



Governor Haley Barbour and Panola Representatives Joe Gardner and Warner McBride (left and right, at right) on Wednesday joined newly-hired GE Aviation employees who are completing intensive training to prepare them for their new jobs. The Batesville composite manufacturing facility expects to employ 220 by year's end, a spokesman said. The Panolian photo by John Howell Sr.

## **Governor praises worker training program at GE**

By John Howell Sr.

Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour addressed the significance of workforce training at GE Aviation Wednesday in Batesville, along with the importance of D-STAMP, a unique workforce training program targeting businesses and workers in the Mississippi Delta.

The governor's visit coincided with the training of an additional 24 new workers hired through the Disadvantaged Short-Term Advanced Manufacturing Program (D-STAMP). D-STAMP provides a mobile job training initiative that will work with Delta companies at no cost to quickly train workers for highly skilled jobs. Governor Barbour funded the program through a \$300,000 grant as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. D-STAMP is administered by Time Wise Management Systems, a lean business consulting company.

"I look forward to seeing the program in place at GE. Each newly trained worker is an asset to the plant, which makes him or her an asset to his community, and to the State of Mississippi," commented Governor Barbour. "This is a tremendous step toward economic growth for our state."

The Delta Workforce Investment Area and South Delta Planning and Development District are assisting with implementation of the program.

D-STAMP is training participants at GE Aviation from June 1–11. The traveling unit is equipped with the latest industrial technology where participants learn practical manufacturing skills during the two weeks of intense training.

Zack Turner of Enid, Carla Edlin of Sardis and Jessica Frison and William Carwell, both of Batesville, were among the trainees readying to hit the GE Aviation plant floor on Monday. All agreed that the customized training period had been “intense.” Frison said that the pay and benefits offered are “the best I’ve ever had,” another statement her three co-workers agreed with.

“This is not about getting a job,” Barbour said. “This about getting the skills to have a career.”

“D-STAMP is for entry-level workers who want to go into manufacturing,” commented Mitzi Woods, Delta Workforce Investment Area director. “When a local manufacturer like GE Aviation needs trained employees, they help us determine exactly what they’re looking for. After we know their particular needs, we train the workers on-site at the plant, using our specialized mobile equipment.”

“GE Aviation’s Batesville facility is doubling its workforce this year and hiring an additional 120 employees to handle our increasing workload,” commented Jeanne Edwards, Batesville plant leader for GE Aviation. “Time Wise will help us train these new employees to ensure they have the right skills that they need to succeed in their new jobs.”

Time Wise Management Systems, Inc. was founded in 1998 as a lean business consulting company working with both nonprofit and for-profit entities.

South Delta Planning and Development District serves as the fiscal/administrative agent for Delta Workforce Investment Area (DWIA), one of four workforce investment areas in the state of Mississippi designated to carry out the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.