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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE ECONOMIC AGENCY FACES BUDGET CUTS

JACKSON, MS – The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the state’s economic development agency, is facing its third budget cut in as many years. MDA faces a 28 percent cut in funds, with an operating budget for fiscal year 2003 of \$18.9 million, down from \$30.2 million in fiscal year 2000.

“At a time when you have a national recession, the last thing you want to do is reduce the funding for job opportunities and your mechanism for obtaining jobs,” said Governor Ronnie Musgrove.

Word of the proposed budget cuts came during a press conference where Robert J. Rohrlack, Jr., executive director of MDA, and Governor Musgrove announced Mississippi’s designation by *Site Selection* magazine as one of the top ten best states for attracting industry.

Though MDA has received praise for attracting Nissan to Canton, Mississippi, its programs affect every corner of the state. Kosciusko’s Montfort Jones Memorial Hospital recently received a low-interest loan from the Energy Division for a complete renovation of its energy systems. In Hernando, closure of the Alcoa plant was imminent until the Existing Business and Industry Division worked with Alcoa’s parent company, Kawneer, to increase their investment in the plant, doubling the number of jobs.

MDA funds support other programs, as

“Mississippi is competing not only with the Southeastern United States, but the whole world,” says Sherry Vance, MDA Director of Communications. “This is a time when we should be spending even more. Successful states are doing just that.”

Legislators vote on the budget next month.