

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



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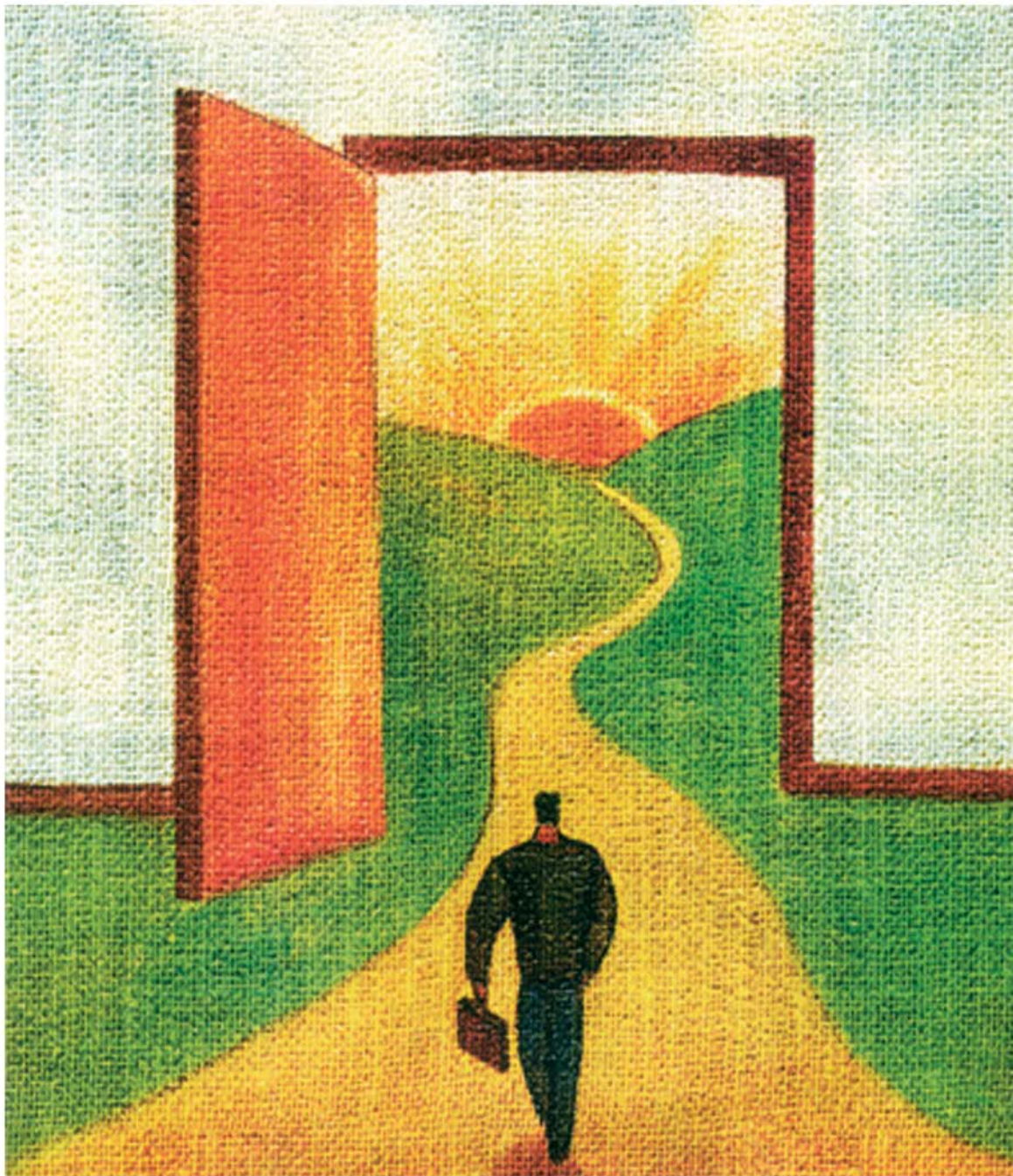


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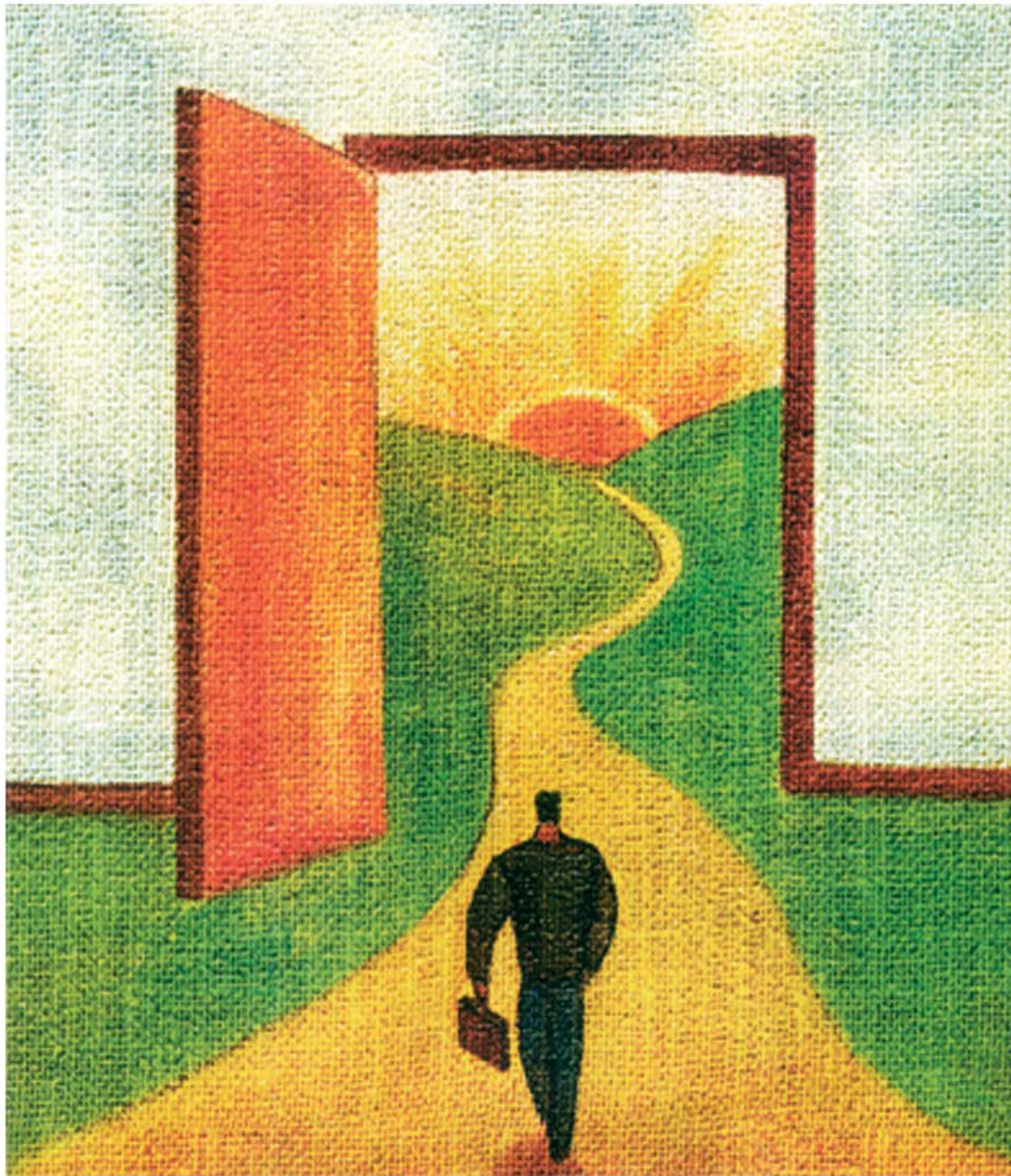
BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011

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BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



PROLOGUE



What is Blueprint Mississippi?

Vision: To enable a more prosperous, vibrant, and resilient Mississippi, built upon a foundation of economic opportunity for all its citizens.

Blueprint Mississippi is an independent cooperative of organizations and leaders aimed at conducting an objective review of Mississippi's economic opportunities and recommended actions for putting Mississippi in the place of greatest opportunity. It is an extension of a similar statewide effort launched in 2004 by the lead organizations listed below.

Lead Organizations

Mississippi Economic Council, The State Chamber – an organization of over 8,000 members from 1,200 companies from every corner of the state, dedicated to building a more competitive Mississippi. MEC's MB Swayze Foundation provided the structure for overseeing the project and assembling the funding for the research and project efforts.

Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development – an organization, working in partnership with MDA to make the state more competitive in recruitment.

Momentum Mississippi, a public private partnership created as a resource for his administration by former Governor Haley Barbour based on the recommendation of Blueprint Mississippi, to provide long-range economic development planning resources to MDA and the State of Mississippi.

Lead Researchers

Mississippi University Research Consortium – the four major research Universities – Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi, which for this project also teamed with Tougaloo College, the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and private consulting resources to conduct the scholarly research and interface with councils and stakeholders, to create the core of the project – the goals and recommendations, and their accompanying narratives.

Mississippi Leaders – Thousands of participants – business and community leaders – who attended road show meetings to offer input and who served as stakeholders, project, advisory and steering council members from across the state who contributed input to this report.





Foreword: A Snapshot of Things to Come

Welcome to Blueprint Mississippi – a massive, privately funded effort aimed at both looking at Mississippi as it is, and as it can be, and providing a process for engaging business and community leaders across the state in a sustained effort to continuously improve our competitive position to put our state in the place of greatest opportunity.

The material presented is a snapshot of what we have learned as we have scanned the broader landscape of the state's competitive position, compiling literally thousands of pages of research and data points. This report focuses on a few interesting points and opportunities – and eliminates far more than it includes. It likely also misses some important information. It is the best we can deliver with the time, space and resources available at the time this snapshot is delivered.

But since this is only a snapshot, it becomes out of date almost immediately, which is why this document is presented on-line, so that it can be continuously improved.

We are eager to review new perspectives, expand points of view and update and improve accuracy. This is why we hope you will use the following email to let us know your thoughts, share information about progress and continuously help us improve this report.

Blueprint will not implement this study – but will rather keep it as up to date as possible with the resources at hand. Implementation will come from the active engagement of trade and professional associations, political and community leaders, local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations, as well as business leaders and individuals across the state who take up the cause and find creative solutions for implementing the goals and recommendations presented here – and developing new ones as well. Through this shared and sustained effort, together we can make certain Mississippi is in the place of greatest opportunity.





Message from Blueprint MS Chair



Dr. Hank Bounds

Commissioner, Institutions of Higher Learning
Chair of Blueprint Mississippi 2011

Blueprint Mississippi 2011 provides a great opportunity for us to think about what Mississippi's future can look like.

Throughout the Blueprint process we have discussed how we can be bold and move from our once low-wage, low-skill economy to a middle-skill, higher-wage and creative-based economy. We know that most jobs in the future will require some training after high school and 54 percent will be middle-skill jobs. We know that poverty and academic success are intertwined so we must address the issues children from low income households face if we are going to have a workforce with the skills necessary to improve Mississippi.

The foundation already exists and scores of major economic development projects have come to Mississippi thanks to the hard work of former Governor Haley Barbour, the Mississippi Development Authority, local and regional economic developers—and with strong support from the Legislature. These projects have positioned our state for progress and the momentum continues to build, even during these times of international economic challenge.

We've also seen a new recognition by Mississippians that we can capitalize on our rich cultural heritage and entrepreneurial spirit of our people and monetize these strengths into a growing creative economy, from film-making to tourism and from the development of homegrown hightech firms to the smallest of businesses in communities across our great state.

Literally thousands of business and community leaders participated in the extensive Blueprint Mississippi process—attending meetings, serving as stakeholders, connecting to Web conferences and participating on committees. They helped shape the goals and recommendations presented in this document, working in cooperation with private consultants and research teams from our state's four public research universities—Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi and University of Southern Mississippi as well as the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and Tougaloo College.

Blueprint Mississippi has truly been a coordinated effort and it will take a partnership of public, private and non-profit organizations to turn the recommendations into reality.

There is much work ahead, but I know by harnessing the power across the state, we can build a better Mississippi for our children and our grandchildren.





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Committed to a Healthier Mississippi.

KEYSTONE SPONSORS



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LTM Enterprises, DBA McDonalds • Mississippi Association of Educators
Mississippi Cable Telecommunications Association





Goals in Priority Order

(As Selected by over 1,500 voting business and community leaders among the nearly 1,900 attending 15 Roll-Out Sessions in 13 communities: Biloxi, Cleveland, Corinth, Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Indianola, Jackson, McComb, Meridian, Oxford, Southaven, Starkville, Tupelo).

1. Increase the Educational Achievement of Mississippians
2. Cultivate a More Robust Workforce in Mississippi
3. Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's Economy
4. Promote Health Care as an Economic Driver
5. Support Mississippi's Creative Economy
6. Continually Develop the Infrastructure for a Competitive Economy
7. Increase Availability of Financial Capital
8. Cultivate Diversity, Community Cooperation and Racial Reconciliation
9. Improve Communication and Coordination Among Public, Private and Non-profit Leaders



Blueprint States

Blueprint Mississippi offers comparative data for what is commonly referred to as the 12 Blueprint States. These are the states that economic development professionals in Mississippi regard as our most closely aligned competitors. While national comparisons are interesting from an intellectual point of view, it is more important to note how our state compares to the market in which we compete.



MISSISSIPPI



GEORGIA



OKLAHOMA



ALABAMA



KENTUCKY



SOUTH CAROLINA



ARKANSAS



LOUISIANA



TENNESSEE



FLORIDA



NORTH CAROLINA



TEXAS



Blueprint by the Numbers

- 300 business leaders and 300 voters were surveyed in two separate surveys whose results were compared and contrasted in the MEC/Godwin Group Economic State of the State, November, 2010, as a foundation for Blueprint MS Research.
- 700 business and community leaders from around the state attended the Blueprint Mississippi Roll-Out Morning Session as a part of MEC Capital Day in January, 2011.
- 2,500 business and community leaders participated in 20 community Blueprint Mississippi road shows February-March, 2011, with nearly 2,000 voting during the sessions on issues of importance and another 1,000 weighing in using internet voting.
- Nearly 1,000 business and community leaders signed up to participate as stakeholders or committee members and hundreds joined a series of Web Conferences held throughout the spring and summer to share research and narrow priorities.
- 1,900 business and community leaders attended 15 roll-out events in 13 different communities and 1,500 voted on key priorities, October-December, 2011.
- 27 Web Conferences in 2011 allowed leaders to participate without leaving their desks
- 9 Goals – 36 Recommendations





Blueprint Project Road Show Stops

24 communities giving feedback manually and electronically during 35 Road Show presentations in:

Biloxi

Grenada

Natchez

Booneville

Gulfport

Oxford

Brookhaven

Hattiesburg

Pascagoula

Cleveland

Indianola

Southaven

Corinth

Jackson

Starkville

Columbus

Laurel

Tupelo

Greenville

McComb

Tunica

Greenwood

Meridian

Vicksburg



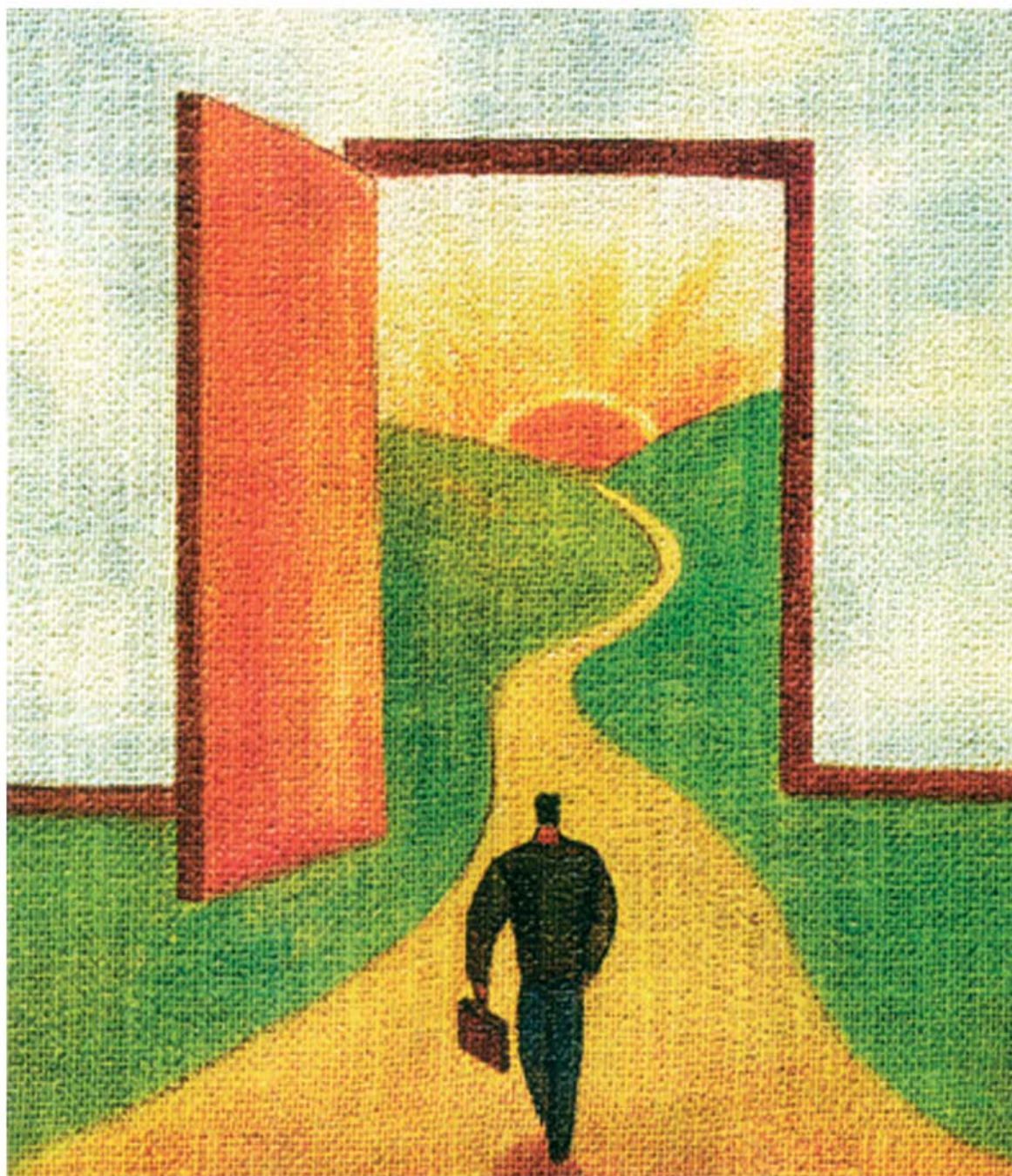


Blueprint Mississippi: Matters of Note

- **Blueprint Mississippi is entirely funded by the private sector and is offered as a tool for opening and stimulating discussion. It is not a final report, but rather a starting point for further expanding the dialogue among Mississippi leaders on issues of importance to the future economic success of the state.**
- **Blueprint Mississippi is a report of a comprehensive process that is based on input from the community and supporting research, not a legislative agenda, although some organizations may wish to adopt and further develop Blueprint's recommendations for legislative action.**
- **Blueprint Mississippi is not a consensus report, but rather the best attempt at pulling together ideas and approaches from a variety of sources and a diverse leadership group of volunteers. The Blueprint process engaged independent research, organizational input and business and community leader input from literally thousands of leaders across the state. It is for this reason that there may be disagreement among some of the leaders and organizations who participated regarding some of the goals and recommendations – yet, the work product reflects the best common ground that could be gained in the time and with the resources available. It is for this reason, among others, that certain specific goals, recommendations and reported results may not necessarily represent the views of the organizations, corporations, research organizations, universities and individual researchers and leaders who participated in this project.**
- **Blueprint Mississippi is offered as a starting point for what will be an ongoing dialogue for improving the economic future of the state.**
- **Blueprint Mississippi is provided as an online resource, to allow data to be updated and our approach to be improved upon with each passing month and to make it a useful ongoing research and resource tool for economic development leaders in Mississippi. Each web page is date stamped to provide a connection to the time the data was compiled, presented and/or updated.**



BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



MESSAGES FROM CHAIRS



Message from Economic Competitiveness Chair



Haley Fisackerly

President & CEO, Entergy Mississippi
Chair – Economic Competitiveness

By working to strengthen and expand our economy, Mississippi will build on the foundation that has been created over the past eight years.

Blueprint Mississippi 2011 provides the building blocks necessary to continue that great work. Following the original Blueprint Plan allowed us to see phenomenal growth, even in the face of an economic downturn. The creation of Momentum Mississippi and the incentives that were approved through Momentum led to:

- More than 50,000 new jobs - created or planned - in new and existing industries
- Private investment of more than \$10 billion
- A renewed emphasis on regionalism – and working together Mississippi has landed several major economic development projects
- And by focusing on our cultural and historical heritage we're opening new opportunities for our state's creative economy

A major part of our success has been the effort to ensure Mississippi has a skilled and ready workforce. To achieve this:

- We created a Single Workforce Investment Board and WIN Job Centers
- We allocated workforce training dollars for Mississippi's 15 community colleges
- Community colleges and the state's department of employment security worked hand-in-hand with businesses to provide the types of specialized training to attract and retain advanced manufacturing
- Groups around the state focused on entrepreneurship and worked to create opportunities for minority businesses

While our successes are great, we realize that to maintain a competitive edge, we have to look for new ways to improve business opportunities. We need to:

- Evaluate our industry sectors to determine growth opportunities
- Sustain and enhance current business recruitment incentives
- Remove tax and regulatory burdens
- Build strong communication and coordination among the state's public, private and non-profit leaders.

We've made great progress, but there's still work to be done. The strategy has been established, and together we can create a stronger economy and a stronger Mississippi.





Message from Technology Commercialization Chair



Alveno Castilla

Partner, Jones Walker

Chair – Technology Commercialization

One of the greatest opportunities we now have in Mississippi is to capitalize on our technology commercialization possibilities.

There have been great strides made in expanding Mississippi's technology footprint. These include:

- The creation of the Angel Fund at Mississippi Technology Alliance
- New technology incentives that were part of the Momentum Mississippi package
- And, encouraging entrepreneurship in a wide range of technology fields

Over the past few years, many of the economic development projects that have chosen to locate in Mississippi have focused on using new technology ... especially in the areas of advanced manufacturing and energy. Also, new technologies will allow companies to become more efficient and create cost savings.

And, we have seen significant growth occurring at many of

our existing technology businesses.

Another crucial point to mention is that there continues to be great cooperation between research universities and the private sector in bringing new technologies. This is an absolute "must," and we are fortunate it is happening.

And through the recently formed Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition, we are looking to maximize resources and make technology more accessible to businesses and to all of our citizens.

With Blueprint Mississippi we can build on our past success.

One key will be to increase the availability of financial capital and aggressively encourage investment by the private sector in research and development. We must recognize the important role entrepreneurship plays in the development of new innovations and ensure we have an environment that promotes entrepreneurial growth.

It is essential that we place renewed emphasis on providing a workforce for careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

We have made tremendous progress, but there is more work to be done. Knowing the tremendous amount of thought and work that has gone into this process, I am confident Blueprint Mississippi will help us chart a course toward new and exciting opportunities in technology.





Message from Educational Achievement Chair



Claiborne Barksdale
CEO, Barksdale Reading Institute
Chair – Educational Achievement

The Blueprint Education Task Force has come forward with a series of recommendations which we believe are concrete, specific and attainable.

We believe the initial most important issue that we need to address is the quality of the teachers and leaders in the schools. Towards this end we have three specific recommendations.

We recommend a \$12.5 million appropriation annually to increase the number of Teach for America and Mississippi Teacher Corps teachers in the state. If we can attain this we will have around 1,100 such teachers in the state, who would be placed strategically in high needs schools. We think this could make a big difference.

We are working with the Mississippi Department of Education to increase the requirements in order to get into teaching to obtain your certificate. We are working with IHL with Dr. Hank Bounds to increase the requirements in order to get into schools of education, so that both the entry and exit requirements will be more rigorous.

Commensurately, we are seeking a merit-based approach to compensation; excellent teachers should be rewarded accordingly. We have to develop a formula in order to do this, but we believe that is essential.

We are seeking a unified approach to early childhood education to bring together disparate elements that are currently spread across a number of bureaucracies.

We are seeking the elimination of elected superintendents. It makes no sense. We want to accomplish this by 2015.

We offer a very narrow and targeted recommendation regarding the implementation of Charter Schools in Mississippi. With over 20 years of data to draw upon from national sources, research tells us that Charter Schools, like public schools, bring mixed results. The basic ingredients of exceptional leadership, teaching and parental involvement are key for success with either approach.

This is why approach is focused and specific, allowing for Charter Schools to be established only for schools which are rated below successful for two consecutive years under state standards, allowing Charter Schools to be run only by those organizations with a proven track record with standards established by and charters approved by the Mississippi Department of Education and with attendance open to all students living within the school zone.

In a state with limited resources, caution is necessary so we do not create a dual educational system that requires dual funding.

And finally, we are working with existing efforts in order to increase the number of citizens in Mississippi who have Associate's and Bachelor's degrees so we will have a more educated citizenry and workforce.





Message from Resource Management Chair



Ed Day

President & CEO, Mississippi Power
Chair, Resource Management

Mississippi is a state of abundant natural resources.

Through the Blueprint Mississippi process we have identified numerous ways Mississippi is capitalizing on those resources to help position the state for success. It is vital we have reliable energy sources to attract and retain the types of businesses that will help grow Mississippi's economy.

We've seen a commitment to this with projects such as:

- Entergy Mississippi's Grand Gulf Nuclear Plant's expansion in Port Gibson
- Chevron's expansion in Pascagoula to refine premium based oils
- The Gulf LNG, a liquefied natural gas terminal in Pascagoula
- And, Mississippi Power's Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle plant in Kemper County

Also, Mississippi is fast becoming a leader in renewable energy with recent projects like:

- KiOR's opening of three facilities to create fuel blendstocks from a variety of biomass
- Twin Creeks Technologies manufacturing of crystalline silicon solar panels in Senatobia
- Soladigm, a producer of energy-efficient Dynamic Glass in Olive Branch

- Stion, a manufacturer of high-efficiency, low-cost thin-film solar panels in Hattiesburg
- Enviva, with locations in Wiggins and Amroy, provides clean, sustainable, renewable wood pellet biomass to industrial-scale customers
- And many more examples across Mississippi

There continues to be key advancements in our infrastructure with:

- The expansion under way at the Mississippi State Port at Gulfport
- Intermodal expansions at airports in Jackson and Gulfport
- The creation of the State Intermodal Council to coordinate opportunities
- The opening of the first leg of I-69 completed in Tunica and DeSoto counties
- Improvements to U.S. Highway 78 to bring it up to Interstate quality as it becomes I-22
- And, the completion of a network of four-lane highways throughout the state

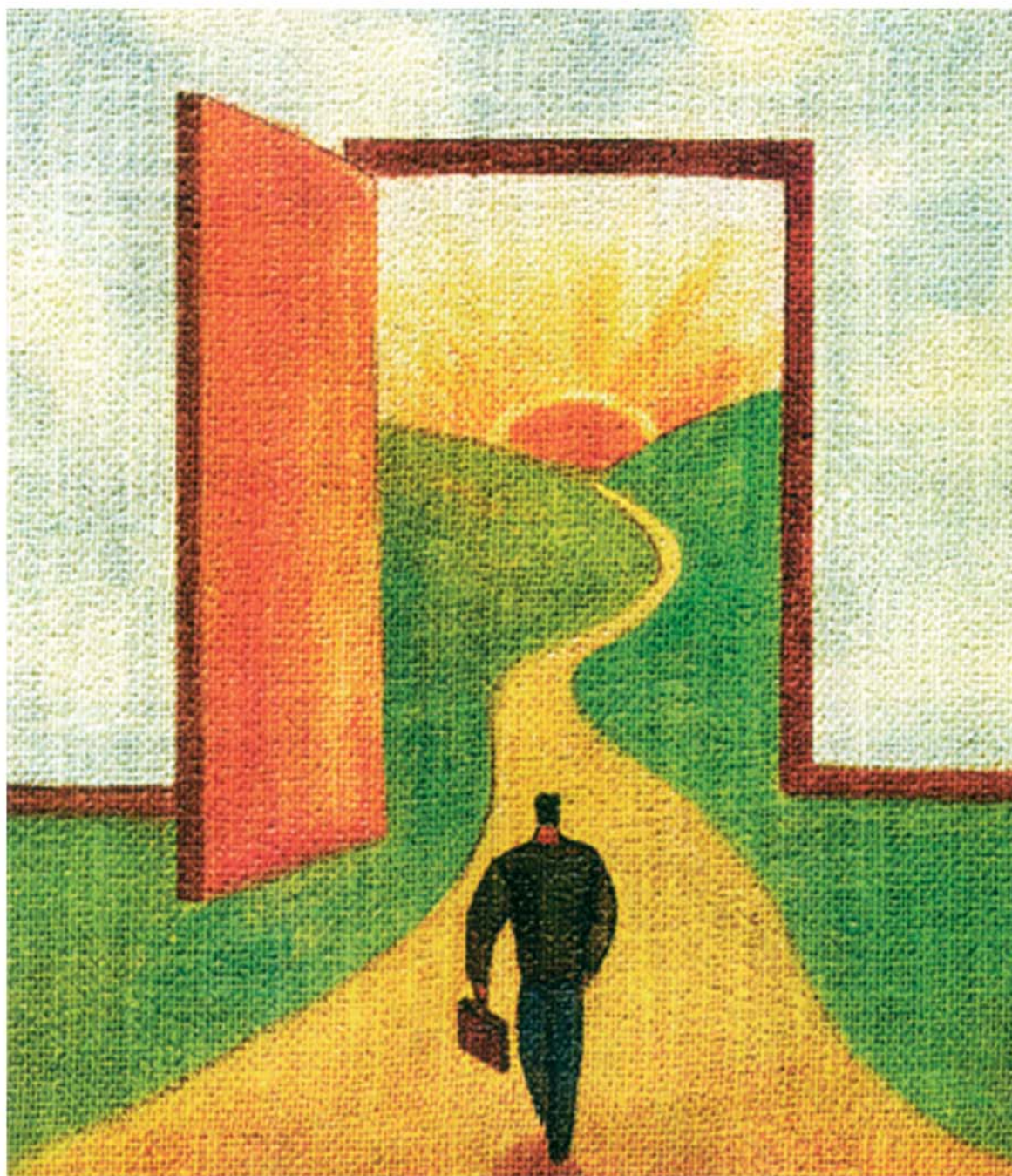
But in many ways this is just the beginning...

