

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 887

WHEREAS, Mississippi's rich heritage, is informed and influenced by the African-American experience, especially that of the culture of the Delta region, and

WHEREAS, life in the Delta was shaped by the land, the river and a people who found release and expression in a profound musical form that came to be known as the "blues"; and

WHEREAS, with migration north of African-Americans from the Delta, blues began to gain a wider audience for its original treatment of the elements of life, its joys and its sorrows; and

WHEREAS, the blues was the progenitor of much of American popular music in the post World War II era, including the enormously significant Rock n' Roll, and Rhythm and Blues, while influencing the evolution of jazz; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the State of Mississippi have proclaimed 2003 the year of the blues, thereby celebrating in a formal way the cultural impact of this powerful, indigenous music; and

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi desires to recognize the large contribution of African-Americans to the cultural life of this State and Nation through blues and blues artists, many of whom share a Mississippi heritage, and to establish a point of focus for the promotion of this internationally acclaimed art form, the coordination with institutions and groups and individuals concerning the study of the blues, and the furtherance of education about this unique music tradition that continues to flourish;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronnie Musgrove, Governor of the State of Mississippi, through Executive Order do hereby authorize and establish by virtue of the authority granted unto me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Blues Commission, whose mission and structure shall be as follows:

I. MISSION

The mission of the Commission shall be to study, deliberate and report to the Governor and to the Mississippi Legislature by January 15, 2004 on the means determined best to foster an appreciation of the blues from diverse perspectives such as tourism, academic study, archival interest, historical preservation, cultural education and support of performing artists.

A. The report should include among its considerations the following:

1. An analysis of the tourism potential of the blues for Mississippi, and in particular for the Delta, and an inventory of blues “assets” that make up the blues landscape that could be developed into a program for tourism, domestic and international; opportunities for investment that would strengthen this potential should be identified.
2. The preparation of a plan for marketing the blues, including the tourism program, that features the historical, cultural, musical and business elements and opportunities of this “Bluesland”. The marketing plan should be designed to attract tourists, conferences, music performances, filmmakers and others for the purpose of economic development of the blues, the region and the state.

II. STRUCTURE

The structure of the Commission, to consist of fifteen (15) members, shall be as follows:

- a. Two members of the Mississippi Senate
- b. Two members of the Mississippi House of Representatives
- c. The Director of the Tourism Division of the Mississippi Development Authority
- d. The Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi
- e. The Director of the Center for Economic Development at Mississippi Valley State University
- f. The Director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University
- g. The Director of the Mississippi Arts Commission
- h. Two members who shall have experience in cultural affairs or tourism development in the Mississippi Delta.
- i. Four members at large who shall have demonstrated a commitment to the understanding and promotion of the blues.

The Governor shall designate the Chair and Vice-chair of the Commission and a Secretary shall be selected, by a majority of the Commission, to discharge the administrative responsibilities of the Commission. The Division of Tourism of the Mississippi Development Authority shall provide administrative support.

II. COMPENSATION

Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for service or through the Commission and shall receive per diem and reimbursement for actual expenses only to the extent allowed by specific legislation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol, in the City of Jackson, this the 23rd day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand and three, and of the two hundred and twenty-seventh year of the United States of America.

**RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR**

BY THE GOVERNOR

SECRETARY OF STATE