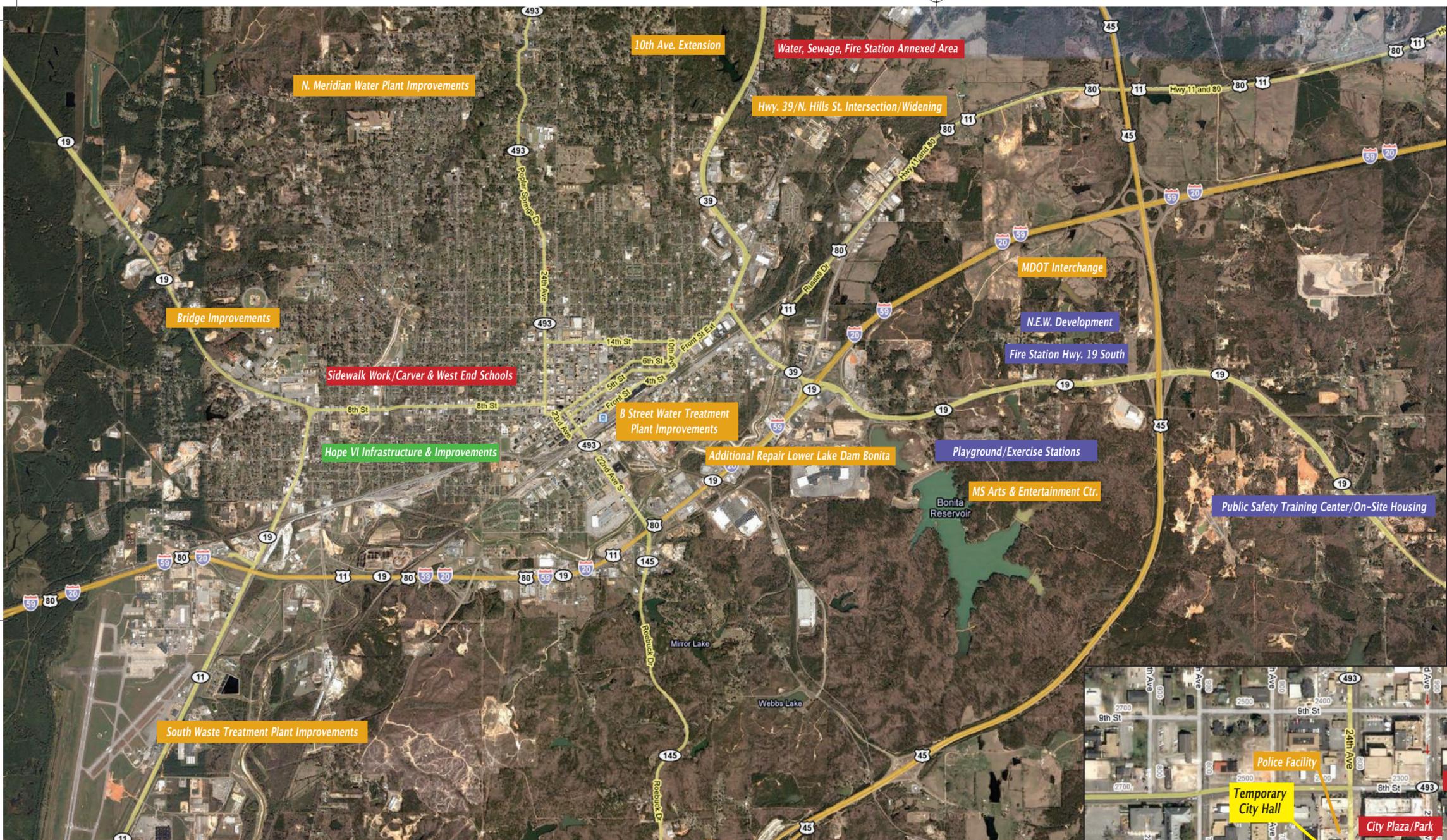
## PUBLIC WORKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

residents to dispose of materials not permitted in the regular waste stream—items such as oil, antifreeze and pesticides. Under a contract with Waste Management, 13,526 tons of garbage, bulky waste and compostable waste were hauled from Meridian residences. The household and compostable wastes go to Pine Ridge Landfill, while bulky waste such as old furniture, appliances and large vegetative debris goes to the Sowaco Landfill. About 18 percent of the residential waste—or about 2,700 tons—doesn't go to any landfill, but is, instead, recycled.

