



DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Delta Regional Authority Announces 2004 Federal Grant Program

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Federal Co-Chairman Pete Johnson and State Co-Chairman Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee announce the start of the DRA's 2004 Federal Grant Program.

With this announcement, Chairman Johnson and the governors of the eight participating member states are making available to their Members of Congress, the Region's 44 local development districts (LDDs) and the general public, its "Uniform Pre-Application Package" for the DRA 2004 Federal Grant Program.

"It is with a great sense of excitement that we, at the Delta Regional Authority, are pleased to present the DRA 2004 Federal Grant Program," Chairman Johnson said. "As we look back over the first two years of the Authority, we are very proud of the program, and we have learned so much."

"We have been in regular contact with Members of Congress, the DRA states, local development districts and actual grantees getting feedback on how we could make the 2004 program a more accessible and efficient process. We can now ensure a higher-level of continuity that will not only help facilitate the quicker awarding and administration of grants but also bring the Authority's program more in line with similar agencies in the federal government."

Huckabee said, "we'll have the same goals we had in 2003, but several things have changed. We continue to improve the grant program. All the changes address specific needs that came to light during the first two years. We listened to those who suggested ways to improve the process and implemented their suggestions."

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For the DRA 2004 Federal Grant Program, the Authority will execute throughout the Region:

- Uniform and aggressive access to information on the DRA 2004 Federal Grant Program through its Web site, www.dra.gov, from which applicants can review and download the entire “DRA Uniform Pre-Application Package”, plus each state’s “State Plan” and the DRA’s “Comprehensive Action Plan”;
- Uniform pre-applications and uniform full applications;
- Uniform definitions of eligible activities and categories – also, greater clarification of the program’s eligibility requirements. Updated clarification notes will be posted on the Web site;
- Uniform timelines and process-compliance;
- Stronger roles for the local development districts to better publicize the program within their areas and to better educate their clients to the 2004 processes, both through public forums and other appropriate outreach, while assisting their clients in the preparation of their pre-applications; and
- Greater and earlier collaboration with the administering agencies, who will serve as the project administrators for most projects; and

Also, the DRA will assist local development districts in announcing forums and other outreach efforts to better publicize the program within their areas and to better educate their clients to the 2004 processes.

According to its enacting legislation, the DRA must prioritize the use of its federal funds in the following categories:

1. Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties,
2. Transportation infrastructure to facilitate economic development,
3. Business development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, and
4. Job training or employment-related education.

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The Delta Regional Authority is a federal-state partnership, created by the U.S. Congress through the “Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000,” and it serves a 240-county/parish area in an eight-state region. Its governing authority, the Board, is comprised of the Federal Co-Chairman, Patrick “Pete” Johnson, plus the governor of each participating state (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee).

The DRA’s mission is to “remedy severe and chronic economic distress by stimulating economic development while fostering partnerships that will have a positive impact on the Region’s economy.”

For more information on the 2004 DRA Federal Grant Program, contact Howard Hemphill, grant program director, at 1-888-468-6372, ext. 25.

Also, for more information on the Authority, please visit <http://www.dra.gov>, where interested individuals may subscribe to the DRA’s electronic newsletter, the *DRA Communiqué*.

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