



PR in the Rural South

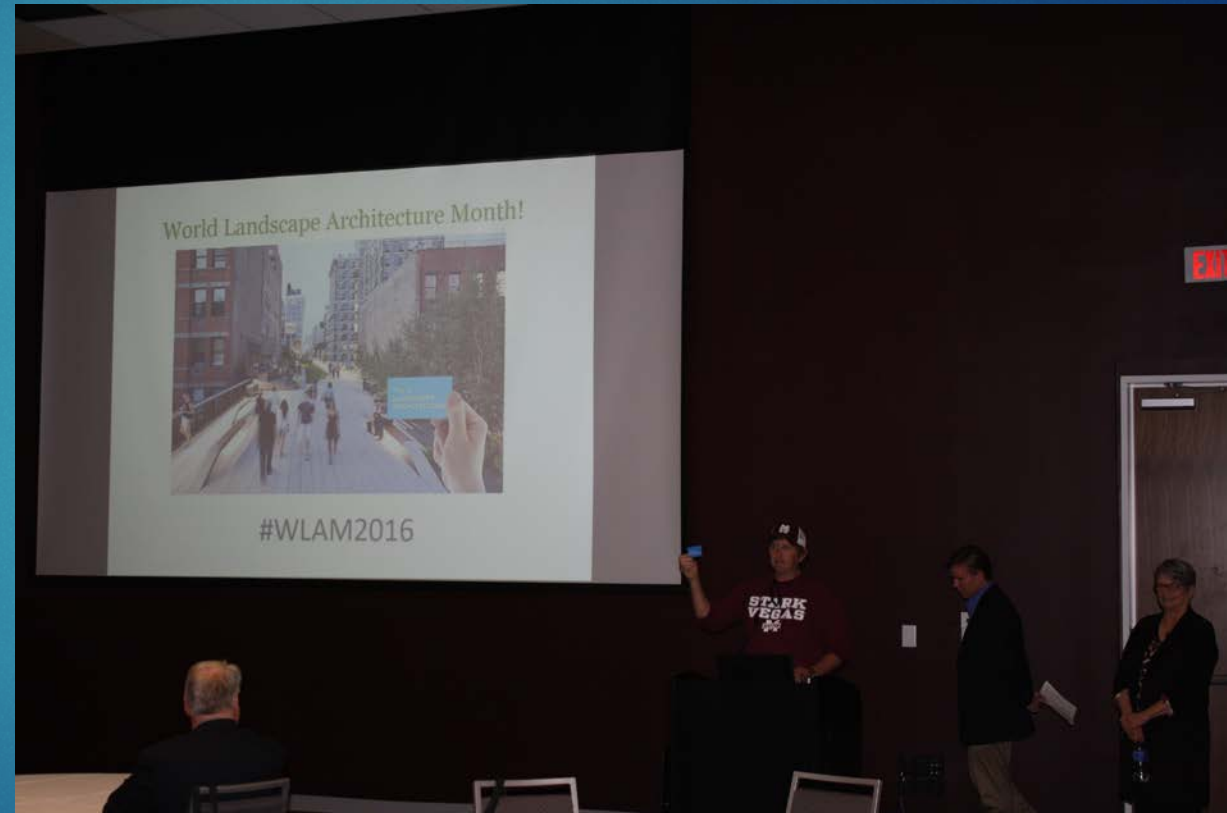
PR FROM A SMALL CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE: AN OVERVIEW

PRESENTER: MATTHEW R. COPP, PLA, ASLA

MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER OF ASLA, PR/COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR & TREASURER

Overview. . .

