

Plan Will Pay Off For People of Mississippi

The people of Mississippi are the big winners this week. Why? Because for the first time in eleven years, the State of Mississippi has an economic development plan that addresses the challenges of a global economy.

The name of the plan is the Advantage Mississippi Initiative (AMI). The purpose of the plan is to bring more, good paying jobs to the people of Mississippi. AMI helps create a better quality of life for all Mississippians in each of the 82 counties of our state.

Just this past week Daimler Chrysler Corporation announced plans that it will break ground on a second plant in Alabama to make Mercedes-Benz vehicles. Company officials say the plan will employ 1,700 people to build vehicles. Mississippians need and deserve those same types of job opportunities.

That is reason enough to realize that Mississippi needed a plan that helps us attract new business and industry to our state. Those businesses bring with them more, good paying jobs for the people of Mississippi.

Our new plan gives Mississippi the competitive edge over other states. We now have tools in place that will give Mississippi the advantage we need to attract more job opportunities for the people of this state.

A sound, comprehensive plan is now in place.

A lot of work and a tremendous number of hours went into the development of the Advantage Mississippi Initiative, and the work of individuals from the public and private sector played an important role in developing and supporting the new plan. We owe our thanks to the members of the Mississippi Partnership for their valuable input in the plan, with a special thanks to Dwight Evans who co-chaired the Partnership with me.

We have a common agenda – give Mississippi the competitive edge. That is why public and private leaders, corporate and community leaders worked together and voted together.

That says a lot about the quality of people Mississippians have elected to represent them. We thank and congratulate Lt. Governor Tuck, the leadership of the Senate, House Speaker Tim Ford, the leadership of the House and the members of both the Senate and House for working with us to take this historic step for the people of Mississippi. Their hard work, leadership and determination to do the right thing for this state and for our people does make a difference in the lives of Mississippians.

We worked together to develop the plan, and together we will follow the plan on the path to a brighter future for all Mississippians. Our state is poised to make huge gains in

creating quality jobs, expanding the resources of existing Mississippi businesses and attracting the interest of national and international companies.

This is a historic time. Our children will look back and realize that our efforts to develop the Advantage Mississippi Initiative marked an important milestone in the better quality of life created for the people of our state.

The plan gives our state the competitive edge we need to create better opportunities, better jobs and a better quality of life for all Mississippians. We are showing the rest of our nation that Mississippi is America's State of Promise.