

July 2011



Building for the Future

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The DeSoto Council's mission is to facilitate, promote and provide effective, unified leadership for economic development and improved quality of life.

WPG Americas Hold Ribbon Cutting

WPG Americas, a worldwide electronics distributor, has cut the ribbon on the company's new distribution operations located at the Airways Distribution Center in Southaven.

Plans to relocate the distribution center to Southaven were announced in early spring. The move to Desoto

County represents a \$1.5 million investment by the company and is expected to create 60 jobs over the next three years.

Headquartered in San Jose, Calif., WPG Americas (WPGA) was founded in 2007 and is a franchised partner to technology



Pictured above are WPG, Desoto County Economic Council, Mississippi Development Authority, and Southaven Officials at the recent ribbon cutting.

leaders such as Avago, Cree, Kemet, ROHM, Samsung and Vishay.

WPGA is a member of WPG Holdings, a worldwide distributor of semiconductors, passive electro-mechanical and display products.

WPG Holdings' subsidiaries include five leading semiconductor distributors in Asia, and the company serves as a franchise partner for more than 200 worldwide brands. WPG Holdings has annual sales in excess of \$5 billion and is the third largest distributor of electronic components in the world.

To learn more about WPG Americas, please visit the company's website at www.wpgamericas.com.

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I-269 Breaks Ground in Mississippi

Officials from MS, TN, and the Federal Highway Administration gathered in MS for the ground breaking ceremony in June, beginning the construction of I-269. I-269 will be part of I-69 which will be a highway that runs from Canada to Mexico.

Mississippi northern district transportation commissioner, Mike Taggart, has said, "This will not only transform Northwest Mississippi, but it has far reaching

implications for our region and our country. It isn't just about moving traffic in Northwest MS, the future of I-269 will connect communities throughout our country and will eventually connect our neighbors to the north and the south."

Construction on the first segment of I-269 to be completed in Mississippi will run for 3.1 miles from Highway 301 to the Mississippi/Tennessee state line.

Tanner Construction Company from Ellisville is the construction company building this piece of I-269. The \$20 million project is scheduled to be completed by October 2013.

Once completed, it will form a 30-mile eastern bypass around Memphis through Tennessee and Mississippi. The new bypass will relieve congestion on I69/I-55 corridor and connect I-40 and I-55 in North Mississippi.

Mississippi officials commented on the importance of this interstate to the state. MS Speaker of the House Billy McCoy believes the work the state has done since the 1987 Highway Act to improve highways has allowed Mississippi to compete with the very best in attracting business and industry and helped lead to MS landing the I-269 stretch of highway in MS.

When completed, I-269 is proposed to stretch 1,600 miles.

Soladigm Announces Scholarship Winners

Soladigm, a developer of highly energy-efficient dynamic glass for next-generation buildings with commercial manufacturing facilities in Olive Branch, Mississippi, has announced the 2011 winners of the Soladigm College Scholarship for DeSoto County high school seniors.

The Soladigm College Scholarship Program, awards two full-tuition college scholarships to Olive Branch and DeSoto County high school seniors annually.

The winners of this year's scholarships are: Samuel Thompson and Zuzana Witkiewicz. Both students are from Olive Branch High School. Both students plan to attend Mississippi State University. Thompson plans to pursue a degree in electrical engineering and Witkiewicz plans to pursue a chemistry degree.

The program has been created to support the development and education of the state's next



generation of engineers and scientists. To be considered, students from the region must be in good academic standing and planning to pursue a degree in either the physical sciences or engineering at a Mississippi college or university. Each Soladigm scholarship pays 100 percent of the winning student's college tuition expense for four years. One scholarship will be awarded to an Olive Branch, Miss. student, and the other to a DeSoto County student.

"Soladigm's engineers and scientists have enabled significant advancements in Dynamic Glass technology," says Dr. Rao Mulpuri, CEO of Soladigm. "Through these scholarships, we would like to play a positive role in preparing Olive Branch and DeSoto County students for a future in science and technology."

