



**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2022 - 2026**

**SOUTH DELTA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC.**

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# INTRODUCTION

The South Delta Planning and Development District, Inc. was incorporated under State Law as a non-profit corporation on September 8, 1967. In January 1976, the Charter was changed and the organization is currently a non-profit, non-taxable corporation as designated by The Internal Revenue Code 501 (C) (3). In 1971, the Governor of the State of Mississippi changed the name from Economic Development District, to Planning and Development District, and delineated its boundaries.

The South Delta Planning and Development District, Inc. serves Bolivar, Sunflower, Washington, Humphreys, Sharkey and Issaquena counties as well as the 35 municipalities within these six counties. The region served has a land area of 3,602 square miles and a population (2020 Census) of 114,801.

South Delta assists local governments with economic development efforts, workforce, housing, community development, childcare and programs for the elderly. The district serves as the Regional Clearinghouse Coordinator, the Delta Workforce Investment Opportunity Area administrator, the Area Agency on Aging and the U. S. Census Data Affiliate.

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been developed through a cooperative effort between citizens, local elected officials, CEDS Committee members and District personnel. Through surveys, meetings, research and observations this document provides an overview of the region as a whole and the individual factors involved in development of the area. The CEDS is to be the basis for district-wide planning and implementation activities for the next five years. However, this document, the analysis and the ideas within are not static. This plan will be revisited numerous times over the next five years and, with the assistance of each local government and the CEDS committee, the plans, goals and objectives will be amended as necessary to reflect changes in the area.

This document includes broad goals and objectives of the region along with some of the readily identifiable needs of the area and potential actions to address these needs. It also includes an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the region. Apparent in recent years is the need for useable regional planning documents to include information related to the resilience of the area with regard to natural disasters and a method of evaluating successes and failures. This document includes both.

*This document, the analysis and the ideas within are not static.*

The completed CEDS will be made available to the public for review and comment. The CEDS will be available at the offices of South Delta Planning and Development as well as on the South Delta website. The document will be provided to State and Federal agencies for integration into state and regional economic development efforts.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

South Delta Planning and Development District includes 41 units of local government. Six counties and thirty-five municipalities make up that number. The counties served by the Planning and Development District are Bolivar, Humphreys, Issaquena, Sharkey, Sunflower and Washington. The regional analysis section of this document serves to give insight into the traits and characteristics that make up the area known as South Delta. Population and demographics, clusters, infrastructure, financial resources and external forces will be looked at from a regional standpoint as well as on a county-by-county basis.

## Population and Demographics

### Population

South Delta is comprised of 3,602 square miles of land area. That equates to approximately 8% of Mississippi's land area. Based on U. S. Census Bureau 2020 Population figures, there are 118,263 people living in the South Delta region. This is only 3.8% of the 2020 Mississippi population. The population of the District and the State of Mississippi, between 2010 and 2020, decreased by 11.98% and .20% respectively. Until 2020 the State had consistently shown an increase in population. The district, however, has had an average decrease in population of 9.58% at every Census since 1960. The 2010 Census showed a District population decrease of 17.5%, the largest decline since the 1960 Census.

South Delta Planning and Development District experienced a total population decline of 44.75% from 1960 to 2020. The majority of the district's population resides in three of the six counties. These three counties - Bolivar, Sunflower and Washington - have over 88.74% of the population. Going hand in hand with this is the fact that the majority of the civilian labor force resides in and is employed in these three counties. Residents of the three smaller counties, the three southern counties of the district, must obtain employment from the limited opportunities in each county. Those unable to find employment within their own county must commute to the surrounding areas.

POPULATION TRENDS PERCENT CHANGE, 1960 - 2020							
	1960	% CHANGE	1970	% CHANGE	1980	% CHANGE	1990
South Delta PDD	212,259	-13.6	183,312	-3.1	177,561	-7.8	163,786
Mississippi (000)	2,178	1.8	2,217	1.8	2,520	2.1	2,573
<b>Counties</b>							
Bolivar	54,464	-9.3	49,409	-7	45,965	-8.9	41,875
Humphreys	19,093	-23.5	14,601	-4.6	13,931	-12.9	12,134
Issaquena	3,576	-23.5	2,737	-8.2	2,513	-24	1,909
Sharkey	10,738	-16.8	8,937	-10.9	7,964	-11.3	7,066
Sunflower	45,750	-19	37,047	-5.9	34,844	-5.6	32,867
Washington	78,638	-10.2	70,581	2.5	72,344	-6.1	67,935
	% CHANGE	2000	% CHANGE	2010	% CHANGE	2020	
South Delta PDD	-3.5	158,039	-17.5	130,429	-11.98	114,801	
Mississippi (000)	10.5	2,844	4.3	2,967	-0.2	2,961	
<b>Counties</b>							
Bolivar	-3	40,633	-15.9	34,145	-9.25	30,985	
Humphreys	-7.6	11,206	-16.3	9,375	-16.9	7,785	
Issaquena	19.1	2,274	-38.2	1,406	-4.84	1,338	
Sharkey	-6.9	6,580	-25.3	4,916	-22.7	3,800	
Sunflower	-4.6	34,369	-14.3	29,450	-11.81	25,971	
Washington	-7.3	62,977	-18.8	51,137	-12.15	44,922	

## SOURCE:

U. S. Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Mississippi 1960-2000.

U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.

U. S. Census Bureau, 2020.

Generally, it can be stated that there are certain prevalent population, labor force, income and educational trends in the South Delta District that have existed throughout the last 60 years and are still present in varying and/or worsening degrees today. In the past, the district's economy was based almost solely on agriculture. With the advent of mechanized farming, the need for laborers who possessed very little education and few job skills diminished drastically. Laborers were forced to seek employment elsewhere, usually in the industrialized cities of the North. In 2022, just as in 2012 and 2017, the district can be described as a persistently distressed area experiencing a continuing decline in population due to out-migration and death; unemployment rates that are high; median family incomes that are extremely low; numbers of persons living below the poverty level are high and educational levels that are below standard.

The population of the district has declined by approximately 97,458 persons between 1960 and 2020. While all counties in the district have experienced significant population losses during the past several decades, Sharkey County has experienced the greatest loss in percentage of population. Sharkey County lost 64.61% of its population during the period 1960-2020, while Issaquena County followed closely with a population loss of 62.58%. In terms of absolute numbers, Washington County lost the greatest amount of population during the same period amounting to over 33,000 persons.

A decreasing population is currently the most concerning threat to the South Delta area. The decline in population was previously considered to be mostly a product of outmigration, "brain drain". Now the long-term impacts of "brain drain/outmigration" are truly becoming apparent. During the period from 1990-99 there were 26,767 births in the district. Between 2010 and 2017 the number of births in the district had decreased by 51.5% to 12,981. In the period of 2017 through 2021 births had dropped to 7,332. The number of deaths in the district, 10,557, during the same period, 2010 - 2017, resulted in a natural increase of 2,424. Despite the fact that births in the district outnumbered deaths, overall population continued to decline. Now during the period of 2017 through 2021 deaths, 8,437, outpaced births accelerating the rate of population decline. Out migration/brain drain, although no longer the major contributing factor of population decline, remains a concern for the region.

Based on the 2016 U. S. Census American Community Survey Data, the District's median age was 36 years while Mississippi's was 36.7 and the United States' 37.7. According to the 2020 U. S. Census American Community Survey, the District's median age increased to 38.7 years while Mississippi's increased to 37.7 and the United States to 38.2. The district's median age in 1960 was 19.9 years indicating the district's population is continuing to age. Of the district's population in 2016, 35.8% were 0-24 years old while 13.4% were 65 years of age or older. This left 50.8% of the district's population in the productive working age group of 25-64. As the overall population of the region has declined these numbers have shifted slightly. In 2020 34.26% of the population was in the age range of 0-24 and 15.86% were over the age of 65. This has left 49.88% of the population in the productive working age range.

The fact that there is no major shift in any one of these segments of the population gives the impression that outmigration/brain drain is still the major contributing factor to the overall population decline. There will be no drastic upward changes in population unless there are significant changes in economic conditions and the perception of these conditions.

