THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Measuring the Success of Freight-Based Economic Development

The Columbus Lowndes County Development Link (the Link), located in Mississippi's Golden Triangle, has adopted the Policom Corporation Economic Strength Rankings to evaluate the success of it economic development efforts. The rankings of Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas attempts to measure the condition of a region's economy and the standard of living. The rankings are based on 24 metrics broken down by groups that attempt to capture the quality of the economy (e.g., jobs, wages, and income), how the economy is behaving (e.g., retail and construction numbers), and negative factors (e.g., welfare and Medicaid payments). Based on these national rankings, the Links industrial attraction efforts that leverage its multi-modal transportation infrastructure have moved the area from the nation's 374th ranked micropolitatian area in 2004 to 57th today. Making it one of the few Mississippi areas to move up the national rankings (See chart). The area has attracted over $4 billion in investment including Severstal, Eurocopter, and Paccar. One of the keys to the region's success has been the integration of its railroads, inland waterways, and road and it is an example of successful freight-based economic development.

									Ranking
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**Change**
Columbus, MS (McrSA)	374	322	257	211	174	100	77	57	85%
Laurel, MS (McrSA)	110	110	83	117	113	103	134	88	20%
Greenwood, MS (McrSA)	482	493	483	476	490	444	451	455	6%
Natchez, MS-LA (McrSA)	498	515	499	525	496	470	497	480	4%
Cleveland, MS (McrSA)	532	556	555	558	554	535	548	530	0%
Corinth, MS (McrSA)	319	337	334	375	405	350	345	322	-1%
Yazoo City, MS (McrSA)	509	525	537	533	520	528	531	536	-5%
Meridian, MS (McrSA)	138	92	55	87	161	221	131	147	-7%
Indianola, MS (McrSA)	526	554	565	574	575	573	573	568	-8%
West Point, MS (McrSA)	370	345	426	466	467	481	355	406	-10%
Jackson, MS (MSA)	72	83	60	69	83	91	106	81	-13%
Vicksburg, MS (McrSA)	89	65	38	59	62	66	46	102	-15%
Grenada, MS (McrSA)	468	462	403	407	394	464	536	549	-17%
Hattiesburg, MS (MSA)	230	247	284	308	287	317	305	271	-18%
Greenville, MS (McrSA)	465	508	468	517	512	511	559	561	-21%
Clarksdale, MS (McrSA)	442	497	539	551	557	561	569	567	-28%
Gulfport-Biloxi, MS (MSA)	198	223	263	324	353	350	302	267	-35%

Oxford, MS (McrSA)	14	38	41	35	57	67	42	26	-86%
McComb, MS (McrSA)	214	257	323	364	425	484	422	459	-114%
Starkville, MS (McrSA)	54	93	142	165	233	218	120	150	-178%
Picayune, MS (McrSA)	129	184	258	313	406	485	387	395	-206%
Tupelo, MS (McrSA)	18	34	35	58	60	84	124	104	-478%
Brookhaven, MS (McrSA)	31	49	97	121	180	226	216	210	-577%
Memphis, TN-MS-AR (MSA)	2	25	12	17	37	39	46	56	-2700%