MISSISSIPPI
CYBER INITIATIVE

Working together to meet the cybersecurity
needs of our state and nation.

Mississippi Cyber Initiative

The Mississippi Cyber Initiative (MCI) was created to meet the challenges of the cybersecurity reality in the state and around the nation and position Mississippi as a leader in a field that will be of critical importance in the years and decades ahead.

The mission of MCI is to provide statewide leadership that prepares Mississippi's future economy through unparalleled collaboration and innovation in cybersecurity. The MCI will be an economic development catalyst leveraging the collective expertise among academia; the private sector; state, federal and local government; law enforcement; the U.S. Department of Defense; and the Mississippi National Guard.

MCI's mission focuses on three primary goals

• Provide statewide leadership in addressing cybersecurity and workforce needs for Mississippi into the future

• Attract innovative cyber and advanced technology industries

• Meet the cybersecurity training needs at Keesler Air Force Base and Mississippi Army National Guard

Advancing Military and Industry on the Gulf Coast

• The Mississippi Gulf Coast is home to all branches of the military – Keesler Air Force Base, Naval Construction Battalion Center, the U.S. Navy at John C. Stennis Space Center, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Air and Army National Guard locations.

• With a population of nearly 400,000 people and a strong and supportive business environment, the region excels in autonomy, shipbuilding, aerospace and defense, advanced manufacturing, energy, and petrochemical industries.

• All the Gulf Coast's primary industries require robust cybersecurity capabilities and a trained workforce to meet current and future demands. The MCI is here to meet that challenge.

Research, Innovation and Economic Opportunity

• Cybersecurity is a primary component for advancing high-performance computing, autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, advanced manufacturing, machine learning, modeling and simulation, and more.

• The MCI collaboration will strengthen cybersecurity, accelerating research and innovation and creating economic opportunities for the entire state.

Introducing the
Mississippi Cyber Initiative Facilities

The MCI will be headquartered in a new, state-of-the-art facility located in Biloxi, adjacent to Keesler AFB, known as the Mississippi Cyber & Technology Center (MCTC).

The MCTC will serve as the heart of the statewide MCI ecosystem, with complementary capabilities across the state. It will serve as a focal point to promote and integrate cyber and technology capabilities and will help to connect cybersecurity efforts and initiatives from across the entire state.

The second key location is on the Harrison County campus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC). With new construction on the campus, MGCCC will serve as a major training hub for the MCI. Having the MGCCC location creates unique opportunities for meeting training requirements at Keesler AFB.

The Cyber Ecosystem

• The Cyber Ecosystem at MGCCC's Harrison County Campus will provide a controlled, interactive technology environment where up-and-coming cybersecurity professionals can learn how to detect and mitigate cyber-attacks using the same equipment they will have on the job.

• The training space will primarily contain virtual arenas, assessments modules, practice ranges, and cyber battlefields modeled from small businesses, academic institutions, and industry networks. Operations to commence by the second quarter of 2022.

System Operations Lab at MGCCC

• In partnership with the 336 Training Squadron at Keesler AFB, MGCCC is spearheading an effort to develop a virtual cyber platform in its System Operations Lab to train network server administrators.

• The virtualization will enhance Keesler's instructional staff in delivering the new required curriculum in administering, managing, and sustaining a cyber network environment.

Digital Forensics Lab

• Working with the Mississippi Bureau of Investigations (MBI), a digital forensics lab is being established on the Gulf Coast. The Digital Forensics department aids in gathering digital information from mobile computing devices collected at crime scenes.

• Expanding the labs' capabilities will provide digital forensics training and create a workforce development program through MGCCC's criminal justice program.

Mississippi Cyber and Technology Center

• Located adjacent to Keesler Air Force Base, the Mississippi Cyber and Technology Center will serve as MCI's permanent headquarters.

• The vision for the building is to serve as a technology hub for private-sector development in cybersecurity and house coordination efforts for all relevant stage agencies in cybersecurity. It will contain a secured/controlled space to hold sensitive information, conduct advanced training and education, and allow collaboration on the most current cyber threats.

Statewide Partners

Collaboration is vital to the success of MCI. The initiative brings together public and private sector stakeholders in a shared effort to enhance cyber capabilities and position Mississippi as a leader in cybersecurity. Mississippi State University, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Keesler AFB and The University of Southern Mississippi are the implementing partners for MCI, with additional organizations representing academia, state and federal government, Department of Defense, and private industry bolstering the reach and strength of MCI. In addition to state academic institutions, several state agencies have joined the MCI effort, helping to broaden the initiative's reach and ensure maximum impact for any capabilities and plans being developed. Each MCI partner brings unique capabilities and expertise to the table to help bolster cybersecurity in Mississippi and meet cyber workforce demands.

Organizations wishing to partner with the MCI may contact Jim Martin, MSU Associate Vice President for Corporate Engagement and Economic Development, at jimmartin@research.msstate.edu or 662-325-3570.

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