

# Mississippi Lives Up to “The South’s Warmest Welcome”

Ellisville, MS (population 3,634) is a small town that is abuzz with energy this summer over the city's Hotel Alice renovation project. The life forces behind this project are Rebuild Mississippi and the hotel's owners, Jan and Eddie Malone.

In 1999, the Malones, near-lifetime residents of Ellisville, had a vision to convert the abandoned three-story, 11,500-square-foot historic building into a Bed and Breakfast, with a coffee shop/restaurant and antiques shop on the first floor. Built in 1902, the building is eligible for membership in the National Historic Registry, which will entitle the Malones to a 20-

percent tax credit. Jan Malone is working with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to establish this designation.

Realizing the major renovation was necessary, Malone called upon Dr. Barbara Ousby, the Mississippi state Rebuild America representative, for support. After the City of Ellisville became a Rebuild Mississippi partner in March 2000, the Rebuild Mississippi team went into action. The team performed technical analyses on the building envelope, lighting, windows, plumbing, gas and electric systems, heating and cooling systems, roofing, and insulation and made numerous recommendations for improvements.

The Malones enlisted an architectural firm to help retain the charm and historical features of the building and to recommend building materials and equipment that adhere to National Historic Registry standards. The total cost of retrofits is estimated at \$335,000, which includes a new HVAC system, energy-efficient windows, hot water heaters and



*Nearly 100 years old, the Hotel Alice is getting a long-overdue face lift.*

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# The South's Warmest Welcome

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reflective roofing. The grand opening of the restaurant is scheduled for August 2000.

## Active on Many Fronts

Since joining Rebuild America in 1998, Rebuild Mississippi has turned up the heat on their community outreach by developing an array of marketing materials, including baseball caps, polo shirts and coasters. Headed by the Mississippi Department of Economic & Community Development's Energy Division, Rebuild Mississippi's partners include the Mississippi Main Street Association, Mississippi Valley Gas Company, Mississippi Downtown Development Association, Energy Rated Homes and the City of Jackson. The partnership is also collaborating with Rebuild Alabama to produce a 5-to-8 minute video to help educate potential partners about Rebuild America and the type of local assistance available through both state partnerships.



Barbara Ousby, left, with Eddie and Jan Malone

Rebuild Mississippi is working with the North Midtown Community Development Corporation and Entergy, a local utility, to plan several projects in Jackson. In June 1999, the partnership kicked off

its work in the city by recognizing Mark J. McCreery, president of Amerimail Direct, Inc., for renovating an abandoned, deteriorating downtown building to house his growing business. The 35-year-old building received over \$300,000 in extensive interior and exterior improvements, which included an \$8,000 grant through the city's Facade Matching Grant Program.

The state partnership is also reaching out to its Native American citizens. In May, Dr. Ousby and Mel Powers, the regional program representative, met with the Choctaw Indian Tribe to discuss their joining the Rebuild America family. Discussions centered on possible energy-efficient improvements to the reservation's 20-plus buildings to minimize energy expenses and on cogeneration and aggregate power opportunities.

Known as "The South's Warmest Welcome," Mississippi has opened its doors to Rebuild America and is actively sharing the program's ideals with the state's communities.