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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi
Celebrates Statewide Rollout**

*Mississippi Development Authority activates new program that combines federal, state
and community workforce programs and services*

JACKSON, Miss., August 20, 2001 – The Mississippi Development Authority today officially activates the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi, an innovative program designed to provide, one-stop employment and training services to employers and job seekers statewide.

WIN in Mississippi creates a system that is both convenient and user-friendly by combining federal, state and community workforce programs and services into physical locations and electronic sites. Originally named and announced in Fall 2000, the WIN program is open to everyone.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, known as WIA, provides the framework for WIN in Mississippi and is administered by the Employment Training Division of the Mississippi Development Authority.

"Mississippi's greatest resource is its people. WIN in Mississippi will give them more opportunities to obtain good jobs while providing employers with the best qualified workforce," said Governor Ronnie Musgrove. "The new program also stimulates economic development as we focus on attracting new companies to Mississippi and growing existing business through Advantage Mississippi Initiatives."

WIN in Mississippi is delivered locally through six Workforce Investment Areas – the Delta, Gulf Coast, Hinds County, Mississippi Partnership, Southcentral Mississippi Works and Twin Districts – which receive grants from the Employment Training Division. Local Workforce Investment Boards in each area plan and develop WIN programs based on community needs.

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ADD ONE – WIN in Mississippi

These local boards are business-led and work in collaboration with elected and community officials, local and state agencies, and the private sector. WIN in Mississippi partners include: local Workforce Investment Areas, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Mississippi Employment Security Commission, Mississippi Department of Education, State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, Mississippi Department of Human Services, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, local elected officials and Mississippi Development Authority.

“Input and participation at the local level is a hallmark of WIN in Mississippi. It ensures that employers' and job seekers' needs are met through tailored solutions designed to promote local workforce development and economic growth,” said Jim Lott, director of Mississippi's Employment Training Division. "Workforce and training needs vary from one region of Mississippi to another, so WIN offers greater flexibility and more choices."

A network of WIN Job Centers is the centerpiece of the new workforce investment system. Located throughout the state, more than sixty-four centers provide customers with easy access to services in the areas of employment, education, training, human services and economic development. This is accomplished through co-location of offices, electronic connectivity, and coordination of existing agency programs and services based on community needs.

"Every WIN Job Center is a local connection that brings together extensive resources and information under one roof," said Lott. "For example, job seekers can access job training, education, and employment services, and employers can post job openings and get current information on the skills their workers will need to be competitive – all at one location.”

By consolidating services, WIN in Mississippi offers added efficiencies that make the most of every dollar available for training, retraining and education.

"It is a WIN-WIN for everyone," said J. C. Burns, executive director, Mississippi Development Authority. "In addition to the more effective use of public resources, WIN in Mississippi helps put people to work creating a broader tax base which in turn grows communities across the state. It is a valuable tool that will allow us to capitalize on Mississippi's high-quality workforce and increasing economic development opportunities."

To learn more about the WIN Job Center nearest you and the WIN in Mississippi system, visit www.wininmississippi.org or contact one these convenient Workforce Investment Area locations: Hinds County, 601-968-6502; Delta, 662-378-3831; Gulf Coast, 228-897-1881; Mississippi Partnership, 662-489-2415; Southcentral Mississippi Works, 601-981-1511; or Twin Districts, 601-545-2137.