



MISSISSIPPI TOURISM ASSOCIATION

SPRING SUMMIT 2026
STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

APRIL 2026

WELCOME

ROCHELLE HICKS, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM



OUR MISSION



As our state's storytellers, Visit Mississippi promotes and enhances the state through global marketing, creative collaboration, and leadership that inspires visitors, impacts businesses, and enriches communities.



Visit Mississippi Team



Rochelle Hicks
Director



Teresa Matthews
Deputy Director



Paige Robertson
Executive Projects Manager



Denise Stewart
Executive Assistant



Kammie Carpenter
Chief Sales Officer



Katie Coats
Chief Marketing Officer



Mike Jones
Director of Sports &
Outdoor Adventure
Sales



Paula Travis
Director of
International Sales
Sales



Marlon J. Ivy
Director of Visitor
Services
Visitor Services



Bevin Messer
Assistant Manager
Sales



Maggie Lowery
Cultural Programs
Manager
Sales



Connie Cossar
Domestic Sales &
Industry Relations
Sales



Sarah Warnock
Marketing Manager
Marketing &
Communications



Hermine Granberry
Digital Content Manager
Marketing &
Communications



Grace Hodanich
General Sales
Coordinator
Sales



David Strother
Sports Tourism
Coordinator
Sales



Walter Oglesby
Program Manager
Visitor Services

FY27 PARTNER RESOURCE GUIDE

VISIT MISSISSIPPI

PARTNER RESOURCE GUIDE



FISCAL YEAR 2027

PARTNERS AND FRIENDS,

Mississippi's continued economic momentum is rooted in partnership, shared vision, and the stories we tell together. Nowhere is that collaboration more powerful than in our tourism industry. Because of your dedication and leadership, Mississippi continues to resonate with travelers from across the country and around the world.

As we enter FY27, we are excited to begin a new chapter with our agency of record, Mies Partnership. Together, we will build on the strong foundation established in recent years to further refine our strategic direction, elevate our brand positioning, and strengthen the integration of our marketing efforts across all Visit Mississippi programs. This next evolution reflects our shared commitment to innovation, alignment, and meaningful results.

FY27 also marks the completion of the first half of our culinary-focused 2026, a celebration of the authentic flavors, traditions, and creativity that define Mississippi. Through this initiative, we have highlighted the culture, heritage, and hospitality that make our state unique while inspiring visitors to experience Mississippi in genuine and memorable ways.

This year, we are also introducing enhancements to our DMO Co-Op Advertising Program to better serve our partners. By streamlining offerings, we are creating a more focused and accessible program designed to maximize impact and complement Visit Mississippi's broader marketing efforts. These updates reflect our commitment to providing strategic, data-driven opportunities that help partners connect with engaged travelers.

Visit Mississippi has also implemented organizational updates that strengthen our team and position us for continued growth. Our evolving structure reflects our dedication to supporting Mississippi's tourism industry and elevating our state as a premier travel destination. Every member of our team is listed within this guide, and we encourage you to connect and collaborate with us throughout the year.

The FY27 Partner Resource Guide is designed to serve as your roadmap for the year ahead. Inside, you will find our annual plan, marketing strategies, key dates, divisional insights, and opportunities to engage across Domestic and International Sales, Marketing and Communications, Sports and Outdoor Adventure, Cultural Tourism, and Visitor Services.

The momentum we are building is possible because of partners like you. Your passion for sharing Mississippi's story continues to shape how visitors experience our state and why they choose to return.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING PARTNERSHIP.

Together, we will build on this momentum, celebrate the richness of Mississippi's culture and cuisine, and continue welcoming travelers to a destination defined by authenticity, connection, and unforgettable experiences.



ROCHELLE HICKS

Director of Tourism, Visit Mississippi

Scan to access guide »



VISIT MISSISSIPPI STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028 OVERVIEW

In collaboration with Coragallio Group, Visit Mississippi has developed a five-year strategic plan. The plan was shaped by extensive input, including survey responses, regional Stakeholder Forums, focused working groups and 1:1 interviews, and a complete Situation Assessment. The plan was unveiled in April 2025.

To explore the full plan, visit <https://visitmississippi.org/travel-industry-partners/>.

