

MISSISSIPPI

OFFICIAL & STATISTICAL REGISTER



2016 *Blue Book* 2020

Delbert Hosemann

SECRETARY OF STATE

MISSISSIPPI

OFFICIAL & STATISTICAL REGISTER

2016 *Blue Book* 2020

PUBLISHED 2017
BY



DELBERT HOSEMAN
Secretary of State

*This book was paid for by the taxpayers of the State of Mississippi
and authorized by the Mississippi Legislature.*



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Fellow Mississippians:

For decades, Mississippi has published the Blue Book, the State's Official and Statistical Register. The Blue Book represents a snapshot of the Magnolia State's history, documenting everything from elected officials' biographies to university populations to the storied history of our various government properties. School children use the Blue Book for research projects. Libraries catalog it in their reference sections. Private businesses view it as a valuable background information resource. Simply put, the Blue Book is a staple in Mississippi.

This year, as Mississippi celebrates its bicentennial birthday, the 2016-2020 Blue Book holds special significance. Mississippi, like every state in our Nation, has seen many challenges in its first 200 years. But we in Mississippi are hard-working, resilient, and faithful people. From Statehood in December 1817 to the present, we have also seen many successes including progress in our voting process, unmatched creativity in areas such as music and the arts, and significant growth in our economy. This year's Blue Book details some of these successes.

Reminiscing about how far we have come together gives me great hope for Mississippi's next 200 years. Thank you for all you do to contribute to making our beautiful and unique State a wonderful place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Delbert Hosemann
Secretary of State



CONTENTS

Letter from the Secretary of State	2
Introduction	4
General Information	63
Executive	75
Legislative	95
Judicial	163
Federal Government	223
County Government	251
Municipal Government	341
Agencies, Boards, and Commissions	389
Education	435
Military	487
Health Care	497
Natural Resources	521
Elections	543
Historical and Statistical Information	707
Government Buildings and Property	739
Reference and Resources	755
Index	805

DEFINING MISSISSIPPI

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the inhabitants of the western part of the Mississippi territory be, and they hereby are, authorised to form for themselves a constitution and state government, and to assume such name as they shall deem proper; and the said state, when formed, shall be admitted into the Union upon the same footing with the original states, in all respects whatever."

The above quote is from an enabling act signed on March 1, 1817 by President James Madison which granted admission of the western section of the Territory as the State of Mississippi.

On December 10, 1817, President James Monroe signed the joint resolution granting Mississippi entrance into the United States as the nation's 20th state. Mississippi's statehood followed 20 years of governance as a U.S. territory; a century of colonial rule under French, Spanish, and British authority; and thousands of years of inhabitation by Native Americans of the Woodland and Mississippian cultures and their descendants: the Biloxi, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Natchez, and Yazoo tribes.

As Mississippi marks the bicentennial of its statehood, we celebrate our State's rich history and reflect upon our next 200 years. How shall we define our State for future generations? That decision is in our hands.

Our ties to the land we call home, combined with our creativity, generosity of spirit, and industriousness have defined many of the brightest moments of our past. With this strong foundation, our State is suitably positioned for success throughout the 21st century and beyond. But, ultimately, how we define Mississippi will be determined by the beliefs, goals, hopes, and dreams of our people. We alone have the honor and duty to define what our State represents to our fellow citizens and to the world around us.



The new Mississippi State Capitol building, our State's third, was completed in 1903 at a cost of more than \$1 million. Mississippi Governor A.H. Longino presided over the dedication ceremony.

History Defined

Mississippi's history, from the earliest prehistoric civilizations to the present day, has all the characteristics of a gripping novel. There is opportunity, struggle, conflict, and redemption.

While our history may be behind us and our best years ahead, knowledge of our shared story is indeed the key to understanding our current times. As Mississippi's great novelist, William Faulkner, put it in his *Requiem for a Nun*, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Mississippi's past, of course, predates written history. We are archeologically rich among American states, with more than 19,000 prehistoric archaeological sites on record and one of the world's greatest concentrations of prehistoric archaeological sites found in the Yazoo Basin of the Mississippi Delta.

More than 10,000 years before the arrival of European settlers, Native American tribes built ceremonial earthwork mounds, and their artisans used clay, stone, wood, bone, and deer antlers to craft pottery, weapons, tools, and ceremonial items. Modern discovery of these artifacts has given us insight into our State's earliest occupants and fueled imagination and research activity around the world.



Natchez Under the Hill

Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto discovered the lower Mississippi Valley in the mid-1500s, but French explorers would be the first Europeans to establish colonies. Natchez, which celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2016, is regarded as one of the oldest and most important of these early settlements. The city was founded in 1716 with the construction of Fort Rosalie, a French outpost near the Grand Village of the Natchez tribe.

During Mississippi's antebellum period, Natchez boasted more millionaires than any other city in the United States and was frequented by many prominent American figures of the time, including Aaron Burr, Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Winfield Scott, and John James Audubon. The "Under the Hill" region of Natchez boasted a notorious and decadent reputation due to the rowdy, and often dangerous, characters frequenting the popular river port.

Today, Natchez is known far and wide for its architectural marvels. Natchez showcases more antebellum homes than any other U.S. city and holds bi-annual pilgrimages cherished by lovers of architecture, history, and Southern culture. While Natchez was largely spared from the ravages of the Civil War, other cities were not so fortunate.

Jackson, for instance, was burned to the ground by Union troops, leaving only brick chimneys behind and earning the city the nickname "Chimneyville."

Vicksburg had particular strategic importance. It was regarded as "The Gibraltar of the Confederacy" due to its heavily defended position overlooking the Mississippi River and its railroad connections to other Southern states. Confederate President Jefferson Davis called Vicksburg "the nail head that holds the South's two halves together." And Abraham Lincoln famously declared, "Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until the key is in our pocket." Those words proved prophetic. Following the 47-day siege and battle over the city, the Confederacy was effectively cut in two, and the Union soon had full control of the Mississippi River.

In commemoration of the siege and defense of Vicksburg, the Vicksburg National Military Park was established on February 21, 1899, making it the eighth oldest national park in the United States. The 1,800-acre park contains 1,325 historic monuments and markers and a National Cemetery where the remains of more than 17,000 Union soldiers – the most of any National Cemetery in the country – have been laid to rest.



A century after the ravages of the Civil War, Mississippi would become a pivotal battleground in the struggle for African-American civil rights. This period was a painful chapter in our State's history, but out of the era a great many transformative ideas and heroes of the movement were born.

