

Seizing the Future: On the Right Track 1999-2000

A report to the Legislature and the Governor on the State's long range economic development planning efforts.

Introduction

Because of the excellent cooperation of Mississippi's Legislature, the 1999 legislative session saw significant progress on the five recommendations put forth by the Governor's Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning. Each of the recommendations was acted upon in some form by the Legislature, a record that could not have taken place without the work of the Legislature itself and many other groups and agencies. The Task Force urges the Legislature to continue to support implementation of the five recommendations from the 1999 report: to continue workforce training consolidation; improve the productivity of high school graduates; develop a regional strategic planning effort; implement the science and technology action plan; and investigate gaming's impact on Mississippi.

The Special Task Force in no way seeks to take credit for the encouraging results from the last legislative session. The task force members hope that the legislation introduced which had an impact on its five recommendations signals that they are continuing "on the right track" in making Mississippi's economy globally competitive well into the 21st century.

The Changing Picture in Economic Development

The original task force, in its report *Seizing the Future, A Commitment to Competitiveness* (December, 1989), sought to make changes to Mississippi's economic development picture that would, in the long run, enable our state to compete on a global basis. In our early development efforts, the state could sell itself on cost alone. But the days of being able to sell Mississippi solely on labor and location costs have disappeared just as surely as low-wage jobs have gone overseas.

What Will It Take to Make Mississippi Globally Competitive?

Remaining globally competitive, then, will require Mississippi to make some changes that will fundamentally affect its quality of life and the quality of its workforce. Attracting higher wage, high-tech jobs will mean that Mississippians will have to be better trained, that cutting-edge technology will have to be readily available here, and that the quality of life stacks up well against other states and nations around the world. Technological advances in communications and plummeting transportation costs have greatly minimized the importance of geographic location, so Mississippi now needs to cultivate the one factor of production that is not easily moved--a quality, trainable workforce.

The Focus of This Year's Recommendations

As a result of this "globalization" of economic issues, the top two recommendations made to the Legislature last year by the Special Task Force related directly to the quality of Mississippi's workforce. The new recommendations again highlight the need for improving the state's workforce over the long term. The leading recommendation deals with continued streamlining of Mississippi's workforce training efforts, with particular emphasis on changes in the community college system. The second recommendation offers concrete suggestions to help the state's educational system operate at maximum efficiency to produce graduates who can compete globally for high-tech jobs. In addition to these measures directly related to workforce training and education, the Task Force also suggests a system of school-based clinics to give children the best possible and healthiest learning environment. Finally, the Task Force is recommending a forestry initiative to allow Mississippi to maximize its vast and valuable forest resources in the coming decades.

Conclusion

In recent decades, Mississippi has fared well in the game of economic development, bringing in many new jobs for the state's residents. But the rules of that game have changed drastically; CEOs considering new locations can minimize costs by going offshore, so our state must offer them something more than cheap labor. Instead, Mississippi must now offer a labor force that can be quickly trained to do the most complex tasks. Our state must offer a quality workforce, quality lifestyle, and quality business climate that cannot be matched in other states or nations. All Mississippians have the opportunity to come together and improve those factors in the long run. Mississippi is now in a position to control its own destiny by "seizing the future."

Summary of 1999-2000 Recommendations

Four major recommendations resulted from the second round of deliberations by the Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning, a process which began two years ago with the appointment and organization of the current group. As in the first year of work, much of the work of the task force highlighted the need for improved training and education in Mississippi. The four major areas of focus which will be presented to the Legislature in September are listed below in order of their ranking by the task force.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Continue streamlining of Mississippi's workforce training programs by mandating that the community colleges develop a statewide strategic workforce training plan; by marketing the value of education to the potential and current workforce; by establishing voluntary demand-driven skills standards for the workforce; by changing the community colleges' funding formula to one based on full-time equivalent enrollment; and by using technology to enhance workforce training.

