

West Alabama-East Mississippi WIRED Initiative

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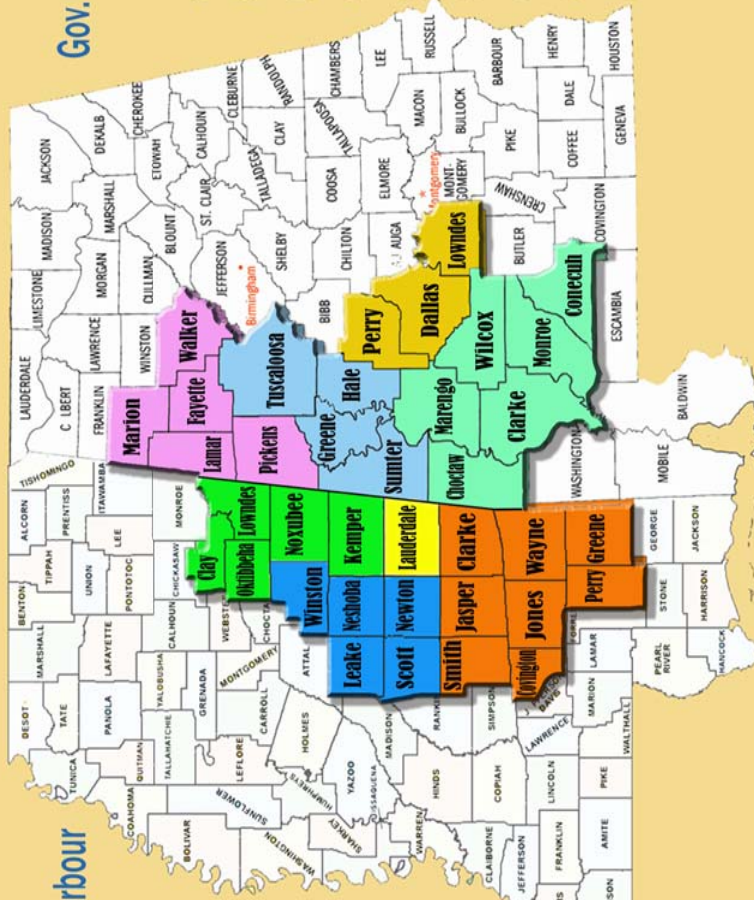
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WIRED Commissioners

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WIRED Partners

- Alabama Office of Workforce Development
- Mississippi Development Authority
- The Montgomery Institute



WIRED Community Colleges

- Alabama Southern Community College
- Bevill State Community College
- East Central Community College
- East Mississippi Community College
- Jones County Junior College
- Meridian Community College
- Shelton State Community College
- Wallace Community College-Selma

Developing Enterprise-Ready

Places, People, Programs, and Regional Identity



RURAL WEST ALABAMA – EAST MISSISSIPPI
AT THE CROSSROADS OF ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
Wired Grant Implementation Plan

Developing Enterprise-Ready
Places, People, Programs, and Regional Identity

Section 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, folk in the 37 county West Alabama – East Mississippi (WAEM) WIRED zone do not see this area as a region. Parts of it lie in West Alabama, East Mississippi, the Black Belt, or the Pine Belt. Perhaps the only across-the-region attribute is one that applies to a much broader area, that of an area with a low-skill, low-wage workforce. The WAEM WIRED grant proposes to change all this, to transform the perception and reality of this area into a region that attracts, grows, and retains people, jobs, and wealth. This will be done through a layered, but integrated development process.

WAEM’s vision is to transform a mostly rural collection of people and places into an enterprising region known for its entrepreneurship, innovative workforce systems, and wealth creation, i.e., one that is “enterprise-ready.” An “enterprise-ready” region is one in which:

- business formation and innovation occur easily and often;
- entrepreneurs and innovation abound;
- a well-trained, skilled workforce has a strong work ethic and values productivity and quality;
- civic entrepreneurs and regional leaders play strong support and encouragement roles; and,
- a sense of and commitment to entrepreneurship, innovation, and enterprise pervade the region from the retirement community down through the K-12 and youth development programs.

More to the point, “enterprise-ready” means “prepared for and committed to value-added activity,” whether individually based, organization based, or community based. The WAEM WIRED initiative focuses on asset-based economic development, enterprise friendly communities and entrepreneur support systems, innovative workforce systems, and skill development as key value-adding activities for enterprise ready regional transformation.

The key to any development process is leadership. Goal 1 of the WAEM WIRED grant is about developing such leadership. Goal 1 – *Fashion an Enterprise-Ready regional identity and civic culture from persistent engagement of leadership in enterprise and innovation based planning and development activities* – describes the method through which the leadership to transform the WAEM

region will be developed. It brings together leaders from across the region to engage in an enterprise and innovation based planning and development process. During this, these leaders will learn the language of enterprise and innovation, work together on identifying key regional assets and regional approaches to leveraging those assets, and begin forming regional networks and identity. Work at the top, however, is insufficient to transform a region. So, Goal 1 also addresses developing enterprise ready leadership at the community level. As Indiana has learned through its “Rural Indiana Strategy for Excellence”¹ “strong leadership and civic engagement is a precursor to, not a follower of, economic growth and development.” When local and regional leadership aligns in its approach to development, regional identity begins to form. Finally, Goal 1 seeks to institutionalize support for such leadership development at community and junior colleges and universities in the region.

The next layer of the development process focuses on transforming the way the region and its communities create jobs. While continuing what the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) calls “the great buffalo hunt” which is to lure major employers to the area, the region must adopt strategies to create and retain jobs from other sources. Drawing from the new Appalachian Regional Commission strategic plan² and other successful rural endeavors, Goal 2 – *Spur and sustain rural economic transformation through a regional, integrated-system approach to economic and community entrepreneurship* – seeks to identify and nurture entrepreneurs who will use local assets (identified in Goal 1) as the cornerstones for new businesses and job opportunities. North Carolina is finding this approach works through its Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship³. Goal 2 establishes and institutionalizes at community and junior colleges the capacity to help communities become “enterprise-ready,” to provide support and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, to provide education and training for entrepreneurs, and to build regional networks to further support and encourage entrepreneurship. Such entrepreneurial activity, integrated with Goal 1’s leadership development activities, begins transformation of community and regional civic culture to one with an enterprise ready focus.

The third layer of the development process focuses on building innovative Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems at community and junior colleges to brand the regional workforce, improve skills, and enhance economic developers’ chances of luring the “great buffalos.” Goal 3 – *Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce* – will draw on the assets, gap, and trend analyses in Goal 1 and guidance from the region’s economic developers to identify and target innovative sectors (clusters) and specific industries for which innovative workforce systems should provide training, to identify innovative access and delivery systems for skill training needed, to provide certification and credentialing systems, and to bring technology to bear where feasible and appropriate. Enterprise-Ready leaders, entrepreneurs, and training systems come together to create the reality of an Enterprise-Ready regional identity. This model conforms with the model presented by the Rural Policy Research Institute in its March 2006 presentation, “The Current U.S. Rural Policy Framework: Toward a Regional Innovation Strategy”⁴.

The fourth layer of the development process is to create a pipeline of future entrepreneurs and skilled workers to sustain the growth of the region. Goal 4 – *Engage K-12 schools and youth development programs in regional branding and Enterprise-Ready activities* –

seeks to integrate “enterprise-ready” activities into K-12 school curricula and youth development programs. It also seeks to provide better access for students to community and junior college “enterprise-ready” programs.

Local and regional leaders developing and implementing these four layers of “enterprise-ready” activity, community and junior colleges building capacity to support such activity beyond the grant period, and regional networking and engagement will result in economic transformation and create a new identity for the region.