We must continue to push for improvements in infrastructure through long range planning – look for new ways to provide access to health care to all Mississippians and capitalize on the efforts under way to make sure Mississippi utilizes its energy resources.

Working together through Blueprint Mississippi we can build on the foundation that already exists.



BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS & CORE RESEARCH NARRATIVE



Executive Summary Of Research

Blueprint Mississippi 2011 recognizes Mississippi's recent progress in cultivating the state's business climate and image provides powerful momentum for anticipating and proactively addressing both opportunities and challenges facing the state in order to ensure a brighter economic future.

To effectively measure the state's progress, *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* compares performance to the twelve Blueprint states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas – those states which economic developers confirm comprise our market.

Overall Key Performance Indicators have been established to track our progress including: Mississippi Fourth Grade Reading Scores; Educational Achievement Levels of Mississippians Over Age 25; Mississippi Private Sector Jobs Gained Since Previous Year; and Active Mississippi Physicians Per 10,000 Capita. Additionally, *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* has established specific, reasonable **Goals** Mississippi should aim to meet within these metrics in order to benchmark progress.

Goals

Goals of *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* represent approaches Mississippi can undertake in order to stimulate economic development, which in turn can drive up the state's economic levels to meet the *Blueprint Mississippi 2011 Goals*. The **Goals** all include a set of **Recommendations**—concrete, insightful tactics that originated from the work accomplished by the four focus area committees (Economic Competitiveness, Educational Achievement, Resource Management, and Technology Commercialization) and crosscutting roundtables and research teams (Community Life, Health Care, Infrastructure, and Racial Reconciliation). Each **Goal** also has

a **Context** section elucidating Mississippi's recent progress in the area discussed, as well as existing challenges and potential solutions.

Improve Communication and Coordination Among Public and Private Leaders assures that the ideas set forth in *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* will be fully implemented to enhance Mississippi's economy. The **recommendation** associated with this **goal** is to institutionalize a permanent, diverse, privately led statewide organization of leaders charged with providing market research and sustained planning for economic development in Mississippi and becoming a resource and partner in helping implement the *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* recommendations.

Support Mississippi's Creative Economy explores the growing interest across Mississippi in taking advantage of one of our state's greatest natural resources—our people and talent. The recommendations associated with this goal are to support the goals in the report, *Mississippi's Creative Economy*, released by the Mississippi Arts Commission with the Mississippi Development Authority. These call for leaders to: facilitate efforts to make communities more creative and vibrant; promote entrepreneurship and small business growth among creative firms; help communities preserve and generate added value from cultural and historic heritage; enhance the competitiveness of businesses and industries through increased use of art and design; enhance support and the networking infrastructure for creative talent; build capacity to grow and retain creative talent; and develop tools and strategies to support growth throughout the tourism industry.





Executive Summary Of Research

*Cultivate **Diversity**, Community Cooperation, and Racial Reconciliation* highlights Mississippi's recent progress in the realm of race relations while also illuminating what continuing steps are necessary in order to increase community inclusivity and establish Mississippi at the forefront of states addressing the persisting national problems of inequality. **Recommendations** include: promote diversity in the workforce and in management in Mississippi businesses through training and by joining national and global business networks that promote the common good; invest in local community building projects that promote interracial cooperation; and invest in youth programs that promote interracial cooperation in order to ensure future generations of leadership.

*Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's **Economy*** examines Mississippi's business climate, explores Mississippi's industry strengths for development potential, and notes the strides Mississippi continues to make in creating an environment conducive to growth. Its **recommendations** include: evaluate Mississippi's industry sectors to determine priority sectors, and conduct comprehensive, customized cluster analyses to determine key growth opportunities for Mississippi, beginning with an assessment of the health care industry as a prototype; invest in university research, development, and commercialization; develop state-level programs that support rural and minority entrepreneurship and strengthen local economies; enhance entrepreneurship in K-20 (*kindergarten through graduate studies*) curricula, provide a statewide or regional Web portal for easy business assistance; remove tax and regulatory barriers that make Mississippi's business climate less competitive; reduce insurance burdens on Mississippi's coastal businesses and individuals, and sustain successful ongoing business recruitment incentives: and recognize and promote

opportunities that result from the growth and expansion of the technology- driven economy, engaging resources such as the Mississippi Technology Alliance to assist in focusing these efforts

*Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians* recommends investing in the future by ensuring that the state's youngest citizens (and future generations) receive the highest quality education from birth onward. It also recommends increasing average educational achievement levels through retention and by attracting highly educated newcomers. **Recommendations** include: improve teacher quality; create a quality early childhood education and development system; transition to all-appointed superintendents by 2015; allow conversion to charter school status of any school that for two or more consecutive years is rated below "successful" under the state's accountability system (the charter should be granted only to entities that have a track record of success in operating charter schools, per determination of the State Board of Education and all children who live within the school's attendance zone should be eligible to attend the new charter school, which should be subject to the state's accountability standards); support the Education Achievement council in its efforts to increase the number of Associate's and Bachelor's degree holders; and develop incentives to attract and retain highly educated citizens.

*Increase Availability of **Financial Capital*** analyzes the state's business climate and explores financing opportunities (and cost savings techniques) that could be used to increase the capital available to businesses in Mississippi, particularly small businesses, technology



Executive Summary Of Research

firms, and minority and rural entrepreneur-led companies that face unique difficulties acquiring capital. **Recommendations** include: develop tools to stimulate private sector R&D spending; create incentives and support for angel investments; develop tools and incentives to increase capital to support minority and rural businesses; and identify, invest in, and encourage the use of new technologies that enhance efficiencies and provide cost savings.

*Promote **Health Care** as an Economic Driver* focuses on the opportunities that exist in major metro areas, regional centers and rural communities alike in promoting a cluster approach to health care as economic development to create jobs as well as a better quality of life. Its **recommendations** include: target the development of the health care industry as an economic driver for Mississippi's economy and create a comprehensive cluster strategy around health care; increase the number of active physicians in the state; and increase the number of health care professionals throughout Mississippi.

*Continue to Develop the **Infrastructure** for a Competitive Economy* recognizes the extensive work already accomplished by the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute and the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition, as well as the Mississippi Department of Transportation in exploring ways to capitalize on our resources. Its **recommendations** include: retain and maintain the infrastructure to capitalize on transportation-related opportunities; in conjunction with state agencies, support the development of a proactive, strategic infrastructure master plan to support Mississippi's economic development goals building on the long-range plan outlined by the Mississippi Department of Transportation and engaging a broad range of stakeholders in the process; support the goals and mission of the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute (MEPI);

and support the goals and mission of the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition (MBCC).

*Cultivate a More Robust **Workforce** in Mississippi* addresses the long-term workforce needs of the state, including the following **recommendations**: in conjunction with state agencies, develop and brand a strategic, long-term workforce development plan for the state of Mississippi, building on the sound foundational strategy outlined by the State Workforce Investment Board and engaging a broad range of economic developers, resources, providers, business leaders and stakeholders in the process; provide awareness and assistance for occupations and vocations important to Mississippi; develop incentives to attract and retain highly educated workers, with particular emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) backgrounds; decrease the economic and societal costs associated with teenage births by lowering birthrates among females under 19; and expand access to and utilization of healthcare services, and improve health awareness and education.

Research Approaches

The *Blueprint Mississippi 2011* process also included the work of four **Research Teams** with representatives from Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University of Southern Mississippi along with Tougaloo College and the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

Community Life, Health Care, Infrastructure and Racial Reconciliation are all "crosscutting" issues because they affect and





Executive Summary Of Research

inform all of the major economic issues addressed by the focus area committees.

- **The Community Life** research finds that Mississippi's community assets can be viewed in the context of seven "community capitals"—natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built. Thus, some communities are "capital rich" while others are "capital deficient." Community development strategies can sustain, amplify, and maximize local strengths.
- The **Health Care** analysis finds that while urban centers offer a vast array of medical services, highly competitive with most markets and includes a major research and teaching hospital, many parts of rural Mississippi – as in other rural parts of America – remain underserved.
- The **Infrastructure** research surveyed existing Mississippi assets and novel infrastructure approaches and best practices.

Findings included strengths in transportation infrastructure—particularly roadways, rails, navigable waterways, and ports. The work explores opportunities to leverage and expand these transportation assets.

- The **Racial Reconciliation** analysis reviews the current and projected race demographics of the state, finding that Mississippi is projected to become a "majority-minority" state within the coming decades. The results address racial disparities in poverty, employment and income, access to health care, and rate of incarceration.

Blueprint Mississippi 2011 blends together targeted goals, thorough research, and recommendations drawn from a wide array of Mississippi's leaders. Combined, these elements can help state leadership develop strategies to ensure Mississippi's continued progress.



Improve Communication and **Coordination** Among Public, Private, and Non-Profit Leaders

GOAL:

Improve Communication and Coordination Among Public, Private, and Non-Profit Leaders

RECOMMENDATION:

*Institutionalize a permanent, diverse, privately led statewide organization of leaders charged with providing market research and sustained planning for economic development in Mississippi and serving as a key resource and partner in helping implement **Blueprint Mississippi 2011** recommendations.*

Blueprint Mississippi will become an ongoing research and development resource for Mississippi, coordinated through the work of a *Blueprint Council*, which will be formed as an independent body, staffed and supported through the Mississippi Economic Council's MB Swayze Educational and Research Foundation and focused with a formal ongoing research partnership with Mississippi's Institutions for Higher Learning.

Public Research Universities are Key

The Blueprint Council's primary research resource will be Mississippi's public university system – and it will serve as a key research resource to support the projects of the Mississippi Development Authority and Governor Phil Bryant, who will serve as the state's chief economic development officer.

Another Arrow in the Quiver

The creation of a private-sector led Blueprint Council, working in partnership with the state's research universities, will add another arrow in the quiver to Mississippi's economic development efforts,



assuring a sustained research resource for Governor Bryant and the Mississippi Development Authority as they partner with other public and private sector organizations to continue to make Mississippi more competitive and create more jobs and opportunities for our people.

Blueprint 2004 Results are Demonstrable

This effort has been highly successful. Today, most of the 2004 priority recommendations have been fully acted upon or have seen significant progress. Although these accomplishments are significant, the leaders of *Blueprint Mississippi* realize the work is not done. Successful economic development takes time—decades, not years. While Mississippi is making important progress, there is much more work to be done.

The success since Blueprint 2004 is evidence of what progress can be made through the collaboration of leaders. Even more can be accomplished by institutionalizing and expanding the role of this organization to become a trusted ongoing research and marketing partner at the disposal of the Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Economic Council, Mississippi Technology





Improve Communication and **Coordination** Among Public, Private, and Non-Profit Leaders



Alliance, trade and professional associations like the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, The Parents' Campaign, Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, Mississippi Economic Development Council and local and regional economic development organizations. A permanent, diverse, privately led statewide organization of leaders could have the following organizational responsibilities:

- Developing and regularly updating strategic economic development in Mississippi;
- Providing a single, streamlined portal to existing resources (information, organizations, infrastructure) and potential partners;
- Serving as a key resource for the Governor, the Mississippi Development Authority and local and regional economic development organizations for research, data and a direct connection to University resources in the direct recruitment of prospects to Mississippi;
- Providing market research resources to the Governor, Mississippi Development Authority and local and regional economic development organizations to support their sales activities in recruitment of industry and provide policy development support to the Mississippi Economic Council, trade and professional organizations like the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, local and regional Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations charged with the responsibility of advocating for the recommendations of the Blueprint process;

- Leveraging regional strengths and alliances with relevant organizations;
- Coordinating implementation of the Blueprint Mississippi 2011 recommendations and actions;
- Tracking metrics for goals of Blueprint Mississippi 2011 recommendations; and,
- Monitoring national and international best practices, trends, and new developments in economic development.

Regionalism key in Blueprint Council's Work

A "Blueprint Council" will also leverage regional strengths and alliances, providing sustained and credible resources to economic development leaders and both statewide and regional organizations committed to economic development. Regionalism helps communities leverage assets to better compete in the global economy, and a "Blueprint Council" with representation across Mississippi can best communicate these regional strengths. Additionally, a "Blueprint Council" can form strong partnerships with existing organizations such as the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition (MBCC), the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute (MEPI), and other specialized groups.

Mississippi is home to a tremendous array of homegrown assets, and asset mapping offers a means to increase awareness and build upon these assets as a means to strengthen both the state and regional economies. The "Blueprint Council" will provide a single, streamlined portal to existing resources (information, organiza-





Improve Communication and **Coordination** Among Public, Private, and Non-Profit Leaders

tions, infrastructure) and potential partners for easy access and use by the broader economic development community, the public, business executives, and entrepreneurs.

The Blueprint Council will guarantee that Blueprint Mississippi 2011 has as much impact as possible and ensure that future leadership will have solid foundations on which to evaluate Mississippi's progress.

Suggested Initial Drivers

Blueprint MS Steering Council
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Economic Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Blueprint MS Council Created Q1, 2012
Blueprint Task Forces Created on Priority Issues Q1, 2012
Blueprint Task Forces Created on Other Issues Q2-3, 2012

Potential Partners and Participants

Governor's Organization
Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Manufacturers Association
Mississippi Economic Council
The Parents' Campaign
Public Education Forum of Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
Gulf Coast Business Council (Insurance Task Force)
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Mississippi Community Colleges
Mississippi Energy Policy Institute
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Montgomery Institute
Other Business, Trade, Professional and Education Associations
Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations



Support Mississippi's Creative Economy

GOAL:

Support Mississippi's Creative Economy

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Support the goals in the report, Mississippi's Creative Economy, released by the Mississippi Arts Commission with the Mississippi Development Authority:*
 - *Facilitate efforts that make communities throughout the state more creative and vibrant.*
 - *Promote entrepreneurship and small business growth among creative firms.*
 - *Help communities preserve and generate added value from cultural and historic heritage.*
 - *Enhance the competitiveness of the state's businesses and industries through increased use of art and design.*
 - *Enhance the support and networking infrastructure for creative talent across the state.*
 - *Build capacity to grow and retain creative talent living and working in Mississippi.*
- *Develop tools and strategies to support growth throughout the tourism industry.*

Mississippi's creative tradition has an impact on the state's economy. A study jointly commissioned by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) found that more than 60,700 people work in Mississippi's creative economy (including both individuals employed by creative business enterprises and those who work in creative occupations).

Report Highlights Opportunities



Recently, MDA and the Mississippi Arts Commission partnered to produce a report, "Realizing the Economic Potential of Creativity in Mississippi," and hosted an accompanying statewide conference to discuss topics such as Developing Your Community's Unique Assets,

How Communities Can Effectively Tell Their Stories, Cultural Marketing: How Communities are Capitalizing on Their Cultural Assets, Capitalizing on the Culinary Arts, Success Stories: How Other States are Growing Their Creative Economies, and more.¹ New and gaining ground, this effort is sure to spur additional activity in pursuit of economic growth in Mississippi in coming years.

The study outlines the many ways that Mississippi's creative economy:

- Is a direct source of economic growth;
- Adds value to other sectors;
- Attracts talented people, businesses and tourists;
- Stimulates innovation; and
- Is the foundation for the 21st century workforce.²





Support Mississippi's Creative Economy



These approaches are also used across the U.S. to drive economic growth. For example, a number of communities, such as Athens, Ohio, Helena, Arkansas, and the Lake Erie region of New York and Pennsylvania have embraced Regional Flavor Strategies,³ an

approach that seeks to promote economic development via support for local food, arts, culture, and heritage initiatives. These strategies combine a mix of approaches, including a heavy dose of tourism promotion and a strong focus on nurturing local entrepreneurs. "Realizing the Economic Potential of Creativity in Mississippi" details several strategies through which Mississippi can act upon the above actions to further grow the creative economy. The goals, strategies, and other report elements are available at: <http://mscreativeeconomy.com/>

Suggested Initial Drivers

Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Arts Commission
Blueprint Council
Mississippi Economic Development Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Broadly Promote the Plan of MDA/MAC
Blueprint Task Force Created Q3, 2012

Potential Partners and Participants

Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Arts Commission
Mississippi Tourism Association
Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Blues Commission
Mississippi Country Music Commission
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Economic Council
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Community Colleges
Local Chambers, Tourism and Economic Development Organizations
Local Arts Associations



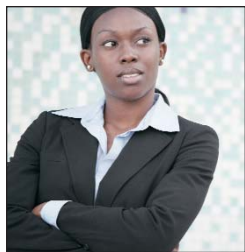
Cultivate **Diversity**, Community Cooperation, and Racial Reconciliation

GOAL:

Cultivate Diversity, Community Cooperation, and Racial Reconciliation

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Promote diversity in the workforce and in management in Mississippi businesses through training and by joining national and global business networks that promote the common good.*
- *Invest in local community building projects that promote interracial cooperation.*
- *Invest in youth programs that promote interracial cooperation in order to ensure future generations of leadership are mindful of diverse perspectives.*



Respondents to the Blueprint Mississippi 2011 roadshow surveys readily and frequently recognized that cultivating racial reconciliation and community cooperation in the state, increasing diversity in leadership roles, and changing misperceptions of Mississippi are important to the state's economic future.

The respondents also applauded Mississippi's recent achievements in racial reconciliation and community cooperation. Indeed, the progress of recent years should be celebrated. Identifying Mississippi's progress can bolster the state from within and help Mississippi determine what paths to follow as it continues to pursue the goal of improving race relations. Stronger race relations can help communities work together more effectively, ensure

diverse future leadership, and transform Mississippi into a place recognized not for where it has been, but for how far it has come.

Success in Philadelphia Telegraphs Message to World

One must look no further than the moving story of progress in Philadelphia, Mississippi, to see how far Mississippi has come in recent years. In 1964, the tragic murders of three civil rights workers in Neshoba County rocked the nation and turned all eyes to the state. In a failure of justice indicative of that dark time in Mississippi's history, the killers were allowed to escape true accountability, and the deaths of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner went without justice for four decades. But the story did not end there. In 2004, on the 40th anniversary of the killings, a multiracial group of Philadelphians—the Philadelphia Coalition—joined together to issue a call for justice.⁴ Thanks in no small part to their community's work, the state of Mississippi brought murder charges in 2005, and in 2007 upheld the manslaughter conviction of former Ku Klux Klansman Edgar Ray Killen. The entire process that led to the conviction illustrates what colossal achievements can be made when communities work together to bring about restorative justice. News of Philadelphia's victory for racial reconciliation made headlines throughout the nation.

The Philadelphia Coalition remains an active multiracial community group, supported by the Chamber of Commerce and other pub-





Cultivate **Diversity**, Community Cooperation, and Racial Reconciliation

lic officials. The group helped create a civil rights tour and began an oral history project, and is now committed to a civil rights educational initiative. As a direct result of these changes, Philadelphia is better able to promote itself and has seen increased business investment from outside the community. In 2009, the community also elected its first African American mayor, James Young. Mississippi leads the nation in elected African American officials⁵—and Mayor James Young’s election was seen by many as a landmark indication of change.⁶

Freedom 50th Celebration Focuses on Future



This same willingness to face history with honesty and integrity was demonstrated at the recent “Freedom 50th” in Jackson, a celebration that marked the 50th anniversary of the 1961 arrest of the Freedom Riders who protested travel

segregation. The event was hosted by a diverse group including former Governor Haley Barbour, Myrlie Evers-Williams, and Jackson Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr. who welcomed dozens of returning Freedom Riders to be honored at the event. Former Governor Barbour delivered an apology for the mistreatment the riders received fifty years ago and unveiled a marker in their honor at the former site of the Greyhound Bus Station.

Mississippi has also seen growth in the number and quality of organizations committed to helping heal Mississippi’s wounds. Since 1999, the University of Mississippi has been home to the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, which serves as a resource and facilitator for communities that have suffered as a result of racial discrimination. The Institute has supported projects

in a number of communities. Other emerging organizations are devoted to recognizing Mississippi’s past and present racial experience—among them, the Emmett Till Memorial Commission, the Welcome Table, and the Mississippi Truth Project.

With its 2010 population split almost equally between white and minority individuals in the “under 18” age demographic, Mississippi is rapidly headed toward becoming a “majority-minority” state for the first time since the 1930s.⁷ This creates many opportunities related to diversity, community cooperation, and racial reconciliation.

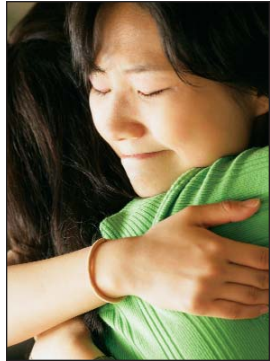
Racially Diverse Leadership Among Elected Officials

One such opportunity comes through partnerships with governmental leaders. As recently as 2010, Mississippi had more African American elected officials than any other state, with 134 county supervisors, 81 mayors and 50 state legislators.⁸ Historically, Mississippi has also had more elected African American officials than any other state in the nation, according to recent census data.⁹ This provides continuing opportunities for greater cooperative partnerships between the public and private sector that can actively engage a racially diverse leadership in addressing economic development opportunities for Mississippi, and in shaping policies and initiatives that are aimed at raising the standard of living for all Mississippians.

By continuing to address remaining racial disparities and increasing understanding among its citizens, Mississippi is sure to have a brighter economic future. By encouraging interracial cooperation



Cultivate **Diversity**, Community Cooperation, and Racial Reconciliation



in community projects and increased business involvement, businesses can help increase trust in communities, which will in turn promote more economic competitiveness and outside investment. Specifically, the business community should invest in public, business-driven initiatives to build sound, healthy race relations – as well as acceptance and recognition of diversity in not only race, but gender, age, sexual orientation, national

origin and points of view.

Diversification within Mississippi's workforce and management will also help businesses compete in today's global economy, and help Mississippi cultivate its own homegrown talent. Consumers are increasingly making purchasing decisions based on whether businesses are socially engaged and contributing to the common good. There exists now the opportunity for Mississippi to be the national leader in developing an important factor for consumers to consider: a commitment to racial reconciliation, evidenced through a business' active involvement with and support of diversity and community engagement.

It is also extremely important to promote interracial cooperation among Mississippi's youngest people. Programs from early childhood through high school that promote interracial interaction and cooperation will encourage an environment of inclusivity, ensuring that young Mississippians enter higher education institutions or the workforce prepared to participate in a multiracial environment.

Initial Drivers

William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation
Blueprint Council

Initial Outcomes

Identify lead driver Q2, 2012
Organize a Community Cooperation Task Force Q3, 2012
Develop Short-Term Goals Q3, 2012
Develop Long-Term Goals Q2, 2013

Potential Partners and Participants

William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
Mississippi Economic Council
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi NAACP
Children's Defense Fund
Mississippi Community Foundations
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Community Colleges
Chambers and Economic Development Organizations
Business and Professional Associations
Social Organizations



Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's **Economy**

GOAL:

Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's Economy

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Evaluate Mississippi's industry sectors to determine priority sectors, and conduct comprehensive, customized cluster analyses to determine key growth opportunities for Mississippi, beginning with an assessment of the health care industry as a prototype.*
- *Invest in university research, development, and commercialization.*
- *Develop state-level programs that support rural and minority entrepreneurship and strengthen local economies.*
- *Enhance entrepreneurship in K-20 (kindergarten through graduate studies) curricula.*
- *Provide a statewide or regional Web portal for easy business assistance.*
- *Remove tax and regulatory barriers that make Mississippi's business climate less competitive.*
- *Reduce insurance burdens on Mississippi's coastal businesses and individuals.*
- *Sustain successful ongoing business recruitment incentives.*
- *Recognize and promote opportunities that result from the growth and expansion of the technology- driven*

economy, engaging resources such as the Mississippi Technology Alliance to assist in focusing these efforts.

Mississippi is a good place to do business. Mississippians have access to many tools and resources to help them start new businesses, and corporate leaders view Mississippi as a business-friendly location. Further enhancing the state's economic competitiveness and strengthening its business climate requires strategic and proactive attention to the needs of the business community and opportunities to leverage the state's many assets.

Since 2004, Mississippi has made tremendous strides in enhancing its business climate and creating an environment conducive to business start-up and growth. Much of this progress, such as improvements in the state's legal environment, can be traced to past work from Blueprint Mississippi 2004. Through objective analysis, strategic planning and partnership, and improving education, training and access, Mississippi can build upon its considerable strengths to expand and strengthen its economy.

When the Blueprint Mississippi 2004 effort began, Mississippi was making rapid strides in improving its economic performance. In 2003, Mississippi ranked number one among benchmark states in key areas such as per capita income growth, reductions in poverty, and strengthening of key manufacturing sectors.¹⁰





Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's Economy

Cluster Strategy Key to Continued Growth



Mississippi is now in the midst of a strong entrepreneurial renaissance with high levels of new business starts and rapid growth in key industry clusters. Further, in the

recent U.S. Chamber Foundation Enterprising States report, Mississippi was lauded as a national leader in export growth, efficiency in its higher education systems, and growth in productivity and new business starts.¹¹ Maintaining this momentum, supporting foundational existing businesses, attracting and cultivating firms that operate in growing clusters, and fostering rural and minority entrepreneurship requires a well-organized and strategic statewide industry cluster strategy supported by a strong public-private partnership and relevant research and analyses to identify and deploy best practices.

Mississippi's cluster analysis and strategy will be developed via a broad public-private partnership, built upon the foundation of Mississippi Development Authority's existing list of 14 leading sectors, and supported by econometrics research to identify potential new cluster targets that: (a) meet objective criteria for growth potential and for existing capacity and resources; (b) provide high quality jobs that pay higher than average wages and, where possible, promote statewide technology development; and (c) build on public-private partnerships. A cluster strategy will be linked to strategic efforts to build and maintain Mississippi's infrastructure assets (e.g., roads, rails, ports, broadband, etc.) to support cluster development and expansion.

There are real opportunities for developing cluster approaches to economic development – and some efforts have been underway for the last decade after a study by noted economic development leader Dr. Michael Porter of Harvard University focused a cluster study on the Communications and Telecommunications Industry (CIT) in Mississippi. Since then, real efforts have been made in CIT, digital/geospatial, automotive and polymers, among others, to establish cluster approaches in Mississippi. As a result, there already is an awareness of the opportunities that can come from a more robust approach to cluster development.

A review of industry sectors in Mississippi, offers a clear view that opportunities exist to build on our state's existing strengths in these areas, and provides a clear path forward for further work by the Blueprint Council.

Removing Roadblocks to Growth

While Mississippi's tax climate generally competes favorably with the Blueprint Mississippi states, our ad valorem tax on inventory, the state's corporate franchise tax and our sales tax on pollution control equipment installations are three often identified tax issues that are roadblocks to economic development in the state.

Removing a tax barrier can be significant in boosting economic growth. A case in point is the removal of a sales tax on public warehousing activities, which netted relatively small revenues, but when removed, opened the state – particularly northwest Mississippi – to a surge in warehouse and distribution expansion, to a point that today Mississippi is #7 among the Blueprint Mississippi States in logistics employment.





Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's Economy

Casualty insurance rates, driven higher in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, are more problematic in South Mississippi, but the impacts of the cost of insurance are experienced statewide when a major employment and residential sector of the state is affected. This is why continued efforts must be undertaken to further strengthen the state's wind pool – and to explore multi-state approaches to dealing with high casualty risks.

Health Care as Economic Development Driver

As a model, Mississippi will comprehensively examine opportunities to grow the health care industry cluster. During the past decade, while most other industry sectors lost jobs, health care saw a 19 percent growth in employment.¹² Additionally, jobs in the health care industry pay an average of \$46,528, 40 percent more than the state as a whole.¹³ Private sector leaders are investing in public research, outreach, and development in health care, and biomedical research underway at Mississippi's universities creates opportunities for high technology business growth. Further, a stronger health care system will help to attract and retain other types of businesses while addressing the shortage of health care professionals in rural communities.