Until opportunities and quality of place improve, the steady out-migration of population will continue. Therefore, efforts must be placed on retaining and attracting population to the area. The “brain drain” must be addressed. Arresting the “brain drain” and drawing younger, educated individuals either back to the area or to it for the first time always brings about the age old “chicken and egg” conundrum. Which comes first? Do you focus on recruiting industry with the idea that younger people will come to the jobs? Do you focus on attracting the younger people in the hopes that industries will choose to locate where the bright, young, well-educated work force is located? Unfortunately, people can’t live on good intentions and growing an area out of nothing. The industry side of this equation should come first but with an initial focus on industry that can utilize a somewhat transient work force until locals are trained and additional population is attracted to the area. The trend of out-migration, especially among the college aged/young adult groups, cannot continue. Everything else that leads to a turnaround in the fortunes and livability of the district depends on having a younger, educated and energetic population in the area.

## Income and Education

The average 2019 median household income of the district is \$28,826, a \$544 improvement from 2016, while that of the State improved from \$40,528 to \$45,081 and the Nation, according to the 2020 ACS is \$64,994. The district’s average median household income remains significantly lower than the State’s and Nation’s. Based on the 2021 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 15% of the 40 reporting units of local government in the South Delta area had a median household income of less than \$20,000 and 67.5% had a median household income of less than \$30,000. Economically, the District continues to lag, significantly, behind the State and Nation. The percentage of households in Mississippi and the United States with an annual household income of \$10,000 or less is 9.3% and 5.8% respectively; whereas, the percentage in the South Delta region is 18.34.



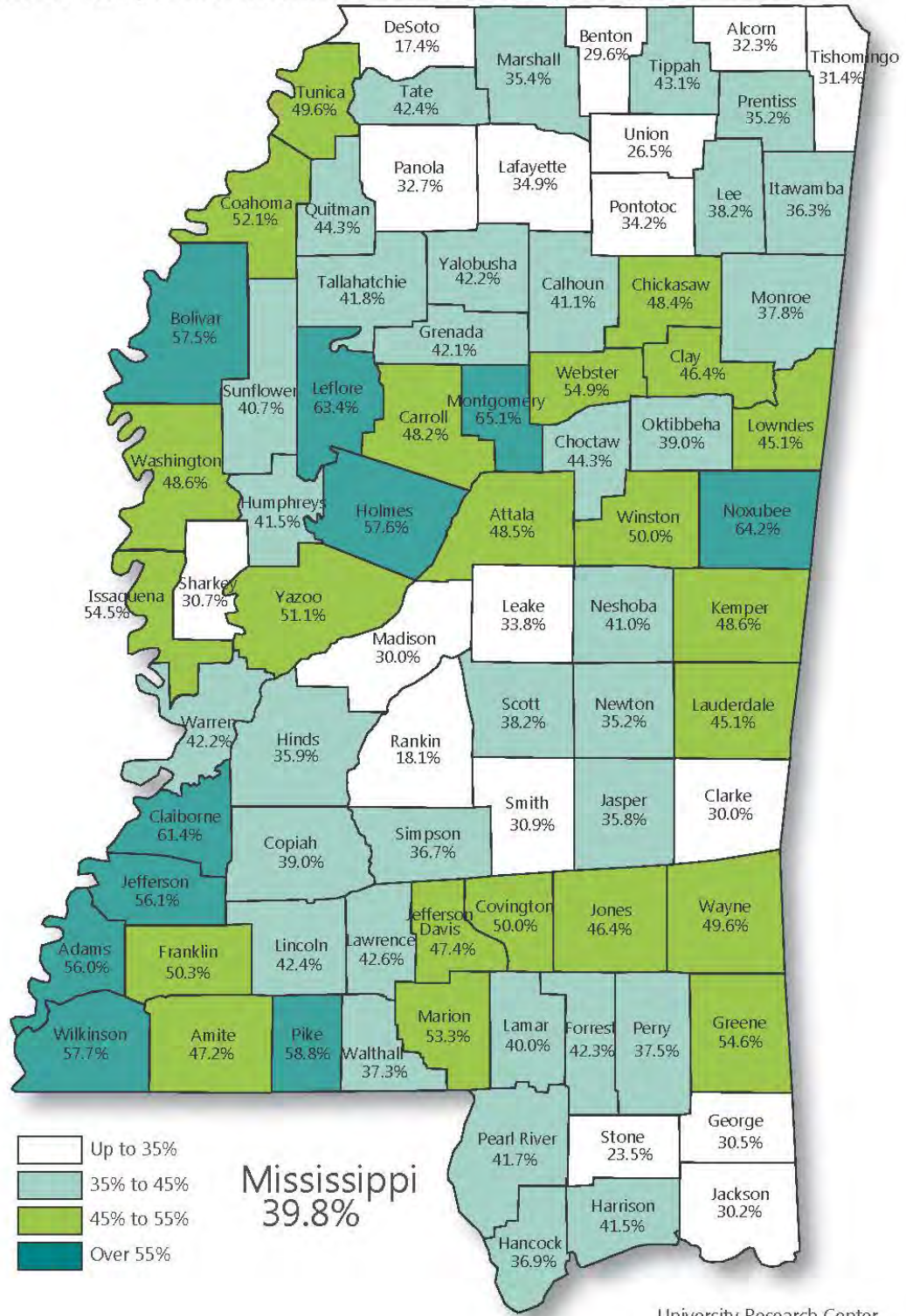








Percentage of families with female householder, no husband present, whose income in the past 12 months is below poverty level, 2013-2017 ACS



The educational attainment level within the district had improved slightly between 2010 and 2016; however, according to the 2015-1019 ACS the average percentage of the district's total population above 25 years of age that had completed high school or above had dipped to 73.23%, compared to 84.5% for the State. These numbers still reflect a considerable improvement in Education levels in the district since 2000, from a 50.7% high school completion percentage to 73.23%. These improvements are encouraging, but there is still much to be done in order for the South Delta region to compete in the State, the Nation, and the World.

With regard to income and education, these two factors must be one of the major focal points for improvement of the region. All other man-based factors are dependent on these things for improvement. The improved focus on workforce training and vocational education rather than the concept of the only way to a good job is through a college degree will continue to help make the region more competitive in attracting skilled employment opportunities.

## Employment and Labor Force

The district's labor force steadily declined from 66,811 in 1960 to 57,565 in 1970, rebounded in 1980 to 60,865 continued upward in 1990 to 64,030 and has fallen drastically to 55,624 in 2010 and even farther to 35,910 in January, 2023, according to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The 2017 district labor force was 42,720 of which 39,548 were employed. The June 2018 District labor force, according to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, was 43,000 of which 39,460 were employed. The January, 2023 labor force number was 35,910 of which 34,060 were employed. The unemployment rate for the period was 5.2%. The January, 2023 unemployment rate gives the appearance that things are improving by showing that there is a larger percentage of the labor force employed and that the region is not as far behind the state and nation as seen previously. However, that is a higher percentage of a much smaller number of labor force participants.



