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MISSISSIPPI

TOURISM ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI TOURISM ASSOCIATION HOLDS AWARDS CEREMONY HONORING TOURISM PARTNERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

Jackson, Miss. - The Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA) recognized the impact and accomplishments of the state's tourism industry at the annual tourism awards program held during Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, October 2-4, 2024. This annual educational and professional development event brought together around 200 tourism industry professionals from across the state as well as tourism partners from the surrounding region.

"Mississippi's tourism industry continues to flourish," said Governor Tate Reeves. "Every day, more visitors are discovering the charm of our state as they are drawn in by its natural beauty and the genuine hospitality of our people. It's no surprise why Mississippi leaves such a lasting impression with our visitors. I want to extend my gratitude to the Mississippi Tourism Association and their members for showcasing all that our state has to offer and congratulate this year's outstanding award winners."

These awards give MTA the opportunity to recognize members who excel in various sectors of the industry. Awards were presented in 22 categories, each focusing on a different aspect of the hospitality industry or individual achievement.

"We are delighted to celebrate these hardworking individuals who consistently go above and beyond for their communities and organizations. The competitiveness of these awards reflects the exceptional quality of work from our partners and highlights the strength of Mississippi's tourism industry. It's a privilege to collaborate with such remarkable professionals as we continue to drive growth and success in our field," said MTA Executive Director, Danielle Morgan.

The winners were as follows:

DMO of the Year \$3,000,000 and Over
Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau

DMO of the Year \$1,000,000 - \$2,999,999
Explore Ridgeland

DMO of the Year \$500-\$999,000
Visit Hattiesburg

DMO of the Year Up to \$500,000
DeSoto County Tourism

Best Overall Digital Media
Visit Oxford

Best Traditional Media Overall
Classic Sip Fest

Large Festival/Event of the Year

The Starkville Dachshund Derby

Small Festival/Event of the Year

JXN Food & Wine

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Community Volunteer of the Year

Jennifer Coulter

MTA Member of the Year

Kinney Ferris

Tourism Investment Award

David Conn

Governmental Tourism Leadership Award

Mayor Toby Barker

Tourism Legacy Award

Joe Jaeger, Jr.

Thomas VanHyning Research in Action Award

Jennifer Chance

Tourism Partnership of the Year

Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park

Attraction of the Year

Pacesetter Gallery

Venue of the Year

BankPlus Amphitheater at Snowden Grove

Lodging of the Year

AC Marriott Ridgeland

Restaurant of the Year

Elvie's

Best PR Strategy/Campaign of the Year

Visit Hattiesburg

Best Sales Strategy/Campaign of the Year

The City with Soul Celebrity Fam Tour Video

Tourism Promotion of the Year

Tunica Fall 2023 Campaign

“Ralph Marson said, ‘Excellence is not a skill, it’s an attitude.’ It is my honor to commend the Mississippi Tourism Association’s 2024 Governor’s Conference on Tourism Award Winners. Your passion and commitment to tourism, our state’s fourth-largest industry, and its collective contribution to Mississippi’s economy are fervently articulated by the impactful strategic initiatives and professionalism you execute and demonstrate daily. Thank you and your team for your unwavering passion that contributes to the transformational impact for our individual and collective Mississippi communities,” said Dr. Rickey Thigpen, 2024-2025 President of MTA.

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The voice of tourism, the Mississippi Tourism Association is a membership organization whose mission is to unite all sectors of the tourism industry through advocacy, promotion and education. MTA’s vision is to transform Mississippi’s economy through increased visitor spending and overall travel industry growth. For more than 30 years, MTA has led the Mississippi’s tourism education and advocacy efforts. Membership and organization details can be found at www.mstourism.com