

MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

FRIDAY FACTS

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MDA HOSTS COMMUNITY SELF PROGRAM IN CHARLESTON

Officials with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) will host a Community Self-Help program, Thursday, August 9, 2001 at the Charleston Courthouse, located on the square at 6:00 p.m.

Community Self-Help is a resource for small communities to meet local needs with less financial resources. The program is funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to residents that are at least 51% low- and moderate income. Labor is provided by the communities.

"The Community Self-Help program is designed to assist those communities that cannot afford matching requirements of traditional grant programs," said Henry Cote', Associate Manager Senior - Finance, with the Development Assistance Bureau of the Community Services Division of MDA.

Self-Help approaches all resources including grants and loans, from a different direction, and actually increases the reach of those scarce dollars by reducing the amount necessary to bring improvements to small communities and towns.

Cote' program presenter, will meet with community residents and provide advice and guidance on a wide range of concerns and project cost reducing techniques, including project planning and development, financial analysis, engineering, community mobilization, volunteerism, goal setting, liability insurance and project certification. Cote' will also assist Charleston in identifying additional state, local, and national resources available to Self-Help projects.

"MDA is looking for communities that demonstrate capacity and readiness to take on a project that will better the lives of all its citizens, whether that is fire protection or a gazebo on the town square," added Cote'.

There is no cost for the program and the public is encouraged to attend.

For additional information, please contact the Mississippi Development Authority Community Self-Help at (601) 359-3179.

TOWN HALL MEETING SET IN LAMBERT

The City of Lambert is inviting the community to a town hall meeting/resource information forum on Tuesday, August 7, 2001 at 6:00 p.m.

The town hall meeting, to be held at Quitman County Elementary School (formerly Southside High), 1017 10th Street will feature presentations by Minority Business Enterprise Division of the Mississippi Development Authority; Reginald Griffin, Mayor of Lambert; Small Business Administration; USDA; Mississippi Planning and Development District; Enterprise Corporation of the Delta; Congressman Bennie Thompson's office; Small Business Development Center and political officials.

The town hall meeting will be an opportunity for citizens to learn about the programs and resources that are available to them. The format will be an open forum with active participation from those participating.

For more information about the meeting, contact Rodella Covington at (662) 326-8018.

"Integrity can be neither lost nor concealed nor faked nor quenched nor artificially come by nor outlived, nor, I believe, in the long run, denied."

- Eudora Welty

LAUREL LUMBER COMPANY PARTICIPATES IN STATE'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY LOAN PROGRAM

Officials with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) along with representatives from Laurel Lumber Company will participate in a loan closing ceremony, Monday, August 6 at 10:00 a.m. at Laurel Lumber Company. The low interest loan for \$300,000 is being awarded to Laurel Lumber Company as a result of their participation with MDA's Energy Investment Program.

The Energy Investment Program, administered by Energy, a division of MDA, provides low interest loans to businesses to finance energy conserving capitol improvements or to fund projects that make current industrial processes more efficient. The goal of the program is to allow businesses implementing these improvements to realize cost savings and/or increased revenues as a result of lowered utility bills and/or increased productivity.

Laurel Lumber Company plans to discontinue using natural gas fired burners in the kilns and utilize a portion of the waste wood generated in the dressing process to fire a steam boiler. The generated steam will then be used to heat the kilns and dry the lumber. When implemented this project will produce a savings of approximately \$190,000 because of the elimination of the natural gas cost.

"The relationship of Laurel Lumber Company and the state of Mississippi is another great example of how business and government can partner to benefit our people," said J.C. Burns, executive director, MDA.

"I would like to thank the Mississippi Development Authority for assisting us with this project and promoting industry around the state. With the aid of their aggressive loan program, we have been able to bring more jobs to Jones County, lower our energy consumption, and increase our productivity," said Hugh Thomasson, owner, Thomasson Lumber Company.

"Improving Mississippi through economic development is our priority," said Kenneth Calvin, director, Energy Division, MDA.

For additional information regarding MDA's Energy Investment Program, contact Donnie Thompson, P.E., at (601) 359-6600 or 1-800-222-8311.