The Task Force reaffirmed its belief that the consolidation and streamlining of Mississippi's workforce training programs is a top priority in making the state's workforce globally competitive. The group continues to support the initiation of systematic reforms to improve Mississippi's workforce development systems. Continued revamping of the state's workforce development system would mean that its training dollars are used as wisely and effectively as possible. In addition to optimal use of funding resources, the Task Force feels that the continued consolidation of the workforce development system would allow both potential employers and potential workers to enter the system and make use of those resources. Putting all workforce training programs into a cohesive system would also identify areas of duplication and areas of need in the delivery of workforce development in Mississippi.

Among the specific needs that should be addressed, the Task Force feels that a key issue is the current funding formula used in the community and junior college system. The current formula awards funding based on full-time enrollment, a policy that must be reexamined in light of the changing needs of Mississippi's workforce. The state needs to upgrade the skills of those persons already in the workforce, and most of them will need to enter the training and education system on a part-time basis. Community and junior colleges would have greater incentive to pursue such part-time students, and in turn upgrade Mississippi's current workforce skills, if funding formulas are changed to reward enrollment of part-time students.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Improve Mississippi's educational system to make students more productive in the workforce by investigating the potential for reducing the number of school districts to no more than one per county where administratively cost-effective; by appointing district superintendents; by electing school board members; and by supporting accountability and reward standards now being developed by the State Department of Education.

The Special Task Force remains firm in its position that the productivity of the workforce is closely related to the capabilities of students graduating from high school. Having taken this stance, the Special Task Force recognizes the need to enhance the education delivery "system" to maximize quality and efficiency, thus creating an environment conducive to optimal student achievement.

A total of 152 separate school districts operate in Mississippi, including three agricultural high schools. Each of these districts has its own superintendent and administrative costs, yet some are unable to provide a full range of

academic offerings for their students. In some areas, there is a demonstrated need for change and greater efficiency in how Mississippi provides educational services. At least one in five districts is performing below level 3, which means that those districts are less than "successful." Recognizing that approximately 40 percent of the state's general fund budget is already being appropriated to K-12 public education, the Task Force believes that structural and strategic changes need to be made to improve Mississippi's educational system. With regard to accountability in Mississippi's public education system, the Task Force strongly supports the current move by the State Department of Education to implement accountability standards which hold all levels of the system--students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards--accountable for their performance.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Develop a school-based health clinic program modeled after the program developed by the Memorial Hospital at Gulfport and/or on State Department of Education pilot programs, coordinating development of that program with the State Department of Health as it considers use of money from the state's tobacco lawsuit.

In 1999, Memorial Hospital at Gulfport (MHG) presented information to the Special Task Force on the hospital's program of school-based health clinics in Harrison County schools. Based on that meeting and subsequent work with the program, the Special Task Force feels that the concept of school-based clinics should be extended farther into the state of Mississippi. Memorial Hospital at Gulfport established its school-based clinics initially "to reduce absenteeism in school, and to provide care for the nation's most underserved population--the adolescent." Since 1995, MHG has set up ten clinics in Gulf Coast schools, with a significant impact on both the health of students and on their learning readiness. The schools which now include clinics have already enjoyed successes as a result of the clinic program. Students with ongoing health problems can receive health care services, yet remain at school. Screenings by clinic staff identify health problems at the earliest possible point, minimizing complications and expensive treatment. Convenient access to a health care provider means that children have access to continuous care and assessment, which gets them into the health care system without cost to their families. Harrison County schools with clinics have experienced lower absenteeism and dropout rates with the resulting additional funding, and reduced teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Placing clinics in more Mississippi schools, the Task Force feels, would bring these social and economic benefits to many more students throughout the state. From an economic development standpoint, this strategy would truly improve the state's prospects in the long term. Students would spend more time in school, which would better prepare them for the workforce. Companies and communities would spend less on health care insurance and costs, as problems would be detected at a much earlier stage. Better health habits cultivated while the students are young would translate into healthier adults who spend more time, and more productive time, on the job.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Establish a forestry initiative which will promote productive long-term cultivation of Mississippi's forestry resources.

