



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(601) 359-1163 / cell: (662) 312-5897
Paige@mdac.ms.gov

Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
(601) 359-1179
HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Dixie National Celebrates the Life of Longtime Rodeo Performer Lecile Harris with Memorial Processional at State Fairgrounds

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce will host a memorial processional for the late Lecile Harris, professional rodeo clown and longtime performer at the Dixie National Rodeo, on Saturday, February 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The processional around the State Fairgrounds will include family members of Lecile Harris, special dignitaries, mounted horse groups and the famous Dixie National Wagon Train.

“The City of Jackson denied the permit for the 2021 Dixie National Parade,” said Commissioner Gipson. “In its place, we are continuing with our celebration of the life of Lecile Harris with a memorial processional around the very Mississippi Fairgrounds Complex where he performed for so many years. The procession will take place one year from the day Lecile completed his final performance of the 2020 rodeo, and then passed away later that night. I invite folks to come out and pay their respects this Saturday as we celebrate the life of the late Lecile Harris and pay homage to the impact he left on the city of Jackson, our state and rodeo communities across the nation. We are looking forward to holding the Dixie National Parade with all of our regular participants in 2022.”

The procession will begin on Mississippi Street on the State Fairgrounds, pass through the viewing area at Gate 7, turn onto Greymont Street through Gate 7, continue onto Madison Street, turn right onto Jefferson Street and turn right back onto Mississippi Street through Gate 14 onto the Fairgrounds. For those wishing to view the processional, seating will be available on the State Fairgrounds near Gate 7 on Mississippi Street.

Following the processional, Commissioner Gipson and the Harper Morgan Rodeo Company will hold a brief service and mural unveiling of Lecile Harris in the Mississippi Coliseum at 11:00 a.m. The public is invited to attend. The extensive mural featuring Lecile Harris is located inside the front lobby on the north side of the Mississippi Coliseum where visitors can see and learn about the renowned rodeo clown.

The annual Dixie National Rodeo takes place Thursday, February 11, through Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at the Mississippi Coliseum. The seven-day event produced by Harper Morgan Rodeo Company features bull riding, barrel racing, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback bronc riding, saddle bronc riding

and tie down roping. Musical artists performing following the rodeo competitions include The Oak Ridge Boys, Elvira, Parker McCollum, Moe Bandy, John Conlee, Sawyer Brown, Justin Moore and Riley Green. Tickets are available at www.ticketmaster.com.

Also, for the first time, the Mississippi State Fairgrounds is hosting the Dixie National Rodeo “Cowboy Up” blood drive, to assist with the shortage of blood supplies caused by the pandemic. The blood drive will be held Friday, February 12, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, February 13, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Mississippi Farmers Market parking lot. All CDC guidelines will be in place for protection of the donors, staff and blood supply. All donors will receive the first annual Dixie National Rodeo blood drive t-shirt.

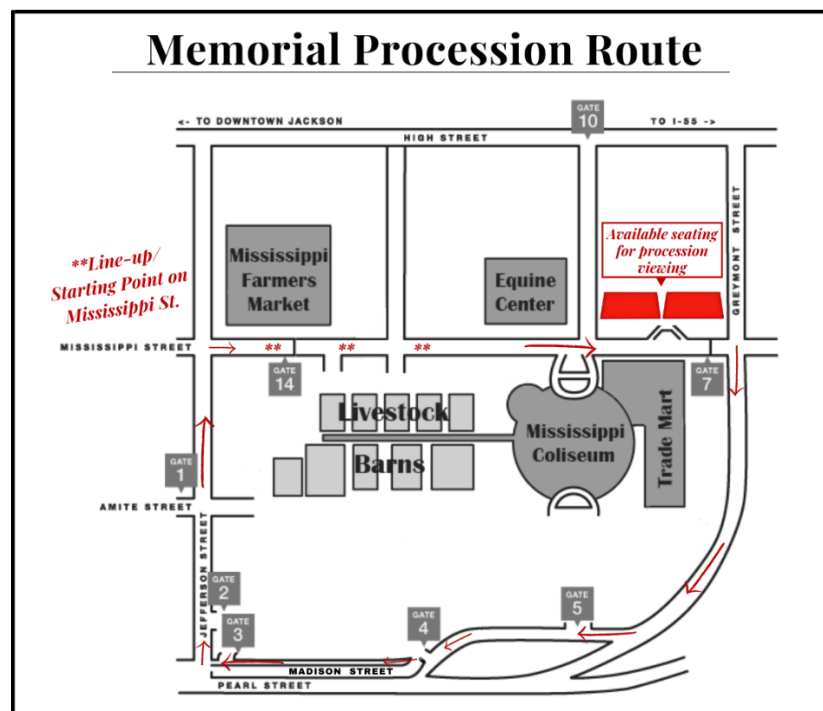
For more information on the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, visit www.dixienational.org, download the mobile app, “like” the Dixie National Livestock Show & Rodeo on Facebook or call 601-961-4000.

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Photo and map attached.



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The procession will begin on Mississippi Street on the State Fairgrounds, pass through the viewing area, turn onto Greymont Street through Gate 7, continue onto Madison Street, turn right onto Jefferson Street and turn right back onto Mississippi Street through Gate 14 onto the Fairgrounds. For those wishing to view the procession, seating will be available on the State Fairgrounds near Gate 7 on Mississippi Street. The Memorial Processional will include family members of Lecile Harris, special dignitaries, mounted groups and the famous Dixie National Wagon Train.