



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Cuts Ribbon at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum's 40th Birthday Celebration**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson cut the ceremonial ribbon commemorating the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum's 40 years of educating the public on the importance of agriculture. He, along with other museum officials, replicated the grand opening ceremony lead by former Agriculture Commissioner Jim Buck Ross on the opening day of the museum, on September 20, 1983.

“This is a historic moment as we gather today to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. Forty years ago, when I was in kindergarten, I walked across the bridge for the very first time when the museum opened in 1983,” said Commissioner Gipson. “This museum is and will continue to be a great testament and legacy for Mississippi’s agricultural and forestry industries. This museum would not exist if it weren’t for the vision of former Commissioner Jim Buck Ross. Millions of people have walked through the gates being a part of the great experience of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum since its opening.”

Commissioner Gipson addressed upcoming plans for museum improvements. “I am proud to announce today that the next phase of our renovations will include upgrading, renovating and preserving the 1897 Church in Small Town, Mississippi. The public can support this and other efforts by becoming a member of the museum,” said Commissioner Gipson.

Commissioner Gipson was joined by Theresa Love, executive director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum; Dr. Bill Herndon, chairman of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation; Mike Massey, member of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation and Glenn Holloway, representative of the National Agricultural Aviation Museum. In addition to all the unique exhibits at the museum, visitors were treated to 40 experiences throughout the museum grounds.

The thirty-nine acres of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum grounds make up forty-four exhibits with eight annual events giving visitors a glimpse into past rural life and the opportunity to see how agriculture has shaped Mississippi over time. The Heritage Center Gallery exhibits 500 years of Mississippi’s agricultural history, from the early contributions to agriculture of the Choctaw population, to

turn of the century forest conservation, to modern catfish farming. The Heritage Center is home to the National Agricultural Aviation Museum featuring over 5,000 square feet of informational videos, colorful photographs and actual planes.

The Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead, a designated Mississippi Landmark dating back to 1860, includes many of the original buildings from a farmstead once located in Jefferson Davis County. Another popular attraction visitors enjoy is Small Town, Mississippi, a true-to-size replica 1920s crossroad town featuring a working cotton gin, print shop, filling station, blacksmith shop, church, schoolhouse, doctor's office and general store stocked with local Mississippi products. The Children's Barnyard houses a variety of farm animals. The Fitzgerald Collection, located off the beaten path on the museum grounds, is a museum-quality collection of antiques featuring Native American and Americana artifacts.

The Ag Museum hosts numerous events throughout the year for school groups, tour groups and families including Spring Farm Days, Easter at the Ag Museum, Mississippi Science Fest, Pumpkin Adventure, Harvest Fest and Homestead for the Holidays. At these special events, visitors enjoy live demonstrations throughout the grounds, cooking demonstrations, gardening tips, tasty treats, and wagon, carousel and train rides. Pickle Fest was awarded 'Small Festival Event of the Year' in 2022. Thousands of attendees flock to the museum for the summer event to enjoy live music, food and craft vendors and the fan-favorite Pickle Eating and Pickle Jar Packing Contests.

The museum has several educational opportunities available for children including Story time with Uncle Story followed by crafting the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., field trip arrangements and summer camps.

The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, located at 1150 Lakeland Drive in Jackson, is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information on the museum, visit [www.msagmuseum.org](http://www.msagmuseum.org), call 601-432-4500 and follow the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The Ag Museum is a division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

Visit <https://youtu.be/McldwQLGbKE> to watch the ribbon cutting ceremony.

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**Photos attached.**



**Today, Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson cut the ceremonial ribbon commemorating the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum's 40 years of educating the public on the importance of agriculture. Pictured L-R: Theresa Love, executive director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum; Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson; Dr. Bill Herndon, chairman of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation; Mike Massey, member of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation; and Nancy Strickland, member of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation.**



**Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson recalled attending the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum when it opened in 1983. Also speaking at the 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration were Glenn Holloway, representative of the National Agricultural Aviation Museum; Mike Massey, member of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation; Dr. Bill Herndon, chairman of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation; and Theresa Love, executive director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.**