

# history

## ASSETS

**The Memphis region is rich in historical assets.** The Memphis region contains a wide variety of historical offerings. For example, some of the earliest are the prehistoric Indian mounds found scattered throughout the region. Along the original four trails is a series of historic buildings, sites, districts and entire towns. Some of the region's cities, such as Holly Springs, have large pre-Civil War era homes and residential neighborhoods. Downtown Memphis recently re-introduced early 1900s streetcars, has historical museums (including the National Civil Rights Museum, Mud Island, etc.) and has a noteworthy Victorian district.

**The region's history has significantly contributed to its strong identity.** Mark Twain's connection to the Mississippi River, the legend of Elvis Presley, the cotton culture, the Civil Rights Movement, the birth of the Blues and rock and roll are all significant events tied to Memphis in the minds of most Americans, and are even recognized worldwide.

**The four historical trails provide an easy and highly visible framework for –understanding the region's historical sites and districts.** The majority of the registered

historic sites, districts and towns in the Memphis region are located along historical trails, which have evolved into modern roads. The Cherokee Trail became Poplar Avenue. The Chickasaw Trail is now US-78. The Tri-Weekly Mail Trail became US-64 while the Military Trail to Little Rock is now I-40. Four original trails linked Memphis to the region and the nation. Three of the trails extended to the east and one continued across the river to the west. These four trails set the pattern upon which the region grew.

While the main cluster of historical resources (i.e. historic sites, districts and museums) is found in the central area of Memphis, other important sites and districts are located along the historical trails. Particular concentrations are found in Collierville, with a dispersed line of districts and sites in Germantown along the former Cherokee Trail. Other concentrations occur along the Chickasaw trail, such as in Holly Springs and in Covington along the 1829 Nashville Mail Route.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Establish an “umbrella” entity for all of the local historical organizations.** Strengthen neighborhood associations to keep historic areas from declining and to recruit active participants

