



**2009-2012**

**State of Mississippi  
Delta Region Development Plan**

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State of Mississippi  
Governor Haley Barbour

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	Page 3
II.	Development of a New Plan	Page 4
III.	DRA – Mississippi Organizational Structure	Page 6
IV.	Mississippi Delta Regional Authority Four-Year Development Plan	Page 7
	Priority I: Increase Private Sector and High Wage Jobs across the Mississippi DRA Region	Page 7
	Priority II: Develop Sustainable Communities With High Quality of Life throughout the Mississippi DRA Region	Page 10
V.	A Brief Look at the Development of the DRA Region	Page 15
VI.	Annual Strategy Statement (FY2010)	Page 26
	Distressed Counties	Page 26
	Conclusion	Page 27

## INTRODUCTION

In 2001 Congress established the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to address the chronic economic distress that denies the eight-state region full partnership in America's future. Congress issued a mandate for the Authority to address this economic dilemma through advocacy, assessment, regional planning, research, and grant-making.

The Authority is comprised of the Governors of the eight DRA states and a Federal Co-Chair, Pete Johnson, appointed by the President. The Federal Co-Chair has one vote and the eight Governors each have one vote, requiring all matters to be decided by both the Federal Co-Chair and a majority of the Governors. The consensus model ensures close collaboration between the federal and state partners in carrying out the DRA mission. The DRA headquarters is in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Since August 2005, Rex Nelson has served as the Alternate Federal Co-Chair of the DRA.

The DRA is a partnership of federal, state, and local governments. This Federal-State-Local partnership provides the structure to accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives set forth by the Authority to accomplish its Congressional mandate. Because of its partnership approach, DRA can identify innovative cross-agency initiatives and serve as a strategic investment partner. Within this framework of shared decision-making, each state adapts and designs programs to meet the needs at the local level.

Governor Haley Barbour is the State of Mississippi's representative to the DRA. The responsibility for the administration of the DRA program within Mississippi lies with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) in Jackson. Governor Barbour has appointed Patrick Sullivan, a Policy Advisor in the Office of the Governor, as his Alternate to DRA, as well as Gray Swoope as Executive Director of the MDA. These state leaders work in a collaborative

manner with local planning and development districts (PDDs), economic development organizations, local communities, and other state agencies in the development of eligible projects to address the needs in the 47 Mississippi DRA counties. The PDDs play an active and essential part by preparing applications that are consistent with the DRA Code, guidelines, and plans. Made up of local elected officials, business people, and other local leaders, PDDs represent local interests. Citizen participation is achieved through public meetings, forums, and workshops held by the PDDs and MDA.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW PLAN**

DRA has a mission to eliminate the chronic economic distress of the region and, thereby, bring its 252 counties into full partnership with America's future.

Mississippi (41), Arkansas (41), and Louisiana (46) have 56 percent of the 228 distressed counties in the DRA Region. (The last calculation for distressed county designation was July 24, 2008, with 228 of the 252 Delta Regional Authority counties classified as distressed.) Forty-one of Mississippi's 47 DRA counties are classified as distressed. Distressed counties in the Mississippi DRA Region are characterized by below average income, higher than average poverty, and below average educational achievement. Many small communities suffer from out-migration, declining tax bases, and eroding infrastructure. (For additional demographic statistical information and a listing of Distressed Counties see Development Trends of the Mississippi Delta Region on Page 15.)

The authorizing statute for the Delta Regional Authority provides that the state's development plan reflect DRA's mission, goals, and guiding principles. Those guiding principles are:

1. The most valuable investment that can be made in the Region is in its people.

2. Entrepreneurial economies that focus on high-value-added goods and services offer the best future for many parts of the Region.
3. Strategies and objectives should take into consideration participation in the global economy.
4. Economic development should be community-based and should emphasize local decision-making.
5. DRA investments should take advantage of technology and telecommunications applications.
6. DRA should promote an atmosphere of open and productive communication among all stakeholders in the Region.
7. DRA should focus special attention on the areas of greatest need.

The DRA authorizing statute also provides that federal funds used for economic and community development “shall be focused on the activities in the following order or priority:

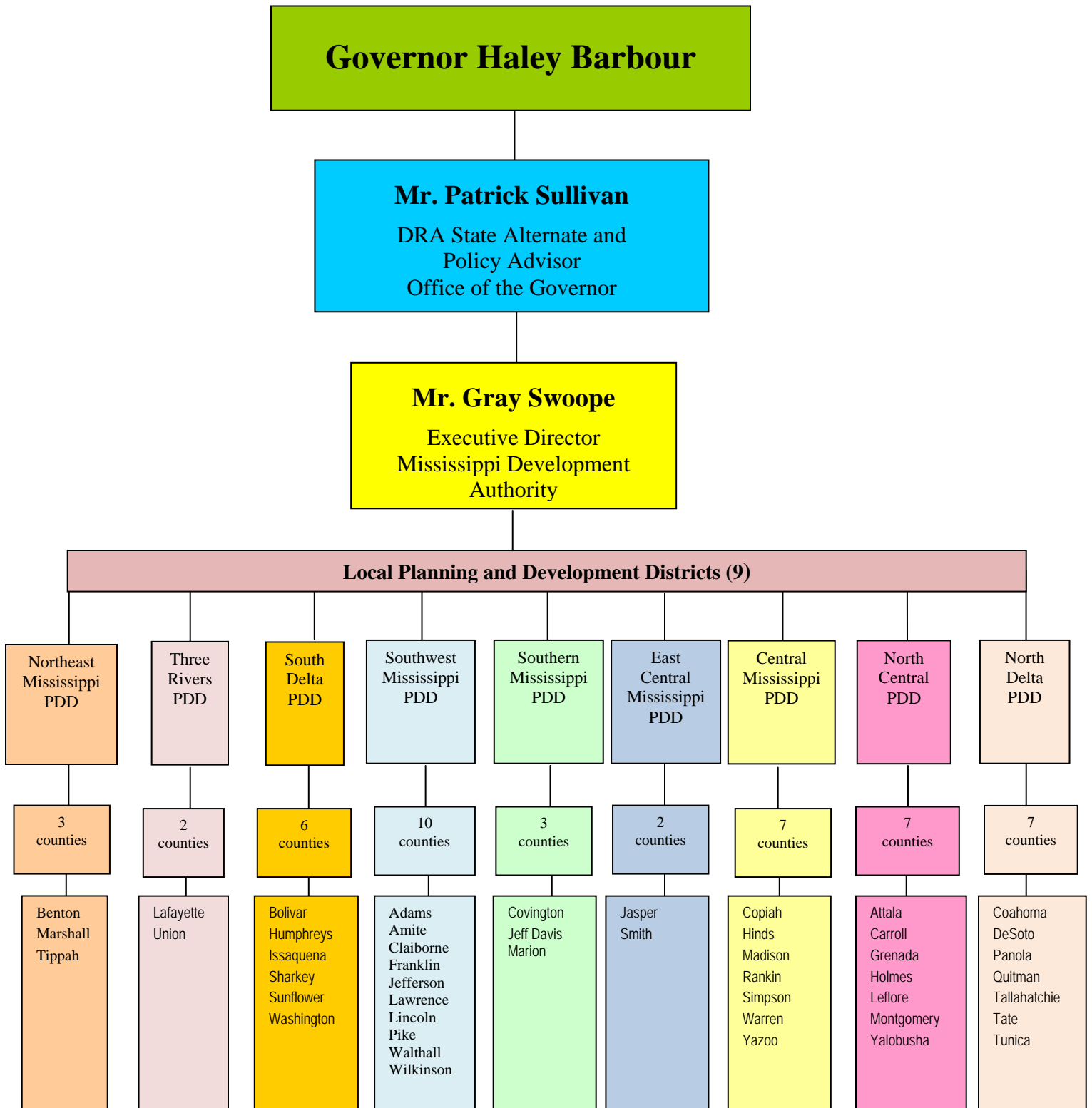
- a) Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.
- b) Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region.
- c) Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- d) Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public educational institutions located in the region.”

The statute further provides that 75% of funds should be allocated to distressed counties and isolated regions.

Governor Haley Barbour’s priorities reflect the DRA mission, priorities, and guiding principles. The Governor’s top priority is private sector and high wage job creation. His other priority is to develop sustainable communities with high quality of life. These priorities were developed through a series of public meetings beginning with his Job Creation Summit and continuing through the Blueprint Mississippi meetings.

In accordance with the DRA governing statute, this document will serve as the State of Mississippi’s Delta Region Four-Year Development Plan.

# DRA-Mississippi Organizational Structure



## **MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **PRIORITY I: INCREASE PRIVATE SECTOR AND HIGH WAGE JOBS ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI DRA REGION.**

In partnership with DRA and related Planning and Development Districts (PDDs), the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) will help local and state leaders diversify and strengthen local economies, enhance entrepreneurial activity, develop and market strategic assets, and foster the development and use of new technologies to accomplish this priority. MDA will serve as a strategic partner to achieve these goals. The PDDs will serve as coordinators and facilitators among participating partners to maximize benefits to the region.

To truly make this a top priority, MDA will fast-track project proposals received that increase private sector and high wage jobs. The better and the higher paying the job, in comparison with prevailing local employment characteristics, the more aggressive MDA will be in providing infrastructure and workforce training support for job creation projects.

#### **Selected Strategies:**

##### **1. Diversify and strengthen the economic base.**

For the Mississippi DRA region to compete in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it must expand efforts to diversify its economic base to provide new employment opportunities. It must also strengthen its existing economic base to maintain and improve existing employment opportunities.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that show great promise for job creation with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Fast-track and help provide infrastructure and workforce incentives to projects that create private sector and high wage jobs.

- Help connect communities and local developers with economic prospects.
- Support initiatives to target and develop critical workforce skills, particularly in distressed counties.
- Support efforts to promote export trading initiatives.
- Encourage foreign investment in the region.
- Encourage formation of business networks and trade groups.
- Support productivity investments and training processes for business.
- Support local access road projects that create or retain jobs.
- Support efforts to develop physical infrastructure along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway for improved employment opportunities and income growth.
- Support improvements to airports related to job creation.

## **2. Enhance entrepreneurial activity.**

Small businesses create 60% to 70% of new jobs in America. Locally owned businesses also play a key role in creating sustainable local economies and high quality of life.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support initiatives that nurture new and existing business by creating technical assistance networks through business incubators, business associations, and private-sector resources.
- Support efforts to improve access to investment capital.
- Support programs that will educate current and future entrepreneurs at K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and jobs training centers.

## **3. Develop and market strategic assets for local economies.**

A way to strengthen communities and their economies is through identification and development of local assets. These assets may be land-based (crops, livestock, and forests; scenic and recreation sites for tourism; natural resource and water assets), transportation and utility based (highways and roads, air, rail, and waterways and ports; gas pipelines; transmission lines; water and wastewater services), workforce based (skill sets, training capacities, work attitudes), cultural and

heritage based (arts, crafts, music; historic assets; ethnic and cultural festivities and mores, and tourist attractions), or any other assets seen as local strengths. Creating homegrown economic opportunity is central to this asset-based approach.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support development of strategies to help new and existing businesses capitalize on local assets.
- Support efforts to maximize the economic benefits of tourism and crafts industries through regional and cooperative marketing opportunities.
- Support local and regional efforts in the Delta Regional Authority counties included in the newly established Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area and the Mississippi National Delta Heritage Area.

## **MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION DEVELOPMENT PLAN (continued)**

### **PRIORITY II: DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION.**

In order to compete in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the people of Mississippi DRA region must have the skills and knowledge required to develop, staff, and manage globally competitive businesses. They must also have the opportunity and desire to live and work in the region. Communities, therefore, must sustain a quality of life that values and provides education and training, attracts and holds on to people with the skills and leadership to succeed in this economy, and provides access to important and quality services from early childhood education to healthcare and elderly care. Underlying this must be a quality and affordable basic infrastructure.

