



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Taipei Economic & Cultural Office Presents Donation for Tornado Disaster Relief

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson facilitated a donation presentation to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce for the purpose of providing long-term relief for those affected by the March 24 tornadoes.

Director General Robert Lo of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston, Texas, presented a significant donation of \$50,000 collected from Taiwanese churches in the Houston area to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief. These funds will go toward assisting with long-term relief efforts for those impacted by the tornadoes that stretched across Mississippi in late March.

“I’m honored to facilitate this donation presentation. Today is an example of people of faith and the private sector coming together and it shows what can be accomplished when our leaders work together,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Our agency has worked closely with the nation of Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the past. On behalf of our great state and, in particular, our rural, farming communities that were devastated by storms last month, I want to thank the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office for this generous donation. I know the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief will maximize these funds by directly addressing the greatest needs of those impacted communities.”

“I am honored to accept this generous donation on behalf of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, our Disaster Relief organization and the hundreds of Mississippians who gather to worship within these affected communities,” said Shawn Parker, Executive Director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. “Under Director Hubert Yates, our Disaster Relief volunteers will be able to continue to provide much needed support and aid to our fellow citizens thanks to the Taiwanese people. We are called to be the light of the world and today, the good people of Taiwan have shown that light upon the people of Mississippi.”

Commissioner Gipson, Director General Lo and Executive Director Parker were joined by several Mississippi Baptist Convention Board members, as well as Mississippi legislators and senior pastors representing the counties impacted by the recent tornadoes. Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief will utilize the donation to purchase supplies, clothing and food for storm victims, and provide monetary support to displaced families. View the donation presentation at [link](#).

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce has collaborated with the Mississippi Development Authority's Trade Office to strengthen trade relations between Mississippi and Taiwan. Commissioner Gipson visited Taiwan in 2019 where he met with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen to promote Mississippi's agriculture commodities. Following the trip, a delegation from Taiwan visited Mississippi as part of Taiwan's Agricultural Trade Goodwill Mission. Commissioner Gipson signed letters of intent with Taiwan on behalf of the state which noted Taiwan's desire to purchase Mississippi soybeans and corn in 2020 and 2021. In addition, Commissioner Gipson accepted 100,000 PPE masks on behalf of the State of Mississippi that Taiwan donated to defend against the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

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Photo attached.



Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson facilitated a donation presentation to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Pictured L-R: Dr. Lloyd Sweatt, Pastor of Meadowood Baptist Church in Amory and President of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; Britt Williamson, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Rolling Fork; Hubert Yates, Director of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief; Dr. Shawn Parker, Executive Director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce; Robert Lo, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office; Milton Yang, Golden Bank Vice Chairman; Lydia Chassaniol, Mississippi State Senator; Gregg Harper, former Mississippi Congressman; and Michelle Lu, Consul with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.