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9-9-2022

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Michelle, "Mississippi SBDC Expands Into Marion County" (2022). *University of Mississippi News*. 3146.

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Mississippi SBDC Expands Into Marion County

State office joins forces with Marion County Development Partnership to offer services, resources

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022 BY MICHELLE THOMPSON



Officials from the city of Columbia and representatives from the Mississippi Small Business Development Center gather to cut the ribbon on the new Marion County location at the Marion County Development Partnership. Submitted photo

COLUMBIA, Miss. – The **Mississippi Small Business Development Center** has added a new business counselor to serve small businesses in Marion County by partnering with Marion County Development Partnership in Columbia.

The new center is among more than 20 sites and centers of the Mississippi Small Business Development Center, headquartered at the **University of Mississippi**. Housed within **Marion County Development Partnership**, or MCDP, the new site is a collaboration of the two entities that both serve small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Officials from the Columbia community and the Mississippi SBDC gathered Aug. 26 for a ribbon-cutting at the MCDP. Speakers included Donovan McComb, chair of the MCDP board; Lori Watts, MCDP president, Judy Forester, Mississippi SBDC associate state director; and Mitch McDowell, Mississippi SBDC assistant state director.

“Small businesses are the real foundation for a community’s economic success, and Columbia’s small business community is growing,” Watts said. “MCDP has hosted more ribbon-cuttings in 2022 than in any previous year, and the resources and assistance that will be provided by this connection to the MS-SBDC will help give them greater advantage toward continued success.”

The new alliance serves Marion County residents, providing assistance and resources to area business owners and aspiring business owners. Services offered include one-on-one business counseling, technical assistance and access to a statewide network of business experts, resources and support.

The MCDP has been serving greater Marion County entrepreneurs since 2004. The organization works to create opportunities for the county through the development of resources so businesses can thrive.

“We are looking forward to partnership with Lori Watts and the MCDP,” said **Sharon Nichols**, state director of the Mississippi SBDC. “Their organization is the perfect connection point for businesses in this area to access all of our resources and services, and we look forward to many years of growth and success for business communities in Marion County.”

The Mississippi SBDC centers are staffed with business counselors who provide counseling, technical assistance and access to a host of resources, experts and support to business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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The Mississippi SBDC is funded through a grant from the **U.S. Small Business Administration** through the University of Mississippi.

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