MDA will serve as a strategic partner to help communities achieve these goals. PDDs will serve as coordinators and facilitators among participating partners to maximize benefits to the region.

#### **Selected Strategies:**

#### **4. Foster civic entrepreneurship.**

The Mississippi DRA region must develop strong and wise leaders, organizations, communities, and regions to compete in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This challenge is particularly critical to our more distressed counties. Capacity-building, leadership development, continuously improving the effectiveness of organizations, persistent strategic planning, and development of regional approaches to problem solving are all components of civic entrepreneurship.

However, civic entrepreneurship is also much more than such development programs, it is community spirit, an attitude of success, and a willingness to work together.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support development of broad-based leadership structures and transformative institutions.
- Support civic education and engagement projects from the K-12 level through the senior citizen level.
- Support initiatives that help local governments and other community development organizations become more productive and effective.
- Support regional approaches to problem solving.
- Support self-help and other initiatives that engage citizens in assessing, improving, beautifying, and motivating their communities.

## **5. Enhance workforce training**

To respond to the challenges and opportunities of the global economy, workers must continually build skills, knowledge, and experience. Community must insure access to institutions and programs that serve existing workers. Communities must also insure that institutions and programs prepare a future workforce. The K-12, community college, and university systems along with WIN Centers and other publicly supported training programs are critical to the success of this goal.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Provide support and incentives to institutions that provide programs to develop critical workforce skills, both for existing business and industry and targeted new business and industry.
- Support the integration of skills training and knowledge of workplace requirements across and into educational and training curricula.
- Support innovative ways to re-tool the skills of the region's workforce.

- Support the modernization and expansion of workforce training and occupational education programs.

**6. Increase access to quality child care and early childhood education**

Access to quality child care and early childhood education fosters the development of children and enables their parents and guardians to take advantage of job opportunities. Studies show that disadvantaged children particularly benefit from early childhood education and pre-school programs. Many families in the Mississippi DRA region do not have the resources to use or access to such high quality programs.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support efforts to increase access to quality child care.
- Support efforts to initiate and expand early childhood education programs offered by the private, public, and faith-based sectors.
- Support programs that better train child care and early childhood education staff.

**7. Increase educational attainment and achievement.**

The region has made great strides in improving its high school graduation rates. However, most jobs in the new economy require education and training beyond high school. Research shows that higher education levels are also associated with better health, longer life expectancies, and higher salaries. The Mississippi DRA region still has significant educational attainment and achievement gaps to close – both with the rest of the nation and with the ever more competitive world.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support local and regional efforts to better prepare students, out-of-school youth, and adults for post secondary level training and education.
- Maintain support for and seek expansion of programs that increase college-going rates.
- Support dropout prevention programs and college and university participation in programs such as the U.S. Department of Education’s TRIO and LEAP programs.
- Support efforts to regularly assess the effectiveness of youth programs, training programs, and educational programs.
- Support efforts to design and initiate innovative programs aimed at improving classroom teaching, using technology better as a teaching tool, and improving student achievement in science, math, and technology.

**8. Increase access to healthcare and healthcare professionals.**

Activities and policies that improve the supply and distribution of the Mississippi DRA region’s professional healthcare workforce (physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, dentists, medical technicians, etc.) can help ensure that health care is accessible, comprehensive, affordable, and tailored to meet the specific needs of communities and regions. Many rural communities, particularly in distressed counties, find it difficult to retain healthcare professionals and provide access to citizens.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will not require new and ongoing state funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Support local efforts to expand access to healthcare programs and recruit healthcare professionals through the J-1 Visa Waiver Program and other programs.
- Support educational institutions that identify healthcare needs and train professionals to help meet those needs.

**9. Build and improve basic infrastructure.**

Sustainable communities must have viable water, wastewater treatment, and basic utility systems, adequate transportation systems, and decent and affordable

housing. Many communities in the Mississippi DRA region struggle to maintain this basic infrastructure.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas for communities able to show an ability to sustain basic infrastructure over time, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Make strategic investments that leverage federal, state, local, and private capital for the development and improvement of water, wastewater, and basic utility systems.
- Support continued efforts to expand and upgrade the region's stock of safe, affordable housing.
- Support programs that help increase home ownership, particularly first-time homeowners.

**10. Increase access to new technologies and telecommunications infrastructure.**

Communities in the Mississippi DRA region face serious challenges in taking advantage of new information technology, medical technology, nanotechnology, and other emerging technologies. Changing regulations have also resulted in access issues for rural communities.

STATE STRATEGY: MDA will particularly support initiatives in the following areas that will develop basic infrastructure that does not require new and ongoing public funding, with a particular focus on communities in distressed counties and isolated areas:

- Make strategic investments in new technological infrastructure to increase local and regional access.
- Support telemedicine applications for communities.

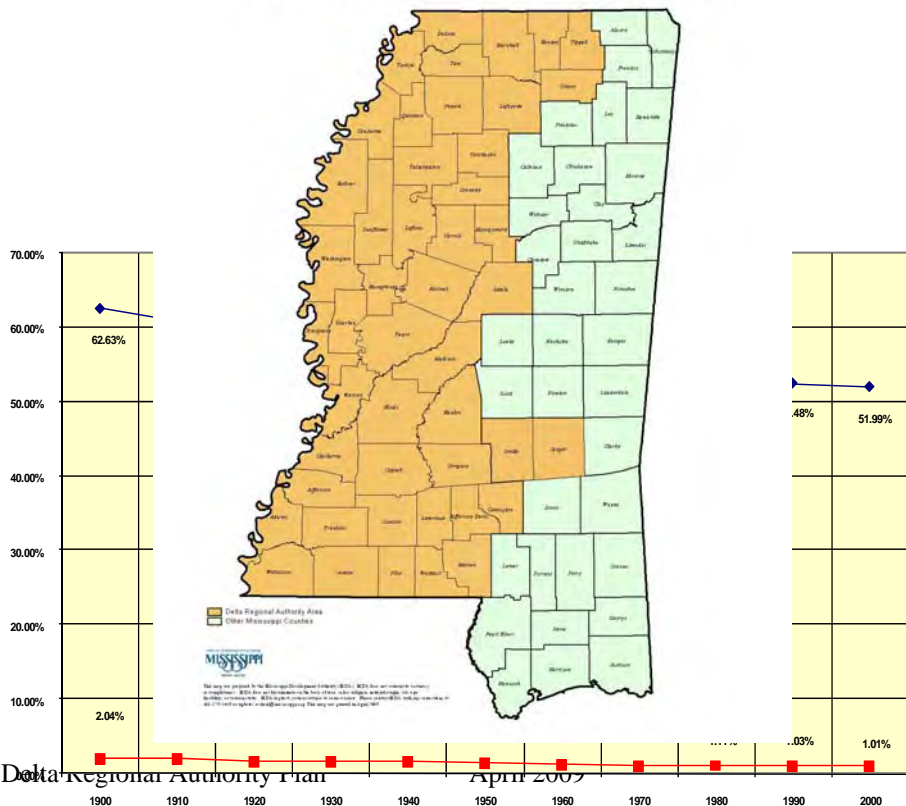
# DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION

The Mississippi portion of the federally designated Mississippi Delta Region consists of the following 47 counties – 41 of them distressed, 6 non-distressed (based on the last calculation for distressed county designation completed July 24, 2008, with 228 of the 252 Delta Regional Authority counties classified as distressed.) Distressed designations are amended annually based on new data.

<b>DISTRESSED</b>				
Adams Amite Attala Benton Bolivar Carroll Claiborne Coahoma	Coahoma Covington Franklin Grenada Holmes Humphreys Issaquena Jasper	Jefferson Jefferson Davis Lawrence Leflore Lincoln Marion Marshall Montgomery	Panola Pike Quitman Sharkey Simpson Smith Sunflower Tallahatchie Tate	Tate Tippah Tunica Union Walthall Washington Wilkinson Yalobusha Yazoo
<b>NON-DISTRESSED</b>				
	DeSoto Hinds	Lafayette Madison	Rankin Warren	

The following data an... development of the

**Delta Regional Authority Counties**

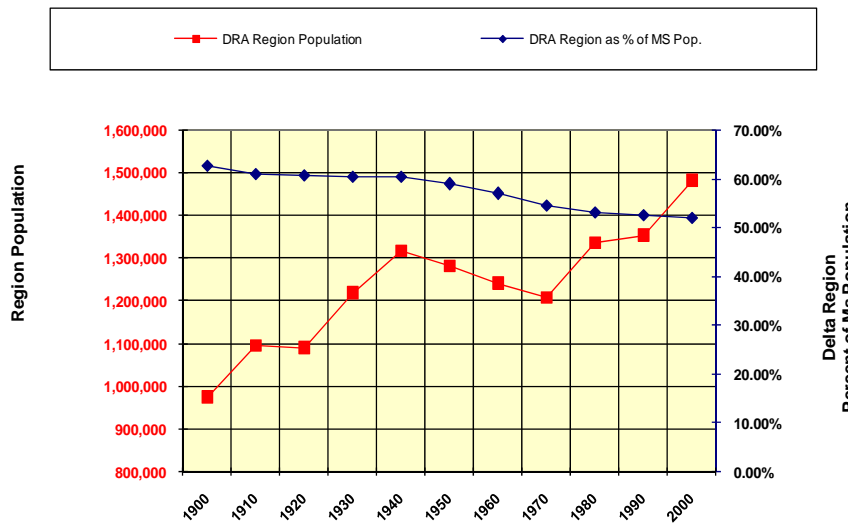


Mississippi portion of the Delta Regional Authority.

## POPULATION

The Mississippi region of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has experienced a small but steady decline in population as a percent of Mississippi's population and the nation's population over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on U.S. Census Bureau decennial data from 1900 to 2000 (Chart 1), the region has declined from 62.63% of Mississippi's population to 51.99%. Mississippi has declined from 2.04% of the U.S. population in 1900 to 1.01% in 2000.

Chart 2 - MS Delta Regional Authority Population Trends for 20th Century  
Total Population and Population as a Percentage of MS Population  
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (Calculated)



Generally, population growth and economic development coincide. In the economic sense, increasing populations lead to larger domestic markets, more complex divisions of labor,

and a greater volume of diffused information, technology and skills. Population densities tend to lower the per capita costs of public infrastructure thus allowing multiple industries to lower transportation costs through closer location.

Population over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the Mississippi DRA Region continued to increase from 971,609 in 1900 to 1,478,935 in 2000, but, as noted above, population as a percentage of state population continues to decline (Chart 2). The region lost population during the 1920s and from the 1950s through the 1970s, then began a steady increase continuing to present times.

However, the growth has not been consistent across the region. The 2008 Census Estimate compared to 1990 Census data indicates that population decreased in 17 counties, increased at single-digit rates in 14 counties, increased at double-digit rates in 134 counties, and increased at a triple-digit rate in one county. Table 1 below displays the population change for the state, each county and the DRA Mississippi region between the 1990 Census and the 2008 Census Bureau estimate. Note the region's growth continued to be lower than the state's.

**Table 1 - Mississippi and County Populations for Mississippi Delta Region**

	<b>1990 Census</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>July 1, 2008</b>	<b>% Change 1990 to 2008</b>
Mississippi	2,573,216	2,844,666	2,938,618	14.20
MS DRA Region Total	1,382,226	1,513,269	1,582,074	14.46
Adams County	35,356	34,340	31,307	-11.45
Amite County	13,328	13,599	13,248	-0.60
Attala County	18,481	19,661	19,671	6.44
Benton County	8,046	8,026	8,116	0.87
Bolivar County	41,875	40,633	37,195	-11.18
Carroll County	9,237	10,769	10,367	12.23
Claiborne County	11,370	11,831	10,848	-4.59
Coahoma County	31,665	30,622	27,272	-13.87
Copiah County	27,592	28,757	29,331	6.30
Covington County	16,527	19,407	20,526	24.20

