

**MDA E-News March 9, 2009**  
**2009 Governor's Community Projects of Excellence Awards, Canton Nissan Plant, 2008 Governor's Cup Awards, MDA Webinar**

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***2009 Governor's Community Projects of Excellence Awards to be Presented March 10 in Downtown Jackson***

The *2009 Governor's Community Projects of Excellence Awards* ceremony will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2009, in the Woolfolk Building's Conference Center East in downtown Jackson. The event will begin at 2:00 p.m. The awards are designed to recognize communities from around the state for their excellent use of community development funds provided through MDA's Community Services Division.

This year, awards will be presented in the following categories: Best Capital Improvements Revolving Loan (CAP), Best CDBG Economic Development, Best CDBG Public Facilities, Best CDBG Self-Help, Best Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), Best Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), Best HOME Homebuyer Assistance, Best HOME Homeowner Rehabilitation, Best Rural Impact Fund (RIF) and Best Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties (SMLPC) project.

A complete listing of this year's winners will be featured in the March 16 edition of MDA's e-News. To learn more about the funding programs available through MDA, please visit [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org), and choose the Community and Asset Development link located near the top of the page.

***Construction Underway at Canton Nissan Plant as Company Prepares to Produce NV2500 Concept Commercial Vehicle***

Initial construction is now underway at Nissan North America's Canton plant as the company prepares to launch commercial vehicles (CV) for the North American market in 2010. The facility will produce the NV2500 Concept, which provides an original take on commercial vehicle design and offers a preview of Nissan's first entry into the CV market in North America. These vehicles, to be built in Canton, will be the first Nissan CVs to be built in North America.

The expansion of the plant includes a 14,400 square foot expansion to the body

assembly shop, a modification to 43,000 square feet of the existing body assembly shop, a 49,000 square foot expansion to the paint shop, modifications to the existing 59,000 square foot paint shop and the addition of a new assembly line in the existing trim and chassis shop.

The expansion represents a \$118 million investment by Nissan North America.

### **Nominations for 2008 Governor's Cup Awards Now Being Accepted**

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2008 Governor's Cup Awards, which are designed to recognize outstanding businesses from across the state and raise a general awareness about their impact in their local communities. The awards, which are some of the highest honors presented by Governor Haley Barbour, will recognize six businesses located in the three statewide MEDC regions (North, Central and South).

Sponsored by Governor Barbour and MDA in partnership with MEDC, the awards will be presented in two categories: a) small business, or firms with 50 employees or less, and b) big business, or firms with 51 employees or more. Of the six businesses honored at this year's event, one small and one large business will be chosen as the statewide winners for 2008. All award recipients will be honored at the annual MEDC awards banquet scheduled for July 23, 2009, during the MEDC Summer Conference.

Economic development organizations or chambers of commerce may submit nominations for outstanding businesses in their areas. The local nominating entities of each district award winner will receive a \$1,000 planning grant as well as a marketing grant to support existing industry and business programs. The nominating entities of each statewide winner will receive a \$5,000 marketing match grant for calendar year 2008. The deadline for nominations is April 8, 2009.

For additional information, please contact MDA's Existing Industry and Business Division at (601) 359-3593, or visit [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org), and select the Existing MS Business link located near the top of the page. From there, select the Existing Industry Programs link located on the left side of the page.

### **MDA to Host Webinar Designed to Help Mississippi's Small and Mid-Sized Businesses Prepare for Future Business Opportunities**

MDA will be hosting a Webinar for Mississippi's small to mid-sized businesses on Tuesday, March 17 at 10 a.m. The Webinar, titled "Positioning Mississippi Businesses to be Prepared for Opportunities Ahead," will highlight the programs and services MDA has in place to help the state's small to mid-sized businesses handle the current softened economy while helping them prepare for competitive business opportunities in the future. MDA's Minority and Small Business Development (MSBDD) and Existing Industry and Business (EIB) Divisions have joined together to host the Webinar.

Following an introduction by MDA executive director Gray Swoope, former MSBDD Director Richard Speights will present an overview of the challenges small businesses in Mississippi are facing and the programs the division offers to help combat those challenges. Chandler Russ, EIB Division Director, will present information on programs available through EIB that assist existing Mississippi businesses. He will also review programs which help small businesses and entrepreneurs implement their business ideas and improve their business plans.

This will be the first of a number of Webinars hosted by MDA. To learn more, please visit [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org), or register for the event by sending an e-mail to [MDAwebinars@mississippi.org](mailto:MDAwebinars@mississippi.org).

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