



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
February 12, 2014**

### **Ag Commissioner Makes Blair E. Batson Patients Cowboys for a Day**

**Jackson, Miss.** – Patients at Blair E. Batson Children’s Hospital received a special treat as they got the chance to be cowboys and cowgirls for a day. Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith along with professional rodeo clown Lecile Harris, Miss Rodeo America 2014 Paige Nicholson from Lawrence, Miss., Miss Dixie National 2014 Taylor McNair of Learned, Miss., Junior Miss Dixie National 2014 Summer Weldon of Martin, Tenn., Miss Mississippi High School Rodeo Kaytlyn McCarty of McComb, Miss., bullfighter Kenny Bergeron of Eunice, La., and Jimmie Nichols with Grabuone Outfitters visited with the patients bringing part of the Dixie National Rodeo with them. Each child received a cowboy hat and bandana compliments of First South Farm Credit. The patients had the opportunity to interact with the clowns and Rodeo Queens and get autographs.

“The patients at Blair E. Batson are very special, and many of them have been through so much. We wanted to make today special for them by letting them meet some of the stars of the Dixie National Rodeo,” said Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith.

“The rodeo clowns, queens, and bullfighters bring added excitement to the Dixie National Rodeo. Since the patients are not able to physically come to one of the shows, we wanted to bring a little bit of the rodeo to them,” continued Hyde-Smith.

As another special treat, twenty current and former Blair E. Batson patients and their siblings were invited to participate in the Dixie National Parade this past weekend. They rode on the float belonging to Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum which won Best Corporate Float.

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**Cutline:**

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith (far left) helped make patients at Blair E. Batson cowboys and cowgirls for a day. Joining Commissioner Hyde-Smith were (left to right) patient John Matthew Davis of Canton, Miss., professional rodeo clown Lecile Harris, Miss Rodeo America 2014 Paige Nicholson from Lawrence, Miss., bullfighter Kenny Bergeron of Eunice, La., Junior Miss Dixie National 2014 Summer Weldon of Martin, Tenn., Miss Mississippi High School Rodeo 2014 Kaytlyn McCarty of McComb, Miss., Miss Dixie National 2014 Taylor McNair of Learned, and Jimmie Nichols with Grabuone Outfitters.



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