DeSoto County	67,910	107,199	154,748	127.87
Franklin County	8,377	8,448	8,316	-0.73
Grenada County	21,555	23,263	22,995	6.68
Hinds County	254,441	250,802	247,650	-2.67
Holmes County	21,604	21,609	20,595	-4.67
Humphreys County	12,134	11,206	10,089	-16.85
Issaquena County	1,909	2,274	1,658	-13.15
Jasper County	17,114	18,148	18,253	6.66
Jefferson County	8,653	9,740	8,872	2.53
Jefferson Davis County	14,051	13,962	12,653	-9.95
Lafayette County	31,826	38,738	43,922	38.01
Lawrence County	12,458	13,258	13,370	7.32
Leflore County	37,341	37,947	35,185	-5.77
Lincoln County	30,278	33,166	34,931	15.37
Madison County	53,794	74,674	91,369	69.85
Marion County	25,544	25,595	25,830	1.12
Marshall County	30,361	34,993	37,102	22.20
Montgomery County	12,388	12,189	11,266	-9.06
Panola County	29,996	34,280	35,660	18.88
Pike County	36,882	38,940	39,961	8.35
Quitman County	10,490	10,115	8,724	-16.84
Rankin County	87,161	115,328	140,901	61.66
Sharkey County	7,066	6,580	5,556	-21.37
Simpson County	23,953	27,639	28,034	17.04
Smith County	14,798	16,183	15,809	6.83
Sunflower County	32,867	34,369	30,697	-6.60
Tallahatchie County	15,210	14,903	13,027	-14.35
Tate County	21,432	25,372	27,176	26.80
Tippah County	19,523	20,826	21,210	8.64
Tunica County	8,164	9,227	10,448	27.98
Union County	22,085	25,362	27,212	23.21
Walthall County	14,352	15,156	15,416	7.41
Warren County	47,880	49,644	48,087	0.43
Washington County	67,935	62,977	55,079	-18.92
Wilkinson County	9,678	10,312	10,283	6.25
Yalobusha County	12,033	13,051	13,645	13.40
Yazoo County	25,506	28,149	28,464	11.60

## INCOME

Household income is the sum of all money income received in a given year by all household members, 15 years old and older. Calculated median household income is used as an indicator of the income levels of a group of people.

Median household incomes (Table 2) as calculated by the U.S. Census for the years of 1969, 1979, 1989, and 1999 indicate that Mississippi has been below the U.S. median household income. Calculated median household income for the Mississippi DRA Region (weighted by county population for each year) indicates that the region and most counties in the region have been below the Mississippi median household income in each of the decennial periods.

