FISCAL YEAR 2020

ANNUAL REPORT

PEARL RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE - POPLARVILLE

MISSISSIPPI STATE CAPITOL - JACKSON
Growth may have slowed for a time, but it did not stop. We are diligently working around the pandemic and continuing to announce new projects and jobs for the people of Mississippi. Domestic and international travel was limited due to various state and global restrictions for much of the year. But, we still found innovative ways to recruit and expand businesses to keep the state moving forward and letting the world know we are open for business.

In Fiscal Year 2020, companies invested $1.1 billion in Mississippi and created 4,312 jobs, and as we advance through the current calendar year the numbers are continuing to grow. MDA staff, along with our economic development partners throughout the state, never slowed down in our efforts to recruit new opportunities to the state.

Mississippi is growing, both in the number and types of companies it attracts, but also in the number of jobs in the state. While the second half of Fiscal Year 2020 was challenging as we dealt with COVID-19 and the economic slowdown, Mississippi still attracted businesses and created jobs. In fact, we have realized more capital investment this fiscal year in the state than last, in spite of the pandemic.

Those efforts will progress as we work with our universities, community colleges, fellow state agencies and trade associations to educate and train Mississippi’s workforce, which will attract even more business and industry to the state. Together with Governor Tate Reeves, Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann and House Speaker Philip Gunn, we will work to make Mississippi even more competitive in this global economy.

John Rounsaville.
Interim Director, Mississippi Development Authority
LED lighting products manufacturer Parmida LED Technologies announced it was locating its latest North American distribution and e-commerce operations center in Indianola, creating 20 jobs. The project represents a $1 million corporate investment.

Stud welding company Image Industries announced the company was locating operations in Clarksdale. The project is a $3 million corporate investment and will create 50 jobs over the next four years.

The Middleby Corporation, a global leader in the food service equipment industry, relocated Lynx Grills headquarters and manufacturing operations to the Viking Range facility in Greenwood. The project is a $5 million corporate investment and is creating 200 jobs, 100 of which were added immediately. The remaining 100 will be added over the next five years.

Medline Industries, Inc., a healthcare business that manufactures and distributes medical supplies, is locating distribution operations in Southaven. The project is a $46 million corporate investment and will bring 450 new jobs to North Mississippi.

Boat manufacturer Avid Boats announced it was locating a new production facility in Amory. The project is a $1.6 million corporate investment and will create 75 jobs.

BancorpSouth Bank is increasing capacity at its Jackson Street campus in Tupelo to accommodate the company’s rapid growth. The project represents a corporate investment of more than $15 million and will create 100 jobs.

Spectra Laboratories, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fresenius Medical Care North America, the nation’s leading provider of kidney care products and services, broke ground on a 200,000-square-foot laboratory in Southaven. The project will to create more than 300 jobs over the next three years.

Catfish processing company Superior Catfish expanded its operations in Macon. The project is a $17 million corporate investment and created 25 jobs.
Leading medical device manufacturer and supplier Zimmer Biomet announced it was growing its distribution operations by locating a facility in Olive Branch. The project is creating 100 jobs.

Saf-T-Cart, manufacturer of steel carts and storage products for various commercial and industrial applications, expanded in Clarksdale. The project represents a corporate investment of approximately $1.5 million and created 25 jobs.

Jamestown Metal is expanded in Pascagoula to accommodate new contracts with shipbuilder VT Halter Marine. The project is a $375,000 corporate investment and is creating 100 full-time jobs.

Recycling and refuse equipment manufacturer New Way Trucks opened operations in Booneville. The project is a $2.5 million corporate investment and created 100 jobs.

Jones Lumber Co. is increased its footprint in Mississippi by expanding its grade lumber operations in Natchez. The project is an $18 million corporate investment and created 35 jobs.

Corelle Brands LLC celebrated the grand opening of the company’s manufacturing and distribution operations in Marshall County. Announced in January, the initial project is a $27.7 million corporate investment over time that is expected to create as many as 400 jobs. During the grand opening event, the company also announced an expansion of its distribution operations — a $2.4 million corporate investment that will create as many as 50 additional jobs.

Leading auto parts retailer O’Reilly Auto Parts announced the location of a distribution center in Horn Lake. The project is creating 380 jobs.

Industrial construction company Great River Industries expanded its operations in Natchez to accommodate an increase in consumer demand. The project is a $3 million corporate investment and created 20 jobs.

