

# THE TUNICA MISSISSIPPI MIRACLE

★ 2008 ANNUAL REPORT ★



*Live it up just down the road*

GAMING ★ INTERSTATE 69 ★ TUNICA METRO MEGA SITE ★ TUNICA AIRPORT  
TUNICA RIVERPARK ★ CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

# TUNICA COUNTY

## THE MIRACLE

# CONTINUES

As one of America's great economic success stories, Tunica County has created a diverse and growing economy from what was one of the country's most stagnant. New developments, recreational facilities and transportation are keeping Tunica County on the rise and on its way to an even brighter future.

### HOW THE TUNICA MIRACLE BEGAN

In 1990, the Mississippi Legislature legalized gaming as a way to create badly needed jobs and bring new industry to river and coastal areas. Civic and business leaders of Tunica County adopted gaming as part of an economic development strategy, which began what is known as the "Tunica Miracle."

In 1992, Splash Casino opened in Tunica, creating jobs and a revived economy almost overnight. Since then, more than \$3 billion has been invested in Tunica, more than 16,000 new jobs have been created and Tunica County has seen its budget grow from \$3.5 million in 1992 to \$56.7 million in 2008, making its turnaround a true economic miracle.



### GAMING INDUSTRY IMPROVEMENTS

The Tunica gaming industry continues to make property upgrades in Tunica. In the past two years, Tunica has seen the following property renovations:

- ★ Fitz Casino and Hotel renovated its hotel lobby, pool and workout area, hallways and all 506 hotel rooms.
- ★ Gold Strike Casino Resort updated its convention space, 800-seat Millennium Theatre and all 1,100 hotel rooms.
- ★ Horseshoe Casino remodeled 194 hotel rooms, added a Starbucks Coffee store and opened a restaurant called Magnolia: A Delta Grill.
- ★ Harrah's Entertainment completed a \$45 million total rebranding of Grand Casino to Harrah's Tunica. This included the renovation of 1,150 hotel rooms and the opening of the Paula Deen Buffet.
- ★ Sam's Town Casino completed a \$9.2 million renovation of 321 of the properties 850 rooms.



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION ACTIVITY

In the past year, the Tunica County Economic Development Foundation has placed a strong emphasis on recruiting businesses and industries to the county. In 2008, through interest in the 2,221-acre Metro Mega Site, 14 major economic development projects considered Tunica County. These projects represented a potential capital investment of \$3.34 billion and 9,015 new jobs and ranged from manufacturing and warehousing/distribution to food processing and entertainment.

Additionally, activity in commercial and residential developments jumped, as evidenced by the increase in new construction and housing permits.

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

At the Tunica RiverPark, visitors can experience the Mississippi River up close at the museum, interpretive center, observation deck and nature trails. And the 400-passenger *Tunica Queen* riverboat provides visitors with a chance to enjoy a ride on the Mississippi with a relaxing river cruise.

And with 48,000 square feet of space, the Tunica Arena & Expo Center is designed to accommodate almost any event, including equine and trade shows.



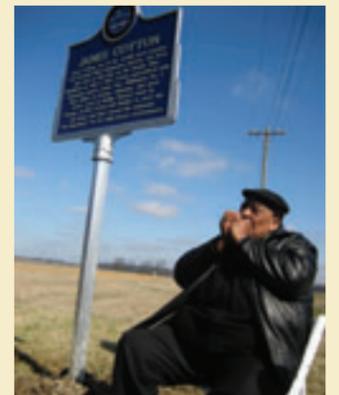
### THE TUNICA AIRPORT

Since the landing of Tunica's first charter 737 flight in November 2005, the airport has grown to the third busiest commercial airport in Mississippi. In the past year, the runway was extended from 7,000 to 8,500 feet; and 2008 also saw a 19% increase in the number of narrow-bodied 737 and MD-80 charter arrivals (501 to 597), along with a 25% increase in the number of passengers (47,465 to 59,188).

Growth is expected to continue in 2009, as plans for the construction of a \$19 million commercial terminal are finalized.

### MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL

Visitors can follow the paths of the world's greatest blues musicians on Highway 61, America's Blues Highway. Composed of over 100 historical markers, the Mississippi Blues Trail allows visitors to immerse themselves in the worlds of dozens of blues legends.



### INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

Tunica is only minutes away from I-55, I-40 and the new I-69, making the resorts of Tunica one of the most accessible travel destinations in the U.S. And from 1992 to 2009, approximately \$53.4 million was spent to upgrade Tunica's four-lane roads and highways, building them to world-class resort standards.

