



**2019**

# **RURAL TOURISM CONFERENCE**

**OCTOBER 21-23**

**NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI**





### **Monday – October 21, 2019**

**1:00 pm** Board bus at Hotel Vue  
Natchez Visitor Reception Center  
Tour the town with Downtown Karla Brown  
Visit Longwood  
Explore The African American Museum of History and Culture

**4:30 pm** Return to Hotel Vue

**5:30 pm** Reception at Hotel Vue with light hors d'oeuvres

**7:00 pm** Dinner (on your own) in historic downtown Natchez

### **Tuesday – October 22, 2019**

**8:45 - 9:15 am** Welcome  
Darryl V. Grennell, Mayor, City of Natchez  
Jennifer Combs, Executive Director, Visit Natchez  
Craig Ray, Director, Visit Mississippi

**9:15 - 10:00 am** Keeping Your Downtown Vibrant  
Chesney Doyle, President, Natchez Friends of the Riverfront

**10:00 - 10:15 am** Exhibitor Introduction - Who We Are and What We Do  
Exhibitors (3 minutes each)

**10:15 - 10:45 am** Break  
Visit Exhibitors' Booths

**10:45 - 11:30 am** Farm to Table, Food Festivals, and Local Flavor - Tools to cultivate our local foods and farms for tourism  
Rachael Carter, Specialist, Mississippi State University Extension  
Laura Jane Giacaglia  
Ann Tackett

**11:30 - 1:00 pm** Lunch  
Buffet catered by the Pilot House Restaurant

- 1:00 - 1:45 pm** Digital Marketing  
Lauren-Colby Nickels  
Dr. James Barnes
- 1:45 - 2:30 pm** Culinary Tourism – The Biscuit Lady  
Regina Charboneau, Chef, Regina's Kitchen
- 2:30 - 3:00 pm** Break – Enjoy Chef Regina's biscuits!  
Visit Exhibitors' Booths
- 3:00 - 3:15 pm** STS Marketing College Experience  
Sandra Fuller, Director, Tallapoosa County Tourism
- 3:15 - 4:00 pm** Tourism Legislative Panel  
Lydia Chassaniol, Senator, Mississippi Legislature  
Chris Massey, Senator, Mississippi Legislature  
Becky Currie, Representative, Mississippi Legislature
- 4:00 – 5:30 pm** Enjoy downtown Natchez shops and attractions
- 5:45 pm** Load bus and depart for Natchez Visitor Center
- 6:00 - 7:30 pm** Reception at Natchez Visitor Center with heavy hors d'oeuvres  
Visit Natchez will host "A Taste of Natchez" Reception in their gorgeous courtyard.  
Sample delicious appetizers and libations from local restaurants.
- 7:30 pm** Load last bus to return to Hotel Vue

### ***Wednesday – October 23, 2019***

- 8:45 - 9:30 am** Making Museums Exciting Panel  
Webster Franklin, CEO, Tunica CVB  
Emily Havens, Executive Director, GRAMMY Museum Mississippi  
Malika Polk-Lee, Director, BB King Museum  
Darrell S. White, Visit Natchez
- 9:30 - 10:15 am** Tourism Trail Systems Panel  
Tami Reist, CEO, Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association  
Kamel King, Bureau Manager, Mississippi Development Authority
- 10:15 - 10:45 am** Break  
Visit Exhibitors' Booths
- 10:45 - 11:30 am** Put A Little Life In Your Cemetery  
Willy Bearden, Filmmaker, photographer, author and producer
- 11:30 – 11:45 am** Wrap-up  
David Otto Legacy Award  
Agnes Zaiontz Award
- 11:45 am** Evaluation Forms – Drawing for \$100  
Wine Pull & Silent Auction Results
- 12:00 pm** Adjournment



**Chesney Doyle**

As a volunteer, Chesney Doyle is founder and president of the nonprofit group, F.O.R. NATCHEZ (Friends of the Riverfront), which aims to revitalize Downtown Natchez through consensus-building, city planning, and strategic action. After gaining the unanimous support of the Natchez Board of Aldermen in 2015, the group raised private funds to contract a professional planning team to engage the community and the leadership, hone a common vision, and produce an action plan. The resulting Downtown Master Plan, officially adopted by the City in 2018, is currently being implemented pursuant to the strategy outlined in the Plan. In 2018, the Downtown Natchez Master Plan received the highest honor given by the American Planning Association (MS Chapter) for "The Year's Most Outstanding Plan."