- ▶ Context
- ▶ Issues facing Chapter
- ▶ What Chapter is Doing
- ▶ PR Happenings
- ▶ Lessons Learned
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ Questions



Context - Mississippi Statistics

- ▶ Population: 2.99 Million (2010)
- ▶ State's Economy: +/- \$156 B annually
 - ▶ ~ \$66 B – Manufacturer's shipments (2012)
- ▶ Education:
 - ▶ 82.3% hold High School Diplomas*
 - ▶ 20% hold Bachelor's degrees or higher* or 1 in 5 people
 - ▶ Nationally: 28.3% or 1 in 4 people *

* Person's 25+ years of age, 2011-2015

Source: US Census Bureau - <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/28>

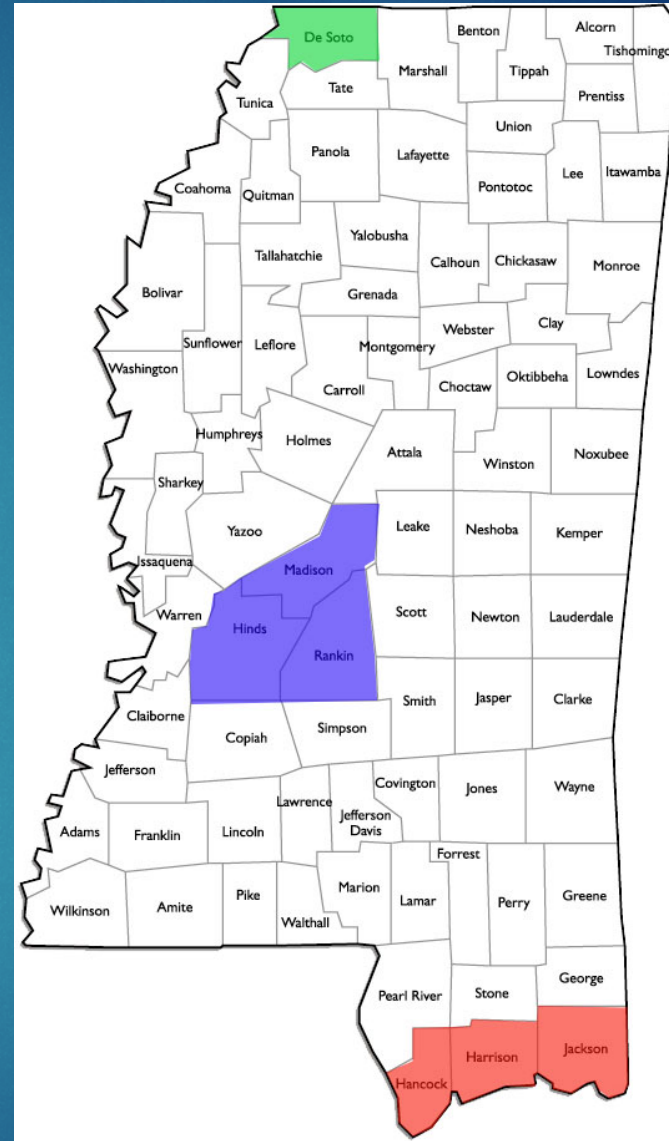
Context - Population

▶ Five Largest Cities:

- ▶ Jackson: 173,513
- ▶ Gulfport: 67,793
- ▶ Southaven: 48,982
- ▶ Hattiesburg: 45,989
- ▶ Biloxi: 44,054

▶ Populous Areas:

- ▶ Jackson Metro: ~ 318,401 (blue)
- ▶ Gulf Coast: 198,718 (red)
- ▶ Desoto County: 122,622 (green)



Context – MS Chapter of ASLA

- ▶ Membership:
 - ▶ On the Roles: 70 to 80 members
 - ▶ Actively Involved: ~35 to 40 members
- ▶ Emerging Professionals (EP):
 - ▶ Mississippi State University graduates (BLA or MLA) leave state to practice as they do not see MS full of opportunity for LAs



Issues Facing Chapter

- ▶ Membership:
 - ▶ Aging membership
 - ▶ Limited EPs in chapter
 - ▶ Limited Member participation
- ▶ BLA & MLA Graduates who remain in Mississippi
 - ▶ BLA & MLA graduates – enter Design/Build and DO NOT join ASLA or seek licensure
- ▶ Rural State:
 - ▶ Members concentrated in 1 of the 3 populous area; others sparsely located
 - ▶ Difficult to host events w/ participation
- ▶ Education:
 - ▶ Lack of higher education within state and state's elected officials affects ability to effectively market profession and services to policy makers or potential clients

What MS ASLA is Doing...