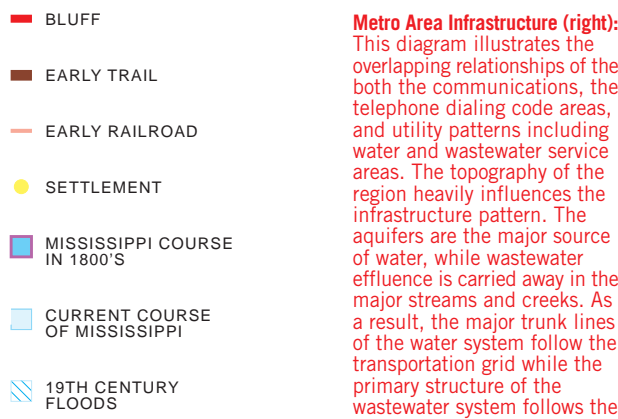
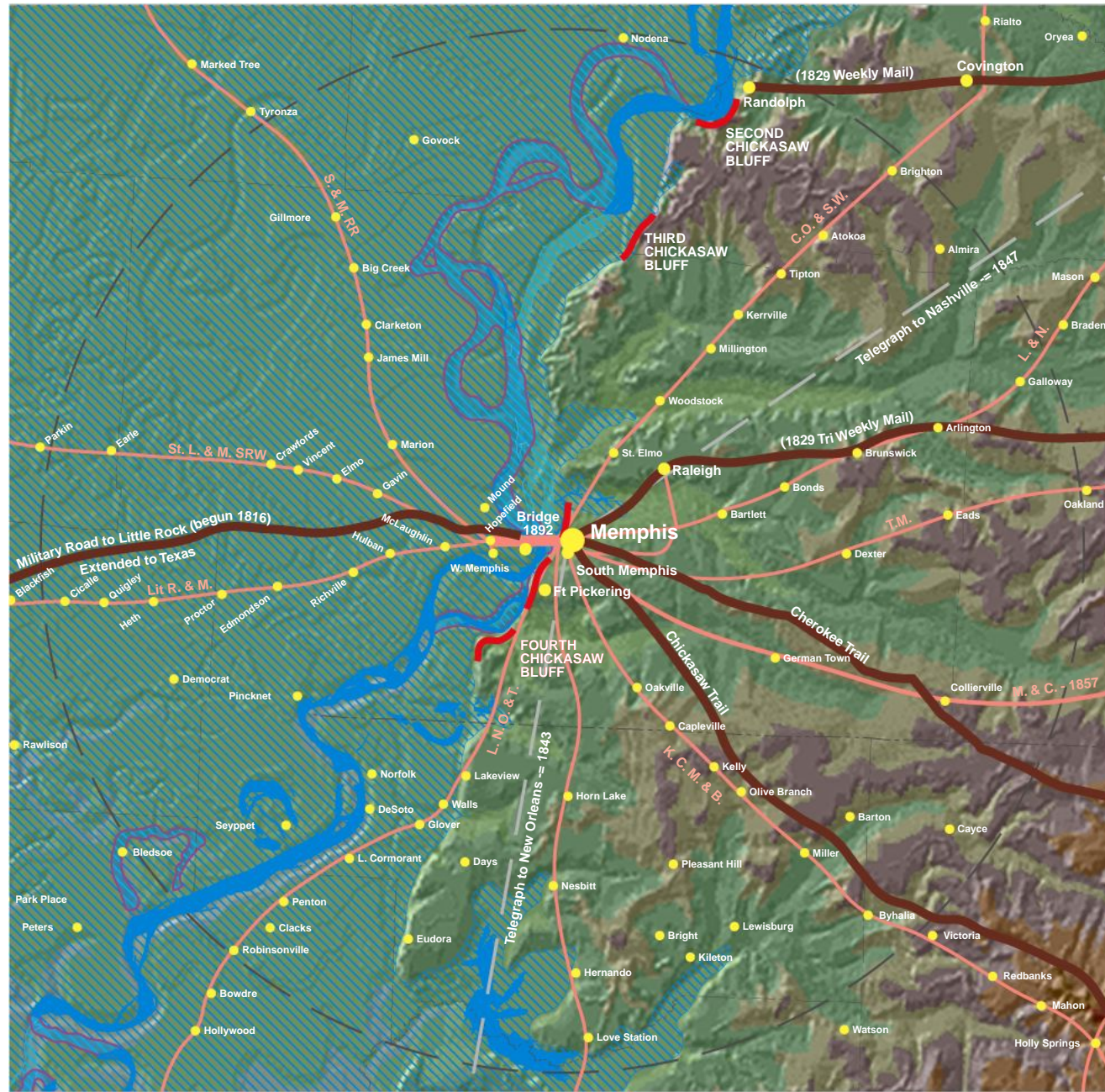
in preservation. This organization could serve as the voice for historical resources, facilitate communication, share information and develop resources.

**Create a regional history project and promote its activities.** Develop a comprehensive preservation strategy covering the entire Memphis region in all three states. Link historic sites and districts to the four historic trails. Involve regional universities in the identification and preservation of regional historical assets (schools of urban studies, architecture, history, etc.). Establish a regional tax abatement plan for the regional historic districts and overlay zones to aid in their preservation.

**Grow the heritage component of the tourism economy.** Capitalizing on the region's historical resources to increase heritage and eco-tourism will add breadth to create additional synergies with other convention, sports, entertainment and regional tourism facilities. Promoting the region's historical assets can significantly increase the region's attractiveness as a destination location. Locally, regionally and nationally promote the region's historical offerings including the area's history museums, historic districts and sites, Indian mounds, historic forest areas and significant trees.

**Use the region's history to build a stronger image and identity in the national and global marketplaces.**

The region's history - including its people, culture and geography - has helped develop its identity in the emerging global marketplace. The region's history should become a significant component of its overall national and global marketing strategy.



