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Craig Ray to lead State's Tourism Efforts *New Visit Mississippi Director begins July 18*

Jackson, Miss. (July 7, 2016) – Veteran tourism professional Craig Ray will take over as Visit Mississippi Director at the Mississippi Development Authority. Ray was appointed to the position by MDA Executive Director Glenn McCullough, Jr.

“Craig has a proven history with both tourism and MDA,” said McCullough. “His results-driven performance record will enhance Mississippi as a destination location with a uniquely rich cultural heritage around the globe.”

As Visit Mississippi Director, Craig will lead MDA’s tourism efforts to promote Mississippi as a premier tourism destination and film location both nationally and internationally. He will advocate Mississippi’s significant cultural, heritage, history, natural resources and recreational offerings through his promotional efforts.

“I have had the privilege of promoting Mississippi’s rich tourism assets for many years. It is an honor to help lead a team dedicated to showing the world what the state has to offer,” said Ray. “I appreciate Glenn McCullough for this opportunity and look forward to working with both MDA and our tourism partners.”

Ray is a former partner of The Talon Group, LLC, a government relations advocacy firm. He has an extensive background in tourism, public relations, event management, partnership development, and entertainment and venue negotiations.

Prior experience includes, Co-Executive Producer of the Mississippi GRAMMY Celebration, Executive Producer of Mississippi Night at the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles, Producer of the Southeastern United States Canada Conference, Director of the Division of Tourism Development at the Mississippi Development Authority and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Advance for Event Coordination for the White House.

Ray is a native Mississippian, where he attended high school before going on to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Business at the University of Mississippi.

Ray assumes his new position July 18, 2016.

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About Mississippi Development Authority:

Mississippi Development Authority is the state's lead economic and community development agency. MDA focuses on new business recruitment, existing business expansion, workforce training, and tourism promotion. For more information, visit MDA's website at www.mississippi.org.