VISION:

Celebrated as the Hospitality State, Mississippi is the preferred destination for vibrant cultural heritage and unforgettable experiences, driving a dynamic tourism industry that uplifts communities and inspires visitors worldwide.

MISSION:

As our state's storytellers, Visit Mississippi promotes and enhances the state through global marketing, creative collaboration and leadership that inspires visitors, respects businesses, and enriches communities.

VALUES:

We are creative, responding to opportunities and challenges in novel ways.

We act with care for one another, approaching our peers and partners with empathy and humility.

We are determined, leading with tenacity.

We are passionate about our state, our culture, heritage and mission.



IMPERATIVES:

- Amplify Mississippi Stories
- Enhance the Visitor Experience
- Destination Development
- Educate, Empower & Support
- Organizational Excellence

COMPETITIVE POSITION:

Mississippi is the hospitality state. Visitors to the state will find:

- The birthplace of America's music and world-renowned writers and artists
- History that continues to shape American culture today
- An exceptional and unmatched hospitality experience
- Iconic outdoor experiences, from the forested Appalachian foothills to the expansive Delta horizons and scenic coastal wilderness





SELLING THE 'SIP



KAMMIE CARPENTER

CHIEF SALES OFFICER

SALES MISSIONS

- Drive overnight visitation
- Generate qualified leads
- Expand Markets
- Deliver measurable ROI



INTERNATIONAL SALES HIGHLIGHTS

- Target markets: UK, Germany, France, Canada
- Trade Shows & Sales Missions
- Tour Operator Partnerships
- FAM Tours



INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Bookable Itineraries
- Rural Destination Inclusion
- Trail Packaging
- Group-ready Attractions



CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS HIGHLIGHTS

- Association & SMERF Growth
- State-wide Lead Distribution
- Secondary Destination Interest
- Convention Service Alignment



MEETINGS MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- Faith-Based Meetings
- Regional Drive Markets
- Incentive Travel
- Corporate Travel



SPORTS & OUTDOORS HIGHLIGHTS

- Golf Show Lead Capture
- Tournament Recruitment
- Great Mississippi Nature Trail Alignment
- Youth Sports Growth



WHEN IT COMES TO
YOUTH SPORTS,
MISSISSIPPI
DOESN'T PLAY AROUND.



SPORTS & OUTDOORS OPPORTUNITIES

- Tournament Bid Support
- Fishing & Hunting Tourism
- E-Sports Exploration
- Seasonal Event Packaging



TEST YOUR SKILL.
TRY YOUR LUCK.
*P*LAN YOUR
ESCAPE.



CULTURAL TRAILS STRATEGY

- Blues Trail
- Country Music Trail
- Freedom Trail
- Writers Trail



CULTURAL TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

- Guided Tours
- Festival Tie-Ins
- Lodging & Dining Packages
- Enhanced Visitor Experience
(QR Content)



PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Room Nights
- Leads Generated
- Bookings
- ROI



PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Submit Bookable Product
- Share Event Data
- Host FAM Tours
- Join Sales Missions



ONWARD & UPWARD

- Together MISSISSIPPI
- Driving Visitation
- Strengthening Communities





MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

CEDRIC BURNSIDE

BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICA'S MUSIC

Our 2025 campaign celebrated the integral role the rhythms of Mississippi played in shaping of America's music and inspired travelers from around the globe to travel to Mississippi and experience the vibrant musical culture that thrives here today.

VISIT
MISSISSIPPI



Savor the JOURNEY

Our 2026 campaign celebrates the unique flavors of Mississippi, highlighting the signature dishes, the world-renowned chefs, and the vibrant culinary cultures that bring visitors from around the world to our table.

VISIT
MISSISSIPPI



Watch the *Savor the Journey* Commercial:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SK5seCLVDH4>

Watch the *Savor the Journey – Fresh* Commercial:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRa5yPksbTs>

PRINT & DIGITAL



PR HIGHLIGHTS

YTD (10/25-03/26)

- **105** Placements including Forbes, National Geographic Travel, Good Morning America, The Local Palate, TODAY Show
- **6,183,242,846** Impressions
- **\$8.1M** Estimated Media Value



Forbes

National Folk Festival Coming To Jackson, MS November 7-9, 2025

Downtown Jackson hosts the 82nd annual National Folk Festival celebrating the artistic traditions of all Americans through music, dance, craft, storytelling, food, and more.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVEL

The best places to eat in Mississippi may be at gas stations

AFAR

The Best Road Trips in the South

Get to know the American South on these top road trips. We've got one for every state, spotlighting Gulf Coast beaches and baysou to Civil Rights landmarks, mountain drives, music trails, and unforgettable food stops.

