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Media Contact:

Brittany Martin

601-359-2701

brittany.martin@mspb.ms.gov

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GOVERNOR PHIL BRYANT PRESENTS EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT AWARDS**

Jackson, Miss. (May 27, 2015) – Today, Governor Phil Bryant presented the Excellence in State Government Award to the Mississippi Development Authority Disaster Recovery Division and the Excellence in Local and District Government Award to Don Buffum of Mississippi State University in recognition of excellence and innovation in public service.

The Mississippi State Personnel Board was authorized by the Mississippi Legislature to establish the Excellence in Government Awards program, and the inaugural award was given in 2012 to encourage the development of innovative systems of public administration.

MSPB Executive Director Deanne Mosley said, “The Mississippi Development Authority Disaster Recovery Division and Don Buffum have demonstrated a commitment to innovation, efficiency, and financial accountability. MSPB is honored to join Governor Bryant in recognizing their outstanding efforts to serve our State with excellence.”

The recipient of the Excellence in State Government Award is the Mississippi Development Authority Disaster Recovery Division. This division administered programs and oversaw funding from the federal government for Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. After Hurricane Katrina, MDA was the recipient of \$5.4 billion in recovery aid for the State. In response, MDA established the Disaster Recovery Division, an internal group of 58 employees, to administer and oversee the usage of the funds. The DRD was responsible for project management, compliance, environmental issues, fair housing, legal casework, financial assistance, and contracting. The programs developed and administered by DRD resulted in almost 40,000 repaired or restructured housing units, almost 6,000 new jobs, more than 200 restored public facilities, and new hardened water and wastewater infrastructure. The DRD has been nationally recognized as a model for best practices in disaster recovery.

Don Buffum, recipient of the Excellence in Local and District Government Award, serves as the director of procurement and contracts at Mississippi State University. Since joining MSU eight years ago, Buffum has initiated several projects to provide more value to taxpayers and MSU students

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including the development of a strategic procurement philosophy, increased use of the procurement card for efficiency, and the standardization of service contracts and contract processes. His initiatives have allowed MSU employees to focus on their primary duties while achieving faster and more efficient results in the acquisition of goods and services. With 35 years of service to the State of Mississippi, Buffum also currently serves as president of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and frequently speaks across the U.S. and Canada about the value of professional public procurement.

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