



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 6, 2020

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What: 161st Mississippi State Fair Opening Ceremony

When: Wednesday, October 7; 5:00 p.m.

**Where: Gate 1 of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds
(Gate located at the intersection of Amite and Jefferson Streets)**

Ribbon Cutting Marks Grand Opening of the 161st Mississippi State Fair

JACKSON, Miss. — Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson will officially open the gates to the 161st Mississippi State Fair with a ceremonial ribbon cutting at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7, at Gate 1 located at the intersection of Jefferson and Amite Streets.

Mississippi Fairgrounds Acting Director Michael Lasseter and Mississippi's Miss Hospitality McKay Lee Bray will join Commissioner Gipson in kicking off the State Fair. The Mississippi State Fire Academy Elite Honor Guard will present the colors and Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's (MDAC) Jared Vardaman will perform a rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Commissioner Gipson will also be joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Mary Walker and EPA Chief of Staff Mandy Gunasekara. Prior to the ribbon cutting, Regional Administrator Walker and Commissioner Gipson will be signing an MOU to formalize the partnership between MDAC and the EPA to expand the collaborative activities related to communication, education, outreach, and training of agricultural practices that benefit the environment.

Following the ribbon cutting, Commissioner Gipson will make his way down the Midway to the Biscuit Booth where he will personally greet fairgoers.

"I am excited to welcome everyone to the 161st Mississippi State Fair, social distance style," said Commissioner Gipson. "We realized this year's fair would look a little different several months ago, and since then, we have been carefully planning the set-up and working out any kinks in the daily operations to ensure the safety of our visitors at the biggest annual event of our state. The State Fair is a tradition for many families, and we have gone to great lengths to make sure the public can enjoy the usual fun-filled activities, while keeping safe."

It is advised that any guests who feel unwell or may have underlying medical conditions stay home. The entire complex has limited the number of guests, and each indoor building has posted building limits. All vendors and employees will be wearing

masks and attendees are encouraged to wear masks when unable to be socially distant. In addition, fair rides will be sanitized between each ride, and hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout the grounds.

“Wearing a mask is a matter of personal preference. We strongly encourage fairgoers to bring a mask in case they are not able to socially distance. We will have masks at the gate for fairgoers that may need one,” said Commissioner Gipson.

The safe fair plan was created using CDC guidelines, guidance from State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs and best practices from other similar events. The plan has been reviewed by Governor Tate Reeves.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS TO NOTE:

- First Responders Appreciation Day will be held on Wednesday, October 7, and as a special thank you, the Mississippi Fairgrounds will be offering free admission to all police officers, first responders, firefighters, healthcare workers and medical professionals. Identification will be required at the gate.
- For the first time ever, the Fairgrounds will host the Genuine MS® Store, which will be open to the public and exhibit a variety of Genuine MS® items for purchase.
- Musical acts performing on the Budweiser Stage located on the Midway include Mustache the Band, Roots and Boots 90’s Electric Throwdown with Sammy Kershaw, Aaron Tippin and Collin Raye, Epic Funk Brass Band, Dirt Road Cadillac, Paul Porter and the Christianaires, U.S., Great White/Slaughter, Big Blues Explosion, Sean Kingston, Southern Komfort Brass Band, 601 Live and the Topher Brown Band. In addition, local acts will perform at the State Fair on the Trustmark Stage located on the Midway. All musical entertainment is free with regular fair admission.
- The 2020 State Fair will include the annual Horse, Mule and Pony Pulls in the Kirk Fordice Equine Center. The Horse Pull will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 17, with the Mule Pull immediately following. The Pony Pull will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 18.
- All American Day will be held on Wednesday, October 14, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will include musical entertainment by the 41st Army Band, Magnolia Brass Ensemble, Jared Vardaman and Ed Meadows, as well as a speech by Commissioner Andy Gipson. As a special thank you to the military for their service, the Mississippi Fairgrounds will be offering free admission on All American Day to any active military. Identification will be required at the gate.
- This year, a new feature of the mile-long Midway will be the Timberworks Lumberjack Show featuring axe throwing, underhand and chopping, crosscut and hot sawing along with chainsaw carving. The Lumberjack Shows will take place daily throughout the duration of the Fair.
- Daily activities will take place throughout the 105 acres of the Mississippi Fairgrounds Complex. Children, and adults alike, will enjoy the Farm Bureau Petting Zoo Area and Pig Races, the 4-H and FFA Livestock Shows and will be wowed by the circus performers of the Great American Thrill Show brought to you by Clarion Ledger located at the Kid Zone. LOCALiQ’s Fetch-N-Fish will perform and dozens of vendors and exhibits will be available to the public, including an arts & crafts competition, food preservation, floral exhibits and an antique tractor show.

Those traveling around the State Fairgrounds in downtown Jackson should be aware of changes in the traffic pattern. Beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7, Amite Street will be closed from North Street to Jefferson Street and will remain closed through the conclusion of the Fair on Sunday, October 18. As has been the case in recent years, Jefferson Street will be reduced from four to two lanes at the Fairgrounds.

The Mississippi State Fair runs Wednesday, October 7, through Sunday, October 18, with a gate admission price of \$5.00 per person and parking \$5.00 per car. Children under the age of 6 are admitted free of charge. Enjoy free admission weekdays 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

For more information, download the Mississippi State Fair mobile app, visit www.MsStateFair.com online or follow the Mississippi State Fairgrounds page on Facebook.

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