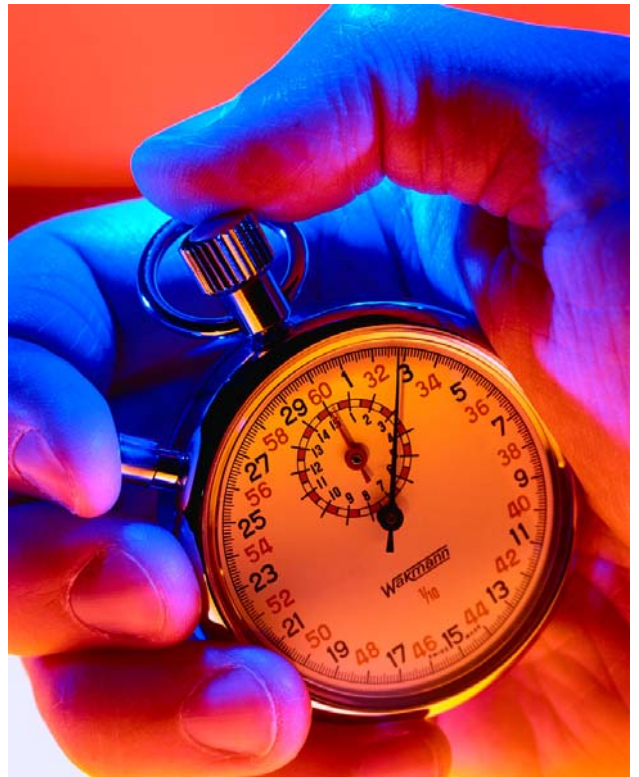


**Every Second Counts:  
Responding to People  
with Disabilities  
in Times of Disaster**

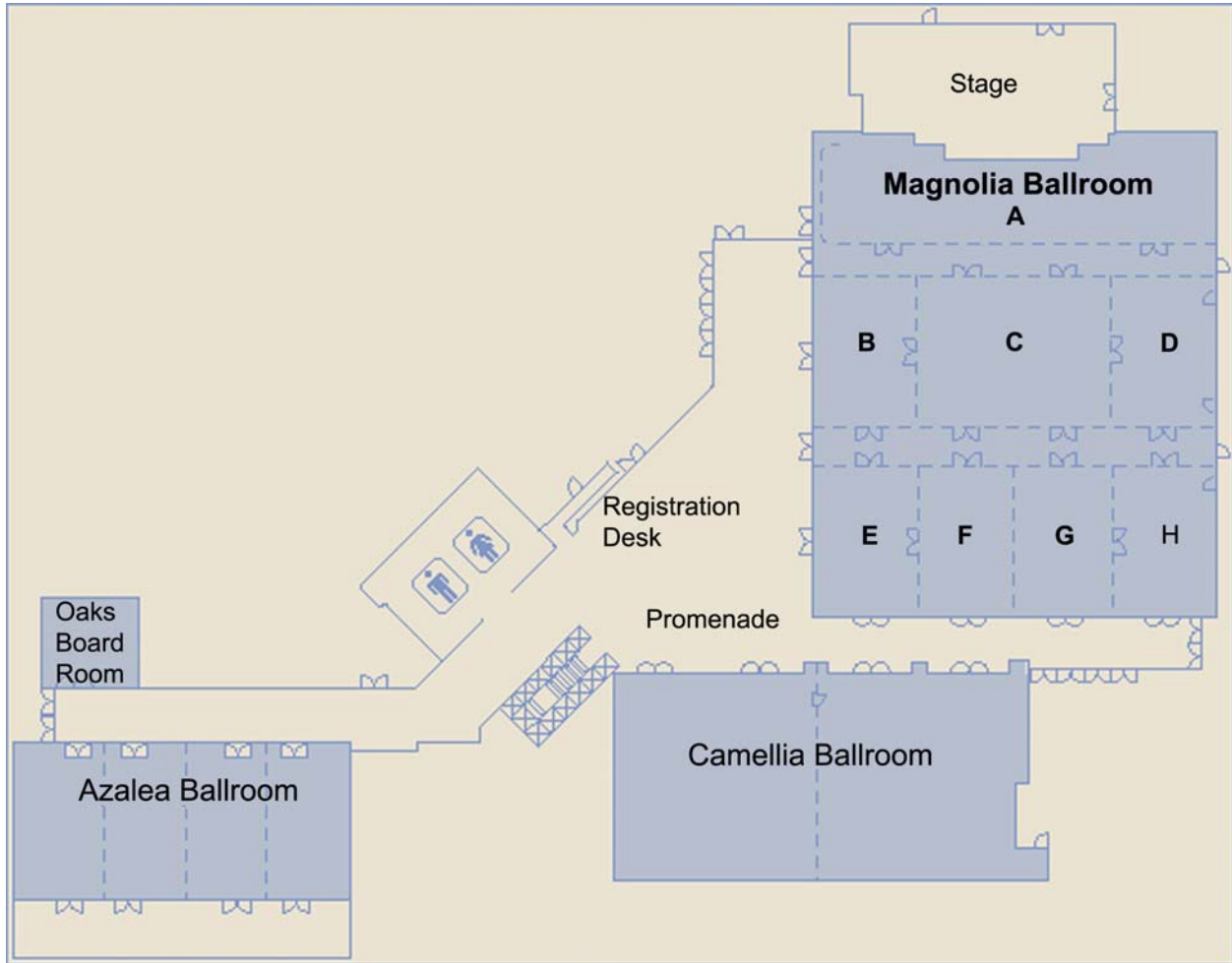


**July 29-30, 2008**

Beau Rivage Resort & Casino  
875 Beach Boulevard  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

# BEAU RIVAGE RESORT & CASINO MAP

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## EXHIBITORS

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- ❖ 4-D Solutions, Inc.
- ❖ American Red Cross
- ❖ EAP Lifestyle Management, LLC
- ❖ IDTF Interfaith Disaster Task Force
- ❖ Mississippi Children's Home Services
- ❖ Mississippi Department of Human Services/Child Support/Mississippi Access and Visitation Program
- ❖ Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
- ❖ Mississippi State Department of Health
- ❖ National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- ❖ UAB South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness

## INTRODUCTION

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In emergencies and disasters the needs of people living with disabilities are often overlooked. A recent report funded by the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research found that often disability groups have not been involved in emergency and disaster planning and strongly advocated including people with disabilities and agencies that serve them in the process. Further, the report called for new initiatives to bring together emergency managers and disability organizations to educate both communities on the unique problems of people with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

This conference on addressing the needs of people with disabilities in emergencies and disasters brings together emergency planners and disabilities organizations to discuss best practices for people with disabilities, better educate agencies involved in emergency response, promote the involvement of persons with disabilities in planning at the local level, and provide a foundation for further communication and interaction between planners and disabilities organizations.

The audience of the conference includes professionals who work with people with disabilities, including family caregivers, advocates, case workers, EMA officials, and others.

## CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

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- Describe the magnitude, nature, and complexity of the issue of people with disabilities who will need assistance during an emergency or disaster.
- Describe the resources needed to assist in the evacuation and care of people with disabilities.
- Demonstrate ways to access resources for people with disabilities in an emergency situation.
- Recognize the importance of including people with disabilities and agencies representing them in emergency and disaster planning.
- Describe appropriate etiquette when evacuating and caring for people with disabilities in an emergency.
- Demonstrate ways to respond to the unique needs of people with disabilities in emergencies.
- Demonstrate appropriate communication techniques (e.g., survival sign language) and technologies to communicate and assist people with disabilities in emergency situations.
- Describe appropriate methods to foster collaboration between individuals with disabilities and agencies and responders that are responsible for care during emergencies.

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday, July 29

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7:00 – 8:30 a.m.

**Registration – Magnolia Foyer**  
**Breakfast – Magnolia B, C, D**

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

**Magnolia A**

**Color Guard Presentation**

**Gulfport High School ROTC**

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem

Led by Kim Rae Magee

Emergency Preparedness Grant

Coordinator

MS State Department of Health

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Peter Ginter, PhD, Principal Investigator

UAB South Central Center for Public Health

Preparedness

**Plenary Sessions – Magnolia A**

9:00 – 9:50 a.m.

**Panel Discussion**

Paul Gallo, Facilitator

Butch McMillan, Executive Director

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation  
Services

Jim Craig, CPM

Director, Health Protection

Mississippi State Department of Health

Connie Rockco, Supervisor

Harrison County

Candice Whitfield, Health Advisor

Office of the Governor of Mississippi

9:50 – 10:10 a.m.