Tourism Key in State's Future

Mississippi will also continue to capitalize on opportunities within the tourism industry sector, which accounted for 78,485 direct jobs in FY 2010 (with an additional 32,130 indirect and induced jobs),¹⁴ 97.1 percent of which were created in the private sector. Gaming, which yielded gross revenues of \$2.4 billion for FY 2010. \$1.68 billion, or 70.1 percent, was the estimated "net" tourist/visitor share, comprising 30.6 percent of the \$5.5 billion in statewide Travel and Tourism expenditures.¹⁵ Cultural and heritage tourism also serves as a major draw, bolstered by promoting newly founded heritage

trails: the Blues Trail, Country Music Trail, Agri-Tours Trail, Culinary Trail, Gospel Trail and Mississippi Freedom Trail, among others. These trails serve not only to attract visitors, but also to inform Mississippi's new generations of its many cultural contributions throughout history.

Gaming also continues to be a strong cornerstone for the tourism industry in Mississippi. Despite the impact of the international recession, as well as some competitive changes, 2009 data shows Mississippi is #1 among the Blueprint States in gaming employment. A cluster analysis of this important sector could chart some new directions for expanding job opportunities in this industry, particularly for the expansion of non-gaming related recreational activities around gaming venues relating to incentives passed recently by the Mississippi Legislature.

Film Industry Opportunities Increasing

Recent economic successes resulting from the filming of the nationally acclaimed movie, *The Help*, and press coverage of comments made by its producer, director and actors about the warm welcome and support from local communities as the state, put Mississippi in the spotlight as a strong movie location. But there is more to offer filmmakers than Mississippi's hospitality. The Mississippi Film Office of the Mississippi Development Authority partnered with the Mississippi Legislature, recently, to significantly improve our state's competitive position for filmmaking, with new incentives for the industry that are already bringing results. Early results indicate this may be a sector worth exploring through additional cluster research.





Strengthen and Expand Mississippi's Economy

Entrepreneurship is a Key to Sustained Growth

University-sponsored research also catalyzes economic transformation. Many of Mississippi's current research strengths result from universities hosting top-class research talent. State investment to recruit researchers who bring with them funded research projects (typically funded by federal agencies) not only has an immediate economic impact by virtue of direct jobs supported through research funding, but also has long-term economic impact through research outcomes that spur the creation of new businesses, bring innovations to existing businesses, and attract existing businesses to locate in Mississippi to gain access to research expertise and knowledge.

Stronger efforts from the state to encourage and support local economies, independent business endeavors, and rural and minority entrepreneurship will also reap economic benefits. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms, employ half of all private sector employees, and have generated 65 percent of net new jobs over the past 17 years.¹⁶ A statewide plan for economic development that includes tools for economic developers to be "economic gardeners," not just "economic hunters"—to cultivate regional pools of entrepreneurs, business support networks, and workforce training—will spur meaningful job growth and provide balance to a community's employment sectors through diversification. Also, a centralized service-oriented Web portal to help business owners easily navigate government rules and regulations and find needed services and support in a user-friendly manner (e.g., Mississippi Technology Alliance) will help all Mississippi businesses—large and small—be more successful.

Nearly 80 percent of would-be entrepreneurs in the U.S. are between the ages of 18 and 34.¹⁷ A 2008 poll from Junior Achievement (JA) found that 59.7 percent of teenagers interviewed wanted to become entrepreneurs.¹⁸ By infusing more entrepreneur-

ship programs into Mississippi's K-20 education, those teens can turn their wishes into a reality that positively contributes to the state's economy.

Suggested Initial Drivers

Mississippi Development Authority
Blueprint Council
Mississippi Economic Development Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Identify Short-Term Action Agenda Q1, 2012
Blueprint Council Develops Short-Term Research Agenda Q2, 2012
Blueprint Council Develops Long-Term Research Agenda Q4, 2012

Potential Partners and Participants

Mississippi Development Authority
Blueprint Council
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Manufacturers Association
Mississippi Economic Council
Public Education Forum of Mississippi
Gulf Coast Business Council (Insurance Task Force)
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Montgomery Institute
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Community Colleges
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development
Local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations
Other Professional and Trade Associations





Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians

GOAL:

Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Improve teacher quality by increasing the Teach for America and Mississippi Teacher Corps teachers in the state, strengthening teacher requirements and considering new methods of merit-based compensation.*
- *Create a quality early childhood education and development system.*
- *Transition to all-appointed superintendents by 2015.*
- *Allow conversion to charter school status of any school that for two or more consecutive years is rated below "successful" under the state's accountability system.*
 - *The charter should be granted only to entities that have a track record of success in operating charter schools, per determination of the State Board of Education.*
 - *All children who live within the school's attendance zone should be eligible to attend the new charter school, which should be subject to the state's accountability standards.*
- *Support the Educational Achievement Council in its efforts to increase the number of Associate's and Bachelor's degree holders.*



As Mississippi moves ahead into the 21st century, its success will depend most heavily upon its citizenry. Any changes made today will only thrive if Mississippi can compete tomorrow, and that requires providing all Mississippians quality educations, keeping highly educated Mississippians in the state, and attracting and retaining highly educated people from outside the state. Improving education will have significant economic returns for the state and will require bold initial investments.

The impressive accomplishments Mississippi has made in education since 2004 are easy to recognize at a glance. For example, the percentage of adult Mississippians with a high school degree (or GED equivalent) or more has increased from 72.9 percent in 2000 to 80.4 percent in 2009.¹⁹ Also, the number of Mississippi fourth graders reading at or above grade level has improved at an impressive rate.²⁰ The annual rate of change in the 2005-2009 timeframe was over twelve times higher than the 1998-2005 rates and 75 percent higher than the nation's overall rate of change.²¹ This speedy progress ranks Mississippi behind only one other state in terms of its rate of change.²² Additionally, the recent improvements in scores are most evident in Mississippi's disadvantaged demographic groups.²³ These findings suggest recent investments to help at-risk segments of the population are showing results.





Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians



Better Data Leads to Better Results

Mississippi has recently created the State Integrated Education and Workforce Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which allows stakeholders and policy makers to access data on state

residents from birth to the workforce to drive accountability and investment decisions. Progress has been made since 2004 thanks to the implementation or continuation of programs such as Mississippi Building Blocks (which provides effective support to improve school readiness skills for children in licensed childcare centers), Excel by Five (which builds community capacity for early childhood), SPARK (which supports Head Start Program centers), On the Bus (which promoted a greater awareness of drop-out prevention statewide and has been sustained across the state in local districts), and the Mississippi Scholars program (which encourages students to take a more rigorous course of study and become involved in their communities). Mississippi's task now is to make sure that this forward momentum persists.

Although there is much to celebrate, it is critical to maintain forward momentum and push Mississippi to greater heights. For example, implementing quality early childhood education is a proven strategy to overcome poverty and give Mississippi's youngest people opportunities later in life. Early childhood education creates a strong return on investment. Economist Robert Lynch, the author of *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation*, has calculated the cost-benefits ratios for three different types of high quality Pre-K options. Lynch estimates that returns on investment range from \$6.97 to \$12.30 in benefits for every dollar of costs

spent on Pre-K over a 40-year period.²⁴ Nobel Laureate of Economics James Heckman called Pre-K the "single most effective, efficient investment in developing job skills."²⁵ An umbrella entity that can streamline and coordinate existing programs, minimize duplications, inconsistencies and other inefficiencies, and align with the state's K-12 education system will ensure maximum use of resources and success of early childhood education and development programs.

Teacher Corps/Teach for America Key Components

Mississippi can increase teacher quality through several actions. The demand for new teachers exceeds supply in Mississippi, with this shortage most strongly felt in high-needs districts. Increasing Teach For America/Mississippi Teacher Corps teachers to approximately 1,100 per year by 2015 can help Mississippi recruit, train, and certify excellent new teachers to fill that gap, and many of those teachers who stay in the region can become strong candidates for future principals, administrators, and district leaders. In Mississippi, a higher percentage of new TFA/MTC teachers stay in the classrooms than traditionally trained teachers; while only 65-75 percent of traditionally trained new teachers in high-needs school districts will complete two years of teaching service, a full 92-97 percent of new TFA teachers complete two years of service, with many staying for a third and fourth year.²⁶ In addition to their higher retention levels and high academic performance, MTC and TFA are also consistently evaluated as superlative teachers.²⁷ The Mississippi Legislature should fund TFA/MTC training at \$12.5 million annually in order to produce these TFA/MTC numbers.





Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians

Improved Certification Requirements

Mississippi can also improve teacher quality by strengthening teacher certification requirements, including raising required Praxis II scores (consistent with the policy under review by the Mississippi Department of Education), significantly increasing teacher compensation, and adopting effective merit-based compensation practices (e.g., value-added growth). Numerous studies indicate that the greatest in-school factor in a student's education is the quality of the teachers. A 2004 review of 17 such studies found that between 7 percent and 21 percent of achievement variability was attributable to teacher effectiveness.²⁸ Marc Tucker, CEO and Director of the National Center on Education and the Economy, argues in his report, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: An American Agenda for Education Reform," that countries throughout the world with the most effective public education systems look for three overriding qualities in a prospective teacher: the highest possible "applied intelligence," content knowledge, and teaching ability.²⁹

Under a Mississippi Department of Education proposal, "cut" scores for various sub-tests would be raised either to the level recommended by the Education Testing Service, or, if no such recommendation is made for a specific sub-test, the required score would be set at the Southeastern state average. Other steps towards increased rigor are to raise the required minimum Praxis I score to the Southeastern average while keeping as an alternate qualification route the minimum required ACT score at 21, increase focus on content during undergraduate years, strengthen job-embedded masters programs to make them more directly related to the master's candidates' teaching, and reform Continuing Education Unit requirements to be content-area specific rather than generic.

Merit Based Compensation

Appropriately designed merit-based compensation can provide incentives to all teachers if administrated effectively. The report "Teacher Pay—Current Model Definitely Outdated" argues that school boards should replace current payment models with an approach that gives school districts the flexibility to pay new teachers varying salaries based upon specific levels of academic achievement, college transcripts, scores on state assessments, and specialty subjects.³⁰ Various reports also argue there is a need to offer more competitive salaries to STEM teachers.³¹

Appointed Superintendents

All districts need appointed superintendents who can make tough decisions. Problems could be remedied by transitioning to all-appointed superintendents by 2015, allowing superintendents elected prior to this date to complete elected terms.

Charter Schools

Across the nation – and in Blueprint States, as well – business and community leaders have been in search of the "silver bullet" for improving educational achievement.

Two decades ago, as the charter school movement caught fire in other parts of the nation, there was great optimism regarding its prospects for boosting student performance. The actual results, measured over time, are mixed. Just as with traditional public schools there are exceptional charter schools and just as with traditional public schools there are low-performing ones, as well.





Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians

To be sure, history tells us that educational success within a school is based upon exceptional leadership, high performance teaching and strong parental involvement – the ingredients for a successful school, whether charter or traditional.

Mississippi is a state with limited resources – and caution is necessary in the implementation of a charter school approach not to create a statewide dual school system, that will also require dual funding.

The most significant nationwide study of charters, conducted two years ago by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) concluded that the authorizing legislation is critical to the success of a state's charters. [CREDO, Stanford University <http://credo.stanford.edu>]

It is for this reason that Mississippi must approach implementation of a charter school approach with the precision of a skilled surgeon, using a charter approach as a tool – another arrow in the quiver -- for targeting those schools that are lowest performing and carefully developing specific criteria upon which a charter school may be created and for those who will be allowed to run them.

Blueprint Mississippi's recommendation regarding charter schools is purposefully narrow, focusing on allowing charter schools to be created only for schools that for two or more consecutive years are rated below "successful" under the state's accountability system. Responsibility would remain with the State Board of Education to approve the creation of charter schools, and charters would be granted only to entities with a proven track record of success in the operation of charter schools – and attendance would be open to all students living within the zone served by the school.

Higher College Completion Rates

Promoting higher college completion rates is also extremely important for enhancing Mississippi's future growth prospects. Recognizing that increasing the number of degree holders is a key to driving economic competitiveness in Mississippi, the Mississippi Legislature enacted the Graduation Rate Task Force in 2009. The task force created the Education Achievement Council (EAC) to sustain attention to this effort. Credentials counted to meet the EAC's education attainment goal are certificates—programs of at least one year in length, associates, and baccalaureate degrees. Adult learners, both reentering and first-time students, will be key to reaching the state's stated goal of the national average by 2025.

Lastly, in addition to making improvements to give young Mississippians stronger educations, Mississippi can also raise its educational achievement levels by developing policies to recruit and attract highly educated talent. For example, immigrants bring fresh ideas, new perspectives, and great skills to our economy. Immigrant entrepreneurs start roughly one quarter of all businesses in the U.S., and a large portion of these firms operate in high technology sectors.³² Programs that incentivize highly educated people from other states to move to Mississippi (or highly educated Mississippians who have moved elsewhere to return to the state) will have a positive economic impact.



Increase the **Educational Achievement** Level of Mississippians

Suggested Initial Drivers

Mississippi Parents Campaign
Blueprint Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Short-Term Agenda Outlined Q1, 2012
Long-Term Agenda Developed Q3, 2012

Potential Partners and Participants

The Parents' Campaign
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Economic Council
Blueprint Council
Public Education Forum of Mississippi
Parents for Public Schools
Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
Mississippi Teacher Corps
Teach for America
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Community Colleges
Phil Hardin Foundation
Education, Business and Professional Associations
Other Business and Professional Trade Associations
Other Parent and Teacher Organizations
Local Chambers and Economic Development Organizations



Increase Availability of Financial Capital

GOAL:

Increase Availability of Financial Capital

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Develop tools to stimulate private sector R&D spending.*
- *Create incentives and support for angel investments.*
- *Develop tools and incentives to increase capital to support minority and rural businesses.*
- *Identify, invest in, and encourage the use of new technologies that enhance efficiencies and provide cost savings.*



Financial capital is the fuel for business growth. If firms want to expand and enter new markets, they must make catalytic investments to develop new products, services, and technologies to attract and retain

talented personnel and improve operations and management structures. While a small handful of firms are sufficiently fortunate to bootstrap their way to growth, most cannot do it alone. They need outside investments, which can take the form of business loans, grants, or equity investments, from individuals or from organized investors, such as venture capital firms.

Mississippi: A Good Place for Start-ups

Mississippi is a highly entrepreneurial state. Over the past decade, the state has ranked near the top of U.S. states in terms of new

business creation. Mississippi ranks near the top of the U.S. (third) in terms of new establishments created from 1999-2008, and 17th in terms of job creation—performance that far outpaces national benchmarks.³³ In addition to its strength in terms of spawning new business start-ups, Mississippi enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a small business friendly state. Mississippi has traditionally been home to a strong base of small business friendly banks, and levels of small business lending are far above national averages. In 2008, Mississippi ranked 14th in the U.S. (8th among Southern states) for the value of private lending to small businesses.³⁴

These smaller firms also operate in a relatively friendly business environment. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council's annual Small Business Survival Index regularly ranks Mississippi among the more "small business friendly" states in the U.S.³⁵ The annual reports regularly recognize Mississippi for several critical assets: favorable corporate tax rates, limited health insurance mandates, and low gas tax rates, among other things. These advantages, combined with Mississippi's lower cost of living, create a favorable operating environment for many small business owners.

Building Research Infrastructure

In technology sectors, Mississippi has made great strides in building the state's research infrastructure and capacity, particularly at the state's higher education institutions. Academic R&D is a key resource in Mississippi. In fact, the state ranks in the top ten for levels of academic R&D as percentage of gross state product.³⁶





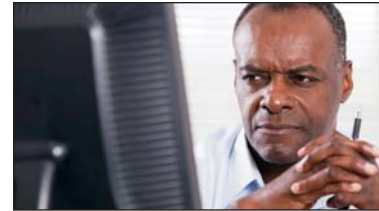
Increase Availability of Financial Capital

This total has grown rapidly, as Mississippi's leading research institutions have made major research investments in recent years. In 1992, the Mississippi Legislature passed visionary and transformative legislation to create the Mississippi University Research Authority (MURA), which provides for university researchers to take ownership in spin-off companies based on inventions developed as university employees. MURA oversees potential conflicts of interest and helps to ensure that intellectual property created in Mississippi universities can stay in Mississippi as new start-up businesses.

Research Capacity Growing

A strong upsurge in technology-related businesses has accompanied the development of this new research capacity. While Mississippi is not yet home to a large base of technology firms and clusters, recent growth rates have been promising. For example, in the latest Cyberstates data (2007-2008), Mississippi ranked 12th in the U.S. in high-tech employment growth.³⁷ The state's high tech employment growth rate of 2.8 percent far outpaced U.S. high tech job growth at 1.7 percent. High tech annual payroll also grew rapidly, jumping 3.8 percent between 2007 and 2008. This growth rate placed Mississippi 3rd in the U.S.—falling behind only Alaska and Tennessee. Finally, the state also witnessed rapid growth in the number of new high tech establishments, with Mississippi ranking 4th in the U.S. for new high tech firms opened in the 2007-2008 period.³⁸ The Mississippi Technology Alliance is a key resource, supporting high technology business development and growth through tools and resources important for success.

Mississippi-based businesses have not traditionally been active investors in R&D and technology development. Approaches that could serve to "prime the pump" and jumpstart new private R&D investments can stimulate private sector R&D. A key part of this



effort involves the creation of new investment vehicles that target technology-based businesses. Many of these efforts target smaller firms seeking to develop new technologies or trying to bring a new technology to market. The Mississippi Technology Alliance's (MTA) Seed Fund has been used for this purpose, and MTA has made key investments in a number of Mississippi's leading technology firms. First created in 2007, the Mississippi Seed Fund has the potential to serve as a critical capital resource for the state's technology firms. The Fund manages \$4 million in capital and can make investments that range in size from \$10,000 to \$100,000. It has already made a number of catalytic investments, but an expanded investment portfolio would enhance its potential impact.

Angel Investors

Across the U.S., a major capital gap exists for firms in their early or seed stage of growth. This stage, often referred to as the "valley of death," presents many challenges to entrepreneurs. There are a number of tools for filling this gap, and angel investors and angel investor groups are among the most used capital sources. In 2008, angel investors invested \$19 billion in 35,000 companies across the U.S. Unlike venture capitalists, most angel investments back early stage firms.³⁹ In 2009, 82 percent of angel investor dollars backed early stage firms, while only 35 percent of venture capital investments backed these new companies.⁴⁰

The number of U.S. angel investors is growing, but the potential for growth is even greater. Today, there are 225,000 active angel investors in the U.S.





Increase Availability of **Financial Capital**

Over 20 states now provide tax credits to angel investors and angel investor groups.⁴¹ These credit programs vary greatly, but typically provide a credit worth anywhere from 25-40 percent of the total investment amount.⁴² New incentives and tax credits to encourage angel investing could include the creation of a new angel investment tax credit along with a series of training programs and support efforts designed to help stimulate the creation of new regional angel investor networks. This effort could build on the existing activities of the Mississippi Angel Network, managed by the Mississippi Technology Alliance.

Building Rural and Minority Opportunities

The challenges facing rural and minority entrepreneurs are often unique. World-class businesses regularly emerge in rural communities, but these entrepreneurs face challenges of distance to markets, limited access to key services, and limited connections to peer networks and other supports. Helping these companies grow can bring important dividends to rural communities. Minority-owned businesses especially face significant barriers in accessing capital. A recent U.S. Minority Business Development Agency study found that minority-owned firms across the U.S. are less likely to receive business loans, and when they do, the dollar amounts are less than those received by their non-minority counterparts and have higher interest rates (7.8 percent on average for minority business loans compared to 6.4 percent for non-minority business loans).⁴³ Financing programs such as the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) Minority Business Enterprise Loan Fund and the Minority Business Micro-Enterprise Loan Fund assist minority businesses owners – and the Hope Enterprise Corporation (Hope Credit Union) also is a key resource partnering with the U.S. Small Business Administration, which also works with the Mississippi

banking community in rural Mississippi. In 2011 the Mississippi SBA office logged a record of over \$274 million in 749 loans to small businesses.⁴⁴

Suggested Initial Drivers

Mississippi Technology Alliance
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Blueprint Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Lead organization identified Q2, 2012
Blueprint Task Force in Place, Q3, 2012
Agenda Developed, Q1, 2013

Potential Partners and Participants

Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Montgomery Institute
Small Business Administration
Mississippi Bankers Association
Small Business Development Centers
Mississippi Economic Development Council
State, Regional and Local Business Incubators
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Community Colleges
Local Chambers and Economic Development Organizations
Other Business and Professional Associations





Promote **Health Care** as an Economic Driver

GOAL:

Promote Health Care as an Economic Driver

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Target the development of the health care industry as an economic driver for Mississippi's economy, and create a comprehensive cluster strategy around health care.*
- *Increase the number of active physicians in the state.*
- *Increase the number of health care professionals throughout Mississippi.*

There exists a compelling economic development rationale for targeting the state's health care sector. During the past decade, while most other industry sectors lost jobs, health care saw a 19 percent growth in employment.⁴⁵ Jobs in the health care industry pay an average of \$46,528, 40 percent more than the state's average as a whole.⁴⁶ For Mississippi, the shortage of health care professionals presents an economic development opportunity. A strong health care system assists in attracting and retaining other types of businesses. It symbolizes a better quality of life and promotes healthier workers, and this contributes directly to a company's bottom line. In addition to the opportunity for growth within the private sector, a significant potential for growth in external research funding seems to exist. For example, the University of Mississippi Medical Center funding increased 93 percent between 2008 and 2010.⁴⁷

Health Care an Increasing Opportunity

Providing access to quality health care is an opportunity for grow-



ing an entire industry sector to meet this need. Adequate access to quality health care will increase patient use of the health care system, improving not only patient outcomes but also growing the health care related industry in Mississippi. With the 'Baby Boomer' generation aging, the possibility for an increase in demand for medical services (e.g., hospital, nursing, and at-home care), medications, medical devices, and other health related products will create a local/regional economic driver for a health care industry cluster.⁴⁸ This is also consistent with the national trend. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for the health care industry sector will continue to grow at 2.6 percent,⁴⁹ with 10 of the 30 fastest growing occupations (e.g., home health aides, physical therapists, physician assistants) being in the health care fields.⁵⁰

In any community, health care also has significant direct and indirect economic impact. For example, in 2009 the over 4,000 office-based physicians in Mississippi generated an output of \$5 billion, supported 24,217 jobs, created \$3 billion in wages and benefits, and paid \$192 million in taxes.⁵¹



Promote **Health Care** as an Economic Driver



Physicians Expand Local Economies

The Mississippi Center for Health Workforce (MCHW) released a policy brief in June 2008 that noted the economic gains from the location of a physician in a particular county depends upon the health care

infrastructure existing in that county. MCHW constructed a model detailing the existing infrastructure in each Mississippi county and found that the estimated economic impacts attributable to individual physicians could vary from under a million to \$14.24 million per county.⁵²

Mississippi has both a medical school and an osteopathic college: The University of Mississippi Medical Center, the state's major research university hospital based in Jackson, MS, which is also served by a growing network of public and private hospitals, and William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine, which was established in 2008 and is bringing new medical technology opportunities to an already strong network of public and private hospitals in the Pine Belt Region around Hattiesburg.

UMMC Second Largest Employer

The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is the second largest employer in the state, generating an annual economic impact of \$2.1 billion, 17,164 jobs, and \$216 million in total tax revenues.⁵³ Between these two areas within the health care enterprise, it is clear that the health care sector has the potential to become a significant economic driver for the state. This can be further compounded by the research and development taking place in the universities, including UMMC. Much of the funding in this

area is externally generated and results in the attraction of highly educated/trained individuals to the state and the creation of direct jobs that pay substantially more than the state average. The discoveries being made by the researchers in these labs and clinics can be the basis for new start-up companies and innovations that help existing businesses prosper. For example, for fiscal year 2010 Mississippi received a total of \$118M in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for biomedical research, supporting an estimated 2,675 jobs.⁵⁴

Cooperation and Collaboration Key Factors

In the metro Jackson area, the Jackson Chamber Partnership has launched an ambitious economic development program to create a health care corridor from the Jackson Regional Airport to Hawkins Field, combining the resources of Health Management Associates, St. Dominic's Health Services and Baptist Health Systems facilities in the region, the Veterans Administration Hospital, Methodist Rehabilitation Center, the Jackson Medical Mall and the University of Mississippi Medical Center. A delegation of business, community, political and health care leaders recently traveled on a Chamber Partnership sponsored trip to Houston, Texas to review opportunities for maximizing the metro area's resources in health care.

Regional efforts that are already underway in Northeast Mississippi, Meridian, Northwest Mississippi, Hattiesburg, the Gulf Coast, the River Region and the Delta – among others – along with the work already underway in the Capital Region, are being explored by a significant economic development study funded by





Promote **Health Care** as an Economic Driver

the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development and undertaken as a project of the Blueprint Council, which is a part of MEC's MB Swayze Educational and Research Foundation. This effort, launched on December 1, will report its findings in the fall of 2012 – and is designed as a major cluster research project to assure that Mississippi is taking full advantage of health care as an economic driver in regional communities – and small towns – across the state.

World-renowned Research

The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is currently conducting world-renowned studies on heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, advanced treatments for cancer, and even a human physiology simulation program used by NASA. Researchers at UMMC are unraveling the diseases that affect Mississippians, as well as creating new, high-tech jobs and injecting tens of millions of dollars annually into the state's economy. Over the last four years, the total dollar value of research has approximately doubled to about \$83 million in fiscal year 2010. Biomedical research supported by major funding from the National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies is also a major component of the research portfolios of all four of Mississippi's research universities.⁵⁵

Like many research programs, some UMMC initiatives are organized as centers or institutes, in which researchers from varied disciplines work collaboratively on health research. For example, the UMMC MIND (Memory Impairment and Neurodegenerative Dementia Research) is a major research initiative aimed at elucidating the causes and treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related forms of dementia through innovative research. Led by Dr. Tom Mosley, a nationally recognized expert in brain aging, the MIND Center brings together some of the largest neuro-epidemiologic studies ever conducted, state-of-the-art brain imaging and

powerful new genetic technologies. Their goal is to accelerate the pace of discovery in the search for treatments that may slow or prevent Alzheimer's and other forms of cognitive decline. The Center has far-reaching impact on both the health and the economy of Mississippi, by employing physicians and other health care workers focused on understanding and treating neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

This is emblematic of the type of research taking place in many areas including cancer research⁵⁶ and cardiovascular disease.⁵⁷

There are over 100 hospitals, health care systems, networks, and other providers of care in Mississippi, including University of Mississippi Health Care's (UMHC) level one trauma center, children's hospital, and organ transplant center (each being the only of its kind in the state).⁵⁸

One of the nation's largest non-profit community hospitals, North Mississippi Regional Medical Center, which is based in Tupelo but operates four other community hospitals in Northeast Mississippi and 30 clinics, was awarded the coveted Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in 2006.⁵⁹

There are also numerous other medical centers, providers, and community hospitals that are regional leaders, critical to the quality of life in small towns across Mississippi.

Despite this, many rural parts of Mississippi—as in other rural areas of the Blueprint states and the U.S.—remain underserved. Recent efforts, including UMMC's Rural Physicians Scholarship Program, continue to combat this disparity.





Promote **Health Care** as an Economic Driver

For example, recently due in part to the efforts of Mississippi 2nd District Congressman Bennie Thompson, a U.S. Department of Agricultural grant was announced to reopen the long-closed Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou in the Mississippi Delta as an urgent care facility. In another recent development, a \$700,000 grant will enable the Delta Health Alliance to network five community hospitals in the Delta in a telemedicine network to connect with physicians at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.⁶⁰

The number of physicians is behind the projected demand for physicians in Mississippi, and Blueprint Mississippi 2011 recommends actions to increase the health care industry in Mississippi to address these projected needs, especially in rural settings.

Suggested Initial Drivers

Blueprint Council
Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Hospital Association

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Health Care Cluster Study Initiated Q4, 2011
Task Force Created Q1, 2012
Health Care Cluster Study Completed Q4, 2012

Potential Partners and Participants

Blueprint Council
Mississippi Development Authority
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Hospital Association
Mississippi Medical Association
Major Regional Health Alliances
University of Mississippi Medical Center
William Carey University College of Medicine
Other Medical Trade and Professional Associations
Jackson Chamber Partnership Health Care Corridor Task Force
Blueprint Mississippi Health Care Advisory Task Force
Local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations



Continually Develop the **Infrastructure** for a Competitive Economy

GOAL:

Continually Develop the Infrastructure for a Competitive Economy

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Retain and maintain the infrastructure to capitalize on transportation-related opportunities.*
- *In conjunction with state agencies, support the development of a proactive, strategic infrastructure master plan to support Mississippi's economic development goals building on the long-range plan outlined by the Mississippi Department of Transportation and engaging a broad range of stakeholders in the process.*
- *Support the goals and mission of the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute (MEPI).*
- *Support the goals and mission of Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition (MBCC).*



Infrastructure provides indispensable links—links that connect businesses with energy and communication needs, allow products to move to the marketplace, and help people travel efficiently throughout

the state. Mississippi is fortunate to have developed several strong infrastructure assets over recent years—including major ports and solid roadways—and its main challenge is to determine how to best capitalize on these developing infrastructure assets.

Resources power Mississippi's homes, businesses, schools, and industries. The availability of these resources and their costs can greatly affect expenditures, and smart use of these resources can be a powerful incentive to companies considering establishing business in Mississippi. As Mississippi moves forward, it will be invaluable to have a strong sense of both the resource challenges and opportunities that are currently facing the state.

