

Mississippi Development Authority  
P.O. Box 849  
Jackson, MS 39305

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Sherry R. Vance, director of communications, 601.359.3041

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**STATE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY HOSTS FOREIGN  
SERVICE INSTITUTE MEMBERS**

JACKSON, Miss., - The state's lead economic development agency, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) hosted this week members of the United States Department of State, Senior Seminar participants. Harry Gibbs, Mississippi Development Authority along with Jerry Acy, Madison County Economic Development Authority and Fred Esco, Mayor, City of Canton discussed the Nissan project with members of the 45<sup>th</sup> class of the senior seminar from the state department's Foreign Service Institute on January 14.

"It was truly an honor for Mississippi to be selected to host such a prestigious group of individuals. This exposure will be tremendously beneficial when we are working with potential clients around the globe," said Robert J. Rohrlack, Jr., executive director, MDA.

"These will be the individuals that can assist us with our recruitment efforts. Besides developing relationships, we have just created another team of goodwill ambassadors, who upon their return home will share what a great place Mississippi is," added Harry Gibbs, director of the Business Development Division, MDA.

The institute class is based at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Washington, D.C. The center was renamed in honor of former U.S. secretary of state Shultz in May.

Senior seminar members were from the branches of the armed services, as well as government departments such as state and commerce and agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the National Security Agency.

Monday, the group met with the Mayor of Jackson, Harvey Johnson to discuss local issues, including views on the New South, education, and regional economic development.

A panel discussion was held that afternoon at Jackson State University. The theme consisted of Jackson State's role; International Visitors Center and the Mississippi Consortium for International Development's programs.

Tuesday, the group met Ronald Robinson, of Mission Mississippi to discuss diversity. Following a tour of the Old Capitol Museum of Mississippi History, the group attended a working lunch with Representatives of the State Legislature. They discussed issues affecting the various areas of Mississippi.

The afternoon was spent in Canton discussing local development plans, including plans to attract foreign investment. Also an outreach event with students from Jim Hill High School and Murrah High School was held.

Wednesday, the group departed Jackson for their next stop of their tour program, Miami, Florida.

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