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Jackson is known as “The City With Soul.” There are 29 museums, three cultural and historic districts to explore and an abundance of excellent restaurants. Many of Mississippi’s major corporations are also headquartered in Jackson.

By JACK CRISS

Jackson has faced its challenges well over the past several years, including well-publicized water crisis events and population loss to surrounding areas and suburbs. The capital city remains the crossroads of the state, not only geographically, but also politically and culturally.

And, as most who do business in Central Mississippi would acknowledge, the actual city itself interacts as a whole with those surrounding areas through support and commerce. “Metro” Jackson, in particular the trifecta of Hinds, Madison and Rankin Counties, is seen as a geographical region comprising

several municipal identities, and what benefits one benefits all in an symbiotic economic relationship.

But Jackson remains the fulcrum and center point of the area and the state and a common adage heard often throughout the state from business and political leaders is, “As Jackson goes, so goes Mississippi.” And at this point, the city is fortunate to have many outstanding companies and entities in and around it to provide a positive forecast for the future.

With a new City administration coming into place soon (election results are unavailable at press time), a new optimism has arrived with that change. Many think Jackson will build upon its many available resources and



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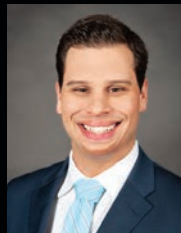
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Ryan Florreich



Liz Brister



Micah McCullough

forge an interesting and innovative new way forward.

The law firm Jones Walker's decision to maintain a presence in Jackson reflects both a strategic commitment to the region and a deep understanding of the long-term value of local relationships, said the firm's Partner and Managing Head, Jeff Barber.

"Jackson is not only the state capital but also a legal, governmental, and economic hub. Remaining in the City

of Jackson enables Jones Walker to serve long standing clients effectively, stay close to key courts and regulatory agencies, and continue engaging with the community.

The decision to stay in the heart of Jackson signals a message of stability and dedication to Mississippi's legal and business communities. It reinforces trust among clients who depend on accessible legal partners that are invested in the state's growth. In many ways, it also demonstrates the firm's confidence in Jackson's future and in the opportunities that come with being part of that development," said Barber.

"The added significance of Jones Walker being located in the historic Fondren district further elevates that commitment. Fondren is a vibrant neighborhood known for its cultural vitality, creative spirit, and sense of community. By situating the office in Fondren, our firm aligns itself with innovation while contributing to the district's revitalization. It reflects a deliberate choice to be part of a dynamic part of Jackson, positioning the firm not only as a legal presence but also as a community partner," he said.

JBHM Architecture, headquartered in downtown Jackson, is another longtime stalwart of the area's business community.

"JBHM has proudly had a local office in Jackson for 34 years (with our firm being around for 55 years, founded in Tupelo in 1970), with the last 18 years spent in the heart of downtown since renovating the Electric Building and relocating to its third floor," said Ryan Florreich, Principal. "In addition to projects throughout the Metro Jackson Area and State, we remain committed to supporting the City's efforts to revitalize and expand the urban business district, stretching from Jackson State University to the State Fairgrounds. We serve clients in a number of market sectors, including economic development efforts."

JBHM is currently collaborating with the Jackson Municipal Airport Authority (JMAA) on three projects—one on behalf of the State and two directly for the airport, said Florreich.

"Additionally, we are working with the State of Mississippi on several renovation projects, including the Supreme Court Building, the Sillers Building, and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. We are also completing a historic renovation of portions of the Hinds County Courthouse," he said.

