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## NEWS

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For more information:  
Mirinda Kossoff  
Communications Director  
(919) 969-8446  
[mkossoff@mdcinc.org](mailto:mkossoff@mdcinc.org)

### **MDC's *State of the South 2007* Spotlights Philanthropy as Key to Region's Future**

Chapel Hill, NC - *State of the South 2007*—the sixth in MDC's biennial series—calls upon the region's philanthropic organizations to think more creatively and act more boldly to help the South address its self-limiting inequities and spur its competitiveness in a global economy.

While the South has advanced economically, it still faces wide gaps in family economic well-being, education, and health: the 2000 Census found that nearly one out of five Southern children lives in a household below the poverty level. The South needs more philanthropy and philanthropy that addresses the twin challenges of equity and competitiveness. [Click here to download a PDF of the report.](#)

"We hope this report will start a fresh conversation about the role of philanthropy, along with private markets and public policy, in helping the South close the gaps that limit our competitiveness and civic cohesion," said MDC President David Dodson. "Historically, philanthropy has helped the nation find innovative solutions to tough social challenges. Once again, we need philanthropy to step up with boldness and vision to tackle the South's challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

*State of the South 2007*, subtitled, *Philanthropy as the South's "Passing Gear,"* makes the case that the South stands on the brink of unprecedented opportunity but can realize its potential only by confronting lingering problems of undereducated youth, chronic poverty, health disparities, and civic frictions along the lines of class and ethnicity. The report provides a wealth of data to support its premise that the South needs more philanthropy deployed more strategically:

- Over the past 25 years, the South has out-paced the nation in population growth—40 percent for the South versus 30 percent for the nation.
- The South is poised for another surge in population, especially along the Atlantic seaboard; the Census Bureau’s mid-decade projections from the 2000 count indicate a 20 percent rise in population by 2015.
- The South is in the midst of a shift from a biracial to a multi-ethnic region.
- The South’s job growth has been accompanied by widening income disparities.
- Since 2000, almost every Southern state has seen a rise in poverty rates.
- The South today has 11,500 foundations with roughly \$56 billion in assets compared to total US foundation assets of more than \$510 billion.
- Seventy percent of the South’s assets are concentrated in four states: Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia.

Specifically, *State of the South* targets four areas that need creative foundation leadership: K-16 education, economic development and labor force preparation, poverty reduction, and public health and disease prevention.

The report provides fresh data on the challenges facing the region, examples of creative, “passing-gear” philanthropy already being practiced in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Kentucky, among other Southern states, and recommendations for developing more “passing-gear” philanthropy.

*State of the South 2007* ends with a call to action from Ambassador James Joseph, MDC board chair and former US Ambassador to South Africa. “Philanthropy’s vision for the future should be to help move the South beyond the tolerance of difference to valuing diversity, to an understanding that opportunities and outcomes are interrelated, and to a commitment to give new life to the promise of equality in the workplace, the schoolhouse, and our civic institutions,” Ambassador Joseph writes.

MDC staff are available for interviews regarding *State of the South 2007*. To arrange an interview, contact Mirinda Kossoff, communications director, by phone at 919-969-8446 or by email at [mkossoff@mdcinc.org](mailto:mkossoff@mdcinc.org).

*Printed copies of State of the South 2007 can be ordered at a cost of \$20 each by contacting MDC at [orders@mdcinc.org](mailto:orders@mdcinc.org) or by calling 919-968-4531. Volume discounts are available.*

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**About MDC:** *MDC is a nonprofit headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC. Founded in 1967 to identify and help remove barriers to progress for the South, MDC has been publishing research and developing policies and programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and building inclusive civic cultures in the American South for the past 40 years. MDC’s mission is to help organizations and communities close the gaps that separate people from opportunity.*  
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