The nation's first state-operated Civil Rights Museum is part of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History's Two Mississippi Museums project, which also includes the Museum of Mississippi History.

While the idea of a Mississippi Civil Rights Museum has long been discussed, it took the combined efforts of Mississippi governors past and present, a broad and bipartisan coalition of state legislators and supportive constituents, and the generous contributions of many private and non-profit organizations to make the project a reality.

The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum focuses on the period from 1945 to 1976 and tells the story of the struggle for equal rights and fair treatment under the law. The story of African-American Mississippians' journey to freedom and justice is expressed throughout seven exhibit areas surrounding a central gallery themed "This Little Light of Mine," a popular gospel song of the same name.

Adjoining the Civil Rights Museum, the Museum of Mississippi History tells the broader story of Mississippi's past, showcasing stories and artifacts from the Department of Archives and History's extensive collection. The museum's holdings include a rare 1818 20-star U.S. flag, an original Bowie knife, quilts made by enslaved people, and prehistoric Native American artifacts.



Mississippi was an important center of activity during the Civil Rights Movement and home to many of the movement's best known figures, including James Meredith (above, center).



Fannie Lou Hamer, Ida B. Wells, Medger Evers, and Emmett Till. The new Mississippi Civil Rights Museum will share their stories, and those of many other Mississippians.

Culture Defined

The rolling hills, scenic coastlines, and rural flatlands of our State have figured into the development of Mississippi's culture in a unique and profound way. Our artistic expressions, music, and even fondness for outdoor activities of all kinds are connected to our love of the land and its features.

Artists have been profoundly influenced by the beauty of our State. From the vivid scenes of city and country life illuminated in watercolor by Wyatt Waters and Gary Walters, to the expansive and contemplative rural landscapes of William Dunlap, to Walter Anderson's uniquely stylized impressions of coastal life, Mississippi artists evoke an inescapable sense of place.

Pottery artists inspired by the clay soils common throughout our State began a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. In the late 1800s, the eccentric George Ohr, often called the "Mad Potter of Biloxi," earned recognition for becoming the first art potter in the United States.

To this day, the Mississippi Gulf Coast remains a mecca for pottery. Walter Anderson's brother, Peter Anderson, founded Shearwater Pottery in 1928 and operated it until his death in 1984. His work helped establish a lineage of imaginative and skilled potters, including the McCarty family of Merigold and the Woods brothers of Peter's Pottery of Mound Bayou whose influences have spread throughout the State.

Mississippi photographers have been tremendously influential, earning worldwide recognition for their work. William Eggleston, of Sumner, is widely credited for his role in establishing color photography as a legitimate artistic medium worthy of display in art galleries. He is regarded as one of the medium's most important pioneers. Eggleston's first cousin, Maude Schuyler Clay of Greenwood, served as his assistant and went on to become a highly acclaimed photographer in her own right, with works exhibited throughout the country and two photography books to her name.

Our State's reputation for producing master storytellers is well-earned. Mississippi authors have explored the story of our land and its people from every imaginable angle through their poignant tales, humor, deep insight, and fictional accounts. The names Faulker, Welty, Foote, Grisham, and Iles are known to book-lovers worldwide, as is our most famous playwright, Columbus native, Tennessee Williams.

Faulkner, in particular, has enshrined Mississippi's literary reputation among the academic world. His works have inspired more scholarly articles than any other English writer, save William Shakespeare.

Mississippi's rich literary heritage continues into the present thanks to ambassadors like Gulfport's Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Natasha Trethewey, who recently completed terms as both the United States Poet Laureate and Poet Laureate for Mississippi. Her critically acclaimed book, *Beyond Katrina*, combined poetry and prose to great effect in a meditation on lives forever changed by the 2005 hurricane.

The Mississippi Book Festival, one of our newest signature events, was organized in 2015 to celebrate the tremendous impact of our State's accomplished authors and their works. The 2016 event showcased more than 160 authors and boasted 6,200 attendees.



The first Mississippi Book Festival was held in 2015 and attracted nationally acclaimed authors, exhibitors including the Library of Congress, thousands of attendees, and live coverage from C-SPAN.



Natasha Trethewey has served as Poet Laureate for the United States and Mississippi. The author received a 2008 Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

Mississippi entertainers are known far and wide for their love for a good story and their creativity. Leland's Jim Henson blended entertainment and new ideas about education to become the creative force behind Sesame Street, a program that has been on air, continuously, from 1969 to the present day. Henson's Muppets and Kermit the Frog, in particular, are among the world's most beloved entertainment figures.

Increasingly, Mississippi storytellers are expressing their ideas through moving images on film and digital media. Our State's competitive film incentive program, local crews and actors, and Canton's recently renovated 36,000 square-foot soundstage, Mississippi Studios, have attracted more than 40 feature and television productions to our State in recent years. Their combined efforts are supporting a growing film industry and creating a vibrant production community throughout the State.

Jackson native Tate Taylor returned home to direct the Academy Award-nominated *The Help* and later filmed the James Brown biopic, *Get On Up*. Other recent productions

include *Dixieland* with Riley Keough and Faith Hill; *Strange Weather* with Holly Hunter and Carrie Coon; *The Hollars* with John Krasinski, Margo Martindale, and Anna Kendrick; *Same Kind of Different as Me* with Greg Kinnear, Renée Zellweger, Djimon Hounsou, and Jon Voight; and *Southern Fury* with Nicholas Cage, John Cusack, and Adrian Grenier.

Others filmmakers have focused on documenting the people, places, and businesses in our State. Starting in the early 2000s, Blue Magnolia Films, a Mississippi documentary film company, began a journey to discover the economic jewels of homegrown innovation found throughout our State. To date, the company's co-founders, Alison Fast and Chandler Griffin, have produced short films highlighting Water Valley's Yalobusha Brewing Company, Clarksdale's Sweet Magnolia Ice Cream, Hattiesburg's Grin Coffee Company, Oxford's Blue Delta bespoke blue jeans company, and the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center in Holly Springs.



Hundreds of excited fans attended the premiere of *The Help*, the Academy Award-nominated movie directed by Tate Taylor, based on Kathryn Stockett's best-selling novel. The Jackson natives who are lifelong friends, enjoyed a red carpet homecoming like no other.

Jim Henson, born in Leland, was one of our State's most beloved visionaries. His signature creation, Kermit the Frog, is known and loved by children and adults worldwide.

