

**MDA E-News October 19, 2009****United Furniture Industries Expansion, PriorityOne Business Retention and Expansion Program, Energy Grant Workshop Series Kicks Off October 29, "Utilizing Renewable Energy in Mississippi" Workshop October 28****In this Issue:**

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**United Furniture Industries Announces Expansion of Okolona Operations; Project to Create at least 100 New Jobs**

Principals of Okolona-based United Furniture Industries announced last week that the company would be expanding its Okolona operations into an existing, city-owned building in order to accommodate an increase in production. As a result of the expansion, United Furniture will be adding at least 100 new jobs at the Okolona manufacturing facility. MDA provided \$1.1 million in CDBG funding for infrastructure improvements at the facility, and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provided \$290,000, also for infrastructure improvements.

MDA Executive Director Gray Swoope commended United Furniture officials for their continued investment in Okolona, Chickasaw County and the state of Mississippi, adding that their decision to create 100 jobs will have a tremendous impact on the surrounding area during a time when job creation and retention are so vital. Doug Hanby, United Furniture CFO, expressed his appreciation to everyone involved in obtaining funding for the expansion, including MDA, ARC, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Three Rivers Planning and Development District, Chickasaw County and the City of Okolona. He stated that the grant monies will enable needed improvements at the facility.

To learn more about United Furniture, please visit the company's Web site at [www.unitedfurnitureindustries.com](http://www.unitedfurnitureindustries.com).

### **MDA Rolls Out PriorityOne Business Retention and Expansion Program in Nine Cities around the State**

On Wednesday, October 14, the MDA executive team and staff members held events around the state for local economic developers during a nine-city rollout of the new PriorityOne program. An effort of MDA's Existing Industry and Business (EIB) Division, PriorityOne is a key component of the agency's business retention and expansion program. Goals of the program include assisting businesses in solving immediate and long-term problems, promoting economic development and job creation and strengthening and diversifying the local economy.

Through PriorityOne company surveys and interviews with company officials by local economic developers and MDA staff, the program will provide local officials with important information regarding their communities' business climates. This will assist them as they define their communities' priorities and determine the best ways to allocate their resources. The program will also enable MDA to develop policy and implement programs that will be most effective in providing relevant assistance in a timely manner to the state's existing businesses.

The rollouts were held in Brookhaven, Columbus, Greenwood, Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Jackson, Meridian, Oxford and Tupelo. To learn more about the PriorityOne program, please contact the EIB Division at (601) 359-3593, or e-mail [eibus@mississippi.org](mailto:eibus@mississippi.org).

### **MDA to Host Energy Grant Workshops Statewide for City and County Officials, Community and Business Leaders; Workshop Series Kicks Off October 29 in Greenwood**

Beginning this month, MDA will host a series of grant workshops statewide to educate city and county officials and community and business leaders about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funding opportunities available through the State Energy Program (SEP) and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program. By attending the workshops, participants will learn more about the technical assistance available through each program, the disbursement of funds, eligible activities, proposal criteria and the application processes for each program. The workshops will begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 12:00 p.m. The dates and locations of each event are as follows:

- October 29: Greenwood, Leflore County Civic Center, 200 Highway 7

- November 3: Hattiesburg, Lake Terrace Convention Center, I-59 and Highway 49
- November 5: Jackson, Jackson Convention Complex, 105 E. Pascagoula St.
- November 12: Tupelo, Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center, 363 E. Main St.

For more information about the workshops or any other energy-related programs, or to register for the events, please e-mail [stimulusworkshops@mississippi.org](mailto:stimulusworkshops@mississippi.org) or visit [stimulus.mississippi.org](http://stimulus.mississippi.org).

**MDA Energy Division to Host "Utilizing Renewable Energy in Mississippi" Workshop October 28 in Vicksburg**

On Wednesday, October 28, at the Vicksburg Convention Center, MDA's Energy Division will be hosting "Utilizing Renewable Energy in Mississippi," a workshop designed to provide valuable information regarding the ways buildings and facilities can save energy and money by using renewable energy sources. The workshop will feature guest speakers covering a variety of topics, including geothermal applications, funding and installation of geothermal and solar energy applications and alternative fuels for vehicles. It will also address cost-saving issues and ways to reduce energy costs through the use and implementation of these applications.

The workshop will benefit schools, colleges and universities, energy and facility managers, fleet managers, commercial and industrial business owners and local citizens interested in learning more about renewable energy. The cost to attend is \$40 per person. Registration will begin at 8 a.m., and the workshop will adjourn at 3 p.m. The registration fee includes lunch and snacks.

To view a brochure of the event, or to print the registration form, please [click here](#).

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