



DIGEST DEEP INTELLIGENCE
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**Looking at The BDO Zone episode with
Grenada, MS and Swan River, MB**

Overview

The following analysis from Digest Deep Intelligence, powered by Digest AI, looks at the November 7th episode recording of THE BDO ZONE featuring Grenada, Mississippi and Swan River, Manitoba.

The document identifies key themes from the broadcast, the strengths of each region, what makes them unforgettable, and the value of the BDO Zone Initiative itself.

Executive Summary

Key Participants:

- Aryn Garswood & Marian Marinescu & Peter Wolf: Ecostrat representatives responsible for BDO Zone technical assessments
- Matthew Harrison: Greater Grenada Partnership representative
- Duane Whyte & Derek Poole: Town of Swan River representatives

Main Themes:

- BDO Zone Designation: Both Grenada County, Mississippi and Swan River, Manitoba have received BDO Zone designations signifying their regional readiness for bio-based manufacturing projects.
- Biomass Feedstock Availability: Both regions possess a surplus of biomass suitable for biofuel and bioproduct development. Grenada boasts 1.85 million bone-dry tons of woody biomass, primarily pulpwood. Swan River offers 100,000 metric tons of wood fiber, with potential for additional agricultural residues like flax and hemp straw.
- Infrastructure & Logistics: Both regions offer robust infrastructure including industrial parks, utilities, transportation access, and skilled workforce.
- Community Support & Investment Incentives: Both communities exhibit strong support for attracting bio-based industries and offer various incentives for project development.

Key Facts & Highlights:

Grenada, Mississippi:

- BDO Zone Rating: High quality, low investment risk (A rating)
- Biomass Feedstock: 1.85 million bone-dry tons of woody biomass
- Price: \$50-\$70 per bone-dry ton delivered to Duck Hill, Mississippi
- Key Infrastructure: 11,750 acre industrial park with ready-to-build sites, utilities, and rail access
- Dual-served electricity
- Access to 1,000 psi natural gas
- New 500,000-gallon water tank and multiple water lines with 1.2 million gallons per day capacity
- Workforce: Access to 9 universities and 14 community colleges within a 60-90 mile radius
- Incentives: \$4.8 million site development grant (available until 2026)
- Land grant program
- 30-year fee in lieu of taxes, negotiable to 1/3 of regular taxes
- Incentive package extends to suppliers locating in the industrial park

Quotes:

- Marian Marinescu (Ecostrat): "[Grenada County] was one of the most rewarding BDO zones I rated due to the engaging business attitude of the forest owners, forestry professionals, and our clients at Greater Grenada Partnership and Chamber of Commerce."

- Matthew Harrison (Greater Grenada Partnership): "We want to make sure we're connecting the universities to our companies and opportunities with these students to create a well-rounded environment of going to the university, coming out of the university, and having sustainable careers."

Swan River, Manitoba:

- BDO Zone Rating: Certified for 100,000 metric tons of wood fiber
- Biomass Feedstock: 50,000 metric tons from Spruce Products Limited sawmill
- 50,000 metric tons from low-grade round wood and forestry residues
- Potential for agricultural residue utilization (quantities not yet determined)
- Key Infrastructure: Project-ready site with access to low-cost natural gas, high-speed internet, and rail
- Workforce: Large agroforestry workforce with relevant experience
- Competitive Advantage: No competing biomass facilities within 240 km
- Incentives: Local incentive bylaw for residential, commercial, and industrial development
- Flexible negotiation and support for project developers

Quotes:

- Peter Wolf (Ecostrat): "Any developer setting up in the town or in the vicinity of the town of Swan River virtually has virtually no competition. So it's a huge asset for the BDO zone."
- Derek Poole (Town of Swan River): "The municipal governments locally are very excited about the possibility of partnering with your companies."
- Duane Whyte (Town of Swan River): "We have things that nobody else does. We have the fishing, the hunting, the outdoor experience. There's nothing like it. Once they come up here, they may not want to leave."

Both Grenada County, Mississippi and Swan River, Manitoba demonstrate significant potential for bio-based manufacturing projects. Their BDO Zone designations, coupled with their strong biomass feedstock availability, robust infrastructure, and supportive communities, make them attractive locations for project developers and investors seeking low-risk, high-reward opportunities.