Kimberly-Clark Corporation increased production at its nonwovens facility in Corinth to support the growth of its personal care products in North America. The project is a corporate investment of more than $20 million and created 25 jobs.

Pipeline construction and maintenance company Progressive Pipeline announced it is expanding in Meridian. The project is a $5.143 million corporate investment and is creating 25 jobs.

Amazon announced the location of its second Mississippi fulfillment center in Olive Branch. The company will create 500 new full-time jobs at the facility.

Global security and aerospace company Lockheed Martin announced the expansion of its operations at NASA’s Stennis Space Center in Hancock County. The project is a $20.9 million corporate investment and is creating 30 jobs.

Ashley Furniture announced it was expanding operations at its stationary upholstery manufacturing and regional distribution center in Ecru. The project is a $25.05 million corporate investment and created 100 jobs.

Inland water transportation company Golding Barge Line expanded operations in Vicksburg. The project is a $20 million corporate investment and created 25 jobs.
**Q3 JANUARY – MARCH 2020**

**Toshiba America Business Solutions** opened distribution operations in Horn Lake. The $14 million project created 40 jobs.

**Ajinomoto Foods North America, Inc.**, a leading manufacturer in the frozen food industry, increased its capacity in Oakland. The project is a $27.3 million corporate investment that created 15 jobs, raising the number of employees to 450.

Aerospace and defense leader **Northrop Grumman Corporation** expanded in Iuka, investing $8.3 million and creating 40 jobs.

Polyurethane foam manufacturer **Innocor** increased production at its two facilities in Baldwyn. The expansion marks a $4.1 million corporate investment and created 90 jobs.

**Milwaukee Tool** located a third distribution center in Olive Branch to meet a need for increased distribution capacity. The project is an $8.7 million corporate investment that created nearly 100 jobs.

Ship maintenance and repair company **ST Engineering Halter Marine and Offshore, Inc.**, expanded in Pascagoula. The project is a $10 million corporate investment and will create 100 jobs.

**Keystone Electrical Manufacturing Company** expanded to Brookhaven, investing $4 million and creating 30 new jobs.

**Q4 APRIL – JUNE 2020**

**Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc.** announced plans to expand in DeSoto County by constructing a new facility in Hernando. The project will bring more than $300 million in investment and 79 new jobs to Mississippi.

**Relativity**, the first and only company to 3D print entire rockets, continued to grow with a $2.42 million investment in southern Mississippi to support the expansion of its rocket vehicle and engine testing capabilities at NASA’s Stennis Space Center. The project is creating 12 jobs.

**Calgon Carbon**, manufacturer of activated carbon products, increased production capacity at Port Bienvenue in Hancock County. The project represents a corporate investment of $185 million and is creating 38 jobs.
MDA's Global Recruitment Division collaborates with economic developers and regional and local officials throughout the state to recruit industry-leading companies to Mississippi. This division assists with locating sites, securing environmental permitting and establishing top-quality workforce training programs.

In FY20, the Global Recruitment Division’s efforts to attract new business and industry in the state resulted in $596 million in new corporate investment and created 2,657 new jobs for Mississippians.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

In August 2019, medical supply manufacturer and distributor Medline Industries, Inc. announced plans to locate a new distribution facility in Southaven. The facility will serve as a hub for Medline’s Mid-South territory. The company is investing $46 million and creating 450 jobs in DeSoto County. MDA assisted with equipment relocation and infrastructure needs.

Spectra Laboratories, a subsidiary of Fresenius Medical Care North America, announced in September 2019 that it would locate a new 200,000-square-foot laboratory in Southaven. Fresenius Medical Care North America is a leading provider of kidney care products and services for individuals with chronic renal conditions. Once completed, the facility in Southaven will conduct comprehensive testing, analysis and reporting for its patients. Spectra Laboratories will create more than 300 jobs and invest $88 million in the project. MDA assisted with site improvements and workforce training.

In October 2019, New Way Trucks, the largest privately held manufacturer of refuse and recycling equipment in North America, announced it would manufacture a full line of refuse trucks designed for collection of residential and commercial solid waste in Booneville. New Way Trucks will invest $2.5 million and create 100 jobs in Prentiss County. MDA assisted with the purchase of the facility, which the company will lease from the county.