Driving this process will be the managing entity for the grant, The Montgomery Institute (TMI). TMI is a regional non-profit focusing on citizen leadership. In 2003 the Southern Growth Policies Board designated TMI as a “Southern Innovator in Leadership Development and Civic Engagement.”

The eight WAEM community and junior colleges the platforms upon which these rural development strategies will be built. The community and junior college presidents will provide leadership by serving as chairs of the key WIRED initiative committees.

Two area research universities will become bases of knowledge and technical assistance needed to develop the systems for implementing the grant as well as sustaining activities into and beyond the grant period. While the universities have existing expertise to bring to the WIRED initiative, we will complement that expertise with other proven experts in specific fields, such as RUPRI and CAEL to enhance university capacities.

The U.S. Department of Labor expects WIRED grant recipients to use innovative approaches to integrate and transform workforce and economic development in their regions. Innovation for the rural WAEM region can and will come from several directions:

- Innovation in access to and delivery of programs and services;
- Innovation-focused, multi-partner, regional leadership networks, organizations, research, and outreach;
- Innovation capacity development at the local, district, and regional levels; and
- Husbanding entrepreneurship with innovative support systems.

The heart of this initiative will be the provision of a process for innovation, not a prescription for innovation.

¹ [http://www.purdue.edu/pcrd/RISE2020/RISE%202020%20Revised%20Report--March%206%20\(4\).doc](http://www.purdue.edu/pcrd/RISE2020/RISE%202020%20Revised%20Report--March%206%20(4).doc)

² <http://arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=2296>

³ <http://www.ncruralcenter.org/entrepreneurship>

⁴ <http://www.rupri.org/getFile.asp?fileID=18356>

Section 2: WIRED Goals

Vision Pulling Together: Rural West Alabama - East Mississippi at the Crossroads of Economic Transformation

Goal 1 Fashion an Enterprise-Ready regional identity and civic culture from persistent engagement of leadership in enterprise and innovation based planning and development activities.
Goal 1 provides the foundational process for Goals 2-4.

This "leadership" goal requires development and alignment of regional and community "Enterprise-Ready" leadership actively engaged in enterprise and innovation based planning and development; building capacity of community and junior colleges to support such leadership development; creating a regional Enterprise-Ready Leadership Institute; creating a broad-based, permanent WAEM regional council to sustain regional leadership beyond the grant implementation period; and holding events to stimulate innovation and building regional capacity.

Enterprising people doing enterprising things at more and better enterprises describes the "Enterprise-Ready" regional identity the WAEM WIRED initiative hopes to create. People know an Enterprise-Ready region when they see one. Business formation and innovation occur easily and often. Entrepreneurs and innovation abound. The well-trained skilled workforce has a strong work ethic and values productivity and quality. Regional leaders play strong support and encouragement roles. And, a sense of and commitment to entrepreneurship, innovation, and enterprise pervade region from the retirement community down through the K-12 and youth development programs.

Strategy 1.1
Build the capacity of the eight WAEM WIRED region community and junior colleges to facilitate, and the two area research universities to advise, an enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development process throughout the region.

The technical part of the enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development process (LEAD Process) shall include: asset mapping (including telecom assets) workforce and economic gap and trend analyses (especially in innovation sectors), and market and niche opportunity identification.

Phase I of the LEAD Process is the key first step in creating a regional identity. It will advise regional planning and ' initiative development and will include rapid environmental scanning and mapping of assets.

Phase II of the LEAD Process is the key first step in establishing an Enterprise-Ready civic culture at the community level. It will advise local planning and initiative development and will include intensive identification and mapping of assets.

Activities

- Form and staff a LEAD Process Committee co-chaired by CCJC presidents to drive development and implementation of

- the enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development process.
 Responsible: TMI
 Launch: July 1, 2006
 Complete: July 28, 2006

Community and junior colleges (CCJCs) will provide the district field staff for this strategy. To provide for this, TMI must obtain presidential commitments, formal agreements, and commitments of staff and other resources. CCJC staff will coordinate local and regional information gathering, meeting facilitation, and project coaching in collaboration with area research universities, the LEAD Process Committee and TMI. Involvement in this process is intended to build internal CCJC capacity to support such activities in the future.

Responsible: TMI/Fisc.Ag.
 Launch: July 1, 2006
 Complete: Aug. 15, 2006
- Area research universities will provide technical assistance and expertise in developing the LEAD Process and will participate in gap and trend analyses and market/niche opportunity identification. Involvement in this process is intended to build internal capacity to conduct enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development activities in the future.

Responsible: TMI
 Launch: July 1, 2006
 Complete: July 31, 2006
- Recruit needed technical assistance (TA) to help create the LEAD Process, execute necessary contracts, and in collaboration with area universities and community and junior colleges create the LEAD Process. TA will help develop the LEAD Process, create the tools needed to implement the process, and train participating partners. It will also help universities, CCJCs, and TMI institutionalize expertise needed to drive enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development activities in the future.

Responsible: TMI
 Launch: July 15, 2006
 Complete: July 28, 2006
- Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to LEAD Process analysis. Engage CCJC staff as well as university and TA staff in this process. Define LEAD Process and write a two-phase implementation plan.

Responsible: TA/Univ.
 Launch: July 28, 2006
 Complete: Aug. 31, 2006
- Submit LEAD Process and implementation plan to WAEM WIRED Commission.

Responsible: LEAD Process Committee
 Launch: Sept. 1, 2006
 Complete: Sept. 5, 2006
- Adopt LEAD Process and two-phase implementation plan.

Responsible: Commission
 Launch: Sept. 1, 2006
 Complete: Sept. 5, 2006
- Train community college, university, TMI, and other participating partners for Phase I.

Responsible: TA/TMI
 Launch: Sept. 1, 2006
 Complete: Sept. 15, 2006
- Initiate Phase I by meeting with regional and state workforce and economic developers, business leaders, and other partners to identify key regional assets, workforce and economic development gaps and trends, and market/niche opportunities.

Responsible: TA/Univ./TMI
 Launch: Sept. 15, 2006
 Complete: Dec. 15, 2006
- Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to regional assets, workforce, and economic development gaps and trends, and market/niche opportunities. Engage CCJC staff as well as university and TA staff in this process.

Responsible: TA/Univ.
 Launch: Sept. 15, 2006
 Complete: Dec. 15, 2006

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile input from the Phase 1 LEAD Process; place into a GIS mapping system; submit findings to the LEAD Process Committee and WAEM WIRED Commission. Responsible: TA/Univ/TMI (Next steps are in Strategy 1.2) 	Launch: Oct. 1, 2006	Complete: Dec. 31, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train community college, university, TMI, and other participating partner staff for Phase II. Responsible: TA/TMI 	Launch: Sept 15, 2006	Complete: Dec. 15, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Phase II of the LEAD Process by meeting with local workforce and economic developers, business leaders, civic leaders, educators, entrepreneurs, non-profit and faith-based organization leaders, and others to gather input. Responsible: CCJCs 	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Aug. 15, 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather, compile, and map county/community data and put into GIS system and submit findings to LEAD Process Committee and WAEM WIRED Commission. Responsible: CCJCs/TMI (Next steps are in Strategy 1.2) 	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Sept. 15, 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a web site that can serve as a technical resource, a current events information sources, and a success celebration source. Responsible: TMI 	Launch: Sept. 18, 2006	Complete: Ongoing

Strategy 1.2

Pull together local, district, and regional community, business, education and other leadership to utilize LEAD Process information to plan and implement local, district, and regional economic, workforce, and community development initiatives.