Grenada's strengths

- Strategic Location: Grenada is strategically located between Memphis, Tennessee, and Jackson, Mississippi, providing access to a population of about 2 million people. It is also situated on the interstate, allowing for access to two-thirds of the United States population base within a two-day radius. This makes it an ideal location for businesses looking to reach a large customer base. [1]
- Access to Transportation: Grenada has excellent transportation infrastructure, including interstate access, rail lines, and air transportation. Interstate 55 runs north-south through Grenada, while Interstate 82 and Highway 7 provide east-west connections. The Grenada Railway connects to New Orleans and Canada, and the nearest commercial airport is located in Jackson. [1-3]
- Readily Available Industrial Park: The 1,175-acre industrial park in Grenada offers multiple sites with utilities already in place, including a 40-megawatt

substation, a 12-megawatt substation, a 6-inch natural gas main, and access to a 1,000 psi natural gas pipeline. The park also features a new four-lane industrial road and completed phase one environmental studies. [1]

- **Ample Water Supply:** Grenada has access to ample water resources, including a new 500,000-gallon water tank, a 14-inch main water line, and a 12-inch main water line. This provides a total water capacity of approximately 1.2 million gallons per day. [4]
- **Incentives and Support:** Grenada offers substantial incentives for businesses, including a \$4.8 million site development grant, a land grant program, and a 30-year fee in lieu of taxes that can be negotiated down to one-third of the regular tax rate. The community also provides support to businesses through customized training programs at Holmes Community College and a focus on developing a skilled workforce. [5, 6]
- **Southern Hospitality:** Grenada is known for its southern hospitality, with a community that is welcoming and supportive of businesses. This creates a favorable environment for businesses to operate and thrive in. [7]

Swan River's strengths

Here are the main advantages of Swan River, Manitoba, for potential investors, drawing from the provided sources:

- **Abundant Feedstock:** Swan River boasts access to 100,000 metric tons of wood fiber, with potential for even more from local sawmills. Additionally, the region has substantial agricultural residues such as flax straw, hemp straw, and canola fibers that could present further opportunities.
- **Experienced Suppliers and Limited Competition:** Two large, modernized forestry facilities — a sawmill and a smart siding manufacturing plant — operate in Swan River, providing a network of experienced suppliers and indicating a stable future for harvesting activities. Notably, there are no competing wood fiber suppliers within the BDO zone or the broader competition zone, giving potential investors a significant advantage.
- **Project-Ready Infrastructure:** A site just four kilometers from the spruce products limited sawmill offers direct access to low-cost natural gas, high-speed internet, and rail. Swan River also has readily available serviced industrial land, with a specific example lot zoned for heavy industrial development and fully serviced with utilities like water, sewer, natural gas, and power.
- **Supportive Community and Government:** Swan River has a strong agroforestry workforce, and local municipal governments are enthusiastic about partnering with new businesses. The Manitoba government is actively working with First Nations organizations and the town to ensure a robust and reliable feedstock supply for years to come.
- **Low-Cost Utilities:** Swan River provides access to ample and low-cost electricity and natural gas. Manitoba Hydro offers industrial electricity rates ranging from 3.8 to 9.8 cents per kilowatt hour, and natural gas is available at approximately 12.33 cents per

cubic meter. This access to affordable utilities is a significant advantage for energy-intensive industries.

- **Excellent Transportation Network:** Swan River is located on Highway 83, which connects to the US border, and Highway 10, which provides access to Northern Manitoba. These highways connect to the east-west Yellowhead Highway and the Trans-Canada Highway, providing efficient transportation routes. Swan River also has a CN rail line connecting south to Winnipeg and west to Saskatchewan. While some bridges in forest operating areas may restrict load sizes, the town is well-connected for transport.
- **Attractive Incentives:** Swan River offers local incentives for residential, commercial, and industrial developments, with flexible terms based on the size of the project. The town is open to negotiation and willing to work with developers to ensure mutually beneficial agreements.
- **High Quality of Life:** Swan River offers a high quality of life with abundant recreational opportunities, including golfing, skiing, hockey, and access to pristine natural environments for hunting and fishing. The town has well-regarded schools and access to healthcare facilities.

Overall, the sources highlight Swan River as a community with significant advantages for bio-based industries. The region offers a strong combination of readily available feedstock, supportive infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and a proactive government dedicated to facilitating new business development.

