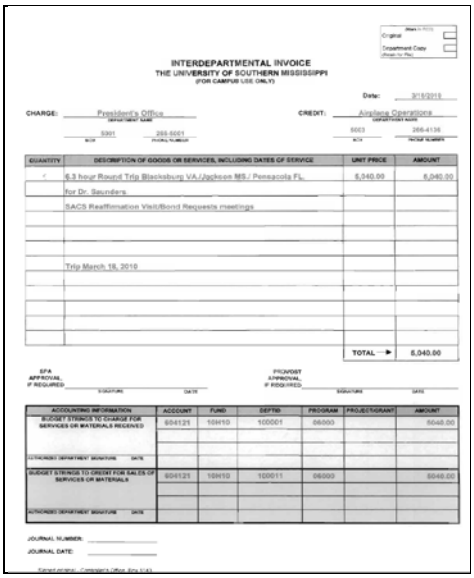
Aunt Martha's Extravagance

Part 7 – Sneaking in a Beach Trip?

Via a Mississippi Open Records Act request, USMNEWS.net recently obtained a large batch of documents from USM relating to USM president Martha Saunders' university aircraft. This series, *Aunt Martha's Extravagance*, provides analysis of these documents. This installment examines the 18-March-2010 trip in the USM airplane taken by Saunders to make a "SACS Reaffirmation Visit" and to attend "Bond Request meetings." That invoice is inserted below, and it indicates that USM charged itself $5,040 for Saunders to take this recent trip.



INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
(FOR CAMPUS USE ONLY)

Original
Department Copy

Date: 3/19/2010

CHARGE: President's Office (DEPARTMENT NAME) — 5301 (BCS) — 266-5001 (PHONE NUMBER)

CREDIT: Airplane Operations (DEPARTMENT NAME) — 5003 (BCS) — 266-4136 (PHONE NUMBER)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	6.3 hour Round Trip Blacksburg VA./Jackson MS./ Pensacola FL.	5,040.00	5,040.00
	for Dr. Saunders.		
	SACS Reaffirmation Visit/Bond Requests meetings		
	Trip March 18, 2010		
		TOTAL →	5,040.00

SFA APPROVAL IF REQUIRED: SIGNATURE / DATE

PROVOST APPROVAL IF REQUIRED: SIGNATURE / DATE

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPTID	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STRINGS TO CHARGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	604121	10H10	100001	06000		5040.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE / DATE						
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604121	10H10	100011	06000		5040.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE / DATE						

JOURNAL NUMBER:

JOURNAL DATE:

One would expect that a bond request meeting would occur in Jackson, MS. Indeed, the invoice above notes that one leg of Saunders' trip was to Jackson. Another leg was to Blacksburg, VA, which one would believe to be the location of the SACS reaffirmation visit. Why, then, was there a third leg of the trip? There was – as the invoice notes that Saunders and the plane stopped off in Pensacola, FL. Of course, long-time readers of USMNEWS.net will recall that one of Saunders' favorite places is her vacation home near Pensacola Beach (see insert below).

The idea that Saunders may have used USM resources for *personal benefit* – to perhaps "stop by" her beach house using "USM Air" – is not surprising to many long-time readers. One has only to revisit the USMNEWS.net Archives for a page of reports about former SoA director James Crockett's taxpayer-subsidized family vacations to see how some USM administrators treat their access to government coffers.