

MDA E-News June 29, 2009 - Research Collaboration Announced, United Solutions Announces Expansion, Town of Shannon Awarded Funds, International Paris Air Show, Tinker's Camp

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MDA and GE Aviation Announce Research Collaboration with University of Southern Mississippi's School of Polymers and High Performance Materials

MDA and GE Aviation have announced a unique research partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi designed to aid in technology and advanced material development at GE's jet engine component factory in Batesville. The factory produces and assembles advanced composite engine components which are unique to the aviation industry.

GE Aviation has worked alongside MDA to develop partnerships with Mississippi universities to assist with the process and material development of products which will be manufactured at the Batesville facility. The partnership between GE Aviation and University of Southern Mississippi's School of Polymers and High Performance Materials focuses on developing advanced materials for the new GENx engine, which will power Boeing's 787 and 747-8 aircraft. The GENx is GE's fastest-selling, high-thrust jet engine, and it is the world's only jet engine with composite fan blades, fan platforms and fan cases. MDA provided a grant of approximately \$2.4 million for research infrastructure for this project.

Three University of Southern Mississippi graduate students have already completed internships at GE's Global Research Center in New York as part of the university-industry partnership; 15-20 students will be a part of the one-year research program.

GE Aviation opened its 300,000 square-foot Batesville facility in October 2008, and the company has plans to expand its workforce to more than 100 employees.

Plastic House Wares Manufacturer United Solutions Announces Expansion of its Sardis, Miss., Facility

United Solutions, a leading manufacturer of plastic house wares, recently announced the expansion of operations at its Sardis, Miss., facility. The expansion will allow the company to increase production of its consumer plastics products and will create at least 20 new positions at the facility. Currently, the manufacturing plant employs 75 full-time workers. To facilitate this expansion, United Solutions is investing \$1 million in new equipment. MDA provided \$344,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for public infrastructure improvements, and the Panola Partnership provided more than \$39,000.

Headquartered in Leominster, Mass., with another location in Gilbert, Ariz., United Solutions manufactures quality plastic items for use around the home and office. Under its own brand name, the company produces such items as trash cans, laundry baskets, storage bins, pails and clothes hampers. Additional lines will be added as new machines become available. To learn more about United Solutions, please visit their corporate Web site at www.unitedsolutions.bz.

MDA Awards CDBG Community Self-Help Funds to the Town of Shannon

MDA recently awarded CDBG Community Self-Help funds in the amount of \$63,035 to the Town of Shannon for park improvements. The project consists of adding new playground equipment, new lighting, a new walking track with lighting and resurfacing the tennis court. The town has committed \$18,910 in in-kind labor.

Administered by MDA's Community Services Division, the CDBG Community Self-Help Program is designed to address local community needs such as water, wastewater, downtown improvements and recreation. Funding from this program can be used by counties and municipalities, and they must show at least a 30 percent cost savings through donations, volunteer work, etc. To learn more about the funding programs available through the Community Services Division, please visit www.mississippi.org, and select the Community and Asset Development link located near the top of the page.

Mississippi Partners with Alabama and Northwest Florida to Host Recruitment Event at International Paris Air Show

MDA team members, along with several Mississippi communities and Mississippi Power's Economic Development Division, recently attended the International Paris Air Show in Le Bourget, France. The Mississippi delegation partnered with the State of Alabama and Florida's Great Northwest to host over 300 key leaders in the aviation and aerospace industries at a reception on the Seine. According to MDA executive director Gray Swoope, by partnering with Alabama and Northwest Florida, which both share an aerospace corridor with Mississippi, and by actively pursuing the aviation and aerospace sectors, Mississippi is making the best use of shared resources and opportunities. Swoope added that the show and the reception provided an excellent chance to meet global leaders in the industry, develop new relationships and maintain existing relationships - all of which are beneficial to the state when companies are possibly looking for new sites in the U.S.



The State of Mississippi, the State of Alabama and Florida's Great Northwest hosted a recruitment event at the International Paris Air Show.

The International Paris Air Show, the premier world-wide exposition for the aerospace community, is held bi-annually in Le Bourget. Each show attracts over 153,000 trade visitors, 150 official defense delegations and nearly 2,000 exhibitors. To learn more, please visit www.paris-air-show.com.

Tinker's Camp Held in Bay Springs to Develop Future Workforce, Prepare Area Youth for Certain Careers

From June 22nd to June 26th, the Hol-Mac Corporation in Bay Springs and Jones County Junior College hosted Tinker's Camp, a workforce training opportunity designed to prepare Bay Springs-area students for potential careers in certain fields. Founded by Hol-Mac CEO Charles Holder, the week-long camp educates local youth about particular high-demand jobs that do not necessarily require a college degree. Through classroom instruction, the students gain knowledge in certain areas and then apply that knowledge to hands-on projects such as welding, hydraulics, building an electric motor, drawing and drafting. The camp was created as a result of Holder's desire to sustain the local economy by preparing area youth for a future in the local workforce.

According to MDA Workforce Specialist Wanda Land, it is important for Mississippi's businesses to take an active role in educating and growing their own workforce, and it is equally important for young people to have an understanding of their local economies, what local companies do and what skills they may need to obtain employment at those companies. Land, who works with Holder on other workforce-related projects, encourages Mississippi companies to institute programs similar to Tinker's Camp to begin building their future workforce. To learn more, please contact Land at wland@mississippi.org, or call (601) 359-3060.

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