



DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

236 SHARKEY AVENUE / SUITE 400 / CLARKSDALE, MS 38614 / (662) 624-8600 / FAX: (662) 624-8537 / www.dra.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DRA Helped Its Grant Applicants Write Successful Proposals in 2003

Some Also Received Second Chance Through Appeals Process

Expansions to the Delta Regional Authority's Federal Grant Program application process were met with success in 2003. Topping the list were the new pre-review and pre-application steps and the additional appeals process.

The pre-review and pre-application procedures were added to provide applicants with feedback, if needed, on ways to make their proposals more competitive. The appeals process was put into effect to give applicants whose proposals were rejected an additional opportunity to have their proposals considered.

During the pre-review and pre-application periods, DRA experienced record high numbers for Web site hits leading up to the deadlines for both services. One hundred and thirty-two (30%) of the 399 applicants requested pre-reviews during the pre-application period. Also during pre-application, 203 (50%) applications were deemed eligible while 196 (49%) were found not eligible. Sixty-four (32%) of the ineligible applications were appealed of which 16 (25%) came back with reversed decisions. (See Table below, "Summary: 2003 Pre-Applications").

Daily Web site activity usage reached an all-time high during the pre-application period with 225 average visits per day for the month of May. This figure was up significantly from the 118 daily visit average for April, and it almost tripled the 86 daily averages for the month of March.

The total number of hits to the site was 519,895 for May; 215,000 for April, and 204,328 for March. Several local development district (LDD) officials and others expressed their appreciation for the help measures posted on the Web site during the early days of the 2003 grant program. Terry Sherwood, chairman of the Association of Delta Development District (ADDD), said "we look forward to a continued partnership as all involved continue to strengthen the presence of the Delta Regional Authority as a key player in optimizing the opportunities inherent to the future success of the Delta Region."

In a June 2003 interview with *The Communique*, the Authority's online newsletter, Central Mississippi Planning and Development District's Belinda Graham, and Greenwood Economic Development Foundation's Robert Ingram described how the site helped them as they assisted potential grantees.

Graham: "I think your Web site is great. It changes daily. The data is out there where people can access it."

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Ingram: “The contact information is on there. It has been helpful. When I’ve needed information, it’s been there.”

Alan Heflin of the Mississippi Development Authority, was not surprised to learn of the success the site was experiencing at the time either. “The expansion of the Web site was the cornerstone of the revamped (application) process,” Heflin said.

(The DRA Web site can be accessed at www.dra.gov)

Region’s Needs Remained Constant during Lean Funding Era

As it was the case in the first year, most of the funds awarded in the 2003 program were for basic public infrastructure projects. Of the \$25,563,711 requested, only \$3,950,868 was awarded. The second largest category funded was transportation infrastructure. Business development proposals ranked third while those for workforce training received the least amount of available assistance (See Table below, “Summary: DRA 2003 Grant Program”).

An additional indicator of the 2003 program’s improved efficiency came with three new records set for closings or document signings in the month of September. Arkansas skimmed four months off its first-year closing in January, while Illinois and Tennessee March closings beat their previous year closings by six months (See Table, “DRA FGP Closings – Y2Y”).

(Three tables are shown below)



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Summary 2003 Pre-Applications

	Total Pre-apps Submitted	Pre-apps for Pre-review	Pre-apps Deemed Eligible	Pre-apps Deemed In-Eligible	In-eligible Pre-apps Appealed	Number of In-Eligibles Reversed
Alabama	71	13	26	45	21	3
Arkansas	75	28	44	31	11	1
Illinois	37	7	20	17	6	4
Kentucky	18	0	12	6	0	0
Louisiana	48	15	24	24	7	2
Mississippi	59	15	26	33	9	2
Missouri	57	35	31	26	10	4
Tennessee	34	9	20	14	0	0
Totals	399	122	203	196	64	16



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Summary: DRA 2003 Grant Program

Basic Public Infrastructure	\$ 3,950,868	\$ 25,563,711
Transportation Infrastructure	2,329,739	16,341,373
Business Development	1,020,420	9,910,417
Workforce Training	200,000	252,000
TOTAL	\$ 7,501,027	\$ 52,067,501



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DRA FGP Closings – Y2Y

	2002 Grant Closing Date	2003 Grant Closing Outlook
Alabama	February 19, 2003	October 29-30, 2003
Arkansas	January 31, 2003	September 10, 2003
Illinois	March 17, 2003	September 18, 2003
Kentucky	February 21, 2003	October 17, 2003
Louisiana	March 14, 2003	October 21-22, 2003
Mississippi	March 13, 2003	October 31, 2003
Missouri	February 11, 2003	October 13, 2003
Tennessee	March 27, 2003	September 19, 2003