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STATE TOURISM DIVISION RELEASES RESEARCH REPORT

New Survey reveals overnight indicators for 1999

JACKSON, Miss., January 4 – Mississippi Tourism Development, a division of the Mississippi Development Authority in partnership with D.K. Shifflet & Associates has released its latest in a series of tourism reports, **Mississippi Domestic 1998-1999 Overnight Leisure Indicators**.

The purpose of the report was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the domestic travel market for Mississippi. The report highlights key demographic and travel behavior characteristics of Mississippi's domestic overnight leisure travelers with a comparison to the national average and to each of Mississippi's competing destinations.

Results of the report will assist the Division plan strategically for the future by providing actionable information to guide marketing and advertising programs.

"We were delighted to see the results of the report. Mississippi tourism continues to grow, in many cases, faster than the national average. The most popular reason to visit Mississippi was a getaway weekend. Previously, visiting friends and relatives held this spot. With some 32 million visitors during 1999, overnight leisure visitors increased by 11.1%," said Darienne Wilson, director, Tourism Development. "Good solid research provides the state, as well as the industry, increased visibility. This report will allow us to optimize our marketing dollars."

Key Survey Highlights

In 1999, 31.9 million people visited Mississippi. Of the total 10.5 million came for one day; 10.3 million were business travelers, and 11.1 million spent an average of 2.6 nights each.

Of the 11.1 million overnight visitors, 78.4 percent were from out-of-state. The average travel party size was 2.8. Expenditures averaged \$92 per person, per day, \$3 more than the U.S. average.

(MORE)

A summary of the D.K. Shifflet & Associates report may be obtained by contacting Stephen Martin as shown above.

The Mission of the Mississippi Division of Tourism is to create economic growth and opportunity through the promotion and development of Mississippi as a tourism destination, to provide leadership and direction for the Mississippi tourism industry, to foster awareness of the tourism industry's significance, thereby enhancing the image of Mississippi and the quality of life for Mississippians.

The goals of the division are to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the State of Mississippi, to be the lead organization in educating the general public and training the hospitality employees of our state, to work closely, partner with and support the Convention and Visitor Bureau industry of Mississippi, and to enhance the efficiency of the Division through the use of technology.

Tourism Development promotes Mississippi as a destination for business and leisure travel, operates the State's Welcome Centers, and includes the Mississippi Film Office.

Tourism and Recreation statewide income was \$6.1 billion in FY 2000 and \$5.6 billion in FY 1999, reflecting a 9.6% increase during this period.

Tourism and Recreation accounted for 94,100 jobs in FY 2000, and 89,600 jobs in FY 1999, or a 5.0 percent increase, based on quarterly employment figures for both years. Tourism and Recreation is the second largest service sector employer in Mississippi. Only health care has more service employees.

Tourism and Recreation General Fund tax revenues totaled \$482.3 million for FY 2000 and \$444.8 million in FY 1999, reflecting an 8.4% increase. Tourism and Recreation provides \$1 out of every \$7 deposited in the General Fund.

For additional information, please visit our web site at www.visitmississippi.org.

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