



HAPPENINGS!

Vol. 11 No. 3

Official Publication of the Mississippi Economic Development Council

Summer 2005

2005 Officers

President
Jim Flanagan

President Elect
Jason Brookins

Secretary/Treasurer
Rick Byars

*Vice President
Economic
Development*
Wade Jones

*Vice President
Chamber of
Commerce*
Dianne Newman

*Vice President
Community
Development*
Angie Cognevich

*Immediate Past-
President*
Max Hipp

Association Manager
Carol Hardwick

*For more information -
www.medic.ms*

President's Report by Jim Flanagan

Your MEDC Board of Directors held a strategic planning session recently to determine the path our association will take in the future. We are currently on a comfortable plateau. We have an easily navigable website, two great conferences a year, an outstanding scholarship program, and an association manager to keep it all organized. What more do we want?

See what you think of these ideas:

-MEDC Professional Certification and Training - Implement an ongoing, quality, practical economic development certification training program that enables professionals to prepare their communities for increased economic development success for the individual, the community and Mississippi.

-MEDC Regional Seminars - Offer regional seminars that provide application and leadership development. This replicates on a smaller regional level the value of the large winter and spring conferences while reducing travel time and cost challenges and providing the ability to customize the topics to meet regional needs.

-Mentoring - Mentoring to be provided by successful, experienced MEDC members to expedite the success and share best practices with new members and communities facing new challenges as well as mentoring to build membership and leadership diversity.

-Enhanced Website - The MEDC website offers members, affiliates, and partners "always available" information on economic development programs, regional and statewide issues, and trends and legislation that impact economic development success in Mississippi.

-Partner Collaboration - MEDC partners with other organizations with similar goals to exchange ideas, drive best practice sharing, strengthen MEDC's influence, and expedite the adoption of successful approaches to economic development.

-Develop an Advocacy Policy - Establishing an advocacy policy will enable MEDC to create economic development initiatives and respond quickly and successfully to emerging economic issues.

-Cultivate Relationships and Collaborate with Elected Officials - MEDC will host information sessions, FAM tours and regional seminars to educate, recognize success and influence elected officials for effecting economic development.

These are just the highlights of our exciting day-long planning session. We want to make them the highlights of our activities during the next few years. We welcome your input as we move your organization forward.



The Summer Conference Holds Something for Everyone....

Jason Brookins

As Summer approaches, we are readying for the MEDC Summer Conference, July 13-15, in the new conference facilities at the Isle of Capri Resort in Biloxi. "We chose the theme of "New Challenges, New Champions, New Communities," announced Jason Brookins, President Elect. "The Conference topics were chosen from suggestions by the membership of MEDC. As technology changes our daily lives, developers want to know how it can make their offices more efficient and effective."

Mark J. James, CECD, will set the pace for the conference at lunch with "Technology Trends - The Good, the Bad, and Site Selection". James is the President and founder of ED Solutions, Inc, a firm specializing in the application of technology in the economic development profession. ED Solutions, Inc. offers consulting services, training and presentations on a

variety of topics and the sale of value added products to the economic development profession. His client list includes the Greater Dallas Chamber, PPL Utilities, the state of Washington, TVA, the Economic Developers Association of Canada, The High Ground of Texas, the Dayton Development Coalition, Aquila and others. James' recent initiatives include consulting on utility economic development programs, assisting in the development of economic development web sites, developing and implementing web based surveys, marketing site and building databases and assisting economic development programs with web site strategies. James is also a recognized instructor on the use of technology in economic development. He will lead sessions on "Economic Development Web Sites - The Point of First Contact" and "Technology for the Economic Development Office".

"As more communities have realized the importance of tourism, our committee felt we should provide some expertise on destination marketing," furthered Brookins. "To that end we have procured Jon Schallert, a nationally-recognized speaker, marketing consultant, and expert on creating consumer destinations." As president of The Schallert Group, Inc., he speaks to thousands annually on competitive marketing strategies that increase customer traffic, sales, and profits.