**Break**

10:10 – 11:00 a.m.

**Stop, Drop, and Roll to Disability  
Emergency Preparedness and Recovery**

Mary Troupe, Executive Director  
MS Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

**“No Time Like the Present”—Disaster  
Preparedness for the Disabled and Elderly**

George Moore, Jr., MPM, Director  
Overton Brooks VA Medical Center  
Shreveport, LA

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

**Networking Lunch – Magnolia B, C, D**

**Special Session – Magnolia A**

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Psychological First Aid Workshop**

Joshua Klapow, PhD, Associate Professor  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
South Central Center for Public Health  
Preparedness

**Concurrent Sessions**

1:00 – 1:50 p.m.

**Magnolia E**

**Emergency Preparedness Issues and  
People with Vision Loss**

Karen E. Brown, Director  
Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center

Pshon Barrett, Esq.

Assistant U.S. Attorney

U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern  
District of Mississippi

**Magnolia F**

**Techniques for Working with Persons  
with Mobility Impairments in an  
Emergency Situation**

Kris Geroux, Director

Assistive Technology

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation  
Services

Dawn Tregre, PT

Lead Physical Therapist

East Baton Rouge Parish School System

**Magnolia G**

**The Deaf Community: A Forgotten  
Population**

Steve Hamerdinger, MA

Director, Office of Deaf Services

Alabama Department of Mental Health and  
Mental Retardation

1:50 – 2:10 p.m.

**Break**

2:10 – 3:00 p.m.

**Current Sessions Repeated**

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

**Break**

**Networking Time at Booth Displays**

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

**Magnolia A**

**Day One Closing Session  
Effective Response to People with  
Disabilities**

Bobbie Singletary

Living Independence for Everyone (LIFE) of  
Mississippi

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**Networking Reception**



## CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day 2: Wednesday, July 30

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7:00 – 8:30 a.m.                    **Registration – Magnolia Foyer**  
**Breakfast – Magnolia B, C, D**

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.                    [Magnolia A](#)  
**Announcements**

### [Plenary Sessions – Magnolia A](#)

8:45 – 9: 35 am                    **Emergency Planning**  
Kent Buckley, Deputy Director  
Mississippi EMA

9:45 – 10:35 a.m.                    **Panel Discussion**  
**Planning for and Responding to People**  
**with Disabilities**

Brice Phillips, Moderator

Sheriff Steve Garber, Hancock County

Albert “Butch” Loper, Director  
Jackson County EMA

Chief Pat Sullivan, Gulfport Fire Department

Brian “Hooty” Adam, Director  
Hancock County EMA

Rick Fayard, AMR Regional Director

[10:35 – 10:55 a.m.](#)

**Break**

11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

**Public Health/ESF8 Resources and**  
**Responsibilities**

Jim Craig, CPM; Director, Health Protection  
Mississippi State Department of Health

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

**Networking Lunch – Magnolia B, C, D**

**Concurrent Sessions**

1:00 – 1:50 p.m.

**Magnolia E**

**A Helping Hand in the Time of Crisis**

Greg Goldman, State Coordinator of Interpreters

Denee Smith, State Coordinator of Deaf Services

Ben Wagenknecht, Director, Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

**Magnolia F**

**Preparedness Kit – What Should Be In It: Special Considerations for People with Disabilities**

Sondra Bell, Staff Officer

Mississippi Office of Homeland Security

**Magnolia G**

**DME (Durable Medical Equipment) – Considerations during Crises and Disaster Situations**

Kris Geroux, Director, Assistive Technology

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

1:50 – 2:10 p.m.

**Break**

2:10 – 3:00 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions Repeated**

3:00- 3:30 p.m.

**Break**

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

**Magnolia A**

**Closing Session - Are You Ready?**

Joshua Klapow, PhD, UAB SCCPHP

## **PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES**

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### **Brian Adam**

Brian Adam has been the Emergency Management Director for Hancock County since 2003. He served eighteen years in the paid fire service where he served the City of Bay St. Louis Fire Department as Assistant Fire Chief. Brian is also the Fire Coordinator, Homeland Security Coordinator, LEPC Co-Chairperson, and Fire Investigator for Hancock County. Some of Brian's Certifications include:

- \* Mississippi Certified Emergency Manager
- \* Certified Firefighter
- \* Certified Fire Investigator
- \* Certified Fire Service Instructor

Brian was the Incident Commander for Hancock County for Hurricane Katrina where Hancock County was ground zero. Brian had the privilege to work with many Emergency Management Personnel from other states after Hurricane Katrina. Brian had the honor and privilege to speak at numerous conferences in which he has been able to share his experience and lessons learned with other Emergency Managers.

