

# SECTION 3

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

This section of the Plan provides a general overview of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) District 6 Region. It consists of the following four subsections:

- ❖ 3.1 Geography and the Environment
- ❖ 3.2 Population and Demographics
- ❖ 3.3 Housing, Infrastructure, and Land Use
- ❖ 3.4 Employment and Industry

The county-specific annexes provide more detailed community profile information about each county.

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### 3.1 GEOGRAPHY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The MEMA District 6 Region was named based on the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency districts lines and is one of nine MEMA regions throughout the state. The Region is located in the central eastern portion of the state. It is bounded by the Mississippi/Alabama State Line to the east. Interstate 20 runs east to west through the region, passing through Lauderdale, Newton, and Scott Counties. Interstate 59 runs north to south, passing through Clarke, Lauderdale, and Jasper Counties. The MEMA District 6 Region includes the counties of Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, and Smith. An orientation map is provided as **Figure 3.1**.

The MEMA District 6 Region encompasses various higher learning facilities such as East Mississippi Community College, Meridian Community College, University of Southern Mississippi School of Nursing, and Mississippi State University Meridian Campus. Naval Air Station Meridian Extension is located within the MEMA District 6 Region offering a training facility for East Mississippi Community College. The Pearl River Resort is located in Neshoba County and contains two casinos, golf course, waterpark, and spa. Roosevelt Park in Scott County is a state park along the western edge of Beinville National Forest in parts of Jasper, Newton, Scott, and Smith Counties. Many historic sites are located throughout the MEMA District 6 Region attracting historic enthusiasts from around the country.

The total area of each of the participating counties is presented in **Table 3.1**.

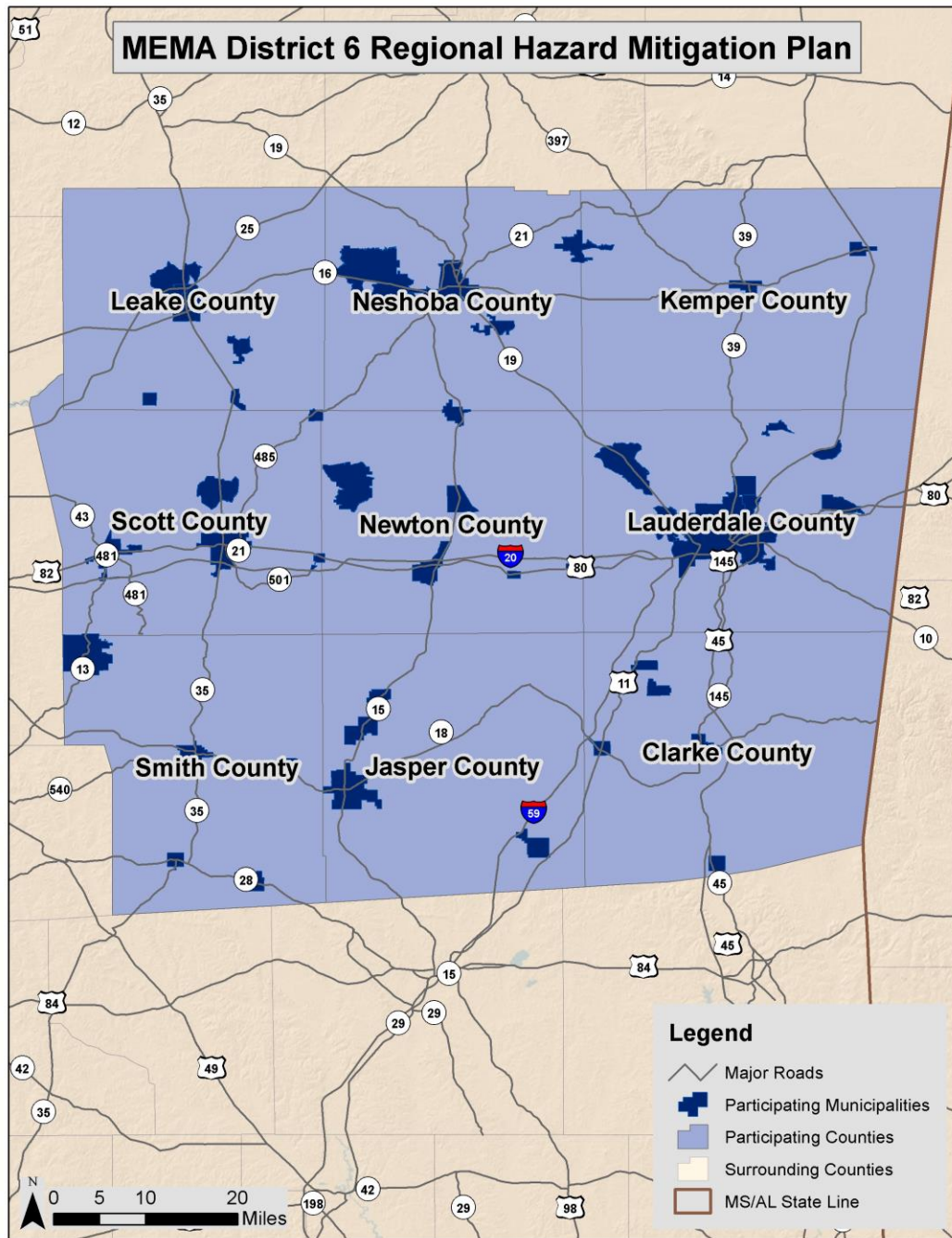
**TABLE 3.1: TOTAL AREA OF PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

