

MDA E-News Briefs for the Week of November 17, 2008

Dart Container Expands its Quitman Manufacturing Facility

Dart Container recently expanded its Quitman, Miss., manufacturing facility. Located in Quitman since 1997, the facility's expansion will create a projected 200 new jobs over the next five years. MDA assisted the company with its Growth and Prosperity (GAP) certification and benefits. The GAP program provides incentives to companies that locate or expand within the specified GAP counties.

Established in 1937 as Dart Manufacturing Company, the company got its start by manufacturing products such as plastic key cases, steel tape measures and identification tags for the armed services. Dart Container was created in the 1950s when experimentation with expandable polystyrene led to the manufacturing of high-quality insulated foam cups. Today, the company manufactures a broad range of single-use products for the foodservice, retail and food-packaging industries, and it is the world's largest manufacturer of foam cups. Dart Container operates 18 manufacturing facilities around the world, 12 of which are in the United States. To learn more about Dart Container, please visit their website at www.dartcontainer.com.

Protocol for Following Basic Patriotic Practices

MDA's protocol officer, Marsha Hamilton, recently passed along the following tips from the Protocol and Diplomacy International Protocol Officers Association (PDI). These basic common patriotic practices were compiled by Kathleen Ryan, Protocol Consultant. MDA urges you - our economic development partners - to pass these tips along via newsletters, bulletin boards, etc.

When our Nation or Flag is honored, it is always appropriate for American citizens to stand and remove hats. It is also very appropriate that we place our right hand over our hearts. This act is equivalent to the salute rendered by our military members. Other specific moments when it is appropriate to follow these practices include:

- During the National Anthem
- During the Pledge of Allegiance
- When at a parade and the U.S. flag is marched past you
- When the national anthems of friendly nations are played
- When at reveille (raising of the flag) and retreat (lowering of the flag) which most typically occurs on military installations
- During the movement of a flag-draped casket - specifically when

- transferred from the hearse to the gravesite
- When *Taps* is played during remembrances, memorials and military funeral ceremonies

To learn more about protocol and international diplomacy, please visit Kathleen Ryan's website at www.kdryan.com.

MDA Disaster Recovery Division Continues to Make Progress towards State's Recovery

In the time since Hurricane Katrina, MDA's Disaster Recovery Division has made momentous strides in addressing disaster recovery needs along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In recent months, the division unveiled two new components of assistance programs while continuing to implement existing programs. Below is a summarized list of the division's recent milestones.

Housing Programs

- **Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP)** - Through this program, the division continues to provide grants to Mississippi residents whose homes received flood damage. So far, \$1.786 billion has been disbursed to over 26,000 applicants through Phases I and II of the program. Both phases are expected to be complete by year's end.
- **Elevation Grant Program** - This program provides an additional \$30,000 in grant money to eligible Phase I and II applicants needing to elevate their homes to the required flood elevation standards. Over 2,200 applicants have applied for this funding. To date, 70 percent of the applicants have been approved.
- **Public Housing Program** - 25 projects representing a total of 2,670 projected housing units have been identified to receive funding through this program. Construction has been completed on 272 of the units; 1,000 units are currently under construction.
- **Long Term Workforce Housing Program** - The division has established this program to provide grants and loans to local units of government, non-profit and for-profit organizations in order to provide long-term affordable housing in the coastal counties. Contracts have been awarded for 38 projects which are currently undergoing environmental reviews. These projects are expected to result in the creation of roughly 8,400 housing units.
- **Small Rental Assistance Program** - This program was created to provide forgivable loans to owners of small rental properties (one to four units). Rounds 1 and 2 of this program are underway; two-thirds of Round 1 applicants have completed the environmental review process, and 385 awards have been approved. Round 2 applications continue to be submitted, with over 513 to date.
- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Assistance Fund** - In light of the softened economy, tax credits for many affordable housing

projects have been re-priced, stalling some of the projects already underway. This \$30 million program provides tax credit gap financing to developers already receiving affordable housing tax credits through the Mississippi Home Corporation. MDA is currently accepting applications from local governments for this funding.

Economic Development and Community Revitalization Grants

- **Economic Development Grants** - The division has allocated roughly \$247 million in the lower six counties and has awarded funding for 32 economic development projects. 18 of the projects are currently under construction, and MDA estimates over 8,000 jobs will be created through all the projects.
- **Community Revitalization Grants** - So far, these grants have been awarded to 86 community revitalization projects in the lower six counties. 40 construction contracts have been issued for the projects.
- **GO Zone Economic Development Grants** - \$41 million has been allocated for all 49 counties in the GO Zone. Grants have been awarded for 39 projects; 21 of these have completed environmental reviews.
- **Tourism Restoration Grants** - The division recently set aside \$5 million to support an expansive advertising, promotions and events marketing campaign to bring out-of-state visitors back to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. All funding has been committed, and 27 grant contracts have been signed.
- **Construction of Employment Training Facilities** - This \$20 million program will provide funds for the construction of employment training facilities specific to the metal fabrication industry. MDA is now accepting proposals for these funds from local governments in the lower six counties.
- **Port of Gulfport Restoration Program** - This program provides funding to the Mississippi State Port Authority to restore the Port of Gulfport's public infrastructure and the publicly-owned facilities destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. This program will increase labor force by creating and returning a significant number of jobs to the region. **The Port Authority recently adopted a new plan which will significantly expand port facilities. MDA has released an amendment to its original plan and is currently reviewing all public comments received. These comments and their responses will be put into a final amendment for submission to HUD for approval.*

If you have any questions regarding any of the programs, please contact MDA's Disaster Recovery Division at (601) 576-5700.