Students interested in applying for Soladigm's future scholarships may visit www.soladigm.com/scholarship/application for program details. Complete applications, will require a written essay and letters of recommendation, and must be received via email or postmarked by the deadline set annually by Soladigm. Next year's Scholarship deadline will be January 2, 2012.

About Soladigm

Soladigm is a developer of next-generation green building solutions designed to improve energy efficiency. The company's highly energy-efficient Dynamic Glass switches from clear to tinted on demand, resulting in significant cost savings, environmental benefits, and quality of life enhancements. Soladigm is headquartered in Milpitas, California. For more information, visit www.soladigm.com.

Headquarter Bill Could Benefit Desoto County

Mississippi Secretary of State, Delbert Hosemann, wants to change the states legal structure as it relates to business and tax incentives to make Mississippi (and Desoto County) more attractive in enticing companies to headquarter in the state.

The biggest incentive for companies and the state is a proposed 7-percent tax credit for any company that signs a written research agreement with a Mississippi university or community college. Hosemann says "Our push there is to have the intellectual capitol in our university system put into the marketplace." He also says, "We want companies to lock into research agreements with the universities to provide jobs for students, income for the university and companies' access to research equipment that is very expensive."

The state university system currently receives approximately \$460 million, and \$80 million of that is from private sources. Hosemann says that a small percentage of what we currently get is private, and he wants to double that.

Hosemann is currently working with business leaders to identify the incentives and legal structure the state needs to adopt. Once that is complete, a bill will be sent to the state legislature.

Senator Doug Davis, the Senate Appropriations Chair says, "When companies move to the Mid-South, rather than automatically going to Memphis, we hope these changes would allow them to more favorably look at Desoto

County as well."

The access to transportation, commerce, and education makes Desoto County a prime location for the possible legislation to take hold. Representative Wanda Jennings says, "Something like 70 percent of commerce that goes through the U.S. goes through the metropolitan area of the Mid-South through air, rail and highways. We think that makes a prime location for national and international company location."

The Secretary of State says the bill is not only benefiting companies looking to locate in MS, but would also benefit companies already here.

Olive Branch Named Fastest Growing City in Nation

Olive Branch has been named the nation's fastest growing city by Bloomberg Businessweek

America keeps getting bigger. The U.S. population grew 9.7 percent over the past decade, yet some cities grew much faster. These areas became denser and some sprawled into neighboring territory as people had children and newcomers moved in for jobs, life style advantages, affordable housing, and good schools.

In a ranking compiled for Businessweek.com, Little Rock-based location-analysis firm Gadberry Group identified the fastest-growing place per state. The number one boom town? Olive Branch, Miss. Others include Keller, Tex. and Ellicott City, Md. The ranking was based on growth in households year-on-year and from 2000 to 2010, as well as such other factors as the 2010 average length of residence and the change in average household income from 2000 to 2010. Household growth from 2000 to 2010 was given the



most weight in order to account for areas that have been growing for a long time, compared to new-growth areas. Only places with 10,000 or more households in 2010 were considered.

Over the last two decades the population of Olive Branch has exploded by 838 percent. In 1990 residents numbered 3,567. A decade

later they totaled 21,054. By 2010, there were 33,484, according to data from the Decennial Census. Meanwhile, Memphis was losing residents: Since 2000, its population dropped 0.5 percent, to 646,889.

In a ranking completed by location analysis company Gadberry Group for Businessweek.com, the Olive Branch area is not only the fastest-growing town in Mississippi, but the fastest growing city in the U.S. The ranking is based on such factors as growth in the number of households within city limits and surrounding areas over the decade and from 2009 to 2010, plus average length of residency and average household income.

Grainger Donates \$10,000 to Foundation for Excellence in Education

The Desoto County Foundation for Excellence in Education is a program sponsored and managed by the Desoto County Economic Development Council. It was created to raise funds to be used exclusively for education purposes. The Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation that operates as a 501(c)(3).

