

MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

FRIDAY FACTS

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LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE

On November 9, 2000, the Governor, Legislature, members of our Congressional Delegation, Nissan officials, and citizens gathered in the State Capitol for one of the most exciting announcements in the history of Mississippi. Nissan announced that they planned to build a \$930 million automotive manufacturing facility in Canton, Mississippi that would create 4,000 direct jobs, and upwards of 20,000 indirect jobs. The wages of these jobs are more than double the state's current per capita income.

On that day, a 4½-month effort by public and private officials came to fruition. The world was watching at 9:30 a.m. and every floor of the Capitol was filled with the citizens of Mississippi waiting anxiously to hear the news. Television crews and media from around the world captured images of Mr. Carlos Ghosn, Nissan's chief executive, as he made the announcement that Nissan had selected Mississippi as its location of choice. Applause was frequent and emotion was high.

When Nissan made this announcement, it gave Mississippi the opportunity to shine bright, and it gave our citizens hope for the future. With this announcement, the economic landscape of Mississippi changed. The world now knew that we were no longer the underdog, but were rather, a true competitor and winner. This project has been awarded designations from major economic development magazines as the Top Deal of the Year, Top Job Creation Project, and one of the Top Investment Deals announced during the year.

However, Nissan is only one of 195 new projects that located in Mississippi last year. An additional 11,992 new jobs were created with an investment of over \$2.5 billion. We have rarely heard about those new jobs because of the focus on the Nissan landowner issues.

Now people around the world are still watching us, but for very different reasons. Competing with other states for a near-billion dollar project is a massive undertaking that includes many different components of economic development. Land acquisitions, environmental concerns, labor, training, incentives, and quality of life are among some of the most critical factors.

In the Nissan competition, Mississippi initially was competing with the entire Southeastern United States. Then it was narrowed to a "short-list" of 5 competing states, and later to two...Canton, Mississippi and Opelika, Alabama. Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and others had been successful in the location of automotive manufacturing plants while Mississippi accepted rejection...but not this time. This time Mississippi became a winner, or so we thought.

On November 10, the work began. To date, we have acquired over 1,400 needed acres for the 2.5 million square foot plant. We have negotiated successfully with 62 landowners, Caucasian and African American alike. Only 5 remaining parcels consisting of 34 total acres remain to be acquired in the main core site. An additional 347 acres are being sought for an engineering school, detention pond, cloverleaf highway exchange, and much-needed supplier sites.

We have also completed construction projects on time with sometimes near-impossible time frames. Now after over 7 months of negotiations, we are still unable to reach a settlement with the remaining landowners, which is unfortunate.

A lot of attention has been focused on this issue, but let's not lose sight of the big picture. The Nissan plant, hopefully, will be one of many new projects locating or expanding in Mississippi. However, if the focus remains on unsubstantiated accusations and sensationalism relating to these issues, then we have only helped to perpetuate an undeserved, negative image of the Great State of Mississippi.

This year, as in past years, companies and consultants responsible for site selections along with the worldwide media are watching Mississippi closely. How will this affect their opinion of Mississippi in the future?

J.C. Burns
Executive Director, MDA

EAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO UNDERTAKE ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) has entered into a performance contract with TVA Energy Services for \$507,618.00. EMCC will make lighting system improvements and install an energy management system. With these improvements in place, EMCC will realize an estimated annual savings in energy cost expenditures of over \$75,347.00.

Funding for this project was provided by the Mississippi Development Authority's Energy Division's Energy Efficiency Lease Program with Trustmark National Bank providing 3rd party financing.

The Energy Division's role in energy efficiency performance contracting is to review the contract and provide technical assistance leading to the final approval of the contract by both parties.

MDA HOSTS INDUSTRIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The Energy Division of the Mississippi Development Authority in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy will host a series of industrial energy efficiency training workshops to assist plant owners, operators, and maintenance personnel in identifying areas, which use excessive energy, and in identifying costs effective upgrades.

"Recent increases in gas and electrical prices have produced significant increases in plant operating expenses. These workshops will explain how dollars saved from the reduction of energy can be reinvested to sustain businesses by increasing profit margins or expanding operations," said Kenneth Calvin, director, Energy Division, MDA.