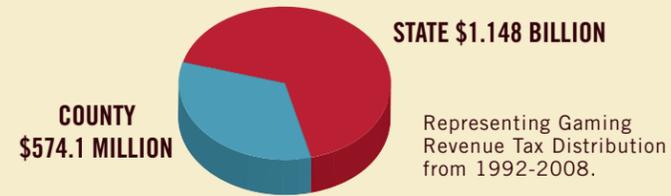


Tunica has four markers honoring James Cotton, Son House, America's Blues Highway at the Tunica Visitors Center, as well as Harold "Hardface" Clanton. A fifth marker will be added in May 2009 honoring the Abbey-Leatherman Plantation. From birthplaces to performance sites to gravesites, visitors can see how the blues came to be and changed American music forever.

# TUNICA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

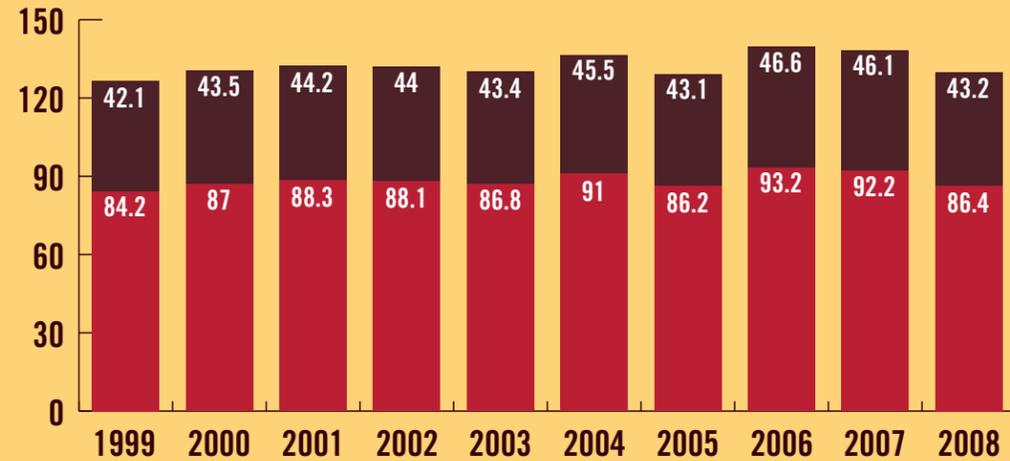
## GAMING REVENUE TAX DISTRIBUTION

12% tax = 4% Local + 8% State



## COUNTY/STATE GAMING REVENUE GROWTH IN MILLIONS 1999-2008

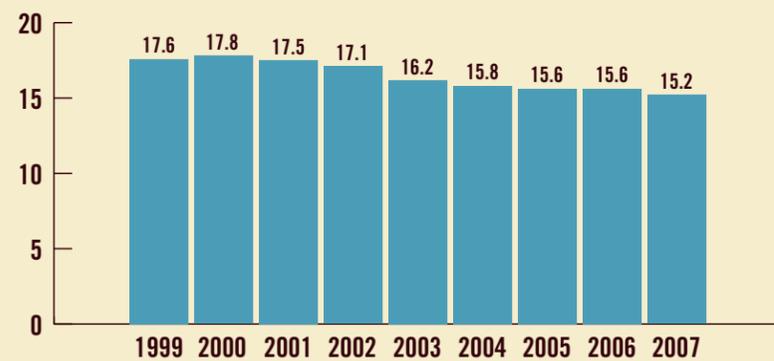
Source: Tunica County Administrator's Office



## TUNICA COUNTY JOB GROWTH

IN THOUSANDS 1999-2007

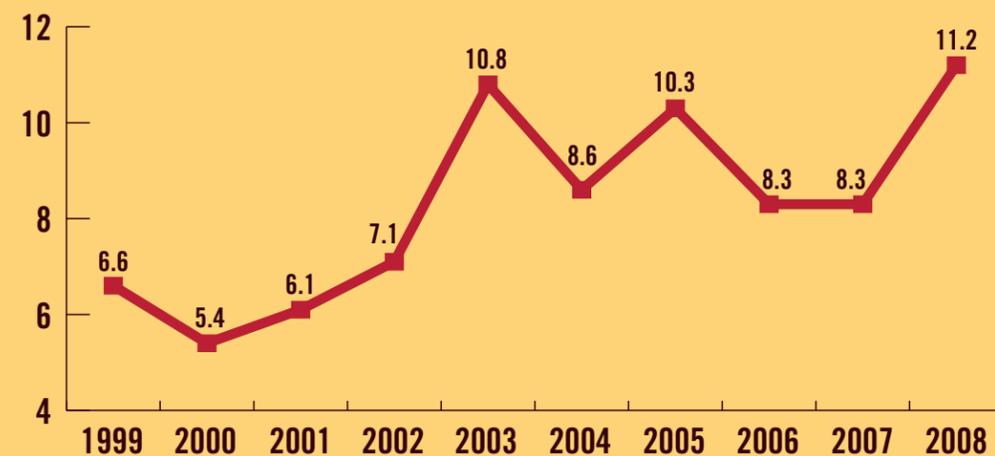
Source: Mississippi Employment Security Commission