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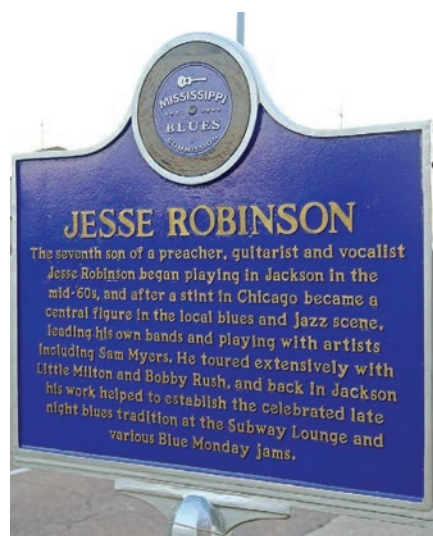
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“Improving the Jackson Metro Area with Master Planning projects include collaborating with Dr. Nashlie Sephus (with The Bean Path) in continued development of the JXN Tech District. We are also involved in a potential project with Erick Dampier, who has a great vision for a new sports facility to serve the Jackson metro area. Another mentionable project is the State Fairgrounds Master Plan; we are currently implementing portions of this plan by demolishing 3 abandoned buildings along Greymont Street, adjacent to the Mississippi Coliseum and Trade Mart,” added Florreich.

The Bean Path, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2018 Florreich mentioned, provides technical advice and guidance to individuals of all ages and small businesses from its headquarters in downtown Jackson. One of the ways the organization is accomplishing this, according to founder Dr. Nashlie Sephus, is with the scaled-out



Jesse Robinson is a blues and Jazz guitarist living in Jackson who has played and worked with many other blues musicians including Bobby Rush, Junior Wells, and Little Milton.

Makerspace, a think tank playground for community workshops and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math)-inspired programming.

As far as the state’s largest airport, The Jackson Municipal Airport Authority (JAN) recently announced increased summer flight options for Jackson and central Mississippi travelers during the peak May through August period.

JAN now has nine nonstop airports from which travelers can choose when making trip plans this year. The number of flights from JAN will increase by over 5% this summer versus 2024, while the seats available to travelers will increase by nearly 3%, according to its website.

“We are excited to offer even more

travel options for our passengers in Jackson and Central Mississippi this summer,” said Rosa M. Beckett, Chief Executive Officer. “At Mississippi’s busiest airport, we are truly grateful to everyone who chooses to fly JAN—you are the reason we continue to grow and thrive.” The Jackson Municipal Airport Authority is investing millions of dollars in infrastructure improvements at JAN to ensure a world-class Customer experience.

Micah McCullough, Vice President



Frank Neville



Roger Parrott



Jeff Barber

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Jackson State University has a rich history and strives to empower students to become future leaders through educational excellence.

with NAI UCR real estate company, commented that, “The Metro Jackson market is still active and stable, but very bifurcated depending on the product type and submarket. Suburban areas—in Rankin and Madison

Counties—continue to perform well across office, industrial, and medical sectors.

“We’ve seen steady leasing activity in suburban office markets, especially in areas with Class A or well-



The Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum, founded in 1978, covers 40,000 square feet and traces the history of agriculture and forestry through an extensive collection of artifacts and exhibits.

maintained B+ assets. These properties are attracting healthcare users, financial services firms, and business owners seeking long-term stability,” said McCullough.

He added that industrial demand in the Metro Jackson area remains strong, both from local owner-users and regional distribution tenants. “We’ve seen continued absorption in the 5,000–30,000 SF range, especially for properties with dock access and yard

space. New industrial construction is limited by rising costs and a tighter lending environment, which has driven a surge in interest for well located existing assets,” added McCullough.

He noted that Metro retail is steady, especially in high-traffic corridors like Lakeland Drive, Highland Colony and many off-interstate locations throughout the metro. “National tenants continue to expand cautiously,