One of the Biggest Lessons learned in Hurricane Katrina is **IT STARTS LOCAL AND ENDS LOCAL.**

### **Pshon Barrett, Esq.**

Pshon Barrett has been an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi since 1980. In this position she handles all of the district's enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, provides legal support for the Financial Litigation Unit, and handles a general civil caseload. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mississippi State University and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law. She also has a Master of Arts degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi. Pshon is admitted to practice before all courts in the State of Mississippi, Federal Court for the Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi, and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1992 and 1993, she served a detail with the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section, as a trial attorney in the enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition to her litigation responsibilities in the enforcement of the ADA, she frequently lectures on the ADA and its requirements to civic and business organizations and disability groups.

In October 2006 Pshon received a Director's Award for Sustained Superior Performance, given by the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, Department of Justice. Pshon is a member of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on Disability Employment Issues. From 1998 through 2001 she served as a member of The American Bar Association's Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law. She is First Vice-President of the American Association of Visually Impaired Attorneys and is a member and former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Industries for the Blind. She is active in various community activities and is also an accomplished pianist and vocal soloist.

### **Sondra Lee-Bell**

Sondra Lee-Bell currently serves as Staff Officer for the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. As a monitor in the Grants division, Ms. Bell oversees the expenditures of Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, Citizen Corps and Metropolitan Medical Response System grants. She has been employed with numerous state agencies to include the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State Health Department, Department of Human Services and the Office of the Secretary of State. She is a graduate of Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, LA. Ms. Bell has two sons, Willie Clark Bell, III, age 15 and Wilson Samuel Bell, age 12.

### **Karen E. Brown**

Mrs. Karen E. Brown has served as the Director of the Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center for the Blind since 2002. Prior to this she worked as a client advocate with the Client Assistance program for 15 years. Before losing her sight she was a high school English teacher in Brevard County, FL. She is a graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana with a B.A. in English. Community involvement has included service on the Board of Trustees of the United Methodist Church MS Conference,

Board of directors of MS Industries for the Blind, Executive Committee of Community Stewpot in Jackson and Chairperson of the Statewide Independent Living Council for 6 years.

### **Jim Craig**

Jim Craig is currently the Director of Health Protection for the Mississippi Department of Health. The mission of the Mississippi Department of Health is *to protect and promote the health of all Mississippians*. Health protection for the people of Mississippi is one of the chief responsibilities of the Mississippi Department of Health. From the safety of Mississippi food and drinking water, to child care and professional licensing, health protection embraces every aspect of life across the state. Jim's goal is to achieve and maintain the highest standard of health for all Mississippians.

Jim has been in emergency response and working natural and man made disasters for 29 years in Louisiana and Mississippi. He has had a career in public service since 1977, as a fire fighter, emergency medical technician and deputy sheriff. He currently serves as the president of the volunteer fire department in his hometown of Lincoln County. He served from 1999 - 2003, as the Chairman of the Mississippi Fire Personnel Minimum Standards and Certification Board and currently serves as the Chairman of the Local Government and Rural Water Systems Improvement Board. From 1990 - 1993, he worked as an EMS Specialist for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

Jim was born July 21, 1958, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and grew up in the Baton Rouge area. He moved to Mississippi in 1992 and lives in rural Lincoln County. He received an associate degree in forensic science from Louisiana State University and a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Southwest Louisiana.

During Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster ever recorded in Mississippi, he served as the incident commander for ESF-8 (Health and Medical) and led the health response. Prior to his coming to Mississippi the public health response to a disaster involved, on average, fifteen public health employees. Jim dispatched 1,400 public health professionals to Hurricane Katrina.

Jim is married to Celine Hartl Craig, a human resource director for the hospital in Lincoln County, and they have five children, son Austin and daughters Allyssa, Alexandra, Cristina and Carley.

