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# Helena Industrial Complex earns Project Ready status

Published: Saturday, May 14, 2011, 6:34 AM



By Harlan Kirgan, Mississippi Press

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HELENA, Mississippi -- A ceremony in Mississippi Export Railroad's transload terminal on Friday marked the Helena Industrial Complex as a Project Ready site.

The certification through the Mississippi Power program of the 134-plus acre site means it is shovel-ready for an industry.

"This is about having a project-ready site for opportunities that we anticipate will come along in the

future," said Chris Anderson, chairman of the Jackson County Economic Development Foundation board of directors.

"This certification process basically says to a prospective business or industry that this site meets a host of criteria that they will be looking for when they are looking for a place to locate," Anderson said.

"With the certification, they know they can count on certain qualities to this site and they don't have to do as much due diligence on the front end to understand what the site offers."

The site owned by Mississippi Export Railroad at Helena includes a 40,000-square-foot transload terminal on the railroad's main line.

The warehouse has loading docks for railcars and trucks.

Greg Luce, president and owner of Mississippi Export Railroad, said sites are for sale or lease. Developing the site has taken about 10 years, he said.

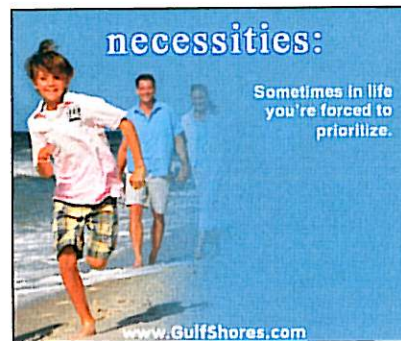
Tindall Corp. already on site with 100 employees



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Greg Luce, owner and president of Mississippi Export Railroad, speaks about the Project Ready certification of The Helena Industrial Complex was announced as Project Ready through a Mississippi Power program on Friday at a Jackson County Economic Development Foundation event. The ceremony was held in the 40,000-square-foot transload terminal, which can be used to load and unload rail cars and trucks. (Harlan Kirgan/Press-Register)

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Tindall Corp., a precast concrete systems manufacturer employing about 100 people, is already located on the site, he said. Luce said there is value in having Tindall in operation on site.

"When we go fishing, we always like to see where other people are out catching fish," Luce said. "We've already had somebody over there that likes the fishing here."

"You have over 100 acres that are ready for business,. You have to cut trees down, but other than that the railroad is here, the water and sewer are here. This warehouse is here."

Among the site's attributes are it is within 5 miles of Interstate 10 and its rail connection provides a link to major railroads, Luce said.

Ed McCallum of McCallum Sweeney Consulting, which consults on the Mississippi Power Project Ready program, said the site offers great synergies.

"It is unusual," he said. "Typically when people certify a site, it is just a piece of property they are trying to market and there are no amenities. Here you have a rail line, you've got a great warehouse. You've got another client right next door. This is unusual. It would surprise me they don't land somebody pretty quick."

Other Project Ready sites in southwest Mississippi include the George County Industrial Park and the Jackson County Aviation Technology Park.

"Having the Helena Industrial Complex certified as Project Ready gives Jackson County a great competitive advantage when prospects are in the site selection stage of development," said George Freeland, executive director of the Jackson County Economic Development Foundation, in a news release.

"Having the majority of due diligence requirements complete enhances the marketability of the site and the competitiveness of the community."

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