



Mississippi Development Authority
Division of Tourism
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Tourism Office to Celebrate the Blues Statewide

JACKSON, Miss.—The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), Division of Tourism will celebrate The Year of the Blues (the official designation of 2003 by the United States Congress and the State of Mississippi) at Welcome Centers across the state September 15-20th. Activities are planned at each of the state's 11 welcome centers and will feature displays on Mississippi blues, play blues music throughout the week, and provide samples of indigenous Delta cuisine.

Certain designated Mississippi welcome centers will feature live blues musicians on Friday, September 19th while Lauderdale County's welcome center will feature Dr. Graham, of the local radio station KISS 104.1 FM. Dr. Graham will broadcast his two-hour blues program from 8:00 a.m.– 10:00 a.m., on Saturday, September 20th, live from the welcome center to complete the week's celebration.

"Designating The Year of the Blues in Mississippi brings worldwide attention to Mississippi as people throughout the state and throughout the world learn the contribution Mississippi has made to the blues industry. Showcasing the importance of the blues industry to tourism in Mississippi will be our key focus," said Governor Ronnie Musgrove.

"We're excited about this week-long celebration," said Steve Hale, executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority. "But more importantly, we're excited about the state and national designations for the year. As the birthplace of the blues, in The Year of the Blues, Mississippi is certainly the place to be, and we want everyone to enjoy these events.

To further celebrate The Year of the Blues, the Division of Tourism will host a special media tour that will visit cities in the Mississippi Delta September 16th – 20th and culminate in a final celebration on September 20th, at the Delta Heritage and Blues Festival in Greenville, Miss., the 2nd oldest blues festival in the United States. Media representatives will tour cities in the Delta and have a special view of the heritage and history of the blues in each area. Representatives will also tour blues museums, and visit other special places from which this powerful and influential music was born.

"Musicians from all over the world come to Mississippi to explore their musical roots, and this media tour will allow journalists to travel these same roads, hear this music, and get a first-hand

look at how this music has resonated throughout the world,” said Darienne Wilson, director of tourism development at the Mississippi Development Authority.

For more information on The Year of the Blues or the week’s activities, contact Mollie Murphy at 601-359-3297 or log on to the Division of Tourism’s website at www.visitmississippi.org for special links to The Year of the Blues.

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