### **Rick Fayard**

Mr. Rick Fayard serves as the Account Executive and Public Information Officer for American Medical Response on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. His duties include the oversight of all emergency medical transportation contracts and local governmental relations for the cities and counties served here in South Mississippi. As Public Information Officer (PIO) Fayard handles all media relative issues and promotes EMS through public education. During times of disaster, he provides leadership in the role of Director of the Emergency Services Function (ESF) #8 section for Hancock County, Mississippi. ESF 8 is responsible for the overall public health response, triage, treatment and transportation of victims during a disaster. It provides immediate support to hospitals and nursing homes, the provision of emergency mental health crisis counseling for individuals and the community, and coordinates the Special Medical Needs Shelter for the county.

Fayard started his career in EMS in 1986 as an EMS Driver and became a Paramedic in 1989. Promoted to Paramedic Field Supervisor in 1991, Fayard has served AMR in many roles which include Administrative Supervisor, Operations Manager, and Business Development. His involvement with the Hancock County Emergency Management Agency which includes being assigned to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Hancock County during times of disaster. In this capacity he serves as the Director for the ESF-8 section since 1992. He also served as the Chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) in 2007.

### **Paul Gallo**

General Manager of SuperTalk Radio Network and talk show host of Number One Rated Mississippi Morning Talk Show

After receiving a degree in broadcasting and experiencing radio in Chicago in the late 60's, Paul returned home to Mississippi. He was smart enough to never leave again. He's spent 11 years with the Mid-South Radio Network, 10 years in private broadcast ownership and has been with

TeleSouth Broadcast Company since January 1990. He has experienced just about every facet of the broadcast industry.

With TeleSouth Broadcasting, he was a marketing consultant for state, regional and national clients as well as Mississippi governmental agencies. He also served as sports marketing consultant at TeleSouth Broadcast for the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, The University of Southern Mississippi and Jackson State University.

In 1998, TeleSouth Broadcast kicked off an ambitious project of creating a statewide "Talk Network". At that time he was asked to become general manager. The statewide talk concept began with two stations and now number seven FM powerhouse voices across the state. **WFMN-FM 97.3** in Jackson, **WFMM-FM, 97.3** in Hattiesburg, **WTNM-FM 105.5** in Oxford, Batesville, Water Valley and the 50,000 watt FM covering most of the Delta, **WTCD-FM, 96.9**. Also **WXRZ-FM, 94.3** in Corinth, Booneville, Ripley, Iuka and **WKBB-FM 100.9** in West Point, Starkville, Columbus and the Golden Triangle area. The latest addition to the SuperTalk family is **WRQO-FM 102.1**, the 50,000-watt powerhouse that reaches from the southern parts of Hinds and Rankin County all the way to the Louisiana border. These are the TeleSouth owned affiliates and do not include a growing list of other stations who are jumping on board to carry some or all of the SuperTalk programming.

Within a year of serving as General Manager, he was asked to end his ten-year hiatus off the air and become a part of the talk show team. The ***Gallo Radio Show*** is now the Number One Rated Talk Show in the mornings across the state.

His guest list has included such notables as Vice-President Dick Cheney, Dick Morris, Morgan Freeman, Mickey Rooney, John Kasik, John McEnroe, Senator and presidential candidate John McCain and a host of other well known politicians and celebrities. Closer to home, Paul's daily guest list is promoted as, "If they're in the news....they're on the show!" and that still holds true.

On a personal note, Paul and his wife Patsy have been married for 39 years. They reside in Madison, MS and are the proud parent of two children and four grandchildren.

More available at [www.supertalk.fm](http://www.supertalk.fm)

### **Kris Geroux**

Kris Geroux is the Director of the Assistive Technology Division for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Engineering from Mississippi State University in 1996. Mr. Geroux completed the requirements for a Certificate in Assistive Technology from Louisiana Tech University in 2001. He has been employed with the Assistive Technology Division of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services since 1999. Mr. Geroux has been certified through the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) as an Assistive Technology Practitioner (ATP). Mr. Geroux evaluates clients across the state of Mississippi in the areas of Seating and Mobility, Home Modification, Jobsite accommodation, Vehicle modification, and agricultural accommodation.

### **Greg Goldman**

Greg Goldman has been interpreting professionally for 20 years. As a child of a Deaf adult, he has interpreted in a non-professional capacity all of his life. He attended Hinds Community College where he received an Associate's Degree. He began his professional career at the Mississippi School for the Deaf, then at the Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, first as a Staff Interpreter, and then was promoted to State Coordinator of Interpreters in 2005. He also is the owner of a Private Practice Interpreting Business.