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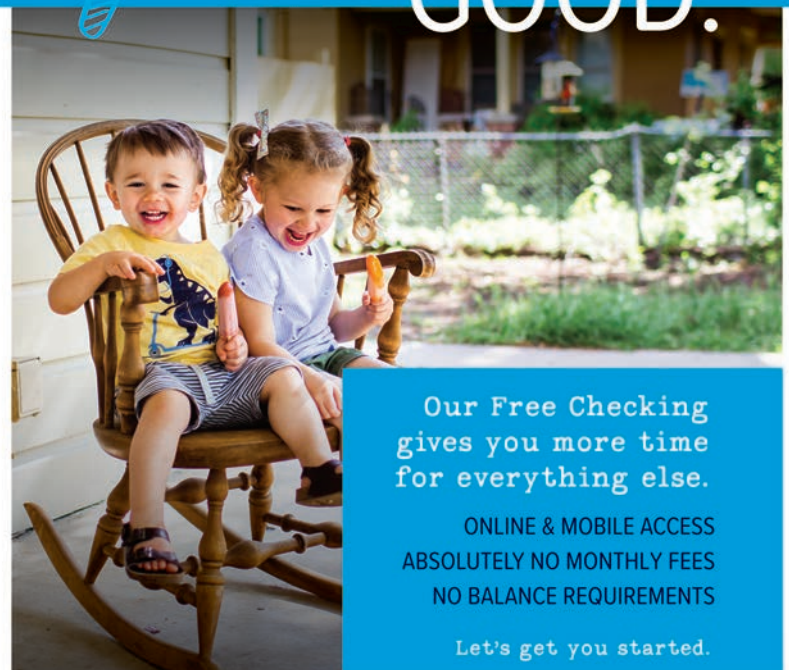
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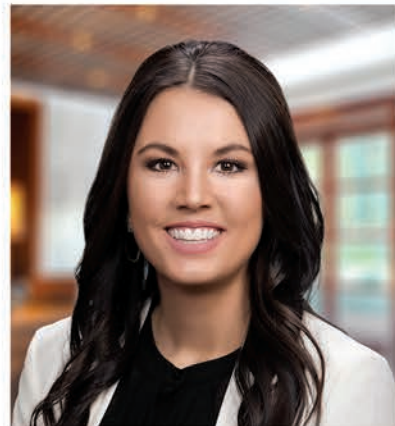
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Mississippi's State Capitol building, located in Jackson, is where all of the state's legislation is passed.



Kasey Dickson



Steve Jent



Thabi Moyo

while local franchisees and local retailers are still active. We're also still seeing great demand in the form of medical users absorbing former retail spaces in areas with high visibility and strong demographics," said McCullough.

Belhaven University, in the heart of the city of Jackson, is celebrating two prestigious awards from the *U.S. News & World Report* 2025 Best Online Programs. The University received recognition in both the Best Online Bachelor's Programs and the Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans categories.

Belhaven University President, Dr.

Roger Parrott, credited the achievement to the dedication of the University's faculty and staff. "At Belhaven, our Christ-centered mission drives us to help every student reach their God-given potential while surrounding them with care and support. These awards reflect the exceptional commitment of our faculty and staff in creating a robust and nurturing learning environment for all students, whether on campus or online, the latter of which has grown exponentially."

U.S. News evaluated Belhaven's online programs based on factors such as graduation rates, faculty credentials,

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A photograph of a young couple in a kitchen. The woman, wearing a yellow sweater and glasses, has her arms raised and is smiling broadly. The man, wearing a green jacket, has his arms raised and is also smiling. They appear to be celebrating. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a window with greenery outside.

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and the availability of student support services. Belhaven's programs stood out alongside those from institutions such as the University of North Carolina, Texas A&M University, and Arizona State University.

At nearby Millsaps College, President Frank Neville touted a business school initiative launched last year called ElseWorks, named after that particular school itself, whereby student teams—under the supervision of faculty members—do projects for and with small businesses and community groups. "The idea, of course, is to help the beneficiaries grow and develop while also allowing our students to gain hands-on experience," said Neville. "I'd like to see such initiatives become a consistent experience across our curriculum."

Jackson will also once again be hosting The Sanderson Farms Championship with southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company returning for the sixth consecutive year as a Tournament Partner and Official Volunteer Sponsor of Mississippi's only PGA TOUR event. The 2025 Sanderson Farms Championship will be held September 29–October 5 at The Country Club of Jackson.