County	Land Area (sq. mi.)	Water Area (sq. mi.)	Total Area (sq. mi.)
Clarke County	692	2	694
Jasper County	676	1	677
Kemper County	766	1	767
Lauderdale County	704	11	715
Leake County	583	2	585
Neshoba County	570	2	572
Newton County	578	2	580
Scott County	609	1	610
Smith County	636	1	637

Source: United States Census Bureau

The MEMA District 6 Region enjoys four distinct seasons but the climate in the region is generally hot and humid compared to the rest of the United States given its latitude and relative proximity to the Gulf Coast. Precipitation is generally highest in winter months when the temperatures are moderately lower, but the likelihood of precipitation remains relatively constant throughout the year. Summers in the region can become fairly hot with average highs in the nineties and lows in the seventies. The region is also often susceptible to turbulent weather when warm, wet air from the Gulf of Mexico is pushed up into the region to mix with cooler air coming down from across the continent which can result in severe weather conditions. This is particularly true in the spring when seasons are changing and diverse weather patterns interact.

FIGURE 3.1: MEMA DISTRICT 6 REGION ORIENTATION MAP



### 3.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Lauderdale County is the largest participating county by area and has the largest population within the MEMA District 6 Region. Between 2000 and 2010, some of participating jurisdictions experienced population decline and some experience population growth. Leake County had the largest population growth at 13.7 percent while Clarke County had the largest population decline at -6.8 percent, followed

closing by Jasper County (-6.0 percent). Population counts from the U.S. Census Bureau for 1990, 2000, and 2010 for each of the participating counties and jurisdictions are presented in **Table 3.2**.

**TABLE 3.2: POPULATION COUNTS FOR PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

Jurisdiction	1990 Census Population	2000 Census Population	2010 Census Population	% Change 2000-2010
Clarke County	17,313	17,955	16,732	-6.8%
Jasper County	17,114	18,149	17,062	-6.0%
Kemper County	10,356	10,453	10,456	0.0%
Lauderdale County	75,555	78,161	80,261	2.7%
Leake County	18,436	20,940	23,805	13.7%
Neshoba County	24,800	28,684	29,676	3.5%
Newton County	20,291	21,838	21,720	-0.5%
Scott County	24,137	28,423	28,264	-0.6%
Smith County	14,798	16,182	16,491	1.9%

Source: United States Census Bureau

Based on the 2010 Census, the median age for residents of the participating counties ranges from 33 to 41 years with an average of 37 years old. The racial characteristics of the participating counties are presented in **Table 3.3**. Generally, whites make up the majority of the population in the region; however, there is a substantial black population in every county that represents the majority in some cases.