- ▶ Member Engagement
 - ▶ Email Campaigns
 - ▶ Annual Conference
 - ▶ Social Media
- ▶ Student / EP Engagement
 - ▶ Sharing Social Media Posts
 - ▶ Sponsorship of Student Chapter
- ▶ Public Engagement
 - ▶ Social Media
 - ▶ Events
 - ▶ Press Releases



PR HAPPENINGS

2015 - 2016

WLAM - 2015

▶ PROS

- ▶ Leveraged local newspaper contact for WLAM coverage
- ▶ Interview & photo shoot at a built landscape architecture project
- ▶ Reporter was very conscientious about understanding profession and did research

▶ CONS

- ▶ Unable to pull off WLAM event with contact in Jordan
- ▶ Little chapter participation

OXFORD CITIZEN THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015

OBITUARIES

BILLY HENSON
Dr. Billy Henson, 81, died Monday, April 13, 2015, at his home in Oxford. Burial services were held Tuesday, April 14, at 1 p.m. at Deaton Funeral Home in Oxford. Burial was at Red Bay Cemetery in Red Bay City.

JAMES EDWARD SPENCE
James Edward Spence, 84, died Friday, April 10, 2015, at the Mississippi State Veterans Home in Oxford. Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 14, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Roger Howgill officiating. Burial followed in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

ESTHER CANDY FUDGE SLAY
Esther Candy Fudge Slay, 96, died Friday, April 10, 2015, at her home in Oxford. Burial services were held Monday, April 13, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Robert Allan Hawkins officiating. Burial was in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

JOHN HAWKINS WILSON
John Hawkins Wilson, 84, died Monday, April 13, 2015, at the Mississippi Memorial Hospital in Oxford. Burial services will be held Tuesday, April 14, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Roger Howgill officiating. Burial will be in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

DELMA W. WUKE
Delma W. Wuke, 84, died March 28, 2015, at the Methodist Hospice, 1000 West Holly Springs Road in Holly Springs. Burial services were held Wednesday, April 15, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Jerry G. Howgill officiating. Burial followed in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

J. L. COOK SR.
J. L. Cook Sr., 81, died Sunday, April 12, 2015, at his home in Oxford. Burial services were held Tuesday, April 14, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Roger Howgill officiating. Burial was in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

WYNE HENDERSON
Wynne Henderson, 81, died Monday, April 13, 2015, at the Mississippi Memorial Hospital in Oxford. Burial services were held Tuesday, April 14, at 11 a.m. at Deaton Funeral Home with Rev. Roger Howgill officiating. Burial was in the Oxford Cemetery in Oxford.

Matthew Copp, owner of MRC Landscape Architecture, stands near a piece of art in the Powerhouse Sculpture Garden, which is part of the Yokna Sculpture Trail, at the Powerhouse Community Arts Center.



Locals promote World Landscape Architecture Month

BY ERROL CASTENS
OXFORD CITIZEN

Matthew Copp says the time to get a landscape architect involved in any major renovation or new construction project is "as soon as possible" – and for good reason. "Landscape architecture is more than 'green side up, brown side down,'" said the Oxford-based owner of MRC Landscape Architecture. "A simplistic definition is 'the built environment' – anything outside the walls of a building or anything that is modified in nature or ecosystems. Landscape architecture blends form and function; it's spatial relationships."

The American Society of Landscape Architects defines its profession in four parts – learning the landscape (its uses and its people), considering concepts, designing details and construction/planting.