Most owners of forestlands in Mississippi are not properly managing their land, which means that the state is not receiving the full economic benefit of those forests. A survey completed in north Mississippi in 1993 found that almost two-thirds of forestland that was clear cut was not replanted. Without replanting and proper management, significant timber production and income per acre can be lost. In fact, conservative estimates suggest that properly managed forestland will generate \$3,000 more per acre over a 35-year period than unmanaged land. Obstacles to proper forestland management by Mississippi landowners include: 1. Lack of knowledge about returns from proper management. 2. Lack of funding for initial investment 3. Lack of return from individual investment during the investor's lifetime.

The Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning recommends development of a "Forest Maximization Program," or Mississippi ForestMax, which will allow Mississippi to harvest more economic benefits from its forestlands. In the program, a landowner would receive loans to fund site preparation and planting of trees, as well as having the option to receive a loan of \$25 per acre of planted trees for 10 years. The land serves as collateral for the loan; only private non-industrial forestland owners who are residents of Mississippi may participate.

Forest resources have always been a major contributor to the state's economy, but the impact of those resources can be significantly enhanced with proper management. ForestMax will show a net benefit to Mississippi and to private, non-industrial forestland owners while overcoming the three obstacles to proper forestland management.

Update on Top Five Recommendations from the Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning 1998-1999

Recommendation #1: Consolidate all workforce training funds under the authority of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.

Legislation Outcome: SB2796, the Comprehensive Workforce Training and Consolidation Act of 1999, transferred industrial training and post-secondary adult short-term training programs to the community and junior colleges.

Recommendation #2: Increase the ability of high school graduates to be more productive in the workforce by requiring a proficiency test of each student after elementary school but prior to high school.

Legislation Outcome: SB2156, the Mississippi Student Achievement Improvement Act of 1999, mandated that a series of tests be given to every student.

Recommendation #3: Implement a regional approach to strategic economic development planning.

Legislation Outcome: HB1221 created a regional initiative program within the University Research Center.

Recommendation #4: Implement the Science and Technology Action Plan.

Legislation Outcome: SB3155 appropriated \$1.5 million in seed money for Mississippi Technology Inc., or MTI, to promote technology-related economic development efforts.

SB2856 created a six-member legislative liaison committee to oversee technology-related economic development efforts.

Recommendation #5: Study the long-term economic impact of gaming.

Legislation Outcome: SB3139 appropriated \$200,000 to the University Research Center for the preparation of an economic assessment of the gaming industry in Mississippi.

Appendix A:

Recommendations made at 1999 regional congresses (listed by performance area with source of recommendation in parentheses)

HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Add local input to Workforce Investment Act. (Jackson)

Support the Workforce Investment Act. (Oxford)

Support the workforce area boundaries adopted by the governor. (Oxford)

Work towards consolidation of workforce investment areas. (Hattiesburg)

Consolidate all training funds. (Jackson)

Change funding to encourage colleges and universities to address more workforce needs. (Jackson)

Market training and education resources available in Mississippi. (Jackson)

Teach "technical trades" to students and award high school diplomas for this effort. (Jackson)

Utilize community colleges and other resources for training programs. (Decatur)

Work together to solve the problems of education. (Decatur)

Continue funding of TANF and other job development and training programs. (Decatur)

Contract w/ colleges for workforce training. (Oxford)

Develop apprenticeship programs for adults and students to learn business skills. (Jackson)

Augment training in computer programs for students. (Jackson)

Develop special television programs to address specific educational needs and make those programs available to individuals. (Oxford)

Develop in-state training for the prison and casino industries. (Jackson)

Enhance parental involvement in children's education. (McComb)