Schallert consults with companies as large as Fortune 100 corporations and as small as single-operator retailers. His "Destination Business" principles show companies how to reinvent themselves as dominant destinations, capable of drawing consumers from outside the company's immediate marketplace. His strategies and techniques provide real-world advice that comes from the thousands of on-site consultations that he has conducted with entrepreneurs around the country. In 2002 Schallert launched his "Destination BootCamps", where clients spend two days learning how to reinvent their businesses and marketplaces using his 14-point approach. His destination business principles have been used extensively by diverse consumer marketplaces across the nation. As a result, Schallert frequently consults with cities, downtowns, shopping centers, retail chains, and franchises on how to successfully apply his methods.

Other sessions include "'A Leader for the Future - The Things that Matter" and "The Ultimate YOU - Being your Authentic Self" which will be led by Jon Hockman of Dream Dare Do. His company exists to catalyze the vibrancy of people and the energy of organizations. Prior to founding Dream Dare Do, Hockman served as the executive director of Delta Sigma Phi, a national, non-profit organization focused on challenging each man to a greater good. His background includes service as a major gift and special-event fundraiser for The American University and The Children's Defense Fund. Based on a belief that you get what you give, Hockman offers his time and experience as a volunteer for several community and professional associations.

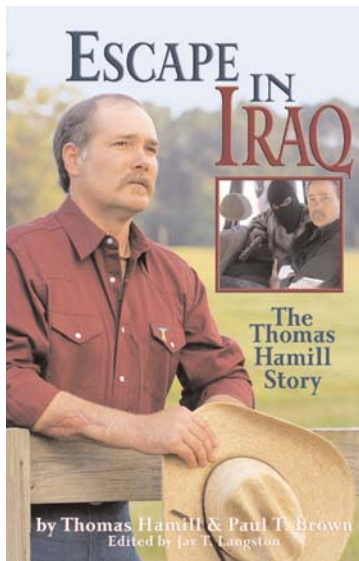
Continued on Page Three

The Conference also offers the networking activities of golf, tennis and sailing on Thursday afternoon, and updates from our own economic development leaders on Friday. Volunteers in economic development will be recognized along with the outstanding business leaders who receive the Governor's Cup Awards at the Thursday night awards dinner.

"With the sessions and activities planned, this will be a very successful conference for all involved", commented Brookins. "We hope everyone will take advantage of our speakers' expertise and help our area continue to bring people to live in and experience our state."

For registration and sponsor information go to www.medc.ms or call the MEDC office at 601-352-1909.

"Tommy Hamill will be the featured speaker during our summer conference," announced Jason



Tommy Hamill to speak at Summer Conference

Brookins, President Elect. "We are also offering personal development sessions. One of our most exciting speakers who will speak to the greatest challenge is Thomas Hamill who wrote *Escape in Iraq - The Thomas Hamill Story*,"

Hamill, from Macon, Mississippi, was a truck convoy commander when his group was ambushed on Good Friday, April 9, 2004, by Iraqi insurgents near the Baghdad International Airport. Six of Tommy's associates were killed in the assault and Tommy was wounded and taken prisoner. He remained in captivity for 24 days until he made a daring escape on Sunday, May 2. He heard the sounds of a military convoy passing by the remote farmhouse where he had been held captive. He ran half a mile to catch up to the U.S. patrol from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, part of the New York National Guard.

His inspirational story is one of danger, courage, faith and family. The 44-year-old Hamill was wounded and taken prisoner. Hamill's survival and escape were made possible by his unrelenting faith. According to Hamill, prayer was the key to his survival. *The Thomas Hamill Story* chronicles the extraordinary experience of American civilian, Thomas Hamill, a truck convoy commander delivering fuel to the U.S. armed forces in Iraq. *Escape in Iraq* is a must read for everyone.

Hammill has since co-authored the book "Escape in Iraq - The Thomas Hammill Story. Released in October 2004 award-winning writer and photographer, Paul T. Brown, was the co-author. Paul T. Brown of Brandon, Mississippi, is a widely published, award-winning and nationally acclaimed author and photographer. His work has earned numerous national and regional awards including honors from the Outdoor Writers Association of America and the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. His latest book is *Conserving Wild America*.

"He is the embodiment of our theme "New Challenges, New Champions, New Communities," furthered Brookins. "Each of us face struggles, but we will learn how he persevered, and how we can keep our day-to-day challenges in perspective and persevere, too."

Books will be available for purchase, as well as autographed by the author, at the Conference.