**Rachael Carter**

Dr. Rachael Carter is an economist for the Mississippi State University Extension Center for Government & Community Development. Her work focuses on economic development, natural resource policy, tourism and local foods marketing through her Extension program, Growing Your Brand. She has worked for over 15 years in community and economic development and she provides analysis and education for elected officials at the city, county, state, and national level. She has led multiple national, statewide and regional economic development initiatives.



**Laura Jane Giacaglia**

Laura Jane Giacaglia received her B.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences from Delta State University in 1996. She majored in Child Development and minored in Special Education. She later received her M.S. in 2002 from Mississippi State University in Health Education and Health Promotion. Her career with Mississippi State University Extension Service began in 1999 where she started as a 4-H Agent in Coahoma County. She currently serves as the Extension Coordinator and Extension Agent for Bolivar County and her focus area is in Family and Consumer Sciences and Community Resource Development. She is a six time Congressional Award winner including both the Governor and Lt. Governor Award for various 4-H conservation projects. She received the Excellence in Promoting Rice Award from USA Rice Federation.



**Ann Tackett**

Ann Tackett is the Aberdeen Main Street manager. Her work is to guide her community in downtown economic development that strengthens our economic assets-design (beautification), retail promotion ,and organization by building partnerships among the community that have a stake in the commercial district. She has worked with Main Street since 2013 but has been a community activist for many years with anything pertinent to making Aberdeen a better place to live.



**Lauren-Colby Nickels**

Lauren Colby Nickels is an Instructor for the Mississippi State University Extension Center for Technology Outreach. During her two years with MSU-ES CTO, she has specialized in digital technology outreach and online marketing using web and social media outlets. She is one of 3 Instructors in Mississippi who teach nontraditional workshops on the importance of digital technology. She has been selected for numerous public speaking opportunities to engage business owners and organization leaders on the importance of digital marketing, outreach and cyber security.



**Dr. James Barnes**

Dr. James Barnes is an Extension economist. His work largely focuses on business development in communities using three Extension programs, including: 1) Bricks-To-Clicks™; 2) Local Food System Economies; and 3) Local Flavor. He is a certified marketing guide and copywriter for StoryBrand, an online marketing framework used to help businesses clarify their marketing messages so customers will listen. He teaches online marketing using StoryBrand's framework to businesses throughout Mississippi communities. His research focuses on branding, online and social media marketing, agribusiness management, local food system economics, and rural development issues.



**Regina Charboneau**

Regina is a Mississippi maven. Born and raised in Natchez, Mississippi, the River runs through her veins. Chef Charboneau has worked as a camp cook in the bush of Alaska, created and owned restaurants in San Francisco, been chef de cuisine on a set of luxurious vintage railway cars, served as the culinary director of the American Queen Riverboat, and written cookbooks. It did not matter if Regina was living in Alaska, Paris, or San Francisco because she brought the South and Southern Cooking with her. A key figure in the American food scene in California that happened in the 80's, she opened the eponymous Regina's at the Regis in 1985. In 1995, Regina created Biscuits & Blues nightclub in San Francisco. Featuring classic southern cuisine and live music nightly, Biscuits & Blues has won multiple WC Handy awards for Best Blues Club in America. Biscuits & Blues is still going strong today, having celebrated its 24th year in February of 2019.



**Senator Lydia Chassaniol**

Senator Chassaniol has served since 2007 and is Chairwoman of the Senate Tourism Committee, where she has shown considerable leadership in helping to develop tourist markets within individual communities throughout the state. Chassaniol also serves as Vice Chairman of the Senate Corrections Committee. In addition, Senator Chassaniol serves on the committees for Agriculture, Drug Policy, Elections, Ethics, Finance, Investigate State Offices and Municipalities. She is a former art teacher who worked in public and private schools, in addition to serving as Director of the Communities in Schools program in Greenwood and Leflore County Schools for two years. Still active in the community, Senator Chassaniol currently serves on the Mississippi Blues Commission and on the board of Cottonlandia Museum. She is a long serving Rotarian and has participated in a literacy project with the local schools for many years.