Require parents to take part in child's school discipline and to be responsible for child's behavior and learning.
Require more parental accountability and individual accountability. (Decatur)
Enhance partnership between the family and the school. (Decatur)
Develop a "school-to-work" program in the construction industry. (Jackson)
Enhance overall school system w/ accountability. Evaluate teachers and administrators. (Decatur)
Establish competency measures to gauge computer skills. (Jackson)
Establish a 12-month school year with students staggering attendance, creating a need for less classroom space. (Jackson)
Examine requirements for financial aid and provide more marketing on available programs. (McComb)
Expand high school training in the latest available software applications. (Decatur)
Funds in Mississippi should go to technical training. (Jackson)
Give Mississippi one integrated system of higher education, w/ community, junior, and senior colleges all in one system. (Hattiesburg)
Implement "training modules" at high school levels. (Decatur)
Incorporate private sector support and input regarding types of training needed by potential employees for business and industry. (Decatur)
Increase post-secondary education and training. (Decatur)
Integrate curricula so that students can learn about areas throughout their years in the school system. (Hattiesburg)
Inventory the state's resources to include volunteers. (Oxford)
Make public and private sectors aware of need for volunteers who are committed to serve. Stress importance of training for volunteers. Make known available resources (TANF, RSVP, etc.) (Decatur)
Make dual-track (college prep and voc-tech) curricula available and acceptable. (Winona)
Offer better salaries to attract qualified teachers, provide training to deal w/ disciplinary problems, reducing bureaucracy and reducing the number of students per class. (Jackson)
Promote job shadowing programs for students and teachers. (Hattiesburg)
Provide funds for training. (Decatur)
Provide adequate training. (Decatur)
Put trained workforce in place. (Decatur)
Provide financial resources and flexible scheduling to address the needs of non-traditional students. (McComb)
Provide a tuition-free education in the state's community colleges. (Oxford) Put more emphasis on business/life skills. (Hattiesburg)
Promote reasoning skills and critical thinking skills in all classes. (Hattiesburg)
Require family and consumer science in every classroom, w/ emphasis on real world teaching and use of adjunct professors or businesspeople in the classroom, and require reasoning skills. (Hattiesburg)
Require curriculum to include computer training earlier. (McComb)
Start training of kids at a younger age in personal financial skills as well as entrepreneurial skills. Put more kids in training. (Hattiesburg)
Return to basic moral values, teaching them in school from a very early age. (Decatur)
Require more cooperation among educational institutions (community colleges and IHL). (Winona)
Require each child to have a "career path." (Jackson)
Set goals for the reduction of class size. (Decatur)
Start instilling workplace values as early as possible, including parents, children, teachers, and employers. (Winona)
Strengthen existing job training and development programs in local schools. (Decatur)
Find funding for counties or groups of counties to hire a coordinator for early childhood development. (Decatur)
Teach children at a young age how the economy works. (Hattiesburg)
Academic faculty should receive training in technology, particularly instructors of math and science. (Jackson)
Address the "taxpayer issue" of remedial classes at IHL. (Decatur)
Ensure that employment service individuals are properly trained. (McComb)
Expose children to success stories by highlighting Mississippi leaders and publishing a list of success stories. (Hattiesburg)
Implement Workforce Investment Board regional boundaries and recognize pre-existing service delivery areas. (Oxford)
Initiate training and/or technical assistance programs designed to help local communities (government, schools, and general public) become more knowledgeable of today's technology. (Decatur)
Minimize absenteeism in the workplace by providing a safe and clean environment and by educating employees in work ethic, discipline, and loyalty. (Oxford)

Provide general public w/ a general understanding of where future jobs are.
Examine vocational education as a cultural issue. Identify vocational students early. Restructure educational system so that students take application courses. (Decatur)
Make incentives to students for good conduct (e.g. housing loans). (Jackson)
Provide good information about jobs and what's needed to achieve these jobs. (Jackson)
Support public libraries and enhance educational programs available through them. (Oxford)
Teach business owners and teachers how to use computers and other equipment. (Winona)
Upgrade technology in schools to leading edge technology and train students and teachers for it. (Hattiesburg)
Market the services of Skill-Tech centers; make the public aware of services that already exist. (McComb)