GOVERNOR'S CUP AWARD DISTRICT WINNERS ANNOUNCED



Elizabeth Pittman, Existing Industry and Business Division

Five small businesses and six large businesses have been named district winners of the prestigious Governor's Cup. Governor Haley Barbour recently announced the winners in recognition of their business achievements. "It is truly a pleasure to honor each of these businesses. The individuals associated with each of these businesses have my admiration for what they have accomplished. I commend these leaders and salute their operation," said Governor Barbour.

The Mississippi Development Authority along with the Mississippi Economic Development Council, sponsors of the event, each year recognize outstanding businesses across the state. Nominations were solicited statewide from local economic development districts and chambers of commerce. Membership in each MEDC district voted to determine the district winners from their district. From these district winners, one small business and one large business will be selected as statewide winners and will be honored at the annual Mississippi Economic Development Council's awards banquet, July 14, 2005 at the Isle of Capri, Biloxi.

The awards, one of the highest honors presented by the Governor, recognizes private businesses that have made a significant impact within their community during the past calendar year. The Governor's Cup award honors these businesses and heightens awareness of their importance to our economy.

The district winners in each category are as follows:

Small Business (50 or less employees)

Square Books & Café, Oxford, nominated by Oxford-Lafayette Economic Development Foundation;
DPCS, LLC dba Duckwood.net, Winona, nominated by the Economic Development Partnership of Montgomery County;
Ward's Fast Foods of Carthage, Carthage, nominated by Leake County Chamber of Commerce;
Red Laser Technologies, Jackson, nominated by Hinds County Economic Development District;
Guild Hardy Architects PA, Gulfport, nominated by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce.

Large Business (51 or more employees)

Alcoa CSI, Olive Branch, nominated by the Olive Branch Chamber of Commerce;
Hancock Fabrics, Inc., Tupelo, nominated by the Community Development Foundation;
Merchants & Farmers Bank, Kosciusko, nominated by the Attala Industrial Development Corporation/EDA;
Tyson Foods, Inc., Forest, nominated by the Forest Area Chamber of Commerce;
Central Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, nominated by the Hinds County Economic Development District;
Grand Casinos, Gulfport, nominated by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce.

The district winners in each category will be recognized and presented a Governor's Cup trophy along with a \$1,000 planning grant for the local nominating entity.

The district winner's nominations are currently being sent to judges to determine the statewide winners. The nominating entity for the statewide winners will receive a \$15,000 planning grant for their local existing program..

Regional Focus:



East Central Mississippi Economic Council

Reprinted from the East Mississippi Business Journal

CHOCTAW - The East Central Mississippi Economic Council (ECMEC), at its March 15 retreat, decided to re-focus its economic development efforts in east central Mississippi. The group's new mission statement is "To increase capital investment and job opportunities within member communities by providing targeted marketing opportunities with regional exposure and access to shared resources." New officers and directors were elected at the Retreat. Ivy Owen, who serves as community development coordinator for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was elected President of the group joins other new elected executive committee members of the group in establishing a clearer objective and strategic plan for economic development in the 17 member counties. The other members of the new Board of Directors are Sharon Chalk, Mississippi Development Authority; Charleigh Ford, Columbus/Lowndes Development Link; Alecia Crawford, Mississippi Power Company; Allen Bates, Choctaw County Economic Development Authority; Larry Mobley, Rankin First Economic Development Authority; Chandler Russ, TVA; Skipp Scaggs, East Mississippi Business Development Corporation.

"Since its beginning, ECMEC has been known as a marketing entity of our area for tourism and for being involved in industrial recruitment," he said. "We've kind of gone back and forth with those two ideas in mind, but now we think its time to re-focus our efforts and outline some clear goals and objectives."

Attala, Choctaw, Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lowndes, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Rankin, Scott, Smith, Webster and Winston counties are all involved.

ECMEC was originally founded in 1995 as a marketing resource for the region. As Mercedes began to explore the possibility of an automotive plant in Mississippi, the group's focus shifted to industrial recruitment of tier one and two suppliers.

It was at a March 15 planning retreat that members began to discuss the need to outline specific goals and objectives for its future. Members felt it was time to measure their success rate and institute a proactive plan for industrial development.

