

A WORD TO COUNTY SUPERVISORS

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Congratulations! Your election in November of 2003 as a county supervisor in the State of Mississippi is significant in a number of ways. You are now one of 410 citizens in whom Mississippians have placed their trust and confidence to govern their counties up to the year 2008. You have been vested for four years by the electorate with the authority and responsibility to make a positive impact upon your county. You number among the thousands of individuals in our nation who selflessly strive to provide grassroots government at its best.

Your election and the weeks that followed were a time for celebration of your election victory. Now that you are entering office, you need to take time to do some soul-searching.

What was your motivation to seek public office? What are your goals and aspirations for your county for the next four years? How do you plan to become familiar with the multitude of areas in which your county is involved and with the services your county provides? How do you plan to keep abreast of the state laws under which your county must operate? Questions of this sort must be considered and answered.

This book is designed to introduce you to your duties and responsibilities and to get you thinking about the future of your county and your role as the governing authority. The educational programs coordinated by the Center for Governmental Training & Technology in the Mississippi State University Extension Service in cooperation with the Mississippi Association of Supervisors are designed to keep you current with the law and practice of county government. These programs are held four or more times a year at regular and special conferences.

No book can set your goals or determine your aspirations for your county. No book can map all the roads you must travel to reach your goals. No book can tell you everything you need to know. This book can, however, help you start taking stock of a number of things which every county official must know if he is going to be successful in helping lead the county farther than it has ever gone.

The chapters which follow outline the essentials of county government in Mississippi, from its historical and constitutional development to suggestions for reform. The appendices provide supplementary information about various aspects of the law and practice of county government and contain information about two organizations important to county government – the Mississippi Association of Supervisors and the Mississippi Public Entity Trust.

It is our hope that this book can help direct your energy and initiative toward accomplishment of the goals you have for your county. If so, the citizens of your county will be the beneficiaries.