Mississippi for a blues pilgrimage



PR HIGHLIGHTS

50 STATES IN 50 WEEKS



MISSISSIPPI IN 90 SECONDS



ROSE PARADE

In 2026, hosted a satellite media tour alongside host Charlie Worsham, helping us connect Mississippi's story with audiences across the country, resulting in:

- 30 interviews
- 12.4+ million in additional reach



ROSE PARADE

In total, our Rose Parade PR efforts generated 115 pieces of editorial coverage, including 59 broadcast mentions, delivering more than 1.6 billion in total media value and nearly \$1 million in estimated earned media value.

And beyond the media outreach, the parade broadcast itself delivered significant national and international exposure for Mississippi, further amplifying our reach.

Los Angeles Times



It took pressure to reveal errors in Palisades fire

A year later, questions swirl about firefighters' decisions — and about disclosure of errors

By Peter Parnis and Anne Thompson



Even rainy skies can't damp excitement at Rose Parade

When rain fell on the day of the parade, it was a relief for many who had been told to expect a dry day. The rain was a welcome change from the heat of the summer months. The parade was a success, and the crowd was large. The rain was a relief for many who had been told to expect a dry day. The rain was a welcome change from the heat of the summer months. The parade was a success, and the crowd was large.



SOCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIAL ANALYTICS



Reach: 20M+
Impressions/Views: 8K+
Engagements: 115K+
Followers Gained: 6.5K
Link Clicks: 645K+

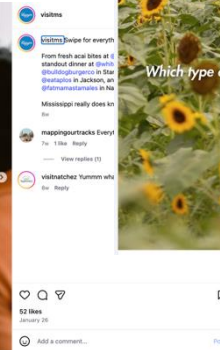
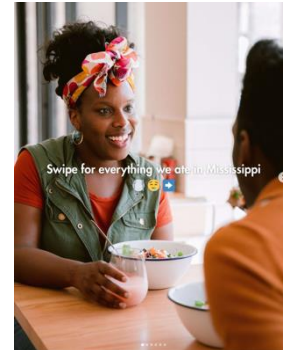
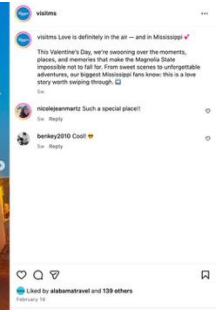
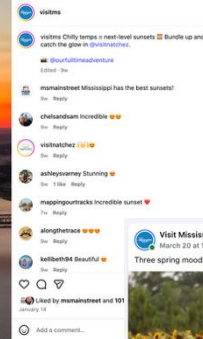
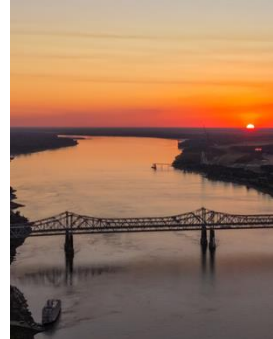
INFLUENCER ANALYTICS

EMV: 10K+
Reach: 98K+
Impressions/Views: 176K+
Engagements: 3.8K+



Visit Mississippi

173K followers · 805 following
Your official source for Mississippi travel planning information and Mississippi tourism.
Local & travel website



