LIBERTY SECURITY CUTS THE RIBBON. A ribbon cutting for Liberty Security was held on April 5, 2016, in Tishomingo.

Mike Kemp, owner, reported that “we provide armed and unarmed standing and vehicle patrol security services. We offer only trained and experienced security personnel with additional training required each year. We are fully licensed and insured and have an inhouse attorney and accountant.”

Liberty Security is based in Tishomingo and the phone numbers are 662-454-9992 or 662-279-6000.

COMFORT REVOLUTION EXPANDS. The Mississippi Development Authority has announced an expansion of Comfort Revolution’s Belmont operation. The expansion will involve a $1.5 million company investment and the creation of 50 jobs.

We thank Comfort Revolution for selecting Tishomingo County for the company’s latest expansion.

FURNITURE FABRICS & MORE DONATES TO PARK. Kary Peters, CEO of Furniture, Fabrics and More donated drapery fabric for the nature center and cabins at Tishomingo State Park. Tishomingo State Park and Friends of the Park are working hard to prepare the nature center for the grand opening on Earth Day, Friday, April 22, 2016, at 11:30 AM. Local and state officials will be present. The public is also invited to join the Friends of the Park for the April 23, 2016, fun run and walk at Tishomingo State Park.

Don’t forget the 38th Annual Hollis Long/Archie Lee Memorial Ole’ Tyme Music Gathering on April 9.

G&G STEEL. G&G Steel is completing work on Tainter Gate #3 of 5 total. This gate is headed to the Olmsted Lock and Dam on the Ohio River in June. The tainter gate is 110 feet long, 54 feet wide, 43 feet tall and weighs about 700,000 pounds.

More information on G&G Steel can be found at www.ggsteel.com. Employment information can be found at www.ggsteel.com/employment.htm. Photo compliments of Eric Daniel, Plant Superintendent, G&G Steel--Mississippi Works.
Tishomingo County Development Foundation, Tishomingo County's public/private economic development team:

- 1,600 jobs & over $320 million in private investment over the past 10 years.
- 4th highest increase in retail sales in the state between 2008 and 2012.
- Rated TOP TEN industrial sites in the southern USA in 2012.
- Rated TOP TEN rural sites in the southern USA for reshored industry in 2013.
- Rated TOP TEN “Comeback Kids” in the southern USA in 2015.
- TCDF rated one of the best economic development agencies in the southern USA in 2015.

We still have a lot of work to do, but just about everyone in Tishomingo County has family or friends working at one of the companies that have been recruited to, or has expanded in, Tishomingo County. Most businesses have customers that get their paychecks from these companies, or sell products or services to these companies. Everyone benefits directly or indirectly from economic development, including the school system that receives significant new tax revenue from economic development projects.

Be sure to thank TCDF Partners in Progress and do business with those businesses that support economic development. A list of these partners is on the front page of this update. You can learn more about these community minded businesses at http://www.tishomingo.org/pdf_docs/Partners%20in%20Progress.pdf.

Also, remember to thank our TCDF, TCEDA, and TCTC board members who serve without compensation of any kind.

TOURISM SPENDING. The 2015 Economic Contribution Report from the Mississippi Development Authority reveals local and statewide tourism spending. From 2014 to 2015, the State of Mississippi had a 1.3% increase in tourism spending.

In Tishomingo County, the increase was 11.4%, over eight times the statewide average. In 2015, tourists spent $15,825,458 in Tishomingo County, accounting for 210 jobs, and paying $1,292,095 in state and local taxes.

Listed below are the 2015 tourism total tax receipts for selected communities in North Mississippi (Tishomingo County only has a 2% hotel tax and no restaurant tax):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Tax Receipt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tishomingo County</td>
<td>$58,545*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>$1,257,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupelo</td>
<td>$3,980,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto County</td>
<td>$7,017,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Springs</td>
<td>$311,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Albany</td>
<td>$691,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontotoc</td>
<td>$383,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>$269,695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One time payment due to several years of back taxes collected in 2015. Average annual hotel tax is around $20,000.

Although Tishomingo County has outdoor tourism resources far beyond what the other example counties possess, Tishomingo County invests the least to market those resources.

With more funds for an aggressive long term marketing campaign, there is no reason that local tourism spending could not increase by a factor of four and tourism employment increase to over 800 within a few years.

Just as importantly, increased tourism spending would spark a significant increase in income for restaurants, gas and convenience stores, and other retail and service businesses as well as encourage the creation of new businesses in Tishomingo County.

If ever there was an opportunity for a county to help itself to a gold mine, tourism marketing is the “shovel”.
TISHOMINGO COUNTY RANKS #2. SmartAsset, a New York financial technology company, recently released their second annual study on property taxes. Tishomingo County ranked number two among Mississippi counties getting the most ‘Bang for their Buck’ on property taxes, making the second consecutive appearance in the top five. In addition to property taxes, the study analyzed the quality of local schools and the local crime rates to calculate where people were seeing the most value. Tishomingo County ranks third in the USA in offering value to its taxpayers.