"What people most often associate with landscape architecture is planting design – putting trees, shrubs and flowers in the ground," Copp noted. "It is that, but it's designing public spaces, too – parks, athletic fields, and outdoor spaces for commercial buildings."

In Mississippi, he said, landscape architects are authorized by law to do grading plans, site plans, stormwater plans and more. While aesthetics is important, the way the designed environment works for its users is even more crucial – from traffic areas to entrances to leisure settings.

"We decide where parking goes, where walkways go – even down to the materials you use," he said. "The scale of projects that landscape architects work on goes from backyard projects in a single-family home to the master plans for thousand-acre developments."

On major projects, Copp said, landscape architects are "almost a bridge between civil engineers and architects. We understand not only building systems but also engineering systems."

CELEBRATING WORLDWIDE WORK

April marks a special time for the profession. "Originally, the expectation was every April would be National Landscape Architecture Month but the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) recognized the need to create diversity not only within the profession but within its observance," Copp said. "The ASLA has reached out to the International Federation of Landscape Architects to rename the observance as World Landscape Architecture Month."

With this expansion, each state chapter of ASLA selects a sister country where they might exchange ideas with their international peers.

"In Mississippi, our chapter has selected the nation of Jordan," Copp said. "We have a connection through the Department of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University – three people who are students or alumni from Jordan, whose father is a practicing landscape architect there. He's in the country's legislature, but he also holds a significant office in Jordan for environmental studies."

"We're going to try to do a Skype dialogue with them."

Next week's unveiling of the Leadership Lafayette-launched sculpture trail will be a local tie-in with the observance.

Another aspect of the month is as local as it can get. The ASLA is seeking to promote its members' profession by having them pose for photos in front of a good example of their work while holding a card that asserts, "DESIGNED BY A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT," then posting those photos on social media.

Copp said the aim is to promote public awareness of the profession and what it offers planners and consumers.

"We need to be involved as soon as possible in the planning of a project," he said. "We can start asking questions in the programming phase, help write goals and objectives and drive the design."

Copp's website is www.mrc-landarch.com/. For a list of other licensed landscape architects in Mississippi, visit misasla.wordpress.com/.

errol.castens@journalinc.com
Twitter: @oxfordcitizenec

Twin States Conference - 2016



- ▶ Largest chapter event annually
 - ▶ Greatest opportunity for MS & AL ASLA chapters for publicity
- ▶ Press Release generated local TV news coverage:
 - ▶ Audience: 56,987
 - ▶ Ad Value: \$ 485
 - ▶ Calc. Publicity Value: \$ 2,836.00

