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MDA Awards Funds to Charleston and Smithville, Honors Bestowed on Mississippi Blues Trail, Ground Broken on General Atomics Facility, Outsourcing Company Opens in Greenville

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MDA Awards RIF Program Funds to City of Charleston and Town of Smithville

MDA's Community Services Division recently awarded Mississippi Rural Impact Fund (RIF) Program funds for two improvement projects in Mississippi. The RIF Program is designed to assist with the location or expansion of businesses in rural areas by providing grants to rural communities. The awards, which total \$300,000, are:

- City of Charleston (Diabetic Shoppe, Inc.) - \$150,000 to purchase a building
- Town of Smithville (Townhouse Home Furnishings, LLC) - \$150,000 for infrastructure improvements

To learn more about the funding programs available through MDA's Community Services Division, please visit www.mississippi.org, and click on the Community and Asset Development link located near the top of the page.

Town of Tutwiler, W.C. Handy and Aleck Miller Honored on Mississippi Blues Trail; Led Zeppelin Frontman Robert Plant Attends Marker Unveiling

The Town of Tutwiler, which is where blues composer and musician W.C.

Handy first discovered the blues while waiting for a train, Handy and Aleck Miller, also known as Sonny Boy Williamson, were honored last week with a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail on Front Street in Tutwiler. Robert Plant, legendary frontman and guitarist for the rock band Led Zeppelin, was on hand for the ceremony and spoke of the town's significance in the history of the blues. The GRAMMY® winner said he had visited Tutwiler six times prior to the marker unveiling, and he referred to the town as "a pivotal spot in the map of the United States in the development of music and a reflection of American society." To view the interview with Plant, please [click here](#).



Legendary Led Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant attends the unveiling of the new Mississippi Blues Trail marker honoring the Town of Tutweiler, W.C. Handy and Aleck Miller. Photo credit: Panny Mayfield

To date, 97 Mississippi Blues Trail markers have been placed at key sites throughout the state, as well as in Memphis, Tenn., Chicago, Ill., and Helena, Ark., to honor historic blues musicians and locations - from the street corners and juke joints where they played, to the places they called home, to their final resting spots. The Mississippi Blues Trail markers are funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Delta State University, MDA and participating communities. To learn more, please visit www.msbluestrail.org.

General Atomics Breaks Ground on Phase IV Expansion at Facility in Shannon

General Atomics' Electromagnetic Systems Division (GA-EMS), manufacturer of advanced linear motors for Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching Systems (EMALS), held a ground breaking ceremony last week

for its Phase IV, 50,000-square-foot expansion at its 72,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Shannon. The expansion is a \$4.5 million capital investment by the company and will accommodate the plant's role as the logistics supplier and depot-level support for the U.S. Navy's Gerald R. Ford aircraft carriers. The project will create at least 20 new jobs.

The Phase IV expansion falls on the heels of the company's recently completed Phase III expansion. The success of the Phase III expansion directly impacted General Atomics' decision to move forward with the Phase IV expansion. MDA provided Momentum Mississippi incentives to help facilitate the Phase III project, which resulted in a 37,000-square-foot expansion at the facility and created 25 new jobs. General Atomics invested \$3.5 million in the Phase III expansion.

To learn more about General Atomics, please visit www.ga.com.

Call Center Outsourcing Solutions Opens in Greenville

Call Center Outsourcing Solutions, a new outsourcing business management and consulting company, celebrated its grand opening last week in Greenville with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Governor Haley Barbour was in attendance. The fully-operational call center, which provides call center services to businesses and busy executives, will receive inbound and place outbound customer service calls and will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The company currently employs 20 workers and plans to add 10 new jobs each month until there are a total of 50 employees at the call center. MDA helped Call Center Outsourcing Solutions become certified as a data center and provided the company with assistance regarding training opportunities.

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