For millions of people around the world, Mississippi has an indelible and enduring connection to popular music. The mere mention of our State's name conjures up images of the various musical forms that were created and refined in our State. Mississippi is truly the "Birthplace of American Music."

The blues, perhaps our State's most defining art form, was born out of field hollers and work songs sung on plantations throughout the Mississippi Delta. Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, and B.B. King are just a few of the influential blues musicians who paved the way for present-day artists and shaped the course of modern music history.

While blues musicians honed their craft at countless juke joints throughout the State, redemption came on Sunday in small country churches where gospel music lifted the spirit – and the bodies of parishioners out of the church pews and into the aisles. Large mass choirs brought the sound of gospel music to a higher level of musicianship and power, and none have achieved greater recognition than the Mississippi Mass Choir. The choir has recorded ten albums, and earned multiple Grammy nominations and Billboard Artist of the Year awards.

As the Muddy Waters' song says, "the blues had a baby and they called it rock 'n' roll." Homegrown musicians like Nesbit's Jerry Lee Lewis, combined fiery showmanship and raw talent to electrify crowds with his piano-pounding "boogie woogie" music, a blend of blues, gospel, rockabilly, and adrenaline. In Tupelo, Elvis Presley channeled the same influences and achieved an entirely singular result that would revolutionize the music industry. Presley would ultimately become the best-selling solo artist in the history of recorded music.

Mississippians also laid the foundation for country music. Meridian's "singing brakeman," Jimmie Rodgers, is called "The Father of Country Music" for his influence on the genre. Rodgers' early success paved the way for generations of Mississippi artists, including Charley Pride, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette, Faith Hill, and LeAnn Rimes to find success in the music industry.

Mississippi's influence on the recording arts is truly unparalleled. Our State has produced more Grammy Award-winning musicians per capita than any other state in America, an honor which led to the opening of the first Grammy Museum outside of Los Angeles. Located in Cleveland, the state-of-the-art museum opened its doors in 2016 on the campus of Delta State University.



The King of the Blues, Riley "B.B." King was known worldwide for his inimitable music, tireless touring schedule, and love for his home state. He died on May 14, 2015.



Mississippi's contributions to the American songbook are preserved in the new Grammy Museum Mississippi in Cleveland and also Indianola's B.B. King Museum.

You would be hard pressed to find any other state that has a deeper appreciation for competitive sports than Mississippi.

Parents fill the stands on Saturday mornings and afternoons across the State to watch their children participate in youth baseball and soccer leagues. But, without question, football reigns supreme. From the “Friday Night Lights” illuminating high school football stadiums across the State, to the tenacious rivalries of our college athletic programs, Mississippians are committed and fiercely loyal fans of the sport.

The Egg Bowl is an annual battle between Mississippi State and Ole Miss football teams. It is the tenth longest uninterrupted college football series in the United States, dating back to 1901. A similar rivalry between Alcorn State and Jackson State University exists with the annual “Soul Bowl” competition between the two historically black universities.

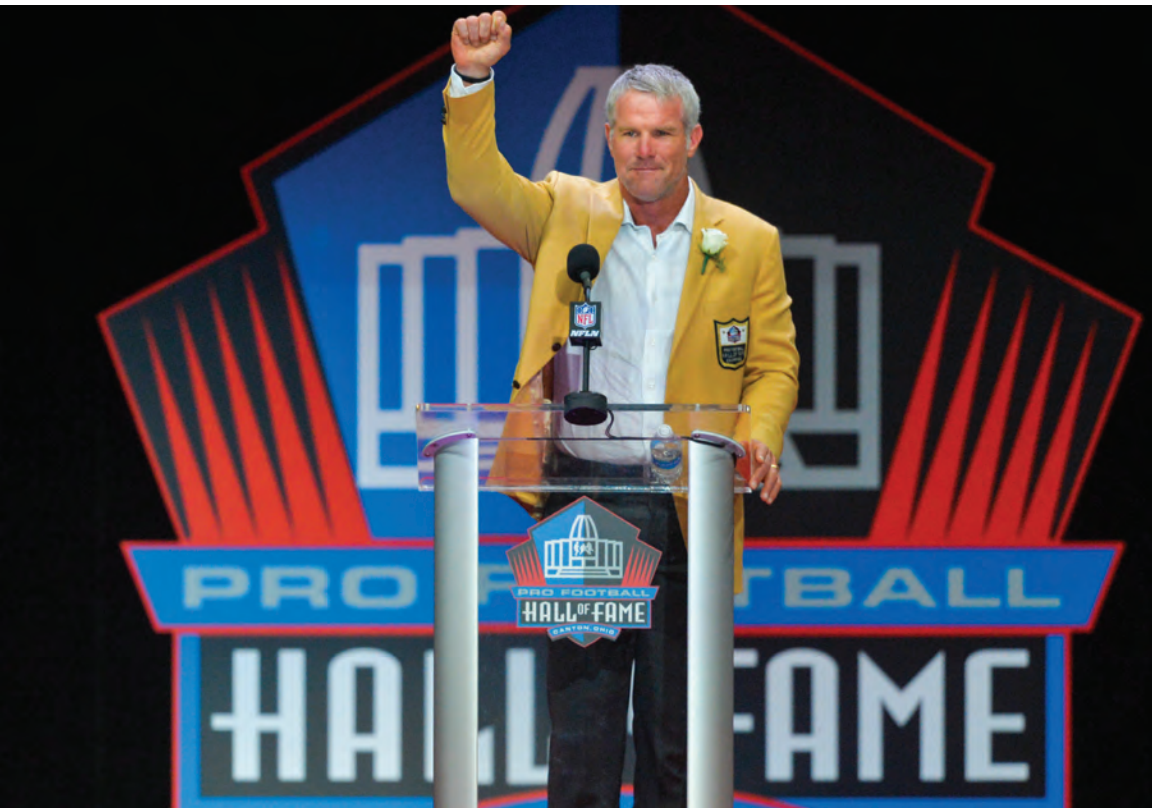
Mississippians are no strangers to professional sports, particularly pro football. The State holds claim to an impressive list of NFL legends, including Kiln native Jerry Rice, Walter Payton, Archie Manning, and his son, Eli.

Brett Favre, one of the most accomplished football players of all time, was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2016. Mississippi claims more Pro Football Hall of Fame inductees, per capita, than any other state. In addition to Favre, eight other Mississippians are among this esteemed group: Bruiser Kinard (Pelahatchie), Lance Alworth (Brookhaven), Willie Brown (Yazoo City), Lem Barney (Gulfport), Jackie Slater (Jackson), Walter Payton (Columbia), Billy Shaw (Vicksburg), and Jerry Rice (Crawford).

