



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Mississippi State Fairgrounds Hosts Heart of the Horse Expo and Trainers Challenge

STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss. – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson is excited to announce the kickoff of the Safe Horse Project's latest event, the 2023 Heart of the Horse Expo and Trainers Challenge, to be held at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds. The event is a spinoff from previous Safe Horse Auctions, with an emphasis on promoting a regional trainers challenge.

During this event, horse trainers from five states will converge at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds on Saturday, January 14, to pick their equine challenge partner from a lineup of over 30 untrained rescue horses. They will take them home for a 120-day training period before returning to exhibit the results of their training and to compete for over \$15,000 in cash and prizes provided by the Safe Horse Project. The public can follow their favorite horse and trainer teams through social media during the 120 Trainer Challenge; attend the finals competition at the Kirk Fordice Equine Center in Jackson May 19-20; and bid on their favorite horse at the live Safe Horse Auction that will conclude the event on May 20, 2023.

The horses participating in the Trainers Challenge will be available for adoption through the Safe Horse Auction, along with a number of other horses that have been fully vetted, evaluated and trained. All potential adopters/bidders must be pre-approved for adoption by submitting an online application to Mississippi Horses at www.mississippihorses.org and must make arrangements to meet with the horse and its trainer in advance of the auction in order to bid. This type of auction provides the setting to match buyers and horses appropriately according to the suitability of the horse for the abilities and activities intended by the buyer, thereby ensuring long-term interest and lasting homes.

The Safe Horse Project's mission is to grow participation in equine ownership as well as support for equine professionals and businesses. There is an epidemic of unwanted, untrained or poorly trained horses on the market, leaving those wanting to enter the world of horse ownership at a loss on how and where to find a horse suitable for their skill level. The Safe Horse Project, spearheaded by Mississippi Horse Rescue, hopes to bring awareness to the problem by promoting responsible horse ownership through events like the Heart of the Horse Expo and Trainers Challenge. Follow your favorite horse and trainer team on social media and by visiting the Safe Horse Project's web site at www.thesafehorseproject.org.

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