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Mississippi plans training center near Ingalls

► Barbour says state plans to invest at least \$20 million in Shipbuilding and Metal Trades Academy

By **KALLA WILKINSON**
Business Reporter

Mississippi plans to spend at least \$20 million in Hurricane Katri-

na recovery money on a new Mississippi Shipbuilding and Metal Trades Academy near Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula, Gov. Haley Barbour told about 100 people gathered Friday for the second annual Gulf States Shipbuilders Consortium in Mobile.

"We'll break ground in spring of this year," Barbour said. "We'll be operational before you know it."

George Freeland, executive director of the Jackson County Eco-

nomic Development Foundation, said the Jackson County Board of Supervisors planned to submit an application for the money "in a matter of days," but with the governor's backing, the project looks like it will quickly become a reality. Freeland could not, however, pinpoint a completion date.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College would operate the facility. It could ultimately be owned by either the college or the county.

The academy will also train workers for other industries, Barbour said, citing energy and aerospace.

Freeland said the new training center will collaborate with a similar, \$10 million to \$12 million facility that Alabama's two-year college system plans on the east bank of the Mobile River near shipbuilder Austal USA.

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Weather 68
Mild & dry
48°
Daily 4
12345
Ale. 44 pages 6 sections