Each workshop will feature concurrent sessions on the following topics: motors, steam, compressed air, lighting, alternative fuels, pump systems, and financing. Participants will be provided software, manuals and a basic knowledge of how to perform preliminary assessments. The workshops are designed to optimize the training of industry representatives while minimizing time away from the manufacturing operation.

The registration fee is \$50, and applications can be obtained at the following address and telephone number:

Industrial Energy Efficiency Training
Energy Division
Mississippi Development Authority
P.O. Box 849
Jackson, MS 39205
telephone - 601-359-6600

Workshop will focus on manufacturers in the following industries: agriculture, forestry, aluminum, metal casting, steel, chemicals, petroleum, glass and mining

The workshops will be held:

- November 5: Whispering Woods Hotel and Conference Center, 11200 E. Goodman Road, Olive Branch, MS
- November 7: E-Commerce Center, Jackson State University (formerly Allstate), 1230 Raymond Road, Jackson, MS
- November 9: University of Southern Mississippi, 730 East Beach Boulevard, Long Beach, MS

Advanced training on these subjects will be offered in 2002 for those seeking certification in plant assessment. These one- and two-day courses will be offered for a full week during the month of March.

For more information about the workshops, contact Harriet Hall with the Energy Division at 601-359-6645 or hhall@mississippi.org.



BUSINESSES HURT BY RESERVIST CALL-UPS MAY APPLY FOR SBA LOANS

The U. S. Small Business Administration will make low interest loans available to small businesses employing military reservists called to active duty during a period of military conflict, provided he or she is an essential employee critical to the success of the business's daily operation.

If the absence of the reservist employee causes the business "substantial economic injury," the business owner can apply for a Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan (MREIDL) through the SBA's disaster offices listed below.

"The loss of a key person - even for a short time - can devastate any small company. Small businesses sometimes fail when such an employee is called away to military service," SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto said. "This program will provide economic support for those businesses, which in some cases are the major source of jobs in those communities. We must do all we can to protect these companies."

The program applies to military conflicts occurring or ending on or after March 24, 1999. Small businesses must apply by November 24, 2001. Otherwise, the filing period begins the date the essential employee is ordered to active duty and ends 90 days after the date the employee is discharged from active duty.

Mississippi businesses interested in applying for an economic injury disaster loan should contact the SBA disaster area office in Atlanta, GA to obtain an application. The toll-free number is 1-800-359-2227.

The SBA makes low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters and non-farm businesses of all sizes. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair or replace damaged real estate. Individuals may borrow up to \$40,000 to cover losses to personal property.

Non-farm businesses and non-profit may apply for up to \$1.5 million to repair or replace business assets. Small businesses that suffered economic losses may apply for a working capital loan of up to \$1.5 million, even if the property was not physically damaged.

To find out more about SBA's disaster assistance program, visit their web site at www.sba.gov/disaster.

MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PREPARE FOR NATIONAL MED WEEK

Since its designation by Executive Order in 1982, National Minority Business Enterprise (MED) Week has been recognized with activities across the United States each fall. This year is no exception. The 19th Annual National MED Week Conference will be held September 23 – 26, 2001, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The conference is co-sponsored by the US Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency and the US Small Business Administration's Office of Government Contracting and Business Development.

In conjunction with National MED Week, local and regional organizations have also scheduled activities throughout the month of September. The Mississippi MED Week Steering Committee has planned a week of events in the Metro Jackson area. The activities kick off with a prayer breakfast on September 10 and culminate with a reception and awards banquet on September 14. Donnie Moncure with the Minority Business Enterprise Division (MBED) of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) serves as President of the Steering Committee.

"Today, Mississippi is experiencing the largest economic expansion in our history. I am excited to be a part of national programs, like MED Week, that foster the growth and success of minority and women-owned businesses," commented Gennie Lacy Jones, Director, MBED of the Mississippi Development Authority. MBED/MDA is co-sponsoring several events for MED Week. For more information about local activities, contact MBED/MDA at 601-359-3448.

In the Southern region, several organizations in the Atlanta area have come together to promote MED Week September 16 – September 21, 2001. Highlights include a Buyer's Tour, E-Commerce Town Meeting, Business in School Day and Legal Forum. For more information about regional activities, contact Robert Williams at 228-396-9185.

To learn more about MED Week, contact the Minority Business Enterprise Division at 601-359-3448 or visit National MED Week 2001 on the World Wide Web at <https://www.a2zshow.com/ssl/medweek>.

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.