

THE MISSISSIPPI Advantage

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

April 2016 | Second Quarter



MAKING HISTORY: **Continental Tire & Topship** Largest Single-Day Announcement in Mississippi's History

World Class Athletic Surfaces
A Major League Mississippi company

Interview Q&A
with ACCO Brand's Bob Alley

**Governor Phil Bryant
and Paul Williams,**
Executive Vice President,
Continental Commercial Vehicle
Tires the Americas

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Please contact us at 800-360-3323 or LocateinMS@mississippi.org.

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bring \$1.5+ Billion and
3,500 jobs to Mississippi



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Welcome from **Governor Phil Bryant**

Economic development is a long-term commitment, a long-term relationship and a long-term benefit – for the industries, the employees and the state.

On the heels of the largest day of economic development in Mississippi history, the State Legislature passed Senate Bill 2808, creating the Mississippi Works Fund to provide highly focused workforce training for new and existing businesses.

This fund is an addition to the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund, which provides funding for existing businesses to train current personnel. The legislation allots \$10 million for workforce training at community colleges for 2016 and \$5 million each following year.

Mississippi clearly isn't resting and relying on what we've done in the past.

After securing Continental Tire's new facility in Clinton, we started working on ways to assist the company during the construction of the facility by getting the word out to Mississippi contractors, subcontractors and vendors. As Continental begins the hiring process, we'll be involved with guiding their future employees through the hiring process with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and with the workforce training at our community colleges.

Ultimately, our focus is to build Mississippi's economy through developing and attracting companies who want a long-lasting relationship with high-quality employees who do top-notch work. The list of industries attesting to Mississippi's commitment to customized workforce training is long – and growing.

Mississippi has the business climate companies need. Whether it's access to major highways, ports or airports, we have the location. Most of all, Mississippi has the talent to make the things America – and the world – needs.

When your company is ready to excel, so are we.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



WORLD CLASS ATHLETIC SURFACES

A Major League Mississippi Company

DuBois' entrepreneurship pushed him into foreign trade missions and international panel discussions conducted through Mississippi Development Authority.

The Masters, Wimbledon, the Super Bowl and 36 college post-season bowl games all rely on one Leland, Mississippi-based company to make their playing surfaces look their best.

Supplying the field colors and sports logos for some of the highest-profile sporting events, World Class Athletic Surfaces grew out of Tra DuBois' passion for tennis. Now appearing everywhere from high school playing fields to the upper echelon of professional sports, the company is a product of DuBois' restless tinkering and constant push for a superior product.

With the connections made playing tennis during and after college, DuBois spent the next few years building and resurfacing tennis courts for everyone from clubs to private clients like Ross Perot. During this

time, with the help of a retired chemist, DuBois started making tennis court coatings for the company, as well as selling their services.

"I'd probably still be there, but I had gotten to the point I knew Tra needed to get to a place where there was a gravel road and away from all the bright lights," he said. "I was tired of the big city and all that stuff."

He came back to Mississippi in 1987 and consulted on tennis court construction. He eventually gathered the money to start making his own tennis court coatings.

"I started out by saying, 'I'm going to make the best tennis court coatings in the world. I'm going to make them so they're really, really clean, and I'm going to make them with the highest technology available,'" he said.

DuBois also diversified his product line, first to running tracks, then to grasses and artificial turf.

He had just started showing his paint for grasses and turf in 1990 when he won the bid for Mississippi State's football field. Within a week, Alabama called. Shortly thereafter, Auburn called.

"We went right through the SEC, and in the middle of going through the SEC, it went to Green Bay, then to the Baltimore Ravens, and then to the Washington Redskins," he said. "The word-of-mouth was what really helped. That, and my product was really clean. I made it that way because I like to fish, and I didn't want to hurt the animals."

By necessity, DuBois added field stencils to his product line, leading to the construction of one of the biggest stencil cutting machines ever built and a patent on the computer process he uses to make the patterns.

DuBois's entrepreneurship pushed him into foreign trade missions and international panel discussions conducted through Mississippi Development Authority. He also has helped push for more professionalism in the field prep industry.



And for any hint as to what his next innovation might be, look no further than his own lawn in Leland. That's where he tests his products.

"I'm playing with some new resins," he said. "I've got some on there now."

