



RANKIN
FIRST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2008 Economic Development Report

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Rankin First is a comprehensive economic development organization committed to the recruitment, retention and expansion of business, industry and investment in Rankin County. Our development team appreciates the opportunity to serve the citizens of this outstanding county and the support you give us in our efforts to improve the quality of life and standard of living for all who live and work here.



President's Message

An organization can only grow and prosper if its leadership works together to maintain focus on its mission. Such has been the case at Rankin First from its inception, and a continuous record of achievement is a testimony to its on-going success.

I am happy to report that Rankin First's 2008 accomplishments reflect effective management of resources by the Executive Director and his staff with oversight from a 9-member Board of Directors who guide and support the business development and retention efforts of this organization.

The programs and activities depicted in this report are a summary of the work implemented by Rankin First in 2008 and represent only a small portion of the volume of daily office duties and responsibilities carried out by the staff throughout the year. Of particular note is the fact that in a year of economic adversity and challenge, Rankin County has maintained its strong position. In fact, one of the state's leading newspapers recently published an article labeling our county as "recession proof" and cited our diversity of business as the key to economic success. We feel that the work of Rankin First has led the way in developing this diverse business strategy and that a good portion of our community's job and workforce development success is directly attributable to the strong leadership of the current and previous Rankin First Board Members and Officers. Our organization has made an earnest pledge to work hand-in-hand with like-minded associations, elected officials and state agencies to assist with the overall economic and community development process; and that is a promise we have kept.

Looking to the future, one of the most important goals of Rankin First is to ensure the overall health of our infrastructure and transportation systems to retain and enhance Rankin County's position as an active player in the state, national and global economy. We will always do our part and whatever is necessary to make that happen along with assuring the delivery of top-notch, customized educational and workforce training. That's our job, and we are committed to it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noel Daniels". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Noel Daniels, President
Rankin First Board of Directors

Rankin First Receives National Excellence Awards

Expansion Solutions, an economic development publication distributed to site location consultants and corporate real estate brokers nationwide, named Rankin First Economic Development Authority as one of its Top 5 award winners in the automotive category at its *2008 Awards of Excellence*. Presented in conjunction with the International Economic Development Council's annual meeting in Atlanta, the "Awards of Excellence" program recognizes organizations who have demonstrated exceptional progress and potential in the development of their areas by successfully recruiting, retaining and growing businesses in a number of targeted industries.



Tom Troxler, Executive Director of Rankin First, accepted the award for automotive excellence and expressed his "gratitude and appreciation to this distinguished publication for its professionalism, foresight and detail in selection of the winners. We are extremely humbled and honored to be recognized on a national level." The award for automotive location excellence follows recognition Rankin First received last year from *Expansion Solutions* as the top site for logistics and distribution.

Overall industrial categories designated by *Expansion Solutions* for award recognition were: Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Automotive, Biotech, Defense, Finance and Business Services, Food Processing, High Technology, Logistics, and Warehouse/Distribution. Rankin County was cited as a choice location for automotive suppliers because it is situated 30-minutes from the Nissan manufacturing plant in Canton, MS; and 150 miles from both the Mercedes plant in neighboring Alabama as well as the new Toyota plant in North Mississippi. The ability to access both foreign and domestic markets puts the world at the doorsteps of companies located in Rankin County and Greater Metro Jackson, MS.

Others recognized in the 2008 automotive awards category were the City of Danville, VA; the City of Gallatin, TN; City of Oshawa Development Services Department; Oshawa, Canada; and Northeast Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, Ferriday, LA.



Economic Development Partnerships

In addition to alliance with the Mississippi Development Authority, Rankin First partners with the following state, regional and national organizations to maximize its marketing resources and efforts:

- Greater Jackson Alliance Mississippi
- Mississippi Economic Development Council – MEDC
- Southeast Economic Development Council – SEDC
- East Central Mississippi Economic Council – ECMEC
- International Economic Development Council - IEDC



Air Logistics Complex and Aerotropolis Study

The Jackson Municipal Airport Authority and Rankin First Economic Development Authority commissioned research to examine the feasibility of an enterprise to attract business and drive economic development throughout the county and Metro Jackson area. On January 28, 2009, a press briefing at the Jackson-Evers International Airport (JEIA) was held to discuss an Aerotropolis, a new enterprise concept emerging from aviation-oriented businesses clustered around airports and transportation corridors. Findings were presented from a formal study conducted by Dr. John D. Kasarda, an expert in aviation, logistics and economic development and Director of the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina.



Recognizing the future economic value of this opportunity, Rankin First approved funding for this study to provide the vision, strategic guidelines, and action-specific recommendations for JEIA to become a catalyst for business recruitment and local and regional economic growth. The final report provides 25 recommendations and action steps to be followed by public sector agencies to successfully develop a fully competitive aerotropolis for the 21st century.