**TABLE 3.3: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

Jurisdiction	White, Percent (2010)	Black or African American, Percent (2010)	American Indian or Alaska Native, Percent (2010)	Asian, Percent (2010)	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Percent (2010)	Other Race, Percent (2010)	Two or More Races, percent (2010)	Persons of Hispanic Origin, Percent (2010)*
Clarke County	64.2%	34.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%
Jasper County	46.3%	52.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
Kemper County	35.3%	60.1%	3.7%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.7%	0.5%
Lauderdale County	54.8%	42.8%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%	1.8%
Leake County	49.5%	40.6%	6.0%	0.2%	0.0%	2.8%	0.8%	4.3%
Neshoba County	60.6%	20.9%	16.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	1.4%	1.6%
Newton County	63.2%	30.2%	5.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	1.3%
Scott County	53.3%	37.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	7.2%	1.4%	10.7%
Smith County	75.8%	22.9%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	1.2%

\*Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

Source: *United States Census Bureau*

### 3.3 HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LAND USE

#### 3.3.1 Housing

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are 105,360 housing units in the MEMA District 6 Region, most of which are single family homes. Housing information for the ten participating counties is presented in **Table 3.4**. As shown in the table, most counties have a very high percentage of seasonal housing units.

**TABLE 3.4: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

Jurisdiction	Housing Units (2000)	Housing Units (2010)	Seasonal Units, Percent (2010)	Median Home Value (2009-2013)
Clarke County	8,100	7,876	14.9%	\$59,900
Jasper County	7,671	8,212	33.0%	\$72,700
Kemper County	4,533	4,722	26.9%	\$65,500
Lauderdale County	33,418	34,698	8.5%	\$87,400
Leake County	8,585	9,415	14.9%	\$73,800
Neshoba County	11,980	12,357	15.7%	\$75,900
Newton County	9,259	9,373	10.4%	\$72,100
Scott County	11,116	11,470	17.4%	\$68,600
Smith County	7,005	7,237	15.8%	\$77,600

Source: *United States Census Bureau*

#### 3.3.2 Infrastructure

##### TRANSPORTATION

There are several major thoroughfares that traverse the MEMA District 6 Region. Interstate 20 runs east-west through Lauderdale, Newton, and Scott Counties connecting multiple towns in these counties to Meridian, Jackson, and into Alabama. Interstate 59 runs north to south, passing through Clarke, Lauderdale, and Jasper Counties, allowing transportation to and from the City of Meridian to multiple towns including those in southern Mississippi, such as Hattiesburg. U.S. Highway 11 runs roughly north-south through Clarke, Lauderdale, and Jasper Counties. U.S. Highway 45 is a north-south highway from the MEMA District 6 Region to the Gulf of Mexico through Clarke, Kemper, and Lauderdale Counties. Within Lauderdale, Newton, and Scott Counties, U.S. Highway 80 connects towns east-west throughout the state and into Alabama and Louisiana. Several other State Highways run through the region, connecting many of the towns to each other and municipalities outside the region. In addition, the Natchez Trace Parkway runs through Leake County. The Natchez Trace Parkway is a National Parkway that is highly regarded for its scenic views, hiking trails, picnic areas, camp sites, and exhibits.

There are several small general aviation airports within the MEMA District 6 Region, including one in nearly every county. Naval Air Station Meridian is a military airport northeast of the City of Meridian in Lauderdale County. It is one of the U.S. Navy's two jet strike pilot training facilities which supports aviation and technical training. The closest major airport used by residents located in nearby counties

includes Jackson-Evers International Airport, which offers international and domestic flights to a number of locations around the world.

### **UTILITIES**

Electric power in the MEMA District 6 Region is provided by several electricity cooperatives. East Mississippi Electric Power Association serves Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, and Lauderdale Counties. Mississippi Power Company provides power to Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Newton, and Smith Counties, as well as several other nearby counties. Southern Pine Electric Power provides service to many counties in the region including Jasper, Kemper, Newton, Scott, and Smith Counties. Leake, Neshoba, Scott, and Smith also receive service from Central Electric Power Association. Additionally, Entergy supplies some service to some residents in Leake County.

Water and sewer service is provided by all of the participating towns, but unincorporated areas often rely on septic systems and wells in the MEMA District 6 Region.

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

There are a number of public buildings and community facilities located throughout the MEMA District 6 Region. According to the data collected for the vulnerability assessment (Section 6.4.1), there are 47 fire stations, 36 police stations, 14 medical care facilities, and 103 schools located within the study area.

Nine hospitals are located in the MEMA District 6 Region. The largest is the Anderson Regional Medical Center, a 260-bed regional medical and surgical hospital located in Meridian. The Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian is another major 215-bed hospital in the region, as is the Alliance Health Center in Meridian with 154 beds. There are also several additional medical care facilities located throughout the region as outlined in the vulnerability assessment (Section 6.4.1).