Keystone Electrical Manufacturing Company announced in February 2020 the company would locate a new manufacturing facility in Brookhaven. Keystone, which is headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, will invest more than $3.5 million and create 30 jobs to support its new facility. Keystone President Fred Buie is a native of Brookhaven and graduated from Brookhaven High School and Mississippi State University. Throughout his career, he has continued to keep a close connection with Mississippi, maintaining a second home in Brookhaven and continuing as a local timber farmer. He is very excited to be able to bring jobs and investment to his hometown.
The International Trade Bureau helps Mississippi companies improve their business prospects internationally. Bureau staff provides international business training and technical export assistance and also sponsors a variety of international trade missions.

In calendar year 2019, Mississippi exported nearly $12 billion in goods and services to 206 countries around the world. From 2018-2019, Mississippi exports increased by 2.34 percent.

The U.S. Small Business Administration’s State Trade Expansion Program assists businesses looking to start or increase trade by providing access to resources designed to help them promote their products and services to international markets while helping with the financial costs associated with participation in international business development trips.

Mississippi companies benefitting from the STEP grant program include:

- **Hyperion Technology**, headquartered in Tupelo, is an engineering services company that provides technology and development support to governments and industry around the world. Founded in 2009, the company currently has 51 employees, as well as a second location in Dayton, Ohio.
  “I think our biggest success would be our connection to the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. We have made several trips to Vienna, and as a direct result of those trips, we now supply sensors to the United Nations in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization that are being used at nuclear monitoring stations around the globe,” said Hyperion President and CEO Geoffrey E. Carter, P.E.
  The company’s recorded sales during 2018 and 2019 for the project totaled $506,000.

- **Thomasson Lumber**, headquartered in Philadelphia, provides pressure-treated utility poles of varying lengths and specifications and quality pressure-treated piling products to consumers around the globe.
  In 2019, the company’s sales in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Philippines totaled nearly $1.63 million. Thomasson Lumber has more than 100 years of industry experience.

### MISSISSIPPI’S TOP 10 EXPORT COUNTRIES AND VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CANADA</td>
<td>$2,229,741,873</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. MEXICO</td>
<td>$1,170,298,121</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. PANAMA</td>
<td>$1,034,873,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>$637,656,841</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. HONDURAS</td>
<td>$525,192,693</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. CHINA</td>
<td>$512,492,780</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. BELGIUM</td>
<td>$492,288,458</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. GUATEMALA</td>
<td>$482,814,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. JAPAN</td>
<td>$418,592,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. BRAZIL</td>
<td>$376,646,083</td>
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</table>
MDA’s Existing Industry and Business Division assists Mississippi companies as they grow within the state and also helps establish start-up businesses. The goal of these efforts is to boost the economy by generating capital investment and jobs.

In FY20, MDA-assisted expansion economic development projects generated approximately $485 million in new investments and created 1,655 jobs.

In July 2019, The Middleby Corporation announced it would relocate its Lynx Grills headquarters and manufacturing operations to the Viking Range facility in Greenwood. Both the Viking Range and Lynx brands manufacture residential, commercial and outdoor appliances. The company will create 200 jobs and invest $5 million. MDA assisted with relocating equipment, building improvements and workforce training.

In June 2020, Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc. announced plans to expand and construct a new distribution facility in Hernando. AWG will invest more than $300 million and create 79 jobs in DeSoto County. AWG is the nation’s largest cooperative food wholesaler to independently owned supermarkets and currently serves more than 1,100 member companies throughout 28 states. MDA assisted with site preparation, construction and public infrastructure needs.

In June 2020, Calgon Carbon announced it would increase capacity at its Port Bienville facility in Hancock County. To accommodate its growth, the company is increasing its production space from 200,000 to 400,000 square feet. Calgon Carbon manufactures activated carbon products to meet water and air purification demands for customers worldwide. Calgon Carbon invested $185 million and created 38 jobs. MDA assisted with building construction and workforce training.
VISIT MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI TRAILS PROGRAMS

Mississippi’s Trails Programs have become highlights of the state tourism industry. Visitors from around the world follow the footsteps of some of the most notable individuals in history, including musicians, authors and key figures from the civil rights era.

The state’s four cultural trail programs are the Blues Trail, Freedom Trail, Country Music Trail and the Writers Trail. During FY20, three new markers were placed on the Blues Trail, bringing the total to 408. Four new markers were placed on the Country Music Trail, and eight new markers were placed on the Writers Trail.

