



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Harvest Festival and Gingerbread Market Canceled Due to Mississippi Ag Museum Fire

Due to Thursday night's massive fire at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, regular operations, including Harvest Festival and Gingerbread Market, have been canceled for Friday and Saturday. The Museum will take this time to assess the damage and begin the recovery process. Private events will move forward as planned.

The fire, which began just before 5:00 p.m., destroyed the Barnyard, the Veterinary Infirmary, and caused significant damage to the Museum's maintenance shop. All Ag Museum staff and large animals made it out of the buildings safely with only one minor injury reported. The cause of the destructive fire remains unknown at this time.

The Jackson Fire Department responded promptly and brought the fire under control saving multiple other historic buildings. "We are incredibly grateful for the Jackson Fire Department and their extraordinary efforts to extinguish and control the fire throughout the night assuring that no more history was destroyed. While we have some broken hearts, the most important thing is that no lives were lost and everyone is safe," stated Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith.

Chairman of the Board of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation Karyn Thornhill said, "We are extremely grateful that there was no loss of human life and that so many of our historical buildings and precious artifacts were saved. The Foundation would also like to recognize the dedication of the staff, led by museum director, Lise Foy. Many sacrificed their personal safety to make certain the animals were cared for and loss was kept to a minimum."

The Foundation serves as a fundraising mechanism to support the mission and function of the Museum and is committed to raising the necessary funds to build back all that was lost.

Anyone who wishes to make contributions to assist with rebuilding efforts, donations, and future improvements at the Ag Museum needs to contact the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum at 601-432-4500

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Photos and outline attached.



Prior to Thursday night's fire, the Children's Barnyard, which housed goats, pigs, horses, and a steer, was a favorite of museum visitors.



The surry was one of the artifacts saved from the Thursday night's fire at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.



A destructive fire on Thursday night at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum on Lakeland Drive in Jackson destroyed the Children's Barnyard and the Veterinary Infirmary and significantly damaged the Museum's maintenance shop.