Mississippi women are breaking ground in professional football as well. In 2015, Sarah Thomas was hired as the first full-time female official in NFL history.



Sarah Thomas of Pascagoula became the first full-time female official in NFL history in 2015. She is also the first woman to officiate a major college football game.



Brett Favre, a native of Kiln, is one of professional football's top record-holders. He was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2016.

Mississippians love spending time in the great outdoors, and the State is uniquely blessed with abundant natural resources and plentiful plant and animal life. Mississippi is blanketed by more than 1.2 million acres of forest land with 119 public lakes, 123,000 miles of streams, and 255,000 freshwater acres distributed across the State.

Our many passionate hunters and fishermen enjoy diverse game populations and a wealth of habitats. In 2016, Mississippi was ranked as the top state for hunting white-tailed deer by *Field & Stream*. Duck hunting is also a perennial favorite in the Delta, and quail hunting is popular at a number of hunt clubs and lodges. Alligator hunting was introduced in 2005. Since then, Mississippi hunters have harvested alligators in excess of 13 feet in length and 700 pounds.

Sport fishing is popular on Mississippi rivers and coastal waters. Among freshwater fish, Mississippi is perhaps best known for bass and crappie. The world-record white crappie, at five pounds three ounces, was caught at a national championship fishing tournament on Enid Reservoir.

Trophy large mouth bass are frequently caught at lakes throughout the State. Speckled trout, redfish, and flounder can be found at inshore locations along the coastal areas. While amberjack, cobia, and red snapper are plentiful offshore along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Biking continues to grow as both a pastime and a sport in Mississippi. The 300-mile span of the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi is a popular destination and thoroughfare for Mississippi bikers and tourists year-round.

The 41-mile Longleaf Trace, constructed in 2000, runs from Hattiesburg to Prentiss. It is one of the nation's first rails-to-trails projects, where unused railroads are converted into public bike and pedestrian trails. The State's newest rails-to-trails project is the 43-mile Tanglefoot Trail, which connects New Albany to Houston, passing through Ecu, Pontotoc, Algoma, and New Houlka along the way. Many municipalities have installed bike trails, including Ridgeland, which boasts a Bike Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.



Duck migration along the Mississippi flyway makes the Mississippi Delta the State's most popular destination for waterfowl hunting. Pictured above: Labrador Retriever, "Bear."



The 33,000-acre Ross Barnett Reservoir hosts an estimated 2.5 million annual visitors at its 48 parks, nature trails, campgrounds, and other recreational facilities.

Competitive running events are flourishing, too. The Mississippi Blues Marathon, presented by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi, launched its inaugural race in 2008 and has since seen the number of participants rise each year. Many other half-marathons, 5Ks, and even a 50-mile trail run through the DeSoto National Forest offer a variety of experiences for beginning and experienced runners alike.

Not surprisingly, given Mississippi's mild seasonal climate, golf is a popular year-round pastime. More than 140 courses are located throughout the State. Mississippi's newest course, West Point's Mossy Oak Golf Club, opened in 2016 and represents a collaboration between George Bryan, the former Chief Executive Officer of Sara Lee Foods and owner of Old Waverly Golf Club, and Toxey Haas, the founder of the Mossy Oak outdoor lifestyle company.

Designed by course architect Gil Hanse, Mossy Oak was the first new course to be completed after Hanse designed the official course for the Rio Olympics. Another top Mississippi course is Saucier's Fallen Oak. The course was honored by *Golf Digest* as one of America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses.

Mississippi's PGA Tour event, the Sanderson Farms Championship, is held annually at The Country Club of Jackson. The event showcases world-class competition, as well as the generosity of our State. Since 1994, Century Club Charities, the host organization for the Championship, has raised more than \$12 million to benefit Mississippi's Batson Children's Hospital and other Mississippi charities.



The Mississippi Blues Marathon features live music before and after the race and along the course. A portion of the race's proceeds benefit the Blues Foundation's support for local musicians.



Cody Gribble (above) won the 2016 Sanderson Farms Championship, which raised a record \$1.125 million to benefit Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson.

Industry Defined

Mississippi's manufacturing economy has increased significantly over the course of the past several decades. Currently, Mississippi is home to almost 3,000 industrial businesses, employing more than 143,000 Mississippians.

Mississippi workers are responsible for building, both directly and via second- and third-tier support companies, some of the most advanced transportation systems in the world.

The shipbuilding tradition on the Mississippi Gulf Coast dates back to the 17th century with the construction of flat-bottomed bateaus by the French. Throughout the 1700s and 1800s, Mississippi shipbuilders focused on building ships to serve the seafood and shipping industries. Later, after the United States entered into World War II, shipbuilders shifted their attention to supporting the war effort.

In 1940, just two years after the company's founding, Ingalls Shipbuilding launched the world's first all-welded steel ship, the SS Exchequer, revolutionizing shipbuilding worldwide. Before the end of World War II, Ingalls would construct more than 60 ships, including aircraft carriers, troop and cargo transports, net laying ships, and submarine tenders. Today, Huntington Ingalls is the largest producer of ships for the U.S. Navy, having constructed 70 percent of their fleet. Ingalls shipyard is also the State's largest private employer, offering steady work to more than 12,000 employees.

VT Halter Marine, another shipbuilder with a long history in Mississippi, is the nation's largest designer and builder of medium-sized ships. The company has constructed more than 3,000 vessels at its three Mississippi shipyards, delivering ships to 29 countries. Our State is also home to one of the world's elite builders of custom superyachts, Trinity Yachts. Other shipbuilders operating in Mississippi including U.S. Marine Inc., Gulf Ship, Signet Maritime, New South Marine Builders, Signal International, and Rolls Royce.

Our manufacturing economy is supported through the combined efforts and investment of our State's research universities. The Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems (CAVS) at Mississippi State University provides our State's automotive-related businesses with research and development capabilities and workforce training services. The University of Mississippi's Center for Manufacturing Excellence (CME) maintains close relationships with employers to prepare engineering students for advanced manufacturing careers. The Mississippi Polymer Institute (MPI) at The University of Southern Mississippi provides contract research and development services, rapid prototyping, incubator space, and testing services.

Our State's network of 15 community and junior colleges supports industry by offering low-cost job training services to companies wanting to acquire highly skilled employees or advance the skills of existing workers. Mississippi was the first State in the nation to have a planned system of junior colleges, and our community college system remains one of the nation's strongest to this day.