SOCIAL RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Address out-of-wedlock pregnancies, which would help solve problems in school absenteeism, child abuse, and infant mortality. Develop a mentoring program to reach students on these issues. (Oxford)
Address children's issues (mentoring, tutoring, anger management, self-esteem). (McComb)
Ask DHS to revisit its strategy towards providing daycare services for TANF clients in hopes that they agency can streamline its process. (McComb)
Businesses should jointly provide child care, perhaps on a regional basis. (Jackson)
Involve industry more in setting up on-site quality day care. (Decatur)
Coordinate day care for community college students. (Oxford)
Offer more parental choice in child care, giving parental education and providing flexibility for full time students w/ regard to the 20-hour work week. (Hattiesburg)
Make day care centers part of the workplace, either w/ individual industries or w/ a group of industries. (Oxford)
Encourage support of "before and after" school day care centers. (Oxford)
Make night child care facilities available. (Jackson)
Examine federal regulations to encourage nonparticipation in child care payments unless through a certified facility. (Hattiesburg)
Consider development of program (private and/or public) that provides 24-hour in-home care at affordable costs. (Decatur)
Continue funding for Medicaid waiver. (Winona)
Create playgrounds/recreation centers in neighborhoods. (McComb)
Continue promotion of natural resources for recreation and tourism. (Winona)
Enhance recreation. (Winona)
Provide access to recreation in individual neighborhoods. (McComb)
Educate community on problems of elderly, incl. info on the process of aging, Alzheimer's and other aging-related diseases, and patients' rights and responsibilities for personal care homes and facilities. (Hattiesburg)
Encourage better race relations, including grassroots people, involving them in the process and in decision-making. (Winona)
Ensure that staffing decisions are based on need rather than on politics (DHS). (McComb)
Establish better licensure procedures w/ better coordination between Dept of Health and Dept of Human Services, and improve staffing. (Hattiesburg)
Establish a more flexible rating bureau for fire trucks in volunteer fire departments. (Winona)
Make some type of gerontology education mandatory at either the high school or post-secondary level. (Hattiesburg)
Improve licensure for personal care homes and assisted living facilities. (Hattiesburg)
Examine regulatory limitations on live-in caregivers in public housing. (Winona)
Provide funds for additional adult day care centers, and adequate training for potential staff. (Decatur)
Coordinate kindergarten/day care w/ training sessions for parents. (McComb)
Provide in-home services to prevent premature institutionalization. (Hattiesburg)
Provide government-subsidized assisted living and personal care homes. (Winona)
Improve home- and community-based health care. (Winona)
Keep more physicians in local/rural areas. (Winona)
Provide local health care centers. (Winona)
Form a cooperative to consolidate health care resources for planning and coordination purposes thru legislative action. (Jackson)
Save the Kilmichael hospital. (Winona)

Offer parenting education programs to train parents on preventive health care measures such as birth control, alcohol and drugs, STDs, etc. (McComb)
Provide state grants to fund rural fire protection. (Winona)
Re-fund and add counties to the Municipal Crime Prevention Program. (Jackson) Work w/ appropriate state agencies and legislature to establish foster care system similar to the one already in operation for children. (Decatur)

PHYSICAL RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Continue development of the transportation service infrastructure, including railroad services. (Winona)
Continue to improve the transportation system, and alleviate problems w/ secondary roads and bridges. (Decatur)
Develop alternate modes of transportation. (Hattiesburg)
Provide funds for transportation operation and maintenance. (Winona)
Implement a statewide transit system to accommodate workers and encourage nurseries on site or near the work site. (Jackson)
Provide transportation options for TANF recipients. (Winona)
Improve roads/streets/bridges to attract and retain industry. (Decatur)
Identify grant monies to fund short-line railroads. (Winona)
Address infrastructure concerns (water/sewer). (Decatur)
Change existing distribution of state dollars to assist w/ locally owned and maintained roads. (Jackson)
Continue to develop brownfield project. (Decatur)
Coordinate public works development w/ telecommunications infrastructure. (Winona)
Expand physical communication infrastructure to allow better/more efficient communication between/within industry and education. (Decatur)
Develop a statewide long-range plan for natural resources, especially water use. (Oxford)
Examine cable rate regulations. (Winona)
Improve utility access: water/sewer improvements, natural gas availability. (Decatur)
Improve telephone customer service through the Public Service Commission. (Winona)
Improve utility companies' public service efforts. (Winona)
Further develop state parks. (Winona)
Mississippi should address the need for sustainable growth policies. (Hattiesburg)
Balance the ecosystem w/ private renewal. (Oxford)
Promote value added to timber industry. (McComb)
Provide funding through MDOT for port development. (Winona)
Provide for effective disposal of used tires. (Winona)
Address litter problems. (Winona)

