

**MDA E-News November 30, 2009  
Funds Awarded to Horn Lake, Procurement Centers Partner Up,  
PriorityOne Program Making Progress, Tourism Division  
Participates in Tour**

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**MDA Awards RAIL Program Funds to the City of Horn Lake**

MDA's Community Services Division recently awarded **Mississippi Freight Rail Revolving Loan/Grant Program (RAIL)** funding in the amount of \$520,000 to the City of Horn Lake on behalf of Newly Weds Foods.

The **RAIL Program** provides loans to municipalities and counties for freight rail service projects. To learn more about the funding programs available through MDA's Community Services Division, please visit [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org), and click on the Community and Asset Development link located near the top of the page.

**Mississippi Procurement Technical Assistance: East Central Contract Procurement Center and Central Mississippi Contract Procurement Center Partner in One Facility**

MDA recently announced the East Central Contract Procurement Center in Meridian and the Central Mississippi Contract Procurement Center in Jackson have partnered their operations in the Jackson center's facility. According to Carol Harris of MDA's Minority and Small Business Development Division (MSBDD), which administers the procurement centers around the state, the partnership will enable the center to offer more centralized services to businesses in the area, and it will reduce costs while increasing the availability of resources and maintaining the

same level of service to the Meridian/Lauderdale County business community.

For businesses located in the Meridian/Lauderdale County area, a representative from the Central Mississippi Contract Procurement Center will make weekly office visits. The East Mississippi Business Development Corporation in Meridian is partnering with the Mississippi Procurement Technical Assistance Program (MPTAP) to provide shared office space for the visits. The consolidated center is part of MPTAP's statewide network of procurement technical assistance centers strategically located throughout Mississippi. Other centers are located in Biloxi, Columbus and Greenville. In addition to providing training opportunities, MPTAP assists the state's businesses in obtaining federal, state and local government and commercial contracts.

For more information regarding procurement services in Mississippi, please contact the MSBDD at (601) 359-3448 or visit [www.msccpc.com](http://www.msccpc.com) or [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org).

### **PriorityOne Program Making Progress: 250 Surveys Expected to be Complete by End of Year**

Since MDA's Existing Industry and Business Division (EIB) introduced the PriorityOne Business Retention and Expansion Program to economic developers across the state in October, several counties, in conjunction with local developers and staff from MDA's regional offices, have completed their surveys and interviews with local business officials, and approximately 200 surveys have been completed statewide. According to EIB Division Director Chandler Russ, 250 surveys, or one fourth of the total to be conducted, should be complete by year's end. At that point, local developers will be given access to their communities' aggregate data, and they will also have the ability to complete remaining surveys online. The information obtained through the program will provide valuable feedback which will assist community leaders in defining their communities' priorities and determining the best ways to allocate their resources. It will also allow 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. For more information about PriorityOne, please contact the EIB Division at (601) 359-3593, or e-mail [eibus@mississippi.org](mailto:eibus@mississippi.org).

### **MDA Tourism Division Participates in Gulf Coast Meeting Planner FAM Tour**

MDA's Tourism Division recently served as a co-sponsor for the Gulf Coast Meeting Planner Familiarization (FAM) Tour, which was held November 16-18 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. During the event, 18 meeting planners and their guests from around the country visited Gulfport, Biloxi and Ocean Springs, where they toured hotels, restaurants and attractions,

including the newly-renovated and expanded Gulf Coast Convention Center (GCCC). As a result of its \$68 million expansion, the GCCC is now the largest in Mississippi, with a total of 405,000 square feet.



FAM tours provide journalists and tourism professionals with opportunities to visit an area to experience its tourism product first-hand. To learn more about tourism in Mississippi, please visit [www.visitmississippi.org](http://www.visitmississippi.org).

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