Currently, funds are being raised to fund teacher grants valued up to \$500, to be used for the purchase of supplies, equipment, and curriculum for classrooms. Teachers apply for "mini-grants" through the Foundation for



Excellence in Education. The Foundation has a panel of volunteer judges that select and award the mini-grants to the teachers. The teachers awarded grants, and grant

donors will be recognized at an awards reception on September 30.

Donations are being accepted for teacher grants through August 15. Donations are accepted from individuals and businesses. A donor form can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

Grainger is the latest company to make a donation to the program. Pictured above are representatives from Grainger presenting a check for \$10,000 to program managers of the Foundation.

2011 Leadership Desoto Class Graduates

Leadership Desoto has graduated its 20th class of community leaders for Desoto county. Graduation from the seven-month-long program was held May 19, 2011, at Bonne Terre Inn.

Five group community service projects were presented by the program participants that included: Feed Desoto Food Drive, Desoto County Maps of Restaurants Offering Healthy Food Choices, Study of a Consolidated County-Wide Website, Leadership Desoto Brochure for Prospects and Recruitment Power Point, and a Brochure Distributed to Elementary Students Promoting Earth Day.

Certificates and trophies for completion of the program were presented to all graduates.

Graduates, sponsors, board members, and guests were then served a catered lunch by Bonne Terre to honor the graduating class.



The Leadership Desoto Class of 2011 Included:

Cory Brady, *Integrated Land Solutions*, **John Caldwell**, *Strategic Financial Partners*, **John Camp**, *BancorpSouth*, **Jennifer Daniel**, *Atmos Energy*, **Dennis Davis**, *Exel*, **Debra Doyle**, *Community Bank*, **Julie Hollingsworth**, *Baptist Memorial Hospital-Desoto*, **Rob Hughes**, *Porter Leath*, **Jay Joel**, *First Tennessee*, **Lisa Johnson**, *Junior Auxil-*

ary of Desoto County, **Mike Jones**, *Future Electronics*, **Sibonie Jones**, *Southaven Chamber of Commerce*, **Russell Jordan**, *Hickman, Goza, Spragins, LLC*, **Ken Kirkpatrick**, *Baptist Memorial Hospital-Desoto*, **Carmen Kyle**, *Office of Mississippi Secretary of State*, **Michael Leonard**, *Trustmark*, **Lynn McAdams**, *First Tennessee*, **Charles McGhee**, *Entergy*, **John Mitchell**,

Desoto County Board of Supervisors, **Marc Montgomery**, *State Farm*, **Anthony Osijo**, *Future Electronics*, **Walt Parker**, *BancorpSouth*, **Kawana Phillips**, *Marietta*, **Pamela Pittman**, *LaQuinta Inn & Suites*, **Gordon Shaw**, *Walker, Brown and Brown*, **Adam Sowell**, *UBS Financial Advisors*, **Collin Tackett**, *Guaranty Bank*, **Randy Taylor**, *A & B Distributing*, **Patrina Williams**, *Parkwood Behavioral Health System*

Leadership Desoto Class Accepting Nominations for 2011~2012

Leadership Desoto is accepting applications for the 2011-2012 class. Individuals or businesses can nominate people to go through the seven-month program through October 1.

Class participants are asked to attend a two-day opening orientation session in November, followed by a monthly 1-day session with a designated topic related to Desoto County. Sessions include: Economic Development, Education, State Government, Healthcare, Community Service and Local Government.

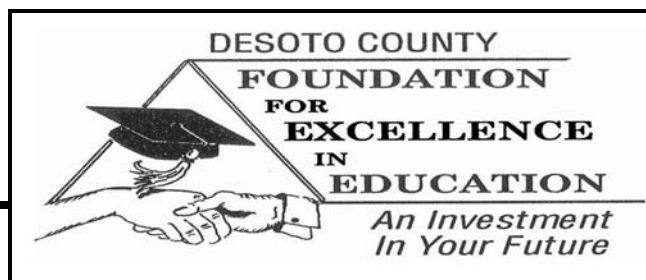
Leadership
DeSoto

In addition, the class is broken up into groups and must complete an outside-of-class group project before their "graduation" from the program in May of 2012.