Mississippi's aerospace industry has a long and storied history as well, dating back to the construction and repair of single-engine biplanes during World War I at Payne Field in West Point. In more recent times, Mississippi has emerged as a major player in the manufacturing of airplane components. The Jackson-based operations of Eaton Aerospace produce hydraulic and motion control components that power hundreds of military and commercial aircraft. It's said that every commercial airplane in the world has at least one component made in Mississippi, thanks in large part to the popularity of Vickers line of products from Eaton.

Mississippi began manufacturing helicopters with the arrival of American Eurocopter, now Airbus Helicopters, in 2012. The company's Columbus location manufactures helicopters for the U.S. Army and civilian markets. Other prominent aviation companies with research, manufacturing, and support operations in Mississippi include G.E. Aviation, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Zodiac Aerospace.



Zach Rowland, left, of Mississippi State's Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems, looks on with Katy Lusky and Dale Aspy of the Environmental Protection Agency as they discuss the "Car of the Future" project which demonstrates leading technology in vehicle performance and energy efficiency.



Built in Columbus, Airbus H125 helicopter is America's most popular helicopter model. It is used for civilian, air medical services, and law enforcement applications.

Unmanned aerial systems, commonly called drones, have surged in popularity for commercial and military applications. Companies like Northrop Grumman Corporation, Stark Aerospace, Aurora Flight Sciences, and Boeing's Insitu division rely on our State to manufacture and research these vehicles.

Research and development programs led by the Raspet Flight Research Laboratory at Mississippi State University support industry through material design and testing, technical training, and manufacturing support services. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) flight training is offered at Hinds Community College in partnership with Pearl River Community College and the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center.

In 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration recognized Mississippi's leadership in this field, selecting Mississippi State University as a Center of Excellence for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The university will conduct research for integrating drones into the national airspace.

Mississippi's John C. Stennis Space Center has played a vital role in our nation's space program since its earliest days. The 13,500-acre site tested engines for the Saturn V rocket used to transport Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon in 1969. Indeed, it was often said during these years, "If you want to go to the moon, you first have to go through Hancock County, Mississippi."

The nation's largest rocket engine testing facility, Stennis Space Center, remained in operation throughout NASA's Space Shuttle program and is now testing engines for the space agency's "Journey to Mars" mission.

In addition to NASA operations, the Center hosts more than 30 government agencies and corporate tenants, including Space-X, Rolls-Royce, Aerojet Rocketdyne, United Launch Alliance, and Lockheed Martin. The U.S. Navy, Mississippi State University, and The University of Southern Mississippi also have research and development centers on-site.



Northrop Grumman's Moss Point manufacturing facility builds MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopters for the U. S. Navy.



An Aerojet Rocketdyne J-2X engine is transported by barge to the A-2 Test Stand at Stennis Space Center.

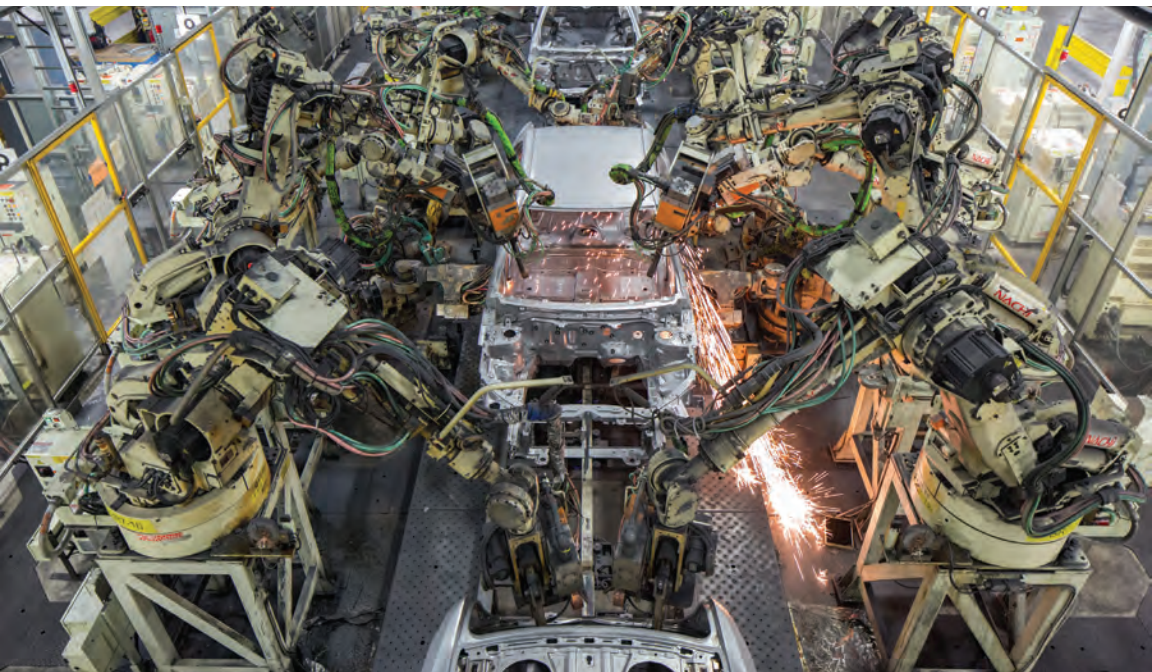
Mississippi staked its claim in automotive manufacturing with the 2003 selection of Canton as the home of a new Nissan assembly plant. Nissan's Canton plant in Mississippi served as a catalyst for the development of a network of in-state automotive suppliers. This strong supplier network, in turn, influenced Toyota's decision to locate a state-of-the-art assembly plant in Blue Springs in 2010. The Toyota plant's 2,000 workers produce approximately 150,000 Corollas each year.

Other automotive companies and suppliers who have chosen Mississippi include PACCAR, Yokohama Tire, Borg Warner, Grammer, and Steel Dynamics. Altogether, there are more than 200 automotive-related manufacturers in our State, employing more than 20,000 Mississippians. Mississippi's healthcare sector fulfills a dual role of helping Mississippians live long, healthy, and productive lives while serving as a key driver of economic activity. Mississippi hospitals employ more than 60,000 full-time workers and have created an estimated 35,000 jobs outside their facilities.

Mississippians are an industrious, entrepreneurial people. We are accustomed to hard work and are joining together to build a diversified economy that leverages our strong work ethic and adaptability to changing workforce needs.

