

Mississippi Development Authority **FRIDAY FACTS**

“We must continue to dream big and work together in the public and private sectors in Mississippi. The economic development success we are experiencing is the result of being willing to roll up our collective sleeves and work on a common goal. We must always remember that nothing is beyond our grasp, only beyond our dreams.”

*--Dwight H. Evans
Co-Chairman*

Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development

RECRUITMENT FOR FIRST NISSAN JOBS BEGINS SUNDAY

Recruitment for the first jobs at the new Nissan plant, maintenance technicians begins this weekend, the Mississippi Employment Security Commission (MESC) announced today.

Notices will appear in several Mississippi newspapers Sunday for the maintenance positions. The notice can also be obtained at any of MESC offices across the state.

In order to be considered, applicants must have a minimum of five years of industrial maintenance experience or journeyman certification in the following areas:

- Industrial Electronics
- Industrial Electricity
- Industrial Machine Maintenance

OR

- Three years experience with programmable controllers, precision CNC tools and industrial troubleshooting.

Applications must be willing to attend unpaid pre-employment training in order to be considered for a position.

Listed below are some of the benefits offered by Nissan:

- Starting pay \$18.00 per hour (\$16.75 base plus a base bonus of \$1.25 per hour
- Comprehensive health benefits including medical, dental, vision, hearing, prescription drug plan and life insurance
- 14 paid holidays per year
- Paid vacations
- Retirement plan
- Vehicle purchase program

Qualified candidates should send resumes to:

Mississippi Employment Security Commission
P.O. Box 22690
Jackson, MS 39225-2690

MESC will conduct an initial screening of the maintenance worker resumes to ensure the applicants meet Nissan's minimum job qualifications, then will refer those applicants to the Nissan Human Resources Department.

ECONOMIC FORECAST CONFERENCE SCHEDULED JANUARY 16

The Community Development Foundation's Northeast Mississippi Annual Economic Forecast Committee, chaired by B.B. Hosch Jr. of AmSouth Bank has announced the selection of Robert G. Dederick, Economic Consultant to Northern Trust Corporation; David Boyer, Director/Plant Manager for Nissan in Canton, Dr. Malcolm Portera, President of Mississippi State University and Dr. Jeff Babrer, CDF Chairman, as speakers for the Economic Forecast Conference.

The Conference will be Tuesday, January 16, at the Ramada Convention Center, Tupelo, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding by 11:30 a.m.

For complimentary ticket information and reservations contact the CDF office at 662-842-4521 or 1-800-523-3463.

TEAM DELTA CONFERENCE SCHEDULED JANUARY 25 - 26

The Technology-based Economic Development Alliance (TEAM Delta) is hosting a conference, "Accessing Technology in the Delta Region", Thursday, January 25 and Friday, January 26, 2001 in Vicksburg, Mississippi at the Vicksburg Convention Center.

The conference will present information on available local, state, regional or federal resources that could assist communities for economic development. Through a variety of panel discussions, participants will learn about such topics as the new economy workforce skills imperative, bridging the digital divide, and resources to help to grow local existing businesses or start new businesses.

Registration is \$50.00 and reservations may be made by calling (601) 960-3600 or by going to www.teamdelta.org website for more information on the agenda.

NEW SBA LOAN PROGRAM CHANGES SET SIZE LIMIT FOR LOANS, ADD INCENTIVES FOR SMALLER LOANS

Recently enacted changes to the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) premier loan program strengthened the agency's array of incentives designed to encourage private sector lenders to make smaller-sized loans more readily available to small businesses.

Changes were made to SBA's three primary loan programs, the 7(a) General Business Loan Guaranty program, the 504 Certified Development Company loan program and the Microloan program.

The most significant changes were to the 7(a) program. Under SBA-supported legislation signed into law in late December, the SBA bill raises the guaranty percentage to 85 percent for loans up to \$150,000, and greatly simplifies the guaranty fee structure. Both changes will make it easier for lenders to make smaller loans under \$150,000.

"These recent changes represent an extremely positive move in terms of economic development across the nation," SBA Mississippi Director Janita Stewart said. In our state, we expect this expansion of our loan programs to increase activity for our Agency, our participating lenders, and Mississippi's small businesses. We certainly look forward to this increased activity so we may continue on our mission of supporting the formation, growth, prosperity and viability of Mississippi's small businesses."

For more information about all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA, or visit SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

HALTER MARINE WINS CONTRACT TO SUPPLY 'FAST CRAFT' TO EGYPTIAN NAVY

Halter Marine, Inc., a division of Friede Goldman Halter has won a \$500 million competitive contract to supply the Egyptian patrol craft designed and built by Halter. The vessels will be a continuation of the successful Ambassador Class Patrol Craft, previously designed and built by Halter. Lockheed Martin, a key subcontractor, will provide combat system design and integration. Construction is anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2001, in Halter's Mississippi facilities.

"We are extremely pleased that the Egyptian Navy has chosen Halter for this significant program," said John Alford, CEO of Friede Goldman Halter. "The mix between business from our commercial clients, and our domestic foreign government customers provides a foundation for the long-term growth of FGH. The Ambassador MK III FMC opens up new frontiers in Egypt, and around the world, and represents a continuation of our market penetration.

For this program, Halter Marine is partnered with America's largest defense contractor, Lockheed Martin, which will provide combat system design and integration. The contract also includes spare parts and technical services. This partnership ensures that these products will be produced with a maximum content of U.S. originated components,

ensuring that more money stays in the U.S. economy. The award is the result of months long competitive by Halter Marine and other firms in which Halter emerged the winner. This contract will join other recent Halter Marine fast missile patrol craft contracts performed for foreign armed forces including Mexico, Venezuela, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and the Bahamas.

Briefly –

Viking Range, a Mississippi based company located in Greenwood was recently featured in the Export Bank's 2000 Annual Report. Viking Range Corporation was recognized in the report for utilizing Export Import Banks short-term export credit insurance program. This popular appliance company, famous for its high-end kitchen appliances, exported its products to countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Belgium with the help of Ex-Im Bank's short-term credit insurance in FY2000.

"The Ex-Im Bank insurance has been an asset to our company because it gives us a confront level of protection that enables us to more aggressively grow our international business," said Brian Waldrop, Viking Range chief financial officer and vice president of finance.

MDA executive director, J.C. Burns, was in Meridian recently to address the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation's Business Before Hours. Burns's discussed the state's new plan for economic development, the Advantage Mississippi Initiative. "The way I see it, Meridian has always played a large role in economic development. I think Meridian has a tremendous location, all the assets for development and that critical mass that makes it a great place to visit and a great place for doing business," said Burns.

Panola Partnership's Executive Board and interim director, Leonard Morris have announced that Paul Conner Alexander has been named as the Partnership's new director.

The Mississippi Development Authority *Friday Facts* is distributed to MDA staff, economic and community development professionals, legislators and other interested parties. Inquiries regarding this publication or information should be submitted to Stephen Martin, Communications Office, telephone 601.359.3555; fax 601.359.3596; email smartin@mississippi.org. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.mississippi.org.