

# ***Mississippi Development Authority*** ***FRIDAY FACTS***

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*“The Advantage Mississippi Initiative is a new way of thinking about economic development for our state. The Initiative is the beginning of our challenge of the future.”*

*-- J.C. Burns*

*Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority*

## **MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES NISSAN TIMELINE**

Today, J.C. Burns, Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority announced the initial timeline plans for the \$930 million Nissan manufacturing plant to be built in Madison County, Miss.

“It is exciting to see how this project continues to advance to the next stage of construction. Not only are we building a production facility, we are building future opportunities for our people,” said Burns.

### **Nissan Timeline**

December 19- Selected the construction manager for the site, Yates Construction/Major Associates.

December 26 – Selected the engineering firms of Waggoner, Schaffer, & AJA, Inc.

January 8 – Have all critical path real estate under contract.

January 15 – Site development work begins.

January 22 – Contracts will be awarded for the first phase of roads and highways development.

February – A supplier fair will be held and further details will follow.

April 1 – Site is ready for the construction of plant building.

April 6 – Groundbreaking ceremonies will be held.

April 10 – Building construction begins.

The plant, with a capacity of 250,000 vehicles a year, will produce a full-size pickup truck, a full-size sport-utility vehicle and the next generation Nissan minivan. Production of the first vehicle is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2003. Initially, 3,300 people will be employed, with a potential employment level of 4,000 in the future.

### **LOTT NAMED AS DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING**

The Mississippi Development Authority announced James (Jim) Lott as been appointed as Director of the Employment Training Division.

The Employment Training Division provides various employment and training services through the State Occupational Information and Coordination Committee and the Job Training Partnership Act programs.

Lott previously served as Vice President of Workforce Development with Goodwill Industries in San Antonio, Texas.

In December 1994 Lott accepted an assignment with the U.S. Department of Labor to work on the JTPA Title II reinvention initiative, the Enterprise, until his relocation to Texas in October 1999. During this time he also served as a Workforce Investment Act Implementation Team member, contributing to the drafting of the WIA regulations.

“Workforce training and retraining are major components of our economic development plan. Mississippi has a quality workforce, and that gives us the competitive advantage for getting good jobs,” said Governor Ronnie Musgrove.

“We are fortunate to have someone with Jim’s background and experience,” said J.C. Burns, Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority. “His knowledge of workforce development will be invaluable to our Agency and to Mississippi.”

Prior experience includes serving as Senior Policy Analyst for the North Carolina Governor’s Office of Workforce Development, Director of Research and Statistics Division of the North Carolina Department of Labor, Executive Director of the Maryland Employment and Training Council, Director of the North Carolina

Division of Employment and Training, and Professor of Political Science at the North Carolina State University.

An Honors graduate of the University of Florida, Lott received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1971 and has pursued post-graduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the area of Political Science.

## **STATE TOURISM DIVISION RELEASES RESEARCH REPORT**

New Survey reveals overnight indicators for 1999

Mississippi Tourism Development, a division of the Mississippi Development Authority in partnership with D.K. Shifflet & Associates has released its latest in a series of tourism reports, **Mississippi Domestic 1998-1999 Overnight Leisure Indicators**.

The purpose of the report was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the domestic travel market for Mississippi. The report highlights key demographic and travel behavior characteristics of Mississippi's domestic overnight leisure travelers with a comparison to the national average and to each of Mississippi's competing destinations.

Results of the report will assist the Division plan strategically for the future by providing actionable information to guide marketing and advertising programs.

"We were delighted to see the results of the report. Mississippi tourism continues to grow, in many cases, faster than the national average. The most popular reason to visit Mississippi was a getaway weekend. Previously, visiting friends and relatives held this spot. With some 32 million visitors during 1999, overnight leisure visitors increased by 11.1%," said Darienne Wilson, director, Tourism Development. "Good solid research provides the state, as well as the industry, increased visibility. This report will allow us to optimize our marketing dollars."

### **KEY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS**

In 1999, 31.9 million people visited Mississippi. Of the total 10.5 million came for one day; 10.3 million were business travelers, and 11.1 million spent an average of 2.6 nights each.

Of the 11.1 million overnight visitors, 78.4 percent were from out-of-state. The average travel party size was 2.8. Expenditures averaged \$92 per person, per day, \$3 more than the U.S. average.

The Mission of the Mississippi Division of Tourism is to create economic growth and opportunity through the promotion and development of Mississippi as a tourism destination, to provide leadership and direction for the Mississippi tourism industry, to foster awareness of the tourism industry's significance, thereby enhancing the image of Mississippi and the quality of life for Mississippians.

The goals of the division are to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the State of Mississippi, to be the lead organization in educating the general public and training the hospitality employees of our state, to work closely, partner with and support the Convention and Visitor Bureau industry of Mississippi, and to enhance the efficiency of the Division through the use of technology.

Tourism Development promotes Mississippi as a destination for business and leisure travel, operates the State's Welcome Centers, and includes the Mississippi Film Office.

Tourism and Recreation statewide income was \$6.1 billion in FY 2000 and \$5.6 billion in FY 1999, reflecting a 9.6% increase during this period.

Tourism and Recreation accounted for 94,100 jobs in FY 2000, and 89,600 jobs in FY 1999, or a 5.0 percent increase, based on quarterly employment figures for both years. Tourism and Recreation is the second largest service sector employer in Mississippi. Only health care has more service employees.

Tourism and Recreation General Fund tax revenues totaled \$482.3 million for FY 2000 and \$444.8 million in FY 1999, reflecting an 8.4% increase. Tourism and Recreation provides \$1 out of every \$7 deposited in the General Fund.

For additional information, please visit our web site at [www.visitmississippi.org](http://www.visitmississippi.org).

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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;

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