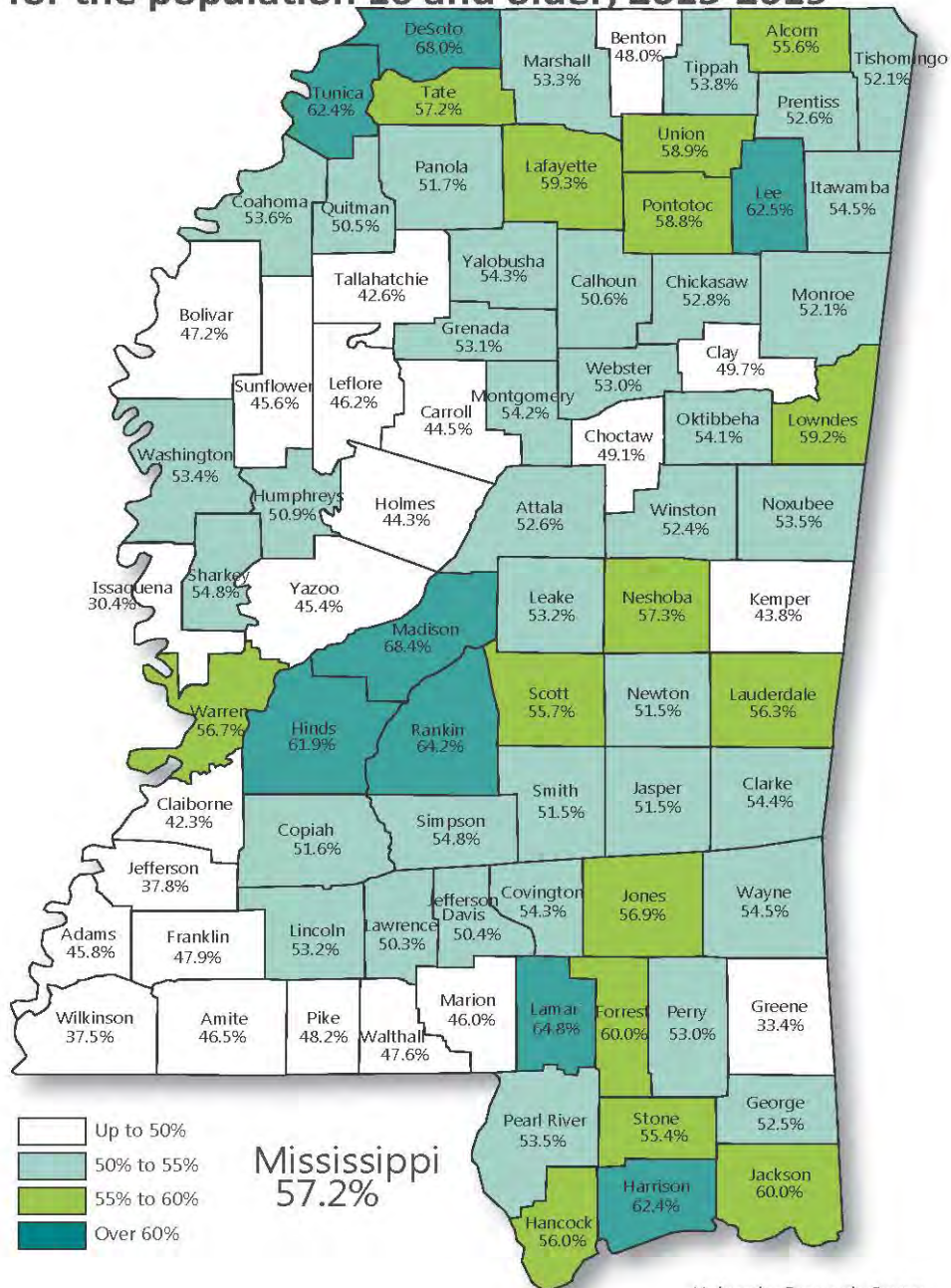






At one time the major draw for companies to come to the Delta was a large labor pool that would work for low wages. That is no longer the case. Out migration and lower labor force participation rates have reflected a change in the attitude of the area’s labor pool. Many of the working age population are no longer willing to remain in situations of underemployment and have chosen to take steps to improve their situation by moving to areas with better opportunities or leaving the labor pool altogether.

### Labor force participation rate for the population 16 and older, 2015-2019





In an effort to bring better, higher paying job opportunities to the area, the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate program was implemented throughout the 6 South Delta counties as well as the surrounding 8 workforce counties. This program put the labor pool on an equal footing with the entire nation. Employers could no longer look to the Mississippi Delta for a plentiful and cheap labor pool. The most recent ACT Certificate numbers are proof that when it comes to a useful, trainable workforce, the region can hold its own.

**South Delta PDD Counties**  
Bolivar, Humphreys, Issaquena, Sharkey, Sunflower and  
Washington

March 13, 2023

**Custom Region**

**ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate [NCRC]**

	Workforce	Total NCRC	Bronze NCRC	Silver NCRC	Gold NCRC	Platinum NCRC	NCRC Plus
Emerging	High School	1831	810	809	184	28	0
	College	865	235	415	147	68	0
Current	Private	1263	408	635	175	45	0
	Public	1663	617	896	135	15	0
Transitioning	Adult Education	253	149	84	19	1	0
	Unemployed	4888	2212	2212	383	81	1
	Recent Veteran	8	3	3	2	0	0
	Workforce category not identified	39	27	7	3	2	0
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>10810</b>	<b>4461</b>	<b>5061</b>	<b>1048</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1</b>

The table above is a detailed breakdown of the same ACT WorkKeys NCRC data presented in the upper right box on this page and represents ACT WorkKeys NCRCs earned or improved throughout the community. All ACT WorkKeys NCRC data is updated monthly.

## Delta Workforce Development Area Counties

Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena,  
Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica  
and Washington





March 13, 2023

## Custom Region

### ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate [NCRC]

	Workforce	Total NCRC	Bronze NCRC	Silver NCRC	Gold NCRC	Platinum NCRC	NCRC Plus
Emerging	High School	3696	1503	1590	466	137	0
	College	1419	381	697	245	96	0
Current	Private	2585	873	1299	326	87	0
	Public	2829	1074	1462	253	40	0
Transitioning	Adult Education	419	251	135	29	4	0
	Unemployed	8704	3980	3931	651	142	1
	Recent Veteran	21	8	7	6	0	0
	Workforce category not identified	43	27	9	4	3	0
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>19716</b>	<b>8097</b>	<b>9130</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>1</b>

The table above is a detailed breakdown of the same ACT WorkKeys NCRC data presented in the upper right box on this page and represents ACT WorkKeys NCRCs earned or improved throughout the community. All ACT WorkKeys NCRC data is updated monthly.

	 <b>BRONZE</b>	 <b>SILVER</b>	 <b>GOLD</b>	 <b>PLATINUM</b>
<b>Certificates are awarded by achieving a minimum</b>	<b>Level 3</b> score on all assessments.	<b>Level 4</b> score on all assessments	<b>Level 5</b> score on all assessments	<b>Level 6</b> score on all assessments
<b>Skill levels demonstrate ability for</b>	<b>16%</b> of jobs*	<b>67%</b> of jobs*	<b>93%</b> of jobs*	<b>99%</b> of jobs*
<b>Sample Occupation Correlation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auto Body Repair Technician</li> <li>• Veterinary Assistant</li> <li>• Janitorial Supervisor</li> <li>• Drywall Installer</li> <li>• Pharmacy Aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Manager</li> <li>• Head Cook</li> <li>• Medical Assistant</li> <li>• Engineering Technician</li> <li>• Machinist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Counselor</li> <li>• Pharmacy Technician</li> <li>• Semi-Conductor Processor</li> <li>• Business Executive</li> <li>• Electrician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountant</li> <li>• Technical Writer</li> <li>• Sales Manager</li> <li>• Registered Nurse Manager</li> <li>• Elevator Installer and Repairer</li> </ul>

\*Approximate percentage based on jobs in the WorkKeys® occupational profile database.

ACT NCRC features four certificate levels

As noted in the previous tables indicating the number of people in the region with ACT NCRC certificates, the single highest category in each table is the Silver Certificate. This means that the majority of the Delta workforce can perform at a skill level equal to a silver certificate holder any where else in the country. The region no longer has to rely on the industries that need high volume, low income/low brainpower to bring employment to the area. Industrial recruitment can now focus on companies that need more skill and trainability. Recruitment of these types of industries can be a huge help in arresting and reversing the outmigration trend.

One component of this is a workforce that improves and advances with time and technology. To this end the district is the fiscal agent for the Delta Workforce Development Board (DWDB). It provides the administrative functions associated with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Six South Delta staff members currently provide support to the Board and coordinate workforce programs and activities in the 14-county workforce area.

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, it is the purpose of the Delta Workforce Development Board to provide workforce activities in the local area that

will increase the employment, retention and earnings of participants and increase occupational skills attainment by participants, and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the fourteen counties which constitute the Delta Workforce Development Area (DWDA).

In FY'07, the DWDA was awarded \$10 million to serve DWDA eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth, since then the awards have steadily decreased, yet the need continues to increase as the Region, State and Nation fall farther behind the rest of the world in the ultra-competitive global market. Seven WIN Job Centers (one-stop operators) in the 14 counties provide adult and dislocated worker services. The DWDA focuses a lot of activity on economic development to recruit new businesses and retain existing businesses through On-the-Job Training and Customized Training. DWDA eligible participants are provided services through Individual Training Accounts to help them get a first job or a better job.