Incentives Spotlight

Mississippi Creates New Workforce Training Fund

Gov. Phil Bryant recently signed into law legislation aimed at meeting the workforce training needs of new and expanding businesses in Mississippi. SB 2808 establishes the **Mississippi Works Fund** with the goal of providing additional training resources for new jobs created by economic development projects in Mississippi and building a more qualified applicant pool in the state. The new, \$50-million training fund will amplify the training resources already available in the state and will allow the Mississippi Development Authority to more proactively meet the training needs of both current and prospective employers in Mississippi.

The **Mississippi Works Fund** will use money derived from unemployment taxes currently paid by businesses operating in Mississippi. The law gives MDA the ability to direct these funds as part of the state's business recruitment and expansion efforts. Mississippi's #1 ranked community college system will provide much of the training.

- 75 percent of the funds are for new job creation
- 25 percent of the funds are for existing workforce training and workforce certification
- Each business may receive up to \$500,000 in training assistance annually

A committee composed of the MDA executive director, the executive directors of other relevant state agencies, and key stakeholders will determine how these training funds will be awarded. Information regarding these new workforce training funds will be posted to MDA's website, mississippi.org, as more details become available.

MISSISSIPPI Locations & Expansions

January - March 2016

January 12

ACCO Brands – Booneville
\$159,000 Capital Investment
34 New Jobs



Officials from ACCO Brands, one of the world's largest suppliers of branded school, office and consumer products and print finishing solutions, announced a reshoring expansion project at the company's facility in Booneville, Miss. The project represents a corporate investment of more than \$159,000 and the creation of 34 jobs, which are being brought to Booneville from Manila, Philippines. The addition of the 34 jobs brings ACCO Brands' total employment in Booneville to 613.

January 13

Ajinomoto Windsor – Oakland
\$20 Million Capital Investment
60 New Jobs



Frozen food manufacturer Ajinomoto Windsor, formerly known as Windsor Foods, announced the company is expanding by adding a new production line at its facility in Oakland, Miss., in Yalobusha County. The project includes a corporate investment of more than \$20 million and will create 60 jobs. Ajinomoto Windsor located to its 140,000-square-foot facility in Oakland in 2007, creating 250 jobs. The company also added jobs in 2010 and 2013. Ajinomoto Windsor currently employs 312.

February 8

Topship - Gulfport
\$68 Million Capital Investment, 1,000 New Jobs



Edison Chouest Offshore, an offshore energy service and supply company, announced the company is locating shipbuilding operations at the Port of Gulfport in Gulfport, Miss. With a \$68 million corporate investment and the creation of 1,000 full-time jobs, Edison Chouest Offshore's new Gulfport operations, Topship, LLC, will be located at the Port of Gulfport's new inland port.

The company will be operating at the former Huntington Ingalls Composite Facility, which was acquired by the Port in March 2015.

February 8

Continental Tire – Hinds County
\$1.45 Billion Capital Investment
2,500 New Jobs



Continental Tire the Americas, LLC, manufacturer of passenger, light truck and commercial vehicle tires, is locating a commercial vehicle tire manufacturing plant near Clinton, Miss., in Hinds County. The project represents a corporate investment of \$1.45 billion and will create 2,500 new jobs. For the project, Continental will construct a multi-million-square-foot facility off I-20 West in Hinds County. Construction of the facility is scheduled to begin in January 2018.

February 10

Delta Furniture – Houlika
\$432,000 Capital Investment
100 New Jobs



Upholstered living room furniture manufacturer Delta Furniture Manufacturing is expanding by locating manufacturing operations in Houlika, Miss., in Chickasaw County. The company will locate in the 80,000-square-foot facility formerly occupied by Astrolounger. The project includes a corporate investment of \$432,000 and will create 100 jobs. Delta Furniture also has manufacturing operations in Pontotoc, Miss., where the company has 180 employees.

February 18

Post Consumer Brands – Byhalia
32 New Jobs



Post Consumer Brands, a consumer packaged goods company, located new distribution operations in Byhalia, Miss., in Marshall County. The project is creating at least 32 new jobs. A business unit of Post Holdings, Inc., located

its distribution operations in the 554,000-square-foot Spec Building II in the Gateway Global Logistics Center, which is located in the Chickasaw Trail Industrial Park.

March 3
**Sleepmade –
 Lowndes County**



\$1.415 Million Capital Investment, 50 New Jobs

Sleepmade, manufacturer of advanced sleep products, announced the company is investing \$1.415 million and creating 50 jobs by locating manufacturing and distribution operations in Lowndes County. Sleepmade is leasing 50,000 square feet of the At Home with Bassett facility, located on U.S. Highway 45 Alternate.

March 8
**Nammo Talley –
 Crawford**



\$500,000 Capital Investment
 12 Jobs

Ammunition manufacturer Nammo Talley has been awarded a five-year, \$97.2 million contract which will create 12 new jobs in Crawford, Miss., in Lowndes County. The contract is for the production of ammunition for the Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon system. Nammo Talley's Mississippi facility, situated on 640 acres, was specifically designed for the high-volume final assembly of shoulder-launched munitions like SMAW projectiles. The facility is also designed for high-rate pyrotechnic operations and storage.

March 16
**ROCKFON –
 Byhalia**



Groundbreaking, \$42 Million Capital Investment, 90 New Jobs

Less than four months after announcing plans to locate in Mississippi, officials from ROCKFON and state and local leaders broke ground on the company's \$42 million acoustic ceiling tile manufacturing plant in Marshall County, Miss. The new facility will employ 90 workers at full capacity. ROCKFON is constructing a 130,000-square-foot addition at the existing ROXUL facility Marshall

County, which is located on more than 100 acres in the Chickasaw Trails Industrial Park.

March 22
**BPI Packaging –
 DeSoto County**



\$8 Million Capital Investment
 150 New Jobs

Chemical blending and packaging company BPI Packaging, LLC, is locating operations in Olive Branch, Miss. The company plans to hire 150 people over three years. BPI Packaging of Memphis, Tennessee, will invest \$8 million, buying a 291,000-square-foot building formerly occupied by Sherwin Williams. BPI Packaging the company expects to open its Mississippi operations by June.

March 28
**Comfort Revolution –
 Tishomingo County**



\$1.5 Million Capital Investment
 50 New Jobs

Comfort Revolution, manufacturer of high-end sleep products, is creating 50 new jobs and investing \$1.5 million by expanding operations at its Belmont location. A leading developer and marketer of high-end, revolutionary mattresses, mattress toppers and pillows, Comfort Revolution announced in September 2012 it would locate operations in Belmont, creating 200 jobs.

March 28
**Billy's Original Foods –
 Warren County**



\$161,000 Capital Investment, 20 New Jobs

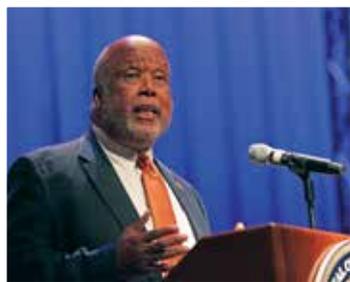
Officials from Billy's Original Foods announce the company is creating at least 25 jobs and investing \$511,000 in food production operations in Vicksburg, Miss. Billy's Original Foods is a manufacturer of artisan, ready-to-eat frozen Italian meals and deli products. Billy's Original Foods is locating operations in the 5,000-square-foot facility formerly occupied by Flooring Gallery. The company expects to begin production in May.



02.08.2016

Historic Teamwork & Record-setting Day

\$1.5+ Billion in Company Investment & 3,500 Jobs



Making History: Largest Single-Day Announcement in State's History



Governor Phil Bryant, MDA Executive Director Glenn McCullough, Jr. and MDA Financial Services Director Billy Klauser celebrate Continental Tire's selection of Mississippi

A room in the northeast quadrant of the Mississippi Governor's Mansion is a war room of sorts. Under Governor Phil Bryant, it's both his office and his trophy room. The surrounding walls hold a number of Bryant's firearms and hunting trophies, including deer, duck and bison.

On January 29, 2016, Governor Bryant waited for bigger game. The hunt for this trophy piece was two years in the making. Several times through the process, it had been very close. Likewise, on occasion, it looked like it might slip away.

When the seminal moment came, it was the ring of a telephone, not a rifle shot.

"Tim, that's great news," Bryant said on the phone. "This is a project

you know we've been working on for a long time. It's a project that's near and dear to my heart, and it's something I've been personally involved in for a couple of years.

"I'm going to put you on speaker phone, if you don't mind."

Bryant punched the button and introduced the other members of his hunting party – members of his staff and officials with the Mississippi Development Authority – to Tim Rogers, chief financial officer of Continental Tire the Americas.

"We were all anxiously sitting around to await the good news," Bryant said. "I've let them know, as you and I have just talked, we're going to have a tire plant in Mississippi."

"That's right, gentlemen," Rogers said. "As I was just telling the governor,

you're going to have a tire plant right in your back yard, and we're looking forward to it.

"As we like to say, you're going to have the best tire plant in the Continental universe."

The anxiousness of whether Mississippi would land the Continental project, its \$1.45 billion of corporate investment and 2,500 new jobs dissipated quickly. Acknowledging Continental could have taken the project anywhere in the world – and certainly, there had been stiff competition – Bryant thanked Rogers for selecting Mississippi.

Of the two projects comprising the single-largest day of economic development announcements in Mississippi history, Continental was the largest in terms of investment and jobs. The other project, Topship, LLC, a venture in Gulfport by Edison Chouest Offshore, represented another \$68 million corporate investment and 1,000 more full-time jobs.

The next step – getting the necessary legislation approved – was essential and already well underway. Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves, House Speaker Philip Gunn and key committee chairmen were already briefed, and the wheels were in motion to brief the remaining members of the Mississippi Legislature.

On February 4, lawmakers took less than a day to overwhelmingly approve the \$274 million incentive package covering site acquisition and site preparation, infrastructure

improvements and workforce training for both projects.



*Gary Chouest,
President
Edison Chouest -
Topship*

Topship, LLC, will be located at the Port of Gulfport's new inland port on Seaway Road. The company will operate at the former Huntington Ingalls Composite Facility, which was acquired by the Port in March 2015.

Landing the Edison Chouest Offshore project in Gulfport was personal for Gary Chouest on a couple of levels. On one hand, it was a homecoming for the company's chief executive officer born in Bay St. Louis and raised in Kiln. On the other hand, the genesis of the idea to locate the company's Topship facility in Mississippi came during a hunting trip with Governor Bryant.

With a family-owned global maritime company based in Louisiana, Chouest's Topship plans are focused, not on where the oil industry is now, but where it will be years down the road.

*Paul Williams,
Executive Vice
President
Continental Tire
North America*

“What we execute today is laying the groundwork for when this industry turns around,” he told a crowd gathered for official announcement in Gulfport February 8. “We want to be in the position as a team to beat everybody else in the world.”

Chouest was especially complimentary of what both the state and the Mississippi Gulf Coast has to offer.

“As we have already learned in the operation of our Gulf Ship facility, the Gulfport region will provide us access to a quality workforce,” he said. “We appreciate the cooperation and support of the Port of Gulfport and state and local officials who are providing a business-friendly environment to grow our company.”

The location, with access to the Port of Gulfport’s modernized, deepwater draft facility, provides Topship room to grow and diversify.

“We know we’ll do shipbuilding,” Chouest said. “It’s just a matter of to what extent. But the property itself is large enough to support many other facets of the offshore industry besides shipbuilding, and that’s one of the reasons we selected to invest there.

“We are indeed excited about the opportunities to grow Topship in a business friendly state, one where we can reach out into the community to recruit various skill sets, developing a quality workforce that will allow Topship not only to compete locally, but also globally,” Chouest said. “With the help of the state of Mississippi, we will modify our Topship facility to become one of the safest and most

efficient shipyards in the nation, building Chouest pride for our employees.”

As a parting note, he added, “Born in Mississippi, I am back home.”



Continental Tire North America Executive Vice President Paul Williams was equally bullish on a Mississippi location. After the fanfare at the Clinton High School auditorium, he rattled off a litany of reasons the company chose Mississippi, the available talent pool and workforce training.

“There were a lot of different reasons to locate in Mississippi,” he said. “Logistically, Mississippi is in the right area, with access to our markets. The skill level was another attraction.

“And, at the moment, we’re starting with truck tires,” he said. “Ultimately, because of the site size, we’ll have the possibility of making passenger car tires and big off-the-road-truck-size tires. That’s a possibility in the short future.”

Momentum:

Optimizing our **Formula for Success**

On February 8th, Mississippi celebrated its largest single-day, economic development success in state history with the announcement of two major projects. Continental Tire the Americas, LLC, and Edison Chouest Offshore's Topship, LLC will invest more than \$1.5 billion and create 3,500 jobs with an average annual salary of \$40,000.

In terms of economic development, Mississippi is winning with people, process and product. However, in the wake of such a tremendous day of announcements, and considering the trajectory of economic development in our state at this time, Mississippi is adding another dynamic to the formula: momentum.

Under the leadership of Gov. Phil Bryant, Mississippi has the right people in place to continue successes in economic development. Gov. Bryant, along with the team at the Mississippi Development Authority, aggressively pursues quality job creation projects from both large industries and small manufacturers. In fact, 62 percent of the MDA-assisted projects in 2015 were for businesses adding or retaining less than 100 jobs.

Process and product are topics we consistently re-examine and refine at MDA. We're always vigilant for more effective ways to connect to prospective industries, as well as ways to help new and existing industries through site selection, incentive plans, and strategic relationships. We work collaboratively with other state agencies, including the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Mississippi

Department of Employment Security, and Mississippi Department of Transportation, who are great partners in our economic development.

We have positive momentum, and we will take full advantage of the opportunities it provides. Mississippi was the sixth largest tire manufacturing state in the nation before the addition of Continental Tire. Placing Topship in Gulfport increases the state's already-strong credentials in the shipbuilding arena. Like Nissan, Toyota, General Electric, Rolls Royce, Raytheon, Caterpillar, and Northrop Grumman, Mississippi's newest industrial partners shine a global spotlight on the thriving business climate Mississippi offers.

High profile companies adding jobs that provide careers in Mississippi is a powerful attraction to industry leaders and site selectors looking for advantageous locations. We're committed to optimizing this opportunity to showcase Mississippi's top-notch workforce, and it's second-to-none community college system, essential to our workforce training. Our business-friendly regulatory environment also grabs the attention of prospective industries. Mississippi ranks in the Top 5 in the country for cost of living, the overall cost of doing business, labor costs, export growth, most favorable regulatory environment, permitting speed and a litany of other advantages to bring more high-quality jobs to our state.

Mississippi is committed to accelerating the growth of our economy and creating exciting new career opportunities for the people of our state.



by **Glenn McCullough, Jr.**

MDA Executive Director



Interview with **Bob Alley**

General Manager of Manufacturing
ACCO Brands



Q: ACCO Brands has expanded its Booneville operations several times. What are some of the distinct business advantages ACCO Brands has found in Mississippi?

A: From an overall business support standpoint, the partnership, cooperation, and commitment that has evolved between the state of Mississippi, the Prentiss County Development Association and ACCO Brands cannot be understated.

Over the past 10 years, we have gone through several periods of expansion in Mississippi and in every instance the state has worked closely with us in order to understand our business needs and to develop plans to assist our organization in realizing its financial objectives.

Q: How critical has Mississippi's infrastructure been in ACCO Brand's business success?

A: From an operations perspective, we tend to manufacture and distribute large/bulky consumer products; therefore, logistics, labor, and access to a qualified work force are very important considerations for us. Given the fact that Mississippi is centrally/geographically located, it gives us a distinct advantage in distribution expense, speed to market and cost competitiveness that we would not be able to enjoy otherwise.

Interview Q&A

Q: What has been ACCO's experience with workforce development in Mississippi?

A: We have found a lot of highly educated, talented people that we could tap into to grow our operations, and we have been pleasantly surprised with everything that Mississippi has had to offer.

Whether it has been partnering with Northeast Community College or Mississippi State, we have found a unique set of individuals within both of these institutions to assist us in developing internship programs and technical partnerships to help us train and develop our workforce.

Some of the new equipment we've recently installed involves more automation and technical skill to operate and we've worked closely with the community college to develop

training programs specifically designed for the type of equipment we have. We've been able to set up curriculums, whether it's electrical or maintenance, they can teach in their classrooms.

Overall, we can't say enough about the individuals we have found in Mississippi. Whether it's their competitiveness, their drive to do better, their cooperation, their willingness to be teammates, their willingness to compete in modern-day manufacturing, their commitment, or their work ethic, we have found the workers to be outstanding.

Q: What would you tell other companies who might be considering establishing their business in Mississippi?

A: As we look for employees and look for the talents we need, we've been able to find them. Mississippi offers a great workforce. I think the state and the local community are more than supportive in doing the things they need to do in order to assist companies to be competitive and the location/geographic advantages offered by Mississippi are great competitive advantages.



***ACCO Brands in
Mississippi Works***

***Let us help write
your success story.***

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Join the growing group of companies who call Mississippi home



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