



“Destination Education” Urges Mississippians to Work Together

Initiative challenges business leaders, others to get on board

In response to a recent report spotlighting shortfalls in the state’s education system, Entergy Mississippi is challenging private business and industry leaders to get on board.

With its “Destination Education” initiative, the company is making Mississippians aware of educational and economic challenges while pledging to support state efforts aimed at improvements. In addition, Entergy is encouraging its employees to get involved.

“We have witnessed time and time again the power of positive partnerships,” said Entergy Mississippi President Carolyn Shanks. “Now, more than ever before, Mississippians must come together in developing solutions that improve our state’s educational system. It is clear that our economic future depends on it.”

In its recent report, “Miles to Go Mississippi,” the Southern Education Foundation of Atlanta draws a direct correlation between the quality of education for Mississippi’s children and the state’s potential for economic growth.

Entergy, which commissioned the study, is pledging resources to support new steps being taken by the state to significantly reduce the number of high school dropouts, broaden workforce

training opportunities, and fund early childhood education. Moreover, the company is calling on other businesses to take similar actions.

“If Mississippi has miles to go to a better education system and therefore, a better Mississippi,” said Shanks, “then ‘Destination

Education’ is a good way to show how private partnership can speed us toward that goal.

“It’s time for every leader in the business community to get on board for the sake of Mississippi’s children and the future of Mississippi,” she said. “By implementing actionable initiatives and supporting state programs, we can

help Mississippi better reach its goal.”

Entergy employees currently contribute in a variety of ways, including participation in the Mississippi Scholars program in which business leaders volunteer time to encourage students to participate in more challenging curriculums, adopt-a-school programs, and mentoring programs throughout its service area.

“Destination Education” furthers this commitment by encouraging Entergy employees to become more involved in their own children’s educations by using

company time to participate in school programs like parent-teacher organizations.



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Entergy Mississippi Goes to Great Lengths to Provide Reliable Service

Vegetation management often a tall order

What better way to trim the leaves and branches of very tall trees than with a herd of giraffes?

With sights on intensifying its service reliability efforts, Entergy Mississippi is calling on 10 Jarraffs (pronounced “giraffes”) to perform key vegetation control activities. The off-road vehicles, which share many of the signature features of their counterparts in the animal kingdom, are used to effectively maintain distribution lines throughout the company’s service area.

Manufactured by the Minnesota-based Jarraff company, the machines allow access to the most difficult areas for tree-trimming.

“Keeping our lines clear of vegetation is the single most important contributor to reliable service,” said Robert Clark, supervisor of vegetation management for Entergy Mississippi. “Jarraffs are key to our success in that effort.”



Since Entergy Mississippi stepped up its tree-trimming program in 1998 to improve customer service and reliability, outages have decreased 41 percent and customer interruptions have fallen 32 percent.

CONTINUED

Entergy Mississippi Preps Community Leaders

Training aimed at sharpening economic development efforts

As part of its ongoing efforts to give local communities a global mindset and competitive edge for recruiting new industry, Entergy Mississippi recently sponsored a series of Community Preparedness workshops throughout its service area.

The workshops were facilitated by Carol Johnson, principal of a Georgia-based consulting company known for its work with economic development groups throughout the Southeast. Emphasis was given to enhancing the recruiting skills of local economic development leaders.

applications to prepare trainees to land business prospects.

"To be successful, a community must have a compelling product and an enthusiastic and prepared recruiting team to attract prospects and to zero in on their specific needs and requirements," Turner said. "This training was an inventive way for people to learn and practice skills that will help them identify the critical issues and delegate roles and responsibilities."

Participating were members of the Metro Economic Development Association,



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"Through our work with potential new industries, we have learned much about the recruiting process and what is expected from communities," said John Turner, director of economic development for Entergy Mississippi. "By offering this training to local leaders, we hope to provide a critical tool in encouraging new industry."

Volunteers and staff members from regional economic development groups, regional office representatives of the Mississippi Development Authority, and local leaders benefited from the series of two-day courses which employ role-playing, team breakouts, and practical

Mississippi Delta Developers Association, and the Southwest Mississippi Partnership.

Participants were challenged to thoroughly evaluate their communities to identify strengths, unique characteristics, and obstacles to success. They also learned how to communicate with prospects, create persuasive sales presentations, and build strong recruiting teams.

"New industry can spur improvements in economic growth, jobs, education, and quality of life," said Turner. "That's why Entergy has always viewed economic development as part of our commitment to strengthening the communities we serve."

"Great Lengths" CONTINUED

Equipped with long, slender "necks" that can reach tall treetops, Jarraffs are agile in areas where bucket trucks have difficulty maneuvering. Affixed to the telescoping boom is a circular saw which makes quick work of vegetation encroaching upon electrical lines.

The vehicles move easily up and down hills and can trim a mile of vegetation a day compared with the slower pace of a bucket truck, which covers about a quarter of a mile per day. Jarraffs are ideal for use in heavily wooded areas and along highways.

Mississippi's long and active growing season requires that trimming and the regular application of herbicides be performed year-round. Entergy's vegetation control crews follow the National Arbor Day Foundation's best practices and guidelines in tree trimming.

Much attention is now being given to trees which sustained damage after Hurricane Katrina. Crews are removing dead and dying trees so that future storms won't blow them onto wires and electrical equipment.

"Vegetation management is an ongoing investment in better service," Clark said. "Jarraffs do a great job helping Entergy Mississippi provide that service to customers."

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Editorial Staff:

Checky Herrington
Ann Day Becker
Nicole Bradshaw

Direct suggestions or inquiries to:

Entergy Communications
PO Box 1640
Jackson, MS 39215-1640



"Destination Education" CONTINUED

"Our children deserve the opportunity to receive solid educations and earn good livings," Shanks said. "And Mississippi business and industry are dependent on their contributions.

"'Destination Education' is a way of helping get Mississippi's education system on track," said Shanks, "and by doing so, creates a better place to work and live."