New efforts are underway in the DWDA to focus on sector training initiatives to address local needs. The DWDA will be exploring specific job sectors and will allocate a certain amount of funds to that specific sector. Some areas to be considered include electrical linemen, A & P (aircraft maintenance), health care, hospitality and advanced manufacturing.

These sector initiatives will focus on key industries, promote education and training, provide opportunities for career advancement and create new jobs while building the area's skilled workforce. These efforts will also help create shared objectives and priorities between public and private partners to leverage new and existing resources.











## Housing

Housing characteristics in the South Delta region are directly related to the environment of the population. One of the negative housing characteristics in the area, as well as in the State, is the age of housing. Of the 52,162 housing units in the six-county area 11.71% were constructed prior to 1949 and only .63% were constructed between 2014 and 2018. The majority of the housing stock in the region was constructed between 1950 and 1999. The very small percentage of new construction indicates that the current housing stock



will age and deteriorate. Substandard housing units will become a bigger issue as the majority of the existing housing stock reaches the upper limits of usefulness. The percentage of housing units in the region lacking complete plumbing and/or kitchen facilities is slightly less than that of the state, .78% and 1.1% respectively. This is an indicator that some efforts are being made to improve the existing housing stock. The fact remains that these aging housing units will become more difficult to address as the numbers increase. It is also an unfortunate by-product of population loss, as well as, the regional and national economy that there is very little housing construction taking place.

According to the 2014 - 2018 American Community Survey conducted by the U. S. Census Bureau there are 19,872 renters in the South Delta area. This reflects a slight increase in renters from the 2012 - 2016 American Community Survey. Some studies have shown a need and desire among renters to become homeowners; however, financing for low- and moderate-income families is often difficult or even impossible to obtain. Experience has shown that not everyone with a desire to own a home is capable of doing so. South Delta has, when programs were available, attempted to address this need through some innovative financing and down payment assistance. These programs, that were available to specific units of government, have virtually disappeared. The programs that are now available are on an individual basis and no longer involve local governmental units.

A number of the 24,385 owner-occupied units in the area are in need of minor to major repairs. The district from 2005 to 2015 assisted local units of government with reconstruction/rehabilitation projects that addressed 137 sub-standard, dilapidated housing units. This program was extremely helpful to many low and very low-income homeowners. Unfortunately, since 2015 the program has changed administrative agencies and shifted priorities. These factors along with very limited funding for HOME (Home Investment Partnership Program) have made it nearly impossible to help those homeowners that are truly in need.



With the realization that it is very much a component of economic development, housing has become an issue in the area. Housing stock deficiencies, especially houses affordable to middle income families are a serious deterrent to industries that may desire to locate here. Houses are not being built in the district. According to some urban and regional planners, “if you aren’t building, you are dying”.

## Clusters/Sectors

According to the Sector Strategy Plan developed by the Delta Workforce Development Area, the South Delta region has grown from three significant clusters/sectors to five, manufacturing, health care, aviation, information technology, and agribusiness. At the writing of the previous CEDS, there were a few other industry categories that, although not included in the Sector Strategy, were relevant enough to remain a focus of industry/job recruitment efforts. (aerospace, metalworking, automotive, distribution, and plastics) Since that time, aerospace/aviation and information technology have become worthy of significant focus. Based on information obtained from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, retail/wholesale has the highest number of employed persons in the 14-county Delta Workforce Area. Away from the more urban settings of the far north delta, retail is not necessarily sustainable as a growing sector for employment. The five significant sectors were established based on job growth projections, sustainability and Delta Strong. Agriculture, although no longer the basis for all of the economy of the region, is still a major

component. In 2006 the largest cluster in the area appeared to be Agribusiness, Food Products and Services. Since then, agribusiness has slipped behind health care and social assistance. Processed food production is still a part of the manufacturing-based sector; therefore, it brings together the sectors of manufacturing and agribusiness.

The district has the largest medical facility within a 120-mile radius. Four of the six counties in the region have hospitals located within their boundaries. Delta Regional Medical Center, located in the City of Greenville, is the largest medical facility in the area. Issaquena County and Humphreys County do not have medical facilities of their own. Humphreys County participated in a pilot project with the University of Mississippi Medical Center to establish a critical care clinic; however, the project was not sustainable as a critical care facility due to a lack of qualified staff willing to work within the design of the program. The facility has since been turned over to a more family oriented medical practice.

The health care and social assistance sector has begun to outpace agribusiness as a source of employment in the region. The manufacturing sector, in the current climate, is where the majority of job creation/improvement strides have been made in the Workforce counties surrounding the South Delta district.

The Delta Strong initiative started to bring about improvement and growth in the manufacturing sector/cluster. Delta Strong is a new regional branding, marketing, and business attraction program aimed exclusively toward attracting new manufacturing opportunities to the Mississippi Delta. The initiative is supported by private sector financial institutions, planning and development districts, port terminals on the Mississippi River, local economic development foundations, and utility/infrastructure partners. This strategy, led by the Delta Council Development Department, is a multi-year plan which includes outcome measurements and transparency that positions the Mississippi Delta region as a major player in the attraction of manufacturing, distribution, and warehousing operations.

Although tourism is not considered a significant sector/cluster it is an up-and-coming component of the local economy and employment. The region is steadily taking hold of the tourism opportunities that are related to the region. Music and museums are now a force in the local economy and driving hospitality industry entrepreneurship. The construction of the B. B. King Museum, the Grammy Museum Mississippi and the Delta Music Institute has been the catalyst for new restaurants, hotels and shops that are springing up in the



area. In addition to music, outdoor sporting activities such as hunting and fishing are helping to bring about outfitter and guide businesses as well as sporting goods retailers.

The aviation/aerospace sector is expected to be the next “big thing” within the area. It appears that the region was unknowingly sitting on a very large collection of airplane hangar space, apron space, runways long enough to land almost any aircraft and very empty airspace. With this revelation, job creation opportunities and workforce training opportunities have come to the forefront. The training and employment program will be working in partnership to make sure the training is sector driven.

The information garnered from the sector/cluster analysis is an indicator of “the way things have been” in the South Delta area but, it is also an indicator of the opportunities that can be taken advantage of moving forward. The low levels of training and educational attainment have left the majority of the labor force qualified for and working at the lowest paying jobs. This is where the Workforce Development Area steps in and provides the training necessary for these workers to fill the gap of the middle-skill worker shortage. These sectors/clusters must be nurtured in order to provide more opportunities for employment and economic growth.



Fuselage Repair Training Aircraft

# Infrastructure

## Water

The principal difference between the infrastructure of urban and rural areas is in the capacity of the water and sewer systems. Urban networks generally have a superior capacity per person in both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Water supplies in the urban area are more reliable and have better treatment facilities. A greater amount is available on a per capita basis for domestic purposes and also for fire flows in emergency situations.

In addition to municipal water and sewer systems, there are water associations operating within the district to provide domestic water supplies to rural areas. Most of these were organized through the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development and were designed to furnish domestic needs only. In most instances, industrial uses of fire flow demands would be beyond the design capacity of such systems.

In accordance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996, the State of Mississippi has implemented a Capacity Development Program to improve the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of the state's public water systems and to prevent the creation of new systems that do not have the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to comply with current and future provisions of the Act. Included in the requirements of the Act is the development of an annual report on all of the public water systems in the State of Mississippi. This report provides much needed information in the development of projects throughout the district. It not only indicates water production capacity but provides ratings to discern the capability of the system on the issues of technology, management and finances. These factors must be considered for projects to improve these water systems as well as for projects that rely on access to water. In addition to the changes in that are now required through Mississippi's Capacity Development Program, funding agencies have also taken steps to become better stewards of taxpayer funds by requiring water system viability prior to awarding funding.

Although the populated areas of the region are generally served by public water systems, these systems are aging and deteriorating to some degree. There may also, be some pockets of population that are too remote to be included in an organized water system and must rely on private wells for access to water. Many of the unserved areas surrounding municipalities or organized communities have been recently connected to existing systems. Those remaining will be connected as funding becomes available. One of the major concerns of the area is not access to water but, access to water systems that are technologically

sound, well managed and financially capable of remaining viable. The second, equally major concern is the aging components of the municipal water systems in the region. Many of these systems are beginning to experience catastrophic failures and have required major system improvements. These issues will continue to be at the forefront of infrastructure improvement planning for many years to come.

