

THE JACKSON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



"To develop and maintain an economic climate, which creates and retains jobs and enhances the quality of life for all citizens of Jackson/Madison County and West Tennessee."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2010

Chamber receives \$500K from the state for regional economic developments

JACKSON, Tennessee — Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development Commissioner Matthew Kisber announced today that the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce will receive a \$500,000 grant from the state of Tennessee to launch a regional economic development partnership. The regional effort will focus on marketing and branding the region with emphasis placed on the West Tennessee Megasite. Kisber made the announcement while speaking at the Chamber's Quarterly Membership Breakfast on Sept. 8 at the Doubletree Hotel in Jackson.

"The megasite has the potential to truly transform rural West Tennessee," Kisber said. "We anticipate this regional partnership will take a leadership role in responding to requests for information about the megasite and the region, marketing its assets and working with existing industry to focus workforce development efforts in order to make West Tennessee businesses globally competitive."

Chamber President/CEO Kyle Spurgeon said it is imperative that the region work together more effectively to enhance the economic development opportunities in the region.

"This grant will kick start a regional effort that will not only support marketing of the West Tennessee Megasite, but will also support a more cohesive effort toward existing industry relations and branding of the entire region," Spurgeon said.

Kisber, who has helped lead Tennessee in securing four \$1 billion dollar projects within a one-year time frame, said successful partnerships lead to new jobs and capital investments. The grant will also help prepare West Tennessee to "hit the ground running when new industry is looking to locate here," he said.

"Unemployment in the region of this state has historically been higher than the rest of the state," Kisber said. "This partnership will help push higher education, attainment of better schools....It will lead to a vibrant regional economy with a brighter future for young people..."

West Tennessee can become a destination that will attract more workers and young families, Kisber said. He said the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development as well as the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce will begin drafting a memorandum of understanding that will outline the grant agreement to clarify objectives and instill transparency in the process. Kisber anticipates the agreement will be finalized by the end of 2010.

"My hope for this region – my hometown – is that our community will be able to put aside our partisanship ... for the common goal of a better future," Kisber said.

CONTACT

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About the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce:

The Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1905 – seven years prior to the United States Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber consists of a diverse and talented staff, an executive committee, dedicated volunteers, and more than 1,350 business members – all committed to growing the economy and quality of life for everyone in Madison County and the region.

About the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development:

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development’s mission is to create higher skilled, better paying jobs for all Tennesseans. The department seeks to attract new corporate investment in Tennessee and works with Tennessee companies to facilitate expansion and economic growth. To find out more, go to www.tn.gov/ecd or www.investtennessee.org.

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