### **Steve Hamerdinger, M.A.**

Steve Hamerdinger has been the Director of the Office of Deaf Services at the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation since January, 2003. Before this he was the Director of the Office of Deaf and Linguistic Support Services at the Missouri Department of Mental Health, a position he held for more than 9 years. Mr. Hamerdinger has an M.A. in Counseling of the Deaf from Gallaudet University. He owns and operates a mental health consulting firm that provides consultation and training on mental health and deafness nationally. He has been an adjunct faculty member of several college programs and a visiting lecturer at the University of Missouri and the University of Kansas. He was the first Reba Hill Memorial Lecturer on



Pediatrics at the Baylor University Medical School. In addition to his expertise in deafness and mental health, Steve is a well-know motivational speaker and entertainer. Steve lives in Montgomery with an ever changing menagerie of four-footed companions.

### **Albert L. Loper**

Born Anchorage, Alaska, 1956 and migrated south to Newton County, Mississippi. Later moved to the Mississippi Gulf Coast where he has lived most of his adult life. He presently resides in Vancleave, Mississippi. He began experiencing hurricanes and dangerous Gulf Coast weather in 1965 with Hurricane Betsy. Later has endured Hurricanes Camille (1969), Frederick (1979), Elena (1985), Georges (1998), Ivan (2004), and finally Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in 2005. His desire to serve his community has seen him in service with the Red Cross disaster services and the Jackson County Sheriffs Flotilla. He has been trained as a SCUBA diver and has advanced to the title of Assistant SCUBA Instructor with credentials in Search and Recovery, Underwater Photography, and Open Water Rescue. He has been licensed in the State of Mississippi as a Residential Contractor and as a Certified and Licensed Real-estate Appraiser in all of which he is currently licensed. Outside of disaster related services, Butch enjoys motorcycling, competitive sailboat racing, and is bass and guitar player for the local band, Never Twice. Butch began his service to Mississippi with 6 years in Civil engineering for state aid division of MDOT. Entered employment with Jackson County Road Department as a Civil Engineering Tech in 1988 and served as Road Superintendent on two occasions and as assistant to the County Engineer in the county. First and only engineering department. He has also twice worked with the Jackson County Planning Department and served as Special Projects coordinator for the county until mid 2004 at which time he accepted the position of Emergency Management Director for the county. Within two months of taking the position, he was confronted with Hurricane Ivan which fortunately served more as a learning tool for the new director than as a practical exercise. With lessons learned from the Ivan experience, Loper assembled the EOC team and successfully guided the county through the disaster brought by Hurricane Katrina in August, 2005.

## **H. S. “Butch” McMillan**

H. S. “Butch” McMillan assumed the duties of Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services in 1997 and has served in that capacity to the present time. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University and a Certified Public Accountant. Mr. McMillan served in the Mississippi House of Representatives from 1980-1992.

Mr. McMillan is involved in many philanthropic organizations that offer assistance to people with disabilities and many programs that promote employment and independence for people with disabilities. On a national level, he is the President-elect of the National Rehabilitation Association and the past-president of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). Mr. McMillan is an active member of many statewide organizations and councils that serve individuals with disabilities including the Disability Resource Commission, the State Workforce Investment Board and the Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth.

As Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. McMillan has successfully gained legislative support to expand services to citizens with disabilities. Under his direction, the Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, and the Office of Special Disability Programs have expanded available services and doubled the number of consumers served by the agency.

## **George M. Moore**

George M. Moore was appointed Medical Center Director of the Overton Brooks VA Medical Center, Shreveport, Louisiana, effective May 2, 2004.

With an extensive background in health care management, planning and development, he served as Medical Center Director at the VA Medical Center, Martinsburg, WV for over five years. During his 25 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Moore has served in various roles including: Operations Manager; Acting Associate Regional Director; Assistant Director; Chief, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service; Prosthetics Representative and as a National Service Officer prior to coming to VA. Mr. Moore has a Master’s Degree in Healthcare Administration from

Carnegie-Mellon University and Bachelor's Degrees in Business and Finance from Arizona State University and Public Administration from the University of Mississippi.