**Metro Area Infrastructure (right):** This diagram illustrates the overlapping relationships of the both the communications, the telephone dialing code areas, and utility patterns including water and wastewater service areas. The topography of the region heavily influences the infrastructure pattern. The aquifers are the major source of water, while wastewater effluence is carried away in the major streams and creeks. As a result, the major trunk lines of the water system follow the transportation grid while the primary structure of the wastewater system follows the tributaries. Although the three-state metro area acts as one business unit, it is divided into three area code zones requiring long distance dialing for intra-metro calls.

**Metro History (left):** The region is an area rich in historic resources, including Indian mounds and artifacts, famous architectural monuments, districts, communities and small rural cities. The primary Indian sites are found in a wide swath along the western edge of the Mississippi River. As the region evolved, the path of the Mississippi River has shifted leaving behind a series of horseshoe lakes as its historic remains. The pattern of early settlements grew up along the four historic trails, shown in yellow, which linked the eastern U.S. to the western territories and formed the spines for urban development. The majority of the regions historic areas and sites are located along these four trails which have become part of the road network in the metro area. While a large cluster of historic resources remains in and near downtown Memphis, other important resources and many historic cities and towns are found throughout the region.

# infrastructure

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Work to create an integrated regional communications system.** Within the Memphis region a single consolidated communications network that allows for local calls across the region does not exist. This is a barrier to the internal communications vital to building an integrated economy. Increased collaboration between the region's providers will be required to create a common communications network. A one-rate region would facilitate communications within the region, thereby strengthening the region's social and economic linkage.

**Once deregulation of the power supply goes into effect, a policy needs to be developed to address the new power demands.** Although service providers have the current capacity to meet the entire region's needs, there are future capacity concerns due to recent brownouts that have occurred in parts of the region during peak summer demand. Plans are under way for new power generation within the region to provide for future needs.

**Ensure the long-term supply of quality water.** Water supply protection requires protection of the aquifers. The metro area and the region are not integrated into a consistent water management and urban growth master plan. There are several problems stemming from this issue. First, aquifer recharge areas are threatened due to lack of sufficient land use controls. Second, aquifer interchange is a potential problem, especially if one aquifer becomes polluted due to inappropriate land use in recharge areas, the other could also become polluted. This possibility is not remote—salinization in east Arkansas is a real threat. Third, only Shelby County has placed strict limitations on withdrawal of water from regional aquifers for industrial use. There should be a regional consensus on regulating industrial and other commercial water uses. Regional coordination of land use to protect these areas is critical, and should involve the Ground Water Institute.

