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State appropriates funds for the CARES Act



By Guest Columnist
Mississippi
Representative
Tom Miles

The last of May we met at the Capitol to continue the debate on how we would appropriate the funds from the CARES Act.

We met in different committees to discuss small businesses, education, rural Internet, cities and counties, and unemployment. I was proud to be in the conversation in these meetings.

The first order of business on the House floor was the Small Business Relief Act. We headed back to the Capitol on the Tuesday after Memorial Day to deal with the rest of the CARES Act appropriations.

What we did pass was an historic, bipartisan \$300 million small business relief bill for businesses impacted by COVID-19. We finished our work a lit-

tle after 12 a.m., on Thursday morning. The program will provide aid to Mississippi businesses in the following ways:

Phase 1: \$60 million

All businesses with less than 50 employees who filed Mississippi state income taxes in 2018, 2019, or eligible businesses who intend to file for 2020, and who were subject to any COVID-19 related state, municipal, and/or county required business closure or voluntary closure will receive a \$2,000 relief check--no application required. Businesses covered in this phase include clothing stores, dance studios, barber shops, salons, restaurants, etc- any busi-

ness forced to close by state or local government.

Phase 2: \$240 million

All businesses with less than 50 employees who filed Mississippi state in-



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come taxes in 2018, 2019, or eligible businesses who intend to file for 2020, and suffered any interruption in busi-

nesses due to COVID-19 may apply to receive up to \$25,000 in grants to cover payroll, rent, utilities, mortgage interest payments and other eligible expenses incurred during the COVID-19 outbreak. Approved applicants under this program will receive a base payment of \$1,500 and can either (1) receive an additional \$500 per full-time equivalent employee OR (2) itemize eligible expenses on the application form.

A few notes on Phase 2

- Businesses who receive checks under Phase 1 WILL be able to apply for Phase 2 relief without restriction.
- Businesses who DID NOT receive federal PPP funds will receive priority for the first 21 days of the program. After that period, businesses who received PPP funds will be allowed to apply, with a portion of their state aid offset based on the amount of the PPP loan.

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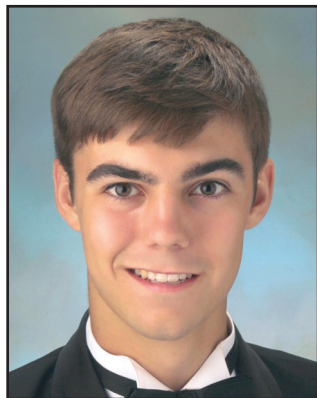
Betts named National Merit Scholarship winner

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Tyler Betts, one of East Rankin Academy (ERA)'s STAR students, was also named a National Merit Scholarship winner.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation chose 2,500 Merit Scholar designees were from a talent pool of more than 15,000 outstanding finalists in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program.

National Merit Scholarship winners are the finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The number of winners named in each state is proportional to



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Tyler Betts is both ERA's National Merit Scholarship winner and one of two STAR students. He plans to continue his education at the University of Alabama.

the state's percentage of the nation's graduating high school seniors.

These scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who appraised a substantial amount of information submitted by both the finalist and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects studied and grades earned; scores from two standardized tests; contribution and leadership in school and community activities; and an essay written by the finalist.

Following graduation, Betts plans to attend the University of Alabama. Betts is the son of Michael and Shirell Betts.

Castillo, Goldman take top PHS honors



Scarlett Suzana Ruth Castillo is the 2020 Valedictorian of the Class of 2020. She holds a GPA of 100.42. She was a member of the Beta Club and Phi Theta Kappa and plans to attend Hinds Community College to pursue a career as an NICU nurse. She is the daughter of Mike and Sue Castillo.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Sydny Naydene Goldman was named the Salutatorian of the 2020 Pelahatchie High School (PHS) senior class with a GPA of 98.79. She served as Beta president and the band's drum major. This fall, she will attend East Central Community College and be drum major for the Wall O' Sound Band. She plans to major in business. She is the daughter of Jason / Rebecca Goldman and Trish Philley.

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