Podcast
Downloads

10K

Podcast
Views

1.2M

Total
Subscribers

1.7K

Instagram
Views

677K

Instagram
Followers

4.4K

Instagram
Engagements

34K

Facebook
Views

13K

Facebook
Followers

663

Facebook
Engagements

664

VISIT
MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI
on the
MAP

with

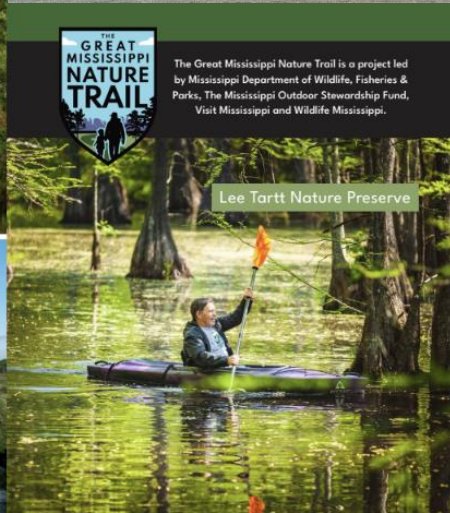
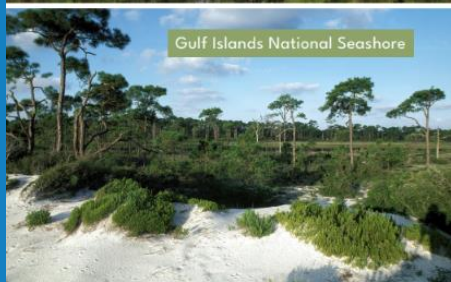
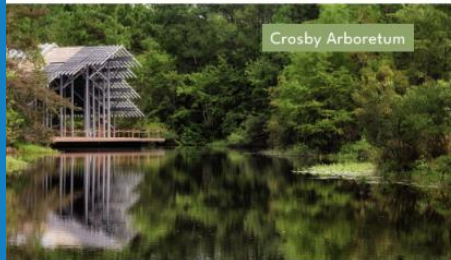
CRAIG
WISEMAN

CHART-TOPPING SONGWRITER & NASHVILLE
SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



The Great Mississippi Nature Trail brings together the state's most breathtaking landscapes, wildlife habitats, and outdoor destinations.

Together, these destinations showcase the ecological richness, cultural history, and natural beauty that make Mississippi unique.



GREAT MISSISSIPPI NATURE TRAIL



Crosby Arboretum

PICAYUNE, MISSISSIPPI

This 104-acre native plant preserve in Picayune is home to wetlands, savannas, and rare carnivorous plants - a living museum of Gulf Coast biodiversity.



Black Creek National Wild & Scenic River

21-MILE CREEK THROUGH DE SOTO NATIONAL FOREST

Mississippi's only federally designated Wild & Scenic River features deep black waters, white sandbars, and remote paddling routes through De Soto National Forest.



Gulf Islands National Seashore — Davis Bayou Area

GULF OF AMERICA | MS, FL

Quiet bayous, marshes, coastal forests, and abundant wildlife make this Ocean Springs destination a peaceful retreat on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



Tishomingo State Park

NORTHEASTERN MISSISSIPPI

Set in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Tishomingo State Park features towering rock formations, scenic bluffs, and rugged hiking trails unlike anywhere else in Mississippi.

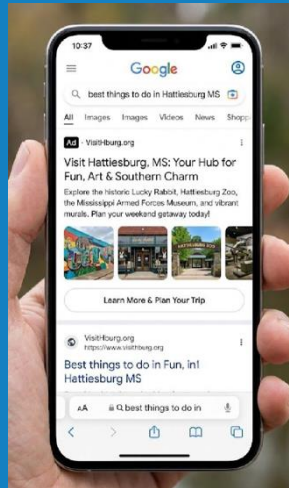
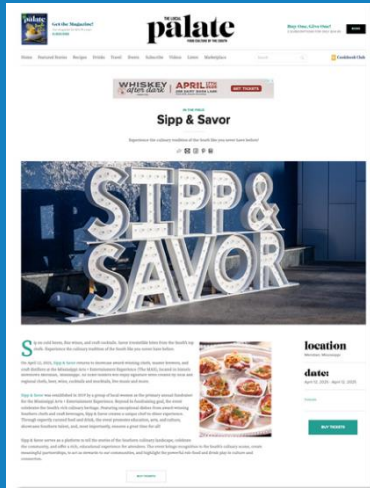


Red Bluff

FOXWORTH, MISSISSIPPI

Often called "Mississippi's Little Grand Canyon," Red Bluff's dramatic red and orange cliffs offer a one-of-a-kind backdrop for short hikes and sweeping views of the Pearl River.