## Sewer

Urban sanitary wastewater facilities have generally been characterized by more sophisticated treatment methods and consequently higher quality treated effluent. Most of the small towns in the district utilize lagoon treatment while the largest city uses a mechanical treatment plant. Several of the communities that were utilizing mechanical plants then changed to lagoon type treatment for cost savings are being forced to make plans to return to the mechanical systems. Constant changes in the permitted limits have caused this epidemic of back and forth on the issue of wastewater treatment. The wastewater systems within the area utilize mechanical treatment plants, lagoons, and overland flow systems. Many of the small communities in the region cannot meet the limits because of location and environment. The outward flow of treated wastewater has to be released into under very strict guidelines to limit potential pollution. This includes outflow to streams that have a consistent flow of water. These streams can be miles from existing treatment facilities. This is an example of one regulatory hardship faced by small communities and utility districts. Many communities had discovered that the operation and management costs related to mechanical treatment was too high for their financial capacity thus turning them back toward a lagoon system only to find out that lagoon systems come with another set of financial hardships. Unfortunately, the choices for wastewater treatment are becoming very limited.

In the last decade, a number of the unincorporated communities in the district have formed utility districts, which allowed them to provide sewer service to area residents. These systems are going to face the same uncertain future as the municipal systems and may have to return to a form of septic system for their wastewater service needs.

More and more information on the health hazards of poor wastewater handling is being disseminated to the public. As this happens more communities are seeking ways to improve their quality of place and the human condition of their area. Additionally, the changes to discharge requirements implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency will bring about the need to revisit wastewater systems that have recently been addressed. Efforts to



assist both units of local government and unincorporated communities in identifying funding for addressing these issues must continue. These efforts are not only vital to maintaining a healthy populace but also in attracting people and business opportunities to the region.

## Transportation

The South Delta area has a multi-modal transportation network capable of handling almost any type of cargo. Proximity to the Mississippi River makes water transportation of bulk materials possible. The public ports at Greenville and Rosedale offer shippers the opportunity to import or export large volumes of goods to regional, national or international markets. Numerous industrial port facilities also line the harbor front. Unfortunately, both of these port facilities are full and no longer have useable land available to offer industries wishing to locate at the ports.

The remainder of the transportation system in the district is characteristic of the State as a whole. The principal north-south and east-west thoroughfares are U. S. Highways 61 and 82. Greenville, the largest city in the district, is the site of the relatively new Highway 82 Bridge and the recently funded by-pass that will skirt the south end of the City of Greenville and rejoin Highway 82 at Leland. Greenville has one of the four bridges in the state that crosses the Mississippi River. The crossing currently gives Greenville a locational advantage because of its exposure to larger volumes of traffic and its access to a greater regional trade area. Highway 61 passes through Leland, which is eight miles to the east of Greenville. A secondary roadway network that serves even the smaller communities with paved access roads complements the primary thoroughfares. The counties build and maintain a network of farm-to-market roads that are either paved or gravel surfaced. This operation is assisted by both State and Federal funds, but the county provides the manpower and management.

The South Delta Region, just like the remainder of the state, is experiencing a critical situation on the farm-to-market roads serving the area. Based on the current criteria and inspections conducted by the Federal Highway Administration, there has been a major focus on rehabilitating or reconstructing timber bridges located within the six-county south delta footprint as quickly as possible. The number of bridges to be addressed will likely rise as rounds of inspections are completed. The long-range plan is to rehabilitate or reconstruct these timber bridges with concrete pilings or concrete box culverts as each bridge situation dictates. The current timber bridges, although some are 60 or 70 years old, outlived their

design life at around 30 or 40 years. Concrete components, with care and maintenance, could possibly double the design life of these bridges.

A proposal for another bridge over the Mississippi River has been approved as part of the construction of Interstate 69 (I-69) an intercontinental highway linking Canada, the United States and Mexico. It appears that the most likely route for I-69 will be through southern Bolivar County and to the north of the City of Greenville. Greenville has been identified as a location requiring further study for access and connectivity. The location of I-69 and any connector routes through the South Delta Planning and Development District would have a major economic impact on the region.

The only commercial airport in the district is located in Greenville, which is within 75 miles of any point in the district. The regularly scheduled commercial flights are regionally oriented, providing a commuter style connection to both Nashville, TN and Dallas, TX. The service provided by the latest flight partner of the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport has been such a vast improvement that the airport has passed year one of two of over 10,000 enplanements. Reaching the two-year goal would reinstate funding from the FAA to the airport. Additionally, the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport, a former Air Force training facility, with over 300,000 sq. ft. of empty hangar space is the target of a number of improvement projects in order to take advantage of the available hangar space for economic development purposes.

The other airport of significance in the region is located at the City of Cleveland and serves both the City and Delta State University's Commercial Aviation degree program. The Cleveland Airport is expanding and building new hangar space to accommodate a new agricultural pilot training program. The Greenville Airport and the Cleveland Airport will be partnering on some activities related to the agricultural pilot training programs.

The Genesee and Wyoming Railway, formerly known as the Columbus and Greenville, provides the South Delta District with rail-freight service. The Genesee and Wyoming is an east-west railway that once crossed the entire state. Now the railway only provides service from Greenville to Greenwood. This service is marginal at best considering the current track conditions. The Great River Railroad, although still in existence, is no longer in operation. Rail access to industrial sites is currently very limited. The Great River Railroad has been the focus of an effort to find funding for revitalization of the north south connector that would serve the growing Port of Rosedale and connect to the east west rail access at Greenville.

Transportation facilities in the South Delta region must continue to be improved upon in order for the area to be competitive with the state, the nation and the world. Every component of the transportation system within the district needs improvement. Some, like the



Port of Greenville and the Rosedale-Bolivar County Port, have taken steps to improve their facilities and the services offered. However, both of these port facilities have many more improvements that could be made, not the least of which is taking the steps necessary to open more land for development.

Air transportation and airport facilities, should continue to be at the forefront of improvement considerations. An area that does not have access to a functioning commercial airport will not be considered for business location over an area that does. Therefore, it is imperative that the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport be maintained at its current level of service and improved with every opportunity. These improvements should include complete renovation of the existing hangars, construction of new hangars and construction of a new Fixed Base Operator (FBO) facility.

Rail service in the district is not even remotely close to the level necessary to make this area a viable option for business location or in support of business that has located elsewhere in the state. The Great River Railroad, that provided service from the Port of Rosedale to a junction with the Genesee and Wyoming in Leland, is currently not in operation due to age and deterioration of the equipment and rails. The Great River Railroad is actively seeking opportunities to rehabilitate the line. The Genesee and Wyoming has shut down service beyond Greenwood. With the location of the Toyota plant at Tupelo, the aluminum plant in Columbus and the steel mill in Columbus, it is critical that the South Delta region have rail access to the eastern side of the state. Plans must be made for the future to keep access to rail service in South Delta area. Even though rail traffic has been very light in recent years, the total loss of rail service would be highly detrimental to economic development in the area.

## **Industrial Parks and Sites**

Nine local governments in the district - Greenville, Cleveland, Indianola, Shelby, Rosedale, Belzoni/Humphreys County, Rolling Fork, Issaquena County and Hollandale - have organized industrial parks. Several smaller communities have industrial sites reserved and serve those sites with utilities, but they are not of a scale that would classify them as industrial parks.

Light and heavy industries are located throughout the district and their contribution to the economic growth of the district has been considerable. The total land area presently occupied by industrial users is very small with the greatest concentration being in Greenville, Cleveland and Indianola. The larger communities are better able to support the needs of

most manufacturers. Consequently, it can be anticipated that their dominance of attracting new industries in the district will continue.

Currently the only shortage of industrial development space within the district is at the Port of Greenville and the Rosedale-Bolivar County Port. All other industrial parks and sites have land available for development. Most of these sites are served with the necessary infrastructure. However, some of the infrastructure serving these industrial parks is beginning to age considerably and some has been surpassed by the needs of industries currently being served. Future efforts must include upgrading and maintaining existing industrial parks and sites. This is especially true in light of the current Delta Strong efforts to focus on smaller manufacturing recruitment. Beyond this, efforts must focus on the development of larger regional industrial development areas designed for the larger type of industry such as an automotive manufacturing facility. This need not be the first item of business but as I-69 continues toward completion it should be addressed.



