



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

**ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER**

PRESS RELEASE

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Mississippi Ag and Forestry Museum Breaks Ground for Children's Barn

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Children's Barn and Multipurpose Building today. The construction of the Children's Barn and the Multipurpose Building are part of the rebuilding efforts to replace buildings lost during a devastating fire on the Museum grounds in November 2014.

"This groundbreaking today signifies growth and new opportunities for the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum and our many visitors. A very small portion of our population, only two percent, is involved in production agriculture. Most people today, adults and children alike, have not visited a farm or experienced farm life. The new Children's Barn and Multipurpose Building will enhance our visitors' experience by giving them the opportunity to experience life on a farm, learn more about the importance of agriculture, make a connection of where their food comes from, and not to mention, make wonderful memories with family and friends," said Commissioner Gipson.

The rebuilding of the Children's Barn, once one of the most popular attractions at the Museum, will provide an exciting opportunity for visitors to observe typical farm livestock in a convenient and authentic farm setting and learn about the importance of veterinary medicine. The Multipurpose Building, which will be connected to the Children's Barn by a covered walkway, will allow the Museum to expand its educational opportunities through the addition of specialized educational programming.

The construction of the two buildings will enhance each visitor's experience by giving them the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the importance of agriculture, and activities such as birthday parties with pony rides will once again be offered. These rebuilding efforts are funded through insurance claim funds from the fire in 2014. The Children's Barn and Multipurpose Building were designed by Wier Boerner Allin Architecture. The general contractor is Paul Jackson and Son Construction Company. Construction is expected to be completed by this fall.

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Picture and cutline attached.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum broke ground on the new Children's Barn and Multipurpose Building today. Assisting with the groundbreaking was Ryan Hansen, Partner of Wier Boerner Allin Architecture; Dakota Murphree, FFA President; Paul Jackson of Paul Jackson and Son Construction Company; Aaron Rodgers, Director of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum; Commissioner Andy Gipson; Abigail Gipson; U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith; Laura Jackson, Executive Director of Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration; Glenn Kornbrek, Deputy Executive Director of Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration; Jamie Wier, Principal Architect of Wier Boerner Allin; and Greg Gibson, President of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation.



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