

DECEMBER 2020

# CLARKSDALE'S NEW DAY



*We've come together to make a new day.*

## THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REBRANDS



# Come Join Us at The Crossroads

By Jon Levingston

The Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation and Economic Development Authority of Coahoma County recently decided to rebrand. The organizations collectively will be known, for marketing purposes, as the **Crossroads Economic Partnership**. You may ask: Why create a new name? Why rebrand? What does this practically mean for the organizations going forward?

Companies often rebrand to better differentiate themselves from the competition. Rebranding is done typically to help a business or organization stand out from their competitors by showcasing the things that make a company different and better. While our local tourism agency, under the leadership of Bubba O'Keefe, has done a brilliant job of distinguishing Clarksdale as the Blues capitol of the United States, it is time for our business and economic development agencies to speak clearly to tech and manufacturing industries about the virtues of relocating to our community.

We accomplish this goal, in part, by rebranding. Our new brand is aspirational. While the word "crossroads" refers to our musical heritage, it also suggests that any business looking to relocate is at a crossroads in their journey. They know they want to move or expand. But where? They are at a crossroads. We want them to choose Clarksdale and Coahoma County.

One of our primary jobs is to bring new employment opportunities to Clarksdale and Coahoma County. In our efforts to accomplish that goal, we need to stand out. We need to create a can-do image. Our image needs to inform and reassure those looking to relocate or expand that we have a team of leaders in our community capable and willing to meet their needs.

While the EDA traditionally works alongside the Chamber and the Industrial Foundation in a partnership manner, other partnerships are necessary if economic development projects are to happen here. First, our economic development agencies must partner well with both city and county government. They must also create a constructive partnership relationship with regional and state economic development agencies, such as the North Delta Planning & Development District, Delta Strong, and the Mississippi Development Authority. The broader partnership must also include federal agencies, such as the Delta Regional Authority. A successful economic development agency must work and partner with a broad group of agencies, organizations, and people. Consequently, the words "economic partnership" fits us perfectly.

Along with our new name, we have a new tagline which underscores that name: "We've Come Together to Make a New Day." Those words refer explicitly to the partnership of groups, mentioned above, all coming together in a coordinated effort to help bring economic opportunity to our community. It also reflects the role our Chamber of Commerce division performs in partnering with our business community to create a better quality of life in our city and county. The fact is that we have been blessed beyond all measure to have the support of all the local, regional, state, and federal agencies. But it is up

to us to make sure that potential recruits understand and appreciate the ecosystem of leadership we enjoy and which will assist them in their relocation.

To accomplish that goal, we have also created a new website that illustrates in words, pictures, and videos, our aspiration to continue our successful work in bringing jobs and new opportunity to our community and its people through our ecosystem of leadership. We want to create the narrative, the story, of who we are rather than allowing someone else to do it for us. To see this for yourself, please visit our new website at [www.crossroadseconomicpartnership.com](http://www.crossroadseconomicpartnership.com).

When our founding mothers and fathers created this extraordinary nation, their documents spoke not just about who they were but more importantly, about who they *wanted* to be. Their words were aspirational. Over time, *we*, as a nation, have come closer to becoming what *they* hoped *we* would be. In the same way, our rebranding, new website, and marketing is aspirational. It talks about not only who we are but what kind of community we want to be. This idea reflects our crossroads, our choices, our future. Let's all aspire to a more successful and prosperous community, filled with opportunity for all our citizens. Come join us at the Crossroads!

Jon Levingston became the Executive Director of the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial Foundation, and the Economic Development Authority of Coahoma County in October 2017. In the three years he has led the organizations, they have announced five economic development projects, creating several hundred new jobs in Clarksdale and Coahoma County. In December 2020, the combined organizations rebranded, becoming the Crossroads Economic Partnership.