**Senator Chris Massey**

Chris Massey was raised in the Mississippi Delta before moving to Desoto County. Chris has represented Desoto County in the Mississippi Senate since 2011. He serves on the Ethics, Housing, Education, Finance, Highways and Transportation, Labor, Municipalities, Wildlife Fisheries and Parks and the Senate Tourism Committees.

Chris is Vice President of the family business where he has worked with his parents for 34 years. He is a Certified Professional Builder and Certified Green Professional. He has also served as President of the Home Builders Association of Mississippi. Chris and Cathy have been married for twenty-eight years. They are the parents of Katie (married to Taylor), Dalton and Morgan. Grandparents of Brentley.



### **Representative Becky Currie**

Becky Currie has been in the Legislature for 3 terms and will be starting her fourth term in January 2020. She is a Registered Nurse of 40 years. Becky Currie serves as Chair of the House Tourism Committee and also Chair of PEER Committee. She is also the first President of the Ms House Conservative Coalition. Other committees that she serves on are Elections and Reapportionment, Medicaid, Education and Ways and Means.



### **Webster Franklin**

Webster Franklin grew up in the Mississippi Delta and now calls Tunica, the northernmost county of the Delta, his home. He attended the University of Mississippi and graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Upon graduation he was employed in the White House for the George Bush administration where he served as an advance representative for Vice President Dan Quayle and executive assistant and personal aide to Mrs. Marilyn Tucker Quayle. In 1994, Mr. Franklin became the first paid Executive Director of the Tunica County, Mississippi, Chamber of Commerce. He was responsible for drafting and lobbying for passage of the special legislation creating and funding the Tunica County Convention & Visitors Bureau.



### **Emily Havens**

Emily Havens is the Executive Director of GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi and has served as the Director since January 2015. Prior to accepting the position, Emily served as on the Board of Directors for the Cleveland Music Foundation, that owns and operates the Museum, for more than 3 years. Emily comes to the museum from an 18-year career as an Executive with the Chickasaw Council, Boy Scouts of America. Emily has a Master of Science in Community Development Degree from Delta State University. She is a member of Board of Directors for the Chamber of Commerce, Crosstie Arts, and the Cleveland Rotary Club and is a Paul Harris Fellow. Emily has served as President of the Rotary Club, President of the Cleveland Country Club, and on the Board of Directors for the GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. She is a member of the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Cleveland. Emily and her husband, Lee, have a son, William and two daughters, Elizabeth Gray and Anna Patrick, and live in Cleveland, Mississippi.



### **Malika Polk-Lee**

Malika Polk-Lee first came to the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in 2012 as its chief administrative officer. Her strong background in corporate management was beneficial in her role of overseeing daily operations of the museum, which included financial reporting, personnel, purchasing, strategic planning, the development of education and outreach programs, and fundraising and donor development. After the departure of the museum's executive director in 2015, Malika was the choice to step into that position. As the current executive director, she ensures local programming excellence while maintaining the high quality of exhibits that welcome visitors from all over the world. She understands that service to the residents of the area is vital, and that it helps build a stronger community as well as offering guests a richer experience in the museum and the Mississippi Delta as a whole.



**Darrell S. White**

Darrell S. White is Director of Cultural Heritage Tourism for the City of Natchez, as well as Director Emeritus of the Natchez Museum of African-American History and Culture. He is widely recognized as a researcher and lecturer on subjects pertaining to the history of the people of African origin in South West Mississippi from the 1700's until today. His talents have been utilized by agencies of the federal, state and local governments, as well as national and inter-national media outlets. He has also worked extensively over the years as a historical re-enactor portraying the lives of the known and unknown people of African origin throughout history. He has performed at the Natchez Little Theater, the annual Angels on the Bluff program, and numerous PBS documentaries.



**Tami Reist**

During her more than three decade long career in the tourism and travel industry, Tami has lived by the theme expressed by the famous American heroine Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." This theme is carried forth in all of her speaking engagements across the country and has had proven results in her professional accomplishments. Tami is the President/CEO of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLA). Her duties include planning, implementing, directing, and evaluating all promotional programs as well as overall development of the tourism and travel industry within the 16 northernmost counties of the State of Alabama. The region currently generates more than \$2.5 billion in travel expenditures on an annual basis.