State Transportation Plan Focuses Long Range

In May 2011, MDOT released "The Mississippi Unified Long Range Transportation Infrastructure Plan" (MULTIPLAN) which is a comprehensive analysis of transportation needs and infrastructure throughout the state. MULTIPLAN, which has a horizon date of 2035, will be re-evaluated every five years to ensure that it remains up-to-date and reflects Mississippi's latest priorities and economic development objectives.

Railways

Rail is key to sustaining trade, manufacturing, and commerce in the state. The railroad system in Mississippi comprises twenty rail systems with 2,841 miles of track, is served by 27 rail carriers, and is home to five of the seven Class I (Annual Gross Freight revenue \$250 million or more) Railroads—CSX, BNSF, Kansas City Southern Railway, Norfolk Southern and CN. This railroad system provides a wide variety of transportation services such as carload, trailer on



Continually Develop the **Infrastructure** for a Competitive Economy

flat car, container on flat car and min-bridge shipments. The merger of Canadian National Railways and Illinois Central railroad has helped the state railroad system in reaching to farther places in providing goods and services. The state has been awarded a \$20 million grant to improve the Port of Gulfport railroad. In 2006, the Railroad system transported approximately 1.7 million tons of and approximately 2.2 million carloads of freight. Approximately 20 percent of the total was inbound and outbound freight, representing commerce that is transported into the state for consumption or commerce that is created within the state and sold to outside customers, creating employment opportunities for Mississippi's citizens. Although the state received more goods than it shipped out in terms of tonnage, the value of outbound goods was higher than the value of inbound goods by \$3.5 billion.⁶¹ The Railroad system provides direct employment to approximately 2,200 workers statewide.⁶²

Ports and Waterways

Mississippi's ports are playing key roles in the state economy. Five of the 15 ports in Mississippi ranked in the top 150 U.S. ports by tonnage in 2000. Mississippi is also home to 2 major deepwater ocean ports: the Port of Gulfport and Port of Pascagoula. The Port of Gulfport is the third busiest containerized port on U.S. Gulf of Mexico and the 23rd busiest containerized port in the U.S.⁶³ Additionally, Port of Pascagoula is ranked among the Top 20 U.S. ports in annual tonnage of foreign cargo. It supports 19,730 direct and indirect jobs, generating \$902M in personal income and \$50M in state tax revenue annually.⁶⁴

Mississippi's ports and waterways have been a boon to the state, enabling the transportation of goods and services between the U.S. and the rest of the world. The ports have a \$1.4 billion eco-

omic impact, account for 3 percent of State's GDP, and provide 34,000 direct and indirect jobs, amounting to \$765M in wages and benefits. Mississippi's ports handled approximately 52 million tons of freight in 2008, consisting of 19 million tons of outbound freight and 33 million tons of inbound freight. These ports provide employment and income to individuals, tax revenues to local and state governments, customs fees to the Federal Government, and revenue to businesses engaged in handling, shipping, and receiving cargo via the ports.

Many of the industries that use and benefit from Mississippi's ports are large employers within the state. Some of the largest users of Mississippi's ports are in chemical and petroleum product manufacturing, non-metallic mineral manufacturing, agriculture, forestry products, and steel product manufacturing. In some cases, relatively small ports support relatively large employers, such as a variety of manufacturing and agricultural activities.

Roadways

Employment, economic productivity, and high property values all depend on reliable access to transportation. Fortunately, Mississippi is ranked #1 in the mid-south, #5 in among Blueprint States and #16 in the nation, based on research analysis of 1984-2008 data in a report issued in 2010 by the Reason Foundation.⁶⁵ The success of Mississippi's roadways system is due in part to Mississippi's Four-Lane Highway Program, which was enacted in 1987 to provide intrastate mobility.

Mississippi's roadway system plays an important role in the transportation of goods and services across North America and Latin





Continually Develop the **Infrastructure** for a Competitive Economy

American markets. Eight major corridors comprise the system, including parts of the I-69 NAFTA corridor, I-59 technology corridor, and future I-22 corridor. The completion of the I-69 NAFTA corridor (which is intended to better enable trade with Canada and Mexico) has the potential to create positive long-term economic impacts in Northwest Mississippi. I-59, also known as the “I-59 Technology Corridor” has become a region of technological advancements, including breakthroughs in the research and development of polymers, and the production of aircraft engines, rocket motors, and electrical transformers. Industries inside the corridor are benefiting from a strong infrastructure and are working together to produce superior products. Due to this type of cooperation, growth in this sector of the state has dramatically accelerated in the past five years, producing ever more highly skilled jobs in Mississippi.⁶⁶

Airports

Mississippi is home to 76 publicly owned and four privately owned airports and enjoys close proximity to major air logistics centers like Memphis. These airports provide excellent facilities and services used by individual travelers, private operators, and both public organizations and private businesses. 53 of these airports are attended, and seven have scheduled air carrier service.

Among the largest major airports in Mississippi are Jackson-Evers International Airport, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, and Tunica Airport. Cumulatively, these three major airports manage an average of 360 flights per day. These assets have helped attract new firms to the state, and maintained investment to increase air travel availability and improve convenience and logistics will assist Mississippi in continuing this economic growth.

[Sean Grimsby, 2010, “Mississippi Airports,” Retrieved:

http://www.ehow.com/list_7368512_mississippi-airports.html]

Smart Grids and Energy

Smart grids are next-generation, two-way information and electrical networks that connect and help redefine the roles of electricity providers and consumers. Smart grids offer economic potential in reducing the number and duration of power outages, lowering utility production and distribution costs, lowering customer prices, and lessening environmental impact. Converting conventional grids to smart grids requires substantial upfront investment in such infrastructure as fiber optic cable. Some municipalities are taking advantage of federal or corporate grant opportunities to finance these investments in what are often proof-of-concept projects.

The Mississippi Energy Policy Institute, a non-profit organization that focuses on providing a statewide strategy for research, policy, and economic development related to energy, has developed a number of specific recommendations to enhance the energy-related infrastructure and business opportunities of Mississippi. Successful accomplishment of these recommendations will position Mississippi to be a leading energy state and contribute significantly to economic growth and job opportunities.

Cyber Infrastructure: Digital Literacy and Broadband Connectivity

As the 4th most rural state in population distribution, Mississippi faces special challenges to increasing broadband penetration. The Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition (MBCC) is a non-profit group focused on producing a comprehensive statewide strategy for improving digital literacy, increasing access to broadband, and enabling greater adoption of broadband in the state.





Continually Develop the **Infrastructure** for a Competitive Economy

Led by Chair Jim Barksdale, the former CEO and President of Netscape, the coalition is composed of over 150 industry leaders, community representatives, state agencies, and broadband end-users. The MBCC recently released its report, "Mapping Mississippi's Digital Future," which provides a number of specific recommendations related to increasing the availability and use of broadband by Mississippi residents, businesses, non-profit organizations and governmental agencies. Thus, the MBCC can provide guidance to ensure that Mississippi's cyber infrastructure will continue to improve and support economic growth and the ability to attract high-technology jobs.

Widespread access to, knowledge about, and utilization of broadband Internet service allows for a better informed citizenry, helps reduce educational disparities, and allows individuals and small businesses to participate as both consumers and producers in the global, knowledge-base economy. While public-private partnerships have proven successful in enhancing broadband opportunities in research universities, a broad digital divide still separates the broadband haves and have-nots, especially in rural areas where customer demand is still insufficient to justify last-mile infrastructure investments by broadband services providers. Further opportunities exist to remove regulatory mandates established decades ago that require continued telecommunications investment in outdated technology that could be more easily replaced by more modern approaches.

State, federal, and private organizations are pursuing both supply-side (e.g., grants and/or tax breaks to connect community anchor institutions with middle-mile data networks) and demand-side (e.g., public education initiatives) approaches to narrow existing cyber gaps—gaps which are being identified by federally and state-funded broadband mapping projects in all 50 states.

Suggested Initial Drivers

Mississippi Energy Policy Institute
Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition
Blueprint Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Mississippi Energy Policy Institute Goals in Place
Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition Goals in Place
Other work to be developed

Potential Partners and Participants

Mississippi Energy Policy Institute
Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition
Mississippi Intermodal Council
Mississippi Department of Transportation
Mississippi Oil and Gas Association
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Mississippi Economic Development Council
Mississippi Ports Association
Mississippi Airport Association
Mississippi Road Builders Association
Mississippi Economic Council
Other Transportation Trade Associations
Other General Business and Professional Associations
Local Chambers and Economic Development Organizations





Cultivate a More Robust **Workforce** in Mississippi

GOAL:

Cultivate a More Robust **Workforce** in Mississippi

RECOMMENDATION:

- *In conjunction with state agencies, expand and brand a strategic, long-term workforce development plan for the state of Mississippi, building on the sound foundational strategy outlined by the State Workforce Investment Board and engaging a broad range of economic developers, resources, providers, business leaders and stakeholders in the process.*
- *Provide awareness and assistance for occupations and vocations important to Mississippi.*
- *Develop incentives to attract and retain highly educated workers, with particular emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) backgrounds.*
- *Decrease the economic and societal costs associated with teenage births by lowering birthrates among females under 19 years old.*
- *Expand access to and utilization of health care services, and improve health awareness and education.*

To increase economic prosperity, Mississippi will take an assertive approach to developing strategic training programs and partnerships, publicizing career-building opportunities among key industries, and educating Mississippians about the positive gains to be made in combating high teen birthrates and poor health.



One of the greatest successes in implementing recommendations from Blueprint Mississippi 2004 has been in the area of workforce development, where a streamlined single State Workforce Investment Board

governing our state's delivery approach was created to coordinate all statewide efforts. Through the work of the State Workforce Investment Board, Mississippi's approach to providing employment and training was catapulted by creating WIN Job Centers that teamed employment and training under one roof and partnered with the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) to put a powerhouse of training at the disposal of companies seeking to locate and expand in Mississippi.

Strategic Thinking Focuses Success

Continued proactive thinking and strategic approaches will ensure that Mississippi can meet projections regarding future education and workforce needs. A successful long-term workforce development plan for Mississippi will include:

- An analysis of statewide projected positive growth job sectors;
- Career awareness programs;





Cultivate a More Robust Workforce in Mississippi

- Business-supported and nationally based certificated skills training programs, with a keen focus on middle-skill jobs training;
- A national review of best practices and incentives used to support workforce development; and,
- An assessment of workforce development-economic development synergies and practices designed to maximize limited resources, ensure accountability, and demonstrate results.



One of the challenges facing Mississippi today is providing the middle-skill workforce so critically needed to staff the many positions available in Mississippi's transitioning economy of today. Over the last 20 years, Mississippi's workforce has adapted to meet the increasing

demand for workers with at least a high school education or community college training and a demonstrated proficiency for approaching an advanced manufacturing career. Many emerging jobs in critical sectors such as health care, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing will be middle-skill jobs; that is, jobs that require education and training beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. Businesses demand a well-trained and highly educated workforce, and the unemployed need multiple pathways into the labor market.

High School Redesign

In 2006, the Mississippi Department of Education kicked off "High School Redesign," a comprehensive, innovative initiative that allows students to select classes based on specific pathways to bet-

ter prepare them for a career or college, and better meet the employment needs of businesses in Mississippi. This program is seen by many as one of the most promising and innovative approaches to preparing students to enter the workforce.⁶⁷ In order to meet the emerging demand of a growing high-tech sector, Mississippi will also continue to build on the strengths of the Institutions of Higher Learning to partner with firms and provide attractive pathways of opportunity so when students graduate, especially in STEM degree fields, they are drawn to career opportunities in Mississippi.

Achieving Success Through State Community Colleges

Mississippi employers and workforce have the benefit of an exceptional community college system. The Mississippi Community College Board helps workers achieve increased career success through its Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED Testing program, for-credit coursework programs, and workforce training programs. During FY 2008, MCCB's 15 colleges enrolled 93,972 students in for-credit programs.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, MCCB connected 179,979 students to non-credit training programs that focused on ABE, GED preparation, Literacy, Workforce Development, and Continuing Education.⁶⁹ The average age of students served in MCCB's for-credit programs in FY 2008 was 26.6 years.⁷⁰

Mississippi has also adopted use of Career Readiness Credentialing (CRC), which certifies that potential employees have the basic skills to perform the job well. This credentialing is based on WorkKey®, a nationally recognized skills assessment tool developed by ACT, Inc. For employers, the CRC offers a reliable means of determining





Cultivate a More Robust Workforce in Mississippi

whether a potential employee has the necessary literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills to be job ready. For job seekers, the CRC serves as a portable credential that can be more meaningful to employers than a high school degree or a resume, citing experience in different job settings. For instance, Huntington Ingalls Industries, which designs, builds and maintains nuclear and non-nuclear ships for the U.S. Navy and builds high-endurance cutters for the U.S. Coast Guard, uses WorkKey® in its hiring and promotion decisions.⁷¹ The Ingalls Shipbuilding division, with locations in Pascagoula and Gulfport, is the largest manufacturing employer in Mississippi.⁷²

Further opportunities should be explored for expanding dual-credit enrollment for high school students in community and junior college coursework, to accelerate their movement toward entering the workforce. This will also be a tool for encouraging those students who are not comfortable with a traditional high school senior-year environment to be encouraged to accelerate their studies and become better prepared for the workforce, rather than dropping out.

Data Drives Success

Data collection, tracking, and improving performance are top priorities in Mississippi and will be enabled by the recently developed State Integrated Education and Workforce Longitudinal Data System.

Through this comprehensive, integrated system, Mississippi will track ABE students over time, across workforce development programs, and into the labor market.

One challenge in today's manufacturing sector is the lack of a standardized credentialing system that firms recognize as useful preparation for their unfilled jobs. The Manufacturing Extension

Partnership (MEP) pairs the federal government and the Manufacturing Institute in a collaborative program called Boots on the Ground: Help for Manufacturers to Implement Credentials. The program promotes a curriculum based on the National Association of Manufacturers' (NAM) advanced manufacturing skills certification system in community colleges in 30 states. The 60 centers of the national MEP system will serve as the "boots on the ground" with local manufacturers, educating them about the value of NAM-endorsed skills certification system to their businesses.

A 2011 National Skills Coalition report for the Southern Governor's Association stated that 52 percent of U.S. employers are experiencing difficulty filling mission-critical positions within their organizations, up from 14 percent in 2010.⁷³ Middle-skill jobs, which require more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree, featured prominently among the top ten "hardest to fill" jobs of 2011, with skilled trades topping the list.⁷⁴

Middle Skill Economy Provides Economic Opportunities

Many of Mississippi's business and education leaders have recognized the need to improve the image of careers among manufacturing, shipbuilding, energy, and other sectors. While some jobs are still thought of as low-skill, low-wage jobs, many have in fact changed in recent years to pay much higher wages and require much more training. Making such careers attractive and accessible is important not just to the upcoming classes of new workers, but also to those in the existing workforce who can be further or newly trained.





Cultivate a More Robust Workforce in Mississippi

Also of concern is the shortage of individuals earning the education and training necessary to complete the growing workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Although these jobs tend to pay higher than average salaries, the number of individuals entering these fields of study and apprenticeships is not what it has been in decades past. A shortage of highly qualified, certified science and math teachers is also a concern in Mississippi as well as many other states.⁷⁵ To attack this problem, several schools of education are enticing education majors with incentives particular to STEM areas.

Teen Pregnancy—a Key Workforce Issue

Mississippi bears significant economic losses due to costs associated with teenage pregnancy and teen births.⁷⁶ Blueprint states Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Mississippi account for four of the five highest teen birth rates in the nation.⁷⁷ In Mississippi, this affects all demographics of the state and has significant impact on local economies. High teen birth rates have far-reaching consequences. The estimated annual cost to Mississippi taxpayers is \$154,895,580.⁷⁸ Costs include lost tax revenue based on lower wages and consumption (for both parents and their children as adults), medical care, incarceration of children as young adults, costs of increased foster care and child welfare services, public assistance, and decreased lifetime earnings.⁷⁹

One effort to address this important economic issue is Mississippi House Bill 999, enacted into law in March of 2011, which requires school districts to adopt a sex education policy by June 30, 2012. Per the law's mandate, school districts must adopt either an "abstinence-only" policy or an "abstinence-plus" policy. Mississippi First, a non-partisan, non-profit organization introduced the "Creating Healthy and Responsible Teens" (CHART) Initiative as a means to improve teen sexual health and increase responsible

decision-making. The CHART Initiative offers tools to school districts to provide comprehensive, or "abstinence-plus," sex education programs which are evidence-based, age-appropriate, and medically accurate. Mississippi First partnered with the Mississippi Department of Health to use federal dollars from the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) to provide school districts a model policy, curricula, training, and technical assistance necessary to implement CHART. In March 2011, Mississippi was awarded over \$2M to implement CHART with PREP funds.⁸⁰

Healthier Lifestyles Equal a Healthier Economy

Additionally, a healthy, productive workforce is needed for a thriving economy. The benefits of a healthy workforce to employers are numerous: reduced medical expenditures, reduced absences, and improved on-the-job productivity. Businesses are compelled to control health care costs, and that includes both direct costs and indirect costs such as disability, worker's compensation, turnover, absenteeism and "presenteeism" (poorer performance from a worker who attends work despite illness or injury).

The Delta Health Alliance,⁸¹ a multi-million program launched by the Delta Council, focuses intense resources on improving the delivery system of health care and promoting healthy lifestyles in the Delta Region. There are also many other significant contributors to efforts to promote healthier lifestyles in Mississippi, including programs funded by the WK Kellogg Foundation through the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi's "Let's Go Walking" program, the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi's efforts in child health care





Cultivate a More Robust **Workforce** in Mississippi

and early childhood education, The Partnership for Healthy Mississippi's obesity and tobacco programs, and efforts launched by private, community and non-profit hospitals across Mississippi, just to name a few.

Suggested Initial Drivers

State Workforce Investment Board
Mississippi Manufacturers Association
Mississippi Community College Board
Blueprint Council

Proposed Initial Outcomes

Broaden Promotion of SWIB Plan Q2, 2012
Blueprint Task Force of Workforce Leaders Q2, 2012
Develop Short-Term Agenda, Q3 2012
Broaden Input to SWIB Agenda, Q3 2013

Potential Partners and Participants

State Workforce Investment Board
Mississippi Construction Educational Foundation
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Mississippi Community Colleges
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Mississippi Technology Alliance
Mississippi Economic Council
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Delta Health Alliance
Mississippi Department of Health
Mississippi Department of Human Services
Major Regional Health Alliances

Women's Fund of Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
Community Foundations
Phil Hardin Foundation
Mississippi First
Other Statewide Regional Health Organizations
Local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations





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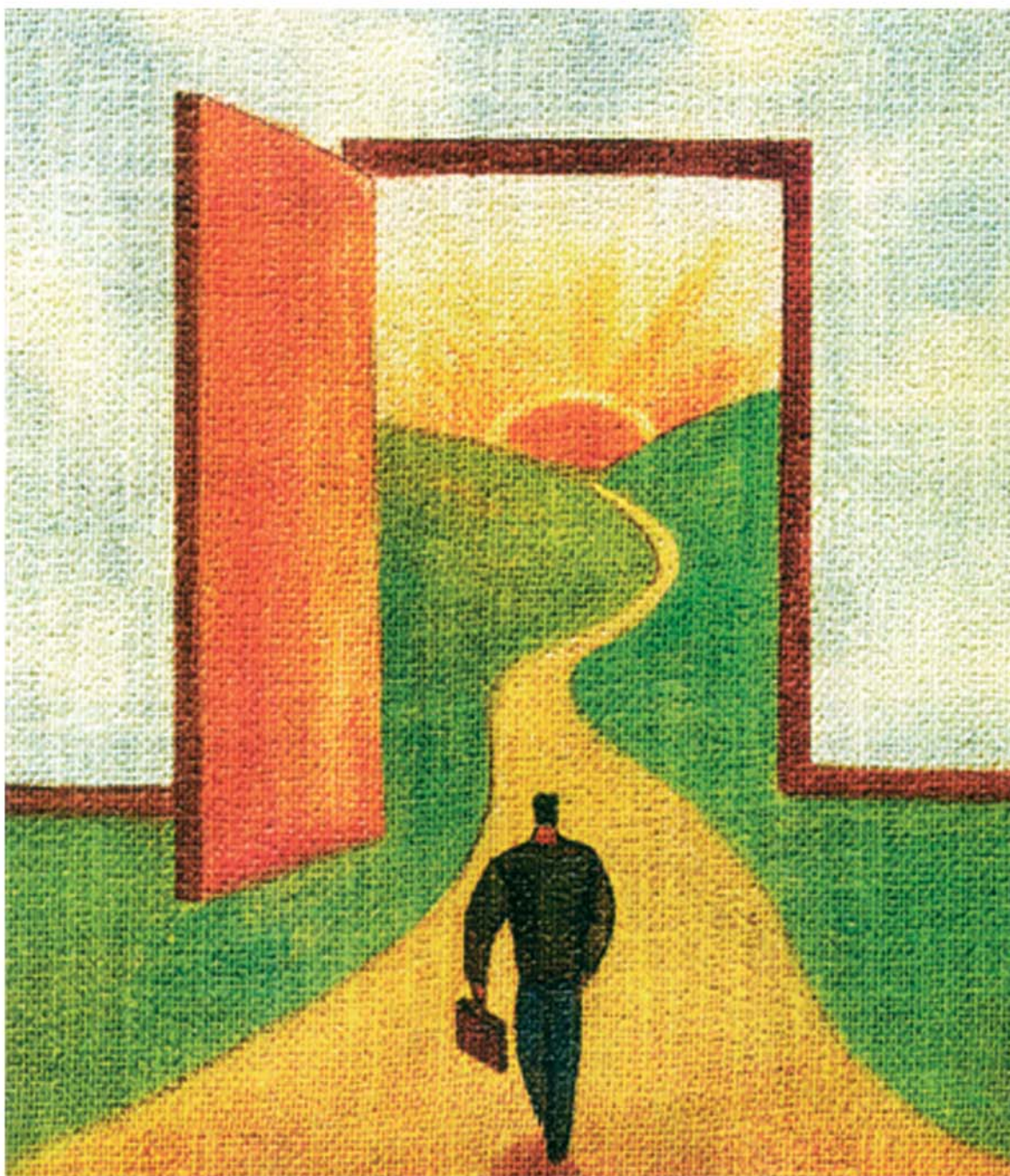
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BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



WHAT WE LEARNED
THROUGH RESEARCH
& OUTREACH



Mississippi has become a major economic development competitor.

Mississippi is an emerging leader in the New South when it comes to economic development. Across many metrics – growth in gross state product, growth in personal income, overall business climate competitiveness, improving educational results, fair tort rules, university research and development spending, entrepreneurial activity, highway performance – Mississippi is a solid competitor with the 12 Blueprint Mississippi states. These are just a few reasons why Mississippi has recently piled up some significant economic development successes, despite a gripping international economic downturn.

There also is a new spirit of optimism among existing business leaders – where 79% in a scientific poll conducted by Blueprint Mississippi responded that they believed our state was in a position to compete as effectively in economic development among the leaders of competitor states, an exceedingly positive response.

Although many long term social metrics – including poverty, health care and education – continue to lag in comparison to the nation along with our other competitors – the upturn in economic trends can stimulate improvements in these other metrics over time, with the continued focus of the business leadership.





Mississippi has moved from a low-skill, low-wage economy to a higher-wage, middle skill state.

It used to be that a small town in Mississippi - and in other parts of small town America - could use industrial development bonds to put up a water tower, develop a small amount of infrastructure and lure a garment manufacturer or small assembly company to locate in the town. Many of these jobs are now offshore, and the game has changed across America – and Mississippi is responding effectively.

Small communities are finding their new place – either by partnering with other communities through multi-county cooperative agreements or by focusing their talents on promoting a unique small town quality of life, cultural heritage or a culture of entrepreneurship. Leaders are focused more regionally – and are working together across the state in formal and informal partnerships to market and promote regions for major economic development projects that will benefit multiple communities in different ways – whether as centers for direct jobs, supplier jobs or for shopping, living or entrepreneurship.

In many small towns economic development entities whose mission was once merely industrial recruitment now have a broader focus on community development.



Streamlining Workforce Development is having a positive impact.

In 2004, Mississippi began streamlining its workforce development process from a hodgepodge of programs to a well-defined delivery system coordinated through a single State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). This has enabled a true partnering between newly created WIN Job Centers around the state and Community and Junior Colleges, which are the key providers of workforce training – and newly developed advanced skills training centers within many of these campuses – to serve the workforce development needs of employers in each region.

Additional workforce training dollars, diverted to the community and junior colleges from reserves in the state's unemployment insurance fund, have put real resources in play for providing a more effective approach to workforce that has been responsible in the effective recruitment and retention of business and industry.

There continue to be opportunities, however, to expand and expose these resources to private sector companies in each region and to make economic development leaders more aware of how to better promote and to engage in pivotal roles in enhancing these resources.



Teacher Quality makes a difference – *leadership matters.*

We have learned that leadership in school systems makes a difference. This is one reason why Blueprint Mississippi recommends moving away from the process of electing superintendents so that school districts – particularly those in rural less populated areas -- can have the best opportunities for recruiting the best talent for running schools. Exceptional talent makes all the difference in the classroom, as well, and the Mississippi Teacher Corps and Teach for America are making a real difference in low-performing schools in providing the best in teaching in schools that have historically had difficulties attracting talent, particularly in the STEM fields.

The Children First Act is providing a process for improving performance – and the Barksdale Reading Institute is putting a renewed focus on leadership in four key school districts to provide a model that can be exported statewide for infusing exceptional leadership in failing schools.

It will take continued progress in these areas to achieve results, but the key ingredient – exceptional leadership – is what makes a real difference.



Creative economy and entrepreneurship is growing.

A recent joint study by the Mississippi Arts Commission and the Mississippi Development Authority shows the tremendous opportunities that exist in Mississippi for mining our cultural resources – homegrown talent. Further results from the Kauffman Foundation indicate Mississippi is among the leaders in the Blueprint States for entrepreneurial activity. And further, we learned in traveling to 24 communities that across the state in communities both large and small there is growing optimism of being able to take advantage of entrepreneurial activity as an economic strength. Communities across the state are boosting this with incubator projects to help businesses get started – and Grenada economic developers have further branded the growth of entrepreneurship as “economic gardening” with the following principles in mind – technical support, infrastructure development and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs.



Communities are realizing the potential of cultural heritage for tourism.

The promotion of the Mississippi Blues Trail by the Mississippi Blues Commission and MDA and further development of the Country Music Trail and Freedom Trail have opened new cross-promotion opportunities for communities across Mississippi – small towns that have latched on to cultural heritage as a real opportunity for growing tourism and improving the overall quality of life.

Across Mississippi there are great examples of where communities have been doing this for years – Natchez, Columbus, Vicksburg, Greenwood, the Coast, Corinth, Tupelo, Oxford, Meridian, just to name a few -- but one of the relative newcomers latching on to this cross-promotional opportunity is Rolling Fork, which has embraced the concept and developed the promotion of cultural heritage as a community-wide project.

Community leaders in small towns across Mississippi, voting electronically in participation at Blueprint Mississippi road show events, see cultural tourism as an emerging opportunity. A Delta town that has really capitalized of late is Indianola, where the opening of the BB King Museum – a community-wide effort – has catapulted tourism and spurred the opening of several restaurants to support the growing market. Similar results were seen earlier as Viking Range made significant commitments to the downtown in Greenwood, with the opening of a luxury hotel property, cooking school and shops – which further developed the growth of other shopping and restaurant developments in the downtown area.





Our human capital is further supported by our Natural Resources.

Agriculture remains a significant cornerstone of Mississippi's economy – soybeans, corn, rice, cotton, sweet potatoes, peanuts, hay and wheat are significant crop contributors -- which when combined is the single largest contributor to the agribusiness balance sheet, followed closely by poultry and then forestry, catfish and livestock, as well as commercial fishing, which also are major boosts to the economies of regions across the state.

Anecdotally we hear consistently about the need to do more with what we grow – to process more – yet, Mississippi already has significant processing capabilities in rice, wood products and pulp, ethanol from corn, catfish and poultry and commercial fishing, as well.

Mississippi also has a real edge in the energy sector – with opportunities across the board from biomass to refining. There is a growing awareness among leaders in our State about the importance of the energy sector in the future of our State, as evidenced by the creation two years ago of the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute, focused on putting heat and light on the issues and opportunities surrounding the energy – and helping state leaders develop strategies for taking full advantage of the myriad resources available for energy industry development .

The Mississippi River, Tenn-Tom Waterway and Mississippi Gulf Coast are major recreation and transportation resources for Mississippi – and thousands of acres of open country provide some of the best hunting and fishing opportunities in the South.



Poverty and our economic success are intertwined.

Where Mississippi now ranks among the leaders in many economic measures among our Blueprint States, poverty and its attendant issues - teen-pregnancy, poor health and educational underachievement - are continuing challenges as they are in our competitor Blueprint States, when compared with other parts of the nation.

Blueprint Mississippi recognizes these challenges, and has used a forum of presentations across the state to energize and engage business and community leaders to address these problems as economic issues, rather than social needs.

Anecdotal responses from business and community leaders participating in Blueprint Mississippi road show events across the state indicate recognition of these issues, which is a first step toward what must be a sustained effort over many years to finding and implementing creative solutions.



Great challenges bring great opportunities.

