

mississippi

Summer 2020 | msfarmcountry.com

FARM COUNTRY

FEATURING

A Modern
One-Room
Schoolhouse

Coca-Cola
History on
Display

A Farm
Family's
Future

inside
NO-SWEAT
SUMMER
RECIPES

ACTIVE Retirement

Former Extension agent still impacts his community
through volunteering and vegetables

A PUBLICATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION



Welcome to Hattiesburg

THIS DIVERSE COMMUNITY OFFERS
A MIX OF CULTURE, CUISINE,
MUSIC AND THE OUTDOORS





Story by KELSEY OGLETREE

KNOWN AS "HUB CITY" AMONG MISSISSIPPIANS

for its central location between New Orleans; Jackson, Mississippi; and Mobile, Alabama, Hattiesburg is a melting pot of cultures.

Nestled at the intersection of Interstate 59 and U.S. Highway 49, and also connected via Amtrak, the city of just under 50,000 residents has a deep history rooted in the civil rights movement. In the 1960s, local activist Vernon F. Dahmer Sr. (known for his mantra, "If you don't vote, you don't count.") played a key role in promoting equal voting rights for African Americans – so much so that his work attracted national

attention. Civil rights activists, including many teachers, flocked to Hattiesburg in summer 1964 to take part in peaceful sit-ins, and the city became known as a mecca for the Freedom Schools Movement. Today, visitors can explore Hattiesburg's Freedom Summer Trail, a collection of 16 stops throughout the area that commemorate those who fought for civil rights during that time. In January 2020, the Forrest County

Courthouse dedicated a new bronze statue honoring the life of Dahmer.

While reliving civil rights history can feel both somber and triumphant at once, Hattiesburg helps visitors experience the impact of those transformational years in a positive light.

"That's the compelling story we want to show – that's the Mississippi we have today," says Marlo Dorsey, executive director of Visit Hattiesburg. "We want to be that progressive, diverse, welcoming community for all, and for people to see that while we have a storied past with ugly chapters, we're set on a path of equality and civility like we've never been able to be before."

BURSTING WITH FLAVOR

Hattiesburg's close proximity to the Gulf helps solidify its position as a foodie destination.

"From a great piece of grilled fish with delicious toppings to fried shrimp, catfish and oysters, you're always going to be able to find excellent seafood," Dorsey says.



From top: Diners enjoy dinner at the Blue Jazz Cafe in downtown Hattiesburg. Oddfellows Gallery occupies the lovingly restored Oddfellows Lodge. Shoppers and families enjoy live music at the farmers market.



That's not the only thing you'll find, however. The area has about 200 locally owned restaurants, ranging from Cajun to soul food and Southern classics to vegan cuisine. Must-visit spots include Keg and Barrel, known for its pub-style grub and hundreds of beers on tap; healthy-eating Birdhouse Cafe, helmed by local celebrity chef Katie Dixon; and GrateFull Soul, famous for its Southern-style plate lunches.

LOCAL SHOPPING

The Lucky Rabbit, which was recently featured on HGTV's *Home Town*, is only open four days a month, so plan your visit accordingly if you want to stop by this downtown shopper's mecca. The beloved shop features many items from local artists and vendors. Whether you're looking to scoop up some antique glassware or find a one-of-a-kind hutch that's been completely restored, you never know what treasures you'll find. In Hattiesburg, discover boutiques around every corner, from shoe shops to women's clothing to furniture.

It's also worth checking out the unique T-Bones Records & Café, where you can peruse vinyl records while sipping a cold-brew coffee. If you're in the mood to browse art, Oddfellows Gallery, located inside the historic home of the Hattiesburg Chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows, is primarily a private event space but also houses art exhibitions and is open to the public Thursday through Saturday.

TUNE IN

With more than 400 live music events each year, Hattiesburg is a haven for good beats and a good time.

"Our live music scene is not only the talk of the town but also the



region, attracting fans and artists from all over the Southeast and beyond,” Dorsey says.

Some venues to check out include Saenger Theater, a historic space dating back to the 1920s that has nearly 1,000 seats and a grand Robert Morton pipe organ; and The Thirsty Hippo, a combination music venue, bar and restaurant that hosts open-mic nights, live trivia, and local and regional bands weekly. Throughout the summer, there are many options for enjoying live music outdoors, too.

GETTING OUTSIDE

As much fun as it is checking out local restaurants, shops and music venues, visitors would be remiss to visit Hattiesburg and not spend time outdoors.

“We have tremendous green spaces and lots of beautiful waterways,” Dorsey says.

For example, the area’s Longleaf Trace is 44 miles of paved trail atop a former railroad. Lined with trees on both sides, it’s ideal for biking and hiking. If you enjoy the water, you can spend a day at Okatoma Creek, doing everything from tubing to kayaking, canoeing, boating and swimming (you can rent gear from Okatoma Outdoor Post). Check into the Okatoma Resort & RV Park to make a weekend of it and stop by Shady Acres Village for a meal of fried green tomatoes and hearty sandwiches to refuel.

Golfers also have several top-notch options for public courses in the Hattiesburg area – and thanks to the area’s relatively mild climate, play happens year round. Timberton Golf Club is highly rated and one of the leaders in championship golf in Southern Mississippi, while Shadow Ridge is a scenic course populated by native pines, dogwoods and magnolias.

Kids will enjoy the Hattiesburg Zoo, which is home to nearly 100 species of animals as well as a high-ropes adventure course, train, splash pad and more. Later this year, look for a new giraffe exhibit and feeding station. ◀



**26%
TAX CREDIT
AVAILABLE***

THERE'S A TREASURE IN YOUR BACKYARD

You may not realize it, but your home is sitting on a **free and renewable** supply of energy. A WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system taps into the stored solar energy in your own backyard to provide **savings of up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. That's money in the bank and a smart investment in your family's comfort. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer today to learn how to **tap into your buried treasure**.

FINANCING AVAILABLE

Hattiesburg American Air Specialists of MS (601) 583-2575	Olive Branch/Oxford Air & Heat Service Co. (888) 845-9580	Starkville/Tupelo Mid South Air Conditioning, Inc. (662) 329-2003
Jackson/Pearl Comfort Designs (601) 932-7555	South BC's Heating & Air (877) 909-2918	

WaterFurnace  visit waterfurnace.com
Smarter from the Ground Up™

WaterFurnace is a registered trademark of WaterFurnace International, Inc.
*26% through 2020 and 22% through 2021