



PRESS RELEASE

Contacts: **Latoya Norman**
General Manager, Museums
lnorman@hattiesburg.org
601.450.1942

Paige Crane
Public Relations Coordinator
pcrane@hattiesburg.org
601.296.7407 or 601.410.6508

USO TO HOST COMMUNITY DAY AND BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, MARCH 25

HATTIESBURG (March 10, 2017) — On Saturday, March 25, the East Sixth Street USO will host a 1940s Community Day and Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration event from noon to 4 p.m.

This official bicentennial project was made possible by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, through support from the Mississippi Development Authority.

The African American Military History Museum will unveil twelve new oral history stories. The museum uses a kiosk to help educate the public by providing first-hand, local accounts of African Americans who either served in the military or volunteered at the East Sixth Street USO.

These stories will be available for public viewing for the first time during the 1940s Community Day and Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration.

“The stories on the oral history kiosk give museum visitors a way of connecting with soldiers from the past and understanding how life was when the USO was fully functioning. The addition of twelve new stories will hopefully bring more visitors to the USO, both returning and new,” Latoya Norman, general manager of the AAMHM, said.

Other activities for the day will be kicked off with a meet and greet with the newly crowned Miss East Sixth Street USO at noon. Following this, attendees can take jitterbug lessons, participate in 1940s games, or listen to live entertainment by the 41st Army Band.

Throughout the day there will be a vintage and military vehicle show. Cars featured in the show belong to friends of the USO from the greater Hattiesburg community. The military vehicles will be provided by the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby.

Attendees will also be given a “ration coupon” upon arrival to redeem for a free snack. Each snack will vary depending on the hour in which the card is redeemed.

Guests are highly encouraged to dress in 1940s attire, but it is not required.

“We are honored to commemorate 75 years of African American military history by celebrating the USO on this day. We invite veterans and community members to join us at the museum,” Rick Taylor, executive director for Hattiesburg Tourism and Convention Commission, said.

The African American Military History Museum's regular hours are from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, and from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday with special appointments available. The USO Club opened on March 22, 1942 and was constructed by community volunteers who invested more than 40,000 hours in the project. It is currently the only surviving restored USO built exclusively for African American soldiers and in 2003 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. More than 150 years of African American military history is on display in the Museum.

The African American Military History Museum is a Hattiesburg Convention Commission Facility. Since 1991, the Hattiesburg Convention Commission has been developing, operating and promoting tourism-related facilities for the Hattiesburg area. For more information, call 601.450.1942 or visit HattiesburgUSO.com.

###