



### **Visit Oxford Wins Top Destination Honors by Mississippi Tourism Association**

**Oxford, MS (October 12, 2023)** – Visit Oxford MS received statewide recognition at The Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA)’s annual tourism awards program held during Governor’s Conference on Tourism at the MSU Riley Center in Meridian, Mississippi, on October 4-6, 2023. Celebrating the destination’s impact on the state’s tourism industry, the awards presented to Visit Oxford MS were **Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) of the Year** and **Large Festival of the Year** for the annual Double Decker Arts Festival.

“We are overjoyed to earn these awards, which are a true testament to the dedication of our entire team and the incredible destination we serve,” said Kinney Ferris, executive director of Visit Oxford MS. “When you’re passionate about what you do, it pays off. We’re proud to represent such an amazing town with even more amazing people in it.”

In the past year, Oxford has established itself as a competitive destination in the tourism sector as well as a thriving community that attracts year-round visitors. Based on the state of Mississippi’s visitor spending numbers, total visitor spending in Oxford was estimated to increase by approximately 10% and taxes attributed to visitor spending were up by 21%. The destination also saw an increase in hotel/motel tax collections of 28% – the highest in collection history, including pre-COVID numbers. The 2023 Double Decker Arts Festival alone had an estimated economic impact on the local community of a staggering \$13.8 million as visitors traveled from over 25 states for the weekend in Oxford.

Visit Oxford MS’ team of four full-time employees and their leadership in the region plays a vital role in the organization’s demonstrated success. Nadia Thornton, the organization’s sales and marketing director, recently completed the three-year program of Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College® and earned Tourism Marketing Professional (TMP) certification. Furthermore, Oxford’s very own Senator Nicole Atkins Boyd was awarded the Governmental Tourism Leadership Award during MTA’s annual event. A champion of her hometown of Oxford and of Mississippi as a whole, Boyd was recognized for her continued dedication to the growth of tourism and economic development across the state.

“The Mississippi tourism industry thrives with dedicated individuals who share a heartfelt commitment to enhancing their communities and our state as desirable destinations to visit, reside, and thrive. We commend their exceptional contributions to our state’s fourth-largest industry and appreciate their unwavering support for the Mississippi Tourism Association’s mission, which unites the entire tourism sector through advocacy, education, and promotion. We extend our

warmest congratulations to all our award recipients for their remarkable achievements and offer our best wishes for their ongoing success,” said Christy Burns, the 2023-2024 president of MTA.

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