BUSINESS RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Go through the tax code to see where burdens are. (Decatur)
Eliminate the state's inventory tax. (Oxford)
Analyze laws on depreciation of equipment, especially those which create a disincentive to upgrade equipment. (Decatur)
Identify key people and institutions to drive development of key industries, possibly those identified by DECD several years ago as "target industries." (Hattiesburg)
Provide the same incentives for small businesses as for big locations. (Winona)
Establish authority to implement/commit incentives. (Decatur)
Create incentives for retail and small businesses. (McComb)
Better fund SBDC and other existing business resources. (Hattiesburg) Make Mississippians better aware of resources available through the use of directories, internet, etc. (Hattiesburg)
Provide better funding for SBDCs. (Hattiesburg)
Increase funding to SBDCs to enhance entrepreneurial development. (Oxford)
Continued technical assistance for small businesses. (McComb)
Develop regional business incubators to assist start-up companies. (McComb)
Promote regional incubators. (Winona)
Enhance and expand technical business incubators. (Winona)

Develop the incubator concept. (Decatur)

Develop a plan to optimize federal resources. (Winona)

Emphasize existing business and expansion of homegrown businesses. (Decatur)

Encourage the provision of venture capital at the state level. (Oxford)

Provide venture capital which can be used as a match for federal funds. (Hattiesburg)

Increase participation of community banks. (McComb)

Improve entrepreneurs' access to capital and incentives, making programs more broadly based. (Winona)

Increase venture capital resources. (Decatur)

Establish an industry resource center. (Decatur)

Establish a standing committee on business in the legislature. (Hattiesburg)

Fund local businesspeople who have been in the area long term. (Hattiesburg)

Direct more technical help to businesses. (Hattiesburg)

Support an expanded extension service, involving the high schools, community colleges, and universities. (Hattiesburg)

Information on programs available to small businesses. (McComb)

Help develop local business leaders. (McComb)

Improve access to e-commerce, both through technical expertise and equipment. (Winona)

Provide funding for university expertise to support businesses' e-commerce efforts, such as paying MIS graduate students to fill these roles. (Winona)

Help businesses develop markets through the Internet. (McComb)

Market existing industrial properties to new industries. (Decatur)

Provide a resource that will allow Mississippi industry to implement the most modern production processes. (Winona)

Spread seed capital to as many businesses as possible. (Hattiesburg)

Too few institutions are willing to finance small business--any business. (Hattiesburg)

Mississippi should offer businesses long-term incentives to stay in an area, regardless of no. of employees in the business. (Hattiesburg)

Use excess revenues for business loans. (Decatur) Create additional capacity/capability at local level for commercial development of new technologies and businesses. (Hattiesburg)

Improve industrial development of property. (Winona)

TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Continue support of and funding for Mississippi Technology, Inc. (Oxford)

Create an entity to manage the location and number of cellular towers. (Jackson)

Develop a state strategy for telecommunications development. (Oxford)

Identify existing sources of technology, expertise, and hardware. (McComb)

IHL and Community College Board should oversee coordination of technology among educational institutions. (Jackson)

Implement GIS/GPS and provide access to technology resources. (Decatur)

Apply geographic information systems (GIS) technology for mapping and planning, providing grants to counties' tax assessors' offices or regional planning organizations. (Oxford)

Inform Mississippians about what technology and information are available and let them know how to access it. (Oxford)

Link parcels at the county level through GIS. (Oxford)

Lay a conduit for telecommunications whenever highway systems are constructed. (Hattiesburg)

Design for availability of fiber optics in all new development. (Oxford)

Recognize communities already doing well in design for technology and expand their models statewide. (Oxford)

Pass enabling legislation to facilitate telecommunications infrastructure. (Winona)

Provide technical telecommunications assistance to counties through the state's backbone. (Oxford)

Partner among cities for regional technology infrastructure and planning. (Oxford)

Provide a technical coordinator in counties, perhaps retraining county agents for this role. (McComb)

Provide access to wider bandwidth. (Hattiesburg)

Recognize community colleges as part of the state's available research network. (Hattiesburg)

Research institutions and universities must partner w/ the private sector to commercialize products. (Hattiesburg)