Every state faces its own unique challenges. In Mississippi, there are many – as in our competing Blueprint States. But in recent years, based on scientific and anecdotal public opinion research by Blueprint Mississippi and the Mississippi Economic Council, there is a growing recognition among leaders across the state that by consistently doing the right things, Mississippi can turn challenges into opportunities.

For example, as low-wage, low-skilled jobs left for offshore, leaving plants in small towns shuttered, communities have risen to the occasion, boosting cultural tourism and entrepreneurship and participating in regional economic development alliances that make communities stronger as true working partners, rather than fierce narrowly-focused competitors.

This new emphasis on regionalism has improved Mississippi's economic development capacity – and made it a real competitor in economic development – and is helping put our state in a place of greater opportunity.





Leaders Surveyed in Development of Blueprint Mississippi 2011

Business and community leaders throughout Mississippi were given an opportunity to participate in the Blueprint Mississippi process. In November of 2010, the Mississippi Economic Council partnered with the GodwinGroup to conduct the Economic State of the State Survey. The survey is conducted every three-to-four years and is a scientific survey that polls both registered voters and business leaders. The telephone survey randomly polled 300 registered voters, as well as an additional 300 business leaders throughout Mississippi. The results had a margin of error of plus or minus five. MEC then held a series of meetings in the early spring of 2011 and another series of meetings in the late fall of 2011. Business and community leaders in attendance were surveyed using electronic polling at each meeting. The electronic voting process provided real-time input with instant results.

Some key findings from Economic State of the State Survey and Electronic Polling:

The MEC Blueprint Mississippi Road Show gave business and community leaders throughout Mississippi an opportunity to participate in the Blueprint Mississippi 2011 process

In February and March of 2011, a 20-city Blueprint Road Show reached over 2,600 leaders in all regions of the

state. The meetings outlined the focus areas of Blueprint and discussed the process that would take place in developing the Blueprint Mississippi 2011 report. Electronic polling was held at each location and there were 11 questions asked of the audiences. The questions focused on issues vital to Mississippi, as well as issues vital to each region.

Making sure Mississippi's Children can find a good job without leaving the state remains a key area of concern

The MEC/GodwinGroup Economic State of the State survey revealed 62 percent of Mississippi voters believe children would have to leave the state to find a good paying job. Of the business leaders surveyed, 51 percent felt children would be able to stay in Mississippi and find a good job. During the 20-city tour, 51 percent of the leaders attending the meetings also believe children could find a good job in Mississippi. These results speak to the importance of creating economic opportunities in Mississippi. For the state to succeed, we must change the perception that we will be exporting half our talent to other states.





Leaders Surveyed in Development of Blueprint Mississippi 2011

Business leaders believe Mississippi is positioned to experience strong economic growth

In both the Economic State of the State Survey and the electronic polling during the MEC Blueprint Mississippi Road Show, there was a sense of optimism among leaders when asked about Mississippi's economic future. When asked if they believed Mississippi could improve its competitive position and experience the type of growth seen in Georgia and North Carolina over the past 20 years, 79 percent said yes. The 79 percent number was the same in scientific survey and electronic polling. The overwhelming belief that Mississippi can create a vibrant, high-growth economy is the first step in seeing significant change.

Mississippi seen as moderately competitive at job creation when compared to other Blueprint states

During the Blueprint Road Show, 58 percent of participants believed Mississippi is moderately competitive when it comes to job creation, while 11 percent view the state as very competitive. The good news is only 3 percent viewed Mississippi as not competitive at all. Looking at the regional breakdown, in the areas north of U.S. Highway 82 there existed a strong belief the region was very competitive. Seventy-four percent of Southaven participants believed their region is very competitive, while 71 percent in Starkville believed their region is competitive. The numbers were also high in Tupelo, 68 percent,

and Columbus, 68 percent. However, six cities had double digit percentages in the "Not Competitive At All" category when asked about their region. Of those six, five were either delta or river cities.

Advanced Manufacturing and Natural Resources considered top growth areas for Mississippi

In looking at growth opportunities, Advanced Manufacturing and Natural Resources – opportunities in timber, energy and agribusiness – were the areas that garnered the most attention. In the electronic polling, 34 percent believe Mississippi is poised to grow in Advanced Manufacturing, while 26 percent selected Natural Resources as the area where the state would most likely see growth. There was a slight shift when looking at this question on a regional basis. The East Central, Northeast, Northwest and Pine Belt regions believe Advanced Manufacturing holds the greatest opportunity for their region, while the Southwest region views Natural Resources as its top category. The Gulf Coast and Delta regions selected Tourism; while Central Mississippi's top choice was Health Care.





Educational Achievement Ranks as the top priority among the nine Blueprint Mississippi Goals

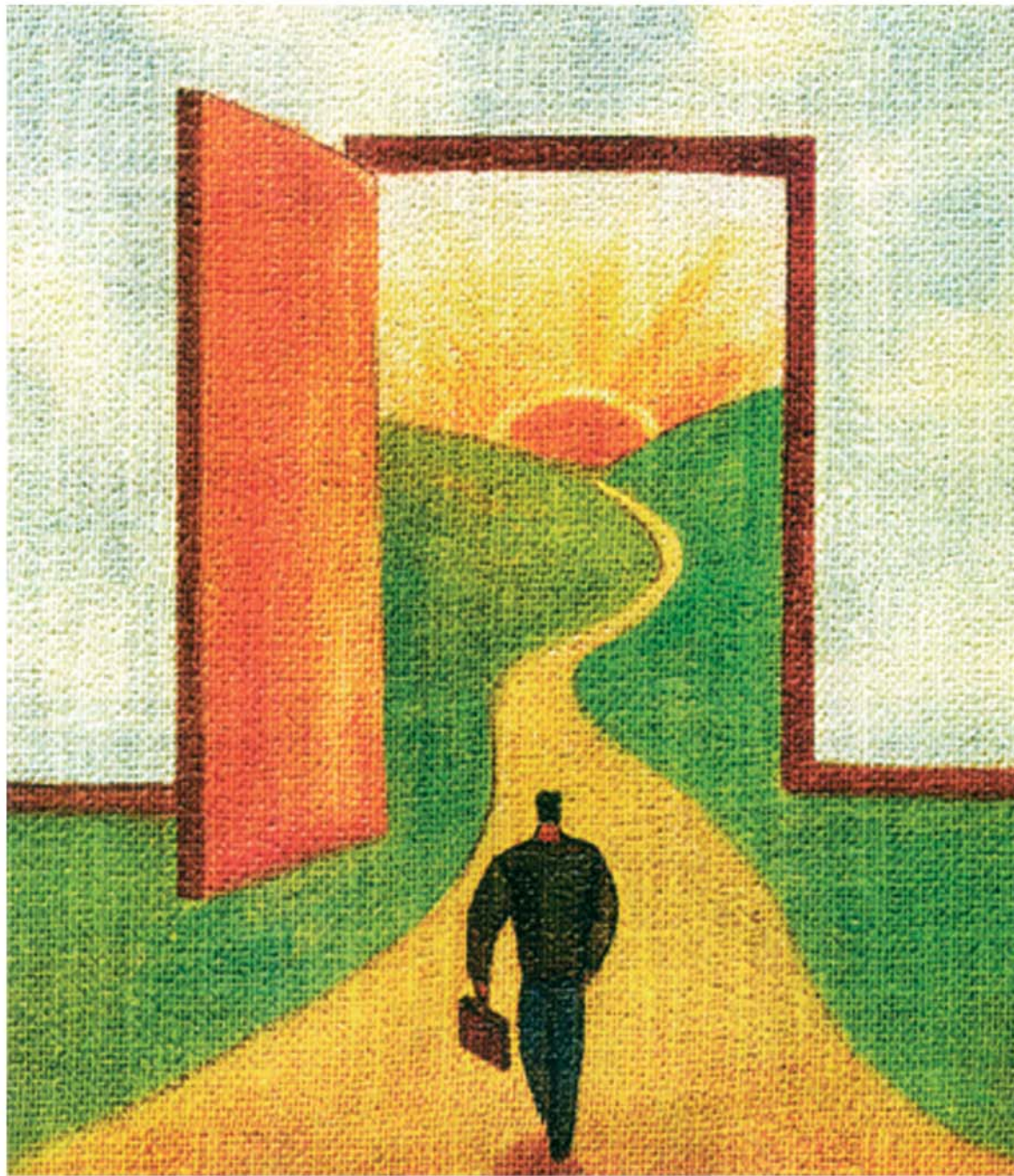
In October, a three-city rollout of the Blueprint Mississippi Goals and Recommendations was held. In November and December, MEC conducted a 12-city statewide Progress Tour. Almost 2,000 business and community leaders participated in the 15 meetings. At each location, there was a review of the goals and recommendations, as well as an opportunity for those in attendance to provide information about the area. Electronic polling was held at each stop and the audience was asked a single question - Rank Your Top 3 Blueprint Mississippi 2011 goals in Order of Priority. Education ranked as the top priority, followed by Workforce and the Economy. The percentage of leaders that selected Creative Economy reached double digits in 11 of 15 surveys, while Health Care reached double digits in 10 of 15 surveys.

Priority Ranking of Goals

Educational Achievement	24.2%
Workforce	16.4%
Economy	15.8%
Health Care	10.9%
Creative Economy	10.7%
Infrastructure	7.5%
Financial Capital	5.2%
Diversity	4.7%
Coordination	4.6%



BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



BLUEPRINT LEADERSHIP



Independent Research – Not Necessarily the Views of All Involved

There were thousands of participants – and just about 1,000 stakeholders and council members involved in the development of Blueprint Mississippi, working closely with University researchers and private consultants, who focused best efforts on communicating the broadest concepts borne out by the independent research and points of view of those involved.

With an effort of this magnitude and a diverse group of participants in geography, types of organizations, gender and race, it is impossible to reach consensus on a document that has as many data points as Blueprint Mississippi. In fact, there has been healthy discussion and sometimes disagreement – which stimulates a process of finding better solutions.

It is for this reason that the work presented in Mississippi Blueprint may not necessarily represent the views of all of those who were involved in the process and who are listed on the following pages as volunteers, researchers, consultants and sponsors.

Blueprint Mississippi represents a snapshot of what we learned based on what could be delivered in the time allotted and with the resources available...it will continue to improve and find more common ground as the months and years progress.



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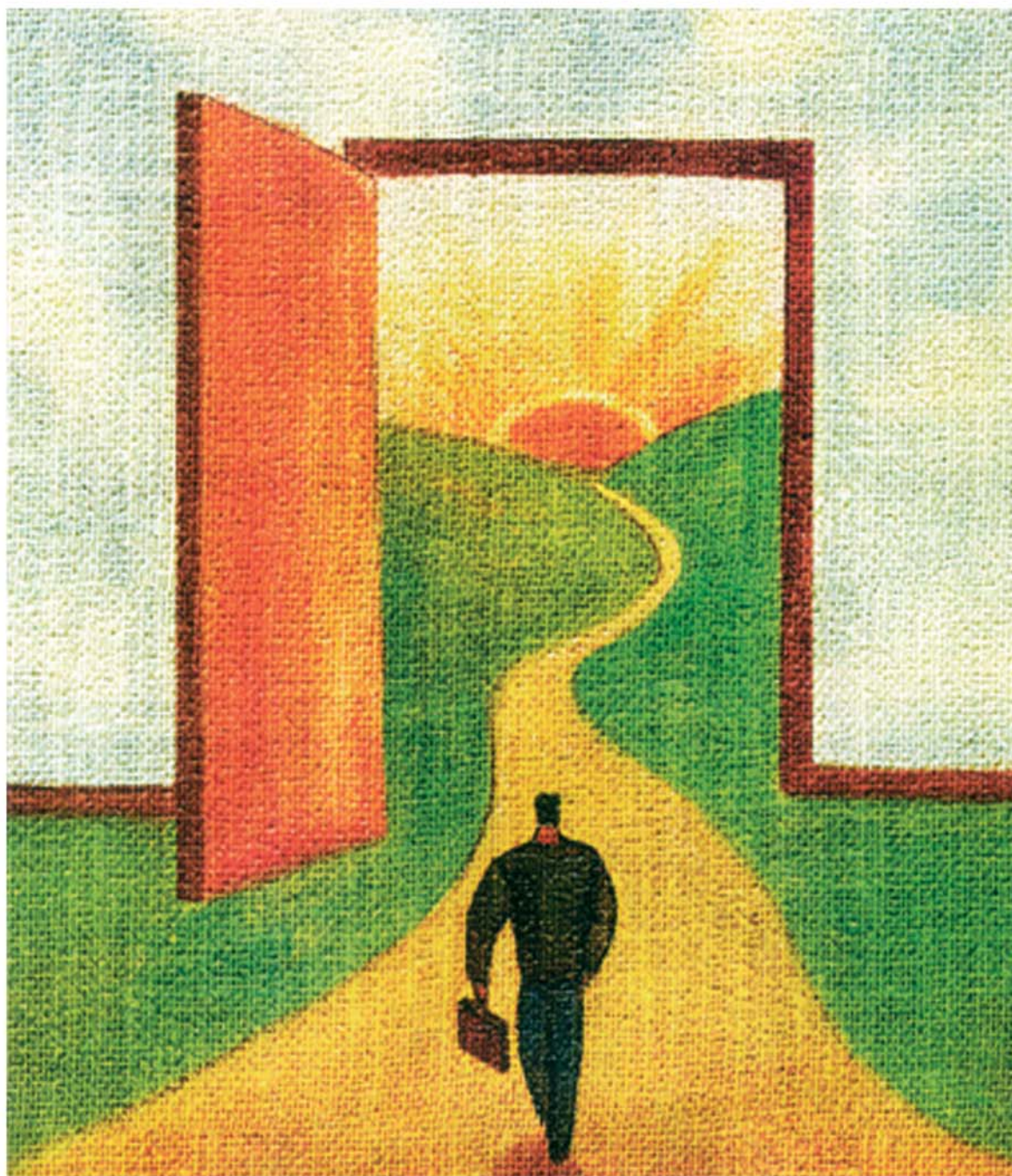
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BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011

KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS





Moving the Needle in the Right Direction

Blueprint Mississippi focuses on several key performance measures that are aimed at showing where Mississippi has been and where it is going.

The key here is to keep the needle moving in the positive direction, year after year. The following report provides a series of graphics to help track Mississippi's progress.

Mississippi Fourth Grade Reading Scores (NAEP)

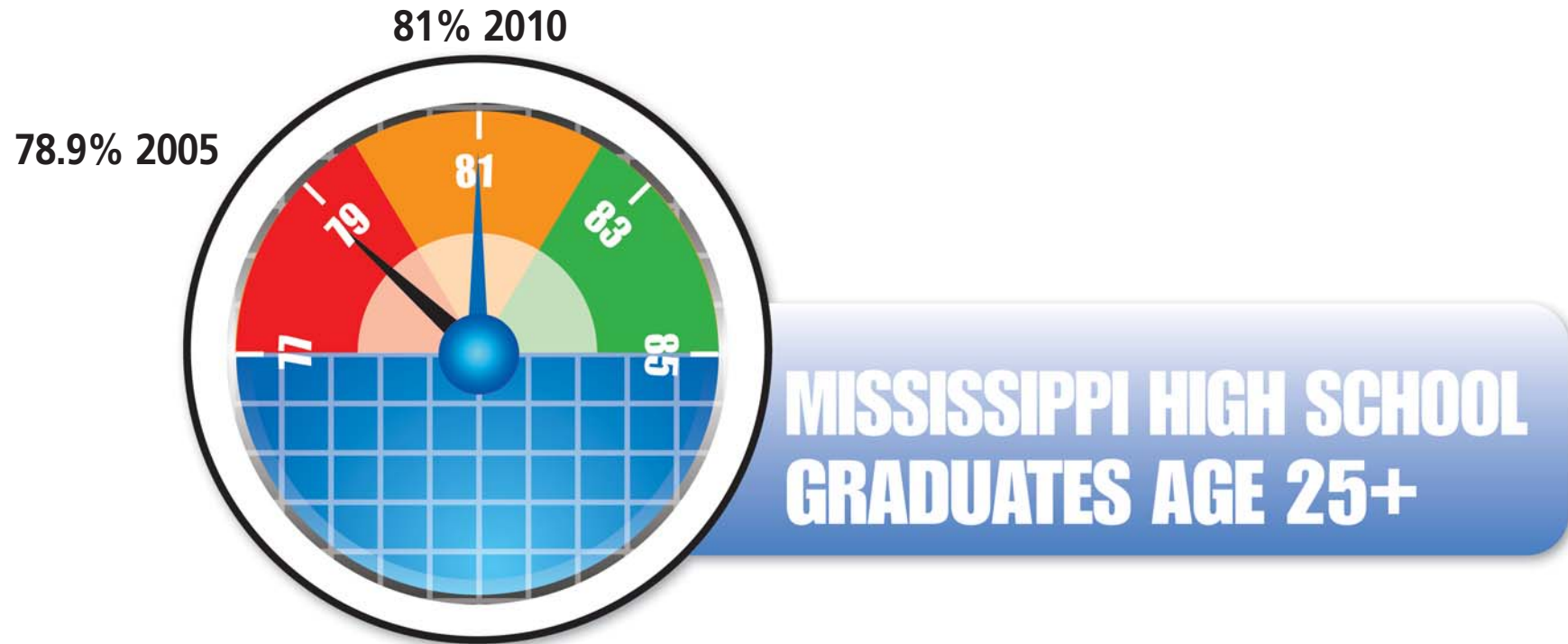
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/dataset.aspx>



Educational Attainment Level of Mississippians Over the Age of 25

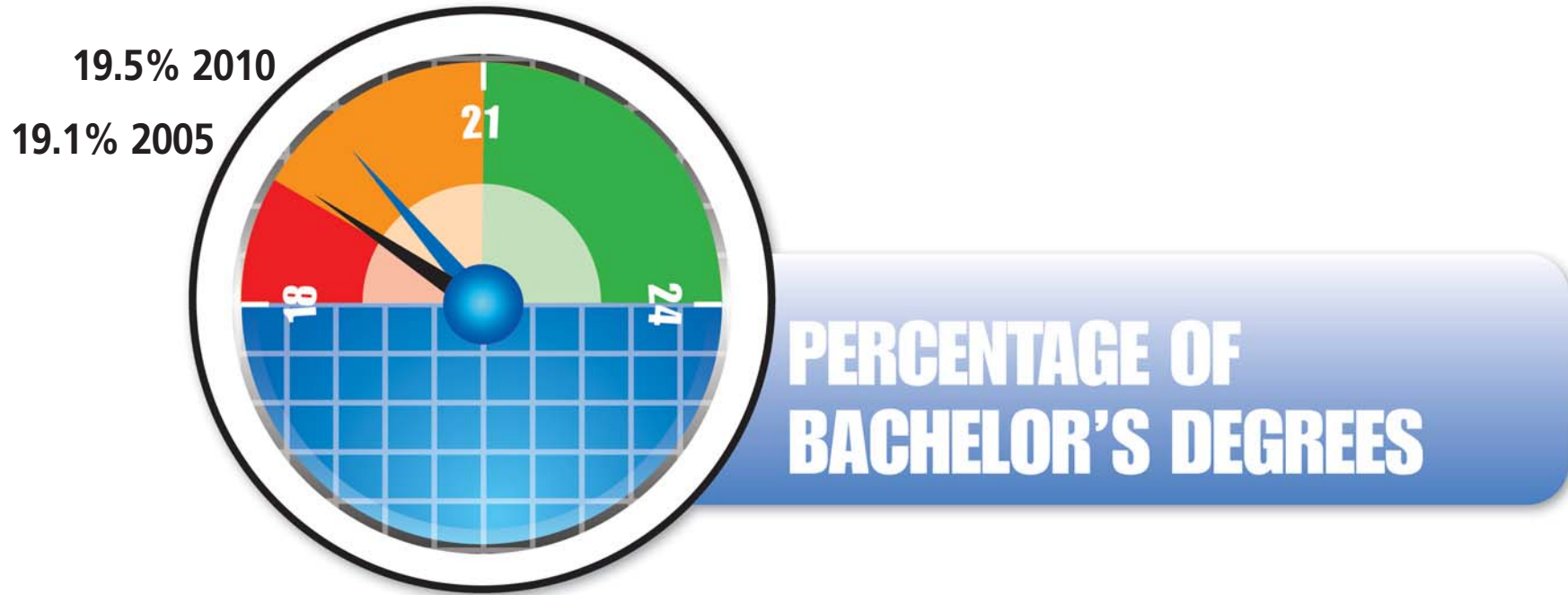
Percent of High School Graduates:

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/dataset.aspx>



Percent of Bachelor's Degrees:

<http://factfinder.census.gov>; <http://factfinder2.census.gov>



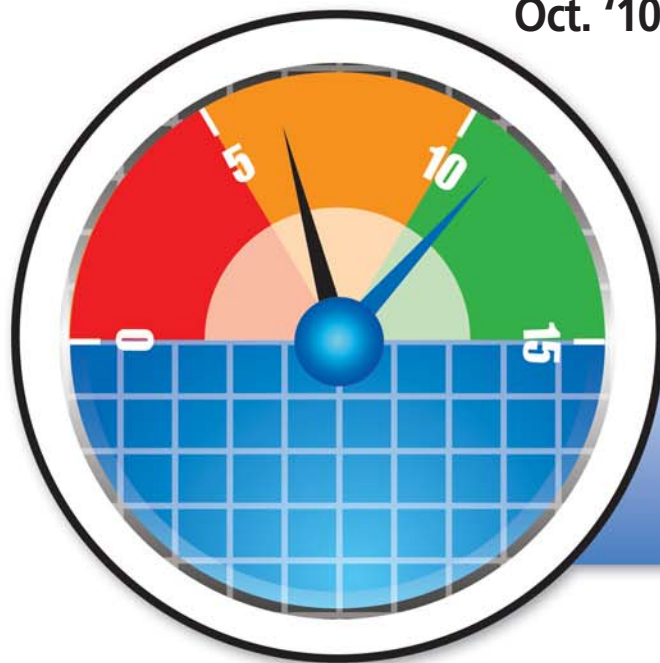
Mississippi Private Sector Jobs Gained Since Previous Year

(using most recent 2011 statistics)

<http://www.bls.gov/sae>

**+6,000 Jobs,
Oct. '03 - Oct. '04**

**+10,600 Jobs,
Oct. '10 - Oct. '11**



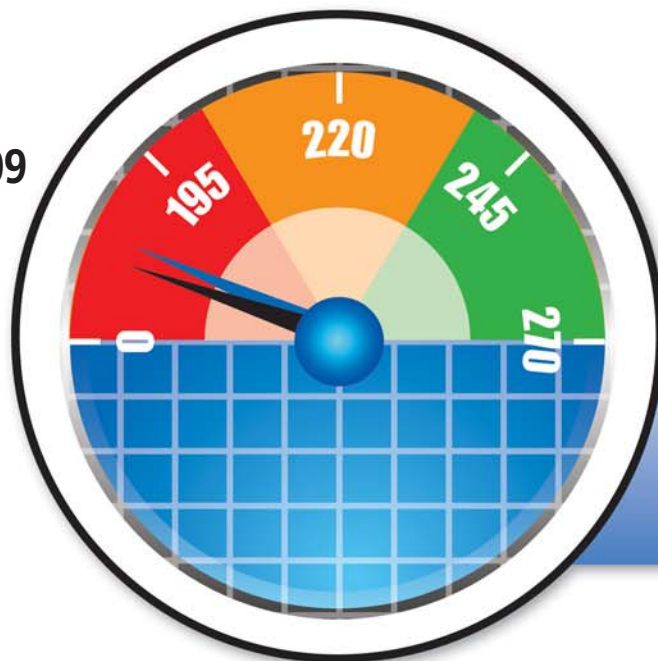
**MISSISSIPPI PRIVATE
SECTOR JOBS GAINED**

Active Mississippi Physicians per Ten Thousand Capita

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/08abstract/health.pdf>

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/12statab/health.pdf>

179, 2009
178, 2005

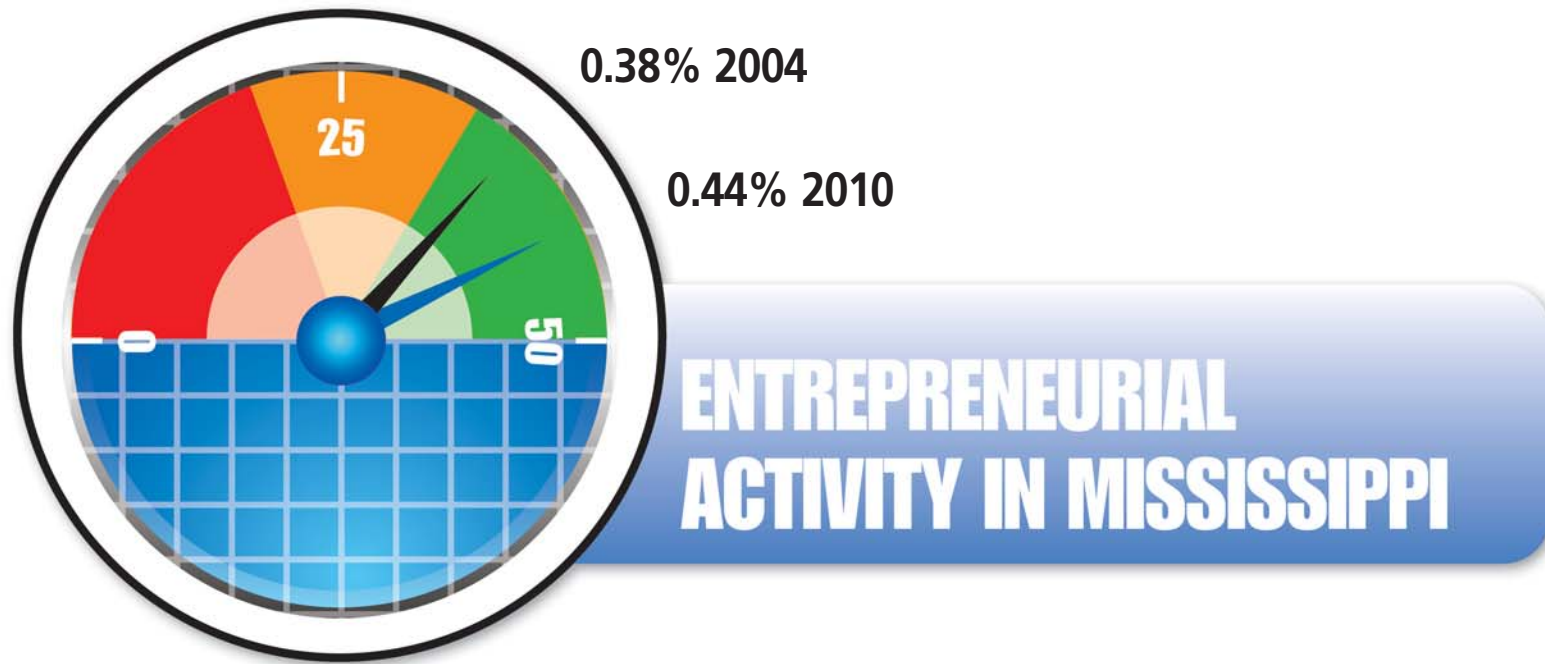


**MISSISSIPPI ACTIVE
PHYSICIANS PER CAPITA**

Entrepreneurial Activity in Mississippi

(New business ownership in the first month of significant business activity)

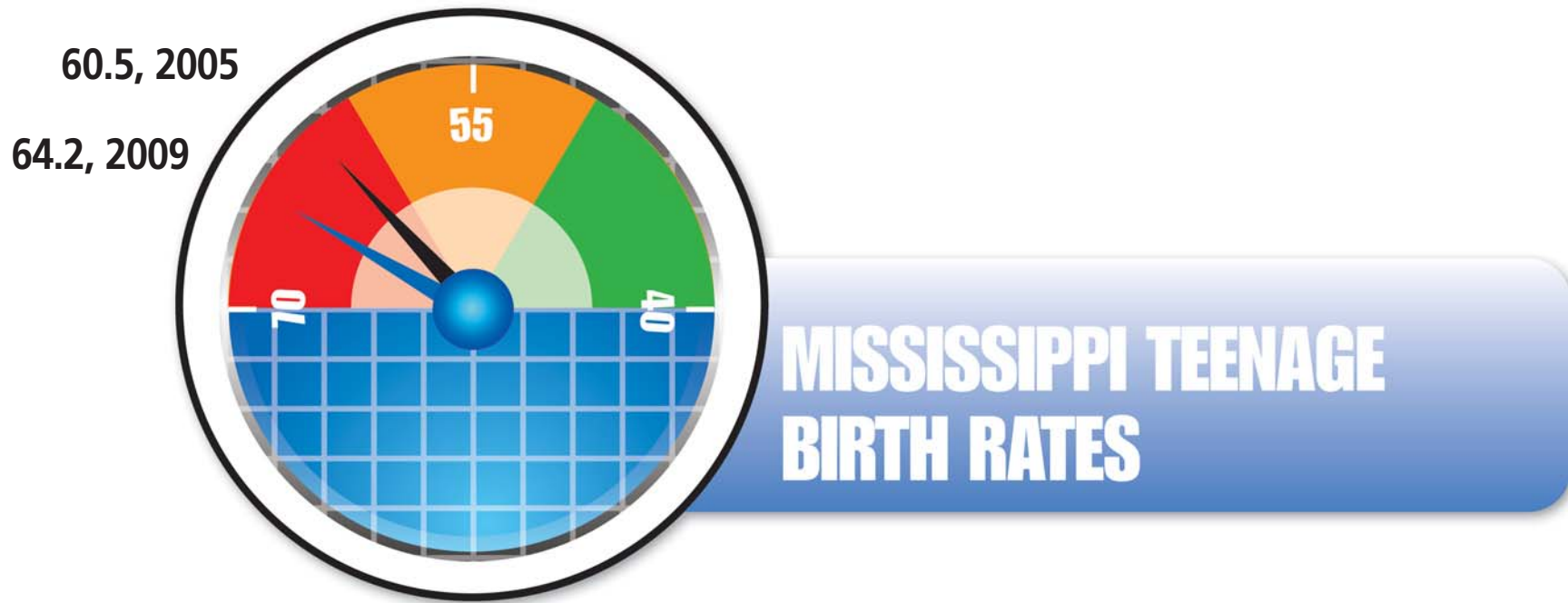
http://www.kauffman.org/uploadedFiles/ResearchAndPolicy/EntrepreneurshipData/kiea/kiea_state9610.xls



Mississippi Teenage Birth Rates

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf;

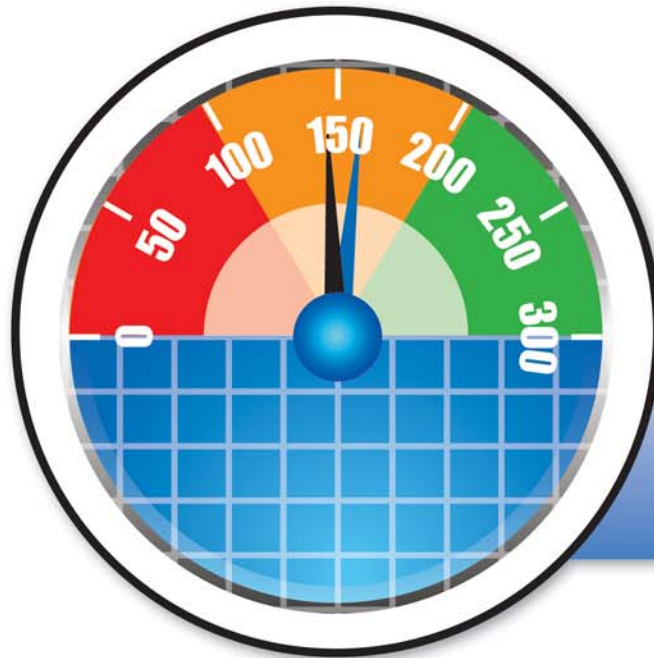
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/TEEN_BIRTHS_BY_STATE_2009.pdf



Mississippi's Median Quality Distribution Index (QDI)

http://orsap.mde.k12.ms.us/MAARS/maarsMS_TestResultsProcessor.jsp?userSessionId=375&EmbargoAccess=0&DistrictId=2037&TestPanel=8&BrowserType=2

148, 2009 158, 2011



**MISSISSIPPI'S MEDIAN QUALITY
DISTRIBUTION INDEX (QDI)**

QDI is a measure of educational performance.

