



Contact: Jennifer Spann, Public Relations, Tourism Division
jspann@mississippi.org

601.359.3505

SPECIAL LUNCHEON AND NEW TOUR GUIDE EMPHASIZE TOURISM IN MISSISSIPPI

Jackson, Mississippi (January 15, 2014) – At a special luncheon to welcome Mississippi State legislators to the 2014 session, the Mississippi Development Authority’s Tourism Division along with the Mississippi Tourism Association unveiled the newest edition of the state’s primary tourism marketing tool: the 2014 Official Mississippi Tour Guide. Published annually, the tour guide is a comprehensive handbook of Mississippi attractions, events, accommodations, restaurants, local contacts, maps, mileage charts and other travel information.

“The Official Mississippi Tour Guide is an all-in-one resource for anyone planning a trip to Mississippi,” said MDA’s Tourism director, Malcolm White. “With input from our tourism industry partners statewide, we work to improve the guide every year. We are really proud of how this year’s edition showcases Mississippi’s diverse culture, geography, food and attractions with eye-catching imagery and design along with comprehensive material highlighting each region of the state.”

The 2014 edition features award-winning actor Morgan Freeman on the cover. Though not a Mississippian by birth, Freeman makes his home in the Mississippi Delta and is known for his co-ownership of Ground Zero Blues Club in Clarksdale and his outspoken support for the state’s cultural heritage. A new pull-out section called “About Town” highlights small town retailers, restaurants and attractions in a user-friendly, at-a-glance package for visitors.

Today’s luncheon was also an opportunity for Mississippi tourism industry partners to network with legislators. As part of its legislative agenda, MTA will continue to reiterate tourism’s economic impact and work to secure additional appropriations for the tourism budget and further improve the film incentive program.

According to FY 2013 figures, the state’s 21.6 million visitors spent \$6.25 billion in Mississippi. Those visitor expenditures produced \$629 million in state and city/county tax revenues.

“Travel and tourism in Mississippi is a good 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 \$2.8 billion in payroll income from 118,900 direct and indirect jobs.”

Two legislators were recognized during the luncheon as the 2014 Mississippi Tourism Association’s Friends of Tourism: District 102 Rep. Toby Barker (R) and District 22 Senator Eugene “Buck” Clarke (R).

For more information about tourism in Mississippi, go to <http://www.VisitMississippi.org> or call 1.866.SEE MISS.

###