FY27 DMO Co-Op Advertising Program



priceline®

amazon

Smithsonian

AFAR

Dotdash
meredith

GARDEN OF GUN

Nativo

Perion

Tripadvisor

hulu

SAMSUNG

peacock

gray

ADVANCE
TRAVEL & TOURISM

AJR MEDIA
GROUP

Atlanta
MAGAZINE

Country Roads
Cultural reporting from the Mississippi Delta to the Louisiana Coast

the palate
FOOD CULTURE OF THE SOUTH

nola.com

SB
StyleBlueprint

TRAVELS IN THE
SOUTHEAST

ad
genuity

Expedia

COMPASSMEDIA

INTRINSIC
MEDIA

MADDEN

OXFORD
AMERICAN

No Spending Caps

MATCH RATES

NO CAPS

Extend your budget by leveraging the buying power of VISIT MISSISSIPPI

Partner media buys as low as \$2,500

	DMO	ATTRACTION
PARTNER CONTRIBUTION	50%	25%
STATE CONTRIBUTION	50%	75%



EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

MARKET UPDATE

TAX COLLECTIONS

LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

Through the first two months of the year, Leisure and Hospitality Gross Sales \$2.7 Billion, up 8% YOY

\$2.6B

Accommodation
& Food Services

\$65.8

Arts, Entertainment
& Recreation

M

Total Tourism Taxes from Special
Levies, \$25.6M, up 5% YOY

MARKET UPDATE

Through the first two months of the year **hotel demand growth** outpaced the national average, **increasing 9.8% YoY.**

TAX COLLECTIONS

Mississippi hotel demand growth and revenue increases outperformed all competitive markets, with hotel revenue increasing 13.7%, totaling \$210.5M in January and February 2026.

LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

	Occupancy	ADR	RevPAR	Supply	Demand	Revenue
Calendar Year-to-Date	54.9%	\$104.26	\$57.19	3.7M	2.0M	\$210.5M
YTD Change vs. Previous Year	+9.0%	+3.5%	+12.9%	+0.7%	+9.8%	+13.7%

Source: STR



MARKET UPDATE

TAX COLLECTIONS

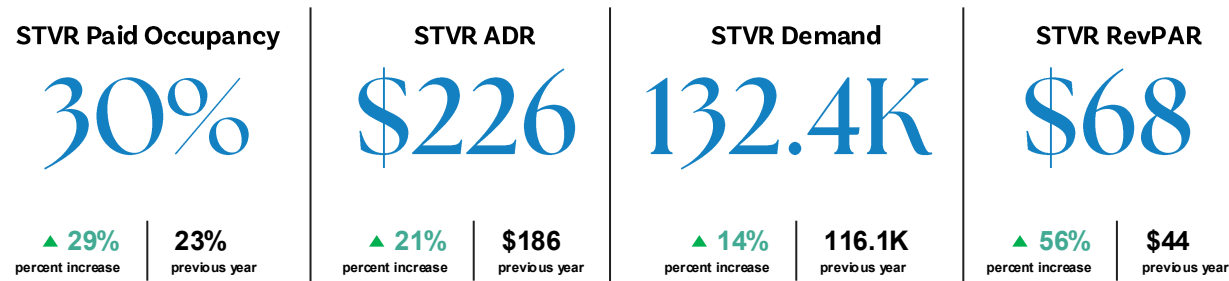
LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

Short-term-rental demand for the first two months of the year **increased 14% YoY, adding 132.4 k room nights** from the same time last year.

Average Daily Rates (ADR) for short-term-rentals is up 21%, driven by both rate increases and a demand for larger property types.



Source: Zartico, Jan-Feb 2026



MARKET UPDATE

Half of Mississippi domestic visitors and visitor spending continues to originate from the **Top-10 origin markets**.

TAX COLLECTIONS

LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

Visitor Origin Market	% of Visitors	% of Spend
Jackson MS	11%	12%
New Orleans LA	7%	5%
Memphis TN	7%	8%
Columbus-Tupelo-West Point MS	7%	5%
Mobile AL-Pensacola (Ft. Walton Beach) FL	5%	3%
Birmingham (Ann and Tusc) AL	4%	2%
Hattiesburg-Laurel MS	4%	6%
Baton Rouge LA	3%	3%
Atlanta GA	3%	2%
Meridian MS	3%	4%
Sum of Top-10 Markets	54%	50%

