



Mississippi Children's Museum Breaks Ground on Satellite Campus: Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian

PRESS RELEASE • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/28/19

MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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Meridian, MS – The Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) broke ground on its first satellite campus earlier today in Meridian, Mississippi. Construction is underway on the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian (MCM-Meridian) which is located on 22nd Avenue and will include a 25,000 square foot state of the art facility featuring 9,500 square feet of exhibit and an additional 25,000 square foot outdoor exhibit experience designed for Mississippi's youngest residents as well as their entire circle of influence. Leaders from the community, government officials, MCM-Meridian and MCM representatives, and most importantly, local children, used their shovels to break ground and share in this momentous occasion.

The eight-acre location on 22nd Avenue for the new museum was selected as the perfect site to welcome visitors along the gateway to downtown Meridian. "We are thrilled to be moving forward with what began as a dream for our community. When completed, we will have a world-class museum for our children and future generations of children in East Mississippi," stated MCM-Meridian Executive Director, Liz Wilson. Wilson, who grew up in Meridian, has been working on this project from its inception, first as a volunteer and now as the Executive Director—planning with education and design teams, leading fundraising efforts, hosting community events for children, and raising awareness about the project throughout East Mississippi.

MCM-Meridian has received significant financial backing from the community, including the signature sponsors: The Phil Hardin Foundation and The Riley Foundation. The combined \$7 million support from these respected community leaders helped launch the project, which has gathered much momentum since its start in 2015. MCM's leadership has used the expertise and experience gained from building the flagship museum in Jackson ten years ago to work in consort with the local leadership to bring together top exhibit designers, architects, engineers, contractors, and landscape architects to arrive at the final plans for construction.

"When designing the building and exhibits, we sought input from community partners and educational experts in Meridian and across the state," explained Wilson. "Our exhibits are designed based on three key initiative areas which include health and nutrition, literacy, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). Aspects of the cultural arts and East Mississippi heritage will also be incorporated throughout the museum – for example, we were able to weave into our exhibit plans the rich narrative of people in Meridian, such as the Key Brothers and the invention of in-flight refueling that is, today, used all over the world."

MCM is recognized as the state’s leading cultural, early education institution and expanding its reach to the residents of Meridian and East Mississippi was a natural progression for the institution. “We are thrilled to be able to bring award-winning opportunities and programs to East Mississippi,” said MCM President and CEO, Susan Garrard. “While MCM will be sharing some of the outstanding programs currently available at our Jackson campus, everything about the new museum reflects the unique people and places surrounding Meridian.”

MCM-Meridian is expected to open in early 2021; and upon opening, is planning to see over 51,000 visitors a year with a roughly \$9 million-dollar economic effect on the community from a combination of direct spending as calculated by Dr. Alan Barefield of Mississippi State University and an investment in early education as researched by the White House. The museum will also create roughly 160 jobs during construction and approximately 25 full-time equivalent museum staff positions. As the construction and operations phases of the museum move forward, fundraising for this project is ongoing; to give, please visit www.mcmmeridian.org.

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About the Mississippi Children’s Museum

The Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge and learning in all children. MCM is dedicated to inspiring Mississippi’s children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential. The museum features 40,000 square feet of exhibit space designed around five primary initiatives: Literacy, STEAM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts and Mississippi Heritage. The museum’s exhibits, programs, and outreach opportunities provide engaging, explorative, hands-on educational activities for children of all ages. To learn more about MCM visit www.mschildrensmuseum.org.

About the Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian

The Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian (MCM-Meridian) is the East Mississippi satellite campus of the statewide Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM)—a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge, and learning in all children. Currently MCM-Meridian is building a 25,000-square foot facility with exhibit space designed around three primary initiatives: Literacy and Arts; STEAM; and Health and Nutrition with Cultural Arts and Mississippi History woven throughout all three galleries. The museum’s exhibits, programs, and outreach opportunities will provide engaging, explorative, hands-on educational activities for children of all ages. MCM-Meridian is a strategic part of the statewide Mississippi Children’s Museum which is dedicated to inspiring ALL of Mississippi’s children from ALL backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential. To learn more about MCM-Meridian visit www.mcmmeridian.org.

MCM – Meridian Fact Sheet

Building	25,000 square feet
Inside Exhibits	9,500 square feet
Outside Exhibits	25,000 square feet
Visitation	51,000 estimated visitors per year
Target Area	Lauderdale, Kemper, Neshoba, Newton, Jasper, Clarke, and West Alabama
Budget	\$17 Million
Economic Impact	Estimated \$9 Million (combination of spending and early education investment)
Signature Sponsors	The Phil Harden Foundation and The Riley Foundation
Estimated Open	Early 2021

THE DESIGN TEAM

Architect	Wier Boerner Allin Architecture Principle: Jack Allin
Exhibit Design	Kraemer Design + Production, Inc. Principle: Tom Kraemer
Landscape Architect	Native Habitats Principles: Robert Poore and Rob Anders
Construction	Fountain Construction President: Brad Fountain
Fabricator	Heartland Scenic Studio, Inc. President: Steve Wheeldon
Civil Engineer	Engineering Plus President: Terrell Temple