A flurry of new retail development added to the responsibilities of the Lines Maintenance Division. Our crews made water and sewer taps at the new Wal-Mart complex on Highway 19 North as well as water and sewer taps at Meridian Crossroads off of Interstate 20/59. The division also made all the taps for Phase 2 of the Hope VI project. Among its more than 1,800 work orders were meter repairs, replacement or repair of fire hydrants and more than 100 water and sewer taps. The division also maintains lift stations and operates two flush trucks with crews to flush out lines.

The Fleet Maintenance Division performed literally thousands of jobs on the city's 325 items of rolling stock, 445 pieces of other equipment and the buses of the Meridian Transit System. Fluid checks topped the list of tasks, followed by car and truck repairs. Other jobs included service calls, replacement and repair of tires, adding fluids and repairing and installing radios.



# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<span style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px;"> </span> COMPLETED	<span style="background-color: yellow; color: black; padding: 2px;"> </span> IN DESIGN
<span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;"> </span> UNDER CONSTRUCTION	<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;"> </span> PROPOSED

- Completed Projects**
- Public Safety Training Center On-Site Housing
  - Fire Station on Highway 19 South
  - Playground/Exercise Stations at Bonita
  - Water, Sewage, Road to N.E.W. Call Center (not on map)
  - Test/Polymer-Coated Asphalt by Temple Theatre (not on map)
- Projects Under Construction**
- City Hall Renovations
  - Hope VI Street Infrastructure & Improvements at Victory Village

## In Design

- Highway 39/North Hills Street Intersection & North Hills Street Widening
- Bridge Improvements
  - 34th Street at Gallagher Creek
  - 35th Avenue at Gallagher Creek
  - 40th Street at Gallagher Creek
  - 29th Avenue at Sowashee Creek
  - Russell Drive at Sowashee Creek
- MDOT Interchange to New Industrial Park
- Mississippi Arts & Entertainment Center (Bonita)
- Mississippi Arts Hall of Fame (Downtown)
- 10th Avenue Extension from Windmill Drive South & East to Highway 39
- B Street Water Treatment Plant/New Sludge Handling Facility

- North Meridian Water Plant/Hardware & Software for New Operating System
- South Waste Treatment Plant/Improvements to Initial Treatment Process
- 22nd Avenue Bridge Renovation
- New Police Facility (Across from City Hall)
- Additional Repair of Lower Lake Dam at Bonita
- Sewer Rehabilitation Analysis (not on map)

## Proposed Projects

- Water, Sewage, Fire Station/Annexed Area
- Threefoot Hotel
- City Plaza/Public Park
- Sidewalk Work/Carver Junior High School/Harris/West End Elementary School
- African-American Business District: 5th Street

- Museum Complexes:
  - Children's Hands-On Museum (Old Bell South Building)
  - Railroad Museum (REA Building/Open)
  - Jimmie Rodgers Museum (Old Newell Paper Building)
  - Institute of Southern Jewish Life (Kress Building)
  - Mississippi Industrial Heritage Museum (Soulé Building/Open)
- Freedom Park (Downtown)
- Dumont Plaza Remodeling
- Building Murals & Public Art (Downtown)
- Retirement Development (not on map)
- One-Way to Two-Way Street Conversion (not on map)
- Highway 45 Interchange Improvements (not on map)
- Historic Resources Plaques on Private Buildings Downtown (not on map)