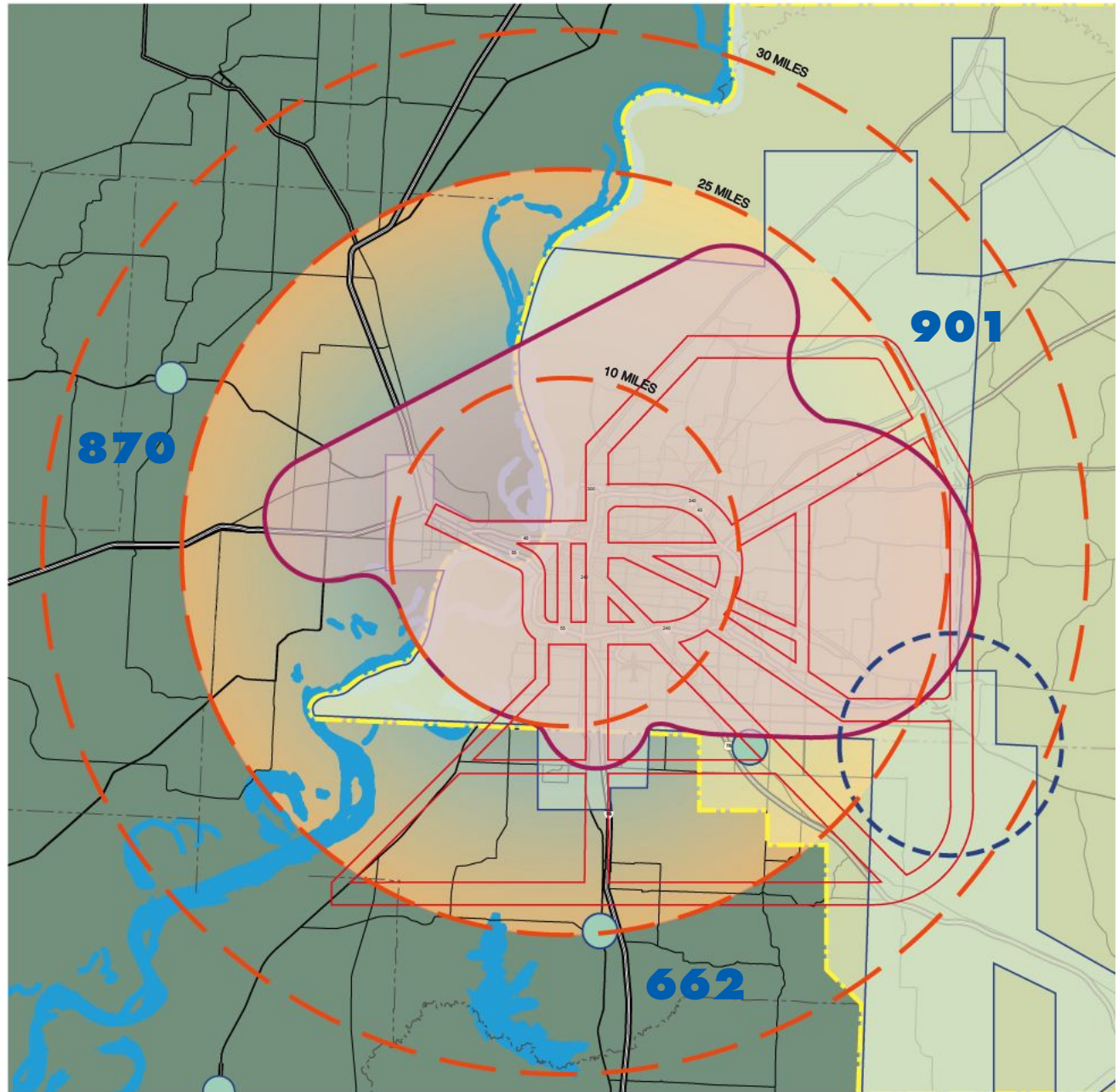
**An integrated wastewater plan should be developed.** Currently, wastewater management is not adequately coordinated with land use policies and urban growth. New suburban development should be regulated and coordinated with future wastewater provision plans. An integrated wastewater plan that creates a comprehensive metropolitan wastewater systems plan would reduce the need for septic tanks and enable the region to maintain a high quality of discharge. While a large portion of the metro has a master plan, many significant areas are not currently a part of it and need to be included to insure high quality of wastewater discharges.

**Increased coordination between infrastructure and transportation improvements is key to urban growth management.** Rather than a reactive approach to suburban growth, the coordination of transportation improvements, land use policies and infrastructure provision could proactively influence urban growth throughout the region. Increased regional coordination of planning and investments in regional infrastructure and transportation improvements can have a direct impact on the region's future land use as well as assist in revitalization efforts. This integrated approach will more efficiently use the region's land resources as well as its investments in new or improved infrastructure.

## ASSETS

**The region is developing an advanced telecommunications grid.** The growth of Memphis as a logistics and distribution center is a motivating force for the region to develop high-tech telecommunications. The University of Memphis, Arkansas State University, University of Mississippi and Christian Brothers University have developed new programs in communications technology to enhance the region's communications capacities and increase the region's technology workforce capabilities. As this technology evolves, many telecommunications companies (including BellSouth, XO Communications, AOL Time Warner, etc.) are expanding their services throughout the region.