George Moore served six years and eleven months in the United States Air Force and was medically retired as Captain. He trained at the Undergraduate Pilot Training School from 1966-1967 and attended the Advanced Fighter Weapons School in 1969. Mr. Moore served two tours in Vietnam from 1967-1970. In 2003, Mr. Moore was selected as DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. In 2005, Mr. Moore was a recipient of the Presidential Rank Award for his service to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Federal Government.

Mr. Moore is married with two children.

### **Connie Rockco**

Connie Rockco began her career as a beginner in almost every field. Following the path less traveled, Rockco started the first Respiratory Department at Hancock General Hospital, was the first female medic on the Coast, and started a one of its kind singing telegram, balloon and decorating business. She managed, promoted and raised funds for the only seafood industry maritime marine museum in Mississippi.

Rockco pioneered the first county-wide beautification and environmental commission in Mississippi. As director of Harrison County Wastewater Management Board, Rockco became an expert in solid waste. She established the first such program as recycling Christmas trees, telephone books and newspapers. Her solid waste and litter reduction education in the schools and to the public led to the largest curbside recycling program in the Southeast. Rockco wrote legislation and grants and coordinated the first household hazardous collection programs in the state. Rockco also coordinated the first county-wide household hazardous waste event and established a permanent countywide HHW site. After fifteen years, these programs are still ongoing and very successful. After Hurricane Katrina, Rockco's waste experience was invaluable when working with EPA and disposal of household hazardous waste.

Connie Rockco's career decisions have made a positive impact for women. The mother of three daughters and one granddaughter,

Supervisor Rockco leads by example to earn respect for women in the workplace and the political arena.

Touted as the underdog for the 2000 Supervisor's race, Rockco pulled out a huge upset when she defeated incumbent C.T. Switzer, Jr. and other candidates. After an exciting race, Rockco arose as the victor with 76% of the vote.

In her 2000 term, Rockco was the first woman to serve on the Solid Wastewater Board and became Vice President. Heavily involved in the Council of Government, Rockco served two terms as the first female President.

Rockco dedicated her first term to improving the quality of life for Harrison County District Five citizens by concentrating on improvements in education, roads, drainage, water and sewer, recreation, economic development, environment, senior services and planning. Rockco was also responsible for paving and building roads and parks for schools in Gulfport, Biloxi and Harrison County, and establishing a Saucier Children's Library. She fought for accountability and oversight of the Harrison County Development Commission, leading to its present day success. Rockco worked hard to improve recreation facilities in Woolmarket, Saucier, and Biloxi.

As supervisor Rockco built two civic centers for the community and promoted senior citizens programs. In 2003 she was challenged for the office of District 5 Supervisor by Les Barnett of the House of Representative, whom she defeated with sixty-five percent of the vote.

Since Rockco's 2004 term, she remains the voice of the people. Rockco's concern for impaired bodies of water made her persevere for water and sewer funding, involving her and the board in the regulation of a regional waste and water bill.

August 29, 2005 changed all priorities in the County. Though monies were set aside for disaster, no one could anticipate the most catastrophic event ever to hit the United States. The Supervisors moved into action before, during and now after Katrina. Positioned at the EOC along with hundreds of National Guard troops, volunteers, county employees, FEMA, and MEMA personnel, the Supervisors started clearing roads, coordinating water and sewer, points of distribution and emergency services.

Supervisor Rockco worked day and night for weeks to ensure the care of the citizens of Harrison County. District 5 opened three homeless shelters for those who lost their homes at the Skate Park, Saucier and Woolmarket Community Centers. During the storm, Rockco was at the EOC and didn't leave for days along with the volunteers, county employees and her fellow Supervisors to provide food, water, shelter and recovery for Harrison County citizens.

In January 2006 Rockco was elected President of the Board of Supervisors, which was another first for Rockco and the State of Mississippi.

The Board is sheltering the homeless and picking up debris at the lowest cost per cubic yard. Rockco is working with over fifteen agencies to clean waterways, drainage areas and Ohio State University for a planned community, working with the legislature and Governor for water and sewer. She is also working with the Unmet Needs Committee, beach renewal, Executive Committee for Biloxi Renaissance, planning transportation issues for the future, debris reduction and disposal, working to improve ordinances and codes.

