

New Plan Will Create Better Quality of Life for All Mississippians

How does a new economic development plan affect the lives of the people of Mississippi? The Advantage Mississippi Initiative can be used as a blueprint to create more, higher paying jobs for the people of Mississippi. That means a better quality of life for all Mississippians.

Eleven years have passed since the current economic development plan was drafted in 1989. The pace of economic development growth in the United States has moved at speeds once thought to be impossible. Right here in Mississippi, we have been the beneficiaries of that expanding economy as well. But if we are to sustain that progress and expand prosperity to all of the people who live in our 82 counties, then we had to begin the time-consuming work of redefining our approach to economic growth.

We cannot wait any longer to begin moving our state forward economically. I am impatient for progress and impatient for prosperity. That is why I have called a special session of the Legislature on August 28, 2000 at 10:00 a.m. to introduce and pass The Advantage Mississippi Initiative.

This economic development plan was developed from input given by members of the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development and thousands of Mississippians and nationally recognized economic development experts. A lot of work and a tremendous number of hours have gone into the production of the plan. It is comprehensive and is inclusive of every community, city and county in the state of Mississippi. From day one, we have reached out across the state, conducting meetings and research to find out the facts and gather input for a new vision to build economic prosperity for Mississippi.

We have asked ourselves- how does Mississippi rate when it comes to comparative and competitive advantages? What will give us the edge over our sister states?

Leadership. Leadership will give us the advantage. We have set priorities for Mississippi that will give us the competitive edge we need to make the short list of major corporate entities looking to locate, while we broaden our ability to assist the expansion of existing businesses and nurture entrepreneurship.

- Creating additional quality educational, training and retaining opportunities that meet the needs of businesses.
- Improving basic infrastructure, transportation and information, to support community and capacity building
- Making state government more accessible, accountable and responsive to business & industry leaders looking to locate or expand in Mississippi
- Fostering local flexibility with greater government and public-private partnerships
- Making best use of knowledge based resources throughout Mississippi by making the 'University Connection'

- Matching Incentives and innovations with the needs of the new economy

Our solutions are comprehensive – building upon new legislation to create flexible incentives to compete in the new economy, facilitating greater coordination between state agencies and revitalizing existing programs.

The Advantage Mississippi Initiative benefits all of the people of Mississippi. It will take all of us – public and private, corporate and individual- focusing our attention on securing the basics and reaching for the best for our people, our businesses and our state.

For the first time ever, we have a common agenda. It is an agenda that places priority on economic growth and prosperity for our people.

Now the Legislature will be called into action to make sure that this administration and the private sector have the tools they need to successfully seize new and exciting challenges, and actively engage in expanding job opportunities for our people.

With your help, we can make a difference. We can make Mississippi America's State of Promise.