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Hancock County Courthouse Reopens; 128 Affordable Housing Units Open, Department of Energy Awards Mississippi Approximately \$470,000, Model Contractor Development Program, SEUS-Japan 33rd Annual Joint Meeting

In this Issue:

- [Hancock County Courthouse Reopens After Nearly Four Years; 128 Affordable Housing Units Open in D'Iberville](#)
- [Department of Energy Awards Mississippi Approximately \\$470,000 to Enhance Electrical Grid Emergency Preparedness Plans](#)
- [Model Contractor Development Program Kicks Off in Gulfport in September](#)
- [SEUS-Japan 33rd Annual Joint Meeting October 18-20 in Tokyo; Partners Encouraged to Register Early for Event](#)

Hancock County Courthouse Reopens After Nearly Four Years; 128 Affordable Housing Units Open in D'Iberville

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held recently to inaugurate the Hancock County Courthouse, which has been closed for nearly four years as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The opening of the 98-year-old landmark on Main Street in Bay St. Louis signifies a major step in the area's Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. The courthouse was restored to its original splendor with the assistance of nearly \$5 million in Katrina CDBG funding, which is administered by MDA's Disaster Recovery Division.

Additionally, another 128 affordable housing units, known as the Estates at Juan de Cuevas Apartment Homes, have opened in D'Iberville as part of the state's Katrina recovery efforts. A partnership between MDA and public and private entities, the project was funded in part by \$1.7 million in Katrina CDBG funds. Over 1,300 affordable housing units have already been completed with Katrina CDBG funds, and another 2,415 have been completed and are currently available.

For more information, and to obtain the latest news and updates concerning Mississippi's disaster recovery efforts, please visit www.msdisasterrecovery.com.

Department of Energy Awards Mississippi Approximately \$470,000 to Enhance Electrical Grid Emergency Preparedness Plans

The U.S. Department of Energy has announced that Mississippi will receive nearly \$470,000 to improve state emergency preparedness plans and ensure prompt recovery and restoration from any energy supply disruptions. The funds, which are made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), will be used by the state to hire or retrain personnel and increase the state's capability to address situations that may disrupt the electricity system, including blackouts, hurricanes, ice storms and disruptions to heating supplies. The funds will also be used to help Mississippi address cyber security issues and prepare for the challenges of incorporating smart grid technologies and renewable energy sources into the transmission network.

According to MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope, the funds will help ensure a quick and effective response should any future disruptions to the state's power supplies occur, while also ensuring that effective emergency preparedness measures are in place to protect the state's energy and utility infrastructure in the event of an emergency.

These funds are being provided to Mississippi in addition to other energy stimulus funds the state has received. To learn more about Mississippi's stimulus programs, please visit stimulus.mississippi.org.

Model Contractor Development Program Kicks Off in Gulfport in September

Beginning in September, MDA will once again present its Model Contractor Development Program (MCDP) at Roy Anderson Corporation's corporate office, located at 11400 Reichold Road in Gulfport. The sessions will be held from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. each Tuesday beginning September 29 and ending December 1.

MCDP is designed to teach small construction contractors the good business practices needed to improve their company's operations, increase their bonding capacity and help them take advantage of construction opportunities in Mississippi. The program is sponsored by MDA's Minority and Small Business Development Division, Roy Anderson Corporation, the Surety and Fidelity Association of America and the South Mississippi Contract Procurement Center. MCDP consists of 10 sessions covering topics such as: *Banking and Finance for Contractors; Marketing, Estimating and Bidding and Dispute Resolutions*. A representative for each contractor must agree to attend at least eight of the 10 sessions. The program is free-of-charge, but companies interested in participating must be enrolled in the Mississippi Contract Procurement Network system.

For more information or to register online, please visit www.mspsc.com.

**SEUS-Japan 33rd Annual Joint Meeting October 18-20 in Tokyo;
Partners Encouraged to Register Early for Event**

From October 18-20, MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope will once again lead a delegation of MDA staff, state officials, business leaders and other partners to Japan to participate in the 33rd Annual Southeastern U.S.-Japan (SEUS-Japan) Joint Meeting. The meeting will provide an excellent venue for the delegation to network with Japanese businesses, customers and industrial investors while forming mutually-beneficial relationships.

As a part of its global economic strategy, MDA has aggressively sought out strategic partnerships such as SEUS-Japan. For years, Mississippi was excluded from the eight-state organization but was invited to join following negotiations with the MDA team. Japanese companies such as Nissan and Sumitomo participate in the annual event.

MDA would like to invite its economic development partners and community leaders around the state to take part in this exciting event. Space is limited, so interested participants are encouraged to register early. To learn more about the SEUS-Japan Association, including registration information, please visit www.seus-japan.org , or contact Liz Cleveland at (601) 359-3155, or e-mail lcleveland@mississippi.org.

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