Unforgettable Grenada

- Matthew Harrison emphasizes that the Grenada community goes beyond professional courtesy, striving to build personal relationships with those interested in doing business there. This commitment to forging lasting connections, combined with genuine warmth and attentiveness, would make a memorable impression on any visitor.
- The emphasis on building relationships suggests a community that goes the extra mile to make people feel welcome and valued. This could manifest in various ways, from organizing community events and social gatherings to providing personalized assistance with navigating local regulations and resources. Beyond this welcoming atmosphere, Grenada offers a compelling combination of strategic advantages for businesses, as discussed in our previous conversation:
 - Its strategic location provides access to a vast consumer and labor pool.
 - Its robust infrastructure minimizes the challenges of setting up operations.
 - Its generous incentives demonstrate a strong commitment to attracting and supporting businesses.

These factors, combined with the warmth and attentiveness of the Grenada community, create a truly unforgettable experience for those seeking a location to establish their business.

Unforgettable Swan River

The overwhelming theme is the natural beauty and unique recreational offerings of the Swan River Valley, combined with the friendly and welcoming nature of its people.

- **Natural Beauty and Recreation:** Swan River is situated in a region of stunning natural beauty. Nestled between the Duck and Porcupine Mountains, the Swan River Valley offers pristine landscapes and unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation. The sources describe it as "the most pristine part of Canada" and highlight its abundance of fishing, hunting, and breathtaking views of the Northern Lights. These natural wonders would leave a lasting impression on any visitor, showcasing a side of Canada that many may not have experienced.
- **Warm Hospitality:** The Swan River team consistently emphasize the friendly and welcoming attitude of Swan River residents. One speaker describes it as "the Land of Smiles", where people are genuinely happy to see you. This warmth extends to the business realm, as the community is eager to work with new businesses and help them succeed.
- **Uniquely Canadian Experience:** Several aspects of Swan River contribute to a uniquely Canadian experience. The strong emphasis on hockey, the presence of First Nations communities actively involved in economic development, and the community's dedication to celebrating Remembrance Day all contribute to a distinct cultural richness. These elements provide a glimpse into the local culture and history, making a visit to Swan River more than just a business trip.
- **"Vitamin R":** While this statement may require some interpretation, it speaks to a certain lightheartedness and jovial nature within the community. This, combined with the descriptions of the region's beauty and abundant recreational opportunities, suggests a place where people know how to work hard and enjoy life.

Overall, Swan River emerges as a place that offers more than just business opportunities. It presents a chance to connect with nature, experience a welcoming and vibrant community, and gain a unique perspective on Canadian culture. These are the things that would stay with a visitor long after they leave, making Swan River truly unforgettable.

What Makes Grenada Low Risk for Feedstock?

- **Abundant Woody Biomass:** Marian Marinescu's presentation mentions that the Grenada BDO zone received an A rating for 1.85 million bone-dry tons of woody biomass, with two-thirds coming from pulpwood thinnings and the remainder from forest residues. This indicates a significant surplus of woody biomass in the region, suggesting a reliable and readily available feedstock source for potential projects.
- **Established Forestry Industry:** The presentation further highlights a "multi-generational legacy of private forest ownership and forest operations" in the region. This implies a mature and well-established forestry industry with experienced stakeholders, contributing to the stability and reliability of the biomass supply chain.

- **Supportive Community:** The sources repeatedly emphasize the strong community support for new biomass projects in Grenada. Local forestry professionals see potential benefits in promoting forest health, increasing timber value, and fostering economic development through a new bio-based industry. This positive attitude towards biomass utilization suggests a lower risk of encountering community opposition or regulatory hurdles for feedstock sourcing and project development.

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Competitive Pricing: The presentation notes a competitive price for delivered biomass in Grenada, ranging between \$50 and \$70 per bone-dry ton. This suggests a favorable economic environment for sourcing feedstock, contributing to the overall low-risk profile of the region.

What Makes Swan River Low Risk as a Feedstock Hub?

- **Reliable and Diverse Feedstock Supply:** Swan River boasts a considerable supply of woody biomass, with the BDO zone rating identifying 100,000 metric tons of readily available wood fiber. Importantly, this supply is reinforced by two major, modernized forestry facilities, Spruce Products Limited (SPL) sawmill and Louisiana Pacific's smart siding manufacturing plant. These established players contribute to a stable and predictable feedstock supply chain, reducing the risk for new bio-based projects.

