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MDA Awards Over \$200,000 for Three Improvement Projects Throughout the State

The Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA's) Community Services Division recently awarded **Mississippi Rural Impact Fund (RIF) Program** and **Small Municipal and Limited Population County (SMLPC) Grant Program** funds for three improvement projects in the state. The **RIF Program** is designed to assist with the location or expansion of businesses in rural areas by providing grants to rural communities, and the **SMLPC Grant Program** provides funding for community-based projects and public facilities and infrastructure needs. The awards, which total over \$200,000, include:

- **RIF Program**
 - City of Louisville (Rives and Reynolds Lumber Company, Inc.) - \$100,000 for the purchase of a rail spur
- **SMLPC Grant Program**
 - Town of D'Lo - \$27,100 for infrastructure improvements
 - Town of Edwards - \$74,076 for infrastructure improvements

To learn more about the funding programs available through MDA's Community Services Division, please visit www.mississippi.org and select the Community and Asset Development link located near the top of the page.

Brazilian Consul General of Atlanta Returns to Mississippi for Economic Development Meetings

Mississippi welcomed Ambassador Adalnio Ganem, consul general of Brazil in Atlanta, to the state this month for a return visit to foster economic exchange between Brazil and Mississippi. Meetings with Mississippi exporters, importers, economic development entities and business leaders were held as a follow-up to the consul general's first-ever visit to the state in January 2010.

During Ambassador Ganem's most recent visit, a "Business Opportunities in Brazil" briefing was held at the Mississippi World Trade Center in downtown Jackson. Sponsored by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the briefing presented information on opportunities for Mississippi exporters and importers looking to expand to Brazil and was followed by a Q&A session. While in Mississippi, the consul general also spent time with business leaders at a luncheon sponsored by the Executive Lecture Forum (ELF), an international outreach program of Mississippi State University, and met with Mississippi Manufacturers Association President and CEO Jay Moon, MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope and Governor Haley Barbour.

MDA, ELF and Governor Haley Barbour partnered to present various networking opportunities for Ambassador Ganem and business and economic development leaders during the visit to promote new and strengthen existing commercial relations with Brazil.

To learn more about MDA's international marketing services and events or to request a consultation with an international trade specialist, contact the MDA Trade Bureau at (601) 359-3155 or visit www.mississippi.org.

MDA Tourism Division to Celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week May 8-16

National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW), held the first full week of May each year, will be celebrated throughout the country on May 8-16, 2010. During the week-long event, the U.S. travel community collectively marks the occasion in various ways, from staging local rallies and conducting media outreach to securing proclamations and resolutions from legislative bodies.

The Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA's) Tourism Division will join in the nationwide celebration by hosting a NTTW kickoff rally press conference on Monday, May 10, at 11 a.m. at the Mississippi Farmers Market, located on High Street in Jackson, where Governor Haley Barbour will unveil two important new tourism initiatives. On Tuesday, May 11, MDA Tourism Division staff will support the "Tourism Day Rally" activities of the agency's city partners throughout the state and the activities occurring during the week at Mississippi's various Welcome Centers.

National Travel and Tourism Week was established by a U.S. Congress joint resolution in 1983, which designated that the week be celebrated in May. During NTTW and throughout the year, MDA's Tourism Division works to promote Mississippi's tourism product and to educate and enlighten Mississippians about the impact the industry makes on our state and local economies.

For more information on tourism in Mississippi, visit www.VisitMississippi.org.

September 16 Deadline Set for Distribution of Home Buyer Advantage Program Funding; Down Payment Assistance Grants Available to Qualified Applicants

As part of efforts to address rising foreclosure rates across the nation, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 allocated approximately \$43 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to Mississippi to stabilize neighborhoods impacted by the housing crisis and to help communities rebound from escalating foreclosures. The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) was charged with administering these funds for the State of Mississippi. Of the total NSP funding, \$23 million was allocated to the **Home Buyer Advantage (HBA) Program**, which provides one-time down payment assistance to qualified applicants in the 48 areas of the state with the highest rates of foreclosure. The Mississippi Home Corporation (MHC), in partnership with MDA, is administering this program and **must distribute the federal grant funding by September 16, 2010.**

Qualified applicants are those individuals and families whose incomes are 120 percent or less of the area median income and who are purchasing abandoned or foreclosed homes located in the areas specified by the program. Recipients of HBA Program funding **may qualify for up to \$39,999** for the purchase of foreclosed or abandoned homes as a primary residence. Current homeowners also qualify for the HBA Program. Certain property requirements and required occupancy periods also apply, and all homebuyers must be qualified for a mortgage through an approved HBA lender.

For a list of approved HBA lenders in your area, property requirements, loan terms, eligible communities and other details of the HBA Program, visit the Mississippi Home Corporation website at www.mshc.com/hba or call (800) 544-6960.

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