

THE Bolton NEWS
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THE Bolton NEWS

M&P Bank's enduring presence in Bolton

Special to Bolton News

Merchants & Planters Bank (M&P Bank) has a longstanding history of serving the Bolton community.

Established in 1906 in Raymond, Mississippi, the bank expanded its reach by acquiring The Merchants Bank of Bolton in 1987, integrating it as M&P Bank's third location.

The Bolton branch, located at 297 West Madison Street, offers lobby hours from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and serves as a financial partner for residents and businesses in the area.

In December 2021, M&P Bank announced its acquisition of Omni-Bank, a community-based financial institution headquartered in Bay



Merchants & Planters Bank, Bolton

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Springs, Mississippi, with branches in Heidelberg and Jackson. The merger, completed in 2022, further expanded M&P Bank's footprint and enhanced its ability to serve a broader customer base.

Throughout its history, M&P Bank has demonstrated resilience and a commitment to its communities. Notably, during the Great Depression, when many banks faced closure, M&P Bank remained steadfast, underscoring its dedication to customer service and financial stability.

Today, M&P Bank continues to uphold its legacy of community-focused banking, offering personalized services to meet the diverse needs of its customers in Bolton and beyond.

Bolton's Henderson has statewide impact in disaster preparedness

Special to Bolton News

Jana N. Henderson, a native of Bolton, has dedicated over two decades of service to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), rising through the ranks to become one of the state's leading voices in disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness.

Her career at MEMA began in 2003, where she served in various roles, including administrative assistant to both the Response and Recovery Bureau director and the executive director. Her leadership and dedication eventually led to her appointment as Chief of Staff, and later as Director of the Office of Mitigation and the State of Mississippi Hazard Mitigation Officer in 2012.

MEMA officials say that Henderson has played a vital role in responding to over thirty declared disasters, including the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina, and that her expertise in planning and recovery has helped guide Mississippi communities through some of their most challenging times.



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An alumna of Belhaven University, Henderson holds both a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in business management. She is also a Certified Floodplain Manager and is furthering her studies in the legal field with coursework in paralegal studies.

In addition to her work at MEMA, Henderson is an adjunct professor at Tougaloo College, contributing to the Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence-Education Project within the sociology and social work department. She also serves as treasurer for the Association of State Floodplain Managers and is a board member of the Association of Floodplain Managers of Mississippi.

She has testified before the U.S. Senate on critical issues such as mitigation, resiliency and flood insurance—bringing particular attention to the needs of rural communities like her hometown of Bolton. MEMA leadership says her work continues to reflect a strong commitment to making Mississippi, and Bolton in particular, stronger and more resilient in the face of future disasters.

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Powering Progress: Soul City Solar Energizes 11 Hinds County Organizations with Grant Awards

HINDS COUNTY, Miss. — In a show of support for community-driven progress, Soul City Solar has awarded over \$70,000 in grants to 11 local organizations advancing education, environmental sustainability, and health and safety across Hinds County.

The funding, part of Apex Clean Energy's commitment to powering better communities through the Soul City Solar Community Grant Program, will support initiatives that create lasting, community-driven impact.

"These organizations are among the many that represent the heartbeat of Hinds County," said Chris Hawk, Development Manager at Apex Clean Energy. "They're showing up every day to teach kids, care for neighbors, protect the environment, and create brighter futures. It means a lot to us at Apex to support that kind of work through the Soul City Solar Community Grant Program. It's about being a good neighbor and standing alongside the people who make this community strong."

The Hinds County Public School District Foundation received a grant to support their teacher and staff retention initiatives, as well as supporting student academic success through recognition programs and community engagement.

"Thanks to Soul City Solar's generous support, we're able to provide vital resources to all 10 schools in our district and celebrate the dedication of our teachers and staff," said Tonie Crisler, Director of the Hinds County Public School District Foundation. "This grant helps us uplift and retain the educators who are shaping the future of Hinds County."



The Mississippi Food Network's Backpack Program received a grant to provide weekend meal kits for food-insecure children to ensure reliable nutrition throughout the school year.



"The Mississippi Food Network is incredibly grateful to Soul City Solar for supporting our Child Feeding Backpack Program," said Allison Arnold, Program Manager. "This funding helps us provide weekend and holiday meal kits to children facing food insecurity, giving them the nutrition they need to learn, grow, and thrive throughout the school year. Thanks to Soul City Solar's generosity, hunger won't stand in the way of their success."



Other grant recipients include:

- **Boy Scouts of America Troop 1475G:** Updating camping equipment and providing scholarships to make scouting experiences accessible to more youth.
- **Fondren Renaissance Foundation:** Creating a drainage system for a new outdoor classroom at Boyd Elementary, providing a safe space for hands-on learning by Fall 2025.
- **Jackson Medical Mall Foundation – Young Futurists Project:** Funding trainers, supplies, and enrichment activities preparing youth for success in STEAM fields, leadership, and wellness.
- **Jackson State University Blackburn Learning Garden:** Expansion of sustainable farming program, increasing access to fresh food and creating new educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Mississippi State University Extension Services** will advance sustainability education across Hinds County through their Sustainable Communities Program, thanks to the new funding.
- **New Vineyard Community Development Center:** Launching the STEM Squad Innovators program, combining STEM education, mentorship, and career exploration.
- **Operation Shoestring:** Sustaining afterschool, summer, and parent programs that drive academic achievement, strengthen families, and build community resilience.
- **Sowing Seeds for Success:** Offering internet access, emergency supplies, food, and year-round enrichment programs for families and students.
- **St. Thomas M.B. Church:** Supporting building upgrades to create a safer, more welcoming space for community activities.

Counting these latest awards, Soul City Solar has provided more than \$200,000 in funding to support community organizations throughout Hinds County. Nationally, Apex Clean Energy has distributed over \$5.6 million through the program since 2017 to support more than 426 organizations, with an average grant of \$3,000 fueling local initiatives across the country.

About Soul City Solar

Soul City Solar, a project of Apex Clean Energy, is a clean energy economic opportunity for Hinds County, representing private investment of more than \$700 million. The solar energy project will benefit the Hinds County economy by creating 400 construction jobs, including significant spending with local and regional contractors. Soul City Solar also provides a new source of income for area farmers and landowners and is expected to generate over \$150 million in new property tax revenue for Hinds County, making it one of the county's largest taxpayers.

For more information about the Soul City Solar project and updates on the Community Grant Program's upcoming fall cycle, visit www.soulcitysolarpower.com.