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Jackson, George counties reach \$990K in United Way drive

By KAREN NELSON

GAUTIER — United Way for Jackson and George counties reached the midway point of its fall campaign to fund 22 agencies, Community Impact grants and operating expenses.

The goal this year is \$2.5 million by the close of the campaign on Nov. 5. Pledges reached \$990,000 on Thursday, thanks to major contributions from Northrop Grumman's Ingalls Shipyard, Singing River Health System and Chevron Pascagoula.

The midway event was lunch at the Gautier Convention Center with more than 200 attending. It included a celebration of the 50 years the United Way has served the area.

The agencies funded by United Way set up booths to show donors where their pledged dollars will go.

The goal of \$2.5 million is lofty, said Carolyn Moore, chief professional officer for the United Way. Last year's was \$2.3 million.

"We have a lot of unmet needs right now with the economy," Moore said.

"But we have a gracious, giving and caring community. We're looking for it to come through for us once again."

Community Impact grants are a way to meet special needs that the United Way sees in the community during the year, Moore said. One example is a pilot after-school program for children in Moss Point.

Moore said that Northrop Grumman and Chevron employee campaigns are not complete and there are still a lot of people in the community planning to give, so she is hopeful that the United Way will reach its goal.

The final event will be Nov. 5 at the Ocean Springs Civic Center.

To make a pledge, call 762-7662 or 800-762-8557.