



## Weekly News Round-up

IN THIS ISSUE: DRA awards \$1.5 million for regional workforce development, releases educational video series Gov Bryant to chair Jobs for Americas Graduates board | Gov Haslam to expand health coverage in Tennessee



### **DRA mourns the loss of Kentucky Judge Executive Mike Miller (Marshall County)**

Last week the DRA lost a friend and strong advocate for Delta communities in Marshall County (KY) Judge Executive Mike Miller. Judge Miller was the longest-serving county judge-executive in Kentucky's history—providing 40 years of service to the people of western Kentucky and in recent years to the Delta Regional Authority. During his tenure, he facilitated the development of the county's infrastructure and nurtured the welfare of its residents and businesses.

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### **DRA awards \$1.5 million to communities to strengthen regional workforce development system**

Chairman Masingill announced this week that workforce development leaders across the Delta region will

### **Upcoming Events:**

*Register or Apply Today*

#### **December USDA Farm Bill Learning Sessions**

*Held throughout the month of December. For location information, email [j.m.riley@msstate.edu](mailto:j.m.riley@msstate.edu)*

*\*If you have an event that you would like featured in our Upcoming Events section, send event information to [news@dra.gov](mailto:news@dra.gov)*

### **Announcements From Our Partners:**

**New Orleans named #1 Food City in America**

**Applications open for Social Entrepreneurship Boot Camp in Arkansas | Deadline to apply January 31, 2015**

**USDA Rural Utilities Services opens applications for Community Connect Grant Program | Deadline February 17, 2015**

**HHS awards \$1.4 million in ACA funding to Delta community health centers to expand quality improvement**

receive more than \$1.5 million to transform workforce development in their communities and regions. The resources will specifically fund technical assistance and capacity building for communities and regional clusters with a particular focus on younger and underserved populations to meet the needs of business and industry.

The capacity building and technical assistance will help county-wide, parish-wide, and region-wide leadership teams develop programs and systems-based policies to build a more connected, comprehensive workforce system among educational institutions and business and industry sectors.

In coordination with this announcement, the DRA has released a series of videos highlighting its Reimagining the Delta Workforce policy framework for approaching workforce development. These videos are available on [dra.gov](http://dra.gov) or on [DRA's YouTube page](#).

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**BLS report that about 7 million of 10.9 million jobs added back since recession came from startups and small businesses**

**OECD Report "Skills Beyond School" Identifies Good Practices in Addressing Growing Skills Gap**

**Rural Health Network Development Planning Program applications available | Deadline January 9, 2015**



## **DRA Governors Phil Bryant, Jay Nixon named Chairman and Vice-Chair of Jobs for America's Graduates Board**

Jobs for America's Graduates—a strong partner of DRA in training a skilled workforce for Delta communities and businesses—has announced that DRA States' Co-Chair and Mississippi Governor Phil

Bryant will serve as Chairman of the JAG Board, taking over for Delaware Governor Jack Markell. Additionally, former DRA States' Co-Chair and Missouri Governor Jay Nixon has been named as Vice-Chair of the JAG Board.

As a premiere national program supporting school to work education and training for high school students, JAG has provided great opportunities for students in the Delta region and across the country. The JAG program consistently achieves graduation rates of 90 percent or more, which is a strong reason why the DRA has joined its governors in investing in JAG since 2012--launching 28 programs in Delta high schools.

Both Governor Bryant and Governor Nixon have been strong partners with the DRA in supporting the expansion of JAG programming into Delta communities in Mississippi, Missouri, and across the eight-state region. As we continue to support JAG programming in Delta high schools, we are proud to have our State's Co-Chair and Board of Governors member at the helm of a great organization such as JAG and look forward to supporting his efforts as Chair of the Board.

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**Governor Haslam announces plan for expanding health coverage for underserved Tennesseans**



Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam announced this week the Insure Tennessee plan, a two year pilot program to provide health care coverage to Tennesseans who currently don't have access to health insurance or have limited options. The program rewards healthy behaviors, prepares members to transition to private coverage, promotes personal responsibility and incentivizes choosing preventative and routine care instead of unnecessary use of emergency rooms.

The Delta Regional Authority applauds Governor Haslam's leadership in identifying a way to improve access to quality, affordable health care to some of the state's most underserved communities, including in large part the Delta counties of West Tennessee. Additionally, the DRA applauds Tennessee's state legislators and cabinet officials for supporting Governor Haslam in this effort.

West Tennessee and the greater Delta region face major challenges with health access and health outcomes with all counties considered medically underserved by federal officials, more than 34 percent of west Tennesseans considered obese, and nearly 12 percent diagnosed with diabetes. Both of these figures surpass national and regional averages. The DRA welcomes this plan as a step forward that is inline with our support of efforts to increase access to quality health care for Delta

residents.

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