**Table 2 - Median Household Income**

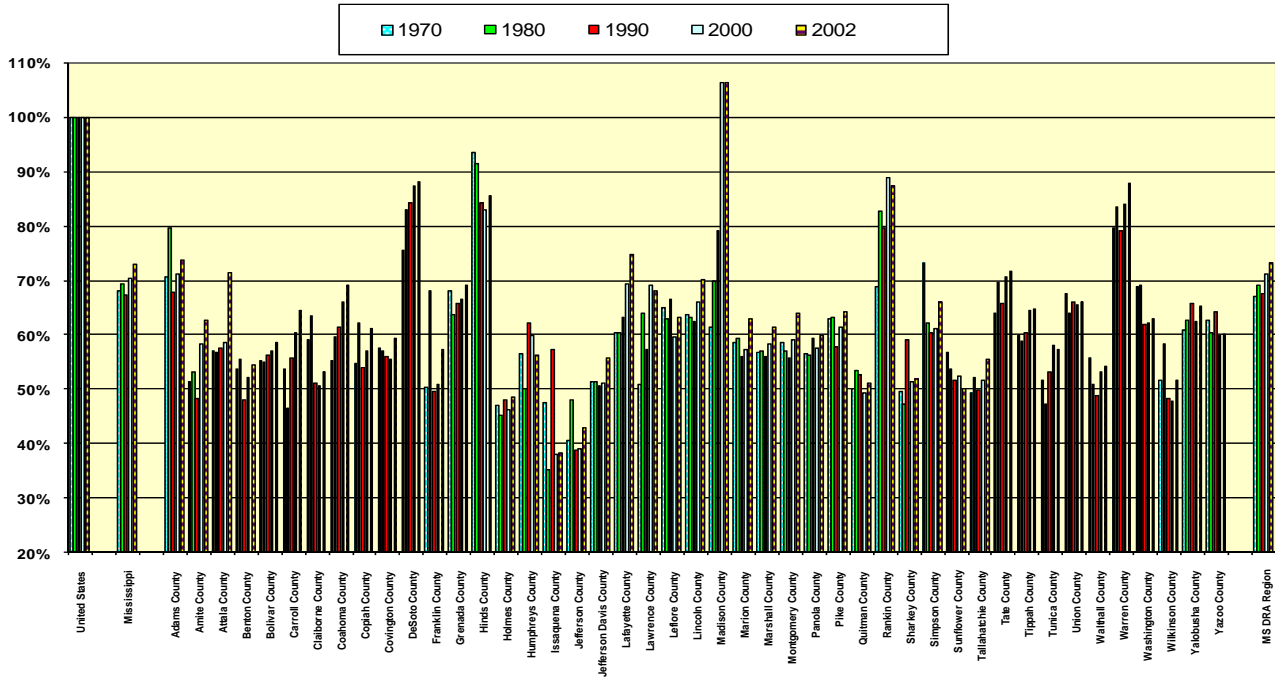
	1999	% of US	1989	% of US	1979	% of US	1969	% of US
United States	\$40,696	100.00%	\$30,056	100.00%	\$16,841	100.00%	\$8,486	100.00%
Mississippi	\$30,739	75.53%	\$20,136	66.99%	\$12,096	71.82%	\$5,221	61.52%
MS DRA Region	\$30,514	74.98%	\$20,155	67.06%	\$12,071	71.67%	\$4,922	58.00%
Adams	\$24,937	61.28%	\$17,214	57.27%	\$11,346	67.37%	\$5,647	66.54%
Amite	\$25,836	63.49%	\$15,669	52.13%	\$9,545	56.68%	\$3,564	42.00%
Attala	\$24,417	60.00%	\$15,380	51.17%	\$9,311	55.29%	\$3,919	46.18%
Benton	\$24,402	59.96%	\$15,794	52.55%	\$11,239	66.74%	\$4,065	47.90%
Bolivar	\$23,212	57.04%	\$14,020	46.65%	\$9,128	54.20%	\$3,656	43.08%
Carroll	\$28,185	69.26%	\$16,639	55.36%	\$9,647	57.28%	\$3,728	43.93%
Claiborne	\$22,612	55.56%	\$12,876	42.84%	\$9,805	58.22%	\$3,353	39.51%
Coahoma	\$22,196	54.54%	\$13,780	45.85%	\$8,931	53.03%	\$3,577	42.15%
Copiah	\$25,805	63.41%	\$16,583	55.17%	\$10,061	59.74%	\$4,149	48.89%
Covington	\$25,712	63.18%	\$17,589	58.52%	\$9,780	58.07%	\$4,716	55.57%
DeSoto	\$47,000	115.49%	\$31,756	105.66%	\$18,434	109.46%	\$6,887	81.16%
Franklin	\$24,876	61.13%	\$14,341	47.71%	\$9,403	55.83%	\$3,728	43.93%
Grenada	\$27,660	67.97%	\$19,955	66.39%	\$12,186	72.36%	\$5,356	63.12%
Hinds	\$32,178	79.07%	\$24,676	82.10%	\$14,976	88.93%	\$7,164	84.42%
Holmes	\$17,344	42.62%	\$9,809	32.64%	\$7,030	41.74%	\$2,604	30.69%
Humphreys	\$20,141	49.49%	\$12,696	42.24%	\$7,913	46.99%	\$2,886	34.01%
Issaquena	\$19,989	49.12%	\$13,005	43.27%	\$9,167	54.43%	\$3,495	41.19%
Jefferson	\$18,888	46.41%	\$10,267	34.16%	\$7,352	43.66%	\$2,291	27.00%
Jefferson Davis	\$21,450	52.71%	\$15,442	51.38%	\$10,512	62.42%	\$4,010	47.25%
Lafayette	\$28,946	71.13%	\$18,186	60.51%	\$11,534	68.49%	\$5,098	60.08%
Lawrence	\$27,795	68.30%	\$17,519	58.29%	\$12,377	73.49%	\$4,264	50.25%
Leflore	\$21,685	53.29%	\$15,219	50.64%	\$9,550	56.71%	\$4,406	51.92%
Lincoln	\$27,549	67.69%	\$18,193	60.53%	\$12,078	71.72%	\$4,875	57.45%
Madison	\$43,671	107.31%	\$25,887	86.13%	\$12,157	72.19%	\$4,384	51.66%
Marion	\$24,250	59.59%	\$16,084	53.51%	\$10,761	63.90%	\$4,318	50.88%
Marshall	\$28,066	68.97%	\$18,492	61.53%	\$11,008	65.36%	\$4,205	49.55%
Montgomery	\$24,688	60.66%	\$15,396	51.22%	\$9,524	56.55%	\$4,145	48.85%
Panola	\$26,055	64.02%	\$17,686	58.84%	\$9,654	57.32%	\$4,217	49.69%
Pike	\$24,224	59.52%	\$15,149	50.40%	\$10,524	62.49%	\$4,346	51.21%
Quitman	\$20,245	49.75%	\$13,730	45.68%	\$8,157	48.44%	\$2,739	32.28%
Rankin	\$43,251	106.28%	\$31,668	105.36%	\$18,348	108.95%	\$7,034	82.89%
Sharkey	\$20,472	50.30%	\$13,304	44.26%	\$8,250	48.99%	\$3,442	40.56%
Simpson	\$26,775	65.79%	\$19,053	63.39%	\$11,718	69.58%	\$4,771	56.22%

Sunflower	\$23,243	57.11%	\$14,431	48.01%	\$9,622	57.13%	\$3,424	40.35%
Tallahatchie	\$21,492	52.81%	\$13,593	45.23%	\$7,900	46.91%	\$2,773	32.68%
Tate	\$33,821	83.11%	\$22,207	73.89%	\$12,109	71.90%	\$4,817	56.76%
Tippah	\$29,125	71.57%	\$17,991	59.86%	\$10,346	61.43%	\$4,429	52.19%
Tunica	\$23,719	58.28%	\$10,965	36.48%	\$6,620	39.31%	\$2,579	30.39%
Union	\$32,390	79.59%	\$21,128	70.30%	\$11,499	68.28%	\$4,957	58.41%
Walthall	\$22,518	55.33%	\$14,135	47.03%	\$10,251	60.87%	\$4,110	48.43%
Warren	\$33,691	82.79%	\$22,804	75.87%	\$15,869	94.23%	\$6,084	71.69%
Washington	\$25,041	61.53%	\$17,492	58.20%	\$10,603	62.96%	\$4,784	56.38%
Wilkinson	\$19,700	48.41%	\$11,910	39.63%	\$9,120	54.15%	\$3,380	39.83%
Yalobusha	\$25,895	63.63%	\$15,885	52.85%	\$10,293	61.12%	\$3,861	45.50%
Yazoo	\$23,683	58.19%	\$14,234	47.36%	\$9,830	58.37%	\$3,643	42.93%

The Mississippi DRA Region has increased its percentage of the U.S. median household income to 72.98% in 1999, but continues to lag the state's 75.53% of U.S. median household income for the same year. Meanwhile, the dollar gap between the regional and the national median household income figures has nearly tripled.



**Chart 4 - Per Capita Income as a % of US PCI**



**POVERTY**

Poverty is determined by comparing pretax cash income of a family with a calculated poverty threshold that adjusts for family size and composition.

In 1967, the Census Bureau began to publish annual poverty statistics calculating the number and the percentages of persons in poverty. Mississippi has ranked last or near last in poverty statistics since the statistics was first published. The Mississippi DRA Region has higher poverty rates than the state.