Agriculture is the State's top industry. The \$7.6 billion-dollar industry employs 29% of the State's workforce either directly or indirectly. Mississippi's 37,000 farms produce a variety of commodities, with poultry, timber, cattle, soybeans, corn, and cotton ranking highest in overall monetary value. Mississippi-based agribusinesses include Cal-Maine Foods, the largest producer and marketer of shell eggs in the United States; Sanderson Farms, one of the nation's top-five poultry producers; and a variety of food processing operations.

Our favorable geography, mild sub-tropical climate, long growing season, and abundant rainfall make our State an ideal location for farming. The alluvial plain along the southernmost stretch of the Mississippi River, more commonly known as the Mississippi Delta, has benefited from the deposition of nutrient-rich soils through periodic flooding over the course of thousands of years. Topsoil in the Delta exceeds 30 feet deep in many places compared to the standard depth of between two to eight inches at other locations around the world.



Toyota's Blue Springs production facility completed its 500,000th Corolla in 2015, reaching that milestone faster than any other Toyota plant in the U.S.



Farming in Mississippi is a high-tech industry, where data from satellites, UAVs, and research facilities is used to improve crop yields, minimize environment impact, and increase profitability.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is one of the State's largest employers, with more than 10,000 full- and part-time workers on staff and 3,000 students enrolled annually in its six schools. UMMC's annual budget represents ten percent of the Jackson metro area economy and two percent of the State's economy.

In 2016, UMMC broke ground on a new School of Medicine building to help increase the number of physicians in Mississippi. UMMC also launched a \$100 million capital campaign to expand and improve health services to our State's children, with contributions including a \$10 million donation from Joe and Kathy Sanderson of Sanderson Farms, \$1 million from Eli and Abby Manning, and a \$20 million pledge from Friends of Children's Hospital. The campaign is funding the expansion and modernization of Batson Children's Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit, pediatric ICU rooms, surgical suites, and other clinical and outpatient services.

Through UMMC's leadership, our State has emerged as a leader in telehealth, the practice of diagnosing and treating illnesses via telecommunications technology. UMMC's telehealth network provides access to 35 medical specialties at more than 200 service locations throughout the State.

In Tupelo, the North Mississippi Medical Center holds the distinction of being the largest, private, not-for-profit hospital in Mississippi and the largest non-metropolitan hospital in America. The medical center serves more than 730,000 people in 24 counties in north Mississippi, northwest Alabama, and portions of Tennessee.

Mississippi colleges and universities offer several degree and certification programs to meet the growing demand for health care workers and allied professionals. Additionally, Jackson State University is creating the State's first School of Public Health, a program which will complement the University's highly regarded public health programs, including the Jackson Heart Study and the Center of Excellence in Minority Health and Health Disparities.



Located on the University of Mississippi Medical Center campus, Batson Children's Hospital treats nearly 80,000 children from throughout the State each year.

Archie and Olivia Manning created the Manning Fund for a Healthier Mississippi in partnership with UMMC to address the health challenges faced by many Mississippians.

Enterprise Defined

Entrepreneurial and small business activity has long been a key driver of Mississippi's economy, and momentum is building. The 2016 Kauffman Index of Startup Activity found entrepreneurship to be on the rise in Mississippi, ranking our State 11th in the nation among smaller states. Mississippi's small businesses employ almost half of the State's private labor force and account for over 96 percent of all employers in the State.

Mississippi's entrepreneurial businesses are remarkable in their diversity. Our State has the nation's highest rate of African-American owned businesses, at 28 percent of all businesses in the State.

Women-owned businesses are prospering in our economy as well. The American Express 2016 State of Women-Owned Businesses report found Mississippi to have the nation's fifth fastest increase in the number of women-owned firms over the past decade.

Mississippi entrepreneurs are transforming our State's economy, through their ideas and vision, while fostering economic growth and opportunity for our State.



While teaching at various nursing schools, Marlene Hurst Cupit noted the abundance of workshops and prep courses for graduate nurses and the lack of similar opportunities for student nurses. In 1988, she created Hurst Review Services to address the void. Her NCLEX review course has helped hundreds of thousands of nursing students pass their licensing exam on the first attempt.

A family business, Ridgeland-based White Construction Company, has grown steadily since Charles N. White founded the company in 1971. Today, his sons, Guy and Neel, have expanded the company into Texas and have completed a number of prominent and award-winning projects, including renovation of the Texas Governor's mansion and construction of the world's first hospital to achieve LEED Platinum certification.

Founded in 1921, Greenwood-based Staplcotn has grown to become the country's oldest and one of the largest cotton marketing cooperatives. Under the leadership of President and CEO, Meredith Allen, Staplcotn marketed their 100 millionth bale of cotton in 2016. The cooperative counts more than 14,000 farm accounts in 11 Southeastern states among its membership.



Guy White – White Construction Company



Marlene Hurst Cupit – Hurst Review Services



Meredith Allen – Staplcotn

Dr. Dolphus Weary, together with his wife Rosie, founded the Rural Education and Leadership (R.E.A.L.) Christian Foundation with the goal of enriching the lives of under-served children, youth, and families. Dr. Weary is the former president of Mission Mississippi. Over the past 19 years, R.E.A.L. has aided more than 25 rural ministries and communities located from as far north as the Mississippi Delta and as far south as Tylertown.

Founded in 1981, TempStaff is a full-service staffing company offering temporary and permanent opportunities in a variety of fields. TempStaff employees nearly 4,000 Mississippians annually. Under the leadership of Carolyn Boteler and her daughter Jamie Boteler Higdon, the company operates offices in Jackson, Canton, and McComb.

Bernie Reed founded his company, Reed's Metals, in 1998. From its humble beginnings in a small portable shed in Lawrence County, the Brookhaven-based company has expanded to become a multi-million dollar corporation with ten locations across the Southeast. The company specializes in metal roofing, metal buildings, and pole barns for residential, commercial, and industrial sites.



Carolyn Boteler and Jamie Boteler Higdon – TempStaff



Dr. Dolphus Weary – R.E.A.L. Christian Foundation



Bernard "Bernie" Reed – Reed's Metals

Puckett Machinery was founded in 1982 by Ben Puckett Sr. and is now led by family members Richard, Hastings, and Rob Puckett. Over the past 35 years, the construction equipment supplier has grown to operate 13 separate facilities while expanding into numerous operating divisions including: Puckett Rents, Puckett Power Systems, and Puckett Global Services.