NEW MARKERS FY20

**Mississippi Writers Trail (MWT)**
1. Margaret Walker – Jackson-Margaret Walker Center (JSU)
3. Elizabeth Spencer – Carrolton-Merrill Museum
5. Tennessee Williams – Clarksdale—Cutrer Mansion
6. Walker Percy – Greenville—E.E. Bass Cultural Arts Center
7. Shelby Foote – Greenville—E.E. Bass Cultural Arts Center
8. Ida B. Wells – Holly Springs—Rust College

**Country Music Trail Markers (CMT)**
1. Marty Gamblin – Philadelphia
2. Jerry Lee Lewis – Nesbit
4. Steve Azar – Greenville

Visit Mississippi is the Tourism Division of MDA and promotes Mississippi regionally, nationally and internationally. This division focuses on tourism development, including the trail marker program, welcome centers and visitors services; tourism trade and films.
**FY20 Tourism Highlights:**
- More than 20 million visitors traveled to Mississippi in FY20.
- Visitor expenditures throughout Mississippi’s 82 counties totaled $5.5 billion.
- Tourism accounted for an estimated 80,000 direct jobs in Mississippi.
- Travel and tourism are responsible for $340 million in General Fund revenues.
- Tourism in Mississippi accounts for a direct annual payroll of $1.75 billion.
- Tourism is Mississippi’s fourth largest private-sector employer.
- In FY20, welcome centers greeted 1.3 million visitors, and 29,016 of those were international travelers.

**Mississippi Film Office**
In FY20, there were six feature films produced in Mississippi, up from two the previous fiscal year. These films were: The Dinner Party, Hattiesburg; Bastard’s Crossing, Brookhaven; Texas Red, Brookhaven; Jakob’s Wife, Canton; Son, Clarksdale/Cleveland/Greenville; The Card Counter (Gulf Coast). Two non-scripted/reality shows also were filmed in Mississippi in FY20: Home Town, Season 4, Laurel, and Find Your Outdoors, Gulf Coast.

Combined, these projects amounted to an estimated $3,205,735 spent with Mississippi businesses and had a combined local payroll of $2,054,554. Several productions were placed on hold due to COVID-19 in the last quarter of FY20.

In addition, there were numerous productions not using the rebate program filmed in all corners of Mississippi, including short films made by Mississippi-based emerging filmmakers, episodes or segments from dozens of reality-based/non-scripted shows covering hunting/fishing/outdoors, food, homes, investigative, music and culture, as well as local and regional commercials.

In other areas central to the mission of creating a vibrant and nurturing film environment, the Mississippi Film Office continued to support the professional production alliances located in Jackson and on the Gulf Coast and sponsored and provided programming support to statewide film festivals and related events.

It also directly supported indigenous filmmaking by continuing to fund the Mississippi Emerging Filmmakers Grant program administered by the Mississippi Film Alliance. The Film Office worked closely with statewide educational programs to identify and connect with new workforce personnel and launched a series of informative networking meetings in areas of the state with growing film communities.
The mission of MDA’s Energy and Natural Resources Division is to support economic growth in Mississippi that leads to increased energy production and consumption in an efficient and environmentally sustainable manner. This division has a four-pillar strategy focused on promoting the state as a top location for energy-related businesses, energy efficiency, energy workforce development and energy security.

Energy has programs that provide low-interest financing to public, private and non-profit organizations that invest in capital improvements to increase the efficiency of their operations or use alternative energy resources. ENRD manages the energy performance contracting network and has pre-qualified 12 energy services companies that may engage in energy efficiency contracts with local, state and federal government entities in Mississippi.

The inaugural round of the Mississippi Industrial Energy Efficiency Program grants were completed in FY20. These projects are expected to save $1.6 million over five years with companies saving 6 percent in energy costs on average each year. These seven projects have improved working conditions for nearly 1,800 employees across a variety of industries in Mississippi, including catfish processing and HVAC component production. Projects include lighting upgrades, compressed air system replacements and building envelope improvements that cover nearly 1.43 million square feet of manufacturing space.

Under the State Energy Management Program, ENRD is responsible for reporting energy consumption of all state agencies to the Legislature. The division aggregated energy data from 77 agencies by compiling more than 18,000 utility bills into the Siemens Navigator energy management platform. From FY19 to FY20, total energy costs decreased by $4.73 million, and the average cost per square foot was down 4.2 percent. A large portion of this decrease was due to the COVID-19 pandemic that depressed fuel prices.