**Kamel King**

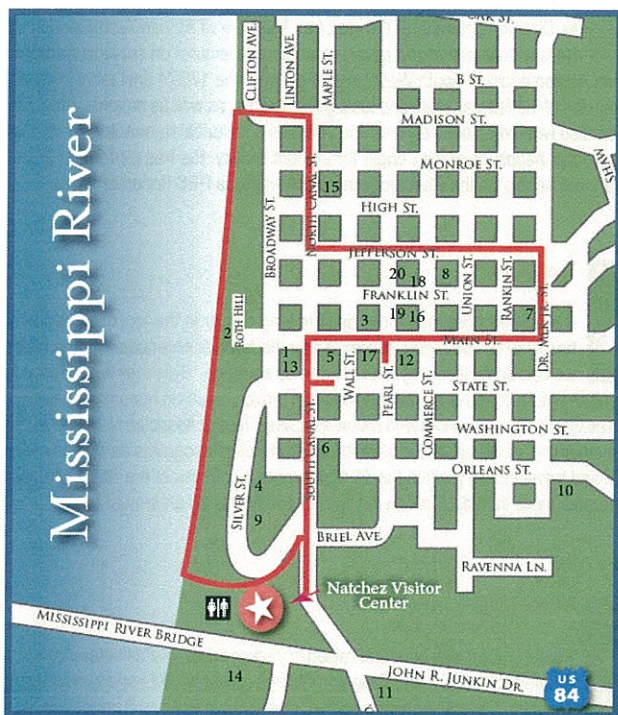
Kamel L. King was born and raised in Jackson, MS. Kamel attended American University (Washington, D.C.) and Tougaloo College (Jackson, MS) and graduated with honors from Tougaloo College earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science/International Relations. Kamel was accepted and graduated from Mississippi College School of Law with a law degree with emphasis on intellectual property and entertainment law. Kamel spent 10 years as the Attorney on the Road for GRAMMY nominated group, was a Director of Operations for both Blackberry Records, Inc. and Terminal Recording Studios, a GRAMMY award winning studio, and has had many years of experience in booking and event production. Kamel has since been Assistant Producer in the Recording Academy® endorsed "Mississippi...Celebrates Its GRAMMY® Legacy" events, "Mississippi Night" at the L.A. GRAMMY® Museum and other tourism conferences.



**Willy Bearden**

Willy Bearden is a Memphis-based filmmaker, photographer, author and producer. His documentary films include: Visualizing the Blues, The Story of Cotton, A History of Memphis Garage Bands, Overton Park, Elmwood Cemetery, Horn Island Journal, Project 366, The Perea Project, 100 Years of Juvenile Court, and The View From Adams Avenue. His museum projects include The Blues Hall of Fame, The Tunica RiverPark, The Elvis Presley Birthplace Museum, Gateway to the Blues Museum, The Cotton Museum at the Memphis Cotton Exchange, and the Memphis Wonders Series. He is the chairman and a founding member of the annual Delta Symposium held at the University of Memphis.

# City of Natchez



1. **100 Main Spirits & Eatery** - open T & W 3pm-10pm  
100 Main Street 601.442.6246
2. **Bandsaw Buffet, The Bluffs Bistro & Prime Cut Steakhouse**  
(call for hours) Magnolia Bluffs Casino  
7 Roth Hill Road 601.235.0045
3. **Biscuits & Blues** - open T & W 11am-2pm, 5pm-10pm  
315 Main Street 601.446.9922
4. **The Camp Restaurant** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
21 Silver Street 601.897.0466
5. **Cotton Alley Cafe'** - open M, T, W 11am-2pm, 5:30pm-9pm  
208 Main Street 601.442.7452
6. **Fat Mama's Tamales** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
303 South Canal Street 601.442.4548
7. **Johnny's Pizza** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
104 Martin Luther King Jr. Street 601.446.5227
8. **Natchez Coffee Company** - open M, T, W 7am-5:30pm  
509 Franklin Street 601.446.5003
9. **Magnolia Grill** - open T, W 11am-9pm  
49 Silver Street 601.446.7670
10. **The Malt Shop** - open M, T, W 10am-9:30pm  
4 Homochitto Street 601.445.4843
11. **Moo's Barn and Grill** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
3 Government Fleet Road 601.653.0907
12. **Pearl Street Pasta** - open M, T, W 11am-2pm, 5pm-9pm  
105 South Pearl Street 601.442.9284
13. **Pig Out Inn Barbeque** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
116 South Canal Street 601.442.8050
14. **The Pilot House** - open M, T, W 4pm-10pm  
130 John R. Junkin Drive 601.442.9976
15. **Pizza Lab** - W 11am-1:30pm  
Natchez Brewing Company  
207 High Street 828.713-5311
16. **Planet Thailand** - open M, T, W 11am-2pm, 5pm-9pm  
116 North Commerce Street 601.442.4220
17. **Regina's Kitchen** - open T & W 5pm-10pm  
312 Main Street 601.392.1756
18. **Rolling N' The Dough** - open T & W 11am-8pm  
413 Franklin Street 601.653-0302
19. **Slick Rick's Cafe'** - open M, T, W 11am-9pm  
109 North Pearl Street 601.445.9900
20. **The Guest House Mediterranean Restaurant**  
open M, T, W 11am-2pm, 5pm-8:30pm



