

MDA E-News February 9, 2009**MDA Funding Projects, Energy Lectures, Work Opportunities and New Website****MDA Awards Funding for Four Improvement Projects throughout Mississippi**

MDA's Community Services Division recently awarded funding for five improvement projects throughout the state. The projects received funding from the Capital Improvements Revolving Loan (CAP), CDBG Community Self-Help, CDBG Emergency Public Facilities and Mississippi Rural Impact Fund (RIF) Programs. The awards, which total \$1.45 million, include:

CAP Loan

- Panola County - \$1,000,000 for access road improvements to an industrial park
- Tishomingo County - \$100,000 for the purchase of a fire truck

CDBG Community Self-Help

- Tallahatchie County - \$100,000 for water improvements

CDBG Emergency Public Facilities

- City of Tchula - \$100,000 for water and sewer improvements

RIF Grant

- Jasper County Board of Supervisors (Jones Lumber Company) - \$150,000 for a rail spur

For more information regarding these programs, please visit www.mississippi.org.

Steven Strong, Solar Design Associates, Lectures on Renewable Energy Sources

On February 4th at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg, architectural firm Larry Albert and Associates hosted world-renowned solar designer and author Steven Strong at a lecture for state and local government representatives and renewable energy advocates. MDA co-sponsored the event, which was designed to teach attendees about the

benefits of incorporating alternative energy methods, such as wind generation and solar electricity, into architecture. In this presentation, Strong emphasized the importance of energy efficiency, stating that 'the future belongs to the efficient.' An esteemed authority on the integration of renewable energy systems in buildings, Strong's career boasts many notable achievements. He has designed the world's first solar-powered house, the world's first solar-powered neighborhood, the world's first solar-powered Olympics and many other projects.

According to MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope, the lecture was held to educate people about the importance of developing and using renewable energy sources, a priority for Mississippi policy makers. Increasing the use of alternative energy in Mississippi is not only beneficial for those who use it, but for the state as a whole; companies that make renewable energy products are more likely to locate in states with policies promoting their use.

To learn more about Steven Strong and Solar Design Associates, please visit www.solardesign.com.

MDES Offers Work Opportunities Tax Credit for the "Hurricane Katrina Employee"

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security recently announced the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) Program for the "Hurricane Katrina Employee," or an individual who had a principal place of residence in the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone and within a four-year period (from Aug. 29, 2005 to Aug. 28, 2009) was hired to perform services in the core disaster area. The WOTC is a federal income tax credit that can provide a company with significant financial savings by reducing its federal tax liability by up to \$2,400 for each qualifying employee.

The WOTC Program is available within the GO Zone. To view a map of counties located in the Go Zone, please select [here](#).

For detailed instructions and requirements, please contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040, or visit www.irs.gov. For more information about the WOTC or other tax credit programs, please contact John Jones, State WOTC Coordinator, at (601) 321-6084 or e-mail jjones@mdes.ms.gov.

MDA Launches New User-Friendly Website; Site Designed to Assist with Economic Development Efforts

At the 2009 MEDC Winter Conference, MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope officially launched the new MDA website, designed to assist with the recruitment and retention of businesses as well as other community development efforts. Since the summer of 2008, the site has sported a new home page; the supporting pages of the website have now adopted the same look and feel of the home page. According to Swoope, MDA's goal for the new website is that it be the top resource for economic development information regarding the state of Mississippi.

MDA staff members have worked diligently alongside The Ramey Agency to ensure a content-rich, technologically-advanced product to assist anyone seeking information about the state. While the new website is more user-friendly and eye-pleasing, its content has also been updated and augmented. It will continue to be updated on a regular basis, and new features such as video, graphics and maps will be added as they become available.

The website address is the same, so please visit www.mississippi.org to view the new site.