HISTORY
The 1907 illustrated handbook of Meridian, Mississippi, states the city of Meridian is a “child of the railroad.” The railroads developed in Meridian in the 1850s, with the Mobile and Ohio and the Southern Railroad of Mississippi lines forming a junction at the small community. Meridian would grow to become the largest city in Mississippi at the turn of the 20th century with five major rail lines and 44 trains coming in and out of Meridian daily.

The Meridian Terminal Company, composed of officers of the Mobile and Ohio, the Southern, the Alabama and Vicksburg, the New Orleans and Northeastern, and the Alabama Great Southern rail lines, was formed to build a new passenger depot. The new depot and railway express agency were completed in August of 1906 at a cost of $250,000 and constructed in Mission Revival architecture. The original depot included a central tower, which was demolished in the late 1940s. Further demolition to Union Station occurred in 1966, when all but the eastern wing of the remaining passenger depot was removed.

CONCEPTUAL HISTORY
The City of Meridian, born of and experiencing its greatest growth in conjunction with railroads, has capitalized on its railroading heritage in the development of the Union Station Multi-Modal Transportation Center (MMTC). A Multi-Modal Transit Study Committee was established to investigate the potential of an MMTC facility. In June 1991, the Mississippi Department of Transportation approved the use of Federal Transit Administration planning funds for a feasibility study to evaluate the demand and possible sites for an MMTC in Meridian.

The Study Committee, made up of community leaders and organizations, property owners, government officials, and interested citizens, participated in the initial charettes conducted by the engineering firm preparing the feasibility study. It was the collective vision of the committee to develop a model which would not only serve the transportation needs of the East Mississippi/West Alabama area, but which could also serve as a national model for small city intermodal operations.

PROJECT FUNDING
The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) provides funding for transportation capital improvement projects which promote multi-modal facilities and for the preservation of historic transportation structures. The site selected for the MMTC project, the Union Station Historic District, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
In 1993, Transportation Enhancement funds for the preservation of historic transportation structures under the Surface Transportation Program of ISTEA were approved by the Mississippi Department of Transportation for this project at the request of the City of Meridian.

The project involved several constituents in an undertaking that had a construction price tag of $6.5 million, including $5.1 million in federal and state contributions, $1.3 million from the City and $0.43 million in contributions from Amtrak.

**MMTC PROJECT DESIGN + DEVELOPMENT**

To begin the process, a design team of joint venture architects, consultant specialists, and engineering consultants commissioned by the City held a series of town meetings as a means of discussing conceptual design concerns with the Study Committee. Conceptual drawings were developed to relate the character of the project and to outline the major components of the MMTC.

Officially dedicated on December 11, 1997, the MMTC is a central transfer point among several modes of passenger transportation including Amtrak, Norfolk Southern, Greyhound Lines Inc. and other providers of transit services.

The MMTC occupies four city blocks. The Alabama Great Southern Railroad Company donated six acres of the project site. From east to west, the facilities involved in the Union Station site plan are as follows:

1) an area designed for future addition of rolling stock;
2) the railroad museum (REA building);
3) a landscaped area with memorial brick pavers;
4) the new terminal addition attached to the surviving portion of the depot.

East of the project site are a farmers’ market, landscaped park, and area for festivals and other city events.

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Union Station Multi-Modal Transportation Center not only serves as the hub of local and intercity transportation services, but it also promotes historic preservation and was the catalyst to Meridian’s downtown revitalization efforts.

Further restoration and development of the Meridian Railroad Museum (REA building) will be a major tourist attraction, inviting MMTC patrons to learn more about Meridian railroading history.

The development of the MMTC facility has centralized transportation services for the community and the traveling public, is stimulating tourism, and has solidified the City of Meridian's reputation as a transportation center in the Southeast.