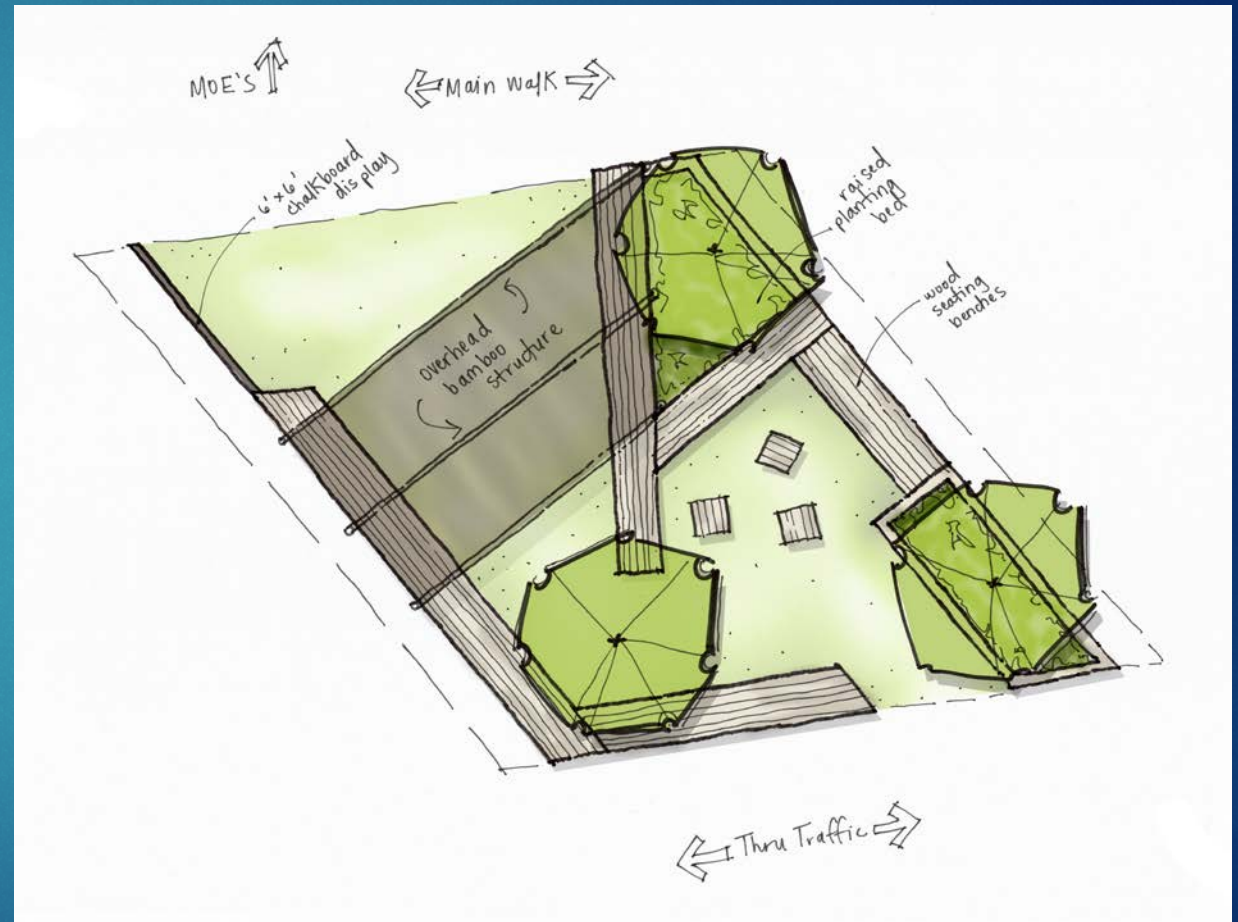
WLAM - 2016

- ▶ Greater membership participation with the “This is Landscape Architecture” campaign than 2015
- ▶ Partnered with Miss. State Univ. Student ASLA to host a ‘10 Parks’ event at Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum
 - ▶ The project has won Mississippi ASLA awards
 - ▶ [ASLA National Award of Excellence](#) in 2013 for Student Collaboration in Service Learning



PARK(ing) Day 2016

- ▶ MS ASLA encouraged MSU Student ASLA to participate
 - ▶ Students planned & executed event in under a month's time
- ▶ MS ASLA supported event
- ▶ MSU Student ASLA Objectives:
 - ▶ Reduce Impact on Environment
 - ▶ Sought donations of materials otherwise deemed unusable
 - ▶ Used leftover materials from NALP Student Competition a month prior
 - ▶ Encourage active lifestyle
 - ▶ Encourage collaboration between students as well as students and local businesses



PARK(ing) Day 2016



PR Lessons Learned...

- ▶ Documentation:
 - ▶ Record events with photos
 - ▶ Save electronic copies of press coverage for future use
 - ▶ TIP: Develop a file store structure & standard document layout/design
- ▶ Voice of Chapter:
 - ▶ Handle ALL Outbound AND inbound public communications
 - ▶ Consistent voice/position, formats, and sender
 - ▶ TIP: Prepare communications on behalf of other Ex Com officers for their review before release

 **AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**
Mississippi Chapter
P.O. Box 3085
Madison, MS 39130

Executive Committee:
Jon Mitchell, Treasurer
Brian Tompkins, President
Jim Jackson, President Elect
D'Ignat Smith, Vice President
Matthew Copp, Treasurer
Mark Levy, Secretary
Jon Mitchell, Past President
At Large Members:
Jason Walker, Northern District
Chris Paine, Central District
Owen Price, South District

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 1, 2016

The Mississippi Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) will be hosting the 2016 Twin States ASLA Conference, themed "Rooted in Design", at The Mill at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi April 7-9, 2016.

