

# 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.*

### 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 east central 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 State Park in Scott County is a state park along the western edge of Bienville 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**.

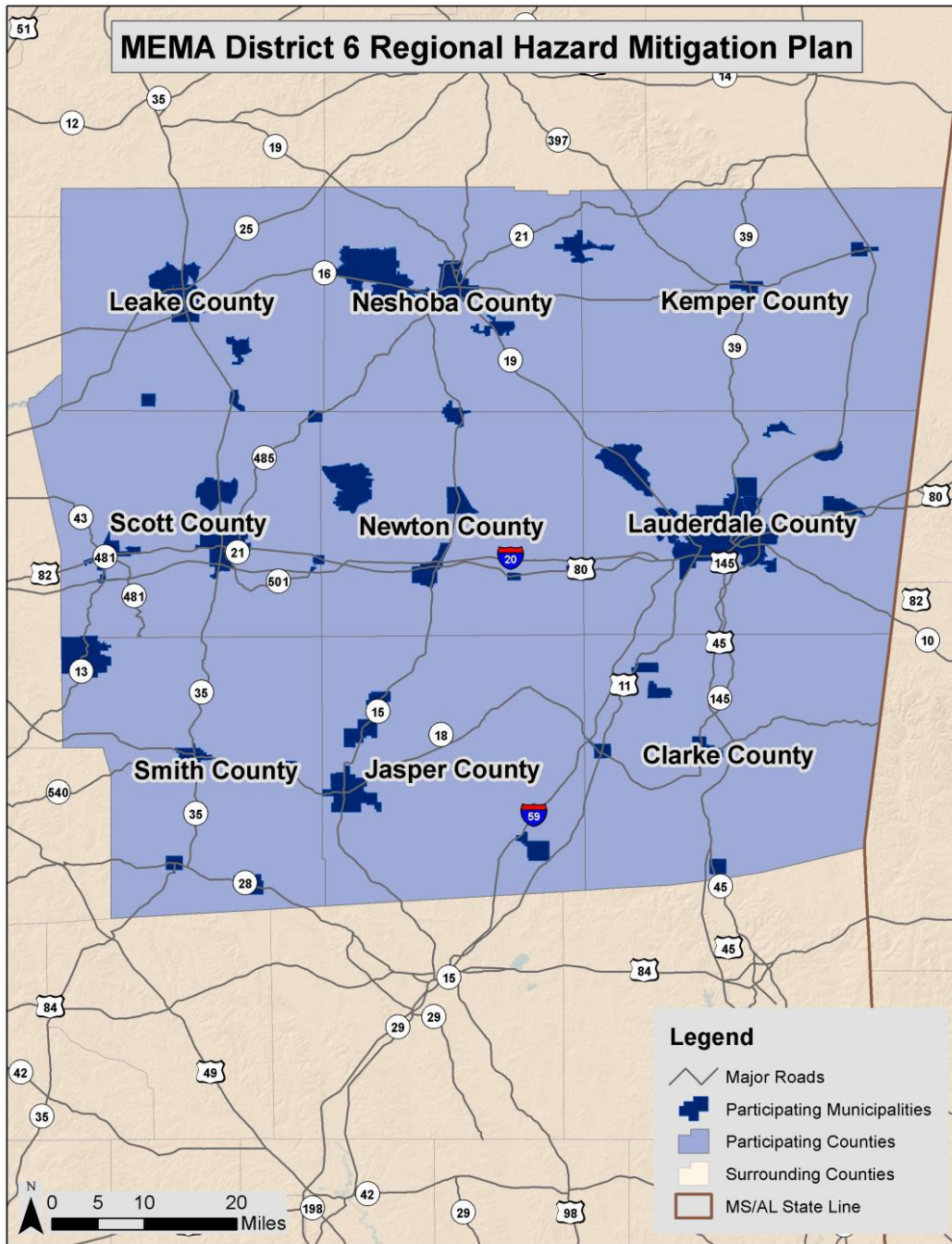
**Table 3.1: TOTAL AREA OF PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

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

While Kemper County is the largest by area, Lauderdale County is the most populous of the participating counties within the MEMA District 6 Region. Between 2010 and 2020, all of participating counties experienced population decline. Lauderdale County had the largest population decline at -7.7 percent, with Scott County having the least decline at -0.5 percent. Population counts from the U.S. Census Bureau

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

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	2020 Census Population	% Change 2010 to 2020
Clarke County	17,313	17,955	16,732	15,615	-6.7%
Jasper County	17,114	18,149	17,062	16,367	-4.0%
Kemper County	10,356	10,453	10,456	8,988	-14.0%
Lauderdale County	75,555	78,161	80,261	72,984	-9.0%
Leake County	18,436	20,940	23,805	21,275	-10.6%
Neshoba County	24,800	28,684	29,676	29,087	-1.9%
Newton County	20,291	21,838	21,720	21,291	-1.9%
Scott County	24,137	28,423	28,264	27,990	-0.9%
Smith County	14,798	16,182	16,491	14,209	-13.8%

Source: United States Census Bureau

Based on 2020 Census data, the median age for residents of the participating counties ranges from 33 to 42 years with a mean age of 34 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, and represents the majority in the counties of Kemper and Jasper.