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011

STATE COMPARISON DATA



#5
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #5 in GDP Percentage Growth - 2003-2010

<http://www.bea.gov/regional/gdpmap/GDPMap.aspx>

Source: Bureau Economic Analysis



#3
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #3 in Personal Income Percentage Growth - 2003-2010

<http://www.bea.gov/regional/remdmap/REMDMap.aspx>

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

#3
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #3 in Tort Rules - 2010

http://www.pacificresearch.org/docLib/20100525_Tort_Liability_Index_2010.pdf

Source: U.S. Tort Liability Index 2010 Report Pacific Research Foundation. By Lawrence J. McQuillan and Hovannes Abramyan.



#5
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #5 in Overall Performance of State Highway Systems - 2008

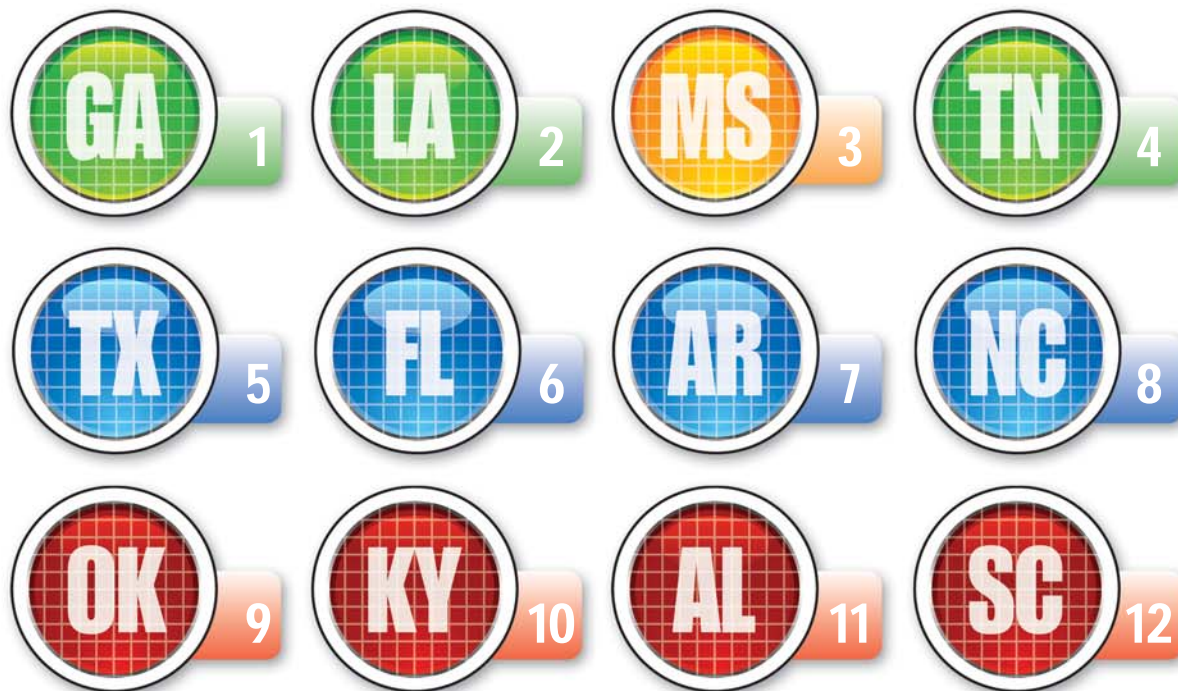
http://reason.org/files/19th_annual_highway_report.pdf

Source: 19th Annual Report on the Overall Performance of Highway Systems (1984-2008) issued in September, 2010, Reason Foundation David T. Hartgen, Ph.D., P.E., Ravi K. Karanam, M. Gregory Fields and Travis A. Kerscher. Project Director: Adrian T. Moore, Ph.D.

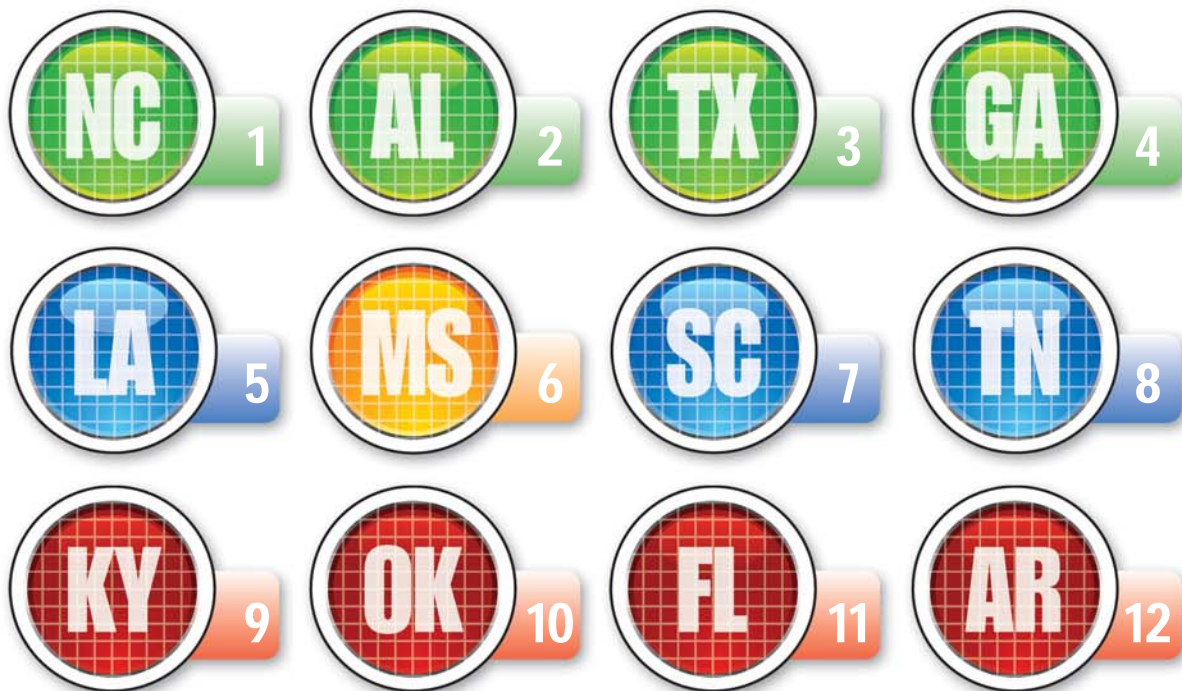
#3
Blueprint State
Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #3 in Entrepreneurial Activity

http://www.kauffman.org/uploadedFiles/KIEA_2011_report.pdf



Source: 2010 Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity



#6
Blueprint State
Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #6 in University R&D Expenditures Per Capita - 2009

<http://www.ssti.org/Digest/Tables/072011t.htm>

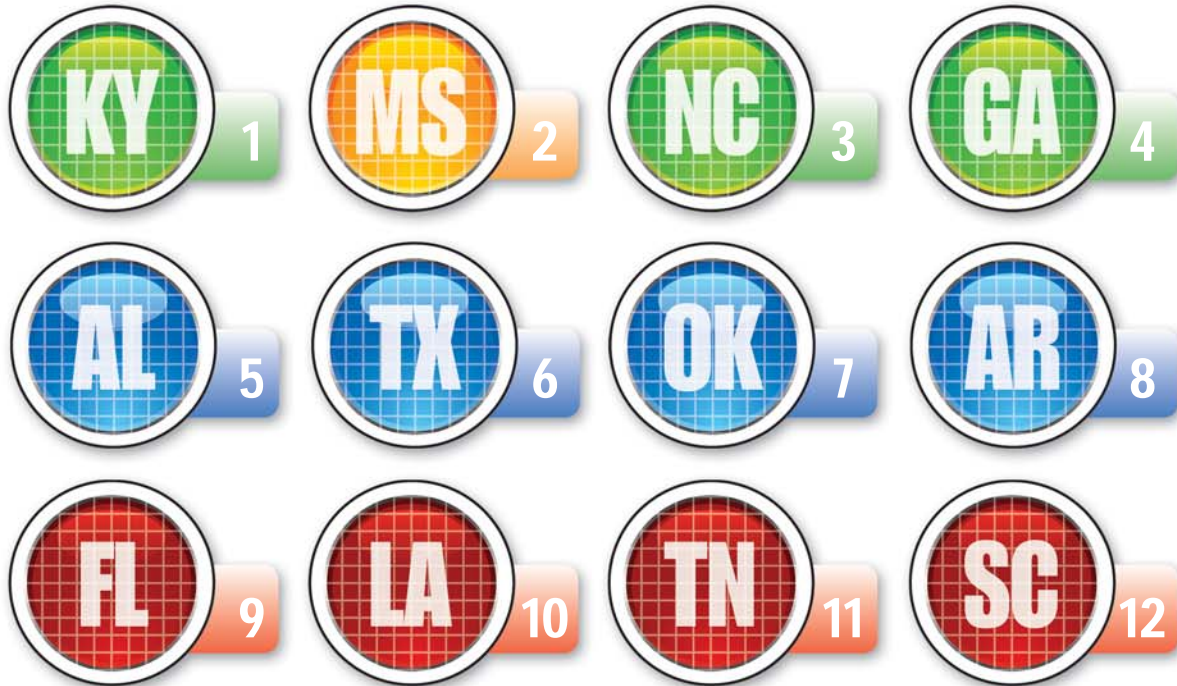
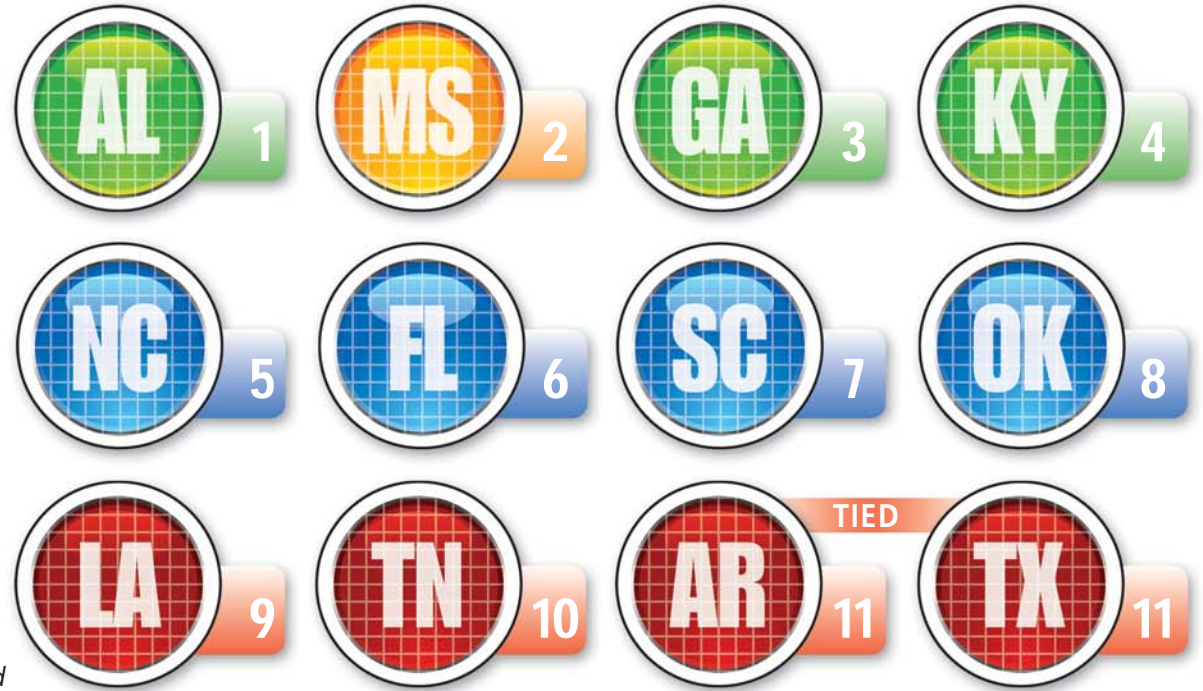
Source: State Science & Technology Institute using 2009 NSF Data

#2
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #2 in Percent Change 4th Grade Students Reading at or above Basic - 2005-2011

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/statecomparisons/acrossyear.aspx?usrSelections=0%2cRED%2c0%2c3%2cacross%2c0%2c2>

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Nation's Report Card



#2
Blueprint State Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #2 in Least Violent Crime Per 100,000 - 2009

<http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/State/StateCrime.cfm>

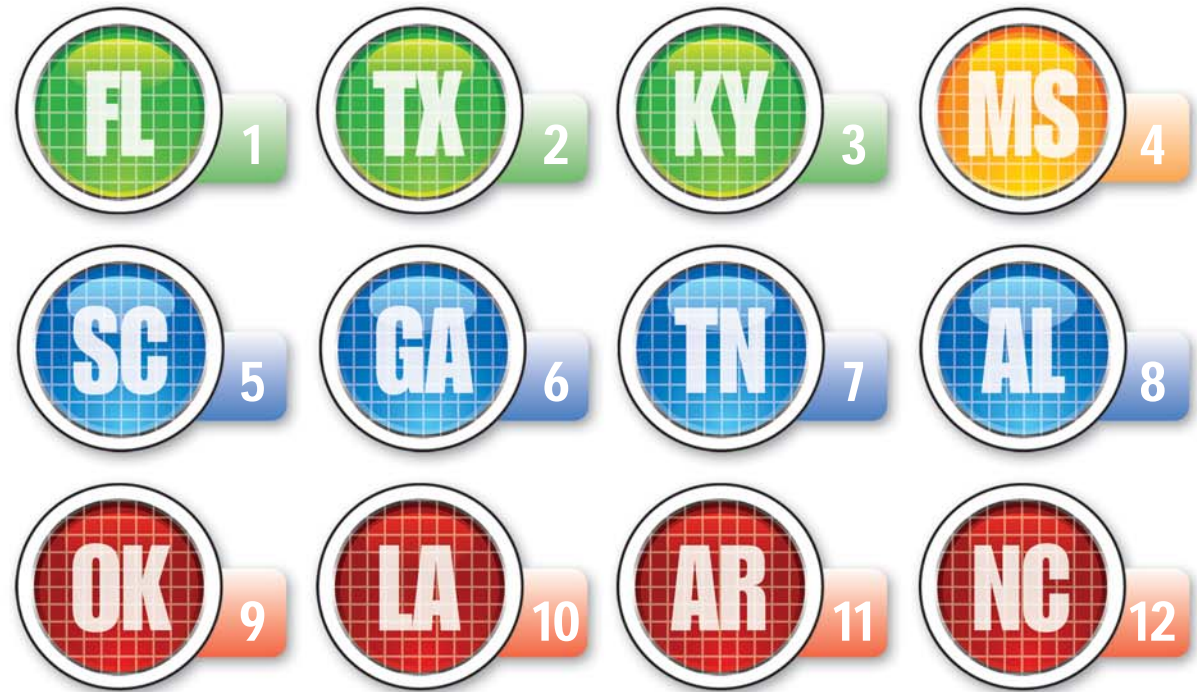
Source: FBI

#4
Blueprint State
Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #4 in State Tax Climate - 2011

<http://www.taxfoundation.org/taxdata/show/22661.html>

Source: Tax Foundation State Business Tax Climate Ratings FY 2011



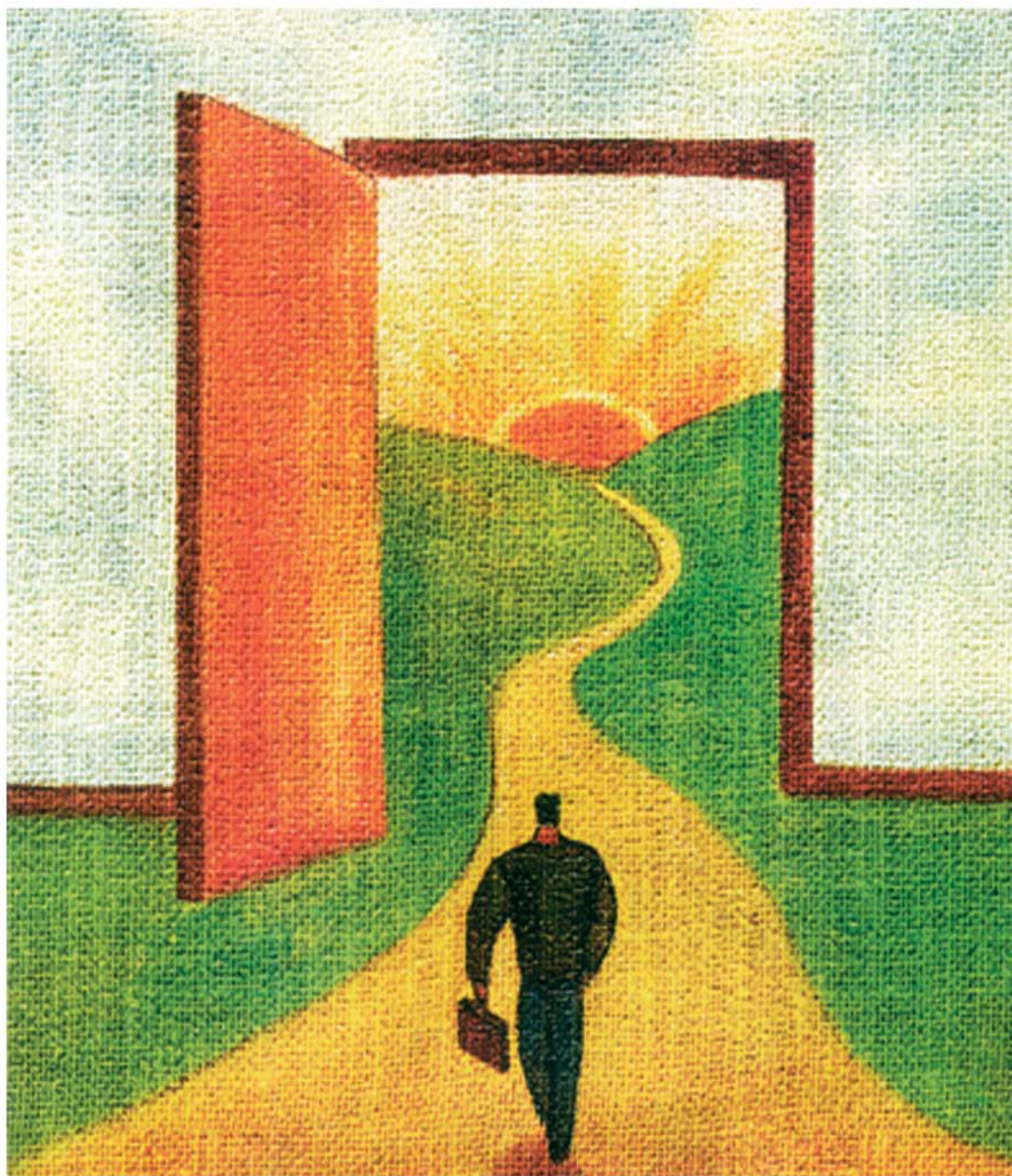
#6
Blueprint State
Comparison Rank

Mississippi is ranked #6 among states growing in competitiveness - 2011

<http://www.newgeography.com/content/002558-which-states-are-growing-more-competitive>

By Hank Robison and Rob Sentz, New Geography

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



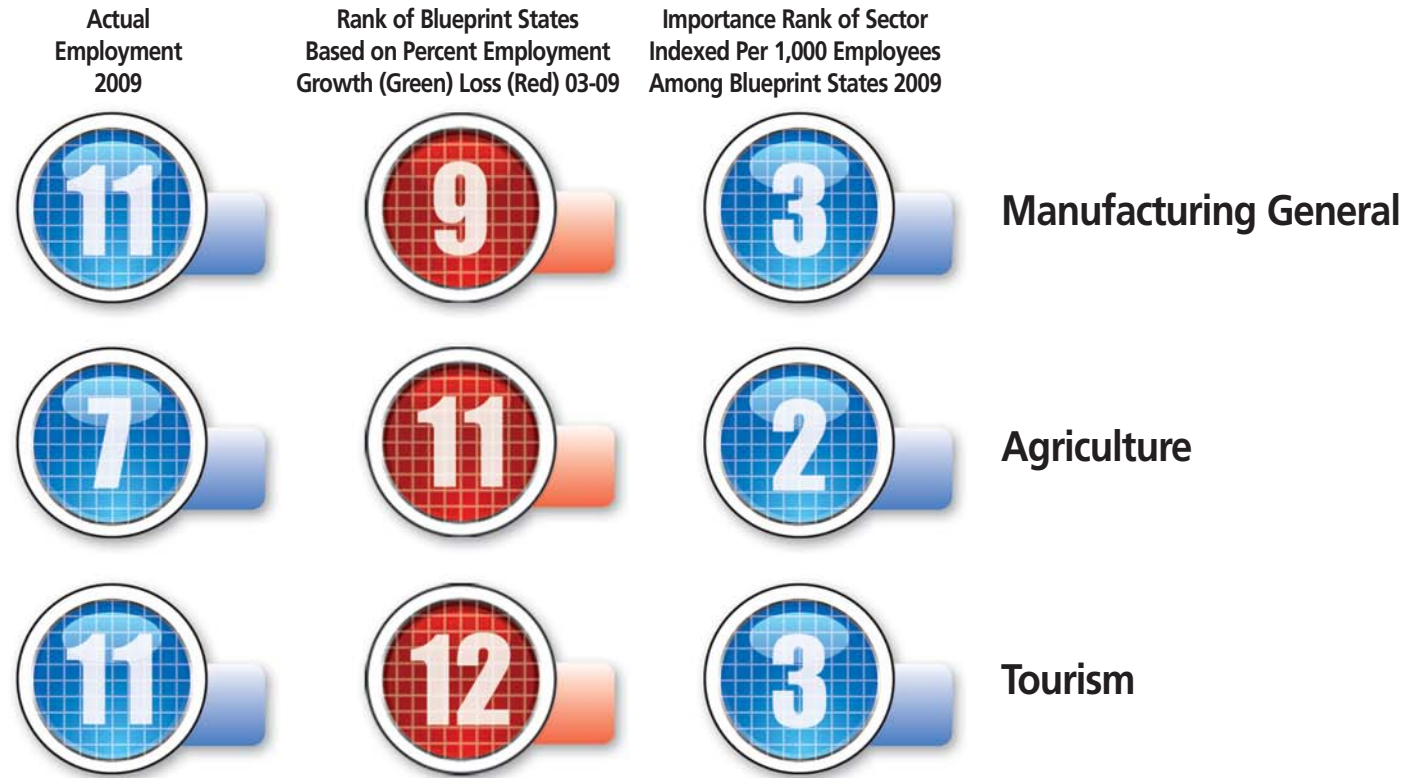
OTHER RESEARCH DATA

How Three Mississippi Employment Sectors Rank among the 12 Blueprint States

As in most Blueprint Mississippi States, the dominant employment sectors remain government, retail and services, yet manufacturing, agriculture and tourism remain three very important employment sectors to Mississippi's future.

This chart shows these three-sectors in three rows and the numbers in each of the dials represents our position among the 12 Blueprint Mississippi states – and when a dial is shaded in red, it represents a loss in employment, as was also the case in many other Blueprint Mississippi states:

- The first column shows our ranking compared to Blueprint States as of 2009 in terms of actual employment;
- The second column shows Mississippi's rank when compared with our Blueprint States in terms of the percentage growth (loss) of employment from 2003-2009;
- The third column shows Mississippi's rank compared to our Blueprint States on the relative importance of the sector, measure as an index showing employment in the sector per thousand employees in all sectors in the state. Because of the small size of the state of Mississippi relative to



many of the Blueprint Comparison states, our actual employment numbers often can be smaller, but the indexed number provides a real understanding of how important these sectors are to the future of our state compared to other states.

For Mississippi, Manufacturing and Tourism are both #3 in importance and Agriculture is #2 in importance, when compared to the Blueprint Comparison states. These numbers do not reflect significant increases in manufacturing employment as a result of the opening of new economic development projects in 2010 and 2011, including expansions at Toyota, Severstal and PACCAR, just to name a few – and we will provide more up-to-date information as it becomes available. (2010 data expected to be posted on this site by the end of January, once econometric models are re-run with the updated information).



Source: University of Delaware Center for Applied Business and Economic Research using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis Data.

Target Industry Rank Among Blueprint States

The Mississippi Development Authority, working closely with local economic developers around the state, narrowed its target industry list to 14 eight years ago, to focus efforts more strategically in recruitment efforts.

This chart shows these three sectors in three rows and the numbers in each of the dials represents our position among the 12 Blueprint Mississippi states – and when a dial is shaded in red, it is representative of a loss in employment, as was the case in many other Blueprint Mississippi states:

- The first column shows actual employment and our ranking compared to Blueprint States as of 2009;
- The second column shows Mississippi's ranking position when compared with our Blueprint States the percentage growth (loss) of employment from 2003-2009;
- And the third column shows the importance of the sector to Mississippi, and our ranking when compared to our Blueprint States as an indexed representation per 1,000 employees of data comparing the sector's employment to the total employment of the state.

It is important to note that in certain sectors – shipbuilding and timber and wood products we are in the top five states in actual employment and these sectors rank #1 in importance when compared with our other Blueprint States.

Additionally, food processing, logistics, defense/homeland security and automotive assembly rank in the top five in importance in Mississippi compared to the Blueprint States.

Source: University of Delaware Center for Applied Business and Economic Research using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis Data.



How MS Employment Ranks For Other Industries Among Blueprint States

Although not listed as target industries on the MDA list, these other industries are of significant interest to Mississippi, either by employment or by contribution to gross national product or both. Gaming, furniture and poultry actual employment rank in the top five and the indexed importance of these industries show a rank of #1 for gaming and furniture and #2 for poultry – clearly very important sectors for Mississippi.

The health care industry is a significant contributor in employment and gross national product, which is why Blueprint Mississippi has already launched a significant study exploring how this industry can be boosted through a major economic development cluster approach.

Cluster analysis of each of the promising sectors listed on these pages will provide better insight into targeting the industries of the future.

Source: University of Delaware Center for Applied Business and Economic Research using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis Data.