The mission of the American Society of Landscape Architecture is to *lead, educate, and participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning, and artful design of our cultural and natural environments.* The Twin States Conference is a partnership of the Mississippi and Alabama Chapters of ASLA, established to promote these goals; to showcase the beauty, culture and history of each state; and is the Chapters' primary fundraising activity each year. This year's conference is expected to host over 70 attendees, including both professional practitioners and students from Mississippi State University's Department of Landscape Architecture, as well as over 30 exhibitors in an industry exposition. For more information about the conference, including a schedule, list of speakers, and exhibitors, please visit: <http://www.twinstatesconference.com/>

This year's conference coincides with ASLA's **World Landscape Architecture Month (WLAM)** – a celebration and introduction of the landscape architecture profession to the general public that takes place each April. For more information about WLAM, please visit: <https://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=45783>

Additionally, the Mississippi Chapter of ASLA will be presenting our bi-annual **Design Awards** recognizing outstanding works of landscape architecture in the state of Mississippi on Thursday, April 7, 2016 at 6 PM. For more information about the MS ASLA design awards, please visit: <https://msasla.wordpress.com/awards/>

Members of the media are invited to visit the conference. AL & MS ASLA Chapter officers as well as landscape architects will be available for interviews about the conference and the landscape architecture profession.

Please direct all questions and interview requests to:

Matthew R. Copp, P.L.A. ASLA
Public Relations Chair, MS Chapter ASLA
P.O. Box 3085
Madison, MS 39130
Cell – 662-801-2573
<https://msasla.wordpress.com/>
msaslapr@gmail.com

END OF PRESS RELEASE

PR Lessons Learned...

- ▶ Email Campaigns:
 - ▶ Less IS More
 - ▶ TIP: Create new mailing lists for specific events to prevent attrition from “chapter news” email lists, for example
- ▶ Working with Press:
 - ▶ What you want reported often is NOT what gets reported
 - ▶ TIP: Build relationships with press to increase coverage for chapter and profession
- ▶ Engagement:
 - ▶ You never know who is looking and sharing
 - ▶ TIP: If relevant to chapter or profession, SHARE, SHARE, SHARE!



Paving the way for green space: ASLA chapter converts parking spaces into temporary park

September 16, 2016

Contact: Sarah Buckleitner (mailto:srb589@msstate.edu)



(http://www.msstate.edu/sites/www.msstate.edu/files/Landscape_Architecture-PARKing_Day_20160916_M4B5347.jpg)

Mississippi State University's student chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects hosted PARK(ing) Day September 16

Upcoming in 2017...

- ▶ Mississippi Legislative Luncheon
 - ▶ January 17, 2017 - hosting Legislators & Staff at State Capital
 - ▶ Members will engage guests in dialogue about how LAs protect HSW through profession's work
- ▶ Travelling Exhibit
 - ▶ Using exhibit boards from Legislative Luncheon, will start a travelling exhibit to showcase profession at schools, public libraries, etc.
- ▶ "The Mississippi Landscape Architect"
 - ▶ Developing a semi-annual publication about profession in MS
 - ▶ Will be mailed to members as well as elected officials, municipalities, schools, etc.
- ▶ Website Updates



Questions?



Matthew R. Copp, PLA, ASLA

MS Chapter of ASLA, PR/Communications Chair & Treasurer

matthew.copp@mrc-landarch.com

Cell Phone: 662.801.2573