- **Potential for Expanded Production:** The sources indicate that SPL is willing to supply even more than the rated 25,000 dried tons of wood fiber, signaling a potential for increased feedstock production should demand arise. This flexibility further mitigates risk by providing a buffer against potential supply chain disruptions.

- **Agricultural Residues as a Supplementary Feedstock:** Beyond woody biomass, Swan River benefits from a substantial agricultural industry, offering additional feedstock opportunities in the form of flax straw, hemp straw, and canola fibers. While the exact quantities of these residues were not quantified in the sources, local leaders suggest a significant availability, particularly for canola straw. This diversification of feedstock sources reduces reliance on a single type of biomass and enhances the resilience of the overall supply chain.

- **Supportive Government and Community:** The sources paint a picture of strong collaboration between the Manitoba government, First Nations organizations, and the town of Swan River to ensure the longevity of the forestry industry and a secure feedstock supply. This commitment from key stakeholders reduces regulatory uncertainty and fosters a favorable environment for long-term investment in bio-based projects.

- **Limited Competition:** A notable advantage for Swan River is the lack of competing wood fiber suppliers within the BDO zone and the broader competition zone, extending 240 kilometers north of the town. This absence of direct competition strengthens Swan River's position as a feedstock hub and reduces the risk of price volatility or supply chain disruptions caused by competing demands.

The Value and Importance of the BDO Zone Initiative

- **Certifying Regional Readiness:** The BDO Zone initiative provides a standardized and rigorous assessment of a region's suitability for bio-based manufacturing projects. This certification, based on a comprehensive evaluation of feedstock surplus, supply chain strength, and infrastructure, offers a powerful signal to project developers and investors seeking low-risk locations for their ventures. This "stamp of approval" streamlines the site selection process, saving developers time and resources that would otherwise be spent on due diligence.
- **Connecting Rural Communities with Global Opportunities:** The initiative plays a vital role in bridging the gap between rural communities with abundant biomass resources and the global network of project developers and investors seeking those resources. This connection unlocks economic development potential for these communities, offering opportunities to diversify their economies, create jobs, and revitalize local industries. This aspect is particularly evident in the enthusiasm expressed by representatives from both Grenada, Mississippi, and Swan River, Manitoba, who see the BDO Zone designation as a catalyst for attracting new investments and creating a more sustainable future for their regions.
- **Accelerating Bio-based Project Development:** The BDO Zone initiative contributes to the acceleration of bio-based projects by mitigating risks associated with feedstock availability, supply chain logistics, and infrastructure readiness. This reassurance, backed by a credible and transparent assessment framework, encourages investors to commit resources to projects in designated zones, knowing that the groundwork for success has been laid. The initiative, therefore, acts as a facilitator, helping to bring promising bio-based technologies to market faster and contribute to a more sustainable economy.
- **Supporting a Transition to a Bio-based Economy:** The BDO Zone initiative aligns with broader policy goals of transitioning to a more sustainable and bio-based economy. By promoting the utilization of renewable biomass resources, the initiative supports efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, create a more circular economy, and mitigate the environmental impact of traditional manufacturing practices. The recognition of the BDO Zone initiative in the USDA's plan to enable the bioeconomy in America further underscores its importance in achieving national goals for sustainable development.
- **Promoting Transparency and Credibility:** The BDO Zone initiative stands out for its commitment to transparency and credibility. The standardized framework, developed in collaboration with Idaho National Labs and the US Department of Energy, ensures a consistent and rigorous assessment process. The involvement of a capital market risk rating review committee and the recognition as a CSA national standard in Canada add further weight to the credibility of the BDO Zone designation. This transparency and adherence to standards fosters trust among stakeholders, making it a more reliable tool for both communities and investors.

The BDO Zone initiative plays a valuable role in promoting and accelerating the development of a bio-based economy. By providing a credible and transparent

assessment of regional readiness, the initiative reduces risk for investors, connects rural communities with global opportunities, and contributes to a more sustainable future. The enthusiasm and optimism expressed by representatives from Grenada and Swan River, as documented in the sources, serve as compelling evidence of the initiative's positive impact and its potential to transform communities through sustainable economic development.