ARTHUR JOHNSTON
MADISON COUNTY CHANCERY CLERK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2006

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Canton, MS – Madison County Chancery Clerk Arthur Johnston today announced the completion of a series of substantial improvements to the county's web site including the ability to search, view and print land record filings from the mid-1990s to the present and the ability to search records by legal description, a feature never before available from the county online.

"Thanks to the support of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, the hard work of my staff, and the tremendous effort of our vendor and webhost, U. S. Networx, Inc. of Jackson, we now have a search tool that is a first class product," Johnston said. "Our citizens have demanded – and they certainly deserve – easily accessible public records," he added, "and with these new website improvements, we are responding to their demands and we are setting an example for the rest of the state in the process." The new web service is available free of charge.

In conjunction with the new web site improvements, Johnston also announced that his office has completed two phases of a seven phase "back-scanning" process which will ultimately mean that all county land records dating back to 1975 will be available online by December, 2007. The Mississippi based company LMI, Inc. has undertaken that project and has already scanned almost 600,000 pages of instruments, comprising more than 820 record books. "The unique and phased-in structure of our contract with LMI means that this project will be completed by the end of this term of office **with no budgetary increase** and at no additional cost to citizens," Johnston said.

As an added benefit of the new features, county records are being preserved and stored in yet another off-site location, providing additional backup in the event of a disaster or system failure.

Late last year, at the request of all county-wide elected officials, supervisors established a county technology advisory committee, chaired by Tax Assessor Gerald Barber, to oversee the county's website and assist in the establishment of priorities in areas of technology. Shortly thereafter, Barber and Tax Collector Kay Pace announced substantial improvements in their web pages, including the ability to pay car tags and property taxes online and the ability to access current year's assessment roll and view tax parcel maps.

Johnston's new features as well as those of Barber and Pace – and many others including the ability to search the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors – may be accessed by logging on to the county's website at www.madison-co.com and clicking on "Online Services."

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