Listed below are the top ten counties in Mississippi:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Property Tax Rate</th>
<th>School Rating</th>
<th>Crimes Per 100k People</th>
<th>Overall Value Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tippah, MS</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tishomingo, MS</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>99.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Greene, MS</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>99.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Choctaw, MS</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>98.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rankin, MS</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>98.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hinds, MS</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>95.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Itawamba, MS</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>94.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Harrison, MS</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>93.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lee, MS</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>93.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hancock, MS</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>90.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>305</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the rating only considers three factors, these factors are often the most significant factors that people consider when relocating.

Congratulations to the Tishomingo County Board of Supervisors, Tishomingo County School District, and local law enforcement agencies.
SCHOLARS AND TECH MASTER PROGRAM. Tishomingo County School District has implemented the Mississippi Economic Council’s Mississippi Scholars and Tech Master Program.

The purpose of the Mississippi Scholars and Tech Master Program is to motivate and assist high school students to complete a defined, rigorous academic course of study, especially in STEM coursework, that prepares them for successful transition to college, university coursework or technical training necessary to enter today’s competitive job market.

Local industries will partner with the local school system to insure that future workers are qualified and equipped with the advanced technical skills required by high tech manufacturing.

More information can be found at http://www.msmec.com/mississippi-scholars.

TISHOMINGO COUNTY VISITORS GUIDE. The Tishomingo County Tourism Council has revised and published the 2016 “Tishomingo County Visitors Guide”.

The guide is provided to the state’s 13 welcome centers and many other locations frequented by travellers.

The visitors guide can be picked up at the TCDF office or found at www.tishomingofunhere.org.

The web site also displays the schedule of events within Tishomingo County. You can also find the tourism council on Facebook.

ULTIMATE OUTDOOR THROWDOWN. The Mississippi Ultimate Outdoor Throwdown launched on Monday, March 28. This voting bracket is promoted in partnership with Outside Magazine and matches 32 of Mississippi’s prized outdoor attractions and activities such as well known trails, lakes, state parks, hunts, gardens and museums. The winner will be named “Mississippi’s Ultimate Outdoor Attraction.”

Fans can vote as many times as they like, and voters can sign up daily for a chance to win the grand prize—a $2,000 gear package of their choice for fishing, canoeing or kayaking. Voting will take place for four weeks starting March 28 and will end at 11:59 p.m. CDT on April 25. Participants must be at least 21 years old to enter. The winner of the competition—the place or activity deemed “Mississippi’s Ultimate Outdoor Attraction” by voters—will be announced in the monthly Visit Mississippi e-newsletter in the first week of May.

To participate in the voting bracket, go to http://visitmississippi.org/outdoor-throwdown or like and follow Visit Mississippi’s Facebook and Twitter pages for links to the voting bracket. Vote for your selections three times until they are entered into the semi-finals column.

Tishomingo State Park is the current frontrunner.
BE YOUR OWN BOSS. The majority of new small businesses in the USA start as home-based businesses. Service businesses are the fastest growing type of small business. Small businesses create most of the new jobs and the majority of the wealth in the USA.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers free individual and private counseling services to businesses and individuals who want to start a business.

Contacts are Dana Cawthon at the Tupelo Renasant Center for Ideas, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, phone 662-680-6988, or James Carden at the SBDC in Oxford, Monday thru Friday, phone 800-725-7232.

Upcoming free workshops: “How to Develop a Business Plan” on April 6, 2016, 1 to 3 PM in Tupelo. The complete schedule of workshops can be found at https://clients.mssbdc.org/events.aspx. Call 800-725-7232 for more information or to register.

The SBDC web site at www.mssbdc.org offers valuable information for existing businesses, individuals wanting to start a business, inventors, exporters, and others.

SBA offers a Small Loan Program of up to $150,000 thru local banks. SBA guarantees 85% of the loan and there is no guaranty fee or maintenance fees. Underwriting and approval are streamlined.

Other sources of funding for small businesses (besides personal or bank funds) include:

- Northeast Mississippi Planning & Development District Revolving Loan Fund (www.nempdd.com/departments.html);
- Small Business Administration loan funds (www.sba.gov/loan-programs); and

The Northeast Mississippi Business Incubation System offers space plus intensive technical assistance to help new and expanding businesses and industries to be successful in the marketplace.

More information is available by calling Ray McClelland at 662-287-4369, e-mail nembis@att.net.

The Mississippi Contract Procurement Center assists small businesses free of charge in finding and bidding on government contracts. Visit the web site at www.mscpc.com or call Bill Burge at 662-329-1077, e-mail nmcpc@ebicom.net.

Tishomingo County Development Foundation offers a number of free publications on starting or expanding a small business.

Tishomingo County Development Foundation also publishes the county business guide and offers free ribbon cuttings for new and expanded businesses.

The online version of the business guide can be found at www.tishomingo.org/pdf_docs/Business%20Guide%20June%202015%20Update.pdf. The business guide is currently being updated and may be republished in mid-2016.

Free printed copies may be found at local groceries and other locations although some locations may have run out of copies.

Call 662-423-9933 or e-mail info@tishomingo.org for more information or for a free copy of the business guide. Listings for local businesses are free.

March 2016