Freda McKissic Bush, M.D., FACOG, is a board certified obstetrician and gynecologist at East Lakeland OB/GYN. She is a board member of the Medical Institute of Sexual Health and is a presidential appointee to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. Dr. Bush has served as a Member of the Mississippi Task Force on Reducing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies and, in 2006, received the Community Service Award from the Mississippi State Medical Association.

Kermit Ivey of Kosciusko founded Ivey Plumbing and Electrical Company in 1947. The company is known today as Ivey Mechanical Company and is led by CEO and Chairman Larry Terrell and President Denny Terrell. The company has become a full-service mechanical contractor with 11 service locations in eight states, providing services to commercial and residential clients.



Freda McKissic Bush, M.D., FACOG – East Lakeland OB/GYN



Rob, Hastings, and Richard Puckett – Puckett Machinery



Larry and Denny Terrell – Ivey Mechanical Company

Howard Catchings, owner of the Catchings Insurance Agency, has been in the insurance business for over 30 years and currently employs a staff of 24. Prior to going into the insurance business, he was a teacher in the Jackson Public School District. He serves on a number of civic and professional boards.

Telesouth Communications, based in Jackson, began as a news network to provide news and information to radio stations in Mississippi. Steve Davenport, a Pascagoula native, founded the company in the early 1980s. Today, Telesouth is a multimedia broadcast company operating 22 radio stations and SuperTalk Mississippi, News MS, and MS Agri News.

Susan Hardin, a former school teacher from Calhoun City, discovered her entrepreneurial streak after she began making pillows as gifts for her daughters' friends. As demand grew, she, and her husband, Tony, opened their business, The Little Birdie, and expanded into the old Calhoun Garment Company building. Today, their pillows can be found in local boutiques and big-box stores like TJ Maxx and Home Goods. The company makes pillows for a number of SEC schools.



Steve Davenport – Telesouth Communications



Howard Catchings – Catchings Insurance Agency



Tony and Susan Hardin – The Little Birdie

Chan Patel, the President of Charter Road Hospitality, immigrated with his family from Zimbabwe, Africa, in 1990 to live in Oxford. Following their purchase of the historic Ole Miss Motel, the Patels have grown their company Charter Road Hospitality, Inc., from one independent hotel to four hotels in Oxford and one currently under construction. The company employs 130 team members from throughout the Lafayette County area.

Now in its third generation of Barrett family ownership, Barrett Law Group, P.A., represents clients and litigates cases throughout the country, in a diverse range of areas including tobacco, antitrust, insurance scams, defective products, and pharmaceutical and consumer fraud. From his office in Lexington, attorney Don Barrett has become one of the preeminent trial lawyers in America.

Duff Capital Investors traces its origin to the 1973 founding of Southern Tire Mart. Over the years, brothers Thomas and Jim Duff have turned their family business into a \$2 billion conglomerate of 11 companies employing more than 10,000 people across the United States. Their best-known brands include KLLM Transport Services, TL Wallace Construction, and DeepWell Energy Services.



Don Barrett – Barrett Law Group



Chan Patel – Charter Road Hospitality, Inc.



Thomas and Jim Duff – Duff Capital Investors

Community Bancshares of Mississippi, formerly Farmers and Merchants Bank, started more than 100 years ago in a small timber community in east central Mississippi. Since 1977, Senior Chairman Thomas W. Colbert Sr. has led the institution through a period of rapid growth, from \$200 million in assets and a couple of offices to more than \$2.8 billion in assets, 44 offices, and more than 700 employees in four states.

As chief executive officer of HOPE, a credit union (Hope Credit Union), loan fund (Hope Enterprise Corporation), and policy center (Hope Policy Institute), Bill Bynum has dedicated himself to advancing economic opportunity in the lower Mississippi Delta, one of America's most impoverished regions. Since 1994, HOPE has provided financial services, leveraged resources, and shaped policies that have benefited more than 650,000 residents.

Thomas Peaster is chairman of the board at BankPlus. He is a farmer, served as president of Peaster Tractor, a John Deere dealership, for 38 years, and is a member of the board of French Camp Academy. He has served on the bank's board of directors for 30 years, guiding the institution from the Citizens Bank and Trust Company of Belzoni, then a bank with \$91 million in assets, to a bank with \$2.7 billion in assets.



Bill Bynum – HOPE



Thomas W. Colbert Sr. – Community Bancshares of Mississippi



Thomas Peaster – BankPlus

As owner of LTM Enterprises, Inc., LeRoy Walker Jr., has dedicated his professional career to mentoring students and sharing his entrepreneurial skills. The former owner/operator of the McDonald's Restaurant in Canton and founder of the 100 Black Men of Jackson, serves on a number of professional and civic boards, was inducted into the Business Hall of Fame of the Junior Achievement of Mississippi, and currently serves on the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Board.

Yazoo City farmer, Harry Simmons, found himself at the forefront of Mississippi's aquaculture economy after replacing his cotton and soybeans fields with catfish ponds in 1974. As his pond acreage grew, Simmons added a processing plant and opened Simmons Farmed Raised Catfish, creating a new brand which would become known for its quality.

Founded in 2003, Lazy Magnolia is Mississippi's oldest packaging brewery and the first to open since prohibition was enacted in 1907. Led by founders Leslie and Mark Henderson, the company has developed a loyal following for regionally inspired beers brewed with local ingredients like roasted pecans and honey. The Kiln-based brewery ships to 18 states.



Harry Simmons – Simmons Farm Raised Catfish



LeRoy Walker Jr. – LTM Enterprises, Inc.



Leslie and Mark Henderson – Lazy Magnolia

Shortly after immigrating to the United States from India in 1977, Roy Patel bought a small hotel in Southern California. He moved to Mississippi in 1982 and, working alongside his cousin Nash, Southern Hospitality Services currently owns and manages 17 hotels in Mississippi, Louisiana, and California.

Ronnie C. Crudup Sr. is the Administrative Bishop for the Fellowship of International Churches and Senior Pastor of New Horizon Church International, which he founded in 1987. His non-profit organization, New Horizon Ministries, Inc., operates five community-based programs in Jackson. Crudup is also co-founder and CEO of the Mississippi Faith-Based Coalition for Community Renewal and serves on the boards of numerous local, state, and national organizations.

Gerard Gibert and Norman Katool have built Ridgeland-based Venture Technologies into one of the South's leading providers of IT solutions and managed services. The company, which was founded in 1986, has a staff of more than 270, delivering services across 11 states. Additionally, the company operates data centers in Jackson; Denver, Colorado; and Casper, Wyoming.



