

MISSISSIPPI NEWSLETTER



QUARTER 2- JUNE 2023

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.

2023 Quarter 2 Highlights

Welcome Aboard! The ECIC Welcomes a New Member



C.D. Smith
Regional Director for AT&T

[Click here to read his full bio](#)

MS Early Childhood Investment Council Members Stay Engaged:

Jason Dean joined the MS Economic Council Spring Meeting in downtown Jackson. Tonya Ware attended **Childcare in Today's Economy: Untapping the Potential to Grow our workforce today and in the future.** Featuring:

- April May, Director of Coalitions and Programs, Mississippi Early Learning Alliance
- Chad Allgood, Director, Division of Early Childhood Care & Development - Mississippi Department of Human Services
- Tiffannie L. Hedin, Corporate Communications Manager, Toyota Motor North America
- Moderator: Linda Southward, Executive Director, The Children's Foundation of Mississippi



ECIC Members Making Headlines:



Jordan Robinson and his team opened the new Pediatric Urgent Care Facility in the heart of Jackson, MS. The Pediatric Urgent Care by MCAM offers immediate, episodic care for children birth to 19 who are sick or injured. The clinic is staffed exclusively by board-certified pediatricians, and the urgent care accepts all Mississippi Medicaid, CHIP, Tricare, and commercial insurance products. Offering extended hours every day of the week, the urgent care's goal is to provide the right care at the right place at the right time for every child who it serves.

Regional Meeting Roundtables:



The Central MS ECIC members: **David Henry**, Merit Health Central, **Jordan Robinson**, Mississippi Center for Advanced Medicine, **Debra McGee**, BankPlus, **General A. Leon Collins**, MINACT Inc., **Ralph Clark**, Trustmark Bank, **Jeff Good**, Mangia Bene Restaurant Management Group, **Brian Johnson**, Fisher Brown Bottrell Insurance, **Jason Duren**, Cadence Bank, and **Jason Dean**, PATH Company, met at Tico's to share and discuss new ways to empower Mississippi's children.

The MS Delta ECIC members: **David Gray**, Consolidated Catfish Producers (Delta Pride Catfish), **Iris Stacker**, Delta Health System, and **Nicole Stubbs**, Upshaw, Williams, Biggers, & Beckham, met with **Tonya Ware** in Greenwood, Mississippi at Fan and Johnny's for a power lunch. They looked at critical issues facing infants, toddlers, and young children in the region; including early intervention, mental health services, social-emotional support, early learning programs, and the pre-K tax credit.



During the East MS Meridian Regional Meeting, ECIC member **Neil Henry** toured the New Destiny Daycare and Early Learning Center with **Tonya Ware**. The value of high-quality early education, early literacy, and wages to retain childcare staff led the conversation.



At the North MS Regional meeting, **Christie Vance**, Mississippi Methodist Senior Services, Incorporated, and **Tim Weston**, JESCO, Incorporated, had a roundtable discussion about pre-K, the early childhood education workforce, new tax credits, and childcare, among other things.

Earlier in the day, Project Director, **Tonya Ware**, was given a tour of Methodist Senior

Services - Traceway Retirement Community and met some of the staff.



ReadyNation MS joined the Grand Opening of the early childhood education Mid-Town Resource and Referral Center! This educational hub for parents, teachers, children, and childcare providers is located on the primary campus of [Midtown Public Charter School](#) at 301 Adelle Street in Jackson, MS, and is run by the [MS Child Care Resource & Referral](#) of the [Mississippi State University Extension Service](#).



Kirk Lewis received his MS Early Childhood Investment Council lapel pin at the North MS Regional Meeting and shared the passion he has to see business leaders offer solutions around early learning in the state.

Mr. Kirk J. Lewis is the Chairman and President of Blue Springs Metals, LLC, Georgetown Metal Processing, LLC, and Madison Metal Processing, LLC. Blue Springs Metals is a supplier of steel products to the Automotive and the Oil and Gas Industry headquartered in Northeast Mississippi.

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
[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
[C.D. Smith](#), Regional Director, AT&T Mississippi
[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

Get Connected

As we continue to spread the message about the vital importance of child care, 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.

Questions: For more information about the ECIC or our work in Mississippi, please contact Tonya Ware at tware@readynation.org.

Thank you for your support this year!



ReadyNation | [\(312\) 288-8229](tel:3122888229) | info@readynation.org | www.ReadyNation.org

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Our mailing address is:

Council for a Strong America
1025 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036