If interested in nominating or applying for Leadership Desoto 2011-2012, please contact Leadership Desoto Coordinator Lisa Biglane, at the Desoto Economic Council Office by email at lbiglane@desotocounty.com or 429-4414.

The 2011-2012 class will begin in November. Applications can be found on the Desoto County Economic Council Webpage or by contacting the Council office. Tuition for the program is required to be paid by December 1.

Foundation Raising Funds for Teacher Grants



Each Year the Desoto County Foundation for Excellence in Education strives to maintain a standard of excellence in our local schools. We achieve this goal by awarding grants of up to \$500 directly to classroom teachers to purchase innovative learning programs and supplies for their classrooms that would not be available through the school budget funding and usually comes directly out of the teachers' own pockets.

We are asking you to consider making a fax-deductible donation to the Foundation for Excellence in Education. For a \$500 donation you make possible the following:

- Your donation will be awarded to a teacher who qualifies and applies for a grant.
- Your donation will go directly towards a specific teacher need.
- Your donation will improve Desoto County schools as each grant directly impacts the classroom that receives the grant.
- Your entire \$500 goes directly to the Teacher Grant program.
- Your name will be recognized as a donor on our Foundation for Excellence facebook page, and in a program of donors at the September reception for all teachers receiving grants.

With your help, our teachers in Desoto County will be able to purchase basic supplies and motivational learning programs that otherwise might not be available to Desoto County students. Simply mark the amount that you are able to contribute and return the donor form via fax, mail, or email. Our fax number is 662-429-0952. **Please send your donation by: August 15, 2011.**

_____ \$500 Education Grant _____ \$250 Luncheon Sponsor _____ Other Amt.

Foundation for Excellence in Education is Sponsored by:



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Leadership DeSoto
Quarterly Newsletter

Larry Jarrett
DeSoto Co Greenways

2011 Calendar of Events

Dates Subject to Change

July

- 26 Chamber Directors' Lunch
- 29 Council of Governments Committee

August

- 4 Tax Advisory Committee
- 4 Salute to Industry Committee
- 5 Infrastructure Committee
- 18 Metro Industrial Park Luncheon
- 19 Executive Committee
- 26 Council of Governments Committee
- 30 Chamber Directors' Lunch

September

- 5 Holiday - Labor Day
- 8 Tax Advisory Committee
- 15 Salute to Industry Committee Meeting
- 15 Metro Industrial Park Luncheon
- 16 3rd Quarter Board of Directors Meeting
- 16 3rd Quarter Membership Luncheon
- 27 Chamber Directors' Lunch
- 30 Council of Governments Committee
- 30 Classroom Teacher Grant Reception

October

- 5 Infrastructure Committee
- 20 Nominating Committee
- 20 Tax Advisory Committee
- 21 Executive Committee
- 20 Salute to Industry Committee
- 20 Metro Industrial Park Lunch
- 25 Chamber Directors' Lunch
- 28 Council of Governments Committee

November

- 10 Tax Advisory Committee
- 16 Governmental Affairs Committee
- 17 Salute to Industry Committee Meeting
- 17 Metro Industrial Park Luncheon
- 17 Leadership Desoto- Opening Session
- 18 Leadership Desoto- Ropes Course
- 18 Executive Committee
- 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 29 Chamber Directors' Lunch

December

- 8 Tax Advisory Committee
- 8 Leadership Desoto- Economic Development
- 9 Infrastructure Committee
- 14 Governmental Affairs Committee
- 15 Salute to Industry Committee Meeting
- 15 Metro Industrial Park Luncheon
- 16 4th Quarter Board of Directors
- 16 4th Quarter Membership Luncheon

The DeSoto Council welcomes its newest members:

Jimco Lamp & Manufacturing Co.

Massey Home Builders

**Mississippi Recycling Services,
Inc.**

NaturePlex LLC

Bonne Terre Country Inn



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Newsletter is also online: www.desotocounty.com