

MDA E-News February 16, 2009
150 New Jobs, Rust College, Improvement Project Funding,
GRAMMY Award Recipients and Tune in Mississippi

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Handy Hardware to Locate Distribution Center in Meridian; Over 150 New Jobs Anticipated

Governor Haley Barbour announced on February 13 that Handy Hardware, a member-owned hardware buying group, is locating a distribution center in the Meridian I-20/59 Industrial Park. The move is part of the company's growth plan to serve members in the southeastern United States, and Handy plans to break ground on its new facility by the middle of this year. Once complete, the distribution center is expected to create over 150 new jobs and represents a \$15-\$20 million investment by the company. The East Mississippi Business Development Corporation (EMBDC) and MDA have been working on the project since May 2008. MDA will provide funding for public infrastructure improvements for the project. The EMBDC will also contribute funding for public infrastructure and other site improvements.

Based in Houston, Texas, Handy Hardware currently operates from a 560,000 square foot facility, and while building plans have not yet been finalized, the new Meridian facility is expected to be comparable in size. The company is one of only five member-owned hardware buying groups in the country, serving over 1,200 members in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. The company also serves retailers in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

To learn more about Handy Hardware, please visit their website at www.handyhardware.com.

Rust College Community Development Corporation Approved as Qualified Entity for Minority Business Enterprise Loan Program

The Rust College Community Development Corporation (RCCDC) was recently approved by MDA as an entity qualified to administer loans through the Minority Business Enterprise Loan Program. The program is in place to assist new and existing minority businesses with gaining access to necessary capital via direct low-interest loans from a combination of state and private-lending sources. Once the loans are repaid, the full balance is returned to the loan administrator to increase available funding for the program.

To become qualified, an organization must operate as a non-profit, must file with the Secretary of State to become incorporated and must receive its 501(c)(3) from the IRS. Once the following criteria have been met, the organization can submit an application to MDA for Board approval. In addition to community development corporations, qualified entities include planning and development districts, small business investment corporations and other similar entities.

This will be the 18th active qualified entity in the state that provides minority loans. For more information on these locations or the program, please contact Donnie Moncure at (601) 359-2789 or by e-mail at dmoncure@mississippi.org.

MDA's Community Services Division Provides Funding for Improvement Project in Holly Springs

MDA's Community Services Division recently awarded Capital Improvements Revolving Loan (CAP) Program funding in the amount of \$873,000 to the City of Holly Springs. The CAP Loan will be used for access roads to the new hospital and the Ashe Industrial Park. The project is expected to create 165 new jobs, bringing the total number of jobs to 365.

CAP Loans are designed to help counties or municipalities finance capital improvements, and loan recipients are encouraged to use the loans in connection with other state and federal funding programs. To learn more about funding programs available through MDA's Community Services Division, please visit www.mississippi.org or contact Michael Armstrong, CAP Loan Program Manager, at (601) 359-9314.

Mississippi Natives, Blues Trail Honorees Receive Awards at 51st Annual GRAMMY Ceremony

On Sunday, February 8, two Mississippi natives received GRAMMY Awards at The Recording Academy's 51st Annual GRAMMY Awards ceremony. Jackson native Cassandra Wilson received a GRAMMY in the Best Jazz Vocal Album category for her CD titled Loverly. Indianola native and legendary blues artist B.B. King took home the coveted award in the Best Traditional Blues Album category for his CD titled One Kind Favor. Additionally, 95-year-old Belzoni native Pinetop Perkins received a

nomination in the same category for his CD Perkins and Friends.

B.B. King and Pinetop Perkins have both been honored with markers on the [Mississippi Blues Trail](#) , and Cassandra Wilson will be honored with a marker in Jackson in the near future. The Blues Trail is a series of historical sites that have markers detailing the history of the blues and its musicians and the people and places associated with that heritage. The Blues Trail is funded through grants from MDA, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Delta State University and participating communities.

Tune in Mississippi Adds New Programs to its Radio Station Line-Up

Since 2007, the MDA Tourism Division website, www.visitmississippi.org , has featured its own streaming radio station dedicated to Mississippi's gifted musicians. From country to rock-n-roll to blues music, *Tune in Mississippi* presents its listeners with a wide array of programs designed to showcase the best of the state's cultural and musical heritage. A few of these programs include: *Riding the Mississippi Blues Trail*, *Down Home Mississippi Country*, *Mississippi Goes to the Movies*, *Mississippi Rocks*, *Mississippi Grooves* and more.

Recently, new programming was added to the station's line-up, including a program dedicated to Mississippi's talented authors. *Mississippi Writes* will feature discussions and interviews with authors from around the state regarding their published works. *Y'all vs. Us*, *Thrilling Tales of Mississippi's Hottest Football Rivalries* by Mississippi authors Xavier M. Frascogna, Jr., Xavier M. Frascogna, III and Martin F. Frascogna is one of the first books scheduled to be featured on the program. *The Mississippi Grammy Show* is another new addition to the station's line-up. Hosted by Jon Homyak with the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the hour-long show will feature new music from Mississippi Grammy winners as well as fun facts about the artists who have won the prestigious award. A new version of the *Mississippi Music Makers* show has also been added to the station; the show will feature Canton-born bluesman [Grady Champion](#).

To listen to these programs and many more, please tune in to www.visitmississippi.org.

For more information on any of these articles, contact us by clicking on the links below. If you have been forwarded this email and would like to subscribe, please contact [Melissa Medley](#) or [Tammy Craft](#).