

For Immediate Release

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Governor Musgrove Announces the Mississippi Blues Commission

(Jackson, MS) –Today, Governor Ronnie Musgrove announced he has signed an executive order creating the Mississippi Blues Commission to develop a marketing plan for Mississippi to take advantage of our rich musical heritage known worldwide as the “blues.”

“Mississippi is the undisputed birthplace of the blues, not Memphis or Chicago,” stated Musgrove. “Life in the Mississippi 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.’”

“Musicians from all over the world come to Mississippi to explore the musical roots of the blues,” stated Darienne Wilson, director of the MDA’s Division of Tourism. “The formation of the Blues Commission will enable Mississippi to further enhance the blues to musicians and fans across the nation and the world.”

The mission of the Blues Commission is to study, deliberate and report to the Governor and to the Mississippi Legislature by January 15, 2004, a plan for marketing the blues, including a tourism program, that features the historical, cultural, musical and business elements and opportunities of this “Bluesland.” The marketing plan will 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.

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Governor Ronnie Musgrove
Mississippi Blues Commission

Musgrove also stated, “The blues has been performed, studied, emulated around the world, but it all began here in the Mississippi Delta and we are proud of our blues heritage.”

Members of the Mississippi Blues Commission include:

- Chair – Fred Carl, Jr., Viking Range Corporation;
- Vice-Chair – Robert Moore, Director of the University Center for Economic Development
- Senator David Jordan
- Senator John Horhn
- Representative May Whittington
- Representative Chuck Espy
- Darienne Wilson, Director of Tourism, Mississippi Development Authority
- Charles Regan Wilson, Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi
- Luther Brown, Director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University
- Tim Hedgepeth, Director of the Mississippi Arts Commission
- Bill Serat, Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Delta Tourism Association
- Isaac K. Byrd, Jr., an attorney and businessman from Jackson
- Will Jacks

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