"We started going through our strengths and weaknesses and what types of industries we felt like we had the best chance to attract," he said. "Instead of reacting to some specific industry that may be looking, we started looking at what types of industry our strengths play to ... that's where we need to focus our attention."

One look at ECMEC's Web site reaffirms the amount of time the organization has spent persuading elusive automotive suppliers. A map of the Southeast region shows every automotive manufacturer's location in relation to the 17 member counties.

This is one reason the group has to redefine its role, according to Owen.

"I think, with good reason, everyone thought they could get a piece of that automotive supplier pie, but we have subsequently found the pie wasn't as big as we thought," he said. "We've got to think about other industries that would be a good fit for our area." In addition to our refocusing efforts, ECMEC wants to establish a closer relationship with MEDC. We feel like there are advantages to working together on projects which will benefit not only our 17 county area but the entire state. Discussions are already underway with MEDC and ECMEC officials to solidify and define this new relationship.

MEDC Members - Thank You!

by Arnie Williams

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving". This quote was made by Oliver Wendell Holmes, a man who clearly understood that change and growth are needed for any solid organization to continue to be successful over the long run.

Having made our start in 1963 as the Mississippi Industrial Development Council, Inc, our organization has endured wonderfully. Now, as the Mississippi Economic Development Council, the premier professional economic development organization and voice in our state, we stand proudly at more than 570 members strong.

Members, thank you for never allowing yourselves to become discouraged under any circumstances. Thank you for your interest in MEDC and for having a chronic enthusiasm to what we see as important. Thank you for your spirit of excellence as a professional in this distinguished arena. And most important, thank you for your perseverance, for it is the greatest element of our success. You are the reason that we're moving in the right direction. Thank You.



UPDATE

Mississippi continues to lead SEDC in membership and to provide strong leadership for the organization. Robert Ingram is Secretary/Treasurer. Angie Cognevich serves as 2004-2005 State Director, Jud Edwards of USM is Vice Chair of the Member Development Committee and Sandy Holifield is our Alternate State Director. Angie Cognevich says, "MS has always been well represented in SEDC with Past Chairs such as John Rucker, Michael Olivier, Mitch Stennett, Duane O'Neill (just to mention a few) and now with Robert Ingram moving up in the ranks. We lead this organization in membership which tells me that others, not just me, believe in SEDC."



Pictured are Robert Ingram, Angie Cognevich, Senator Trent Lott, and Vic Lafont, current chair of SEDC

"The SEDC Board is evaluating several potential new programs/services for its members, and both educational programming and networking opportunities are outstanding. Dollar for dollar, SEDC and MEDC offer great value to their members!"

"Robert Ingram and I attended the Legislative Honor Roll Reception which was held May 18 in Washington, D.C. This reception is held each year to honor our Congressional delegation that are pro-business and support economic development. Senators Cochran and Lott, along with Congressmen Pickering and Wicker were recognized this year. "This 17 state organization has given me new opportunities, new ideas and new friends," says Cognevich.

For more information on SEDC, visit the website at www.sedc.org or contact Angie Cognevich, Sandy Holifield or Robert Ingram.

UPDATE:

Momentum Mississippi

Jim Flanagan, President

Economic developers across the state are still working to help pass the Momentum Mississippi economic development legislation. This bill contains \$27 million in development bonds to help Mississippi recruit more high tech jobs and encourage existing businesses to expand.

Almost 100 MEDC members met with the Momentum Mississippi team late last year to help hone the provisions to keep existing businesses in their areas and to attract new business. And many of you were in attendance at the State Capitol when this legislation was introduced on January 6.

The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Economic Development Council unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Momentum Mississippi legislation at its December, 2004 meeting. To date 15 other economic development organizations have passed similar resolutions showing their support.

In the regular session of the legislature earlier this year, this legislation overwhelming passed the Senate 45-4. And, in the first few hours of the special session it passed the Senate again 44-3. However, the House of Representatives has not yet passed it, and even attached tens of millions of dollars of new bonds to it sealing its demise in the special session.

Governor Barbour has now called a special session on June 28 just to pass Momentum Mississippi.

Evidently, there are many House members who are not aware of the enormous support of this legislation among our economic developers. ***Please make sure your House member is aware of the importance of this legislation, and that we cannot be competitive with other states in the South without these not only enhanced but basic tools.***