



134 East Amite Street
Jackson, MS 39201
www.fndmidsouth.org

Chris Crothers, Communications Director
601.863.0483
ccrothers@fndmidsouth.org

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AWARDED IN LEFLORE COUNTY
Communities of Opportunity Initiative awards grants totaling \$1,365,500 for
community improvement efforts.

JACKSON MISSISSIPPI JULY 21, 2008 The Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) announced today the recipients of two grants in Leflore County totaling \$1,368,500 through its Communities of Opportunity (COO) Initiative. The initiative was created to help residents in Leflore County institute and sustain positive change in their own communities. A key aspect of the initiative has been to establish and support an inclusive decision-making and planning process where all community stakeholders become unified in the pursuit of common goals.

The organizations receiving funding are:

- Leflore County Public Schools (\$1,128,000)
- Greenwood Main Street (\$240,500)

The **Leflore County Public School District** will use its funds to initiate a comprehensive school improvement and professional development program. Through this program, the Leflore County Mississippi School District seeks to improve student learning and achievement and significantly improve teacher quality and leadership in public schools K-12.

Specifically, the program will (1) provide teachers with quality coaching to strengthen their core classroom ability and pedagogical knowledge, and (2) seek to improve student achievement while increasing the rigor of the curriculum in the classroom.

“The grant award,” said Mrs. Jean Hall, Leflore County School District Superintendent, “will allow the Leflore County School District to ‘Engage Every Learner’ in our goal to increase student achievement.” She further stressed that all residents in Leflore County will benefit because of the positive effects of high-quality education on community life.

The award to **Main Street Greenwood** will help expand its façade-improvement grant program. Specifically, the funds from this grant will provide financial assistance for exterior appearance improvement projects on buildings located in the Johnson/Carrollton District.

--- more ---

One of the anticipated outcomes is an increase in the number of small businesses in the downtown area, particularly minority-owned businesses. Another expected outcome is an improved and attractive downtown area that will benefit existing businesses, as well as encourage new businesses to relocate to the area. The façade-improvement grant program will require a match from interested property owners who meet the program's criteria.

About the Communities of Opportunity Initiative

FMS believes in the ability of residents to improve communities—all that is needed is some help. In specific geographic areas, the foundation has created Communities of Opportunity to provide a spark to help residents become advocates and agents for change. By strategically attracting, coordinating, and mobilizing resources (both human and financial), locally-based, resident-driven projects can be extremely effective as a mechanism to improve the health and vitality of communities.

COO is a model for community revitalization that seeks greater impact through collaboration between residents and stakeholders to achieve sustainable, long-term, comprehensive community transformation. The initiative challenges the manner through which philanthropy traditionally uses its assets—not just money but also its influence—to attract and align investment (and reinvestment) in communities.

About the Foundation for the Mid South

The Foundation for the Mid South is a regional foundation that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. FMS invests in people and strategies that help to create the conditions where change can occur in the Mid South. The foundation seeks to strengthen communities by attracting and mobilizing resources to improve the quality of life for all Mid Southerners.

--- ### ---