MONMOUTH HISTORIC INN - NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI

Don't  
MISS

...ON SOUTHERN  
STROLLING TIME

Rest, dine and delight at historic bed and  
breakfast inla across Mississippi.  
Don't miss out on the elegance and hospitality  
that has charmed visitors for centuries.

VISIT  
MISSISSIPPI

Plan your next Mississippi trip at [VISITMISSISSIPPI.ORG/DONTMISSOUT](http://VISITMISSISSIPPI.ORG/DONTMISSOUT)



## Earned Media:

Contact LRC to see your stories published in blogs, online magazines, newspapers and more!

SOUTHERN DESTINATION SPECIALISTS • CUSTOMIZED PUBLIC RELATIONS  
EXPERT MEDIA RELATIONS • PRESS TRIPS • SOCIAL MEDIA

[TravelMediaPressRoom.com](http://TravelMediaPressRoom.com)

LRC'S 24/7 proprietary tool for media marketing and promotion

With the LRC team behind you, it's like having a full-time, experienced PR department on staff—but even better. We work with the media every single day. From writing and pitching story ideas to arranging press visits to tracking and reporting results, every plan is targeted and strategic for maximum results and return on your investment.

For more information, email or call Laurie Rowe:  
[LaurieRowe@LRC-Media.com](mailto:LaurieRowe@LRC-Media.com)  
770.402.0879



EXPLORE  
**DREAM**  
DESTINATIONS

Take a Trip to Alabama's Majestic Appalachian Mountains!  
**800.648.5381 • NorthAlabama.org**  
Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

ROAD TRIPS  
BARBECUE TRAIL  
CRAFT BEER

FREE APPS  
FOR IOS AND ANDROID  
SMARTPHONES

WE'RE SOCIAL  
@VisitNorthAL

BARBECUE TRAIL • WINE TRAIL • WATERFALL TRAIL  
CRAFT BEER TRAIL • CIVIL WAR TRAIL • BIRDING TRAIL  
ALABAMA BASS TRAIL • SCENIC MOTORCYCLE ROUTES



UA Center for  
Economic Development

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

Our center offers **expertise** on **planning** and **economic development** in the following departments

- Community
- Leadership
- Outdoor Recreation
- Tourism
- Workforce
- Placemaking



Find resources to bring economic development to a rural area at:

[uaced.ua.edu](http://uaced.ua.edu)

---

---

# SPONSORS



UA Center for  
Economic Development

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®



historic  
**ABERDEEN**  
mississippi

# VISIT MISSISSIPPI



**LAURIE ROWE**  
COMMUNICATIONS



Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association  
NorthAlabama.org



VisitDesotoCounty.com



## 50 YEARS STATES

## Road Tour

- Visiting every state and unique attractions along the way
- Fun contests and giveaways at festivals across the country
- Showcasing many wonderful, weird and crazy treasures we have discovered over the years
- Love Luggage paint days to benefit foster children

509 West Willow Street  
Scottsboro, AL 35768  
256.259.1525

Updated Road Tour info at  
[www.unclaimedbaggage.com](http://www.unclaimedbaggage.com)

