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Group discusses growth, road system ties

ROSE PENDLETON

American Staff Writer rnpendleton@hattiesburgamerican.com

Stressing the relationship between good roads and economic growth, members of the American Council of Engineering Companies in Jackson held its biennial legislative breakfast Wednesday at Lake Terrace Convention Center.

"You can't have good economic growth without great road systems," said Judy Adams, commissioner of the American Council of Engineering Companies. The council designs roads, bridges and clean and wastewater facilities.

"Right after Hurricane Katrina, my group was out there, trying to get things back up and running and helping out their customers before handling their own homes," Adams said.

About 75 attended the breakfast including elected officials from 12 counties - including Simpson and Lincoln counties - to learn the status of Mississippi's transportation system.

"It's always good to collectively hear stateside about our bridges and roads," said Hattiesburg Mayor Johnny DuPree. "I appreciate them bringing together engineers and officials so we can hear their vision of the future of Mississippi's transportation system."

Wayne Brown, Mississippi Department of Transportation commissioner of the Southern District, spoke of a study to improve U.S. 49 from the Gulf Coast to Jackson.

"While Mississippi has lower taxes, I know of no highway out of the southern district of Mississippi where you drive to an adjacent state and the roads get better," Brown said. "We're going to maintain what we have, but we're going to see less road building."

J. Brooks Miller Sr., from the Office of State Aid Road Construction, stressed that State Aid's existence is to assist cities and counties with roads and bridges, but were not responsible parties.

Adams also advised county and municipal entities to hire engineers based on qualifications, not on price.