(The format for this plan suggests research will be conducted and completed, then planning completed, and then implementation begun. In fact the process will be much more dynamic with some projects emerging while research and/or planning continue for others. This is why time periods may overlap.)

Activities

- Conduct Phase I planning at a regional, Governors-convened Summit with CCJCs assigned responsibility to bring public officials, business and industry leaders, community and economic developers, civic leaders, non-profit and faith-based organization leaders, educators, and others to the event. Using LEAD Process Phase 1 data, Summit participants will develop innovative regional initiatives around key assets. Potential areas of interest include regional hunting/fishing/recreational assets; rural downtown assets; steel, automotive, timber or other innovative sector assets; transportation assets; and cultural/historic assets. A key requirement will be to identify regional leadership (RLEAD) to drive chosen initiatives for the committee. Results from this planning will help drive Goal 3.
Responsible: LEAD Process Comm/TMI
- Hold meetings throughout the region to test support for initiatives from business leaders, public officials, civic leaders, non-profit/faith-based organization leaders, education leaders, and others.
Responsible: CCJCs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Phase I regional initiative plans to WAEM WIRED Commission for prioritization and adoption. Responsible: LEAD Process Committee Launch: May 1, 2007 Complete: May 15, 2007 Implement Phase I regional initiatives RLEAD Launch: Jan. 15, 2007 Complete: Jan. 31, 2009 Conduct Phase II planning sessions involving public officials, business and industry leaders, educators, entrepreneurs, civic leaders, non-profit and faith-based organization leaders, and other using EC Process data to develop local strategic plans and initiatives around key assets and potential key assets. A key requirement will be to identify local leadership (RLEAD) to drive each initiative. Responsible: CCJCs Implement Phase II local initiatives Responsible: RLEAD Launch: Mar. 15, 2007 Complete: Dec. 15, 2007 Hold events to celebrate successes and highlight innovation and regionalism. Responsible: CCJCs/TMI Launch: May 15, 2007 Complete: Jan. 31, 2009 Publish a newsletter and distribute articles to news outlets about initiatives and successes. Responsible: TMI Launch: Aug. 15, 2007 Complete: Ongoing
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Strategy 1.3

Utilize a persistent enterprise and innovation based planning and leadership development process (LEAD Process) to develop and engage local, district, and regional leadership; encourage innovation, transform workforce culture; build regional identity; and sustain these efforts beyond the grant period.

Activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the region. Responsible: Commission Launch: July 1, 2006 Complete: March 31, 2007 To sustain Enterprise-Ready and region building activities beyond the grant implementation period, create a broad-based WAEM regional council and hold periodic meetings to promote regional activities and planning. Responsible: Commission Launch: July 15, 2008 Complete: Oct. 15, 2008 Transition commission and grant committees to new broad-based WAEM regional council. Responsible: Commission/Committees Launch: Oct. 15, 2008 Complete: Jan. 15, 2009 Describe and promote LEAD Process and EREADY Development System (see Goal 2) initiatives and innovations at national conferences. Responsible: TMI/Partners Launch: Jan. 15, 2007 Complete: Ongoing Create a regional Enterprise-Ready Leadership Institute (ERLI) to train leaders, identify and communicate best enterprise-centric practices, and apply quality improvement review to enterprise-centric systems (see Goal 2). Responsible: TMI/CCJCs Launch: Sept. 15, 2007 Complete: Ongoing Create and implement a certification program for enterprise-centric trained leadership (tied to Goal 3). Responsible: TMI/CCJCs Launch: Jan. 15, 2007 Complete: Dec. 15, 2008 Conduct regular local/district LEAD Process sessions.
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Responsible: CCJCs	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Dec. 15, 2008
• Hold regional conferences related to LEAD Process methods and initiatives.		
Responsible: TMI	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Dec. 15, 2008
• Integrate LEAD Process methods into local leadership development/strategic planning programs.		
Responsible: CCJCs	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Dec. 15, 2008

Goal 2 Spur and sustain rural economic transformation through a regional, integrated-system approach to economic and community entrepreneurship.

This "entrepreneurship" goal requires development of an "Enterprise-Ready Development System" to support entrepreneurs and Enterprise-Ready Communities; building the capacity of community and junior colleges to deliver services establishing the Enterprise-Ready Community program; and, in conjunction with Goal 1, creating a regional Enterprise-Ready Leadership Institute; and holding events to stimulate innovation and build regional identity.

Strategy 2.1 Design a regional, integrated Enterprise-Ready Development System to spur and sustain economic and community entrepreneurship, and build the capacity of WAEM WIRED region community and junior colleges to deploy this EREADY Development System.

A comprehensive Enterprise-Ready Development System includes:
 Locally championed efforts to create and sustain community-based entrepreneur support systems such as coaching and mentoring; access to technology; entrepreneurial networking; access to education/training, counseling, financing, research; K-12 entrepreneur programs; and business-friendly ordinances and regulations; and Make-A-Job Impact Centers.
 Regional education and training programs; technology transfer and innovation commercialization programs; venture capital and angel networks; coordinated access to regional, state, and national service providers (SBDC, SBA, (USDA, etc.) and technical assistance networks (patents, copyrights, incorporation, etc.); access to incubators; and service provider, entrepreneur, and financial networks and seminars.
 State programs such as (loans, bonding, procurement, etc.) and technical assistance programs (entrepreneurial toolkits, crossmatch programs, minority programs, etc.) and business friendly statutes and regulations.
 Searchable, web-based programs including service-providers, client tracking database, technical advice, training modules, and entrepreneur chat rooms.
 Celebration of successful entrepreneurs and innovators.

Activities

- Form and staff an Enterprise-Ready Development System Committee (EREDY Comm) co-chaired by CCJC presidents drive development and implementation of this goal.

Responsible: TMI	Launch: July 1, 2006	Complete: July 28, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and junior colleges (CCJCs) will provide the district field staff and ongoing support for this strategy. To provide for this, TMI must obtain presidential commitments, formal agreements, and commitments of staff and other CCJC staff will coordinate local and regional information gathering, meeting facilitation, and project coaching in collaboration with the EREADY Committee and TMI. Involvement in this process is intended to build internal CCJC capacity to sustain such activities in the future. 		
Responsible: TMI/Fisc.Ag	Launch: July 1, 2006	Complete: Aug. 15, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit needed technical assistance (TA) to help design the EREADY Development System and in collaboration with CCJCs and TMI. TMI and Fiscal Agent will execute necessary contracts. TA will help design the EREADY Development system, identify the tools needed to implement the system, help devise Enterprise-Ready Community program criteria, and train participating partners. It will also help CCJCs and TMI institutionalize the expertise needed to sustain EREADY Development System activities in the future. 		
Responsible: TMI	Launch: July 15, 2006	Complete: July 31, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with regional and state workforce and economic development entities to gather input. 		
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006	Complete: Aug. 31, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to EREADY Development System Process. Engage CCJC staff as well as university and TA staff in this process. Design the EREADY Development Systems and prepare the implementation plan. 		
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006	Complete: Aug. 31, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit EREADY Development System and implementation plan to WAEM WIRED Commission. 		
Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: Sept. 1, 2006	Complete: Sept. 10, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the EREADY Development System implementation plan. 		
Responsible: Commission	Launch: Sept. 8, 2006	Complete: Sept. 15, 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train community college, university, TMI, and other participating partners in the EREADY Development System. 		
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Sept. 8, 2006	Complete: Sept. 15, 2006

Strategy 2.2 Stand-up the Enterprise-Ready Development System components with special attention to minority business support.

