

# MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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# FRIDAY FACTS

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## ***From the Executive Director . . .***

During the recent legislative session the Mississippi Development Authority had a number of items for consideration. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to each of you for the important part you played in assisting us with the passage of our legislation. You are to be commended for the work you have done to enhance economic development for Mississippi. We sincerely appreciate your continued support and tireless efforts to improve the lives of the citizens of Mississippi. The following is a summary of our 2001 legislation.

### **MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY 2001 LEGISLATION**

**HB 371** Funds the Land, Water and Timber Resources Program with \$10,000,000 for grants. The program is designed to promote the use of the state's natural resources. A board co-chaired by the Executive Director of MDA and the Agricultural Commissioner will administer the program and the funds.

**HB 439** This act provides the Development Infrastructure Program (DIP) with an additional \$1,500,000 for grants and loans to communities. It also creates and funds a Capital Access Program, which is a program that promotes the lending of capital to under served citizens by private banks.

**HB 897** Exempts sales tax on the temporary storage of tangible personal property by a public storage or commercial warehouse pending shipping of the property out of state. Surrounding states have not had this tax for some time.

**HB 1352** Provides an additional \$4,000,000 for the Minority Loan Program and an additional \$1,000,000 for the Minority Surety Bond Program.

**HB 1467** This act revises certain sections of the Growth and Prosperity Act (GAP). The 1995 census bureau data will be used to determine eligible counties under the act for poverty rates until

December 31, 2002. After December 31, 2002 the most recent date available will be used.

**SB 2126** Funds the Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program with \$10,000,000. The program is for cities under 10,000 and counties under 30,000 population to build needed public infrastructure.

Now, what are the implications of this? The legislation strengthens our position as a major competitor in economic development. Since passage of the Advantage Mississippi Initiative we have continued to make great strides in making Mississippi competitive with other states, a location of choice.

Improving Mississippi through economic development is our priority. We intend to build all our communities – urban and rural – improving the quality of life for our people. We want to improve opportunities for Mississippi's best and brightest to find good paying jobs and professional paths and remain in their home state.

Let's keep the momentum going. I look forward to traveling the road with you as we continue to build a brighter future for all Mississippians.

*J.C. Burns*

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*"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision."*

*- Theodore Hesburgh*

## **QUALITY FOODS TO LOCATE IN BATESVILLE**

Quality Foods, Inc. of Little Rock, Arkansas proudly announces the opening of their newest food service distribution facility - the Memphis Distribution Center located in Batesville.

The 180,000 square foot state of the art facility will service restaurants, hospitals, hotels and convenience stores from West Tennessee, Northern Alabama and Northern Mississippi. It is designed by Environmental Structures of Wisconsin and will be the duplicate of its \$12.5 million sister distribution center in Magee, Mississippi. This facility will employ approximately 160 to 200 people.

Quality Foods was founded in 1953 by the Kirkpatrick family of Little Rock. The company has annual sales of over \$400 million and services eight states in the south. The Kirkpatrick family still owns and operates Quality Foods today.

The company was recently awarded the 2001 Pocahontas Distributor of the Year by the marketing group, Pocahontas Foods USA. ID Magazine, the "voice of food service distribution", ranks Quality Foods as the 14<sup>th</sup> largest food service distributor in the US.

After renovation of the facility and expansion of the loading docks, the center will open in late July 2001.

## **PLANT EXPANSION BRINGS NEW JOBS TO LAWRENCE COUNTY**

A Lincoln County industry will soon expand a large portion of its operations after signing a lease for the old Kellwood Manufacturing Cutting Plant.

The announcement came during the presentation of an Energy \$247,000 infrastructure loan to Foster Millworks and Timber Products co-owner Anthony Foster at the plant Friday.

"This money will be used to purchase equipment that will reduce energy consumption and increase productivity," Foster said. "This will enable Foster Millworks to be more competitive, more profitable and provide more jobs.

"The Energy Division of the Mississippi Development Authority takes great interest in business and industry joining the call to address

energy concerns. We are proud to play any role in the success of those efforts. Improving the way business and industry consume energy translates into sustainable economic development opportunities," commented Kenneth Calvin, Director of MDA's Energy Division.

Foster said it was the efforts of Lawrence County officials, state officials they recruited into their efforts and the people of the county who drew them to the area.

"No one has been as open as Lawrence County," Foster said. "They helped us in as many ways as possible. We didn't get that kind of support from the other counties we looked at. We're looking forward to a great, long relationship with the people of Lawrence County."

The 39,800 square foot plant will triple the workspace, Foster said. The company will still be based at the present facility in Brookhaven, but will move their larger projects here.

Foster said the Monticello branch will start with 25 to 30 employees and hopefully slowly increase to approximately 100 in a year's time.

The company's main focus is commercial architectural millwork, but they also make commercial cabinets, molding, wood doors and hunting calls.

"It's important to me that Lawrence County residents know this is not a grant," Foster said. "This is not free money to help us make the move. This is a loan we have to pay back, so taxpayers have lost nothing in bringing us here. I believe industries should help and become a part of the communities they move into, not the other way around."

Mayor David Nichols said this was one more indication that the county was rebounding from the closure of Kellwood Manufacturing more than a year ago.

"We're very, very pleased and proud that Monticello has attracted another new industry to our great town," he said. "We feel confident that this is not the last announcement of a new industry locating to Monticello soon."

## **JONES COUNTY RECOGNIZES LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CLASSES**

EDA and Jones County Chamber of Commerce will host their annual Leadership graduation banquet for their three leadership development classes, May 10th. The program day will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Sawmill Ramada Inn of Laurel, with all three classes giving their project presentations. This portion of the program will conclude at 12:00 noon.

At 6:00 p.m. on the Jones County Junior College campus, a graduation banquet will be held for all three classes. The three classes include: Leadership Jones County (adults age 21-54) Future Leaders of Jones County (juniors from the four area high schools) and C.L.A.S.S. (Continuing Leadership as Supportive Seniors, adults age 55 and over).

For more information, contact Sandy Holifield, 649-3031.

## **TECO HOLDS GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW POWER STATION IN ATTALA COUNTY**

TECO Power Services of Tampa, Florida, broke ground on April 24, 2001, on a 599 MW natural gas fired electric generating facility near McAdams. The TECO groundbreaking comes several months after construction began on another power facility in the same area by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). The \$300,000,000 facility is scheduled to begin generation in mid-2002.

## **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON 224-ACRE KOSCIUSKO INDUSTRIAL PARK**

Construction has begun on construction of a new industrial park for Kosciusko. The 224-acre industrial park was funded by a \$1,000,000 grant from the U. S. Economic Development Administration. The property was purchased by the City of Kosciusko and the City matched the grant with \$700,000.

## **KOSCIUSKO AND SOUTHWESTERN RAILROAD BEGINS TOURISM TRAIN**

Mississippi Rail Group, which operates the Kosciusko and Southwestern Railroad, has purchased a locomotive and caboose, which is open to tourists to ride from Kosciusko to the IC/CN main line, a distance of approximately 20 miles. The railroad is also a working railroad that hauls freight.

The tourist rides will begin this weekend during the Natchez Trace Festival. You may reserve tickets at the railroad web site at [www.ksry.com](http://www.ksry.com).



The Mississippi Development Authority's *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](mailto:smartin@mississippi.org). Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org).