Source: Zartico, Jan-March 16, 2027

MARKET UPDATE

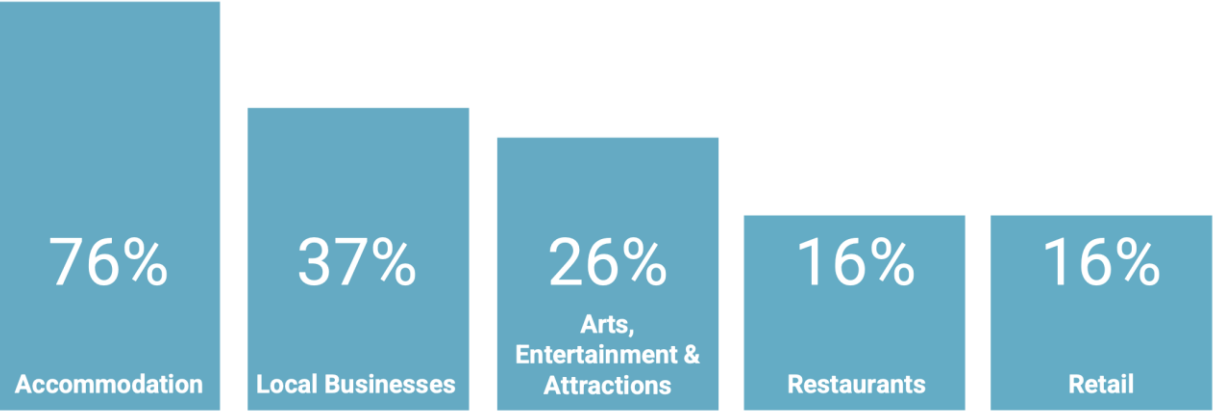
When **visitors** come to Mississippi, they **spend money with local businesses**, with these businesses capturing **1/3 of visitor card spending**

TAX COLLECTIONS

LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS



Source: Zartico, Jan-March 13, 2027

MARKET UPDATE

TAX COLLECTIONS

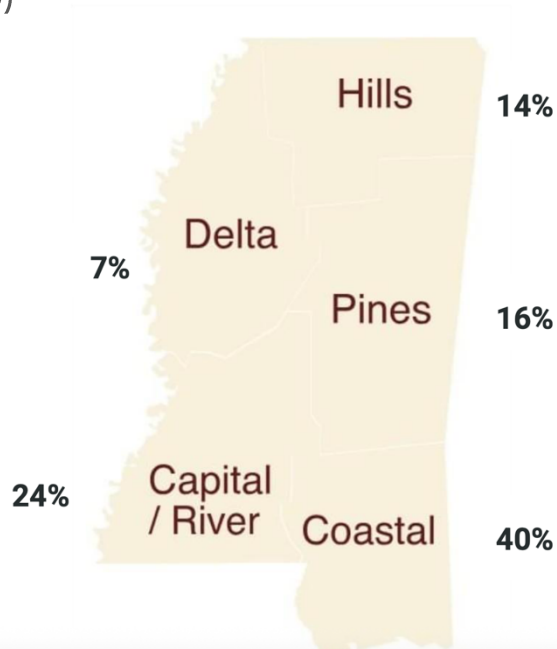
LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

40% of domestic visitors traveled to the Coastal region, with the Capital/River region receiving the second largest share of domestic visitation (24%)

Visitor
Percentage
at MS
Regions



Source: Zartico, Jan 1-March 13, 2026

MARKET UPDATE

TAX COLLECTIONS

LODGING DATA

VISITATION

EMERGING TRENDS

- Following strong lodging demand in the first two months of the year, **demand is pacing to continue this upward trajectory through the next six months**, with average stay value pacing at 153% of last year.
- **Mississippi visitors are 10-points more likely to consider travel a budget priority, and 36% plan to travel more in the next 12-months**, creating an opportunity to drive repeat visitation and expand their time in market by promoting new and unknown things to do in the state.
- **Drive markets continue to drive a notable value for the state, both in terms of visitation and spending.** This creates an opportunity to leverage loyalty from in-state and nearby markets while elevating Mississippi's cultural identity in the competitive source markets.



SPECIAL PROJECTS & EVENTS



Mississippi's Indigenous peoples have a long and enduring history of *reaching for the stars*.

