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A senior vice president at Regions Insurance Inc., Billy Painter received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in accounting from the Millsaps College Else School of Management in 1992. Upon graduation, he went to work for a construction-specific CPA firm. Painter then continued his education, earning a Master of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in sales and marketing from Millsaps in 1998.

"I have been working in the construction industry my entire career, in one capacity or another," said Painter. "I immediately fell in love with the industry and the people and knew this was the field for me. It was a natural progression to move from construction accounting to the bonding aspect of the business."

Painter joined Barksdale Bonding and Insurance Inc. in 1997 as a producer specializing in construction insurance and surety bonding. He became a principal of the organization in 2002. In 2008, the independent agency sold to Regions Financial, and the name changed to Regions Insurance Inc.

Painter's accounting background, along with his understanding of and experience with financial statements, provides a tremendous benefit to

his customers. The cyclical nature of the construction industry means good times come and go, but the ability to maintain surety credit and the capacity needed to pursue work remains constant. Painter has found that relationships, trust and communication are critically important in this process.

"Most of my customers have become close family friends," Painter said. "For me, this isn't a job; it's a lifestyle."

Heavily involved in the construction industry, Painter has served or is currently serving on various boards and committees, including the Road Builders Association (MRBA); the Asphalt Pavement Association (MAPA); Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC); Associated General Contractors (AGC); the American Subcontractors Association (ASA); the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA); and the National Association of Surety Bond Producers (NASBP).

Painter believes in the importance of educating the public about the construction industry and sits on the board of the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation (MCEF), whose mission is to promote careers, recruit students and help train a quality workforce for the construction

industry in the state of Mississippi.

"I want to help kids," said Painter, who with his wife, Regan, has three children of his own: Ivy, Millicent and Blake.

"The average age of construction workers is approximately 40," he said. "And many current workers are getting ready to retire. Today, for every four people who leave the trade, only one newly trained person is supplied by apprenticeship programs."

Therefore, Painter believes it's important to try to steer people in the direction of construction at an early age.

"We need to continue to educate the public about the opportunities in the industry. Although the last several years have seen construction slow down, the economy will improve, and workers will be needed for the future growth of this great state and country."

Painter is also involved with other construction education programs in the state and has pledged to support the Mississippi State University Building Construction Science Banquet for the next five years. The annual banquet honors the senior class, and the banquet would not be possible without this support. This year's banquet will be held on May 10, 2013, at The Ritz in West Point.