**Table 3 - All Ages below 100% of Poverty**  
2000 1989

	Number	%	Number	%
Mississippi	489,775	17.6	626,022	24.6
MS DRA Region	272,125	21.3	375,273	32.5
Adams County	7,411	22.0	10,702	30.2
Amite County	2,587	19.1	3,700	27.4
Attala County	3,934	20.2	5,679	30.6
Benton County	1,664	21.1	2,283	28.0
Bolivar County	10,551	27.5	18,898	46.5
Carroll County	1,770	16.8	2,685	28.7
Claiborne County	2,748	27.3	4,221	44.3
Coahoma County	8,245	27.7	14,896	47.6
Copiah County	5,793	20.7	8,000	29.5
Covington County	3,804	19.7	4,380	26.2
DeSoto County	8,289	7.3	7,539	11.0
Franklin County	1,677	20.0	2,381	28.3
Grenada County	4,083	18.0	4,579	21.2
Hinds County	43,619	18.0	59,074	23.6
Holmes County	7,266	34.8	12,291	57.1
Humphreys County	3,361	30.8	5,602	46.2
Issaquena County	674	33.4	878	45.4
Jefferson County	2,655	29.2	3,375	38.4
Jefferson Davis	3,474	25.5	4,573	32.3
Lafayette County	5,341	15.4	5,867	21.1
Lawrence County	2,359	17.7	2,628	20.9
Leflore County	10,198	29.1	14,101	38.6
Lincoln County	5,643	17.1	6,753	22.1
Madison County	9,280	12.4	13,175	24.6
Marion County	5,323	21.7	7,532	29.6
Marshall County	5,893	17.5	8,615	28.7
Montgomery County	2,521	21.0	3,685	29.7
Panola County	7,055	20.5	8,812	29.2
Pike County	8,760	22.9	11,319	30.8
Quitman County	2,778	28.2	4,943	46.8
Rankin County	11,105	9.7	9,216	10.8
Sharkey County	2,111	33.4	3,564	50.4
Simpson County	5,315	19.7	5,029	21.3
Sunflower County	9,068	31.6	14,914	49.9
Tallahatchie County	3,865	26.5	6,790	44.3
Tate County	3,358	13.6	4,539	21.6
Tippah County	2,966	14.4	3,757	19.3
Tunica County	2,031	22.1	4,600	56.0
Union County	3,091	12.0	3,384	15.2
Walthall County	3,677	24.3	4,954	34.3
Warren County	8,043	16.4	10,094	21.0
Washington County	16,145	26.2	24,382	35.7
Wilkinson County	2,747	29.8	3,763	38.8
Yalobusha County	2,494	18.8	2,949	24.4
Yazoo County	7,353	28.7	10,172	39.8

The Mississippi DRA Region has decreased poverty over 100,000 persons from 375,273 in 1989 to 272,125 persons in 2000. Table 3 lists the number of percentage of persons in poverty for each of the Mississippi DRA region counties and a regional calculated total number of people below the U.S. poverty level.

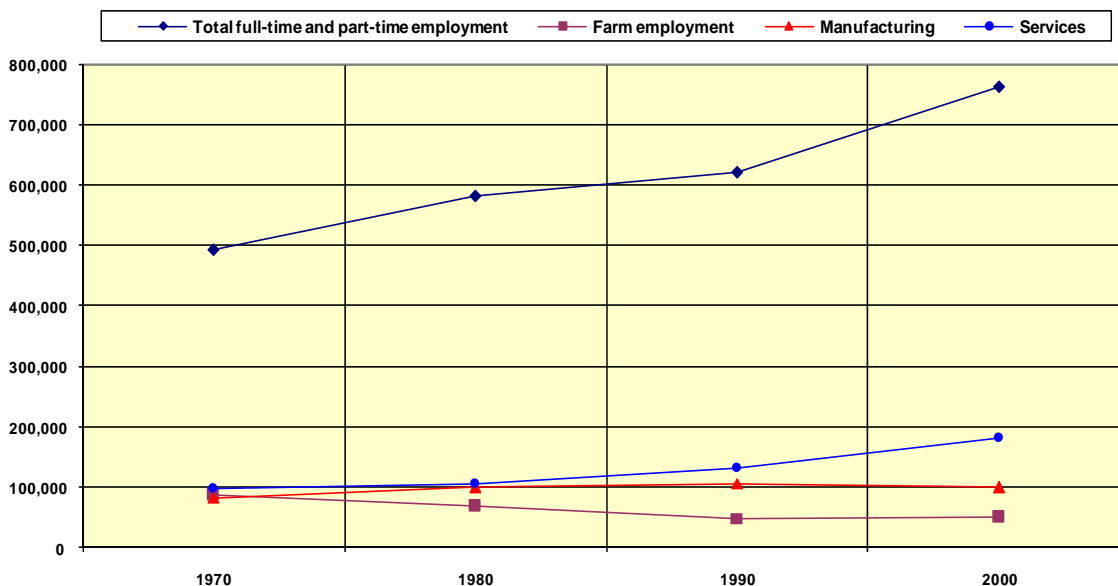
### INDUSTRY SECTORS

The Mississippi DRA Region became dominated by the manufacturing sector in the 1950s. Apparel manufacturing was a significant employer, but these low-wage and low-skilled jobs moved to foreign countries that provide abundant, cheaper workers. Recent growth in the region’s economy has come through diversification into service and other jobs.

While the region’s total employment has increased from 494,000 workers in 1970 to over 763,000 workers in 2000, farm employment fell by one third from 86,000 to 50,000 workers. Manufacturing peaked at 106,000 workers in 1990, falling to about 100,000 in 2000. Service related jobs almost doubled to 181,000 by 2000.

The region transitioned from agriculture in the early 1900s to manufacturing in the 1950s.

**Chart 5 - MS DRA Region Employment**



It has now transitioned to a larger service based economy, signaling a change in the region’s development strategy over the next 30 to 40 years.

The future success of the region will increasingly depend on its human capital and ability to grow and attract higher-end service jobs. Education, workforce skills improvements, and life-long learning will be more important to the economic development of the region.

