



Jackson T. Dunn
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To: Lisa Green/OPD/EOP@EOP

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Subject: Can you call me about this -

**Wayne Leonard remarks for
ECD Check Presentation Press Conference
Jackson, Mississippi, September 24, 1999**

Thank you Carolyn

I am very excited about the program Entergy is launching today, providing a \$5 million investment in the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta. And I congratulate Bill Bynum for the work he has done with ECD in attracting businesses and new capital to the Mississippi River Delta region.

Today's announcement is another step forward in President Clinton's New Markets Initiative for the Mississippi River Delta area begun in July when I joined the President and regional business leaders in Clarksdale to discuss ways to stimulate local economic development.

At that time I committed, on behalf of Entergy, to provide economic support and personal leadership to help attract businesses to this region. Since then I became chairman of BusinessLINC, a partnership between private business and government agencies encouraging large companies to advise and mentor small businesses in the Delta.

And Entergy's \$5 million investment in the region that we're announcing today is another piece of that commitment. The money will be used by ECD to help finance small businesses in the region.

You know I have been in this part of the country for just under 18 months now.

And I've been CEO of Entergy for almost 10 months.

When I think about my job, I think about the people Entergy serves throughout our four state territory– from the very affluent in uptown New Orleans to the very poorest of the Mississippi River Delta region.

If you look at a map of the Delta and a map of Entergy's service territory you can see how closely tied together we are. Entergy is the largest electric service provider in the Mississippi River Delta area.

The area includes more than a million and a half people in 58 counties along the River in western Mississippi, eastern Arkansas and northeastern Louisiana.

Nearly 30 percent live below the poverty level,
the median annual household income is about \$17,000,

45 percent of people age 25 or older do not have a high school diploma.

Traditionally dominated by plantation agriculture, low wages, and limited training opportunities the region is steeped in inequality and seemingly endless cycles of poverty.

It is as if the world has just passed it by.
Entergy hasn't and won't.

Many believe the economic plight of this region is hopeless. That the best economic investment for the people of the Delta would be to build roads so people can leave.

I don't believe that ...

Entergy doesn't believe that...

Entergy is here to stay.

There is no company with better resources ... with better connections to the community... or with more talented and committed people than Entergy ... to help bring opportunities to this region.

And for us, this makes very good business sense.

We know the people of the Delta and we know that with the right opportunities, and with the resourcefulness of people like Bill Bynum and his staff we can improve the economic and social conditions of the region.

Through the years, Entergy has played a leadership role in working together with people, business and government officials of this region to provide new and better economic development opportunities.

In the mid 1990's Entergy was a founding member of ECD, providing money and resources to attract additional capital and make loans to fledgling local businesses. Since that time, ECD has assisted more than 700 businesses and impacted more than 6,000 jobs.

And Entergy was instrumental in establishing the Foundation for the Mid South an organization focusing on social issues, human capital development and increasing philanthropy in the area.

Between 1990 and 1999, excluding today's investment, Entergy has contributed over \$3 million to the Foundation and to ECD. In addition, we donate office space to both organizations, and Entergy leaders serve in prominent role on both Boards.

In Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana Entergy contributed millions of dollars and thousands of employee volunteer hours to enhance the quality of life and business opportunities for the region.

We have Community Partnership Grants providing up to \$1,000 in matching money for initiatives addressing educational and community involvement issues. And we have the TeamCity program where we partner with local representatives to build leadership skills, train industrial recruitment teams, provide infrastructure grants and market speculative buildings. More than three dozen Mississippi River Delta cities participate in our TeamCity program.

We have individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to help solve local business problems or enhance the lives of those less fortunate.

Our commitment to the Mississippi River Delta area, its people, its businesses and its social institutions runs deep. We will work together with you to harness your resourcefulness ... your individuality... and your strengths... to bring more economic opportunities throughout the region.

You can count on me ... and you can count on Entergy for that.