"We are incredibly grateful for Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company's continued support and leadership," said Steve Jent, Executive Director of the Sanderson Farms Championship. "Their commitment to our volunteer program plays a vital role in the tournament's success, and ultimately in our mission to improve the lives of children and families across Mississippi."

Since 1994, Century Club Charities has served as the tournament's host organization, generating more than

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\$26 million for Mississippi charities. The event's primary beneficiary is Children's of Mississippi through their donation to Friends of Children's Hospital.

And, as Jent noted, not only is the prestigious tournament one of largest charity events in the state, it also brings

enormous press coverage and attention to Jackson through live television coverage.

The free National Folk Festival will be coming to Jackson on November 7-9, 2025 after being selected from a competitive field of 42 cities to host the event for a three-year residency.

Produced by the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) since 1934, the National is the country's premier multicultural folk and traditional arts festival.

The large-scale, downtown event, will celebrate the roots, richness, and variety of American culture,

showcasing the artistic traditions of all Americans. For the first time ever, the festival is coming to the State of Mississippi, as well as the Deep South, marking a transformative moment for Mississippi's capital city. Presented in partnership with the City of Jackson, Visit Jackson, Visit Mississippi, the Mississippi Arts Commission, the Community Foundation for Mississippi, the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, Downtown Jackson Partners, the Mississippi Humanities Council and more, this event will honor the best of the nation and the best of Mississippi while driving economic growth and community revitalization.

"With an expected audience of 60,000-80,000 attendees in the first year, the National Folk Festival will turn downtown Jackson into a vibrant, multistage celebration of music, dance, art, food, storytelling, and more, featuring the nation's finest traditional artists in music and dance performances, an area devoted to Mississippi folklife, an interactive Family Area, a bustling crafts marketplace, and regional cuisine," said Thabi Moyo, Local Festival Manager for the event.

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*Figures are approximate as compiled and furnished by the Greater Jackson Alliance, 2025

Attendees to the Festival will have the option of staying at The Westin in downtown Jackson.

The hotel boasts a prime location within walking distance of the Mississippi Museum of Art, Federal Courthouse, Planetarium with The Jackson Convention Complex and Mississippi Coliseum just moments away.

As the center of health care for the state, Jackson is home to Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, St. Dominic Health, the V.A. Medical Center, Merit Health Center and dozens of other clinics and facilities, and home to the leading medical center in Mississippi, the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

UMMC averages over 3000 students enrolled at our campus in all of their medical programs who are from every county in Mississippi. The institution also has the only Level I Trauma Center in the state as well as the only Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. UMMC has close to 700 physicians employed on campus as well as in the clinics all around the Metro area.

Also, in Flowood just outside of Jackson, is the home of Mississippi Blood Services which serves the entire state as well as those in emergency need across the nation. Kasey Dickson, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, said the agency has “collection” and “drawing” stations, including 50 hospitals, throughout the state all in place to help Mississippians in need.

“Our primary focus is on patients here in the state. We always place Mississippi first,” said Dickson. “We also rely on our donors here, particularly in the Metro Jackson area where we are located, many of whom are regular.

Summer is our biggest time of need for donations, so we are amping up our message, including through promotions, to reach people. That said, we have an extremely generous population here—but more can always be done since the need for blood always exists.”

Finally, in February, the longstanding development group Downtown Jackson Partners appointed Liz Brister as president of the organization. Brister brings

extensive leadership and energy to the state’s largest commercial district and will focus on attracting more residential development—an approach that has fueled urban growth across the country.

“Nationally, there is a shift to live, work, and play in the city center. This can drive our state’s growth as we reimagine a downtown that provides more residential dwellings and the amenities that naturally follow, such as restaurants, bodegas, and other retail,”

said Brister. “Blending a traditional business district with residential helps create a more vibrant downtown for everyone.”

With investments through the Capitol Complex Improvement District, including the Capitol Police force, state-owned buildings, and attractions like the Two Mississippi Museums, the state has made significant contributions to downtown Jackson’s development. **MBJ**



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