**The region has a large power grid.** The region's sources of energy are almost equally split between the Tennessee Valley Authority to the east of the Mississippi River and Entergy to the west and some parts of North Mississippi. At the center of the region, covering most of Shelby County and extending slightly east, is Memphis Light, Gas & Water (MLGW)—an integrated utility provider.



# timeline

## 8000 BC - 1500 AD

8000 BC Early Archaic Period Begins  
6000 BC Middle Archaic Period Begins  
3000 BC Late Archaic Period Begins  
900 BC Early Woodland Period  
200 AD Middle Woodland Period  
900 Early Mississippian Period  
1000 The Chickasaw Indians cross the Mississippi River from the west to establish the first village located on the Chickasaw Bluffs at the site of present Downtown Memphis.  
1100 Middle Mississippian Period  
1200 The spread of Mississippian culture traits was facilitated by a vast and widespread trade network.  
1250 A political system had come into being, composed of sites including civic-ceremonial centers with mounds, associated with walled villages, surrounded by dispersed farmsteads.  
1300 Late Mississippian Period  
1400 Chickasaw Indians develop a broad trading network extending from the Natchez area to Western KY and IL.  
1500 The Chickasaw society and technology had evolved and produced rather advanced chiefdoms in Memphis and Walls, Mississippi.

## 1500

1541 Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto "discovers" the Mississippi River somewhere south of the present site of Memphis.  
1673 Marquette and Joliet descend the Mississippi, land at the bluffs.  
1682 LaSalle, encountered Chickasaw Tribe on the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, claims the Mississippi valley for France.  
1739 French build Fort Assumption, first European settlement on the bluff.  
1763 French and Indian War ends with Treaty of Paris, giving territory east of the Mississippi to England except for disputed Spanish claim in the area of north Mississippi and west Tennessee.  
1783 NC legislature opens land office which illegally sold 5 million acres within Chickasaw territory, John Rice and John Ramsey each granted 5,000 acres to claim the Memphis area.  
1783 River eddy located at the Memphis site is noted as being favorable to flatboat landings.  
1789 NC is made a state of the Union. The western portion is ceded to the Federal Government (but titles to land grants were maintained).  
1793 Americans occupy the bluffs. W. Clark prepares for Carolinian settlers.  
1794 John Overton and Andrew Jackson acquire the Rice claim, cultivate alliance with the Chickasaws.  
1795 The Spanish under Gayoso build Fort San Fernando in the area of Auction Avenue.  
1795 Spain cedes its claims north of the 31st parallel to the United States.  
1796 Tennessee created from area previously part of NC.  
1797 US Army builds Fort Adams and then replace it with Fort Pickering.

## 1800

1803 Louisiana Purchase removes int'l boundary from Mississippi River.  
1811 Earthquake on New Madrid Fault causes Mississippi River flows backward.  
1816 Military Road from Memphis to Little Rock begun.  
1818 Chickasaw tribes cede all land in Kentucky and Tennessee.  
1819 Andrew Jackson, James Winchester and John Overton found the town of Memphis.  
1826 Memphis receives a charter of incorporation.  
1826 Memphis Advocate and Western District Intelligencer, Memphis' first newspaper began.  
1829 Tri-weekly mail line from Jackson to Memphis through Bolivar, Somerville, and Raleigh; moving Memphis ahead of competing bluff city of Randolph at Tipton/Lauderdale county line.  
1831 Stage line from Nashville and Jackson established.  
1835 Exports of Southern goods begin gain in importance. Memphis was well located as a distribution hub for Western goods carried on the Mississippi for Southern consumption.  
1838 Low water at Randolph diverted steamboats and cotton to Memphis, effectively ending its competition with Memphis.  
1844 Congress funds navy yard in Memphis for construction of ocean-going vessels.  
1845 The Military Road from Memphis to Little Rock nearly complete.  
1847 First municipal bond issue approved, mainly for street construction.  
1848 First free public schools.  
1849 Memphis Medical School founded.

