



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Commissioner Gipson Announces Rankin County Major Economic Development Project to Enhance Local Food Supply, Storage and Distribution in Mississippi

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced an economic development project, which includes the first of its kind food supply, storage and distribution hub – the Genuine Mississippi Agricultural Market Complex. The Market Complex will be located in Brandon, Mississippi.

“It has been said that ‘Food security is national security.’ Today, we are excited to announce the first step in our Mississippi Strategic Agriculture Facilities Expansion (S.A.F.E.) Plan to create long-term food supply, storage and distribution resiliency for all the people of Mississippi. As I outlined at the 2023 Neshoba County Fair, I am convinced that rebuilding Mississippi’s local food supply, storage and distribution is the critical issue we must tackle as we move Mississippi into the future. Today, I am very pleased to announce the first major step toward that vision with a new economic development project to be located in Rankin County, Mississippi,” said Commissioner Gipson.

With unanimous support from the Rankin County Board of Supervisors, Rankin First and the City of Brandon, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is launching a new type of Farmers Market featuring not only fresh local products such as poultry, beef, pork, blueberries, sweet potatoes, watermelons, peas and beans, tomatoes, muscadines, rice, peanuts, pecans, dairy, catfish and much more – but also frozen and dried products that can be stored and distributed and sold to consumers throughout the year. The Genuine Mississippi Market Complex will immediately result in new markets and business opportunities for all our Mississippi farmers and for all local food products grown, raised, crafted and made right here in Mississippi. The Market Complex will also provide real world Training and Workforce Development opportunities for Mississippi’s 4-H and FFA youth interested in exploring available agricultural and commerce career paths.

Rankin County Board of Supervisors President Steve Gaines commented, “No one can question the commitment of the Rankin County Board of Supervisors to support and promote agriculture and the well-being of the farm families of Rankin County and our State. Commissioner Gipson’s desire to bring an agriculture-focused, economic development and tourism project to the heart of Rankin County is a testimony to the leadership of this great county who have made every effort to prepare Rankin County for success. I am excited most of all for the next generations of farm families who will call Rankin County home. The Genuine Mississippi Agricultural Market Complex will

afford our families with any number of opportunities not currently available to them. We are grateful for this opportunity to partner with Commissioner Gipson, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the City of Brandon in this great effort.”

The Genuine Mississippi Market Complex will be located on approximately 153 undeveloped acres on Mississippi Highway 18 near the front door of future economic development for Rankin County. This Market Complex will be unlike any other existing development in the State of Mississippi. It will feature the full farm-to-table experience for retail consumers whether shopping for fresh farm-raised produce in season, high quality meat products such as beef, chicken, pork and catfish, or frozen or dried products for cooking at home. Visitors will also be able to sit down at a table to enjoy a delicious fresh-cooked meal of Genuine MS® products.

“At the request of the Department of Agriculture and the Rankin County Board of Supervisors, we are pleased to participate in the Genuine Mississippi Market Complex project. It will be a wonderful addition to our county and spur additional economic and tourism development,” said Noel Daniels, President of Rankin First.

Seasonal agricultural-themed events will be held at the Market Complex throughout the year to highlight the great strength and variety of Mississippi’s agricultural products and commodities.

Additionally, the Genuine Mississippi Market Complex will include commercial wholesale food storage and processing components operated by the private sector for distribution to other retail locations including local grocery stores, restaurants and farmers markets. The overall site development will be overseen by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce with input and private investments from the agricultural industry and private sector partners.

This development will become a Mississippi agriculture-themed destination for thousands of visitors and customers that will spur additional tourism and private investment in and around Rankin County.

“The announcement of the Market Complex to be located on Hwy 18 in Brandon is an exciting addition to our area,” said Brandon Mayor Butch Lee. “Improving access to local, fresh meat, produce and other farm-raised products is a tremendous plus for the quality of life for our residents. Clearly this will expand the production of produce and local food on small farms in the region, expanding their access to the consumer. Crop production, sales and distribution is a win-win-win for local farmers, small businesses, and ultimately the consumer searching for freshness and quality. In these economic times, the need for healthy, safe food products is an accelerating demand which only local access to local products can satisfy. We applaud and completely support the vision and determination of Commissioner Gipson in his efforts to improve the connection of local consumers to local and regional farmers.”

Commissioner Gipson concluded, “This new market facility will serve as a food hub creating multiple opportunities for producers and processors with Mississippi products statewide, such as produce from the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, sweet potatoes from Northeast Mississippi, grain and catfish from the Mississippi Delta, blueberries from south Mississippi and fresh dairy products from Mississippi’s family-owned dairies. We at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce look forward to providing additional details and our long-range vision at a later press conference and groundbreaking currently planned for March, 2024.”

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