

MDA E-News February 16, 2010**Furniture Companies Announce Expansions; Projects to Create 25 New Jobs, MDA to Host Webinar to Provide Information on Converting Fleet Vehicles to Propane and Natural Gas, Mississippi Main Street Association Touts 2009 Successes****In this issue:**

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Two Furniture Companies Announce Expansions; Projects to Create 25 New Jobs***Townhouse Home Furnishings Expands***

Townhouse, a stationary furniture manufacturer located in Smithville, is adding a new access road and undertaking other infrastructure improvements in order to accommodate future growth. The project, which will create 15 new jobs, will allow employees to utilize a separate entrance from the delivery and outgoing transportation area and will create a new access road connecting to Highway 25. The company invested \$20,000 for the expansion, and MDA worked closely with the company and provided Rural Impact Funds to help facilitate the addition of the access road.

Jamco Expands Tishomingo Facilities

Jamco, an upholstered furniture manufacturer in Tishomingo, is expanding its facility in order to accommodate an increase in production. The 5,000-square-foot expansion represents a \$200,000 investment by the company and will create 10 new jobs. MDA worked closely with the company and provided Rural Impact Funds and Community Development Block Grant Program funds to assist with the expansion.

MDA to Host Webinar to Provide Information on Converting Fleet Vehicles to Propane and Natural Gas

On **Thursday, February 18 at 10:00 a.m.**, MDA's Energy Division, on behalf of the Mississippi Clean Cities Coalition, will host a Webinar to provide information regarding retrofitting or converting fleet vehicles to propane and natural gas, both of which produce lower emissions than

petroleum while helping to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

Mark Denton, vice president of business development for Blossman Gas, and Bill Calvert, vice president of sales for BAF Technologies, will speak at the event. Denton will discuss the options for converting vehicles to accept propane, and Calvert will discuss the options for converting vehicles to accept natural gas and establishing natural gas fueling stations.

The information to be covered in this event will benefit anyone overseeing a fleet of vehicles, including fleet managers, county supervisors, school officials and others. To register for the event, please visit www.mississippi.org/webinars . MDA encourages its partners to share this information with their communities. For more information, please contact MDA's Energy Division at (601) 359-6600.

MDA is a member of the Mississippi Clean Cities Coalition, a government/industry partnership created to help reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by advancing the use of alternative fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends and fuel economy measures.

Mississippi Main Street Association Touts 2009 Successes

The Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA), a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), generated numerous economic development success stories in communities throughout the state in 2009. Through its 71 active main street communities, downtown networks and association member communities in the state, the MMSA generated 212 business façade improvements and 212 new downtown residential units last year. The program also helped create numerous jobs and new businesses and assisted existing businesses in expanding.

According to MMSA Executive Director Bob Wilson, last year's numbers are likely a result of the national recession, in part, since recessions often evoke a sense of localism in residents of smaller cities, causing consumers to shop locally. In fact, in a study conducted by the National Main Street Association, the 1200 main street communities throughout the United States saw on average only three to five percent reductions in retail sales last year, compared with 10-15 percent reductions in larger retail establishments.

MMSA is an economic development program based in historic preservation. The association has many strategic partners in Mississippi including MDA, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Mississippi Arts Commission, Mississippi Heritage Trust, Mississippi Urban Forestry Council, the Carl Small Town Center at the Mississippi State

University (MSU) School of Architecture and the MSU Community Action Team. MMSA was voted the #1 main street program in America by the National Main Street Association in 2000 and has since upheld its top-tier statistics among programs nationwide. To find out more about MMSA, visit the association Web site at www.msmainstreet.com.

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