

# WHY IS MISSISSIPPI ONE OF THE NATION'S HOTTEST POLYMER LOCATIONS?



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## Why is Mississippi one of the hottest plastics locations in the U.S.?

Ranked #14 on Business Facilities Management's "Hottest Places for Plastics" list, Mississippi is an undisputed leader in plastics manufacturing and research. In fact, thanks in large part to its plastics manufacturers, the state ranks 10th in the nation in defense procurement per capita, with more than \$10 billion in government contracts.

In Mississippi, training for the plastics and polymers industries starts as early as high school and runs all the way to the latest techniques in the trade. The state has five two-year high-school programs that help teenagers understand the plastics industry as a career and provide students with hands-on experience, from job shadowing to Computer-Aided Drafting.

Students can continue to develop at the university level by enrolling in the internationally recognized School of Polymer Science at the University of Southern Mississippi. The \$23 million, 86,000 square-foot research facility opened in 1990 and has become a

national center for plastics studies. Polymer science students at USM are so well esteemed that leading-edge plastics companies offer most of them jobs before they've even graduated.

The USM-affiliated Mississippi Polymer Institute is one of only three institutions in the United States to offer industry outreach programs, stepping beyond the University to train industry workers in place and provide problem solving, process improvement, analytical services, consultation, and physical testing services to the private sector.

These resources and more have allowed Mississippi to foster a thriving plastics industry that supports nearly every other manufacturing entity in the state.

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