### ANNUAL STATE AGENCY ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND COST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARAMETER / (UNITS)</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ANNUAL COST (U.S. DOLLARS)</td>
<td>$104,378,600</td>
<td>$104,378,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELECTRICITY USAGE/ KILOWATT HOURS (KWHR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVERAGE COST FOR KWHR</td>
<td>$0.0777</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATURAL GAS USAGE/ HUNDRED CUBIC FEET (CCF)</td>
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<td>30,702,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVERAGE COST PER CCF</td>
<td>$0.545</td>
<td>$0.460</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL SQUARE FEET (FT2)</td>
<td>74,008,463</td>
<td>73,981,217</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVERAGE COST PER SQUARE FOOT ($/FT2)</td>
<td>$1.45</td>
<td>$1.35</td>
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### RATIO OF TOTAL FY20 STATE ENERGY EXPENDITURES

- **NATURAL GAS COST**
  - $14,112,900 (14%)
- **ELECTRICITY COST**
  - $85,534,400 (86%)
Mississippi’s productive, highly skilled workforce plays a key role in recruiting companies to invest in the state through new locations or expansions. MDA’s team approach, combined with the state’s impressive training network, helps businesses achieve immediate and long-term success.

In FY20, MDA provided more than $2.2 million through the Mississippi Works Fund to assist the state’s community colleges, universities and WIN Job Centers with workforce training. These investments help meet the critical hiring and training needs of today’s industries that are not met through regular workforce training programs.

The Mississippi Works Fund allocates $50 million for workforce training and prepares more Mississippians for the in-demand, sought-after careers being created throughout the state. Seventy-five percent of the funds are reserved for new job creation, while 25 percent are allocated for existing workforce training and workforce certification.

In FY20, MDA provided $2,151,500 in Mississippi Works funds to assist the following:

- East Central Community College - ESCO/Weir Group
- South Delta Planning & Development District - MS Works Apprenticeship
- South Mississippi Planning & Development District - MS Works Apprenticeship
- Central Mississippi Planning & Development District - MS Works Apprenticeship
- Three Rivers Planning & Development District - MS Works Apprenticeship
- South Delta Planning & Development District - Viking/Lynx Grills
- Itawamba Community College - Ashley Robotic Training
- Three Rivers Planning & Development District - Corelle Brands
- Northeast Mississippi Community College - New Way Trucks Welding Project
- South Delta Planning & Development District - Blauer Manufacturing
- South Delta Planning & Development District - GreenServ
- South Delta Planning & Development District - Broadway Linen Services (BLS)
MDA’s Community Services Division administers state and federal financial and technical assistance programs that help sustain communities and prepare them for growth. Through grant and loan programs, the CSD provides funding that improves quality of life, supports current economic development projects and builds capacity for future economic development projects.

**Federal programs:**
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

**State programs:**
Mississippi Development Infrastructure Program (DIP)
Rural Impact Fund (RIF)
Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Program (SMLPC)
Mississippi Main Street Investment Revolving Loan Fund Program (MMSIRLF)
Capital Investments Revolving Loan Fund Program (CAP Loan)
Local Governments Freight Rail Loan Fund Program (RAIL)

**SUCCESS STORIES**

**Parmida LED Technologies** announced the location of a distribution and e-commerce operations center in Indianola. The project represents a $1 million corporate investment and created 20 new jobs in the Mississippi Delta. MDA awarded Sunflower County $400,000 through the CDBG program to assist with the renovation of publicly owned infrastructure and building improvements.

**Jones Lumber** announced the company was expanding its grade lumber operations in Natchez. MDA awarded Adams County a $234,243 DIP grant to assist with drainage and road improvements in support of the expansion project. The company is investing $15 million and creating 35 new jobs in Southwest Mississippi.

**ADDITIONAL COMPANIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION**

- Parmida LED Technologies, LLC, Sunflower County (CDBG) $400,000
- Image Industries, Inc., Coahoma County (DIP) $500,000
- New Way Trucks, Prentiss County (CAP Loan) $2,275,000

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>NUMBER OF AWARDS</th>
<th>TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED</th>
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<td>ARC</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDBG</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIP</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>RIF</td>
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<td>NSP</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMLPC</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP LOAN</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$11,326,321</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAIL</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>
MINORITY AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

MDA’s Minority and Small Business Development Division connects minority- and women-owned businesses with key industry partners from the public and private sectors. The division also assists with identifying joint-venture and subcontracting opportunities and provides technical and financial assistance to help these businesses compete successfully for commercial and federal, state and local contracts.