Mrs. Rockco has been married 32 years to Robert Rockco and is the mother of three daughters; Shelly Scarborough married to Brian Scarborough, Jaclyn Ducote married to Billie Ducote, and Tracey Creel married to Jamie Creel. She is also the grandmother of Arley Bethanie Scarborough, Orrin McCain Scarborough and Taylor Creel.

### **Denee Smith**

Denee Smith began her career in the field of deafness in 1993. She has served as a Deaf/Blind Specialist, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, Mental Health Therapist for the Deaf, Staff Interpreter, Director of the Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and currently as the State Coordinator of Deaf Services for the Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

### **Pat Sullivan**

Fire Chief Pat Sullivan has been with the Gulfport Fire Department for 33 years, serving as chief for the last 8 years. He started as recruit fire fighter and worked his way to fire chief. During his career with the department, he has served in all ranks and divisions. Chief Sullivan has

been in charge of The Gulfport Fire Department Hazardous Materials Response Team, Dive Rescue Team, Fire Prevention and Arson Investigation unit, K-9 search and rescue unit and the Emergency Medical Services division.

Also, he has been a practicing paramedic for 28 years and presently serves as the State of Mississippi Office of Homeland Security Regional Response Team Task Force 3 team coordinator. The team is funded, trained, equipped, and staffed to respond to weapons of mass destruction events and incidents which overwhelm the resource of local communities. Task Force 3 first responds to the lower twenty nine counties of the state and is ready to respond by order of the governor to any area that needs special assistance.

### **Dawn Tregre**

Dawn Tregre graduated from Louisiana State University School of Allied Health in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in physical therapy. She has practiced in a variety of settings including inpatient rehabilitation, women's health, acute care, and home health. Ms. Tregre currently holds the position of Lead Physical Therapist for the Occupational and Physical Therapy Program in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

### **Mary G. Troupe**

Mary Troupe is a native Mississippian and a graduate of University of Mississippi. She currently serves as Executive Director for the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), the state's only cross-disability organization founded in 1989. She was recently appointed to the U.S. Access Board in Washington DC to address Emergency Transportable Accessible Emergency Housing with members from FEMA, HUD, DOJ and the manufactured housing industry. In September 2005 she was a consultant to the "Special Needs Assessment 4 Katrina Evacuees" (SNAKE) Teams to the MS Gulf Coast in response to Hurricane Katrina. Results from this report are being used to address issues on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities across the country and in new legislation before the U.S. Congress. At the request of The National Organization on Disability, Ms. Troupe and the CCD were asked to conduct "train the trainer" workshops on Emergency Preparedness and

Response for the disability and aging population throughout Mississippi.

Mary has over 37 years of knowledge, skills and experience in the disability sector. Mrs. Troupe has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives and the Mississippi Senate and House of Representatives on disability issues and has provided testimony to the William Winter Institute on the disabled population evacuation during Hurricane Katrina. She is frequently called on to testify or brief Members of Congress on special needs issues. She serves on national, state and local disability committees and boards. Through her civil rights and advocacy work for people with disabilities and their families, Mary has been interviewed by CNN, National Public Radio, USA Today, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Fox News, and several dozen local newspapers across the country. Mary has also had the honor to train and share her experience as a person with a disability at national conferences including the National Disability Rights Conference, Association of Secretaries of State Conference, the National Organization for Women Summit and the National Victims of Crime Conference.

### **Ben Wagenknecht**

Benjamin Wagenknecht has been working for the MDRS since September of 2005. He was former Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf in Starkville and Olive Branch. He graduated from Gallaudet University and majored in Social Work. He worked in Maryland for most of his career as a Residential Counselor and as a Social Worker. He recently graduated from the Rehabilitation program at the University of North Texas via online with Master's Science. He is currently working as Director of Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Jackson, MS at the beginning of 2008.

## **CERTIFICATES AND CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS**

All conference participants will receive a certificate of attendance at the conclusion of the conference. These certificates can be collected from the registration area.

Continuing education units will be offered for some disciplines. Please stop by the continuing education table each day to register.

## **CONFERENCE MATERIALS**

Some presentation materials and streaming videos of some presentations will be available on our website after the conference. This website can be accessed at [www.southcentralpartnership.org](http://www.southcentralpartnership.org). If you have any questions regarding this or any other matters relating to this conference, please contact Natasha Ptomey at [nptomey@uab.edu](mailto:nptomey@uab.edu).

**Thank you for your attendance and participation!**



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