



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 18, 2025

Contact: Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
(601) 359-1179 / cell: (662) 816-3230
HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces Key Leadership Assignments at MDAC

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced key leadership assignments at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC).

Michael Lasseter, longtime MDAC employee and current executive director of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds, has been appointed chief projects officer. In this new executive role, Lasseter will oversee special projects for the entire agency including renovation and improvement projects at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds, the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, the MDAC's main office in Jackson, as well as the Bureau of Plant Industries office in Starkville and the metrology laboratory at Alcorn State University.

"I am proud to name Michael Lasseter as the chief projects officer for the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce," said Commissioner Gipson. "Michael took on the role of executive director of the State Fairgrounds during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to successfully leading the Mississippi State Fairgrounds during those challenging times, Michael has consistently managed major improvements and special projects on the fairgrounds. His institutional knowledge, project management skills, and ability to deliver results make him the ideal choice to oversee MDAC's infrastructure and development initiatives."

Lasseter has worked for the Department for 25 years and served as the executive director of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds since 2020. He earned his B.S. in Communications and Business from Mississippi College and he is working towards a Master's in Business and Human Relations from Amberton University. Lasseter is also licensed in real estate and insurance in Mississippi. He and his wife, Cheryl, reside in Brandon with their two children.

"I am thrilled to step into the Chief Projects Officer role at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce," said Lasseter. "With 25 years at the Department, I am eager to continue working with the Fairgrounds and the Department but with a focus on special projects that strengthen our facilities and support Mississippi agriculture."

Hayes Patrick, deputy commissioner for the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, will assume the responsibilities of acting executive director of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds, while continuing to serve as deputy commissioner.

“I am pleased to appoint Hayes Patrick as the acting executive director of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Hayes has demonstrated outstanding leadership as deputy commissioner and previously as director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. His ability to manage complex operations, engage the public, coordinate mass attendance events, and lead with integrity makes him well-suited to serve in this dual role and guide the Fairgrounds during this time of transition.”

Patrick joined MDAC in 2019 as the director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum and has served as the deputy commissioner since 2023. Patrick earned his Master’s Degree in Secondary Education from Mississippi College and his B.A. from Mississippi College in Christian Studies and Philosophy. A lifelong beef producer, he brings extensive experience in business management and development, education and agriculture. He lives in Brandon with his wife, Lyndsey, and their five children.

“It’s been an honor working at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and I’m excited to step into this role and help lead the Mississippi State Fairgrounds into its next chapter. I look forward to building on its strong legacy, supporting our agricultural heritage, and creating memorable experiences for all who visit,” said Patrick

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Photos attached.



Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson announced key leadership assignments at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Pictured L-R: Michael Lasseter and Hayes Patrick.