### EDUCATION

Educational attainment will be very important to the Mississippi DRA Region over the next decades as the region’s economy moves more towards information and knowledge businesses and away from agriculture and industrial manufacturing.

**Chart 6 - Educational Attainment for Population 25 years and Older**  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

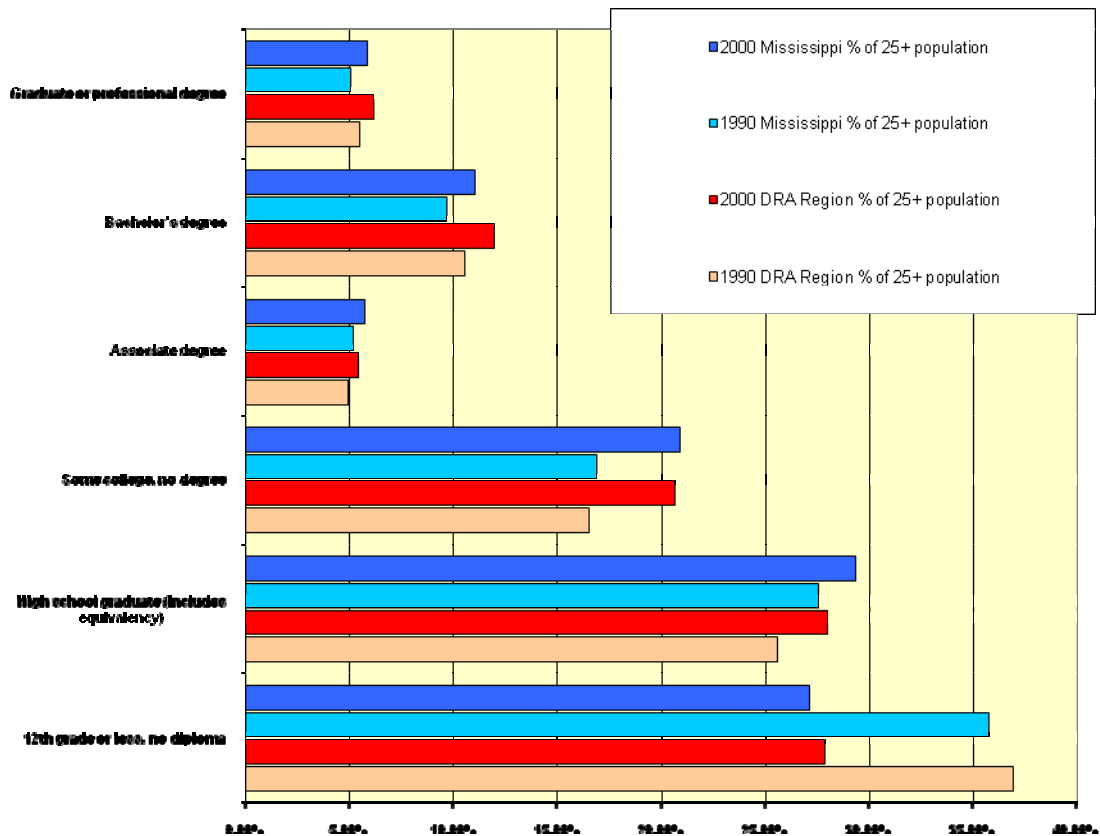


Chart 6 compares the region's educational attainment achievements to the state's over the last decade.

The region has made some progress over the last decade in improving the educational levels of the population. From 1990 to 2000, the number of citizens that have less than a high school degree fell to 252,000 or 27.9 % of those 25 years and older. This compares to the state's population with less than a high school degree in 2000 of 27.2%.

People with educational attainment less than a high school degree will be unable to earn a wage that provides for a decent standard of living in the economy of the future. Mississippi and its DRA region have too many citizens with less than a high school degree.

Also, in 2000, 23.53 % of the Mississippi DRA Region's population had an AA degree or higher compared to the state's 22.63%. It has made progress in improving the percentage of the population with educational attainment higher than a high school degree, but has far to go. The region has also made progress in the percentage of adults with a B.S. or professional degree, but needs more citizens with higher levels of post-secondary education.

## **ANNUAL STRATEGY STATEMENT**

The Mississippi Delta Region's Annual Strategy Statement for Fiscal Year 2010 lies within the scope of the authorizing statute for the Delta Regional Authority. The statute provides that federal funds used for economic and community development "shall be focused on the activities in the following order or priority:

1. Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.
2. Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region.
3. Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship.
4. Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public educational institutions located in the region."

For FY 2010, the Mississippi Delta Region's Strategy Statement mirrors exactly the strategy statements set forth in the 2009-2012 State of Mississippi Delta Region Development Plan (see Page 7).

### **DISTRESSED COUNTIES**

For FY 2009, 41 of the Mississippi Delta Region's 47 counties are classified as distressed. The strategies set forth in this annual plan as well as the four-year plan apply in particular to the Mississippi Delta Region's distressed counties. Additionally, Mississippi's plan in FY 2010 for distressed Delta Region Counties is to continue to help citizens and officials develop self-sufficiency and sustainable economic development plans. Projects that facilitate the process of building local capacity, that result from a collaborative process, or that promote regional alliances are especially encouraged.

The strategies set forth in the four-year development plan and incorporated into this annual strategy statement align with the economic and community development strategies of the State of Mississippi. In that regard, the State through its Mississippi Development Authority

shall pursue these strategies for the benefit of the DRA Region Counties regardless of the availability of DRA funds.

PDDs are encouraged to work with communities to assure that DRA-funded activities in distressed counties are consistent with local community economic strategic plans, and should provide documentation of such work. The local plans, as reflected in the project applications, should identify community needs, actions for improvement, and capacity to sustain activities in the long term, and should include measurable outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

In accordance with the State of Mississippi Four-Year Development Plan and the 2010 Strategy Statement included herein, MDA will focus on projects that increase private sector and high wage jobs, and develop sustainable communities with high quality of life. This will be particularly true for the distressed counties and isolation regions of the Mississippi Delta Region.