

# READYNATION MISSISSIPPI NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 4- DECEMBER 2022

## Early Childhood Investment Council

The Early Childhood Investment Council (ECIC) is comprised of prominent business leaders across Mississippi and organized by ReadyNation Mississippi in partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The influence of this group, as individual business leaders and as a collective, positively impacts policies and programs to help Mississippi's children succeed, especially those who are most vulnerable. In turn, this success helps ensure more students develop the skills they need to pursue a degree or credential of value and secure a good-paying job, increasing the ability of businesses to attract and retain the talent they need to thrive.

## 2022 Quarter 4 Highlights

**Welcome Aboard!**  
**The ECIC Welcomes THREE New Members**



**John Damon,  
Ph.D.**

Chief Executive  
Officer, Canopy



**Neil Henry**

Regional President,  
Citizens National  
Bank



**Jordan  
Robinson**

1st Vice President &  
Chief Operating Officer,  
Mississippi Center for  
Advanced Medicine

# Daily Journal

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Child care educators are the workforce behind the workforce

"One of our members, **Jeff Good** of Bravo and Sal & Mookie's in Jackson, explains our concerns from his perspective: 'In the restaurant industry, we hire a lot of single parent home employees — primarily mothers — and these young ladies are unable to work if they do not have access to child care. [...] many parents are still without options. The number one thing we could do to get everyone back to work is provide child care.'"

[Read the Full Article](#)



ReadyNation MS represented at the Senate hearings on women, children, and families. Lawmakers, appointed by Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann, were tasked with making legislative recommendations for families and young children from birth to 3 years old. Senator Nicole Boyd is chairing the committee.



Tonya Ware toured the North MS Child Care Resource and Referral Center at the University of Mississippi and visited with Dr. Cathy Grace. Dr. Grace is the Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning Co-Director and the Early Childhood Education Program Specialist with the North Mississippi Education Consortium.

[Visit website](#)



ECIC members joined the 2022 Hobnob hosted by the MS Economic Council. The Mississippi Economic Council's 21st annual Hobnob was held in Jackson. The political networking event got underway at the Mississippi Coliseum with Governor Tate Reeves as the opening speaker. Guests had an opportunity to hear from Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann, House Speaker Philip Gunn, and Attorney General Lynn Fitch, among other elected officials.

[Visit website](#)

Tonya Ware attended and gave the invocation at the 23rd Annual Accelerate Conference hosted by Innovate Mississippi. This year at Accelerate, attendees explored a critical component in the success of Mississippi's ecosystem: collaboration.

The 2022 Theme:  
"CoBuilding Mississippi's Future."

[Visit website](#)



## Celebrating Champions

On Tuesday, November 15, 2022, a group of ReadyNation Mississippi's senior business leaders came together from across the state to celebrate the massive impact of the Early

Childhood Investment Council (ECIC) at the 3rd Annual Mississippi Early Childhood Investment Council convening.

The council members shared their thoughts on state-funded early learning programs, early intervention services for birth-to-3, wage updates for child care workers, and more business use of the pre-K tax credit in support of early learning collaboratives. The convening highlighted the tremendous focus on these issues by the ECIC.

[Read the Blog Post on the Event](#)



## ECIC Members

[Seth Assink](#), Vice President/SBA Business Development Officer, Peoples Bank  
[C. Jerome Brown](#), Executive Vice President, The First Bank  
[Wade Broyles](#), Regional Vice President- Central US, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure  
[Ralph Clark](#), Vice President and Commercial Relationship Manager II, Trustmark - Metro  
[General Augustus "Leon" Collins](#), CEO, MINACT Inc.  
[John Damon, Ph.D.](#), CEO, Canopy Children's Solutions  
[Jason Dean](#), Senior Vice President, PATH Company  
[Jason Duren](#), Senior Vice President, Cadence Bank  
[Joey Garner](#), President & CEO, TEC  
[Will Garner](#), Vice President/ Shareholder, Ross & Yerger  
[Jeff Good](#), President, Mangia Bene Restaurant Management Group  
[David Gray](#), Vice President & CFO, Consolidated Catfish Producers (Delta Pride Catfish)  
[Charles Hall](#), Vice President of Power Generation, Entergy  
[David Henry](#), CEO, Merit Health Central  
[Neil Henry](#), Regional President, Citizens National Bank  
[John Payton Hood](#), Vice President of Commercial Banking, Hancock Whitney  
[Maury Hull](#), Vice President of Human Resources, Hol-Mac Corporation  
[Susan Jacobs](#), Vice President of Human Resources & Administration, Ingalls Shipbuilding



[Brian K. Johnson](#), Executive Vice President, Fisher Brown Bottrell Insurance  
[Jonathan Jones](#), Senior Vice President & General Manager, Harrah's Gulf Coast  
[Willie Jones](#), President & CEO, Dependable Source  
[Emily K. Lauder](#), Vice President of Administration, Toyota Mississippi  
[Kirk Lewis](#), Chairman & President, Blue Springs Metals  
[Latasha D. McCullar](#), Vice President of Operations, Blacklidge Emulsions, Inc.  
[Debra McGee](#), Senior Vice President & Director of Minority Business Development, BankPlus  
[Paula McNair](#), Vice President of Finance, Atmos Energy  
[Jack Reed, Jr.](#), Chairman, R. W. Reed Company  
[Jordan Robinson](#), First Vice President & COO, Mississippi Center for Advanced Medicine  
[Iris Stacker](#), Interim CEO, Delta Health: The Medical Center  
[Nicole Stubbs](#), Vice President of Performance Improvement, Greenwood-Leflore Hospital  
[Alan Sudduth](#), Manager of Government Affairs, Chevron  
[Christie Vance](#), VP of Operations & COO, Mississippi Methodist Senior Services, Inc.  
[Charles D. Watson II](#), Senior Vice President of Network Operations, C Spire  
[Tim Weston](#), Vice President, JESCO, Inc.  
[Ashley Willson](#), Office Managing Partner, KPMG LLP  
[Matt Wilson](#), Vice President of Operations, Newk's Eatery

## Let's Get Social

As we continue to spread the message about the vital importance of child care during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, we encourage everyone to join the conversation on social media by following ReadyNation [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#). For regular LinkedIn users, we also encourage you to add your affiliation with ReadyNation under the "volunteer experience" section. This special [social media toolkit](#) offers step-by-step instructions to do so seamlessly in five minutes or less.

**Questions:** For more information about the ECIC or our work in Mississippi, please contact Tonya Ware at [tware@readynation.org](mailto:tware@readynation.org). Thank you for your support this year!



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