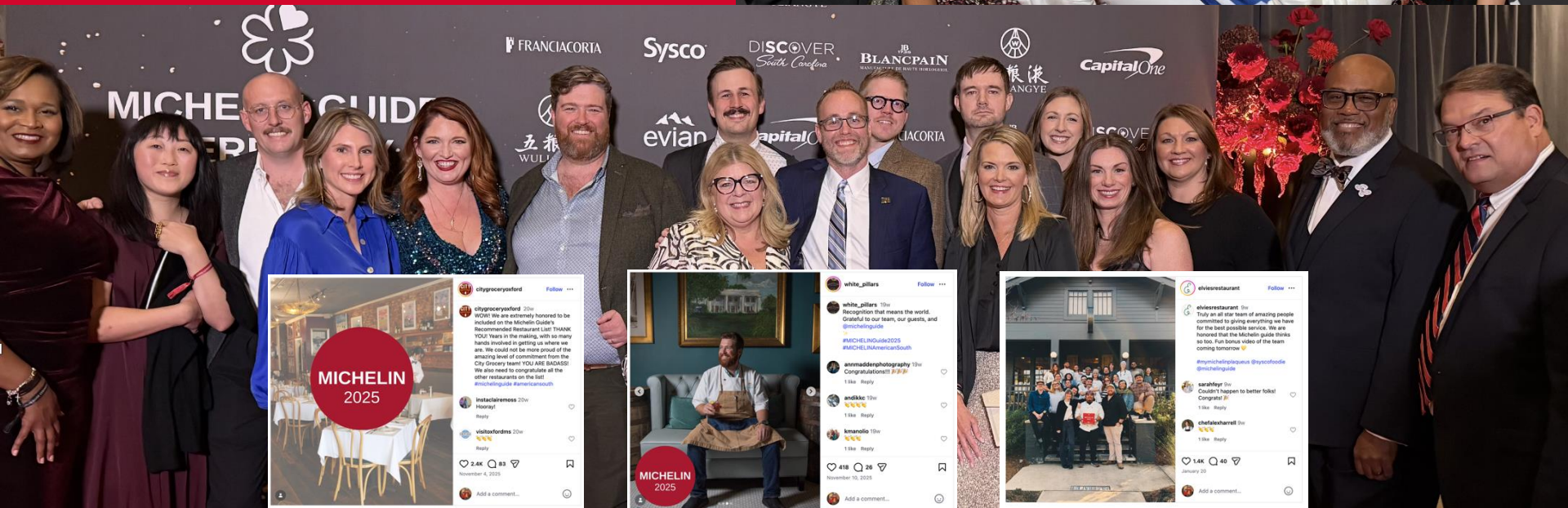
From the mound builders of ancient Mississippian civilizations to the leaders and visionaries behind some of our state's most popular resorts and attractions, Native American culture continues to shape our state's story and legacy. Visit Mississippi is proud to support our indigenous tourism partners in sharing that story with the world. Learn more at VisitMississippi.org.

#VisitMS



VISIT
MISSISSIPPI

THE MICHELIN GUIDE



THE GOLD RECORD ROAD:

Celebrating Louisiana &
Mississippi GRAMMY® Award
Nominees of the South



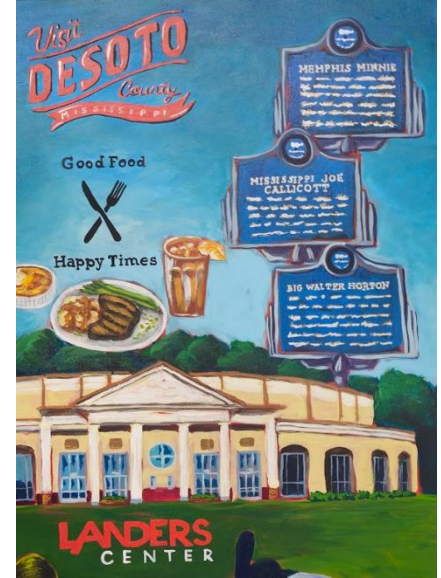
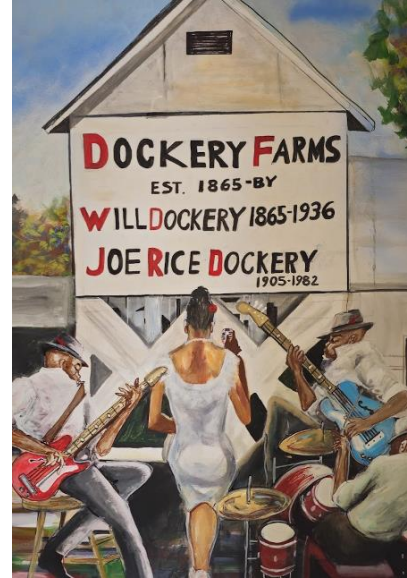
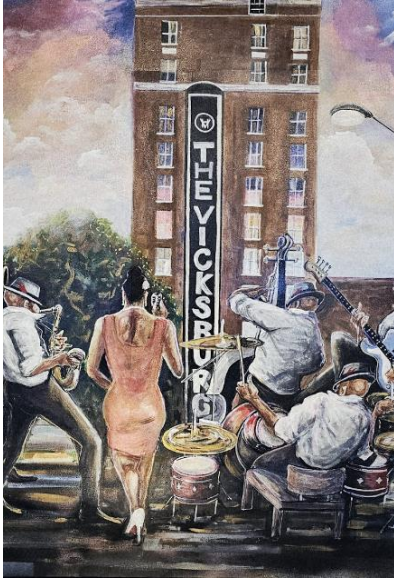
CLASH Coastal Mississippi Triathlon