Highways 61 and 82 Industrial  
Park, Leland, Mississippi

## Water Resources

One of the primary natural resources of the district is the water supply. In addition to the Mississippi River, which forms the western border of the district, underground aquifers have provided domestic water supplies of very good quality. Lakes and ponds provide numerous opportunities for water-oriented recreation as well as aesthetic enhancement of building sites.

The port terminals at Greenville and Rosedale provide excellent access to water transportation of cargo for the entire district. Passenger access at the City of Greenville waterfront and at Terrene Landing in Bolivar County is bringing about a renewed focus on the Mississippi River's role in tourism. Partnerships with the American Queen and Viking River Cruises are now bringing tourists to the area on a regular basis.

As both the Port of Greenville and the Port of Rosedale have reached capacity in land area available for development, expansion projects are at the forefront of future planning activities for the region. As with all new major construction projects in the South Delta area, will have careful environmental evaluations in order to assess the impact of the projects on their surroundings. In order to assure the continued potential of the district's natural resources for future generations, it is imperative that our present action be consistent with conservation goals for the future. Additionally, future activities of this nature will be planned to minimize negative impacts and maximize resilience. Specifically, related to port expansion areas, lands dedicated to future development at either port will be raised to a level equal to the height of the existing levee to minimize the impact of river flooding.

## External Forces

### Natural

The State of Mississippi, like any other state, is susceptible to a number of natural and man-made hazards. The South Delta region faces the same hazards as the rest of the state and some not associated with the entire state. The region, just like the rest of Mississippi, is threatened annually by devastating tornadoes, drought and severe thunderstorms. Not as frequent, but just as devastating, is the threat of winter storms and hurricanes that approach

the state from an angle leaving the region vulnerable to spin off tornadoes and flooding. The South Delta region, by its very nature, is extremely vulnerable to flooding resulting from storms and prolonged periods of rain. Additionally, the threat always exists for a break in the levee that retains the Mississippi River.

In addition to threats already mentioned, is the region's location along the New Madrid fault. This location expands the list of natural threats to include earthquakes. Though the threat of an earthquake may seem very small it is a very real possibility and like the others must be included in future planning efforts.

## Political

There are several politically based external forces that are at work in the South Delta Planning and Development District. These political forces include Federal and State programs as well as the current administration.

Portions of the District were included in the Mid Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance. This Empowerment Zone designation, a joint program through the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for urban zones and the U. S. Department of Agriculture for rural zones, had a ten-year time frame. Even though the time frame for the Empowerment Zone has expired, the benefits of this designation are still in evidence. The broad and flexible usage of the funds associated with the designation provided an additional resource for financing projects of all types. These projects have included water system improvements, sewer system improvements, port facility additions and drainage improvements just to name a few. All of these projects continue to provide benefit to the citizens of the region long after the expiration of the Empowerment Zone designation.

More recently, seven census tracts within the district were designated for the Opportunity Zone program. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 established Opportunity Zones as a new community development program aimed to encourage long term investments in low-income and rural communities.

Private investors could earn tax relief through investments made in qualified Opportunity Funds. In turn, Qualified Opportunity Funds must be invested in designated Opportunity Zones. Low-income communities, defined as census tracts with a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater and/or family income less than 80 percent of the area's median income, were eligible for consideration as Opportunity Zones. Each state could nominate up to 25 percent of the total number of eligible low-income community census tracts within the state.

The U.S. Department of Treasury approves the nominated census tracts and administers the Opportunity Zone Program. States were required to submit Opportunity Zone applications to the U.S. Department of Treasury no later than March 21, 2018. Mississippi accepted and reviewed applications for tracts to receive consideration. Governor Phil Bryant submitted his nominations to the U.S. Department of Treasury in March, 2018.

## Economic

The previous cluster analysis leads us to a number of conclusions concerning the impact, of the national economy as a whole and private sector actions, on the economy of the South Delta region. One would have the impression that a few of the clusters might be somewhat more immune to the impacts of the ups and downs of the national economy than others. At first glance it would stand to reason that food and health care are items of necessity and as such would not seem to be as easily impacted by swings in the economy. However, as everything, including the identified clusters/sectors, becomes part of the global economy they become much more susceptible to the impacts of inflation, interest rate increases and an over economic downturn. Advances in technology, along with decisions of elected officials, are impacting each of the five identified sectors/clusters on a daily basis.

Multi-million-dollar private sector investment in the State of Mississippi should be a boon to all areas of the State. Additionally, these major investments improve the overall financial status of the State thereby allowing the Legislature the opportunity to increase the funding for programs that help all areas of the State., not just the location of the investment. These benefits may be somewhat indirect but, benefits nonetheless. The location of the automotive industry facilities, along with steel and aluminum facilities should have improved the economy of the South Delta region through investment and job creation focused on bringing ancillary businesses to the region. Unfortunately, regardless of recruitment efforts, these ancillary business locations have not yet come along; therefore, the region has continued to maintain a “go it alone” attitude focusing on growing industry with partners from outside the state rather than within.

## Social

The overall population of the district has continued to decrease putting a very steady pressure on the region to maintain the basic services necessary for the remaining population. Numerous efforts are either underway or on the horizon to try and curb the outmigration of residents as well as attract newcomers. Current residents do not appear to be as focused on the social component of the overall community as much as potential newcomers. Making more of an effort to promote placemaking, improving quality of place and quality of life opportunities is of the utmost importance in bringing newcomers to the area and encouraging them put down roots. Although, not the main focus of current residents, these same place-based activities are more important for residents remaining in the area than many believe. It is crucial for the future economic health of the South Delta region for local governments to focus on supporting the arts, entertainment, and tourism sectors for the future growth and stability of the region.

## Resilience

The general consensus is that regional economic prosperity is tied to an area's ability to prevent, withstand and recover from a major disruption. The Economic Development Administration considers resilience in three ways: a region's ability to recover from a disaster; a region's ability to withstand a disaster, and; a region's ability to avoid/prevent a disaster. To this end, it appears that there are two types of answers: steady-state and responsive. Having two types of answers does not mean that they are exclusive of each other. Both must be incorporated into future plans in order to be somewhat resilient. Because of the ever-increasing potential for natural, economic, and political disasters it is becoming more and more important for economic development to be as disaster resistant as possible. It is also critical to understand that disasters do happen. The key is to minimize the negative impact.

**Responsive:** In the case of a disruption to "normal" South Delta is in the best position to act as the hub of the economic development community's network for coordination, information dissemination, and grant administration. It is imperative in these situations to have prior knowledge of the types of assistance that may become available from agencies such as the Economic Development Administration, the Federal Emergency Management

Agency and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ongoing experience with these agencies makes the district the logical focal point for post-disaster recovery.

**Steady-state:** It is also important to not lose site of the fact that the district can and should be the leader in pre-disaster planning and development guidance. When one thinks of a disaster, it is generally with the idea that it is very sudden. That can certainly be the case. Economic and natural disasters that have occurred in the region, most recently, however, have been rather slow moving. The district in its collaborative efforts with Delta Strong and other economic developers in the area is focusing industry placement away from flood prone areas and focusing, for the most part, on recruitment of industries that are smaller and more numerous. The “don’t put all of your eggs in one basket” style of development. However, due to certain economic development assets available in the area at least one large employer is being pursued along with ancillary businesses. If all of your area employment relies on one industry that falls to some type of disruption, recovery will be much more difficult. In addition to this more proactive approach to development of new business and industry, South Delta is also actively trying to assist existing industry to become more resistant to issues that may arise.



# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats





## Goals and Objectives

In the original study of The Mississippi Delta that formed the basis for the Delta Regional Commission, it was surmised, “A Delta without change is a symbol without meaning”. In order to progress and improve during the 21st Century, a change of direction is needed. This change in direction will be informed by the findings generated and analyzed during the development of this document. Very broad goals for the district have been established over the years. These goals have then been looked at in terms of objectives that when achieved will help in attaining the goals.