Use extension service to provide technical expertise w/ a liaison to universities to augment/supplement MTEP. (Winona)
Use the state backbone to link communities via the PDDs to give statewide data access. (Oxford)

STRATEGIC RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AREA

Ask legislature to create a constitutional revision commission to study issues involved and report back to legislature on predetermined date. (Jackson)
Assign IHL the task of developing a consistent methodology for allocation of state econ. development funds. (Worst=first or best return on investment). Adopt this methodology as state policy. (Jackson)
Develop leadership through organizations such as civic, government, social, and early childhood intervention. (Winona)
PDD and MDECD regional offices should educate local/county officials on regional solutions to common problems. (Jackson)
Develop standards (job requirements) for state elected positions. (Winona)
Create a centralized technology clearinghouse. (Jackson)
Create a mechanism for sharing ideas. (Decatur)
Create a statewide resource guide. (Oxford)
Develop a resource directory which can be given to individuals and put the DECD Resource Directory on the internet. (Hattiesburg)
Create and maintain an accurate statewide data networking mechanism. (Hattiesburg)
Develop network of individuals, agencies, communities, and governments to continue to meet and develop strategic plans. (McComb)
Develop psychographic information (information database) system. (McComb)
Develop county resource plans. (McComb)
Educate legislature regarding opportunities in linking cities and counties statewide and removing regulatory barriers. (Oxford)
Enhance services by diminishing duplication and requiring collaboration among city and county governments, state agencies, educational institutions (secondary and IHL), businesses and nonprofits. (Winona)
Enlist help and resources of chambers of commerce and local governments. (Decatur)
Establish an automated management system for cities and counties. (Hattiesburg)
Establish a clearinghouse of programs and/or a website w/ hyperlinks. (Decatur)
Examine federal and state property procedure for private development. (Winona)
Find out what is going on w/ neighboring states. (Decatur)
Fund all mandates. (Winona)
Get local input in simplifying training programs and reducing fragmentation. (Winona)
Identify available resources and communicate them to parties whom the resources could benefit. (Decatur)
Improve community pride. (Winona)
Increase involvement and coordination of MDECD, PDDs, Supervisors' Assoc., Municipal Assoc., and Legislature. (Decatur)
Initiate programs from within local communities, using local resources, esp. churches and civic organizations. (Decatur)
Lobby legislature for funding of SB1221. Involve all existing regional groups. (Jackson)
Local input in decision-making in identifying and using grant funds, without competition from other areas. (McComb)
Make use of buildings and equipment 24/7. (Winona)
Marketing of existing programs. (McComb)
Raise public awareness of assets already available to motivate people to change, get training, etc. (Winona)
Use county resource plans to develop regional plans. (McComb)
Provide for countywide zoning and building plans. (Winona)
Reaffirm recommendation #3 to implement a strategic resources action plan. (McComb)
Develop local support for local strategic planning and obtain funding. (Winona)
Pass legislation to allow a local-option economic development tax to be used on regional planning and regional infrastructure needs. (Winona)
Pass tort reform. (McComb)
Provide funds for incentives to land major projects (consolidate administration). (Decatur)

Regional heritage tourism could be presented as a beneficial project for local governments to develop. (Jackson)
Seek additional resources for development (grants). (Winona)
Spread the dream/vision and get Mississippians to a higher level. (Hattiesburg)
Stem the flow of people leaving the state for better wages. (Decatur)
Streamline the state's permitting process. (Oxford)
Reduce permitting times in surface water regulation by DEQ. (Oxford)
Explain DEQ regulations for business owners. Make DEQ more "business-friendly" and outline expectations. (Decatur)
Share data among entities, perhaps through use of the Internet. (Winona)
Assess what is needed for Mississippi to compete for high-tech jobs. (Winona)
Address the issue of private sector competition when providing a free service competes w/ existing businesses. (Winona)
Bring universities from being monastic to being innovation-driven. (Hattiesburg)
Change/improve image of public education, w/ more commitment from leadership, parents, general public. (Decatur)
Coordinate efforts w/ local home economists, 4-H clubs, etc. (Decatur)
Create partnerships between education and industry. (Decatur)
Pass legislation requiring owners of rental property to upgrade substandard housing. (Winona)
Possibly combine advanced technology centers w/ one-stop centers, utilizing the total resources of junior and community colleges. (Hattiesburg)
Provide more flexibility in fish and wildlife regulations. (Winona)
Provide additional funding (public or private) for adequate, up-to-date equipment. (Decatur)
Use school facilities year round, perhaps as technology centers. (Jackson)