Welcomed athletes and visitors from across the U.S. and over 20 countries, featuring multiple events including the USA Triathlon Collegiate Club National Championship and 2026 Americas Triathlon Cup Gulfport

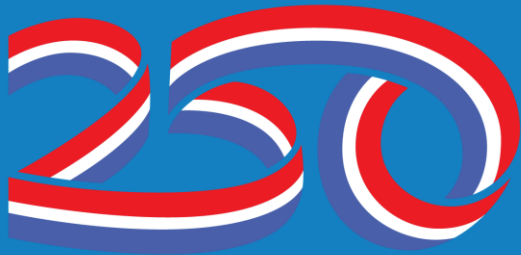
VISIT
MISSISSIPPI



WELCOME CENTERS



AMERICA



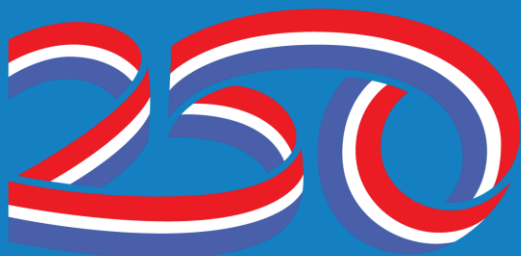
MISSISSIPPI

AMERICA250 MISSISSIPPI

A250MS is leading the charge in the state to promote America's 250 anniversary as well as encourage local communities to participate in their own way during the year-long celebrations.

Among the various state offices participating in A250MS programming are Visit Mississippi, the MS Arts Commission, MS Humanities Council, the MS Dept. of Archives & History, the MS Dept. of Agriculture & Commerce, the MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks, while the Commission is co-chaired by Mississippi First Lady Elee Reeves, Lynn Hoseman, and Jolynn White.

AMERICA



MISSISSIPPI

GET INVOLVED

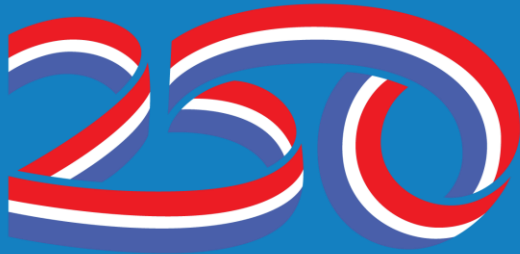
United in Song – The state's premier celebration is set for June 20, 2026, where Mississippians will come together for a powerful musical tribute to America's 250th birthday. FREE, Jackson.

National Initiatives on the Local Level – For students, teachers, civic organizations, etc. Check out resource guide now available

Newsletter – Sign up for latest events and initiatives



AMERICA



MISSISSIPPI

GET INVOLVED

Great American State Fair – Worlds Fair Style Event, 2 weeks on the National Mall in D.C. June 25 - July 10. Expect to welcome 2 million plus people. Mississippi will have a 25x30 pavilion. If interested in attending to work the booth, let Paige know ASAP.

United In Song – Registration closes April 10 for choir participation. DMOs invited to set up a booth on concourse (FCFS, 6 spots available)

Information on site at America250.MS/United



THANK YOU

VISIT
MISSISSIPPI