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## MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL GOES NATIONAL

Jackson, Mississippi (April 29, 2009) – Governor Haley Barbour announces the continued growth of the Mississippi Blues Trail Friday, May 8 at 11:30 a.m. as the Mississippi Blues Trail goes national with its first out-of-state marker in Memphis titled “Mississippi to Memphis.” The marker will be dedicated in front of the FedEx Forum and Rock'n'Soul Museum on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street near Beale. The unveiling by the Mississippi Blues Commission and the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau will follow the annual Blues Awards ceremony in Memphis.

“With markers now stretching across the state and into Tennessee, the Mississippi Blues Trail is truly a tourism destination honoring our top musicians,” Governor Barbour said. “I thank Memphis officials and Mississippi communities for their help honoring these talented artists.”

This is one of the Mississippi Blues Trail markers to be erected outside of Mississippi; at present more than seventy markers have been dedicated within Mississippi, and in the future approximately seventy others will be placed around the state as well as in other cities with close ties to Mississippi blues, including New Orleans, Chicago, and Helena, Arkansas.

President and CEO of the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau Kevin Kane said, “The relationship between Memphis and Mississippi has very deep roots. The relationship between the two when it comes to musical talent and development speaks for itself. Beale Street and the Mississippi Delta have nurtured and grown from one another for over 50 years and they continue to learn from one another to this day in music, tradition, and pure southern soul.”

The “Mississippi to Memphis” marker acknowledges the many native Mississippians who performed and made their name in the Bluff City from the earliest days of the blues until the present. In Memphis’s rich blues scene of the 1920s leading artists who were born in Mississippi included Gus Cannon, Furry Lewis, Robert Wilkins, Jim Jackson, Joe McCoy and Dan Sane. In the decades following World War II Mississippians who helped establish Memphis as a major center of blues and rock’n’roll included B.B. King, Elvis Presley, Rufus Thomas, and Junior Parker. In the 1960s and 1970s the Memphis-based soul labels Stax and Hi scored many hits with Mississippians including Little Milton Campbell, Syl Johnson, and Albert King, and today many of the city’s leading blues artists have Mississippi roots, including Blind Mississippi Morris, Robert Belfour, Daddy Mack Orr, Billy Gibson, and Dr. Feelgood Potts.

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Blues Trail markers are placed at key sites across Mississippi to honor historic blues locations and give visitors insight into this unique heritage. As the Mississippi Blues Commission and the Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Heritage Trails Program continues to unveil these The Mississippi Blues Trail markers are funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by support from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Delta State University and the Mississippi Development Authority.

The Mississippi Blues Trail offers an unforgettable journey into Blues history, from the street corners and juke joints where musicians played, to the places they called home, to their final resting spots. Travelers are invited to walk where they walked, dance where they danced and play in the land where it all began. For travel information about Mississippi explore [www.visitmississippi.org](http://www.visitmississippi.org).

To contact the Mississippi Blues Trail office in Jackson, contact Alex Thomas (601-359-3297, [athomas@mississippi.org](mailto:athomas@mississippi.org)) or Leigh Portwood (601-359-3061, [lportwood@mississippi.org](mailto:lportwood@mississippi.org)).

For further information on the Mississippi Blues Trail, go to [www.msbluestrail.org](http://www.msbluestrail.org).

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