Activities	Map entrepreneur education and training programs at each community and junior college, university, K-12 school, and WIA center in the region.
	Responsible: CCJCs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess availability and access issues related to education and training programs above; identify gaps; and make recommendations for improvement. Particularly assess barriers to minority participation.
	Responsible: TA/CCJCs
	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006
	Complete: Sept. 30, 2006
	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006
	Complete: Oct. 15, 2006

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a regional plan to provide and enhance needed entrepreneur education and training programs at CCJCs, universities, and WIA Centers. (K-12 programs will be addressed in Goal 4.) 			
Responsible: TA/CCJCs	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006	Complete: Nov. 15, 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present regional entrepreneur education and training plan for adoption to the WAEM WIRED Commission. 			
Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: Nov. 15, 2006	Complete: Nov. 22, 2006	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the regional entrepreneur education and training plan (this activity may overlap Innovative Workforce System initiatives in Goal 3 and should be coordinated with such). 			
Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: Dec. 1, 2006	Complete: May 31, 2008	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deploy a technical resource website complete with a virtual resource directory, entrepreneur development advisor, client services database, and other innovative functions to provide a support rural EREADY Development System. 			
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Sept. 18, 2006	Complete: Jan. 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and load into the technical resource website state and national entrepreneurial resources, services, and programs. Also map the state and national entrepreneurial policy environment. 			
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Sept. 18, 2006	Complete: Jan. 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and load into the technical resource website state and national minority business resources, services, and programs. 			
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Sept. 18, 2006	Complete: Jan. 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and load into the technical resource website district and regional entrepreneurial resources, services, and programs. Also map the district and regional entrepreneurial policy environment. 			
Responsible: CCJCs/TMI	Launch: Sept. 18, 2006	Complete: Jan. 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually update the technical resource website. 			
Responsible: CCJCs/TMI	Launch: Feb. 1, 2007	Complete: Ongoing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map technology transfer and innovation commercialization programs within the region. 			
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Dec. 1 2006	Complete: Feb. 28, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link CCJCs and communities to technology transfer and innovation commercialization programs within region. 			
Responsible: TMI	Launch: Mar. 1, 2007	Complete: May 31, 2008	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold district and regional roundtables with resource/service providers 			
Responsible: TMI/CCJCs	Launch: Dec. 1 2006	Complete: May 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize the system of support tying service providers together, building collaboration among them, and linking them to entrepreneurs and communities. 			
Responsible: TMI	Launch: May 1, 2007	Complete: Aug. 15, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access for all service providers to the technical website common-client database. 			
Responsible: TMI	Launch: Apr. 1, 2007	Complete: Oct. 31, 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify policy, regulation, and ordinance barriers to entrepreneurial activity and develop initiatives to eliminate or reduce such barriers. Identify any such barriers especially harmful to minority entrepreneurial development. 			
Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: Jan. 15, 2007	Complete: Aug. 15, 2007	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present regional barrier reduction/elimination plan to WAEM WIRED Commission. Responsible: EREADY Comm 	<p>Launch: Aug. 16, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Aug. 31, 2008</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt regional barrier reduction/elimination plan. Responsible: Commission 	<p>Launch: Sept. 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Sept. 30, 2007</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement regional barrier reduction/elimination plan. Responsible: EREADY Comm 	<p>Launch: Oct. 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Dec. 15, 2008</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a newsletter and distribute articles to news outlets about initiatives and successes. Responsible: TMI 	<p>Launch: Aug. 1, 2006</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>

**Strategy
2.3**

Build the capacity of communities to use the LEAD Process (Goal 1) and EREADY Development System to

transform themselves into Enterprise-Ready Communities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit and hold meetings in each district to identify communities interested in becoming certified Enterprise-Ready Communities. This will be an ongoing effort, with cohorts of communities selected periodically. Responsible: CCJCs 	<p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2006</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select communities and identify local entity (chamber of commerce, economic development organization, business league, downtown association, retired businessmen, governmental department) that will champion and lead EREADY Development System deployment in selected communities. Community selection will be an ongoing process. Responsible: CCJCs 	<p>Launch: Nov. 16, 2006</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Enterprise-Ready Implementation Teams (ERIT) in each community, including the CCJC field staff who will help coordinate activities, to implement the program. Responsible: Champions/CCJCs 	<p>Launch: Jan. 15, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and load into the technical resource website local entrepreneurial resources, services, and training opportunities. Also map the local entrepreneurial ordinance and regulation environment. Responsible: ERIT 	<p>Launch: Feb. 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map retired and active entrepreneurs in the community by areas of expertise. Responsible: ERIT 	<p>Launch: Feb. 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link Enterprise-Ready Implementation Teams with data derived from LEAD Process. Responsible: CCJCs 	<p>Launch: June 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Enterprise-Ready implementation plans. Responsible: ERIT/CCJCs 	<p>Launch: Apr. 16, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Enterprise Friendly implementation plans. Responsible: ERIT/CCJCs 	<p>Launch: May 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor community implementation of Enterprise-Ready plans. Responsible: CCJCs 	<p>Launch: May 1, 2007</p>	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p>

- Determine criteria for communities to receive Governor Awards as Certified Enterprise-Ready Communities and present program elements to WAEM WIRED Commission for approval.
Responsible: TA/TMI
Launch: Mar. 1, 2007
Complete: Apr. 30, 2007
- Hold a Governors-hosted annual regional Enterprise-Ready Community Conference to provide networking opportunities for local champions and celebrate entrepreneurship and innovation successes in the region.
Responsible: CCJCs
Launch: Mar. 1, 2008
Complete: Annually
- Present Enterprise-Ready Community certificates at conferences.
Responsible: Governors
Launch: Mar. 1, 2008
Complete: Annually

Strategy 2.4
Sustain Enterprise-Ready Development System activities to develop and engage local, district, and regional leadership, build robust networks, encourage innovation, transform workforce culture, and build regional identity.

- Activities
- Link entrepreneurs, service providers, and Enterprise-Ready Communities into robust networks to share successes and problems, identify new opportunities, and continuously improve EREADY Development System offerings.
Responsible: CCJCs/TMI
Launch: Jan. 15, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
 - Conduct regular local, multi-district, and regional EREADY Development System workshops to maximize understanding and participation.
Responsible: TMI/CCJCs
Launch: Jan. 15, 2007
Complete: Jan. 31, 2009
 - Hold multi-district and regional conferences related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial networking.
Responsible: TMI/CCJCs
Launch: Jan. 15, 2007
Complete: Jan. 31, 2009
 - To sustain Enterprise-Ready and region building activities beyond the grant implementation period, create a broad-based WAEM regional council and hold periodic meetings to promote regional activities and planning. (Same as in Goal 1)
Responsible: Commission
Launch: July 15, 2008
Complete: Oct. 15, 2008
 - Transition commission and grant committees to new broad-based WAEM regional council (see Goal 1).
Responsible: Commission/Committees
Launch: Oct. 15, 2008
Complete: Jan. 15, 2009
 - Create a regional Enterprise-Ready Leadership Institute to train leaders, identify and communicate best Enterprise Ready practices, and apply continuous improvement review to Enterprise-Ready systems (see Goal 1).
Responsible: TMI
Launch: Sept. 15, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
 - Describe and promote LEAD Process (see Goal 1) and EREADY Development System initiatives and innovations at national conferences.
Responsible: TMI/Partners
Launch: Jan. 15, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
 - Assess the successes/failures of the LEAD Process and EREADY Development System initiatives to date; identify commonalities and gaps; and develop a sustainable EREADY Development System plan.

Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: Feb. 1, 2008	Complete: Mar. 31, 2008
• Meet with local, regional, and state partners and leaders to gather input.		
Responsible: TA/TMI	Launch: Feb. 1, 2008	Complete: Mar. 31, 2008
• Submit sustainable EREADY Development System plan to TMI and WAEM WIRED Commission.		
Responsible: EREADY Comm	Launch: April 1, 2008	Complete: April 15, 2008
• Adopted sustainable EREADY Development System plan.		
Responsible: Commission	Launch: April 16, 2008	Complete: May 15, 2008
• Implement sustainable EREADY Development System plan.		
Responsible: TMI/CCJCs	Launch: April 16, 2008	Complete: Ongoing
• Develop criteria for annual Regional Innovation Awards		
Responsible: TMI/CCJCs	Launch: April 16, 2008	Complete: May 31, 2008
• Present annual Regional Innovation Awards at the Enterprise-Ready Community Conference.		
Responsible: Governors	Launch: May 31, 2008	Complete: Aug. 31, 2008

Goal 3 Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce.

This "workforce" goal requires development of a regional credentialing and certification process, designing an Enterprise Ready Workforce regional plan, creating regional networks and other systems to share expertise and access to innovation-job training programs, and branding the regional workforce. It also provides for a comprehensive study of Broadband Internet and its potential for program delivery throughout the region.

Strategy 3.1

Using community and junior colleges as the operators and innovative jobs and LEAD Process (Goal 1) analyses as the guides, build regional, innovative Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems to help credential, certify, transform, and brand the workforce.

Innovative Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems (WORKS) can present various faces. One may be a regional approach to high-skill innovative-job training in the automotive, timber, or information technology clusters. Another may be innovative access to and delivery of both innovative and traditional training across the region. Another may provide technology-based entrepreneurial training for home and office access throughout the region. Selection of these innovative workforce strategies will be driven by innovative job analysis as well as asset mapping and gap and trend analyses from Goal 1. Community and junior colleges will be the delivery platforms for these initiatives. Each Enterprise-Ready Workforce system will tie into the regional credential and certification system.

- Form and staff an Enterprise-Ready Workforce Systems Committee (WORKS Comm) co-chaired by CCJC presidents to

drive development and implementation of this Goal.

Responsible: TMI

Launch: June 25, 2006

Complete: July 28, 2006

- Community and junior colleges (CCJCs) and their workforce directors will play key roles in this strategy. To provide for this, TMI must obtain presidential commitments, formal agreements, and commitments of staff and other resources. CCJC staff in collaboration with area universities, TA, and TMI will help develop WORKS initiatives. They will then implement the WORKS plan and operate the WORKS initiatives.

Responsible: TMI/Fisc.Ag

Launch: July 1, 2006

Complete: Aug. 15, 2006

- Area research universities will continue to provide technical assistance and expertise as in Goal 1 and help develop an Innovative Job Index for the region, help assess training programs, and assess and recommend K-12/youth development programs (Goal 4). In conjunction with Goal 1, TMI must obtain commitments of support from university presidents, formal agreements and other resources. University staff will participate in the above mentioned activities in collaboration with the WORKS Committee, CCJCs, and TMI. Involvement in this process is intended to build the internal capacity of universities, CCJC's, and TMI to conduct such activities in the future.

Responsible: TMI

Launch: July 1, 2006

Complete: July 31, 2006

- Recruit additional needed technical assistance (TA) to help develop Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems (WORKS) in collaboration with universities and CCJCs. (TA from Goal 1 will also help with this goal.) Execute necessary contracts. TA will provide evaluation and design help for the WORKS plan, help develop the certification and credentialing plan (Strategy 3.2), and assess existing workforce training programs (Strategy 3.3), assess and recommend K-12/youth development programs, and help CCJCs, universities, and TMI institutionalize expertise needed to drive the WORKS process in the future.

Responsible: TMI

Launch: July 15, 2006

Complete: Aug. 15, 2006

- Conduct assessments of existing workforce training programs.

Responsible:

TA/Univ./CCJCs

Launch: Aug. 15, 2006

Complete: Dec. 15, 2006

- Meet with regional and state workforce and economic developers and other partners to gather input.

Responsible:

TA/Univ./CCJCs

Launch: Aug. 15, 2006

Complete: Dec. 15, 2006

- Develop an Innovative Job Index to measure innovative job growth in the region.

Responsible: TA/Univ./TMI

Launch: Aug. 15, 2006

Complete: Dec. 15, 2006

- Using input from the Goal 1 Summit, develop the regional WORKS plan and submit it to the WAEM WIRED Commission for review.

Responsible: WORKS Comm

Launch: Mar. 15, 2007

Complete: May 15, 2007

- Tie WORKS plans to the regional credentialing and certification plan (Strategy 3.2).

Responsible: WORKS Comm

Launch: Mar. 15, 2007

Complete: May 15, 2007

- Implement WORKS plan.

Responsible: WORKS Comm

Launch: May 15, 2007

Complete: Dec. 15, 2007

NOTE: The WORKS plan is one of the critical components of this grant. The lack of detail on what this plan will include denotes our commitment to build regional approaches through a civic engagement process, i.e., rather than a

prescription, a process for innovation is provided.

Strategy 3.2 Create and implement a Regional Workforce Certification and Credentialing Agreement that builds

common language and credentials across jurisdictions, emphasizes skills certification and helps brand the regional workforce.

Activities	Launch	Complete
• Review and compare existing and proposed credentialing and certification agreements in Alabama and Mississippi, identify gaps and common areas, and with TA help propose a regional approach and agreement that will brand the regional workforce and accomplish this strategy. Responsible: WORKS Comm	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006	Complete: Sept. 30, 2006
• Adopt regional agreement as policy of WAEM region. Responsible: Commission	Launch: Sept. 30, 2006	Complete: Oct. 15, 2006
• Identify gubernatorial, legislative, and regional/local authorities needed to execute the regional agreement and take steps to achieve such approvals. Responsible: WORKS Comm	Launch: Aug. 1, 2006	Complete: May 1, 2007
• Implement Regional Workforce Certification and Credentialing Agreement Responsible: CCJCs	Launch: Sept. 30, 2006	Complete: Ongoing
• In concert with Strategy 3.3, establish a regional network of workforce training professionals to regularly review and update the credential and skills certification components of the Regional Agreement. Responsible: TMI	Launch: Sept. 30, 2006	Complete: Ongoing

Strategy 3.3 Establish a regional network of workforce training professionals to share expertise, develop regional

access to specialized programs, and continuously recommend improvements to workforce training credentialing, certification, and branding programs.

Activities	Launch	Complete
• Buy time of CCJC workforce directors to implement with strategy. Responsible: CCJCs	Launch: June 25, 2006	Complete: Ongoing
• Workforce directors, universities, and TA assess existing workforce programs per Strategy 3.1. Responsible: CCJCs/TA/Univ.	Launch: Aug. 15, 2006	Complete: Dec. 15, 2006
• Recommend to WORKS Comm improvements and regionalization opportunities to existing workforce systems and programs. Responsible:	Launch: Dec. 15, 2006	Complete: Feb. 28, 2007

CCJCs/TA/Univ.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt existing workforce systems and programs improvement plan. Responsible: Commission. Launch: Mar. 1, 2007 Complete: Mar. 31, 2007 Implement existing workforce systems and programs improvement plan. Responsible: Commission. Launch: Apr. 1, 2007 Complete: Jan. 31, 2009 Network community and junior college, WIA, university, and other workforce training professionals to share expertise, continually identify regional approaches to training, and review credentialing, certification, branding programs. Responsible: WORKS Comm Launch: Sept. 1, 2006 Complete: Ongoing Annually survey network participants to identify needed improvements, eliminate problems, and gauge activity. Responsible: TMI Launch: Sept. 2007 Complete: Annual 		

Strategy 3.4
In collaboration with workforce and economic developers, develop the "brand" for the regional workforce, publish data about the brand, and begin outreach efforts to make the brand known.

Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a planning workgroup (WORKGROUP) of WORKS Committee, CCJC workforce directors; local, regional and state economic developers; local, regional, and state WIA professionals; university partners; and others. Responsible: TMI/WORKS Comm Launch: Sept. 30, 2006 Complete: Oct. 15, 2006 Utilize findings from LEAD Process (Goal 1), Enterprise-Ready Workforce systems analyses, and other WIRED strategy research to focus in on potential brands and recommend potential branding concepts to the WAEM WIRED Commission. Responsible: WORKGROUP/WORKS Comm Launch: Oct. 16, 2006 Complete: Mar. 31, 2007 Adopt brand concept Responsible: Commission Launch: Apr. 1, 2007 Complete: Apr. 30, 2007 In collaboration with workforce and economic developers, develop internal and external outreach strategies for the new brand. Responsible: WORKGROUP Implement outreach strategies. Responsible: Partners Launch: May 1, 2007 Complete: July 31, 2007 Launch: Aug. 1, 2007 Complete: Ongoing 		

Strategy 3.5
Determine the market demand for delivery of workforce and entrepreneurship training over Broadband Internet throughout the rural WAEM region, investigate options for meeting this demand, and develop a Broadband Funding and Implementation Plan. Parts of this strategy may overlap with WORKS initiatives

in Strategy 3.2.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and staff a broadband committee (BBC) of community and junior college workforce directors; local, regional and state economic developers; local, regional, and state WIA professionals; university partners; and others. Responsible: TMI/WORKS Comm Launch: Oct. 1, 2006 Complete: Dec. 31, 2006 Obtain University participation evidenced by presidential support, commitments of staff and other resources, and formal agreements. Universities in partnership with technical assistance and CCJCs will develop the Broadband Funding and Implementation Plan. Responsible: TMI Launch: Aug. 1, 2006 Complete: Dec. 31, 2006 Recruit needed technical assistance to assess market demand, review options, and develop a broadband plan. Responsible: TMI/BBC Launch: Jan 15, 2007 Complete: Aug. 31, 2007 Adopt broadband funding and implementation plan if market demand warrants. Responsible: WORKS Comm/Commission Launch: Sept. 1, 2007 Complete: Sept. 30, 2007 Secure funding for broadband adopted plan. Responsible: BBC/WORKS Comm/Commission Launch: Oct. 1, 2007 Complete: Dec. 31, 2008 Implement adopted broadband plan Responsible: Partners Launch: Jan 1, 2008 Complete: Jan. 31, 2009
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Goal 4 Engage K-12 schools and youth development programs in regional branding and Enterprise Ready activities.

This "K-12/youth" goal requires assessment of K-12 and youth development programs to determine how and where Enterprise-Ready skill development processes can be integrated, exploring dual enrollment opportunities among schools and colleges, and encouraging businesses to promote Enterprise-Ready skill development in K-12 and youth development programs.

Strategy 4.1 Find innovative and appropriate places in K-12 curricula to integrate/enhance regional-brand skill development, provide incentives for schools to integrate such skill development, and train teacher trainers for related classroom teachers.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and staff a K-12/youth skill committee (SKILL Comm) co-chaired by CCJC presidents to drive development and implementation of this goal. Responsible: TMI Launch: July 15, 2006 Complete: Aug. 31, 2006 Utilize technical assistance (TA) and universities from Goals 1 and 3 to help develop this goal and in collaboration with TMI develop the K-12 curricula skill integration plan. TA will help train participants and help universities and TMI institutionalize expertise needed to do such programming in the future.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible: SKILL Comm Identify and assess existing skill development programs in schools and determine alignment with regional-brand skills identified in Goal 3.. Responsible: TA/Univ./TMI Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to K-12 skill development programs. Responsible: TA/Univ./TMI Meet with local, regional, and state K-12 leadership to gather input. Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs/TMI/SKILL Comm Recommend K-12 skill program integration plan. Responsible: SKILL Comm Adopt K-12 skill program integration plan. Responsible: Commission Recruit K-12 schools to participate in skill program. Responsible: CCJCs Train teacher trainers at participating schools Responsible: Univ/TA Train teachers at participating schools Responsible: Teacher Trainers Implement K-12 skill program in participating schools Responsible: Schools 	<p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2006</p> <p>Complete: Feb. 15, 2007</p> <p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Mar. 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Mar 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: Jan. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Mar 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: May 1, 2007</p> <p>Complete: May 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: June 1, 2007</p> <p>Complete: June 15, 2007</p> <p>Launch: June 1, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Launch: July 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Launch: Aug. 1, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Launch: Aug. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
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Strategy 4.2 Encourage youth development programs to include regional-brand and Enterprise-Ready programs in their curricula and activities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership to youth development program skill development initiative. Responsible: SKILL Comm Identify and assess existing skill development programs in youth development programs and determine alignment with regional-brand skills and Enterprise-Ready programs. Responsible: TA/Univ. Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to youth skill development programs. Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs/TMI Meet with local, regional, and state youth development leadership to gather input. Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs/TMI/SKILL Comm 	<p>Launch: Jan. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2006</p> <p>Complete: Mar. 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Mar 31, 2007</p> <p>Launch: Sept. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Mar 31, 2007</p>
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- Recommend youth skill and Enterprise-Ready programs and implementation plan to WAEM WIRED Commission for adoption.
Responsible: SKILL Comm
Launch: May 1, 2007
Complete: May 31, 2007
- Adopt youth skill and Enterprise-Ready programs and implementation plan.
Responsible: Commission
Launch: June 1, 2007
Complete: June 15, 2007
- Recruit youth development programs to participate in skill and Enterprise-Ready program.
Responsible: CCJCs
Launch: June 1, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
- Train youth development program staff in skill/Enterprise-Ready program.
Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs
Launch: June 15, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
- Implement skill and Enterprise-Ready program in recruited youth development programs.
Responsible: SKILL Comm
Launch: Aug. 1, 2007
Complete: Ongoing

Strategy 4.3
Explore credit-based secondary to post-secondary transition programs such as dual enrollment as means to broaden, align, and accelerate school Enterprise-Ready learning experiences.

- Activities
- Provide leadership to K12-to-college initiative.
Responsible: SKILL Comm
Launch: Jan. 1, 2007
Complete: Ongoing
 - Identify and assess existing Enterprise-Ready K12-to-college programs and map policy opportunities and barriers.
Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs
Launch: Feb. 15, 2007
Complete: Mar. 31, 2007
 - Review and cull useful information from existing research, studies, and reports relevant to dual enrollment and other K12-to-college programs.
Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs
Launch: Feb. 15, 2007
Complete: Mar. 31, 2007
 - Meet with regional and state educators and business leadership to gather input.
Responsible: TA/Univ./CCJCs
Launch: Apr. 1, 2007
Complete: June 15, 2007
 - Recommend Enterprise-Ready K12-to-college plan.
Responsible: SKILL Comm
Launch: July 1, 2007
Complete: Aug. 15, 2007
 - Adopt K12-to-college plan.
Responsible: Commission
Launch: July 15, 2007
Complete: Aug. 31, 2007
 - Pursue plan implementation and funding with state education authorities in both states.
Responsible: Commission
Launch: Aug. 1, 2007
Complete: Ongoing

