



Live it up just down the road

★ NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ★

CONTACT: Patrick Collins
901-219-9944
Patrick@VMorrisMarketing.com

Gateway to the Blues Museum in Tunica, Mississippi Opened Today

TUNICA, Miss., Feb. 19, 2015 – The Gateway to the Blues Museum located on the Blues Highway, United States Route 61, in the Mississippi Delta where the Blues began opened today, Thursday, February 19, 2015.

The Gateway to the Blues exhibition represents one of the most important collections of Blues artifacts and memorabilia in the country. Over seven hundred items help to illuminate the story about the origin and development of blues music in the Mississippi Delta.

“It is with great pleasure that we open the Gateway to the Blues Museum, the first stop outside of Memphis for blues and music tourists looking to experience Mississippi’s musical heritage, today,” said Webster Franklin, President and CEO, Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau. “We will forever be grateful of the generosity of Caesars Entertainment, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Hood of Dundee, Mississippi for making this project a reality.”

The Gateway to the Blues Museum is a significant element in the Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau comprehensive visitors services strategy to utilize the cultural and heritage tourism product of Mississippi and the Mississippi Delta region to diversify the overall entertainment offerings in Tunica County, a destination known for its gaming offerings.

“The Gateway to the Blues Museum is another great attraction and educational opportunity for Mississippi visitors and residents alike showcasing, blues music, the heart of American music,” said Phil Bryant, Mississippi Governor.

The entrance to the museum is located in a restored train depot that dates back to 1895 and was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Hood. The museum artifacts were originally part of the Blues and Legends Hall of Fame Museum located in the Horseshoe Casino. The artifacts are on loan from Caesars Entertainment, who also donated the land where the museum is located.

“We are proud to be able to offer these historic artifacts, on behalf of Horseshoe Tunica, representing one of Mississippi’s most valuable and far reaching art forms, blues music, for the enjoyment of visitors to Tunica,” said R. Scott Barber, Regional President, Caesars Mid-South.

The Gateway to the Blues Visitor Center & Museum project was funded in part via a Transportation Enhancement Grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation and Economic Development Initiative Grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“Mississippi is the birthplace of America’s music, the blues, and this museum is a testament to that rich history,” said Transportation Commissioner Mike Tagert. “The preservation and display of such valuable pieces of Mississippi’s musical legacy is a cultural and educational necessity.”

It is estimated that the new Highway 61 Gateway to the Blues Visitor Center Museum will have visits in excess of 40,000 per year. By educating these visitors on all Mississippi has to offer, hotel stays, casino visits, and collateral visits to museums throughout the Delta region will be significantly enhanced.

The following attractions are examples, and are not limited to the Mississippi Cultural and Heritage tourism attractions, that the development of the Highway 61 Gateway to the Blues Visitor Center will positively enhance.

Tunica RiverPark
Mississippi Blues Trail
Ground Zero Blues Club
Red's Lounge
Po Monkey's Lounge
Museum of the Mississippi Delta

Tunica Museum
Delta Blues Museum
Highway 61 Blues Museum
Dockery Plantation
BB King Blues Museum
Greenwood Blues & Heritage Gallery

The Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau has partnered with State officials and private developers to create a thriving tourist destination that appeals to a broader audience than just the gaming customer. The Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau has helped to develop attractions to include the Tunica RiverPark, Tunica Museum, Tunica Arena & Exposition Center, Tunica Aquatic Center, and Tunica National Golf & Tennis. The private sector has developed Riverbend Links Golf Club, the Tunica Queen, and the Casino Factory Shoppes that combined with the gaming industry has made Tunica a must see destination that welcomes more than 5 million visitors annually to the State of Mississippi.

For more information about the Gateway to the Blues Museum visit TunicaTravel.com/Blues

About Tunica:

Located 30 minutes south of Memphis, Tunica is The South's Casino Capital. "Live It Up Just Down the Road" and enjoy eight world-class casinos, 5,000 luxurious hotel rooms, fine-dining restaurants and buffets, headline entertainers, championship golf and tennis, award-winning museums, lavish spas and outlet/antique shopping. Call 1-888-4TUNICA to request a value-packed Winner's Guide, or visit TunicaTravel.com for travel information.



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(PHOTO)

The Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center

(PHOTO)

Left to Right – OFFICIALS OPENED THE GATEWAY TO THE BLUES VISITORS CENTER TODAY, Thursday, February 19, 2015

(PHOTO)

Memphis Jones performed as part of the Gateway to the Blues Grand Opening Celebration on Thursday, February 19, 2015

(PHOTO)

The father of the blues, WC Handy's coronet is just one of the artifacts that can be seen at the Gateway to the Blues Museum located on Highway 61, the blues highway, in Tunica, Mississippi.