

MDA E-News June 8, 2009 -- Funds Awarded to Panola County, NASA's Stennis Space Center, Affordable Public Housing Update, Piney Woods Pellets, Asset Mapping in Quitman

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MDA Awards CDBG Economic Development Funds to Panola County

MDA's Community Services Division recently awarded \$344,308 in CDBG Economic Development (ED) funding to Panola County on behalf of United Comb and Novelty Corporation. The funds will be used for a rail spur extension in the county's industrial park, which will enable the company to increase production. In addition, Panola County is investing \$39,134 and United Comb and Novelty Corporation is investing \$1 million in new equipment as part of this expansion project.

CDBG ED funds are designed to help local units of government ensure basic community services, environmental quality and economic opportunities for their residents. 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.

Emergency Operations Center Opens at NASA's Stennis Space Center

The new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Hancock County officially opened on June 2nd during a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Governor Haley Barbour, Stennis Space Center Director Gene Goldman, NASA Associate Deputy Director Charles Scales, National Weather Service's Southern Region Deputy Director Steven Cooper and other state and local leaders.

The nearly 78,700 square foot facility houses Stennis Space Center's fire department, protective and medical services and Energy Management Control System. The EOC, which is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified, also boasts a HazNet Emergency Management System which was developed through NASA's Innovative Research Program. LEED is a third-party certification program and the national benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. The EOC is also one of only nine federal facilities that are StormReady certified - a certification that is designated by the U.S. National Weather Service for communities and sites around the country that demonstrate severe weather readiness.

To learn more about Stennis Space Center, please visit www.ssc.nasa.gov.

384 New Affordable Public Housing Units Open along the Coast; Approximately 1,000 Units Now Complete

With the recent opening of 384 more new, affordable public housing units along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, MDA's Public Housing Grant Program - which is funded through the \$5.4 billion Mississippi received in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds - has now completed about 1,000 public housing units. More units are planned to open in the coming weeks.

The three latest projects, Morrison Village and Taylor Heights in Pascagoula and Regency Way Apartments in Gulfport, are part of Mississippi Regional Housing Authority VIII's Katrina recovery plan. Morrison Village, located at 2503 Old Mobile Highway, consists of 120 units designed for senior adults. Taylor Heights, located just down the street from Morrison Village, includes 144 units of single-family housing available for all ages. Regency Way Apartments, located at 1400 28th Street in Gulfport, consists of 120 units also designed for single-family housing.

According to Governor Haley Barbour, the units are a new type of public housing, designed to be attractive to residents, complement the surrounding area and be a source of pride for the entire community. Mississippi Gulf Coast Housing Director Gerald Blessey added that the units will help sustain economic recovery, particularly in Jackson County where much of the area's manufacturing workforce resides.

The State of Mississippi has allocated \$106 million in federally-appropriated CDBG funding to restore the public housing stock that was damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. More than 2,000 of the approximately 2,500 planned post-Katrina public housing units are complete, under construction or about to begin construction.

Piney Woods Pellets Begins Production of Wood Pellets at Facility in Wiggins

Piney Woods Pellets recently celebrated its first official day of operation at its facility in Wiggins. MDA executive director Gray Swoope was on-hand for the dedication. The plant, which employs 32 individuals, is capable of producing over 50,000 tons of wood pellets per year.

Piney Woods Pellets uses renewable raw materials to produce wood pellets, honoring the environment while providing economical heating fuel for customers. The pellets are carbon-neutral, meaning every atom of carbon produced by the burning pellets is removed as trees are planted to replace those that were harvested. The pellets will be used in wood pellet stoves as well as in large industrial plants around the South. This product will provide pellet users with an economical fuel that is produced in the U.S. from a renewable, clean energy source.

To learn more about Piney Woods Pellets, please visit www.pwpellets.com.

MDA's Asset Development Team Conducts Asset Mapping in Quitman

MDA's Asset Development team - along with representatives from Mississippi Main Street Association, MSU Community Action Team, Central Planning and Development District and Jones Community College - recently conducted asset

mapping in Quitman in Clarke County. Asset mapping involves identifying assets in communities throughout Mississippi by pinpointing them on a GPS interactive website. The process is designed to identify the assets that set a community apart from others or have the potential to enrich the quality of life of its citizens.

Three assets identified for Quitman include: Clarkco State Park, which draws over 75,000 visitors to the area each year; Archusa Creek Water Park, a 450-acre lake that offers numerous recreational opportunities; and the Quitman Country Club, which features an 18-hole, regulation-length golf course.

Once asset mapping has been completed in a community, the team presents its findings, along with recommendations for promoting the assets, to community leaders. The team also works with the community to locate resources to assist in accomplishing the recommendations.

To learn more about asset mapping in your community, please contact MDA's Asset Development Division at (601) 359-3449, or e-mail assetdevelopment@mississippi.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](#).