Strategy 4.4
Encourage business leadership to partner with K-12 schools and youth development programs in establishing Enterprise-Ready programs -- such as School Counts -- and establish a "Governor's Seal"

award program to recognize the best examples of Enterprise-Ready business/school/youth program partnerships.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership to design and implement Governor's Seal programs. Responsible: SKILL Comm Launch: July 1, 2007 • Develop criteria and name for the Governor's Seal award program. Responsible: TA/SKILL Comm Launch: Aug. 1, 2007 • Present Governor's Seal program plan to WAEM WIRED Commission for adoption. Responsible: SKILL Comm Launch: Aug. 16, 2007 • Adopt Governor's Seal program plan. Responsible: Commission Launch: Sept. 1, 2007 • Promote Governor's Seal program to schools, youth development programs, and business leaders. Responsible: CCJCs Launch: Sept. 16, 2007 • Hold Governor(s) hosted regional award program. Responsible: TMI Launch: Mar 15, 2008 • Publish recognition details in local media. Responsible: TMI Launch: Mar 15, 2008 	<p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Complete: Aug. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Aug. 31, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Sept. 15, 2007</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p> <p>Complete: Ongoing</p>
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Section 3: GOVERNANCE

Alabama Governor Bob Riley and Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour executed a “Joint Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Alabama and the State of Mississippi Governing the Start-up of the West Alabama and East Mississippi WIRED Grant.” This MOU (copy attached) provides the governance structure for the grant in the form of a West Alabama – East Mississippi WIRED Commission. Prior to the grants demise, the Commission will form a regional council to help sustain the regional identity and approaches to development created during the grant period.

The make-up of the WAEM WIRED Commission is diverse. The non-voting chairman and consensus builder is the President of The Montgomery Institute (TMI). TMI is a regional non-profit with expertise in developing citizen leadership. Alabama representatives include the Chancellor of the Alabama College System, the Superintendent of Lowndes County Public Schools, the Project Manager from the Alabama Blackbelt Commission, and the Director of the Alabama Office of Workforce Development. Mississippi representatives include CEO of Structural Steel Services, an entrepreneurial start-up and now highly successful business, the East Central District Manager for Bellsouth, the President of the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, and the Executive Director of the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.

Basically, the Commission must positively affirm adoption of a plan, budget, or policy before it can be implemented. The fiscal agent is the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) at the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Development. The managing entity is The Montgomery Institute (TMI). These are the two executive entities that bring plans, budgets, and policies before the Commission for review and affirmation.

As the fiscal agent, OW D manages the budget and accounting process. Sub-recipient contracts blessed by the Commission are executed by OW D. Changes to budgets, other than reallocation within major line items, must be approved by OW D and affirmed by the Commission. Budget changes within major line items, i.e., four laptops will be purchased instead of three but funds are available in the Supply line item, must be approved by OW D. Equipment expenditures of over \$5,000 require additional review by the Department of Labor.

As the managing entity, TMI manages the implementation of the grant with assistance from two gubernatorial designees. Governor Haley Barbour has designated a senior manager from the Mississippi Development Authority as the grant's program director. Governor Bob Riley has designated a program officer from Shelton State Community College as the grant's associate director. These two designees and TMI staff are the management team for the grant, and thereby bring input from the two Governors into the management process.

The detailed scope of work for each sub-recipient grant must be approved by TMI and the Commission. Changes to the scope of work must be approved by TMI and affirmed by the Commission. The scope of work for each sub-recipient will provide for TMI oversight of sub-recipient activities and input into hiring related to the grant.

OW D has executed sub-recipient grant agreements with TMI, MDA, and Shelton State Community College as directed by the start-up MOU. The fiscal agent will also execute sub-recipient agreements with the other seven community and junior colleges and two area research universities with clearly defined scopes of work and budgets and requirements for TMI and OW D oversight.

Upon approval of a Commission approved implementation plan, TMI will provide a monthly management report to the Commission, the fiscal agent, and the Department of Labor. The fiscal agent will provide financial reports on a periodic basis to the same entities.

Section 4: OPERATIONS

The grant program director, the associate director, and the TMI president meet and work together daily on grant implementation. Regular discussions are held with the fiscal agent. Additional discussions are held with key partners such as community and junior

colleges, universities, economic and community developers, and so on. As plans, programs, and budget requirements are developed, these are reviewed by the fiscal agent and TMI then presented to the Commission for review and affirmation.

Expenditures in accordance with the budget are handled by TMI and other sub-recipient grantees with discussion and oversight from the fiscal agent.

Within the plan of work (implementation plan), four major committees (see attachment #2) and one technical committee (the broadband committee) are established to provide leadership and follow-through. Committees are co-chaired by community and junior college presidents and staffed by the TMI management team. TMI is responsible for populating the membership of the committees. TMI solicits input for committee membership from community and junior colleges, universities, community and economic developers, business and industry leadership, civic leaders, and non-profit/faith-based organization leaders.

The committees will have limited but diverse membership. To provide for greater participation and input from partners and interested citizens, two procedures will be followed. First, proposals and information developed by committees will be placed on the Collaborative Workspace for review and comment by partners. This input will be provided to committees to influence their decisions. Second, the Governors' Summit, regional conferences, and other events will be posted on the Collaborative Workspace and announced in the media. Partners and citizens with interest in the WAEM WIRED initiative may participate in these events. In addition to these procedures, activities at the local level will provide many opportunities for direct partner and citizen engagement.

Committees recommend plans, actions, and expenditures. TMI confers with the fiscal agent. Proposals not already clearly defined and affirmed by the Commission are submitted to the Commission for review and affirmation. Examples: 1) The plan of work specifically calls for a governor-convened conference. This event would not require further Commission review. 2) The plan of work calls for a committee to develop a plan for Enterprise Ready Communities. This plan must be affirmed by the Commission before it can be implemented.

In addition to the operational items discussed above, operations of the grant include the following:

The grant and plan of work call for community and junior colleges to play key roles in implementing the plan. As noted, the community and junior college presidents will co-chair major committees. They will also meet periodically as an informal operating committee. The function of this information operating committee, which will be facilitated by TMI, will be to coordinate committee work and engage the presidents as a group in region building.

Another key working group will be the workforce directors from each community college, who will also be part-time staff for the grant. Each of these directors will also be assigned to one of the major committees. They will gather as an informal committee facilitated by TMI to assist plan of work implementation, help coordinate community and junior college staff hired by the grant, further engage in region building, and network among themselves.

The plan of work calls for community and junior colleges to hire field staff to help implement Goals 1 and 2. These staff will work at the local level with guidance from workforce directors and oversight from TMI to implement these goals.

The plan of work calls for a major regional summit convened by the two Governors to prepare plans to develop important regional assets and take advantage of key opportunities identified in Goal 1. TMI and the Goal 1 committee will be responsible for inviting a diverse group of leaders from around the region to participate in this meeting and take leadership roles to implement adopted plans. Such leaders will be drawn from community and economic developers, business and industry leadership, civic leaders, and non-profit/faith-based organization leaders.

The plan of work also calls for civic engagement activities in Goals 1 and 2. Community and junior colleges will be responsible for inviting diverse groups of leaders from the communities to participate in these activities and take leadership roles to implement adopted plans. Such leaders will be drawn from community and economic developers, business and industry leadership, civic leaders, and non-profit/faith-based organization leaders.

TMI in conjunction with community and junior college partners is developing a regional communication plan. A communications specialist has been hired at TMI to help put together and to coordinate this plan. The communications specialist will also manage the Collaborative Workspace for the grant. Duties include direct contact with every partner to make sure they have access to the Collaborative Workspace. TMI will use the Collaborative Workspace extensively to make plans and documents available to partners for review and input.

In regard to tools, TMI expects to purchase Microsoft Project to help manage the project; utilize DOL provided or other GIS software to map project discoveries; and develop a comprehensive entrepreneur support website.