Appendix B:

Recommendations made by other resource groups as presented to the Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning, 1999
Conduct pre-enrollment exams to identify physical, hearing, vision, and speech problems.
Develop an educational seminar for business leaders and management highlighting connection between early childhood development and economic development.
Develop an economic culture that encourages employees to routinely communicate with their child's school and encourage release time to attend parent conferences at school's request.
Establish parenting centers.
Support/suggest policies that reward employer and employee partnerships respectful of employees as parents.
Encourage businesses to join community partnerships that result in support/education of parents/families on type of home environment that promotes nurturing and stability.
Make early childhood education an economic issue and champion the cause as economically good for Mississippi.
Allocate 1% of the economic development budget for early childhood programs.
Make kindergarten attendance mandatory.
Decrease class size in early childhood classrooms.
Establish coordinating body to oversee early childhood plan.
Support before- and after-school programs and summer programs by forming partnerships w/ community agencies and nonprofit programs to expand the number attending.

Appendix C:

Recommendations from "Taking Stock" Meetings of the Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning, 1998
More focused effort needed for inter-modal transportation planning; better understanding of how it would affect economic development (i.e. Latin American trade study).
Need coordination and consistency in workforce development programs.
Communicate to involve parents in educational importance. Start at home w/ efforts that link child/parent.
Communicate to and educate family members on importance of health education and parenting: "a preventive effort."
Raise expectations of parents/students. Instill a desire to learn early. "Market" education and training.
Require universities/comm. colleges to report student achievement back to high schools.
Require a common board member for K-12, community college, and IHL.

Promote and encourage "lifelong learning." Make provisions for non-traditional teachers.
Develop a holistic approach to combat illiteracy. Involve churches, volunteers, agencies.
Require arts in the schools; require physical education in the schools.
Need affordable day care for children of working parents.
Promote our culture more.
Focus on services to youth and elderly.
Work more w/ children at an earlier age. Form neighborhood "networks" to assist parents.
More regional approach to social services.
State aid roads need higher priority; bridge replacement fund needed.
Access inventory tax needs/replacement.
Analyze the need for reducing or eliminating business inventory tax.
Award incentives for new businesses based on the number/quality of jobs.
Tax incentives should apply to "back office" businesses.
Create an incubator "without walls." Professional support regionally based.
More focus on entrepreneurial efforts.
Provide a stronger focus on entrepreneurial development efforts in Mississippi.
Encourage formation of specialized small business investment company. (private investment, government-guaranteed)
Develop a low-cost business resource directory, distributed at time of license application.
Need for awareness of business programs and assistance; better access to resource directory.
Minority businesses need financial assistance/capital for start-ups.
Create the not-for-profit Mississippi Technology, Inc.
Create a separate line item for information technology in the budget process.
Need fiber optic connections in each and school and public building.
Legislature must immediately address Y2K problem for all state agencies.
Establish clear, measurable education and training goals w/ information technology as central component.
Need a structure to provide for growth and development of science and technology for economic development: a public-private partnership.
Agriculture interests want more representation on task force.
Coordinate training/leadership of local and county officials.
Encourage cities and counties to work jointly in developing a "local" strategic plan for economic development. All parties must participate in the planning process.
More awareness is needed of the current programmatic efforts.
Need for better awareness of resources offered by state and private groups. Need an easy-to-use format of directory.
Need uniform boundaries when accessing regional needs. Focus on regional efforts.
Provide more coordination between agencies and local/county efforts.
Regional approach to infrastructure needs.
Need e-mail, Internet access at city and county governments.
Need to start land use planning/mapping statewide.
Target technologies that complement the capabilities within the state.
Develop a public/private partnership for economic development.