## TUNICA COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT ANNUAL AVERAGES

IN PERCENTAGES 1999-2008

Source: Mississippi Employment Security Commission



# QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

## TUNICA COUNTY INVESTMENT OF GAMING REVENUE IN MILLIONS 1992-2008

- \$61.5** Education: new schools, increased teacher salaries and per-pupil program support
- \$53.4** More than 30 miles of four-lane roads built to resort standards
- \$31.6** Water, sewer and drainage improvements
- \$29** Tunica Arena & Exposition Center
- \$26.5** Tunica RiverPark museum, landing and nature trail
- \$23.3** Airport expansion
- \$14** Tunica National Golf & Tennis Club
- \$13.2** Law enforcement and fire protection: improvements to facilities and equipment
- \$12.6** Housing rehabilitation and support services for elderly and disabled
- \$8.3** Youth and family recreation: new facilities, programs and additional construction
- \$2** Tunica Museum
- \$1.6** Tunica Lake restoration
- \$1.5** Library expansion

Source: Tunica County Administrator's Office

## TUNICA COUNTY NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

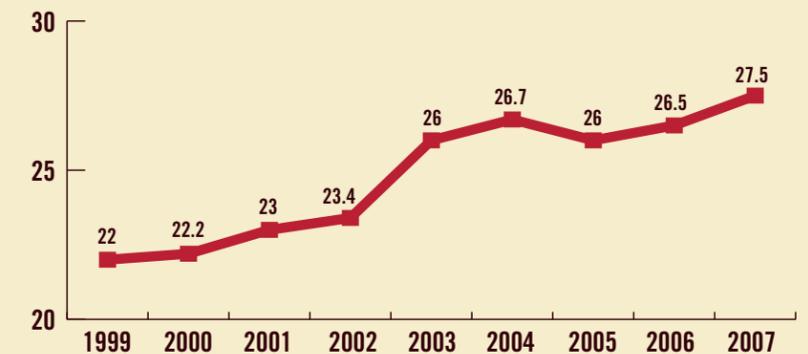
JANUARY 2008-DECEMBER 31, 2008

- 50** Commercial Construction Permits
- \$49.8M** Total Commercial Cost
- 64** Residential Construction Permits
- \$5M** Total Residential Cost

Source: Tunica Planning Commission

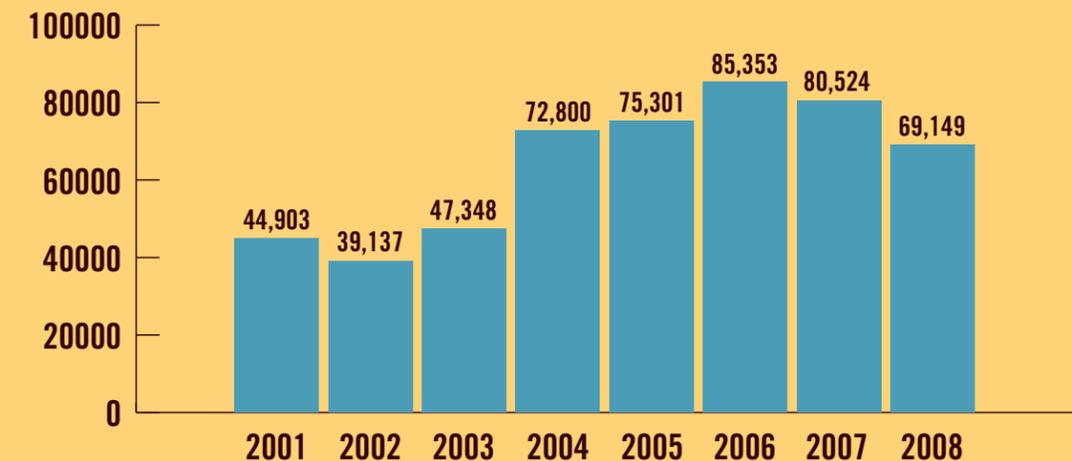
## TUNICA COUNTY ANNUAL AVERAGE WAGE IN THOUSANDS 1999-2007

Source: Mississippi Employment Security Commission



## TUNICA COUNTY GOLFING ROUNDS PLAYED IN THOUSANDS 2001-2008

Source: Cottonwoods at Harrah's Tunica, River Bend Links at Casino Strip Resorts and Tunica National Golf & Tennis Club\*

