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## **MTA DAY AT THE CAPITOL DEMONSTRATES TOURISM INDUSTRY'S ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Jackson, Mississippi (March 5, 2014) – Visitors spent more than \$6.25 billion in Mississippi last fiscal year (July 2012-June 2013) as the travel and tourism industry continues to have a major impact on the state's economy. The Mississippi Tourism Association and Mississippi Development Authority's Tourism Division are working to spread that message through a collaborative effort. Today's "MTA Day at the Capitol" was a part of that message and the ongoing strategy to show legislators the value of tourism in Mississippi. Tourism partners and dignitaries from convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and other entities around the state joined MTA and MDA today to show their support.

"We have so much to offer to visitors in Mississippi, and we need to invite them here to hear our story," said Rochelle Hicks, MTA's executive director. "The Mississippi Tourism Association is committed to providing the tourism industry the support needed to see an increase in tourism spending in Mississippi."

Malcolm White, MDA's Tourism director, noted the importance of the state's creative economy: "Mississippi's tourism industry is one of our greatest assets. Our musical legacy, culinary heritage, literary and artistic traditions and more are a part of what brings people here. Those assets are the key drivers behind our creative economy and how we can seize the opportunities created by the one-of-a-kind experiences that can only happen in Mississippi."

A complete breakdown of how tourism is a key component of the state's economic development efforts is outlined in the Fiscal Year 2013 Travel and Tourism Economic Contribution Report. Published each fiscal year by MDA's Tourism Division, the report is now available online at [www.VisitMississippi.org](http://www.VisitMississippi.org). From film projects to golf tournaments, Mississippi's tourism industry is thriving. According to the report, the state's 21.6 million visitors spent \$6.25 billion

in Mississippi, up from \$6.16 billion in FY2012. Those visitor expenditures produced \$630 million in state and city/county tax revenues.

Other highlights from the report include:

- 2.5 million persons were serviced at the state's 13 Welcome Centers
- Over 54,000 Welcome Center registrants were international travelers
- Travel and Tourism comprised 2.8% of the state Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Average visitor stay was 3.0 nights

“Travel and tourism is one of Mississippi’s largest export industries and a solid investment for our state,” added White. “For every \$1 spent on advertising and marketing, Mississippi receives \$6.46 in return. As the state’s fourth-largest private sector employer, the travel and tourism industry generates \$2.74 billion in payroll income from 115,000 direct and indirect jobs.”

For more information about MTA, go to <http://mstourism.com/>. For details about attractions, events and more around Mississippi, go to the state’s official tourism website, <http://www.VisitMississippi.org>, or call 1.866.SEE MISS.

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