Ronnie Crudup Sr. – Fellowship of International Churches; New Horizon Church International



Roy Patel – Southern Hospitality Services



Gerard Gibert and Norman Katool – Venture Technologies

Starting out as a small lumber business in 1949, Jones Companies has diversified to operate 12 privately-owned entities, providing services that include construction mat leasing, pipeline pipe logistics, pipe traceability software, portable refrigerated storage equipment, recycling, and mobile fuel management. Jonathan Jones, CEO of the Columbia-based company, was named 2016 EY Entrepreneur of the Year for the Gulf Coast Area.

Gulfport-based John Fayard Moving and Warehousing opened for business in 1982 with just two trucks, one of which was driven by the owner. Since that time, John Fayard's company has expanded and diversified the company to offer local and long-haul trucking services, self storage, and more than 1 million square feet of commercial warehousing and cold storage in four southern states.

At the age of four, Vernice Sanders was working alongside her sharecropping parents in their fields in Crenshaw, Mississippi. In her teenage years, she worked at several manufacturing jobs before securing a position as the first African-American woman to work at the Dillingham Manufacturing Company in Leland. Vernice was active in both the Civil Rights and Labor movements and, today, owns her own company, Vernice Upholstery.



Johnny "Tripp" Fayard III and John Fayard – John Fayard Moving and Warehousing



Jonathan Jones – Jones Companies



Vernice Sanders – Vernice Upholstery

C.C. Clark, Inc.'s history dates back to a small soda water operation owned by Carsie C. Clark in 1903, located in the rear of a drug store in Martin, Tennessee. Today, the company holds franchises for Coca-Cola and a number of other soft drink and beer brands, conducting business in parts of Mississippi, Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, and Indiana. C. C. Clark, Inc. is a Mississippi corporation, incorporated in 1931. With headquarters in Starkville, C.C. Clark, Inc. wholly owns Clark Beverage Group, Inc., which conducts business in 55 counties throughout the State.

Pansey Bradley founded her janitorial services company, Tidy Cleanup Services, in 2004 and has guided the company through years of steady growth. Following her participation in the Community Development Foundation's Renasant Center for Ideas Incubator program, Pansey secured the janitorial contract for Toyota's Blue Springs assembly plant and was also selected to provide pre-construction janitorial services for Yokohama Tire in West Point and several facilities for the North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo.



Harold Clark, Robert Clark, Morgan Clark Schnur, and Albert Clark – C.C. Clark, Inc.



Pansey Bradley – Tidy Cleanup Services

Opportunity Defined

Entering into our third century of statehood, Mississippi is well positioned to continue the gains we have made in economic growth and quality of life for the nearly 3 million people who live within our borders.

Mississippi has the lowest cost of living of any U.S. state as of 2016, giving our residents more than 15 percent greater purchasing power than residents of other states. Mississippians enjoy some of the lowest utility costs in the country, and our businesses enjoy low overall operating costs and a stable and consistent pro-business policy environment.

The economic development efforts instituted in past years and present times are increasing access to high quality jobs. The Jackson metro area, for example, currently has the third highest rate of growth in advanced industry employment, behind only San Francisco and Nashville.



Docked boats at the Gulfport Marina

Our State is making historic gains in improving education outcomes as well. In 2016, Mississippi's high school graduation rate reached 82.3 percent, an all-time high, and we're on track to soon surpass the national average.

Mississippi is seeing similar improvements in childhood literacy thanks to programs like our State's Early Learning Collaboratives and the Literacy Based Promotion Act of 2013. Mississippi was recognized by the National Institute for Early Education as one of only six states meeting all quality benchmarks for effective preschool programs.

An impressive 92 percent of Mississippi third-graders have passed the State reading exam. Scores from the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed historic gains, as well. Mississippi was one of only two states to see increases in NAEP scores at both 4th and 8th grade levels.

Our teachers deserve great credit and appreciation for these improvements. Mississippi has the 7th highest number of national board certified teachers in the country, and incentive programs are in place to encourage more teachers to receive certification, especially in high-need school districts.

Mississippi's new "Districts of Innovation" legislation is just one example of how our State is giving schools greater autonomy to encourage student success by applying innovative methods and programs outside of the standard State regulations. The Corinth School District was among the first in the State to become a District of Innovation by adopting new academic pathways and implementing procedural changes to elevate their already high level of success. Vicksburg and Gulfport schools have also received the designation.

Mississippi's strong results and track record have led to the State being recognized with the 2016 Frank Newman Award for State Innovation, a national award for education innovation.

The Mississippi Department of Education continues to adapt to changing education opportunities and needs. Public charter schools now operate in Mississippi, thanks to legislation passed in 2013. The State also launched a new computer science pilot program in 2016, which is offered in 38 school districts and more than 150 schools across the State.



Houston, Mississippi high-school students have won 14 consecutive titles at the Solar Car Challenge and took first place in a 1,800-mile, solar-powered race across the Australian outback.



The Mississippi Department of Education launched the Computer Science For Mississippi (CS4MS) initiative, a computer science pilot program, in 2016.

Our State has recently taken significant measures to protect the integrity of our voting system. In 2011, more than 62 percent of Mississippi voters approved a citizen-initiated Constitutional Amendment which requires eligible voters to present a photo ID before casting a ballot in person. To ensure the new law did not impede voter access, the Secretary of State consulted with the U.S. Department of Justice, and the law was implemented with bipartisan citizen support and without litigation.

The Secretary of State's Office launched a statewide education campaign after Voter ID was enacted in 2014. The State provides transportation to any citizen in need of a free Mississippi Voter ID Card. In the 2016 Presidential Election, 99.9 percent of citizens had acceptable identification at the polls.

Additionally, Mississippi continues to lead in providing the information businesses need to be successful. The Secretary of State's Office created Y'all Business, a unique website presenting economic, cultural, and statistical information for all of the State's 82 counties and 21 metropolitan areas. Visit the site at www.yallbusiness.sos.ms.gov to learn more about our State and its citizens.

These initiatives, along with many others, demonstrate Mississippi's effort to move our State into the future while respecting and learning from our past. Our history illustrates our resiliency and ability to grow. Our culture illuminates the talent and creativity we have to offer. Our industry shows Mississippians to be hard-working and resourceful. Our enterprise confirms our leadership ability.

In every way, Mississippi is providing greater opportunities for our children and grandchildren. We are on a path to a better future for our State. Those great Mississippians who came before, and all who will come after, are our inspiration and driving force. Happy 200th birthday, Mississippi.