These goals, resulting from establishment of needs, pertain to a wide variety of issues in the region. The issues range from the very broad, economic improvement, to the very specific, construction of I-69 and connectors. All of these goals and objectives should work hand in hand to improve the region. The items addressed in this section of the document should be considered the “road map” for South Delta Planning and Development District for the next five years.

**Goal:** Attract new private sector investment to the region while retaining and expanding existing business.

- Focus on and encourage downtown development
- Rehabilitate/reconstruct existing facilities at the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport
- Focus on establishing an airport-based MRO
- Encourage the development of tourism-based business, capitalizing on the cultural history of the area as well as the outdoor recreational opportunities
- Focus on recruitment of smaller 50 - 200 employee industries
- Continue efforts to expand and improve ports along the Mississippi River
- Continue collaboration and support of Delta Strong
- Assist local developers, through Delta Strong, in marketing of industrial parks and sites
- Coordinate financial resources for economic development projects
- Pursue funding for economic development projects
- Continue to develop existing clusters

- Focus efforts on assisting business development related to agribusiness, health care, aviation, information technology, and manufacturing

**Goal:** Develop an ethically sound, well-trained and educated workforce

- Encourage and assist in the development of employment opportunities in the private sector
- Coordinate activities and training needs with the Delta Workforce Investment Area
- Encourage the use of “One Stop” (WIN Job Centers)
- Encourage the development of partnerships between local schools and business leaders to emphasize the importance of education and training
- Continue to provide high quality training through the use of appropriate providers

**Goal:** In order to enhance competitiveness in the realm of economic development, upgrade and maintain basic infrastructure

- Continue efforts to assist in the location of I-69 within the district
- Seek funding for planning requirements and implementation of I-69 connector routes
- Continue to seek funds for the implementation of water, sewer, storm drainage and street improvement projects
- Assist communities in updating needs assessments
- Establish a geographic information system to maintain infrastructure records for member governments
- Encourage establishment of telecommunications/broadband infrastructure

**Goal:** Improve the “quality of place” within the region to enhance competitiveness

- Continue implementation of housing programs designed to improve quality of the housing stock

- Continue implementation of home buyer activities thus establishing pride of ownership as well as increasing tax base
- Seek funds for implementation of recreation projects
- Seek funds for construction of community centers and multi-purpose facilities
- Encourage the implementation of zoning ordinances
- Encourage the development of localized comprehensive plans
- Main Street Program participation should be encouraged
- Focus on maintaining and expanding health care facilities

## Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities

The following pages of this document provide a, in no way exhaustive, list of potential projects. These projects are based on the overall goals and objectives set forth on previous pages. The list includes very specific projects of a regional nature as well as rather broad projects based on the desires of individual communities. Some of the activities listed are in the beginning stages of implementation while others are still in the very early planning and development stage. Regardless of their status or range of benefit, all of these projects are important in one way or another to the South Delta Planning and Development District and its citizens.

Funding for these projects could come from a number of sources. Federal, state and local funds could be used for the implementation of these projects. Private sector funding may also be necessary for the larger projects. Federal sources could include but, are not limited to, Delta Regional Authority, Economic Development Administration, USDA Rural Development, HUD, Federal Highway Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. State funds may come from the Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, MS Department of Health, MS Department of Environmental Quality and the MS Department of Transportation.

	<u>Strategic Project, Program or Activity</u>	<u>Responsible Partners</u>	<u>Potential Funding</u>	<u>Job Creation Estimate</u>
<b>Regional</b>				
Vital	Design of I-69 Connectors	Bolivar County Washington Co.	Federal State Local	100+
Vital	Rebuild Railroad connecting Bolivar Co. to Washington Co.	Bolivar County Washington Co.	Federal State	50+
Vital	Reopen rail service to the east side of the State		Federal State Private	
Vital	Rehabilitation of hangars at the Greenville Mid-Delta Airport to Department of Defense standard - Reconstruct FBO	Greenville Washington Co.	Federal State Local Private	200 - 600
	Establishment of Revolving Loan Fund for Brownfield Properties	SDPDD Area	Federal State Local	
	Construction of I-69 Corridor	Federal Highway	Federal	100-500
Ongoing	Construction of Highway 82 By-Pass	MDOT	State	
	Open development ready land at the Port of Greenville	Greenville Washington Co. Port Commission	State Federal	25-100

	<u>Strategic Project, Program or Activity</u>	<u>Responsible Partners</u>	<u>Potential Funding</u>	<u>Job Creation Estimate</u>
	Open development ready land at the Port of Rosedale	Bolivar County Port Commission	State Federal	
<b>Bolivar County</b>				
	Recreational Improvements All County Parks	Bolivar County	State	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Bolivar County	State	
Benoit	Sanitary Sewer System Improvements	Benoit	State Local	
	Construction of Town Maintenance Facility	Benoit	Local	
Beulah	Water & Sewer System Improvements	Beulah	Local State	
Merigold	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Merigold	State	
	Downtown Development	Merigold	Local State	
Mound Bayou	ADA upgrades and repairs to City Hall	Mound Bayou	Local State	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Mound Bayou	State	
	Downtown Development	Mound Bayou	State Local	
	Water System Improvements/Extension of Water System to Unserved Area	Mound Bayou	State Local	



Boyle	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Boyle	State	
Boyle	Water System Improvements	Boyle	State	
Pace	Water & Sewer System Improvements	Pace	State	
	Renovate vacant school building for multi-purpose use	Pace Bolivar County	State Local	
Renova	Construction of Public Park & Playground	Renova	State Local	
Rosedale	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Rosedale	State	
	Water and Sewer System Improvements	Rosedale	State Local	
	Rehabilitation of Public Parks	Rosedale	State Local	
Shaw	Water System Improvements	Shaw	State Federal	
	Downtown Improvements (Sidewalks and Lighting)	Shaw	State Local	
Shelby	Industrial Facility Renovations	Shelby Bolivar County	State Federal	
	Water System Improvements	Shelby	State Federal	
	Downtown Improvements (Sidewalks and Lighting)	Shelby	State Local	
Winstonville	Sanitary Sewer System Improvements	Winstonville	State Federal	
	Construction of a Multi-purpose Building	Winstonville	State Local	
Humphreys Co.				

Humphreys Co. Complete	Construction of Health and Human Services Complex	Humphreys County	State Federal Local	10-25
	Drainage Improvements	Humphreys County	State Local Federal	
Belzoni	Improve Public Tennis Courts	Belzoni	State Federal Local	
	Drainage Improvements	Belzoni	State Federal Local	
	Water/Sewer System Improvements	Belzoni	State Federal	
Louise	Downtown Improvements	Louise	State Federal	
	Renovate Town Hall	Louise	State Local	
	Water & Sewer System Improvements	Louise	State	
<b>Issaquena County</b>	Courthouse Parking Areas	Issaquena County	State Federal	
	Provide Water To Unserved Areas	Issaquena County	State Federal	
	Construct Additions to County Courthouse	Issaquena County	State Local	
	Street and Road Improvements	Issaquena County	State Local	
Mayersville	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Mayersville	State	
	Water System Improvements	Mayersville	State Federal	

<b>Sharkey County</b>	Rural Water & Sewer System Improvements	Sharkey County	State Local	
Anguilla	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Anguilla	State	
	Construction of a Multi-Purpose Facility	Anguilla	State Local	
	Water System Improvements	Anguilla	State Federal	
Rolling Fork	Water System Improvements	Rolling Fork	State Federal	
	Sanitary Sewer System Improvements	Rolling Fork	State Federal	
	Drainage Improvements	Rolling Fork	Local Federal	
<b>Sunflower County</b>				
	ADA Compliance - Courthouse	Sunflower County	Local State	
	Street and Drainage Improvements	Sunflower County	Local State	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Sunflower County	State	
Drew	Sewer & Water System Improvements	Drew	State	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Drew	State	
Indianola	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Indianola	State	
	Drainage Improvements	Indianola	State	
	Construct Fire Station	Indianola	State Federal	

