

VANCLEAVE'S NEMESIS AWAITS IN LONG BEACH

Gustav slams Haiti



See PASCAGOULA, Ocean Springs, Moss Point, Gautier and Lucedale

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Utility proposals treading water

Watson wants utility voluntary

By **CHERIE WARD**
Staff Reporter

PASCAGOULA — State Sen. Michael Watson asked the Jackson County Utility Authority Tuesday for voluntary connections to water and sewage projects slated for north Jackson County. "Is there a way to make this thing a little more passable for the residents of my district?" Watson asked. "Can we get some kind of grandfather clauses in? My take on this thing is — we've got to have it. If we don't, Jackson County's going to be left in the dust. I don't want that to happen on my watch — but, the most important thing to me is how we get there. We've got to address our residents

with respect. What can I do to make this happen?"

The utility authority board members vowed to keep costs as low as possible, but Robbie Maxwell said it's currently impossible to predict if the projects to provide decentralized sewer systems for Vanleave, Wade and Hurley could be voluntary.

"We're a compassionate board," Maxwell said. "We can't vote for voluntary connections right now because we still — even today — don't know if we can afford to. We don't have those numbers. We understand people, but we also understand our responsibilities

See **WATSON**, Page 8-A



JON HAUGE/Staff Photographer

Sen. Michael Watson addressed the Jackson County Utility Authority Tuesday about the concerns of the Hurley/Vanleave project.

West Jackson County Utility holds off on JCUA contract

By **CHERIE WARD**
Staff Reporter

ST. MARTIN — West Jackson County Utility District board members delayed action Tuesday on a contract to buy water from the Jackson County Utility Authority.

Instead, the five-member board unanimously approved adding revisions to the contract that has been negotiated for more than a year. The board intends to submit a revised contract to the Jackson County Utility Authority and possibly vote on the issue Sept. 9.

The agreement would provide 600 million gallons of water at \$5,000 a month for West Jackson County

District customers. The district would pay 41 cents per 1,000 gallons used over the base amount.

The path to the utility district's decision was flooded with questions for Tommy Fairfield, director of the Jackson County Utility Authority.

Commissioner Rodney Lamey said that the project, which would provide piping and water towers, is needed.

"But, I want to make sure what we are doing is the right thing for this utility district," Lamey said.

Commissioner William Henson said he's concerned with the Gautier City

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Mississippi Phosphates produces record earnings

By **APRIL M. HAVENS**
Staff Reporter

Phosphate Holdings Inc. this week announced \$35 million in record second quarter earnings, a 349 percent jump from \$7.8 million in earnings during the same period last year.

Phosphate Holdings Inc. is the sole stockholder of Mississippi Phosphates Corp., which owns and manages a diammonium phosphate production facility that employs about 220 people in Pascagoula.

Diammonium phosphate is a water-soluble ammonium phosphate salt that is commonly used as a fertilizer, among other uses.

During Tuesday's earnings conference call, CEO Robert Jones said the company "just had a great quarter."

The company sold 162,427 tons of diammonium phosphate in the second quarter of 2008 as compared to 103,917 tons in 2007, the financial data showed.

Net sales in the second quarter were \$171.5 million, up 192 percent of second quarter 2007's \$58.8 million, which was due in part to a 183 percent increase in the average sales price of diammonium phosphate over the last year.

Currently, the average price is \$1,049 per short ton. In 2007, diammonium phosphate cost about \$371 per ton, Jones said.

This price increase of diammonium phosphate is historical, Jones said, but the prices have not yet responded to the sharp rise in the cost of ammonia, sulfur and phosphate rock.

For example, the cost of ammonia, Jones said, has gone from about the high \$500s last year to about \$750 per ton currently.

Diammonium phosphate is manufactured from phosphate, sulfuric acid

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IMMIGRATION RAID



AP

Detainees netted in a Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Custom Enforcement sting at Howard Industries manufacturing plant in Laurel are led out of the federal courthouse in Hattiesburg.

Nearly 600 detained in Laurel plant raid

By **HOLBROOK MOHR**
The Associated Press

LAUREL — The largest single-workplace immigration raid in U.S. history has caused panic among Hispanic families in this small southern Mississippi town, where federal agents rounded up nearly 600 plant workers suspected of being in the country illegally.

One worker caught in Monday's sweep at the Howard Industries transformer plant said fellow workers applauded as immigrants were taken into custody. Federal officials said a tip from a union member prompted them to start investigating several years ago.



AP

More than 500 workers at the Laurel facility were deemed ineligible to work and detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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GAUTIER

Tighter finances predicted

By **APRIL M. HAVENS**
Staff Reporter

GAUTIER — The 2009 city budget dominated much of the conversation at Tuesday's Gautier City Council meeting, with council members mostly agreeing with the city manager and city clerk's budget recommendations.

City Clerk Linda Green recommended a 2009 millage rate of 20.44 mills, based upon the new value of a mill after the county's property reassessment.

Last year, the millage was set at about 26 mills, but based on the new property assessments, 2009's 20.44 mills would bring in about the same amount of money. It would be within about \$78, Green said.

"I think these numbers are realistic," said Sidney Runnels, the recently appointed city manager.

This budget year, one that city councilmen and employees describe as "tight," is to include a 5 percent pay increase for employees, which coincides with the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 5.8 percent cost of living increase, Green said.

Runnels said he has been talking with all of Gautier's department heads about the upcoming fiscal year. "We have to be careful with our spending," he told the council.

The city is to hold a public budget hearing Sept. 2, while the budget, millage rate and pay scales are expected to be approved at the Sept. 9 council meeting. The city must submit its millage rate to the county by Sept. 12, Green said.

Also at the meeting, officials briefly discussed funding the Jackson County small business incubator, a start-up nonprofit being organized by a group of local professionals.

Mayor Pete Pope voiced concern over the \$10,000 the group asked for during a previous council meeting. "I don't think we're financially able to

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Old Crab

I heard one candidate said he was going to stop negative campaigning. — So he shot all of his attack ads with dadburn digital cameras!



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