Entergy Certified Industrial Sites

The result of years of work at Rankin First culminated last year in the official certification by Entergy of two county industrial sites as being shovel-ready for development for any major industrial, distribution or corporate headquarters project. The certified sites are as follows:

East Metropolitan Center – A world-class mixed-use commercial business park 10 miles east of Jackson offering gentle, rolling terrain, lakes and immediate access to interstate highways, rail and the Jackson-Evers International Airport. The park has a detailed development plan in place and is currently home to General Motors, Brown Bottling Company and Barbour International.

43/20 Site – Located 20 miles east of Jackson with 250 developable acres and a 150 buffer acre buffer zone; all utilities are adjacent, and plans are in place for access roads. The site has passed a Phase I Environmental Study, and other engineering assessments have been complete. The site is within a Foreign Trade Zone providing it the advantage of warehousing tax exemption on certain types of imported merchandise and raw materials for manufacturing.



Marketing and Prospect Recruitment

In today's highly competitive recruitment business, face-to-face interaction with site location consultants, industry specialists and development decision-makers is essential. As an active member of the Greater Jackson Alliance marketing team, Rankin First participated in strategically targeted conferences, trade shows, consultant visits and professional development events in 2008.

Job Recruitment & Retention

2008 Activity Summary

- Existing Industry Visits – 48
- New Industry Project Proposals – 34
- Entergy Certified Industrial Sites – 2
- Prospect Recruitment/Marketing Events – 10
- Professional Development Meetings and Conferences – 6
- Consultant Networking Events – 5
- Demographic Packages Provided to New and Existing Commercial, Retail and Industrial Clients – 102

New and Expanded Facilities in Rankin County

January, 2008 - December, 2008

Manufacturing Facilities	Number of Facilities	Jobs Created	Estimated Capital Investment
New Facilities	4	220	\$17,295,000
Expanded Facilities	20	93	\$40,147,567
Total	24	313	\$57,442,567
Non- Manufacturing Investment	Number of Facilities	Jobs Created	Estimated Capital
New Facilities	11	15	\$415,413,639
Expanded Facilities	12	90	\$14,893,777
Total	23	105	\$430,307,416
Total Manufacturing and Non-Manufacturing	47	418	\$487,749,973

Five-Year Comparison Workforce Unemployment Rates

Rankin County has consistently ranked lowest in unemployment numbers in the Metro-Jackson area and across the state.

Area	Nov. 2008	Nov. 2007	Nov. 2006	Nov. 2005	Nov. 2004
Mississippi	6.6%	5.7%	6.2%	8.7%	6.6%
Rankin County	4.1%	3.7%	4.1%	4.8%	4.5%
Hinds County	5.9%	5.2%	5.5%	7.0%	6.3%
Madison County	5.2%	4.4%	4.5%	5.1%	5.1%

2008 Board of Directors

DISTRICT I	FORREST RHEMANN	Petroleum Equipment Co., Inc.
DISTRICT II	JOHN "BAXTER" BURNS, II	Ergon, Inc.
DISTRICT III	MIKE AINSWORTH	B & Z Sales, Inc.
DISTRICT IV	NOEL E. DANIELS	Gray-Daniels Ford Corp
DISTRICT V	BETTY TWINER	Retired
AT LARGE	MCKINLEY JOHNSON	Retired - Entergy, MS
	FREDDIE J. BAGLEY	Community Bank of Mississippi
	MIKE MARSH	Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium
	JOHNNY WYNNE - Deceased	Johnny G. Wynne and Associates, Ltd.

Committee of 100 Foundation Members

Diamond Patrons

Blue Cross Blue Shield of MS, Inc.
Central Electric Power Association
Ergon, Inc.
Jackson-Evers International Airport
Rankin County Board of Supervisors

Silver Patrons

AdCamp, Inc.
Dr. Murphy Adkins; Chancery Clerk, Retired
AT&T
BancorpSouth
Bank of Yazoo
BankFirst Financial Services
Blue Clover
Brunini, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, PLLC
Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada, PLLC
Canebrake Development Company
CenterPoint Energy Entex
ChamberPlus/Greater Jackson Chamber
City of Flowood
City of Richland
Comcast Cable Rankin County
Crossgates River Oaks Healthcare
Dean & Dean/Associates Architects, PA
Delta Industries/Jackson Ready Mix
Denmiss Corporation
EastGroup Properties
Engineering Service
Entergy Mississippi
Exide Technologies

Gold Patrons

Bank Plus
Community Bank of Mississippi
Merchants & Farmers Bank
Trustmark National Bank
W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Company
Willmut Gas Flowood and Hattiesburg

Gray Daniels Ford Corporation
Heritage Banking Group
JBHM Architects
L Signs, LLC
Lakeland Development Corporation
Laws Construction Company, Inc.
Miskelly Furniture
Mississippi Braves
Neel-Schaffer, Inc.
Peoples Construction Company
Petroleum Equipment Company
Plastic & Hand Surgery Associates, PLLC
PriorityOne Bank
Regions Bank Grants Ferry
River Oaks Health System
Southern Pine Electric Association
Larry Swales, Rankin County Chancery Clerk
TVA Economic Development
Underwood Homes, Inc.
Waste Management of Mississippi, Inc.
Wise Carter Child & Caraway
WJTV Jackson