

# PLASTICS/POLYMERS/ CHEMICALS

*Shape Your Future in Mississippi*

**A**lready one of the largest manufacturing industries in the United States, the plastics/polymer/chemical industry is poised for continued growth in the next decade. This huge industry already has found a home in Mississippi, with more than half of all polymers produced along the Gulf Coast in the I-59 Technology Corridor. In fact, more than 350 plastics/polymer companies are located in the state, including BASF, E.I. DuPont de Nemours, GE Plastics, Sunbeam Oster and Wellman. In addition, more than 100 chemical related companies have Mississippi locations.

**Fast Fact:** U.S. News & World Report magazine ranked the University of Southern Mississippi's graduate program in polymer sciences as one of the top ten in the nation.

## An Industry Overview

The plastics/polymer industry currently employs more than 18,600 people in Mississippi, with a projected growth of 4.7 percent through 2010. Companies within the industry are found in the following six sub-clusters:

- Plastic resin and petroleum refining
- Suppliers and support services for resin production
- Plastics products (molding, extruding, compounding)
- Synthetic rubber production
- Rubber products production (foam and molding)
- Organic fiber production

Expected areas of growth within the plastics/polymer industry in Mississippi include thermoset resin production, plastics parts for the automotive industry, wood polymer laminates, a variety of coatings, medical polymers, plastics plumbing fixtures, and research and development for polymer packaging.

There are an estimated 7,000 employees in the chemical manufacturing industry in Mississippi making the total estimated employment for plastics/polymers/chemicals combined 25,600. More than 800 plastics/polymers/chemical manufacturers are located in Mississippi and its surrounding states.

## A Trained Workforce

A well-educated and trained workforce is an essential element to operating a successful plastics/polymer/chemical business. The state of Mississippi offers a



### Mississippi Plastics/Polymers/Chemicals

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Total Employment</b>                           | <b>25,600</b> |
| <b>Total Plastics/Polymers/Chemical Companies</b> | <b>450</b>    |

multitude of resources to ensure that our workforce is prepared to meet the needs of your business.

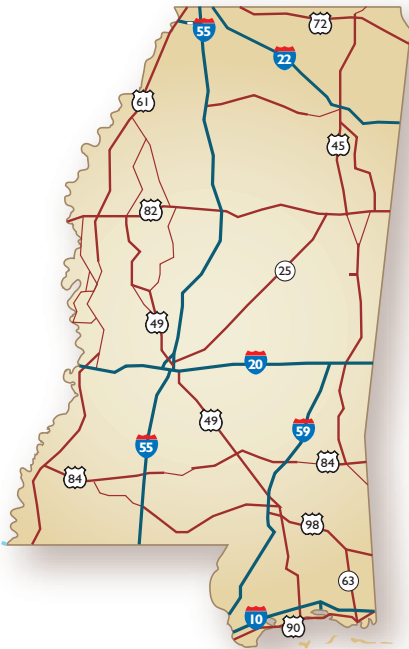
The University of Southern Mississippi, located in Hattiesburg, is a national leader in the area of polymer science, with one of the top programs in the United States. The premier **Polymer Research Institute** also includes one of the most advanced rapid prototyping systems in the world. In addition, the University of Mississippi offers a **pultrusion technology program**, and Mississippi State University has a **wood products laboratory** that provides training important to the plastics/polymer industry.

Our students can also begin their plastics training at the high school level in several schools offering a program in plastics and polymer science. The program not only introduces students to the field of plastics and polymer manufacturing, but also prepares them for employment or continued education in this growing industry.

A strong educational system, combined with a growing pool of workers already trained in plastics technology, ensures that plastics/polymer/chemical companies will find a highly skilled workforce available to meet their needs.

## A Vast Transportation Network

The ability to move raw materials in and finished product out to market is essential to successful plastics/polymer/chemical manufacturers. Prime Mississippi locations offer both highway and rail access, in addition to key ports along the Gulf Coast and the state's navigable rivers. Mississippi's highway system ranks among the four best in the country and the best in the southern United States. The



- Limited Access Four-Lane Highways
- Four-Lane Highways
- Primary Highways

Interstate 59 Technology Corridor stretches from Meridian to the Gulf Coast and encompasses more than 400 technology companies.

Mississippi's location, which is central to both U.S. coasts, also provides easy access to plastics and petrochemical supplies in Texas and Louisiana. In fact, the state is within a day's drive of more than 50 percent of the U.S. business population, including such major markets as Atlanta, Birmingham, Dallas, Houston, Little Rock, Memphis, Mobile, Nashville, New Orleans and St. Louis. Seventeen rail systems serve Mississippi with more than 2,800 miles of track, and the state's 15 ports include two on the Gulf Coast that provide access to worldwide commerce.

## A Supportive Business Climate

Mississippi offers a strong, supportive business climate, where the cost of doing business is low and many other tools are available to help your business compete in today's economy. Locations within Mississippi offer companies substantial savings compared with other parts of the U.S.

Economic incentive programs provide income tax credits for job creation, investment, retraining of employees, and research and development. The **Mississippi Advantage Jobs Incentive Program** provides quarterly incentive payments based on a percentage of withholding to qualifying companies for up to 10 years, which provides an important cash benefit to new companies locating in the state. Cities and counties may also offer a property tax exemption for qualifying projects.

The **Tort Reform Act of 2004** is another important element of the business climate in Mississippi. This act ensures fairness in the courtroom for Mississippi businesses, with provisions that address joinder and venue; innocent seller protection; and non-economic damages caps.

In addition, the state offers a variety of training programs through its **community/junior college system** to assist companies in preparing workers for new job opportunities within the plastics/polymer/chemical industry. In fact, Jones County Junior College has an impressive history of designing custom programs for training plastics firm employees.

A right-to-work state, Mississippi's union membership is less than six percent. And the workforce is well-prepared for jobs in the manufacturing sector, with more than 16 percent of its workers employed in manufacturing, the fifth highest per capita in the nation.

Companies seeking new sites will find an abundance of land available in industrial and technology parks throughout the state. Locations include large green field sites, as well as land in existing parks in close proximity to compatible industries. These sites, combined with reliable utilities and one-stop environmental permitting, make Mississippi an ideal location for the rapidly growing plastics/polymer/chemical industry.

**To learn more about shaping your company's future in Mississippi, call the Mississippi Development Authority at 1.800.360.3323 or visit our website at [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org).**