**Table 3.3: Demographics of participating counties**

Jurisdiction	White alone %	Black or African American alone %	American Indian or Alaska Native alone %	Asian alone %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone %	Two or more races %	Hispanic or Latino ** %
Clarke County	63.8%	34.7%	0.5%	0.2%	Z*	0.7%	1.1%
Jasper County	45.5%	53.2%	0.3%	0.1%	Z*	0.8%	1.4%
Kemper County	34.1%	61.4%	3.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.8%	0.9%
Lauderdale County	53.6%	44.2%	0.3%	0.8%	Z*	1.1%	2.3%
Leake County	49.4%	42.1%	6.8%	0.5%	Z*	1.1%	1.9%
Neshoba County	58.5%	21.3%	17.5%	0.4%	0.1%	1.9%	2.2%
Newton County	61.6%	31.2%	5.6%	0.5%	Z*	1.1%	2.0%
Scott County	58.2%	36.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	1.5%	11.9%
Smith County	75.3%	23.7%	0.2%	0.1%	Z*	0.7%	1.8%

\*Z Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown.

\*\* \*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 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates, there are 107,777 housing units in the MEMA District 6 Region, most of which are single family homes. Housing information for the nine participating counties is presented in **Table 3.4**.

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

Jurisdiction	Housing Units 2019	Owner-occupied housing unit rate %	Median value of owner-occupied housing unit 2015-2019
Clarke County	8,057	83.9%	\$84,900
Jasper County	8,490	85%	\$79,000
Kemper County	4,795	73.6%	\$73,600
Lauderdale County	35,399	64.5%	\$96,300
Leake County	9,622	70.8%	\$83,300
Neshoba County	12,598	71.5%	\$83,000
Newton County	9,567	77.2%	\$85,600
Scott County	11,810	74.1%	\$71,300
Smith County	7,439	83%	\$102,600

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.

## SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 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, and they also provide high-speed fiber-to-the-home broadband internet through East Mississippi Connect. 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, and they too are in the process of providing high-speed fiber-to-the-home broadband internet through TEC Fiber Internet. 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.

### Internet

Currently ranked 42nd in the USA, Mississippi is among the top ten worst states in the nation when it comes to state broadband access according to Broadband Now. This is in part due to the relatively low statewide average download speed of 84.5 Mbps and the fact that over 16% percent of the population remains without access to a high-speed wired broadband connection of 25 Mbps or faster. That being said, 39.9% of Mississippians have access to fiber-optic service, which is significantly higher than the national average of 25% of consumers who have access to the same in part due to electrical utilities offering fiber-to-the-home broadband internet. In the MEMA District 6 Region Kemper County has the lowest percentage of broadband coverage at 41%, while Lauderdale County has an estimated coverage of 86.7%.

### 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 129 fire – rescue stations, 48 police stations, 18 medical care facilities, and 111 schools located within the study area.

The largest hospital located in MEMA District 6 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.

The MEMA District 6 Region contains numerous local, state, and national parks and recreation areas, including the Bienville 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 nine-county area, with a few larger hubs interspersed. These areas are where the region’s population is generally

## SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

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 In Clarke County, 50.6 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 45.6 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 77.4 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.0 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 5.1 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business with 31.8% employed in educational services, and health care and social assistance.

In Jasper County, 48.6 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 48.5 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 80.7 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 14.8 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 4.4 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. Manufacturing jobs accounted for 25% of the jobs, while educational services, and health care and social assistance made up 24.7%.

In Kemper County, 39.2 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 56.2 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 63.4 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 30.2 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 6.4 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. Educational services, and health care and social assistance jobs made up 24.9% while manufacturing accounted for 22%.

In Lauderdale County, Mississippi, 51.7 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 43.7 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 76.9 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.9 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 4.8 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. Educational services, and health care and social assistance jobs accounted for 30.3%.

In Leake County, 48.6 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 46.8 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 75.0 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.4 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 7.5 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. Manufacturing accounted for 20.4% while educational services, and health care and social assistance jobs made up 19.3%.

### SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

In Neshoba County, 51.4 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 42.7 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 65.8 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 28.1 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 5.8 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. The largest employment sector is educational services, and health care and social assistance at 29.7%.

In Newton County, 48.5 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 48.5 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 72.6 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 21.3 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 5.8 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business with 29.7% employed in the educational services, and health care and social assistance industry.

In Scott County, Mississippi, 51.8 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 44.3 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 81.1 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 10.9 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 7.8 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business with 29.4% employed in the manufacturing industry.

In Smith County, Mississippi, 49.3 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 48.5 percent were not currently in the labor force. An estimated 73.1 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.9 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 8.4 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business. Manufacturing accounted for 22.2% while educational services, and health care and social assistance jobs made up 22.3%.