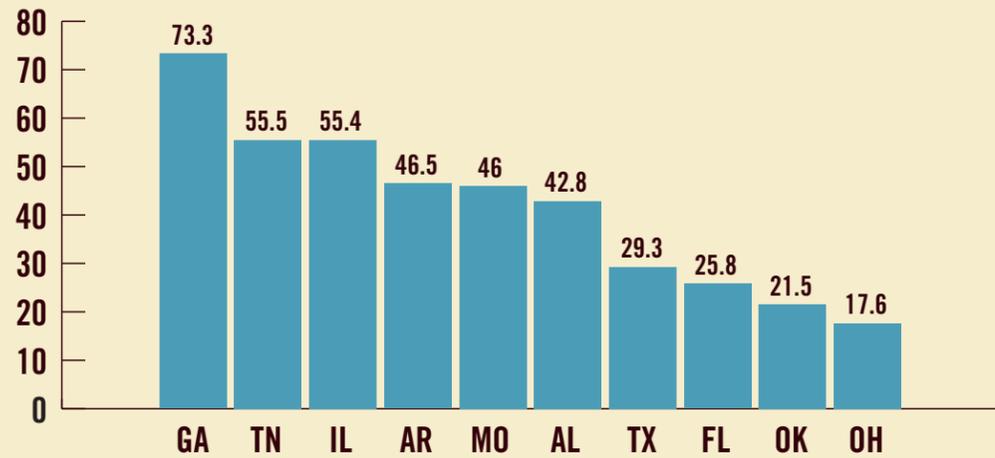


\*Tunica National opened for play in 2004. Cottonwoods and River Bend Links were under renovation three months of 2008.

# TOURISM INDICATORS

## TOP 10 STATES FOR CVB VISITOR INQUIRIES

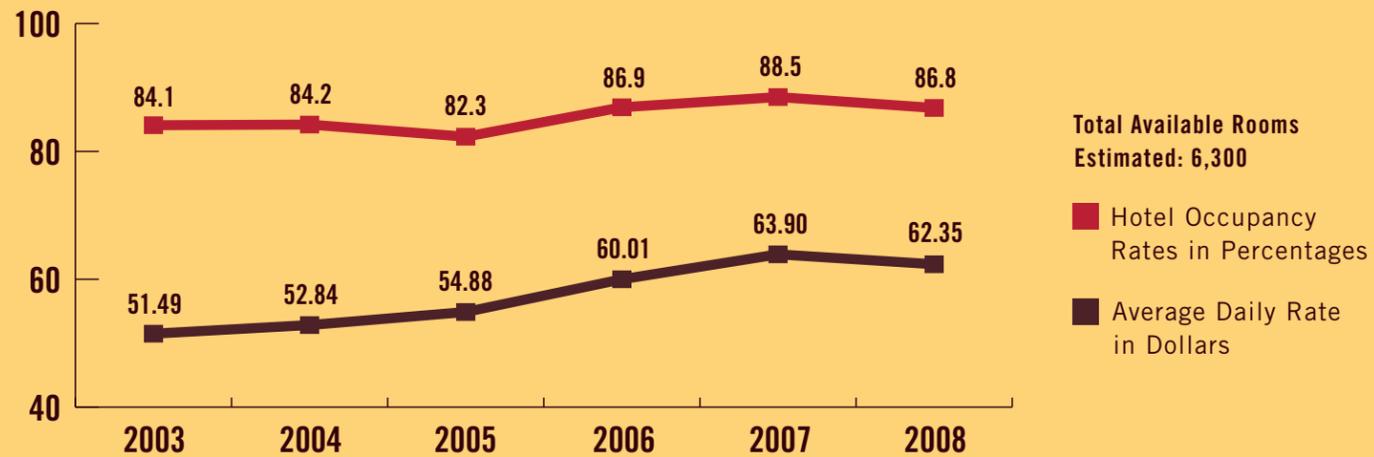
IN THOUSANDS 1999-2008



Source: Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau

## HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES & AVERAGE DAILY RATE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2002-2008

