

**PEARL RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**NEWS & INFORMATION**  
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## Digital technology is changing how things are done

POPLARVILLE - Communities that thrive in the digital age will be doing business in new ways. Dr. Roberto Gallardo, director of the Mississippi Extension Service Intelligent Communities Institute at Mississippi State University, brought that message to the Poplarville Chamber of Commerce during a Lunch and Learn session Nov. 4 at Pearl River Community College.

The digital age remains something of a blank canvas, he said.

"It's just the beginning," Gallardo said. "We don't know what's in store."

The use of mobile devices for communication, internet access, shopping, healthcare and a wide variety of uses has overtaken traditional desktop computer use, forcing businesses and governments to understand the challenges of digital usage and to take steps to encompass it, he said.

"It's critical for your business to be mobile-friendly," he said. "Folks, you're at the dawn of the second machine age. We have to make efforts to bring those who can't understand or afford the technology into the fold."

The Intelligent Communities Institute is a resource available to communities throughout the state.

"This is the beginning of a program where we can help you assess yourself and plan," Gallardo said.

Chamber members also heard from Ya'Frica Edwards, resource development director for the United Way of South Mississippi which serves Pearl River, Stone, Harrison and Hancock counties.

Following a needs assessment program, United Way is focusing its efforts on education, putting \$800,000 into early childhood and third-grade reading programs.

"We have put a stake in the ground that this is important to us," she said. "Hopefully, we're engaging parents in how to educate their children."

United Way also participates in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the Familywize prescription discount card and free tax preparation programs, raised \$1.1 million in 2013 for its work and recorded 46,682 volunteer hours.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Carolyn Tedford of the Poplarville Women's Club presented a \$331 donation to the Poplarville Excel by 5 fund.

Photos:



Above: Dr. Roberto Gallardo talks about digital communities at the Poplarville Chamber of Commerce.

Below: Resource development director Ya'Frica Edwards tells Poplarville Chamber of Commerce members about the work of the United Way of South Mississippi.



Below: Carolyn Tedford, center, presents a donation from the Poplarville Women's Club for Excel by 5 to Ernie Lovell, executive director of the PRCC Development Foundation which is the financial agent for Excel by 5. With them are, from left, Byron Wells, Excel by 5 steering committee chair; Mayor Brad Necaie and Dr. William Lewis, president of Pearl River Community College.



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