As of FY20, the MSDD sponsored and/or participated in more than 50 conferences, workshops and training events. The outreach and educational programs are designed to foster a positive working relationship between local, state and federal agencies and small minority- and women-owned businesses. This is accomplished through periodic workshops, forums and summits held in strategic locations and virtually online. MSBDD continues to partner with other business organizations, agencies and alliance groups to advance the growth and development of small businesses throughout the state.

Workshops and conferences MSBDD sponsored or participated in include:
- NASA Small Business Showcase, Stennis Space Center, Hancock County
- Jackson County Industrial Supplier Association Business and Industry Roundtable, Pascagoula
- Gulf Coast Industry Connection, Gulfport
- Delta Emerging Small Business Conference, Greenville
- Certification, Financing and Government Procurement Opportunities, Southaven
- USACE Innovation Summit, Vicksburg
- Creating An Effective Capability Statement Workshop, Columbus

Model Contractor Academy

The Model Contractor Development Program, which evolved into the Model Contractor Academy in October 2019, teaches best practices to small contractors and businesses throughout Mississippi to help them improve their operations and increase bonding capacity. The MCDP has graduated more than 1,000 participants from workshops held in approximately 20 cities throughout the state, including Greenwood, Greenville, Jackson, Gulfport, Tunica, Columbus, Tupelo, Meridian and Hattiesburg.

The inaugural class of the Contractor’s Academy kicked off in Hattiesburg in early January 2020 and concluded in late February.

The Contractor’s Academy is a three-phase program that intertwines MSBDD’s two existing contractor development programs with a customized approach. The Academy focuses on building the basic infrastructure of a small businesses, assisting contractors with becoming more comfortable obtaining licensure through the Mississippi State Board of Contractors, building bonding capacity and increasing chances of winning larger contracts. The Academy also provides hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge of advanced contracting principles and practices.
The Entrepreneur Center continued its focus on ecosystem development, following two specific pathways to ensure companies have multiple ways to enter the system, regardless of development stage and technical sophistication. This includes engaging outside expert organizations, including Startups Genome and HeartLand Forward, two experts in national and international system development.

In developing the “lifestyle” business pathway, TEC coordinated a senior management committee that meets virtually once a week. The committee is comprised of executive directors from MDA, Mississippi Small Business Development Center, Main Street Mississippi and The Alliance. The group continually evaluates the needs of small businesses and develops methods to address their needs.

In developing the “knowledge intensive pathway,” TEC has engaged various groups that focus on advanced technology and emerging technology organizations. They include: Mississippi Research Consortium, Mississippi Office of Technology and Transfer and the Digital Education Group.

TEC has continued to work in conjunction with Innovate Mississippi, assisting with the development of two new Angel Funds. These programs are designed to showcase the benefits of doing business in the state and include the research universities, military labs and state government.

The Entrepreneur Center at MDA is a bureau within the Minority and Small Business Division. For entrepreneurs seeking resources to start a new venture or for a seasoned business owner wanting to expand, The Entrepreneur Center is a one-stop shop.

In FY20 TEC conducted 22 workshops, all of which were held in Jackson. Thirty percent of the workshops were conducted virtually, either via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The center also hosted five webinars. Topics included “Simple Steps to Starting a Business,” “Financing and Marketing Concepts” and “Business Practices During COVID-19.”
MDA’s Asset Development Division assists communities in enriching their economic development environments through its Aspire Mississippi program, while maintaining important commitments to the Main Street and Hometown Retirement programs.

The focus of Aspire Mississippi is to assist communities so they can become better places to live, work and visit. Local economic development directors serve as leaders of diverse teams of local stakeholders who attend sessions devoted to community, economic and workforce development and data-driven decision making. County teams receive guidance as they determine and map a community project, which is a significant component of the program. Leaders from Claiborne, Holmes and Sunflower counties comprise the 2020 Aspire class.

In five years, teams from 31 counties have completed Aspire Mississippi, resulting in numerous community-based projects that enhanced the quality of life.

**Mississippi Main Street**

MDA enjoys a strong working relationship with the Mississippi Main Street Association. Main Street communities reported 633 new businesses, 62 business expansions, 185 new jobs, 101 façade improvements, 331 new downtown living spaces and 36 new construction projects in FY20.