	Actual Employment 2009	Rank of Blueprint States Based on Percent Employment Growth (Green) Loss (Red) 03-09	Importance Rank of Sector Indexed Per 1,000 Employees Among Blueprint States 2009	
	11	2	6	Energy
	3	6	1	Furniture
	1	7	1	Gaming
	12	9	8	Hospitals/Health Care
	5	9	2	Poultry



Mississippi Gross Domestic Product - 2010

	\$-Billion	
1. Government	18.0	18.5%
2. Manufacturing	16.6	17.0%
3. Real Estate & Rental Leasing	8.9	9.1%
4. Retail Trade	7.7	7.9%
5. Health Care & Social Assistance	7.3	7.4%
6. Finance & Insurance	4.5	4.6%
7. Wholesale Trade	4.5	4.6%
8. Construction	4.1	1.2%
9. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3.6	3.7%
10. Accomodation & Food Services	3.6	3.6%
11. Transportation & Warehousing	3.2	3.3%
12. Utilities	2.8	2.9%
13. Other Services except Government	2.4	2.4%
14. Administrative & Waste Management Services	2.2	2.2%
15. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2.1	2.1%
16. Information	2.1	2.1%
17. Mining	1.5	1.5%
18. Management of Compaines & Enterprises	1.1	1.2%
19. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0.8	0.8%
20. Educational Services	<u>0.7</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
Total GDP	97.5	100.0%

<http://www.bea.gov/regional/gsp/action.cfm>





Total Full-Time & Part-Time Employment - 2010

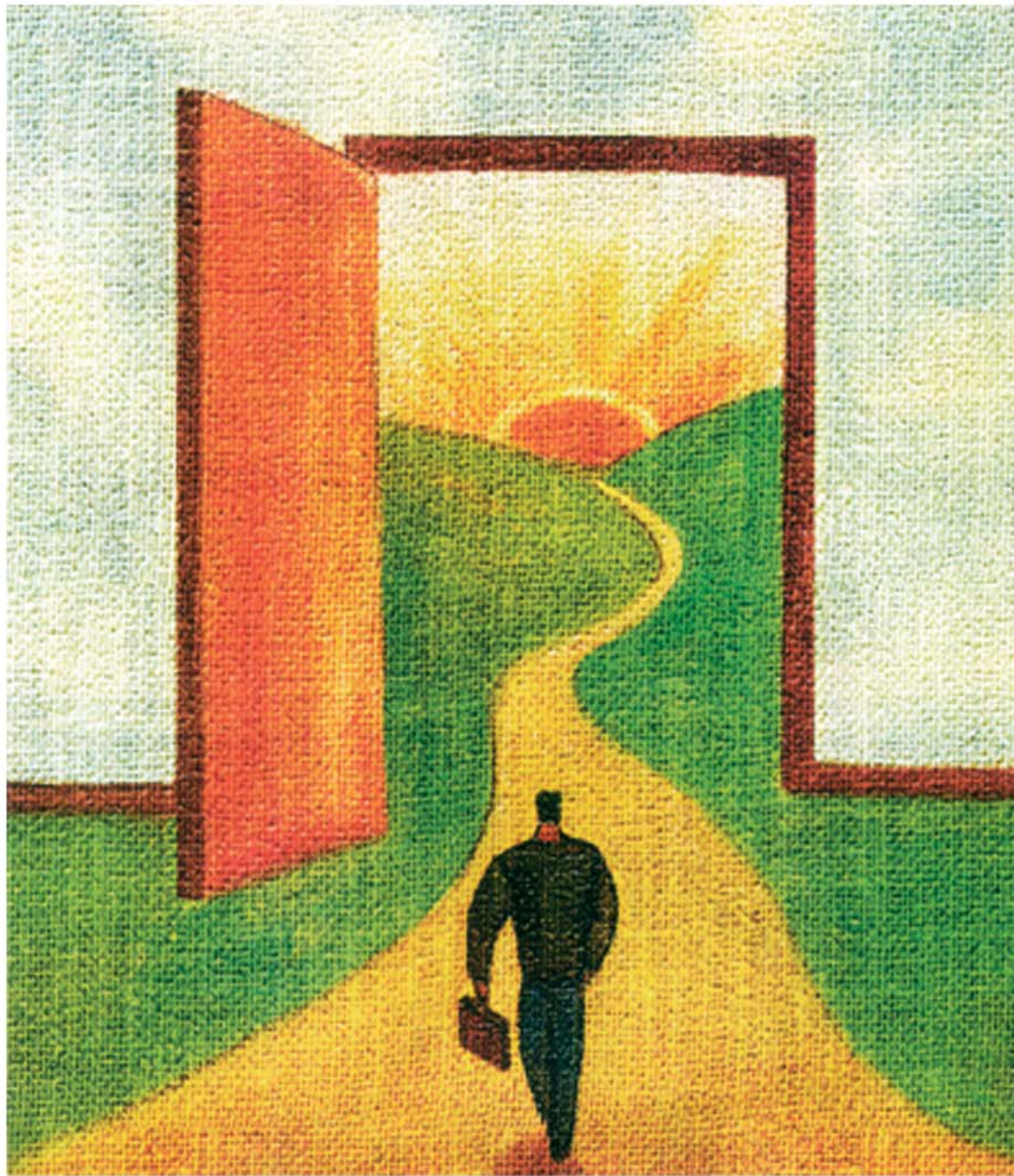
#-Thousands

1. Government & Government Enterprises	283.3	19.0%
2. Retail Trade	162.4	10.9%
3. Health Care & Social Assistance	142.1	9.5%
4. Manufacturing	140.5	9.4%
5. Accommodation & Food Services	115.1	7.7%
6. Construction	88.9	6.0%
7. Administrative & Waste Management Services	82.0	5.5%
8. Other Services, except Public Administration	81.3	5.4%
9. Finance & Insurance	57.5	3.8%
10. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	55.0	3.7%
11. Transportation & Warehousing	51.8	3.5%
12. Farm Employment	45.4	3.0%
13. Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	44.2	3.0%
14. Wholesale Trade	38.2	2.6%
15. Educational Services	25.0	1.7%
16. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	20.2	1.4%
17. Information	14.9	1.0%
18. Forestry, Fishing & Recreation	13.6	0.9%
19. Mining	12.6	0.8%
20. Management of Companies & Enterprises	11.2	0.7%
21. Utilities	8.1	0.5%
Total Employment	1,493.4	100.0%

<http://www.bea.gov/regional/spi/>



BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



MAJOR MILESTONES
SINCE 2004
BLUEPRINT



Major Milestones Since Last Blueprint

Economic Competitiveness

- Creation of Momentum Mississippi
- Momentum Mississippi Incentives approved
- More than 50,000 jobs created in various new and existing industries with a private investment of more than \$10 billion
- Real drive toward regionalism in landing major projects with cooperation of economic development officials throughout the state
- Growth of Main Street Program
- Passage of film incentives that have resulted in projects such as "The Help"
- Creation of Single Workforce Investment Board and WIN Job Centers
- Workforce dollars allocated from unemployment insurance tax to fund workforce training at Mississippi's 15 community colleges
- Revolving fund available for economic development projects
- Elimination of Public Warehouse Tax in state has led to the location of numerous distribution facilities in DeSoto County
- Tourism incentives passed and expanded
- Cultural heritage trails enhancing tourism
- Creative Economy providing economic benefits
- Focus on Health Care as an economic driver by the Greater Jackson Partnership and ADP in Hattiesburg and Blueprint Mississippi has begun a privately-funded comprehensive study on the economic development impact of health care
- Insurance – state boosted funding of wind pool after Katrina – continues to address issue
- Delta Regional Authority becomes fully staffed resource for Mississippi and other river delta areas – joins with Appalachian regional commission as resource for state
- Business incubators created around state
- CREATE Foundation forms the Wellspring Center for Professional Futures in Northeast Mississippi, an education facility for students in the eight school districts in Pontotoc, Union, and Lee counties
- Focus on entrepreneurship and minority businesses by several groups including the Montgomery Institute, Mississippi Technology Alliance, SBDC's, Magnolia Business Association, Hope Credit Union/Hope Enterprise Corporation and others
- Creation of the Aerospace Alliance along the Gulf Coast – a partnership between Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Louisiana
- Numerous Museums and Attractions that have opened or opening to help boost tourism and the overall quality of life



Major Milestones Since Last Blueprint

Educational Achievement

- Children First Act passed 2009 – Revision and strengthened with changes in 2010
- Dashboard report for schools and school districts established for reporting data
- Improved Core Curriculum – aligned for first time with national standards
- Growth of Mississippi Scholars from two Pilot schools to 148 schools in 2011
- Expansion of scope of the Mississippi Council on Economic Education
- Creation of Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
- On the Bus – drop-out prevention campaign that led to the creation of an office of dropout prevention at the Mississippi Department of Education
- Mississippi ranks 8th in the total number of National Board Certified Teachers with 3,222
- High School Redesign – career pathways program to help put middle school students on the right career path approved – pilot program begins
- Barksdale Reading Institute – renewed focus on teacher quality, leadership, four pilot districts
- Early Education Milestones
 - Mississippi Building Blocks currently providing training for 33 child care centers
 - SPARK (Supporting Partners to Assure Ready Kids) currently serving 10 schools
 - Excel by Five moves from pilot to certified program in 28 communities
- Digital Opportunity Trust – strong presence in Mississippi – originally funded by Cisco
- More organized approach to coordinating early childhood resources through statewide organization – the State Early Childhood Advisory Council formed in 2008
- Creation of Parents Campaign – single parental voice for education reform
- Teach for America training institute established at Delta State University
- Significantly increased enrollment at state universities
- Significantly increased enrollment at community and junior colleges and greater participation in workforce training programs
- Mississippi Adequate Education Program funded fully – in fiscal years of 2009 and 2010





Major Milestones Since Last Blueprint

Technology Commercialization

- Creation of Angel Fund at Mississippi Technology Alliance
- Technology incentives included in Momentum Mississippi package
- Repositioning of Technology Alliance focusing on building entrepreneurship in technology field
- Shared Services Center located at Stennis Space Center
- Location of several new industries that focus on technology, including:
 - Soladigm
 - Stion
 - Twin Creeks Technologies
 - KiOR
 - GE Aviation
 - Wilh Schulz GMBH
- Growth of home-grown, high-tech businesses, including:
 - C Spire Wireless
 - Peavey
 - Bomgar
 - SmartSync
- Creation of MissiON, the Mississippi research network, which links the Mississippi Research Consortium – comprised of the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi and Jackson State University; the University of Mississippi Medical Center; the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Stennis Space Center.
- Creation of the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition to maximize resources

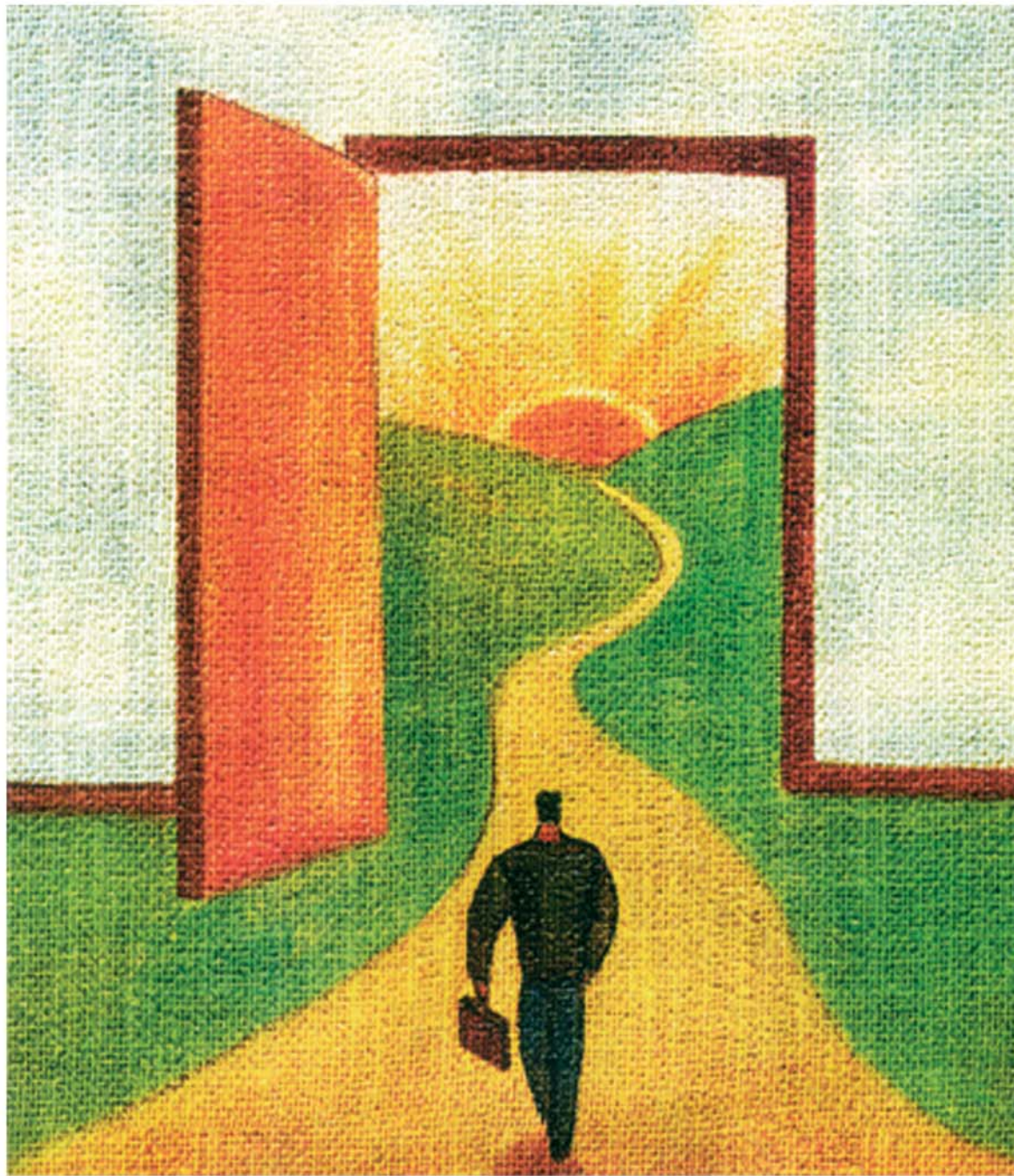


Major Milestones Since Last Blueprint

Resource Management

- Focus on energy sector has resulted in major investment in Mississippi, including:
 - Mississippi Power Company's Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) plant in Kemper County - a \$2.4 billion project
 - Entergy Mississippi's Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Plant's \$500 million expansion in Port Gibson
 - Chevron's \$1.4 billion expansion in Pascagoula to refine a premium base
 - Gulf LNG, (Liquefied Natural Gas) terminal in Pascagoula
 - KiOR, will open three facilities, to create fuel blendstocks from a variety of biomass
 - Twin Creeks Technologies Inc., manufacturer of crystalline silicon solar panels in Senatobia
 - Soladigm, a producer of energy-efficient Dynamic Glass in Olive Branch
 - Stion, a manufacturer of high-efficiency, low-cost thin-film solar panels in Hattiesburg
 - Elevance Renewable Sciences, Inc., a producer of high-performance renewable specialty chemicals, in Natchez
 - Enviva, which provides clean, sustainable, renewable woody biomass to industrial-scale customers, now has facilities in Wiggins and Amory
- HCL CleanTech, which will convert biomass into sugars for industrial bioproducts, will locate its headquarters in Olive Branch and open additional facilities in Grenada, Booneville, Hattiesburg and Natchez
- CaliSolar, a manufacturer of silicon to be used in the automotive and energy industries
- Expansion of the Mississippi State Port at Gulfport
- Intermodal expansions at airports in Jackson and Gulfport
- Creation of State Intermodal Council to coordinate opportunities
- First leg of I-69 completed in Tunica and DeSoto counties
- Improvements to U.S. Highway 78 to bring to Interstate quality as it becomes I-22
- AHEAD program completed after 20+ years – creating a network of four-lane highways throughout the state
- Vision 2020, a continuation of the highway improvement program, has begun
- Creation of Delta Health Alliance

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



MAJOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENTS
SINCE 2004
BLUEPRINT

MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Since 2004, the Mississippi Development Authority, along with local and regional economic development officials, have worked to secure projects that have resulted in 50,626 new jobs. During that time, private investment has totaled more than \$10 billion for new projects and expansions of existing businesses. Among the major projects:

CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI

Advanced Distributor Products - Evaporator Coil

Manufacturer – Grenada*

**Affiliated Computer Services – Information Technology –
Ridgeland***

Automated Data Processing – Shared Services Center – Clinton

**Comcast Advanced Solutions Center – Regional Headquarters –
Madison**

**Grenada Stamping & Assembly – Automotive Supply –
Grenada***

HCL CleanTech – Biomass/Research & Development – Grenada

Irby – Electrical Distributor – Jackson*

Lockheed Martin – Mission Support Center – Clinton

Luvata – Aluminum Products – Grenada*

Nissan – Commercial Vehicles – Canton*

Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems – Defense – Forest*

Scotts Miracle Gro – Chemical Manufacturer – Pearl

Ergon Refining Inc. – Refinery – Vicksburg*

Sealed Air Corporation – Packaging – Grenada*

Vicksmetal – Transformer Core Manufacturer – Vicksburg

Vitro America – Fabricator Glass and Aluminum – Grenada*

Bunge-Ergon – Ethanol Producer - Vicksburg

DELTA/NORTHWEST

American Contract Bridge League – Headquarters – Horn Lake

Anda – Pharmaceuticals Distribution – Olive Branch

Anel Corporation – Steel Fabrication – Carroll County*

Anderson Technologies – Injection molding – Batesville

Cardinal Health – Medical Distribution – Olive Branch

CE-Bio – Nutritional Supplement Manufacture – Olive Branch

Child Support Services – Call Center – Yazoo City

BorgWarner – Automotive – Water Valley*

Fiskars – Distribution Center – Southaven

GE Aviation – Aerospace – Batesville

Guardian Fiberglass – Building Products – Olive Branch

Hamilton Beach – Distribution Center – Olive Branch

HCL CleanTech – Headquarters – Olive Branch

MARS Foods/Uncle Ben's Rice – Food Processor – Greenville*

**notes expansion*



M A J O R ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Myers Tire Supply – Distribution Center – Southaven
Newly Weds Foods – Customized Food Coating – Southaven
PK USA – Automotive - Senatobia
Soladigm – Green Building Materials – Olive Branch
Toyoda Gosei – Automotive – Batesville
Twin Creeks Technologies – Solar Panels/Energy – Senatobia
United Solutions – Plastic Housewares – Sardis*
Wilh. Schulz GMBH – Pipe Manufacturing – Tunica
WPG Americas – Electronics Distributor – Southaven

EAST CENTRAL

II-VI – Crystal Technology – Starkville*
AlaphGen Materials – Polymer – Philadelphia
American Eurocopter – Aerospace – Columbus
Aurora Flight Services – Aerospace – Columbus
Calisolar – Silicon Products – Columbus
Camgian – Semi Conductors – Starkville*
Handy Hardware – Distribution Center – Meridian
KiOR – Biofuels – Columbus & Newton
Mississippi Power (IGGC) Plant – Electrical Generation –
Kemper County
Mississippi Steel Processing – Steel Products – Columbus
New Process Steel – Steel Products – Columbus

**notes expansion*

N.E.W. Customer Service Center – Call Center – Meridian
PACCAR – Automotive – Columbus
SemiSouth – Semi conductors – Starkville
Severstal – Steel Products – Columbus
Shuqualak Lumber Company – Wood Products – Shuqualak*
Stark Aerospace – Defense/Aerospace – Columbus*
Tower Automotive – Automotive Supplier – Meridian

GULF COAST

Chevron – Petroleum Refinery/Energy – Pascagoula*
Gulf Liquefied Natural Gas – Natural Gas Terminal/Energy –
Pascagoula
MAC LLC – Polymer-Cased Ammunition – Hancock County
Northrop Grumman Unmanned Systems Center –
Defense/Aerospace – Moss Point
Rolls Royce Engine Testing Facility – Aerospace – Stennis Space
Center, Hancock County
Trinity Yachts – Shipbuilding – Gulfport
Triton – Automated Teller Machines – Long Beach*

PINE BELT

Stion – Renewable Energy – Hattiesburg



M A J O R ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GE Aviation – Aerospace – Ellisville
HCL CleanTech – Biomass – Hattiesburg
Hol-Mac Corporation - Steel Fabrication – Bay Springs*
Resinall – Polymers – Hattiesburg*
Noetic Technologies – Polymers – Hattiesburg
Deloitte – Business Consulting – Hattiesburg

NORTHEAST

ACCO Brands – Office Product – Booneville
Artisan Frame and Moulding – Custom Milling – Byhalia*
Ayrshire Electronics – Electronic Manufacturing Service – Corinth
Cooper Tire – Tire Manufacturer – Tupelo*
Delta Furniture – Upholstered Furniture – Pontotoc*
Dennen Steel – Steel Products – Iuka
Eagle Capital Corp. – Data Center – Tupelo*
G&G Steel – Steel Fabricator – Iuka
General Atomics – Defense – Tupelo*
HCL CleanTech – Biomass – Booneville
Holley Performance Products – Automotive Specialty – Aberdeen*
Homestretch LLC – Furniture Manufacturer – Nettleton
Hudson Salvage – Distribution Center – Tippah County

Hunter Douglas – Metals & Distribution Center – Tupelo*
KC Integrated Services – Logistics/Distribution – Pontotoc
Kidz World – Furniture Manufacturer – Calhoun City
Kimberly Clark-Corinth Professional Products Mill – Corinth*
Kingsford Manufacturing Company – Charcoal – Glen
Lane Furniture – Furniture Manufacturing – Lee County*
Madison House – Furniture Manufacturer – Amory*
Martin Rea Fabco – Automotive Parts – Lee County
MTD – Lawn Mower Manufacturer – Tupelo*
N.E.W. Customer Service Center – Call Center – Tupelo
Olin Corporation – Ammunition – Oxford*
Roll Form – Steel/Metal Products – Iuka
Skyline – Steel Products – Iuka
Southern Motion – Furniture Manufacture – Pontotoc*
Steel Development Co. – Steel Products – Amory
Toyota – Automotive – Blue Springs
Toyota Auto Body Co. – Automotive – Baldwin
Toyota Boshoku – Automotive – Fulton
True Temper – Sporting Goods Manufacturer – Amory*
United Chair – Furniture Manufacturer – Bruce*
Universal Asset Management – Aerospace – Tupelo

**notes expansion*

M A J O R ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

United Furniture – Furniture Manufacturer – Okolona*

VuTeq – Automotive – New Albany

**Worthington Cylinders - Pressure Tanks and Cylinders –
New Albany***

SOUTHWEST

Community Construction – Pipeline Contractor – Hazlehurst*

Delphi – Automotive – Brookhaven*

D.M.I. Pipe Fabrication – Steel/Metal Products – Woodville

**Elevance Renewable Sciences – Chemical Manufacturer –
Natchez**

Enerfab – Metal Products – Natchez

Energy Nuclear – Electrical Power Generation – Port Gibson*

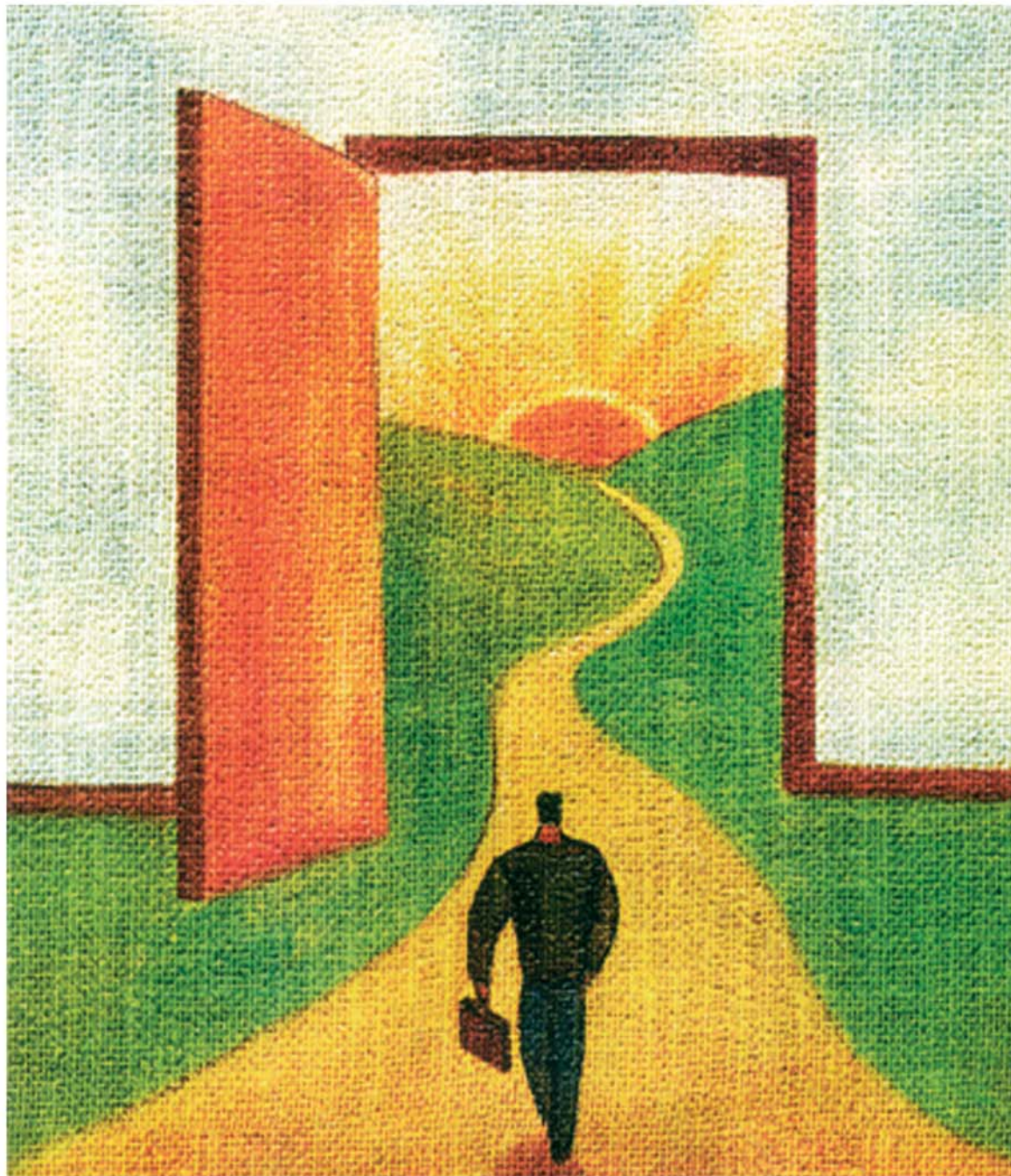
HCL CleanTech – Biomass – Natchez

KiOR – Biofuels – Franklin County

Pioneer Aerospace – Aerospace – Columbia*

**notes expansion*

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

A Note About WOW Things

Statewide WOW Things were developed from research and nominations from Road Show Participants and have been quantified.

Regional WOW Things were nominated from Road Show Participants, and have not been quantified.

What's Happening in Mississippi?

- 50,625 new job opportunities recruited or created with more than \$10 billion in investment according to the Mississippi Development Authority.
 - A snapshot of one year – from Oct. 2009 to Oct. 2010 shows projects announced by the Mississippi Development Authority would create 7,604 new jobs. Of those, 2,806 would be jobs created as a result of expansions of existing businesses. Two companies, Toyota and KIOR, accounted for 3,000 of the more than 7,500 jobs. Many of the jobs were at small companies, as 19 projects created less than 50 jobs and six projects created less than 25 jobs.
- Mississippi 4th grade reading scores improved at a rate that was 75% higher than the national average according to the Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales (National Center for Education Statistics/U.S. Department of Education Institute of Educational Sciences)
- Mississippi's per capita income has grown 30% since 2003 – almost twice the rate of inflation
- Since 2004, Mississippi Public Universities have:
 - Increased the number of classrooms and lab space by almost 200
 - Increased the number of dorm rooms by almost 4,000
 - Increased the number of dorm beds by almost 8,000
 - Added 77 undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs
 - Increased enrollment by 8,681 students
 - Awarded 115,459 degrees
 - Received 109 patents, with 68 more patent applications pending
- Major Accomplishments at Mississippi Public Universities include:
 - Alcorn State University Extension Program's Small Farmers Conference has increased revenue for over 2,500 farmers annually.

What's Happening in Mississippi?