JOHNSON CONTROLS WILL BUILD NEW PLANT IN MISSISSIPPI

Automotive interior supplier Johnson Controls will build a new manufacturing plant in Canton, Mississippi to supply interior systems for three vehicles to be assembled by Nissan North America. Construction of the 120,000-square-foot facility is slated to begin in early 2002.

Beginning in the summer of 2003, the plant will supply automotive seat systems for model-year 2004 Nissan vehicles to be produced by the automaker at the new assembly facility two miles away. The automaker will receive shipments of seats – manufactured on a "just-in-time" basis at the Johnson Controls plant – as they are required on vehicle assembly lines.

Johnson Controls' new plant is targeted for the Canton Industrial Center in Madison County. When it launches production in 2003, the facility will employ approximately 300 people. It will be Johnson Controls' first automotive manufacturing plant in Mississippi.

Officials from Nissan, Johnson Controls and other suppliers formally announced their plans at a news conference in Jackson earlier this month. Tom Bobo, vice president and general manager of the Johnson Controls Nissan Business Unit – North America, represented the interior systems supplier.

"As a primary supplier of automotive seating to Nissan in North America, we look forward to starting our manufacturing operations in Canton," said Bobo. "Johnson Controls is committed to being an industry leader, outstanding employer and excellent corporate citizen for the community."

A Fortune 150 company with corporate headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Johnson Controls is a top global supplier of automotive seating, interior systems and batteries. Its automotive division operates 285 manufacturing and technical facilities around the world. Johnson Controls serves as a tier-one supplier for Nissan and other major automakers.



MISSISSIPPI INVENTORS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 8

The annual Mississippi Inventors Conference is scheduled for Saturday, September 8, 2001. The event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Jackson. This event is hosted by the Mississippi Small Business Development Center. The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) is one of the sponsors of the event this year.

During the daylong event, nationally known speakers in the invention field will provide information on how to obtain a patent, what to do once you have a patent, and how to get your invention on the market. There will also be an opportunity to perform a patent search.

The cost of the conference is \$70 in advance and \$80 at the door. For more information, contact the Mississippi Small Business Development Center at (662) 915-5001 or email them at msbdc@olemiss.edu.

GOVERNOR MUSGROVE ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING MATCH GRANTS

Governor Ronnie Musgrove has announced new economic development marketing match grants for Claiborne, Harrison and Washington counties. The grants were made by the Mississippi Development Authority.

"These grants will help improve the economic development efforts of these areas around the state," Musgrove said. "We want to help every county in the state send out the message that Mississippi can compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere."

The Claiborne County Port Commission on the Mississippi River in West Mississippi received a grant of \$12,289. The funds will be used to develop marketing materials, a website and logo design.

A grant of \$15,225 was awarded to the Harrison County Development Commission on the Gulf Coast. The funds will be utilized to produce an advertising campaign promoting the Gulf Coast to tourists and retirees.

The Industrial Foundation of Washington County in the Delta received \$8,500 to support the development of new marketing materials.

For more information about the program, call (601) 359-3179.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO GROW

Travel volume to Mississippi grew significantly from 1999 to 2000, and many are staying longer according to information released by Tourism Development, a Division of the Mississippi Development Authority during their annual summit held in Jackson on Tuesday.

Thirty-four million people came to Mississippi for a visit in 2000, up from 32 million in both 1998 and 1999 reported Darienne Wilson, Tourism Director during the recent gathering of tourism industry representatives from around the state.

The tourism summit gives those in the industry a chance to share new marketing ideas, and ways to promote events in the state. Tourism is a six billion dollar a year industry in Mississippi.

During her presentation, Wilson presented an overview of the state of tourism in Mississippi and discussed initiatives to attract more people.

Some projects in the works for the coming year: a film-location tour that would highlight the state's noted movie settings and a golf trail similar to one in Alabama that would include several of Mississippi's premier courses.

According to the new figures released, the average length of stay for visitors increased from 3.3 days in 1998 to 3.7 days in 2000. Overnight leisure visitors increased from 10 million two years ago to 12.4 million in 2000. In addition, the average annual household income of tourists visiting Mississippi jumped from \$48,300 in 1998 to \$58,350 in 2000.

Tourism-related businesses contributed \$6.09 billion into the state economy in 2000, a 9.6 percent increase from the \$5.55 billion generated in 1999, according to a report released from the state tourism office.

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. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.mississippi.org.