	Renovation of Neighborhood Parks	Indianola	Local	
Ongoing	Sewer System Improvements	Indianola	State Local	
Inverness	Sewer System Improvements	Inverness	State Federal	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Inverness	State	
	Street Improvements	Inverness	State Local	
Moorhead	Purchase Three Police Cars	Moorhead	Federal	
	Hire Police Officers	Moorhead	State Federal Local	
	Street and Drainage Improvements	Moorhead	State Federal	
Ruleville	Drainage Improvements	Ruleville	State Federal	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Ruleville	State	
	Sewer System Improvements	Ruleville	State Local	
Sunflower	Sewer System Improvements	Sunflower	State Federal	
	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Sunflower	State	
	Downtown Improvements (Sidewalks and Lighting)	Sunflower	State Local	
Washington Co.				
	Renovate Buildings for Economic Development Purposes	Washington County	State Local Federal	

	Drainage Improvement Projects Throughout County	Washington County	State Federal	
Arcola	Downtown Improvements (Sidewalks and Lighting)	Arcola	State Local	
	Construct Indoor Recreation Facility	Arcola	State Local	
	Renovate Public Bldg. For Community Resource Center	Arcola	State Local	
Greenville	Rehabilitate Historic Area of Downtown	Greenville	State Local Federal	
	Sanitary Sewer System Rebuild	Greenville	State Local	
	Development of New Sub-divisions	Greenville	Local Private	
	Reconstruction of Major Traffic Arteries	Greenville	State	
Hollandale	Purchase Equipment for Fire Department	Hollandale	State Federal	
	Street Improvements	Hollandale	Federal State	
Leland	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation	Leland	State	
	Water & Sewer System Improvements	Leland	Local Federal	
	Storm Drainage Improvements	Leland	Local State Federal	
Metcalfe	Water & Sewer System Improvements	Metcalfe	Local State Federal	



## Action Plan

Renovate Greenville Airport Hangars to DOD Standard/New FBO	\$33,000,000	Economic Development - Job Creation	Seeking Funding
The City of Greenville, South Delta Planning and the Washington County Economic Alliance commissioned a study of the vacant airport facilities for the purpose of obtaining cost estimates. South Delta will assist in obtaining funding for the renovations and act as project administrator.			
Rebuild Rail from Bolivar Co. To Washington County	\$30,000,000 - \$50,000,000	Transportation Improvement for Economic Development	Seeking Funding
Bolivar County and the Port Commission, owner of the railroad, have obtained a preliminary cost estimate for the rehabilitation of the rails. South Delta has made initial contact with potential funding sources.			
Design of I-69 Connectors	Construction costs unknown - location to be established	Transportation Improvement for Economic Development	Feasibility Study and Environmental Study
South Delta is currently seeking cost information and funding opportunities.			
Repair of Greenville's Sewer System	\$161,000,000	Infrastructure Improvement	Partially Funded - Under Construction
South Delta Continues to seek funding and provide administrative services.			
Delta Strong	Non-Construction	Economic Development Industry Recruitment	Ongoing
Regional nineteen-county effort.			
Port Expansions - Greenville & Rosedale	Unknown at this time.	Economic Development	
South Delta has previously submitted applications for funding the Greenville Port Expansion. Port at Rosedale is still in the planning stages.			
Complete Street - City of Greenville in support of new Federal Courthouse Project	\$5,000,000 - \$10,000,000	Quality of Place Improvements	

## Performance Measures/Evaluation

Any “plan of action” to be successful must produce positive results. The evaluation process for this plan must be the measurement of the economic conditions that it has prioritized.

An analysis of economic indicators will attest to improvements in the area economy or a continuation of the downside. Statistics are cold, hard facts. They are not infallible but they do measure in the same manner and the same factors every time. Success or failure can be measured by analysis of:

- Unemployment figures
- Gain or loss of jobs
- Diversification of employment
- Population Figures
- Health care statistics
- Area tax base statistics
- Housing analysis

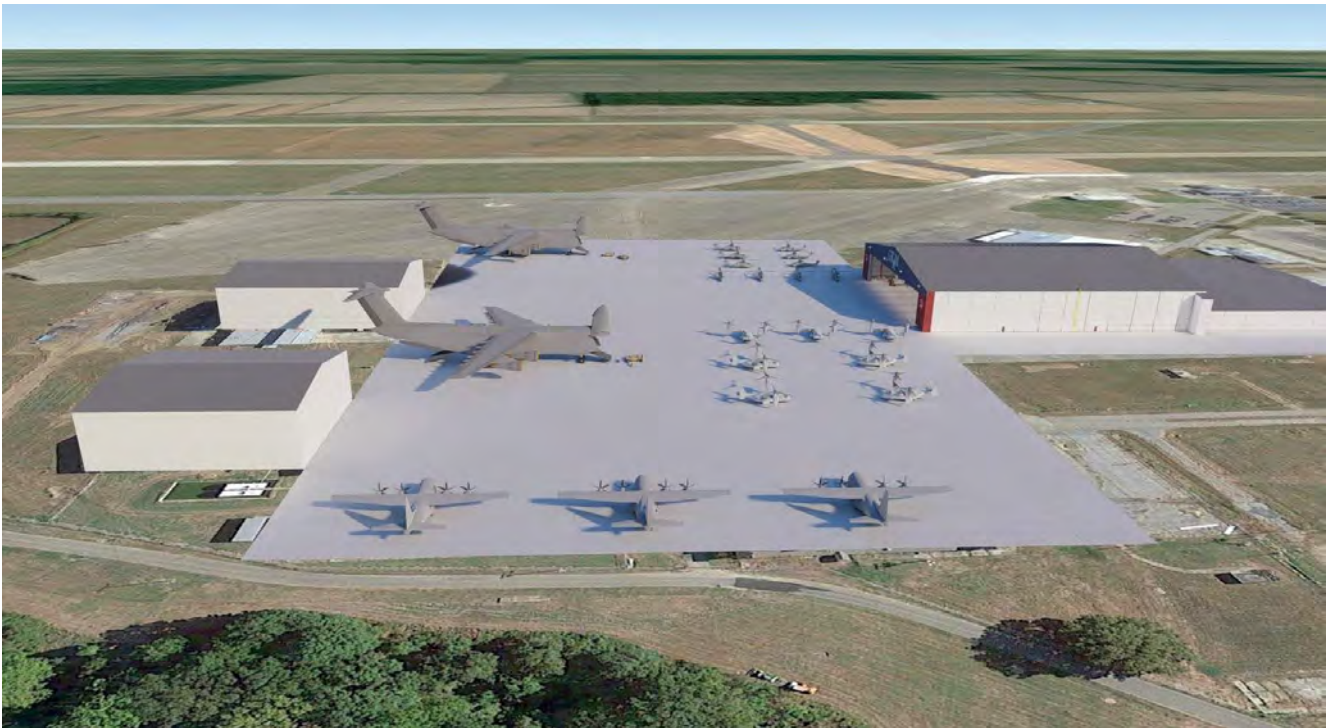
As indicators change, the plan will need to be flexible and adjustable. Elimination of some problems will allow other problems to increase in priority. As goals are reached, new goals must be established. Success will be measured in “degrees of accomplishment, not by the elimination of goals”.

It is a basic axiom that one’s interests and perceptions determine one’s ideologies. This holds true in the South Delta region. Economic and social interests, as well as, societal influence play a large part in the perception of whether or not economic development activities have been successful. The hard numbers may say that there is success, yet the populace doesn’t believe it because they can’t look around and see the change.

Of the socially and politically involved groups in the region, they all list economic development/job creation as a major priority. These groups have, however, changed their point of view on the types of jobs created. There is no longer a willingness to be satisfied with the creation of just any type of job. The emphasis has shifted to jobs that pay better than a

living wage and require some skills. This change in emphasis from the citizens of the region does not take into consideration the actual skill levels of the labor force but instead assumes that workforce training will take care of those needs.

A number of paths to improvement will be needed for a region like the Delta. Activities along more than one path will have to take place in order to realize actual and perceived improvement. As regional economic development efforts come to fruition, quality of place improvements, and population increases must also be recognized. Without recognition of multiple factors, maintaining citizen “buy-in” will be extremely difficult. If the citizen investment can’t be maintained and/or increased, improvements will be extremely difficult to maintain and grow.



Future Element of Success: Greenville Kearns Aerospace Maintenance