Source: Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau



Total Available Rooms Estimated: 6,300

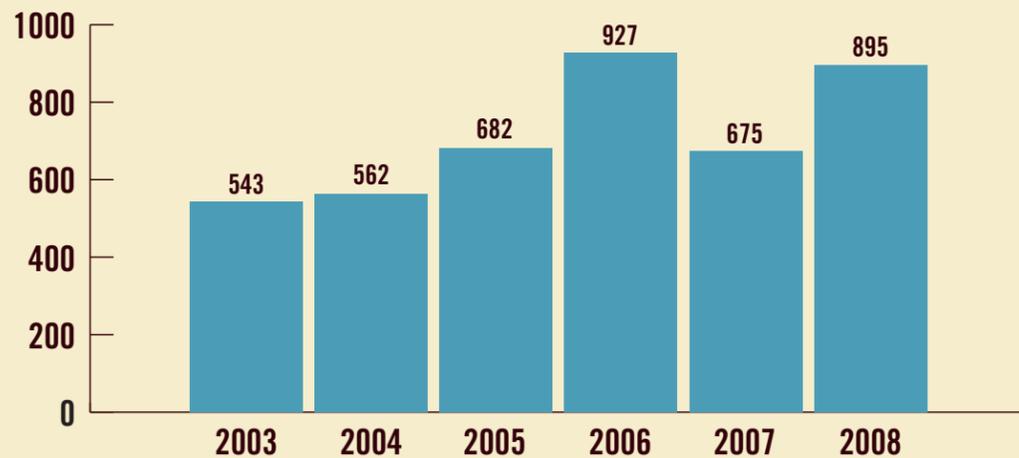
■ Hotel Occupancy Rates in Percentages

■ Average Daily Rate in Dollars

## MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS SEASONAL STATISTICS

IN HUNDREDS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2002-2008

Source: Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau



# 2008 TOURISM UPDATES

## REGISTERED VISITORS AT THE TUNICA VISITORS CENTER

Source: Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau

January through December

2002	58,925
2003	59,335
2004	60,025
2005	54,631
2006	56,044
2007	48,324
2008	36,805



## TUNICA RIVERPARK

The Tunica RiverPark has welcomed more than 200,000 visitors in four years and received many awards and accolades. The *Tunica Queen* riverboat, offering Mississippi River cruises, is docked there.



## TUNICA NATIONAL GOLF & TENNIS CLUB

The Mark McCumber-designed championship golf course hosted more than 30,000 rounds of golf in 2008. The Club's indoor tennis courts were awarded the USTA's Outstanding Facility Award.

## TUNICA GAMING STATISTICS

Source: Mississippi Gaming Commission

As of December 31, 2008

Casino Resorts	9
Employees	10,917
Gaming Square Footage	530,119
Other Square Footage	3,082,879
Slot Games	12,685
Table Games	412

## TUNICA AIRPORT

Nearly 60,000 commercial, charter and private passengers were welcomed to the airport in 2008. The runway was recently expanded to 8,500 feet, and a commercial terminal is currently under construction.



## MOTORCOACH ARRIVALS

Source: Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau

July 2007 through June 2008

Total Motorcoach Arrivals	6,160*
Total Passengers	203,834*

\*Total based on seven of the nine casino properties.



## TUNICA ARENA & EXPOSITION CENTER

The Tunica Arena holds more than 152 show days each year, bringing approximately 23,000 event attendees to Tunica annually.

# TUNICA VISITOR PROFILE

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL VISITORS:  
10+ MILLION**



\*This demographic information was the result of a visitor profile study that was conducted in 2007. \*\*These results were obtained through an awareness and perception study among Tunica visitors in 2008 in the key markets of Little Rock, AR; Nashville, TN; and Huntsville, AL.

## VISITOR\*

Average Age: 54

64%	Age 50+
65%	Female
35%	Male

## PURPOSE OF TRIP\*\*

Gambling
Dining
Entertainment

## FINANCIAL\*

\$58,700	Average Annual Income
\$484	Average Spent Per Trip

## AVERAGE TRIP TO TUNICA\*\*

2.6	Average number of visits in the last year
3.2	Average number of casinos visited per trip
2.2	Average number of nights spent in Tunica
2.9	Average group size per trip

## VISITOR SATISFACTION\*\*

32%	Completely satisfied
39%	Mostly satisfied
22%	Somewhat satisfied
5%	Mostly dissatisfied
2%	Completely dissatisfied



## TUNICA COUNTY

P.O. Box 639 ★ Tunica, MS 38676  
662.363.1465 ★ tunicacounty.com

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P.O. Box 1888 ★ Tunica, MS 38676  
662.363.2865 ★ tunicachamber.com

## CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

P.O. Box 2739 ★ Tunica, MS 38676  
662.363.3800 ★ tunicatravel.com

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