Section 5: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

1. Program Integrity

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), Office of Workforce Development (OWD), Workforce Development Division (WDD) is the state administrative entity (and has been since the Legislature established the Department in the early 1980s) for the various Federal grant programs such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as well as several discretionary grants from the U. S. Department of Labor. The WDD is the Grantee and fiscal agent for the WIRED Grant (West Alabama/East Mississippi (WAEM)) project. As with all of our Federal programs, the WDD's fiscal and programmatic staff applicable will provide grant administration, Federal reporting of grant activities to include costs, oversight and monitoring of the WIRED sub-recipients such as The Montgomery Institute, the various colleges, and other sub-recipients, which receive WIRED grant funds. At the end of the three year term of the WIRED Grant, the WDD will complete the Closeout Package and submit it to the U. S. Department of Labor. The WDD has well experienced people, whose intent with this an all grants is to ensure that grant funds are efficiently managed and that grant funds are expended for the activities and purposes for which they were obtained as well as to preclude the expenditure of any funds for unallowable costs and activities. The experience of the WDD coupled with that of experienced contractors should ensure that we meet the employment and training needs of WAEM's service population. The WDD also is the administrative entity for the Alabama Local Workforce Investment Area (65 counties). It is ADECA's intent that the state WDD entity will administer the WAEM Project as it is the USDOL Grantee and ultimately responsible for ensuring that grant funds are expended in accordance with the WIRED Grant's approved budgets and for activities allowed in the USDOL approved WIRED Grant document.

ADECA/WDD utilizes the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Policies and Procedure Manual and the Alabama State Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for Merit System Employees. WDD has an active capacity building effort to improve the knowledge and effectiveness of its staff.

2. Fiscal Integrity

The ADECA/WDD has years of Federal Grants management experience and has the required fiscal capability to properly track, report, and account for Federal (as well as State General) funds.

ADECA/OWD/WDD has developed a comprehensive property management system, covering both internal (ADECA/WDD) and external (subcontractor) procedures for property acquisition, the transfer/loaning of property, lost, stolen, or destroyed property, inventory.

Only authorized personnel identified by the ADECA and OWD's Directors will be allowed to sign documents requesting the disbursing funds. Other duties will be assigned to provide adequate separation of duties for internal control purposes.

ADECA/WDD has systems, which will provide the mechanism to properly control and report funds received and disbursed under the WAEM WIRED Project.

Financial and compliance audits will be performed in accordance with provisions of the ADECA Audit Policy, as amended for each subgrantee who receives \$25,000 or more during the subgrantee's fiscal year to include in-house administrative costs and program costs.

State-level programmatic/fiscal oversight is viewed as a particularly effective means of ensuring that both USDOL and state program policies are properly observed. The state's program monitoring policies and procedures are continually evaluated against the informal needs of staff managers and general standards of system integrity.

Monitors provide program operators the appropriated onsite technical assistance, and often refer sub-recipient staff to other state agency staff whose assistance might enable them to improve their respective programs. The state of Alabama has established methods of administration, which have been certified by the U.S. Department of Labor's Directorate of Civil Rights and which ensure compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions.

WDD's state program monitoring section will play a critical role in ensuring the maintenance of program integrity and to provide ongoing program evaluation and planning. There will be oversight, monitoring, and fiscal review activities to identify areas on non-compliance and to provide technical assistance where appropriate.

As noted earlier and to reiterate, Federal funds received from the U.S. Department of Labor are administered by the ADECA/OWD/WDD. The ADECA Fiscal and Audit Manager functions as the Comptroller and determines and provides fiscal policy and guidance to the WDD Division Director, the OWD Director and ADECA Director.

3. Electronic Reporting

State staff submits the NJFP quarterly reports. Reports are electronically submitted to the USDOL via the Enterprise Information Management System (EIMS). Data is entered in the State Management Information System by the customer service staff. Customer service staff is connected via our integrated management system (AlaWorks) thus allowing for timely reports to the USDOL.

Object Class Categories:

- a. Personnel \$283,860.00
- b. Fringe Benefits 91,140.00

c. Travel	25,000.00
d. Equipment	-0-*
e. Supplies	6,289.00
f. Contractual	4,369,965.00
g. Construction	-0-
h. Other	<u>50,000.00**</u>
i. Total Direct Charges	\$4,826,254.00
j. Indirect Charges	<u>173,746.00***</u>
k. Totals	\$5,000,000.00

* Equipment is to be purchased by the contractors not by the Grantee, thus included in Contractual. The Grantee will purchase no equipment.

** Other is for data processing costs at approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of one percent, repairs, rentals, etc.

***Indirect Costs are at the ADECA/OWD's currently USDOL approved rate of 3.60%, but this goes up to 4.09% on 10/01/06.

Section 6: ANTICIPATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

Technical assistance requests from the ETA Resource Team will include:

1. CAEL review and participation in workforce systems assessment (Goal 3 and 4), possibly to a much greater extent than anticipated by its DOL contract.
2. New Economy Strategies and the Council on Competitiveness review of goals and help with or recommendations for economic analysis and innovative job analysis, entrepreneurship system implementation, website design (Goals 1 and 2).
3. Assistance with assessment and outcome measurement.
4. Assistance with identifying resources to leverage with WIRED grant funds.

Other technical assistance requests are detailed in the goal statements. Substantial assistance is needed for Goals 1, 2,3, and 4. Organizations like the Rural Policy Research Institute, the Center for Adult and Experiential Learning, the Southern Rural Development Center, regional research universities, and others can play vital roles and will be identified during the planning processes.



West Alabama/East Mississippi Region Major Committee Structure Outline Description

7.22.06

Attachment 1

GOAL 1

LEAD Process Committee

Fashion an Enterprise Ready regional identity and civic culture from persistent engagement of leadership in enterprise and innovation based planning and development activities.

Co-Chair: Dr. James Mitchell, President
Wallace State Community College - Selma
Co-Chair: Dr. Jessie Smith, President
Jones County Junior College
Work Force Director: Raj Shaunak, EMCC
Work Force Director: TBA ASCC

Other members selected from: economic developers, business and industry, minority business, cultural/tourism industry, university expertise in natural resources-agriculture-forestry, Workforce Investment, and more.

Staff: Bill Crawford

GOAL 2

READY Committee

Spur and sustain rural economic transformation through a regional, integrated-system approach to economic and community entrepreneurship.

Co-Chair: Dr. John Johnson, President
Alabama Southern Community College
Co-Chair: Dr. Phil Sutphin, President
East Central Community College
Work Force Director: Shandra Smith, WSCC
Work Force Director: Shannon Campbell JCJC

Other members selected from: economic developers, entrepreneurs, minority business, state and federal small business and entrepreneur development programs, state economic development agencies, and more.

Staff: Chris Reed

GOAL 3

WORKS Committee

Credential, certify, and transform to a regionally-branded workforce.

Co-Chair: Dr. Rick Rodgers, President Shelton State
Community College
Co-Chair: Dr. Scott Elliot, President Meridian Community
College
Work Force Director: Charles Ireland BSCC
Work Force Director: Roger Whitlock ECCC

Other members selected from: economic developers, business and industry, technical training, state economic development agencies, universities/technology alliance departments with job cluster expertise, and more.

Staff: Dr. Bill Scaggs

GOAL 4

SKILL Committee

Engage K-12 schools and youth development programs in regional branding and Enterprise Ready activities.

Co-Chair: Dr. Harold Wade, President Bevil State
Community College
Co-Chair: Dr. Rick Young, President East Mississippi
Community College
Work Force Director: Susan Miller, SSSC
Work Force Director: Janet Heggie, MCC

Other members selected from: economic developers, business and industry, skill programs, superintendents, state K-12 agencies, state youth program funders, youth development programs, and more.

Staff: Mason Bonner