

Mississippi Business Journal – Nissan Special Edition
Governor Ronnie Musgrove

Over two years ago, the announcement of 4,000 new jobs from a single economic development project was made to a standing room only crowd in the state capitol in Jackson. With “one vision, one future” in mind, Mississippi and Nissan formally joined forces and began an incredible relationship.

Since that announcement on November 9, 2000, Nissan has demonstrated its confidence in Mississippi with the news that the facility located outside Canton would expand to include the production of the Altima sedan. This decision in June 2002 to invest an additional \$500 million created another 1,300 jobs for the people of Mississippi and increased the plant size to a total of 3.5 million square feet.

The vision and the future we (we spoke of) had in 2000 has quickly become reality. This month, the first vehicle will roll off the assembly line of the Nissan plant, and Mississippi’s role as a competitor and a leader in the global marketplace will be further strengthened.

The impact of this plant on our state is massive. The total investment stands at over \$1.4 billion. More than 5,300 new jobs have been created, and another 26,000 indirect jobs are being created through the Nissan suppliers locating around the state. To date, employees have been hired from 73 of Mississippi’s 82 counties.

Newly employed people from around the state are working, training and preparing for the start of full production, and it is easy to see the importance of this project in their faces. There’s a sense of pride and excitement in the air at the plant, and that pride and excitement is going to translate into quality automobiles built by a quality workforce.

These are more than just assembly line jobs. These are jobs that require strong technical skills and attention to detail. While more than 850 robots are used on the assembly line, they are programmed by hourly workers hired from around the state. It’s going to be Mississippians building the 450,000 cars a year that will eventually be rolling off the production line, and I’m proud of that fact. As a state, we should all be proud.

We were able to recruit Nissan to Mississippi because of bold, new and aggressive efforts made as part of the new Advantage Mississippi Initiative. We knew that if we wanted to compete with the best, we had to do our best. The results speak for themselves.

Companies are no longer asking, “why Mississippi?” The question now is “why not Mississippi?”

The world has seen what we’ve done with Nissan. Companies across the nation and across the globe know that *Site Selection* magazine ranked us as one of the top ten states for economic development projects. They know that *Expansion Management* magazine,

in its January 2003 issue, ranked four cities in Mississippi as among the 50 hottest cities in the nation for business expansions.

They know we've got the location, the infrastructure, and most importantly, the skilled workforce, in place to offer them exactly what they need.

The story of Nissan and Mississippi is a great one, and we look forward to a long and healthy relationship.

Welcome, Nissan. We're glad you're here.