- The Delta Music Institute (DMI) at Delta State University provides students with a broad and thorough education in the technological, creative and business areas of the music and entertainment industries. DMI features two recording studios, including an orchestral studio and a studio for small ensembles or solo performers.
- Jackson State University leads the Jackson Heart Study, the largest single-site, prospective, epidemiologic investigation of cardiovascular disease among African Americans ever undertaken.
- Mississippi State University was recently recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as “a very high research activity university,” one of only 108 in the nation.
- Since opening in August 2004, the Roger F. Wicker Center for Creative Learning at Mississippi University for Women has served:
 - 6,478 K-12 students * 4,581 Parents * 6,417 Teachers * 1,802 Community Members * 56 Community Partnerships * 388 School Partnerships * 887 Community Service Hours through organized monthly Center service projects
- Mississippi Valley State University has one of only seven accredited graduate environmental health programs in the nation and is the only HBCU to have one.
- The University of Mississippi’s School of Education is making a positive difference in low-income, quality-challenged public schools through such programs as the Mississippi Teacher Corps, Mississippi Principal Corps and the Center for Excellence in Literacy Education. At North Panola High School, Mississippi Teacher Corps graduates helped the school improve from “Failing” status in 2007 to a “Successful” ranking this fall. Also, CELI personnel worked with teachers at Dundee Elementary School in Tunica County to implement new teaching strategies to enhance reading and writing, helping Dundee to become one of 65 Star schools in the state and the only one in the Mississippi Delta.
- The University of Southern Mississippi’s College of Business has appeared on the *U.S. News & World Report’s* list of top business schools, an honor that places the college among the top 15% in the country.
- Mississippi Ranks No. 3 Nationally for Export Growth Intensity and No. 5 Nationally for Export Growth according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's report ‘Recovery and Renewal for the 21st Century.’
 - Mississippi Exports Total \$8.2 Billion Annually - up from \$3.1 Billion in 2004

What's Happening in Mississippi?

- Mississippi is ranked as the No. 1 place in the world for making investments in oil and gas as cited by the Fraser Institute's Global Petroleum Survey 2011
- Site Selectors rank Mississippi No. 9 nationally as a "Top State for Doing Business" according to Area Development Magazine
- Mississippi's overall highway position is No. 1 in the Mid-South, No. 5 among Blueprint states and No. 16 nationally as stated by Reason Foundation
- Changes in workforce development programs allowed 179,979 adults to take part in non-credit training in 2008
- Major Accomplishments at Mississippi's Community Colleges
 - The Aspen Institute named five of Mississippi's Community Colleges (East Central, Hinds, MS Delta, MS Gulf Coast, and Pearl River) among the Top 120 community colleges in the nation. Later, Gulf Coast was named one of the Top 10 community colleges by Aspen
 - During 2011, our community colleges awarded 14,074 degrees which is an increase of 15% compared to the previous year.
 - From fall 2007 to fall 2010, credit enrollment at Mississippi's Community Colleges increased by approximately 23%
 - Dual credit/dual enrollment allows high school students an opportunity to earn college credit before they graduate. Because of this, some students can enter college with enough credits to be classified as college sophomores
 - Holmes Community College was awarded Phi Theta Kappa International's Most Distinguished Chapter Award in 2010 and 2011. The Jackson-based Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is the largest honor society in American higher education with 1,270 chapters on two-year and community college campuses worldwide
 - The average community college tuition and required fees for this entire school year is just \$2,174.
 - "G.I. Jobs" website named Co-Lin, Jones, Meridian, Gulf Coast, and Pearl River as "Military Friendly" schools for 2012.
- Mississippi's Community College System ranks above the national average in all measurements in the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government report "The States and Their Community College." Mississippi was one of only four states to earn this distinction in the 2008 study.
- Mississippi's Cultural Heritage is attracting national attention as the Blues Trail now has 140 markers

What's Happening in Mississippi?

- Mississippi has more African American elected officials than any other state
- Almost 1,000 adults have received manufacturing credentials through the Alabama-Mississippi Regional Initiative
- The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program began at the University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Mississippi Council on Economic Education was re-established to provide financial literacy for middle and high school students statewide
- Between the Lions Preschool Literacy Initiative, a partnership between Mississippi Public Broadcasting and Rotary Clubs in Mississippi
- U.S. Presidential Debate held at The University of Mississippi's Gertrude Castellow Ford Center for the Performing Arts
- Mississippi hosts the International Ballet Competition in Jackson every four years – the only IBC competition held in the United States
- Jobs for Mississippi Graduates has a 92% rate of graduating from high school and enrolling in college or the military
- Mississippi has the highest number of High Schools with Solar car teams, which have won national honors for 10 consecutive years
- Peavey Electronics®, The Recording Academy® and the State of Mississippi celebrate the musical legacy of the "Birthplace of America's Music" at the annual Mississippi GRAMMY® Legacy Celebration and Peavey Awards
- Mississippi has produced more GRAMMY® winners and nominees (per capita) than any other state as confirmed by the Recording Academy (National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, Inc.)
- Mississippi has 21 State Parks located throughout the state offering a variety of amenities
- The abundance and appreciation of natural resources (water, energy, timber, wildlife, coast line and navigable rivers)
- The collection of locally-owned and operated restaurants adds to Mississippi's cultural experience
- Mississippi's celebration of its GRAMMY® legacy
- Mississippi provides an opportunity for people of all ages to participate in various athletic and recreation programs
- Mississippi ranks No. 4 for Bio Mass according to Forbes America's Best Places For Alternative Energy Report

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Gulf Coast

Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport completed \$50 million expansion

Knight Center for Community Service opens in Gulfport

Gulf Coast Convention Center renovation and expansion completed in Gulfport

Biloxi Community Civic Center Opens

Mississippi State Port at Gulfport expansion under way

Fallen Oak and The Preserve Golf Club

Gulf Coast Convention Center renovation and expansion completed in Gulfport

Pleasant Reed Interpretive Center opens in Biloxi

Gallery of African American Art opens in Biloxi

INFINITY Science Center at Stennis Space Center under construction in Hancock County

NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center

Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art opens in Biloxi

\$1.4 Billion expansion at Chevron under way in Pascagoula

Gulf LNG Terminal Constructed in Pascagoula

Creation of Gulf Coast Business Council

Mississippi Gulf Coast Alliance for Economic Development

Ocean Expo Aquarium & Learning Center in D'Iberville – construction under way on \$30 million project

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Gulf Coast

City of Picayune has opened a visitors center and intermodal center

Cruising the Coast has an annual economic impact of \$18 million-\$20 million

Walter Anderson Museum of Art in Ocean Springs

Mississippi's Seafood Industry

Biloxi Seafood Festival

Annual Blessing of the Fleet and Shrimp Festival

Mississippi coast, beaches and waterways

Downtown merchants and attractions in Ocean Springs

Pascagoula School District named one of nation's 100 Best Communities for young people by America's Promise Alliance

Singing River Hospital has moved from a small community hospital to a major regional medical center

Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs is center for Gulf of Mexico Research

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at Stennis Space Center major source for television weather data

National Data Bouy Center at Stennis Space Center

DuPont's investment in the Delisle Plant

Mississippi Power Company's "Project Ready Program" has identified 12 project ready sites in Southeast Mississippi

Downtown Revitalization program in Biloxi

Largest man-made beach is on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

Stennis Space Center has the highest concentration of oceanographers in the world – leaders in weather modeling, ocean mapping, tsunami buoy development, and providing the military with ocean data



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Gulf Coast

Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo

Pine Hill Festival in Wiggins

Mississippi Gulf Coast tourism includes gaming, golf, beaches, fishing, water sports, as well as other resort amenities

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Southwest Mississippi

Southwest Mississippi Partnership - 10-County regional economic development effort

Scenic Rivers Program in Southwest Mississippi

Mississippi River Steamboat return announced, 2011, Natchez (& Vicksburg)

Mississippi School for the Arts graduating students received \$3.2 million in scholarships in 2009, Brookhaven

Brookhaven raised \$347,000 for Mississippi Scholars' scholarships, 2008-2011

Formation of Natchez Inc for Economic Development, Natchez and Adams County

Expansion at Entergy's Nuclear Power Plant, 2011, Port Gibson

Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center

Pike County Industry Park enhancements

The Inn at Whitworth in Brookhaven

Mississippi School for the Arts, Brookhaven

Southwest Mississippi outdoor recreation – canoeing, camping, hunting

Southwest Mississippi Community College Well Construction Technology Program

Regional Workforce Development Center at Southwest Mississippi Community College to open in 2012

Strong spirit of cooperation between cities and counties in Southwest Mississippi

McComb Railroad Museum

Mississippi opened its 13th Welcome Center on Highway 61 in Woodville

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Pine Belt

Howard Technology Park opens in Ellisville

Trent Lott National Center for Excellence in Economic Development at the University of Southern Mississippi

The Garden, a 521-acre innovation and commercialization park at the University of Southern Mississippi

The Accelerator business incubator opens at the Garden at USM

University of Southern Mississippi's polymer research key to GE's decision to locate facility in Ellisville, announced 2011

Area Development Partnership expanded reach and increased private sector funding

Entertainment Industry program at the University of Southern Mississippi School of Music is the fastest growing major and in 2008 the School formed South City Records in Hattiesburg

Lauren Rogers Museum of Art \$3.5 million expansion in Laurel

Over 350 tourist visited Columbia in a three month period, as the city prepared to celebrate its bicentennial in December 2011.

University of Southern Mississippi's Nationally recognized Economic Development Master's Degree Program

William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine Opens in 2010 - First class had 100 students and program will have 400 students by 2013

William Carey University Ph.D. degree program for higher education leadership

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Pine Belt

Hattiesburg's Historic Downtown is spurring investment in the creative economy

Forest General Hospital and Southern Bone & Joint Specialists announced plans for the construction of a new Orthopedic Hospital

The African American Military History Museum opened near downtown Hattiesburg

Howard Industries is largest transformer manufacturer in nation

Sanderson Farms in Laurel is one of the nation's largest poultry processors

Sanderson Farms in Laurel has largest child care center in Mississippi

158th Training Brigade relocated to Camp Shelby in 2010

Long Leaf Trace Bike Trail

War Museum at Camp Shelby

First Social Media Associates Degree Program in the nation was offered in Mississippi at Antonelli College in Hattiesburg



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Central Mississippi

Mississippi Children's Museum opens in Jackson

Jackson State University is one of 11 universities to receive the federal designation to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

Hinds Community College Clyde Muse Center opens in Pearl

Old Capitol Museum renovation in Jackson

The MIND Center opens at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson

State Funding of Cancer Institute at UMMC

New Acute Care Hospital at UMMC Opens

Trustmark Park – Home of Mississippi Braves opens in Pearl

Transportation Museum under construction in Vicksburg

Jackson Convention Complex opens in Jackson

King Edward Hotel (formerly) renovation complete and opens as Hilton Garden Inn Jackson

Greater Jackson Partnership continues work on the Medical Corridor in Jackson

US Army Corps of Engineers Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center under construction, Vicksburg

Fondren District revitalization in Jackson

Pinnacle Building opens in downtown Jackson

Renaissance Center opens in Ridgeland

Mississippi Museum of Art opened in new space and Art Garden Opens – in Jackson

Mississippi Literary Trail under development

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Central Mississippi

Madison River Oaks Medical Center (HMA), New Facility Opens in Canton

Jackson Business Development Professional Roundtable Established to Develop a Community-Based Small Business Development Strategy for Jackson

Central Mississippi Affiliate of Susan G. Komen has Raised \$1.5 million to Aid in the Fight against Breast Cancer in a 30 County Area Marathon Makeover started in Clinton and has expanded nationwide

Farish Street Project Continues in Jackson

Civil Rights Museum and State History Museum planned, receives state funding commitment in 2011

PGA Golf Event continues as the True South Classic at Annandale Golf Club in Madison

Mississippi State University, the Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems, Holmes Community College and Nissan North America-Canton formed a partnership to conduct "Enhancing On-the-Job Problem Solving" training program.

Mississippi State Fair in Jackson

Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show in Jackson

Jackson Symphony Pepsi Pops on the Ross Barnett Reservoir

Belhaven Singing Christmas Tree, a tradition since 1933

Grenada League for Adult Development (GLAD) is a one stop center for full range of adult learning

Mississippi Museum of Natural History

Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame

Jackson Planetarium

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

East Central Mississippi

Mississippi State University Riley Center in Meridian

Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center - land donation and funding under way in Meridian

Mississippi Powers' Lignite plant under construction in Kemper County

Mississippi State University Entrepreneurship Center

Ritz Theater and Conference Center and Cafe` Ritz renovation, 2009, West Point

Creation of Columbus-Lowndes Development LINK

Creation of Community Development Partnership in Philadelphia

Volunteers in Classroom in Oktibbeha County School System

Aerospace/Aircraft development and research at Mississippi State University

Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium in French Camp

Johnny Cash Amnesty Day – Starkville Area Arts Council

MSU College of Engineering and Computer Science commercialization of software for high tech industries

Biofuels research and location of KiOR in Golden Triangle

Research in the area of renewable and sustainable energy at Mississippi State University

Workforce Development programs at East Mississippi Community College

Smartbiz Program to be launched at Center for Creative Entrepreneurship of Mississippi University for Women

Lifetime Enrichment Program at Mississippi University for Women

Mississippi Horse Park in Starkville

Thad Cochran Research Park at Mississippi State University

Mississippi State University School of Veterinary Medicine

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

East Central Mississippi

Golden Triangle Regional Airport partnership with businesses in the region and Creation of the Golden Triangle Aerospace Technology Park

Starkville Arts Council Everything Garden Expo

Mississippi University for Women has 99 percent passage rate for nursing certification

Golden Triangle has seen \$3 billion investment and 3,000 new jobs in the steel, aerospace and automotive industries since 2003

First Tee of Meridian was the First Chapter of First Tee in Mississippi

Peavey Electronics Headquartered in Meridian

Chickasawhay River canoeing and fishing

Meridian has become a regional center for medical care

Entertainment Walk of Fame at MSU Riley Center in Meridian

Temple Theater in Meridian

Jimmy Rogers Museum in Meridian

Soulé Live Steam Museum and Soulé Live Steam Festival

Meridian Railroad Museum and Meridian RailFest

West Alabama East Mississippi Mayors Regional Summit

One-third of Navy Pilots are trained at Naval Air Station Meridian

Starkville Civil War Arsenal, a private collection of Civil War field artillery carriages open for public viewing by appointment

Oktibbeha County is home to a member of the National Basketball Hall of Fame – Bailey Howell , the National Baseball Hall of Fame – Cool Papa Bell, and the National Football Hall of Fame – Jerry Rice

Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science in Columbus



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Delta

B.B King Museum and Interpretive Delta Center has had over 50,000 visitors (since opening) in 2008 in Indianola

Viking Cooking School and Retail Store opens in Greenwood

The Alluvian Hotel & Spa in Greenwood

Continuation of Downtown Rebirth with restorations to Elk's Lodge and others, Greenwood

Filming of 'The Help' in 2010 in Greenwood

U.S. 82 Mississippi River Bridge, Longest Cable Stayed Bridge Span on the River opens in 2009 in Greenville

The GRAMMY® Museum's first satellite museum announced in 2011 to be built at Delta State University in Cleveland

Tunica Riverpark & Museum opens in Tunica

EE Bass Cultural Arts Center in Greenville, with the inclusion of the Delta Children's Museum and the restored Armitage Herschell Company Carousel built in 1894 and brought originally to Greenville in 1901.

Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale

Delta Council's work to promote the Delta and work for economic opportunities

North Sunflower Medical Center in Ruleville

Mississippi Delta Community College – workforce training provided at the Capps Technology Center

Delta Health Alliance

Viable downtown business in Indianola

Delta State University Teach for America Institute

Indianola Promise Community a program of the Delta Health Alliance

Cassidy Bayou Art & Culture Center in Sumner

Gateway to the Blues Visitor Center and Museum in Tunica County



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Delta

Greenwood Elementary named a National Blue Ribbon School

YouthBuild program in Greenville operated by Mississippi Action for Community Education

Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden in Ruleville

Hunting, fishing and recreational opportunities in the Delta

The Mississippi River and the commerce and recreational opportunities it creates

Martin & Sue King Railroad Heritage Museum in Cleveland

Delta Music Institute at Delta State University

The Dave Boo Farris Museum at Delta State University

S. Hazel & Jimmy Sanders Sculpture Garden in Cleveland

Bologna Performing Arts Center at Delta State University

Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area

The Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University

Octoberfest in downtown Cleveland

Delta Arts Alliance

Foxtrot Pottery and Art Gallery in Clarksdale

Coahoma County Higher Education Center in Clarksdale

The Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information Technologies

Peer Power middle school reading program in Cleveland

Po Monkey's Juke Joint in Merigold

Hayes Cooper Center for Math School Tec in Merigold

Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Northwest Mississippi

DeSoto County is one of the top 40 fastest growing counties in US

DeSoto County became Mississippi's largest school district

Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi creates strategic initiatives, Hernando

Baptist Hospital has major expansion in Southaven

Methodist Hospital under construction in Olive Branch

Olive Branch is fastest growing city in the U.S. in Businessweek.com ranking

Construction of the Airport Industrial Complex in Panola County

Sardis Lake and Enid Lake Recreation areas

Logistics growth and location advantages in Northwest Mississippi

Taste of DeSoto Benefit

Centerhill Elementary School in Olive Branch selected as Blue Ribbon School

Three Interstate Highways Cross Through DeSoto County I-55, I-69 and I-22

DeSoto County Museum was selected for the Southeastern Museum Conference Leadership Award

DeSoto Arts Council growth

Workforce training through Northwest Community College

University of Mississippi DeSoto Center provides opportunities to earn four-year degrees

Hernando named the Healthiest Hometown in Mississippi

Mid-South Fair returns to DeSoto County

Sailing and fishing at Arkabutla Lake

Snowden Grove Park in Southaven hosts the Dizzy Dean World Series each summer with over 2,000 youth teams participating

DeSoto Civic Center

Mississippi River Kings Central League Hockey Team

DeSoto County is No. 7 nationally according to a Fortune magazine report



MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Northeast Mississippi

Northeast Mississippi Medical Center received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation's highest Presidential honor for organizational performance excellence

BancorpSouth Conference Center renovation and expansion completed in Tupelo

Robert C. Khayat Law Center opens at the University of Mississippi

Fairpark District redevelopment is completed on the former city fairgrounds on 50 acres and is a major part of the Tupelo downtown revitalization

The Inn at Ole Miss opens in Oxford

The University of Mississippi's Center for Manufacturing Excellence opens

Old Community Center into Community Theatre opens in New Albany

Baptist Memorial Hospital – new hospital location under way in Oxford

The University of Mississippi Center for Insight Excellence (Insight Park) opened

Mississippi Hills Heritage Area

The PUL Alliance was created - A regional economic development effort by Pontotoc, Lee and Union counties – which was instrumental in landing a Toyota Manufacturing facility in Blue Springs

Bridgepoint: Hematology and Oncology Associates, a state-of-the-art cancer care center in Tupelo

Planned expansion of the Elvis Presley Museum

Itawamba Community College nursing program expansion

Healthworks! North Mississippi – a program to help kids of all ages learn, have fun, and make great life choices

Growth of Blue Mountain College

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Northeast Mississippi

Renasant Center for IDEAs regional business incubator

Autism Center of Tupelo – the state’s only nonprofit autism center

Manufacturing Solutions Center at Itawamba Community College’s Belden Center

Pontotoc was chosen by Businessweek as Best Place to Raise Kids in Mississippi - 2012

National Center for Natural Products Research - an FDA Center of Excellence (one of only four nationwide) at the University of Mississippi

Mississippi Hound Dogs – Ultimate Indoor Football League – Arena Football, in Tupelo

Toyota’s \$50 million endowment to the CREATE Foundation to enhance education in the PUL Alliance counties

Tuition guarantee for high school graduates in 15 Northeast Mississippi counties to attend community college

Tupelo Automobile Museum

Brice’s Cross Roads National Battlefield

Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center

TAP Alliance - Tishomingo, Alcorn and Prentiss counties

Pickwick Lake and other recreation areas

Downtown development in Corinth

Alcorn County EPA – first rural electric cooperative in the nation

Corinth to designate two entertainment districts within the city

Magnolia Regional Health Center in Corinth

Northeast Mississippi Community College partnerships

IDEA (Iuka Development and Economic Association) working to rebuild historic downtown Iuka

MISSISSIPPI WOW THINGS

Northeast Mississippi

Rowan Oak – William Faulkner Home in Oxford

Gertrude Castellow Ford Center at the University of Mississippi

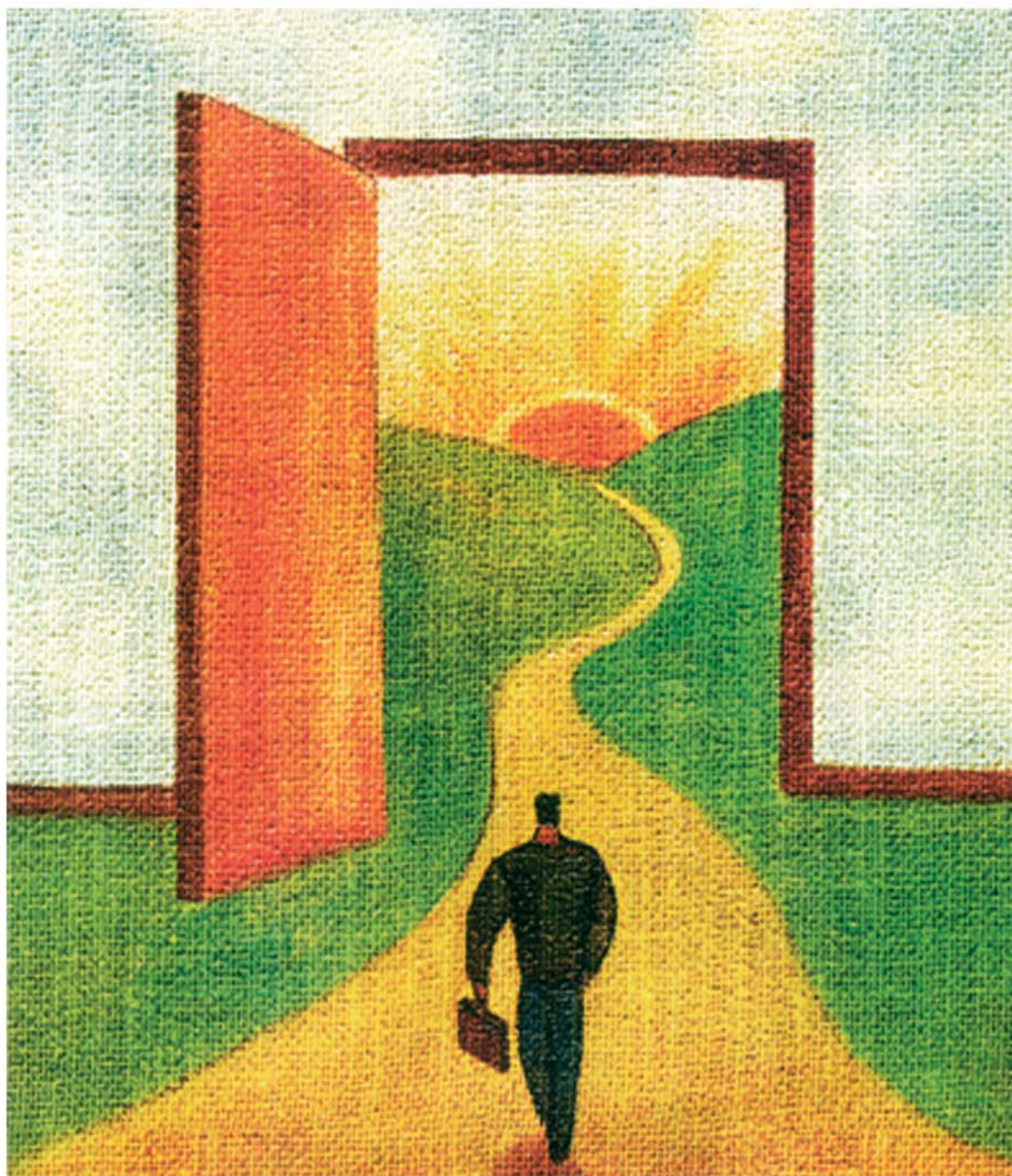
Water Valley art galleries and rotating exhibits

The Chinese Language Flagship Program at the University of Mississippi

St. Peter's Episcopal Church and Second Baptist Church Race Reconciliation Committee, Oxford

The Oxford Film Festival and Oxford Music Festival combining to a joint event

BLUEPRINT MISSISSIPPI 2011



EPILOGUE



Blueprint Mississippi – A Window to the Future

Blueprint Mississippi's work has only begun. The work product presented here is a window to the future, more than a vision of the past.

While Blueprint Mississippi is a very comprehensive document, anyone who has spent any time in Mississippi will note things that are missing from this report, areas of study that may demand more emphasis and opportunities for telling the story of this great state better and in greater detail.

This is why the process that was involved in accomplishing this work is perhaps even more important than the progress that resulted. Through the process, Blueprint Mississippi engaged thousands of leaders in communities all across the state to offer input. And now they have a connection – a common ground listing of ideas and initiatives – to rally upon and take to the next level.

And the real solutions will come from how communities across the state embrace the opportunities and shape Blueprint Mississippi to fit their specific needs, developing their own strategies and approaches for moving Mississippi forward, using Blueprint Mississippi as a general framework.

It is up to all of us to take the next steps toward improving...and implementing...Blueprint Mississippi. We are counting on your help.





How to Provide Input on Blueprint Mississippi

In order to keep Blueprint Mississippi a fresh document, please feel free to send us your thoughts to the following contacts:

- **Wow Things** – send your Mississippi Wow Things suggestions to Scott Waller: swaller@mec.ms – mark your subject line – WOW THINGS.
- **Economic Developments** – send your major (over \$10 million) Economic Developments suggestions (since 2004) to Scott Waller: swaller@mec.ms – mark your subject line: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS.
- **Updates** – Send your update recommendations to Sandra Maxwell: smaxwell@mec.ms – mark your subject line: UPDATES.
- **Corrections** – Send your correction recommendations to Blake Wilson: bwilson@mec.ms – mark your subject line: CORRECTIONS.
- **Perspectives** – Send your perspectives to Blake Wilson: bwilson@mec.ms – mark your subject line: PERSPECTIVES.

We will acknowledge the receipt of all communiqués marked as above, but please allow us a few weeks to process your information, as we are a small staff.

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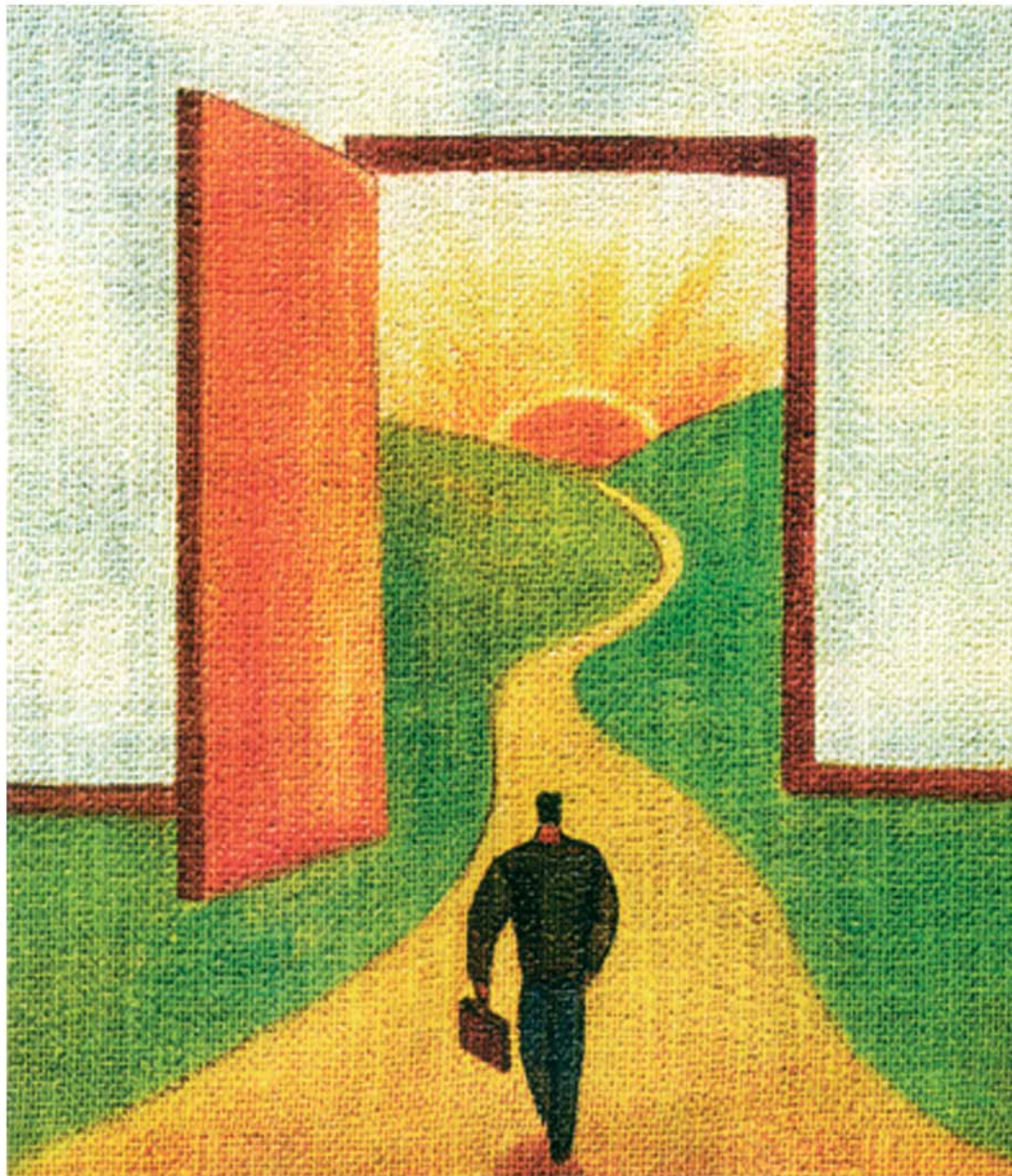
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