The MEMA District 6 Region contains numerous local, state, and national parks and recreation areas, including the Beinville National Forest and Natchez Trace Parkway. These facilities offer recreational opportunities to area residents and hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

### **3.3.3 Land Use**

Many areas of the MEMA District 6 Region are undeveloped or sparsely developed. As shown in **Figure 3.1** above, there are many small incorporated municipalities located throughout the study area, with a few larger hubs interspersed. These areas are where the region's population is generally concentrated. The incorporated areas are also where many of the businesses, commercial uses, and institutional uses are located. Land uses in the balance of the study area generally consist of rural residential development, agricultural uses, and recreational areas, although there are some notable exceptions in the larger municipalities.

Local land use and associated regulations are further discussed in *Section 7: Capability Assessment*.

### 3.4 EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY

Like many other parts of Mississippi, the MEMA District 6 Region's economy has traditionally been heavily reliant on the manufacturing industries. However, the region has suffered from numerous plant closings during the 1990s and 2000s. As a result, many of the communities are now working to develop other economic categories such as wholesale/retail trade which has experienced growth within the MEMA District 6 Region. Education, educational services, and health care remain growth economies due to the prevalence of various higher learning establishments and health care facilities within the MEMA District 6 Region. Although jobs have decreased, manufacturing continues to play a major role in the local economy and provide jobs for residents throughout the region.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2013, Clarke County had an average annual employment of 7,077 workers and an average unemployment rate of 7.0 percent (compared to 9.2 percent for the state). In 2013, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance Industry employed 25.3 percent of the county's workforce followed by Manufacturing (12.5%); Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (10.2%); and Retail Trade (10.2%). The average annual wage in 2013 for Clarke County was \$45,175 compared to \$39,031 in the state of Mississippi.

In 2013, Jasper County had an average annual employment of 6,959 workers and an average unemployment rate of 3.8 percent. According to the ASC, in 2013, the Manufacturing industry employed the most people, with 29.1 percent of the workforce, followed by Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance (22.9%); Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (7.7%); and Construction (6.9%). The average annual wage in Jasper County was \$43,376.

Kemper County had an average annual employment of 4,117 workers and an average unemployment rate of 7.6 percent in 2013. According to the ACS, in 2013, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry employed 24.9 percent of the workforce followed by Construction (11.8%) and Manufacturing (10.6%). The average annual wage in Kemper County was \$37,377.

In 2013, Lauderdale County had an average annual employment of 4,117 workers and an average unemployment rate of 7.6 percent. In 2013, according to the ACS, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry employed 24.9 percent of the workforce. Construction was the second largest industry, employing 11.8 percent of workers, and Manufacturing followed closely behind (10.6%). The average annual wage in Clay County was \$54,754.

Leake County had an average annual employment of 9,120 workers and an average unemployment rate of 5.8 percent in 2013. According to the ACS, in 2013, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry employed 22.0 percent of the workforce followed by Manufacturing (18.4%) and Retail Trade (10.3%). The average annual wage in Leake County was \$47,712.

In 2013, Neshoba County had an average annual employment of 13,608 workers and an average unemployment rate of 7.7 percent. According to the ACS, in 2013, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry employed the most people, with 23.4 percent of the workforce, followed by Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services (18.8%) and Retail Trade (10.9%). The average annual wage in Neshoba County was \$55,087.

In 2013, Newton County had an average annual employment of 9,380 workers and average unemployment rate of 4.7 percent. In 2013, according to the ACS, the Educational Services, Health Care,

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and Social Assistance industry employed 29.5 percent of the workforce. Manufacturing was the second largest industry, employing 14.0 percent of workers, and Retail Trade followed behind (10.0%). The average annual wage in Newton County was \$50,114.

Scott County had an average annual employment of 12,739 workers and an average unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in 2013. According to the ACS, in 2013, the Manufacturing industry employed 30.0 percent of the workforce followed by Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance (16.6%). The average annual wage in Scott County was \$46,595.

In 2013, Smith County had an average annual employment of 6,805 workers and an average unemployment rate of 3.8 percent. In 2013, according to the ACS, the Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry employed 22.1 percent of the workforce. Manufacturing was the second largest industry, employing 18.0 percent of workers, Construction (9.4%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining followed behind (8.0%). The average annual wage in Smith County was \$51,871.