



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
MISSISSIPPI FAIR COMMISSION**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Ag Commissioner Gipson Announces New Staff at MDAC**

**JACKSON, Miss.** — Commissioner Andy Gipson recently announced two new staff members of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC). Gayle Fortenberry was named Agriculture Workforce Development Coordinator. In this position, Fortenberry will serve as a liaison between MDAC and agriculture industry employers, agricultural education program representatives and potential agricultural employees in high schools, colleges and universities to coordinate the Mississippi Agriculture Workforce Development program.

“There is nothing more important that we can do than to invest in our young people as the future of the agriculture workforce in Mississippi. I am proud to have Gayle Fortenberry launch this new initiative for the department as we strive to grow and strengthen our agriculture workforce,” Gipson said.

Fortenberry earned her Master’s Degree in School Administration and B.S. degrees in Agricultural Communications and Agricultural Education from Mississippi State University. She has 25 years of experience in the career and technical education field as a high school agriculture teacher, coordinator of the Mississippi FFA Association and as a curriculum specialist in agriculture education. Fortenberry is currently working on a Doctoral Degree in Agriculture Education, Leadership and Communications at MSU. She resides in Starkville and has two sons Neil, a freshman at East Mississippi Community College, and Tyler, a senior at Mississippi State University.

Commissioner Gipson also named Whit Kendall as Senior Counsel and Legislative Policy Coordinator. He will be responsible for staying apprised on the latest policy issues and working with the legislature on behalf of the department and the commissioner in order to monitor and shape legislation that has an impact on the agency.

Kendall earned his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering Technology and Business from MSU. He also earned his law degree from Mississippi College School of Law where he was a member of the Mississippi College Law Review. This past summer, Kendall passed the Mississippi Bar Examination and was recently admitted to practice in the state of Mississippi. While in law school, he gained experience in the legal field working within the offices of the Governor of Mississippi as well as the Mississippi Secretary of State. Kendall currently resides in Bolton.

“I am proud to welcome Whit Kendall as Senior Counsel and Legislative Policy Coordinator,” Gipson said. “The skills, experience and agricultural background he brings to the department make him a true asset to the agency.”

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**Photos attached.**



**Gayle Fortenberry**



**Whit Kendall**