Chapter No. 3254
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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 90

Originated in House Don Richardson Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 90

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE UNMATCHED AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE AND THE LEADERSHIP OF MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GRAY SWOOPE, AND EXPRESSING GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE FOR HIS ZEAL AND UNRELENTING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AS A POWERFUL CONTENDER AT THE FOREFRONT OF ATTRACTING AND ACQUIRING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ON MARCH 19, 2011.

WHEREAS, appointed by Governor Haley Barbour in 2007 to lead Mississippi's economic development efforts as Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), Gray Swoope, who initially joined the MDA in 2004, bringing to the agency over 25 years of economic development experience including work on the local, regional and state levels in both Mississippi and Arkansas, will be vacating the post of executive director to assume leadership of the State of Florida's comparable agency; and

WHEREAS, Gray started his career in economic development in 1985 with an undergraduate degree in business and an MBA from Mississippi State University in hand, when he accepted a job with the North Mississippi Industrial Development Association (NMIDA) in West Point, working with Bill Barrett, well-known in economic development circles, who taught Swoope the fundamental importance of economic development and its potential to impact people's lives; and

WHEREAS, immediately prior to joining the MDA, Swoope served as President of the Area Development Partnership in Hattiesburg and also previously served as Director of the Community and Industrial Development Division of the Arkansas Industrial

Development Commission, now called the Arkansas Department of Economic Development; and

WHEREAS, in both his role as chief operating officer and as executive director, Gray led the MDA team with the mantra of "changing lives and changing minds," which has been instrumental in the agency's ability to secure such projects as Toyota's tenth North American manufacturing plant, along with six tier-one suppliers; Severstal's steel mini-mill; GE Aviation's composite jet engine parts facility; PACCAR's truck engine manufacturing plant; Schulz Xtruded Products' seamless extruded bonded pipe manufacturing facility; Twin Creeks Technologies' and Stion's solar panel manufacturing facilities; Soladigm, a producer of energy-efficient dynamic insulated glass units; biofuels producer KiOR; and Gray has worked to expand and retain Mississippi businesses, such as Cooper Tire; and

WHEREAS, for an individual who views economic development as a business opportunity to really change the livelihood of people and change their life, it was no surprise that making a difference in the lives of Mississippians remained a key priority for Swoope as he took the helm of the Mississippi Development Authority, in which capacity he oversaw over 300 employees engaged in providing services to businesses and communities throughout Mississippi ranging from traditional business recruitment and retention, to developing unique Mississippi assets such as cultural heritage, to implementing programs that address community development, tourism, disaster recovery and energy, among other things; and

WHEREAS, recognized by site selection consultants and company executives as being one of the most responsive and effective economic development entities in the country, the MDA, under Gray's leadership, has provided technical or financial assistance to business location and expansion projects that are creating 46,000 jobs and are generating nearly $12 billion in investment in Mississippi, which are testaments to the successes that have been

accomplished despite a 26% decrease in the MDA's budget and a 15% decrease in the agency's workforce, through natural attrition; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the MDA, Gray, a consummate executive was always looking ahead, promoting the two most admirable qualities that drive the work done at the MDA: first, the understanding that in every piece of work that we do, we have an opportunity to change somebody's perception of Mississippi, and secondly, an examination of the work performed by the agency, and the impact it has in changing people's lives; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to commend the innovation and integrity of such a dedicated individual as Mr. Swoope, whose efforts on behalf of the State of Mississippi have resulted in a handsome reward for the state in the form of jobs creation and economic development:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend the unmatched and meritorious service and the leadership of Mississippi Development Authority Executive Director, Gray Swoope, express grateful appreciation of the Mississippi Legislature for his zeal and unrelenting efforts to promote the viability and sustainability of the State of Mississippi as a powerful contender at the forefront of attracting and acquiring economic development projects, upon the occasion of his departure from the Mississippi Development Authority on March 19, 2011, and extend most sincere wishes for continued success in his new endeavor as Florida's guide for economic development and all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be

furnished to Mr. Swoope and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 4, 2011

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 9, 2011

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE