

**RESOLUTION**  
**APPROVING THE 2020 - 2021**  
**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) UPDATE**  
**EAST CENTRAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of East Central Planning and Development District, Inc. met on December 8, 2020 in Newton, Mississippi; and

**WHEREAS**, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration requires the preparation and adoption of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update to meet the requirements for designation as an Economic Development District and to qualify for assistance under the public works, economic adjustment and planning programs of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors has reviewed the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update and acknowledges that it is consistent with the requirements of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update is located on East Central Planning and Development District, Inc.'s website at [www.ecpdd.org](http://www.ecpdd.org).

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the East Central Planning and Development District Board of Directors do hereby authorize and support the submission of the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

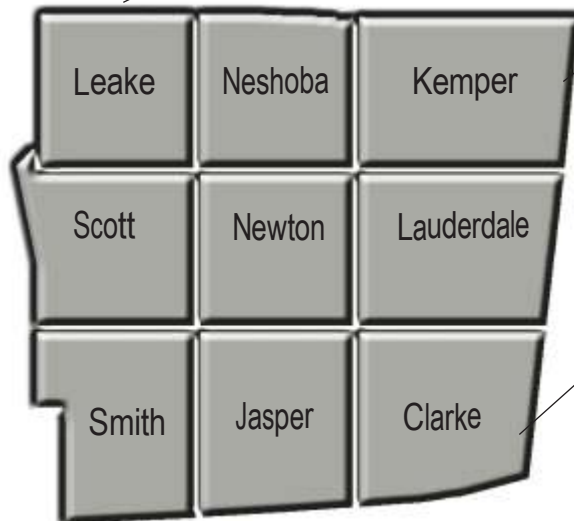
ATTESTED BY:

  
Wilson Hallman, President

December 8, 2020

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Date

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Update



**East Central Planning and Development District**

October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

**East Central Planning and Development District  
Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update  
October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021**

**Introduction:**

The primary function of East Central Planning and Development District (ECPDD) is to promote organized economic development on a multi-county basis. The District’s role in economic development varies widely from planning, obtaining funding, and implementing basic infrastructure to actually working with industry and local units of governments to help determine and meet their common needs and goals. In essence, the District provides a wide array of professional services and technical assistance for local units of governments in working with existing and new companies, and in preparing for economic development.

The District administers projects and programs for several federal and state agencies, including the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), including the MS Council on Aging.

Analyzing problems and potentials of the multi-county area and outlining goals and strategy for attaining these goals is part of the District’s economic development process. The District’s Comprehensive Economic Strategy, approved by the Economic Development Administration, qualifies member counties for the full range of EDA programs. Identifying existing resources, assessing needs, and securing funds from federal and state levels to enhance the economic development of the areas is another role of the District.

It is important to highlight the various elements of the District that affects the growth potential and the elements that are critical for growth. The District area has had a decline in population, an increase in the per capita income, a significant change in the poverty level, increase in the labor force, high unemployment rates as a result of COVID-19 and job losses, and plant closures.

**Regional Analysis:**

The population for the East Central area declined 2.2% in a three (3) year period. The population decline was reported as follows:

| <b>County</b>     | <b>2016</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Clarke</b>     | 15,888      | 15,541      |
| <b>Jasper</b>     | 16,578      | 16,383      |
| <b>Kemper</b>     | 9,896       | 9,742       |
| <b>Lauderdale</b> | 77,755      | 74,125      |

|                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Leake</b>   | 22,620         | 22,786         |
| <b>Neshoba</b> | 29,403         | 29,118         |
| <b>Newton</b>  | 21,588         | 21,081         |
| <b>Scott</b>   | 28,207         | 28,124         |
| <b>Smith</b>   | 15,909         | 15,916         |
| <b>ECPDD</b>   | <b>237,844</b> | <b>232,753</b> |

Source: StatsAmerica, USA Counties in Profile

As related to the 2010 Census, the East Central area had a “Final Self-Response Rate” that is below the National Self-Response Rate. The following are the East Central Area Self-Response rates:

| <b>Final Self-Response Rate</b> |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Newton County</b>            | 60.2% |
| <b>Leake County</b>             | 59.0% |
| <b>Lauderdale County</b>        | 58.6% |
| <b>Neshoba County</b>           | 57.8% |
| <b>Scott County</b>             | 56.6% |
| <b>Clarke County</b>            | 54.9% |
| <b>Kemper County</b>            | 50.4% |
| <b>Smith County</b>             | 47.2% |
| <b>Jasper County</b>            | 40.4% |
| <b>State of Mississippi</b>     | 60.4% |
| <b>USA</b>                      | 67.0% |

Source: United States Census 2020, Shape Your Future

The per capita income of the District increased in a four-year period by \$4,422.34 or 12.18%. Per County, the per capita income increases were as follows:

|                          | <b>2015</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Clarke County</b>     | \$35,778    | \$38,735    |
| <b>Jasper County</b>     | \$34,409    | \$39,699    |
| <b>Kemper County</b>     | \$27,575    | \$30,021    |
| <b>Lauderdale County</b> | \$34,964    | \$39,359    |
| <b>Leake County</b>      | \$27,283    | \$31,441    |
| <b>Neshoba County</b>    | \$34,051    | \$36,785    |
| <b>Newton County</b>     | \$31,690    | \$35,563    |
| <b>Scott County</b>      | \$29,133    | \$31,585    |
| <b>Smith County</b>      | \$32,043    | \$35,445    |
| <b>Mississippi</b>       | \$21,057    | \$38,914    |
| <b>USA</b>               | \$28,930    | \$54,490    |
| <b>ECPDD</b>             | \$31,880.66 | \$36,303    |

Source: StatsAmerica, USA Counties in Profile

The poverty level for the District area is a distressed factor and all attempts should be made to increase the income and decrease the poverty level of the District.

|                          | <b>2015</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Clarke County</b>     | 21.8        | 21.6        |
| <b>Jasper County</b>     | 22.8        | 19.0        |
| <b>Kemper County</b>     | 31.9        | 27.5        |
| <b>Lauderdale County</b> | 22.0        | 25.5        |
| <b>Leake County</b>      | 24.3        | 24.4        |
| <b>Neshoba County</b>    | 25.5        | 26.9        |
| <b>Newton County</b>     | 22.7        | 21.2        |
| <b>Scott County</b>      | 21.7        | 25.5        |
| <b>Smith County</b>      | 19.5        | 16.8        |
| <b>ECPDD</b>             | 23.6        | 24.4        |

Source: StatsAmerica, USA Counties in Profile

The above data represents the poverty level of the counties in the District area. The District has determined the need for jobs, increase in educational attainment of the area, and to provide training opportunities and programs to increase the livable wages for the District area. The labor force of the District area has increased over the three-year period.

|                          | <b>2016</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Clarke County</b>     | 5,665       | 5,923       |
| <b>Jasper County</b>     | 5,702       | 6,185       |
| <b>Kemper County</b>     | 3,244       | 3,555       |
| <b>Lauderdale County</b> | 29,974      | 30,536      |
| <b>Leake County</b>      | 7,318       | 7,968       |
| <b>Neshoba County</b>    | 10,095      | 10,244      |
| <b>Newton County</b>     | 8,152       | 8,856       |
| <b>Scott County</b>      | 12,746      | 12,721      |
| <b>Smith County</b>      | 6,428       | 6,822       |
| <b>ECPDD</b>             | 89,324      | 92,810      |

Source: StatsAmerica, USA Counties in Profile

As a result of COVID-19, there was spike in unemployment in the area, the following represents the unemployment rates for 2015-2020.

|                          | <b>2015</b> | <b>2019</b> | <b>2020</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Clarke County</b>     | 5.3         | 6.2         | 13.5        |
| <b>Jasper County</b>     | 5.4         | 6.8         | 11.4        |
| <b>Kemper County</b>     | 7.0         | 8.0         | 14.2        |
| <b>Lauderdale County</b> | 4.5         | 5.5         | 12.5        |
| <b>Leake County</b>      | 4.5         | 5.5         | 14.0        |

|                       |     |     |      |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| <b>Neshoba County</b> | 4.5 | 5.9 | 17.9 |
| <b>Newton County</b>  | 4.4 | 5.5 | 13.4 |
| <b>Scott County</b>   | 3.8 | 4.5 | 9.9  |
| <b>Smith County</b>   | 4.0 | 5.2 | 7.8  |

Source: Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2020

The District had five (5) companies to have layoffs or closure during Covid-19. The listing is below:

**Business Layoffs/Closures in the East Central PDD Area\*  
October 2019 – September 2020**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>County</b> | <b>Company</b>                 | <b>Industry Type</b>                             | <b>Layoff/Closure</b> | <b># Employees</b> | <b>Reason</b>                    |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4/17/2020   | Neshoba       | MBCI-Chahta Enterprises        | Non-Current Carrying Wiring Device Manufacturing | Layoff                | 14                 | Temporary layoff due to COVID-19 |
| 4/17/2020   | Lauderdale    | Aslane's Mission               | Thrift Shop, Used Merchandise                    | Layoff                | 4                  | Temporary layoff due to COVID-19 |
| 4/21/2020   | Neshoba       | Neshoba County Animal Hospital | Veterinary Services                              | Layoff                | 9                  | Temporary layoff due to COVID-19 |
| 4/24/2020   | Lauderdale    | J&C Auto & Towing              | Motor Vehicle Towing                             | Layoff                | 3                  | Temporary layoff due to COVID-19 |
| 6/04/2020   | Newton        | La-Z-Boy South Newton          | Furniture Manufacturing                          | Closure               | 300                | Permanent layoff due to COVID-19 |

\*Source: Twin District Workforce Development Area, 2020

The following are a listing by goals and objectives that reflects the summary of funds received in the year (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020) toward implementing the 2017 CEDS:

**Goal #1: Develop and maintain infrastructure to support long-term economic and community development.**

*Objective: Improve rural water and sewer systems, build access roads, industrial parks, air access, rail access, roads and bridges.*

Projects were approved in FY2020 related to the above objective, totaled \$4,081,132.00 (Federal \$3,477,132.00; local \$604,000.00).

*Objective: Enhance rural fire protection by working with county fire departments to create fire districts and provide equipment, training, and facilities to obtain lower fire ratings for as many areas as possible.*

Fire protection related projects were approved in the amount of \$883,600.00 (Federal funds).

*Objective: Enhance downtown revitalization efforts to recreate viable downtown business districts.*

Total funds received related to this project was \$570,800.00 (Federal \$465,400.00; local; \$105,400.00)

**Goal #2: Create effective partnerships for economic growth and expansion.**

*Objective: Identify, assess, and cleanup defined brownfields in the District area.*

District staff completed the implementation of the EDA Brownfield grant, which identifies properties that were assessed for hazardous substances and petroleum substances. As a result of the assessment, several properties are being redeveloped and private and public dollars are being invested in the District area.

*Objective: Promotion of the revolving loan fund programs, workforce programs, and other funding programs to assist with the implementation of the above goals.*

Two revolving loan projects were approved totaling \$710,000.00 which also result in job creation and increase in tax revenue.

*Objective: Work with counties and municipalities to build partnerships and strategies to strengthen local and regional development efforts.*

The District will coordinate the implementation of an \$850,091.00 project to provide homebuyers assistance to approximately 48 families with emphasis on providing services to persons with disabilities.

**Goal #3: Emphasize workforce development and education to help qualify for and attract higher skilled, better paying employment opportunities.**

*Objective: Continue to work with employers to determine manpower needs for businesses and industries and to provide training for potential employees.*

District staff, through the Twin Districts Workforce Development Area (TDWDA), continues to work with local industries to provide information about On-The-Job Training Programs that are available. Additionally, assistance and programs that are available through the local WIN Job Center are provided.

**Goal #4: Strengthen our communities through a network of services, amenities, and institutions to provide for essential human needs and to support the quality of life.**

*Objective: Improve law enforcement, crime prevention, highway safety, and drug abuse education and prevention programs.*

Approximately \$471,898.38 was provided to the local law enforcement agencies for the above objective. Additional \$134,413.60 in CARES funds were made available to the local units of government.

*Objective: Establish cultural centers and recreational parks throughout the District.*

Funds from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks in the amount of \$150,000.00 were provided to the District area.

*Objective: Promote adequate non-emergency transportation for rural poor and elderly.*

East Central Area Agency on Aging provides transportation services to the elderly/disabled persons who live within the nine-county area. The purpose of this program is to maintain the independence of the elderly/disabled persons for as long as possible by promoting access to available services in the community. Service activities include providing transportation for the following purposes: medical and/or dental treatment, social service and other related agencies/functions, personal care needs, nutrition sites, grocery shopping, etc.

**Vital projects completed from the 2017 CEDS.**

*Objective: Improve access to broadband and fiber optic services to enhance tele-medicine and distance learning opportunities in rural areas.*

USDA awarded TEC, a Bay Springs home-based company over \$4.6 million to help provide dependable high-speed internet to rural areas in east central Mississippi.



The USDA grant was for \$4692,817.00 and TEC provided \$2,603,098 for an overall investment of \$7,295,915.00. The project will involve TEC running approximately 200 miles of “fiber” and is expected to bring dependable high-speed internet services to over 1,500 homes and businesses in the project area.

East Mississippi Electrical Power Association (EMEPA) was awarded a \$5.4 million grant to fund high-speed internet access to Southeast Lauderdale, Northeast Clarke, and West Kemper County area (east central Mississippi). EMEPA will match the project with \$8.3 million for a total cost of \$13.7 million.

*Objective: Identify, assess, and cleanup defined brownfields in the District area.*

East Central PDD received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant in the amount of \$299,700.00 to complete an assessment of Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Substance. The project was completed in September of 2020. Nine (9) Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, eight (8) Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, and one (1) Phase III Environmental Assessments were completed.

*Objective: Coordinate partnerships between community-based organizations and local communities to improve the quality of life of all local residents.*

District staff assisted in stressing the importance of the Census with local units of governments and to highlight participation in the Decennial Census by encouraging local residents to participate in the completion of the 2020 Census forms. The District’s population has decreased by approximately 4,000 persons in the last five- year period. Increased community support for and participation in the 2020 Census will help achieve a more accurate population count.

The goal of the District’s participation was to increase and obtain a better population count and increase participation in the Census 2020, which impacts federal and local funding and formulas.

### **Vital Projects (FY 2021):**

The following are additions to the ECPDD CEDS Update and is added under Vital Projects:

- Industrial Development Sites (development improvements and expansion):

- Clarke County – Site work at the existing industrial park
  - Smith County – Purchase and develop land for industrial sites in Polkville, Raleigh and Taylorsville
- Building Renovation and Improvements:
- Jasper County – Renovation of vacant industrial building to be used for the expansion of an existing industry.
  - Jasper County – Construction of a new, modern headquarter for an existing industry
  - Kemper County – Renovation of an existing industrial building for industry development and job creation
  - Meridian Community College (Lauderdale County) – Renovation of existing building to be used as a Transportation Training Center for automotive, diesel, and aviation repair
  - Neshoba County – Renovation of an existing building for a prospective industry
  - Newton County – Renovation of closed hospital to be used as a medical facility
  - Development of a Study to determine feasibility of an industry expanding to Kemper County
  - Development of a Master Plan for Meridian Community College

**Possible Funding Sources:**

The following have been identified as funding sources for the above projects:

- Mississippi Development Authority's Small Municipality and Limited Population Counties (SMLPC)
- Mississippi Development Infrastructure (DIP)
- Mississippi Development Authority's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Delta Regional Authority (DRA)
- Mississippi Capital Improvements (CAP), and other state and local Bond programs