



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Gipson Announces Opening of New International Trade Office on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

BILOXI, Miss. - Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the opening of a new international trade office on the Mississippi Gulf Coast today. The office, located in the Bolton Building in Biloxi, will enhance the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's international marketing efforts through the promotion of Mississippi's commodities and goods, including aquaculture. Commissioner Gipson was joined by Mike McCormick, President of Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation; General Joe Spraggins, Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; and Bernadette Wiltz-Lang, Executive Director of the Southern U.S. Trade Association.

"I am pleased to announce today that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce will be expanding our presence in the state with an office on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Gulf Coast is at the heart of much of our state's international trade efforts. This additional office will generate an increased interest in the state's agriculture and aquaculture commodities, particularly for exports, and will allow us to have a closer pulse on the agriculture and commerce issues constituents in South Mississippi are facing," said Commissioner Gipson.

The international trade office will conduct trainings for local businesses interested in exploring international markets and will educate agricultural and food business on the marketing and financial opportunities offered through the Southern U.S. Trade Association, a non-profit trade association which Commissioner Gipson currently serves as President. In addition, this new MDAC office will address agricultural and commerce issues in South Mississippi.

"Agriculture is not only the largest industry in our state; it is also the backbone of the economy for many of our communities. In order to grow the industry even further, we must take advantage of new and emerging markets, and one of the main functions of this office will be to identify these markets," said Commissioner Gipson.

Businesses interested in learning more about international trade and marketing opportunities and the Southern U.S. Trade Association can contact the Market Development Division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce at 601-359-1159.

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Photo attached.



Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the opening of a new international trade office on the Mississippi Gulf Coast today. Commissioner Gipson (second from left) was joined by (far left) General Joe Spraggins, Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Bernadette Wiltz-Lang, Executive Director of the Southern U.S. Trade Association; and Mike McCormick, President of Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.