## 1850

1850 Packet boat lines to New Orleans, Louisville and Cincinnati established.  
1852 13 Public schools in operation. Taxes first levied for public education.  
1855 Two Packet boat lines to St. Louis.  
1857 Memphis and Charleston Railroad completed.  
1860 Memphis is the largest city in Tennessee. Population is 22,623.  
1861 Civil War begins, Shelby County votes for secession.  
1862 After the capture of Nashville, Memphis is the state capitol for 3 months before it too fell.  
1865 War ends, civilian government resumed control.  
1866 County seat moved back to Memphis from Raleigh.  
1866 Race riots in south Memphis result in state control of police system.  
1870 Memphis is the fifth most populous city in the South. Pop 40,226.  
1873 Yellow fever epidemic strikes with over 24,000 cases over the next six years.  
1880 Memphis builds modern sewer system to prevent future epidemics, gains world acclaim.  
1887 Artesian water supply discovered, system soon constructed to supply water to the city.  
1887 100 million board feet of lumber handled through Memphis.  
1891 Memphis Light and Power wiring city.  
1891 First electric streetcar.  
1892 Great Mississippi River Bridge completed, first bridge across Mississippi south of St. Louis.  
1895 First skyscraper, Dr. D.T. Porter Building (11 stories).

## 1900

1900 Population is 102,320. New Park Commission authorizes Overton and Riverside Parks.  
1906 Overton Park Zoo founded.  
1909 Legislature authorizes commission form of government for Memphis.  
1910 Edward "Boss" Crump elected mayor, begins campaign to reform the city.  
1917 Hanrahan Bridge provides region's first automobile roadway across Mississippi River.  
1923 The Commercial Appeal wins Pulitzer Prize.  
1929 Municipal Airport completed.  
1931 Airmail service begins.  
1932 Depression results in loss of 1/3 of Memphis' manufacturing jobs since 1930.  
1932 The school system runs out of money to pay teachers.  
1933 Memphis votes to build electric grid to distribute power from TVA.  
1933 US Office of Education ranks Memphis last in school spending.  
1937 Preparations for war brought new industries to Memphis (Chickasaw Ordnance Works Plant, Second Army Headquarters, Chicago and Southern Airlines).  
1941 US Quartermaster Depot in Memphis, additional munitions plant.  
1941 US enters WWII. 40,000 Shelby County residents inducted for active duty.  
1941 Airforce and Navy facilities constructed. Major manufacturing facilities constructed. Unemployment eliminated.  
1942 Kennedy General Hospital constructed by military, converted to VA in 1946.  
1949 Suburban development begins with Poplar Plaza Shopping Center.

## 1950 - 2000

1950s Memphis won awards as America's cleanest city and America's quietest city.  
1950s Memphis is the largest wholesale center in the south, and 10th in the nation.  
1952 First Holiday Inn built on Summer Avenue.  
1954 Elvis Presley records at Sun Studio, marking the birth of Rock n Roll.  
1960s Government construction accelerates in downtown Memphis.  
1960s St. Jude Children's Research hospital founded.  
1963 New airport terminal building dedicated.  
1968 Dr. Martin Luther King assassinated at the Lorraine Motel during garbage workers' strike.  
1972 School desegregation and busing ordered.  
1973 Federal Express headquarters moved to Memphis from Little Rock, AR.  
1970s County Commission and Court replaced by mayor and commission form of government.  
1980 "America's Distribution Center" marketing theme adopted. Logistics boom.  
1981 Peabody Hotel reopened - turning point for downtown redevelopment.  
1983 Rebuilt Beale St. opened.  
1986 Republic Airlines bought by Northwest Airlines, Memphis a major hub of combined airlines.  
1989 Construction of the Pyramid Arena begins.  
1990 Memphis metropolitan area population exceeds 1 million.  
1991 Dr. W. Herenton elected city's first African-American mayor.  
1995 Memphis 2005 Strategic Economic Plan adopted by the community.  
1999 DeSoto County, MS becomes second metro county to exceed 100,000 population.