

October 7, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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MISSISSIPPI
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

PACESETTER GALLERY HONORED WITH TRAVEL ATTRACTION OF THE YEAR AWARD BY MISSISSIPPI TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Jackson, Miss. - The Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA) recognized the impact and accomplishments of the state's tourism industry at the annual tourism awards program held during Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, October 2-4, 2024. This annual educational and professional development event brought together around 200 tourism industry professionals from across the state as well as tourism partners from the surrounding region.

"Mississippi's tourism industry continues to flourish," said Governor Tate Reeves. "Every day, more visitors are discovering the charm of our state as they are drawn in by its natural beauty and the genuine hospitality of our people. It's no surprise why Mississippi leaves such a lasting impression with our visitors. I want to extend my gratitude to the Mississippi Tourism Association and their members for showcasing all that our state has to offer and congratulate this year's outstanding award winners."

These awards give MTA the opportunity to recognize members who excel in various sectors of the industry. Awards were presented in 22 categories, each focusing on a different aspect of the hospitality industry or individual achievement.

This year's recipient of the **Attraction of the Year** award was given to Pacesetter Gallery. This is presented to an attraction that is new or unique in bringing visitors to its city and has demonstrated outstanding results in doing so.

"We are delighted to celebrate these hardworking individuals who consistently go above and beyond for their communities and organizations. The competitiveness of these awards reflects the exceptional quality of work from our partners and highlights the strength of Mississippi's tourism industry. It's a privilege to collaborate with such remarkable professionals as we continue to drive growth and success in our field," said MTA Executive Director, Danielle Morgan.

Established in 2021, Pacesetter Gallery has hosted over 250 cultural art events. Featuring over 72 artists and artisans from across the state, visitors to Pacesetter Gallery enjoy discovering Mississippi-made unique art and gifts and getting hands on art experiences.

Voted Best Art Gallery by Mississippi Magazine readers for 2023 and 2024, the gallery shares the stories and artworks of talented Mississippi makers at public appearances, print, radio, and podcasts.

Artist and owner, Keri Davis, believes in growing tourism through promotion of one of our state's greatest resources -- our visual artists. Each picture says a thousand words, from cherished landscapes painted of delta bluffs to beautiful coastlines, blues musicians, and our daily life.

In October 2023, Pacesetter Gallery partnered with Explore Ridgeland and the Renaissance at Colony Park and hosted a live painting competition and art show. Visitors watched as 34 artists brought landscapes to life across the venue, increasing retail and restaurant sales in Ridgeland.

The gallery also teamed up with Greater Greenville in October by promoting Mississippi original art and featuring blues painter Cliff Speaks for the Hot Tamale Festival. Attendees throughout the festival watched as the artist painted live blues musicians.

In April 2024, Pacesetter Gallery teamed up with Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Visit Jackson and the City of Flowood to host the 2nd En Plein Air Painting Competition, featuring 42 artists from across Mississippi. Over 500 visitors attended the event.

Nature and art come alive at Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Wild Wonders: Painting Natural Mississippi Classes. Davis teaches this series for teens and adults that explore the different habitats and animals of Mississippi. The museum, gallery, Visit Jackson and Capital Area Tourism multiplied social media and exposure through strategic sharing of social media posts across platforms for each event.

When visiting the gallery, you can expect a warm southern welcome, good music and plenty of time to wander and discover. From fine art paintings, pottery, jewelry, glass art, soaps, and hand-printed notecards, there is truly something for everyone at Pacesetter Gallery.

“Ralph Marson said, ‘Excellence is not a skill, it’s an attitude.’ It is my honor to commend the Mississippi Tourism Association’s 2024 Governor’s Conference on Tourism Award Winners. Your passion and commitment to tourism, our state’s fourth-largest industry, and its collective contribution to Mississippi’s economy are fervently articulated by the impactful strategic initiatives and professionalism you execute and demonstrate daily. Thank you and your team for your unwavering passion that contributes to the transformational impact for our individual and collective Mississippi communities,” said Dr. Rickey Thigpen, 2024-2025 President of MTA.

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The voice of tourism, the Mississippi Tourism Association is a membership organization whose mission is to unite all sectors of the tourism industry through advocacy, promotion and education. MTA’s vision is to transform Mississippi’s economy through increased visitor spending and overall travel industry growth. For more than 30 years, MTA has led the Mississippi’s tourism education and advocacy efforts. Membership and organization details can be found at www.mstourism.com

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