The latest community to receive the official Main Street designation is the Town of Nettleton. The Asset Development Division and other groups assisted Nettleton in creating a plan comprised of both short- and long-term goals for the community.
Asset Development and the Mississippi Main Street Association created a Community Development Collaborators Group, which consists of 18 state, federal and nonprofit partners that work in various areas of community development. The group shares information and resources, which has streamlined communication, and is working to build upon the programs and services of the partners to better maximize impact when working in Mississippi communities.

**Asset mapping**
The newly redesigned Asset Mapping program helps local teams identify assets and develop strategies so they can incorporate local assets into a community project action plan. Aberdeen, Greene County/Leakesville, McComb and a neighborhood in West Jackson are in various phases of the asset mapping process.

**Hometown Mississippi**
The Hometown Mississippi Retirement program helps communities to market themselves as retirement destinations.

Oxford, one of Mississippi’s certified retirement cities, is a vibrant university town heralded for its unique shops and galleries, eclectic restaurants and clubs and historic landmarks. Home to the University of Mississippi, it offers an array of exciting athletic events, as well as enlightening and enriching performing arts programs, scholarly presentations, museums and exhibits.

Oxford was featured in Southern Living’s August edition as one of the “Smartest Places to Retire” and has been cited in numerous articles as an ideal destination for retirees looking for a community with the right mix of quality-of-life amenities to enjoy during the next phase of their lives.
MDA’s Disaster Recovery Division has dispersed more than $5.43 billion in federal disaster funds from through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development since Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005. These funds are dedicated to long-term recovery efforts relating to Hurricane Katrina and later storms.

The division has three main recovery and preparedness priorities:

- Recovering housing stock – single and multi-family housing
- Rebuilding and strengthening public works/facilities
- Economic development – programs to retain and recruit new jobs and investment within affected counties

In the state’s efforts to restore the housing stock in the counties affected by Hurricane Katrina, MDA has provided more than $2 billion in grants to more than 27,000 homeowners whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the storm.

Currently, 265 public infrastructure projects receiving MDA-administered federal disaster recovery assistance are complete. These projects, which were undertaken throughout the 49 counties declared as major disaster areas after Hurricane Katrina, are aimed at rebuilding or strengthening public services, such as water/wastewater service, fire, police, permitting and other governmental activities. The division has five open public infrastructure projects under Community Revitalization, with an additional four projects under award and in pre-development.

The division’s economic recovery programs give funds to local governments to provide infrastructure to for-profit companies that create jobs for low- to moderate-income residents. To date, 85 of 91 economic development projects receiving federal disaster recovery assistance through MDA are complete. These projects account for 7,735 new jobs and 1,554 retained jobs. Of these jobs, 5,831 (62.8%) are held by low- to moderate-income individuals.
The Mississippi Development Authority’s Marketing and Communications Division promotes the agency’s job and investment creation efforts and works to attract visitors to the state’s tourism destinations. Marketing and Communications serves each of MDA’s divisions through public relations, marketing, event planning, graphic design, website management and advertising.

For FY20 state-assisted economic development projects, the public relations team worked with business representatives, local and regional economic development partners and media as companies announced new or expanded locations throughout the state.

The marketing team produced print and digital ads used to promote economic development and tourism. Marketing also used various social media platforms to promote economic development successes and tourism destinations.

The team also planned, hosted and participated in special events, including the Sanderson Farms Championship, Governor’s Conference on Tourism, Energy Awareness Day, Continental Tire grand opening, Aerospace Alliance Conference, SEUS Japan and the Mississippi Economic Development Council Conference.

In the spring of 2020, Mississippi won its second consecutive Gold Shovel Award from Area Development magazine for the People Shores project. This was the state’s third Gold Shovel and its ninth consecutive shovel award.
MDA’s Financial Resources Division provides technical assistance for the various business incentive programs available and administers many of the financing and incentive programs Mississippi offers to new and expanding businesses.

The division gives guidance to agency staff and economic development professionals, as well as prospective businesses and current employers, regarding the statutory tax incentives Mississippi offers businesses that create jobs and make financial investments in the state. Financial Resources also manages a variety of economic development loan, grant and incentive programs essential to maintaining Mississippi’s competitiveness in attracting new jobs and investment. These programs play a key role in supporting the business location and expansion projects highlighted throughout this report.