



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

February 25, 2026

Dear Congressional Representatives:

Visit Mississippi, the official tourism organization of the State of Mississippi, wholeheartedly supports the Chickasaw Nation's request in partnership with the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation for \$16,000,000 in federal funding to complete the construction of the Chickasaw Heritage Center. We believe this project aligns perfectly with our mission to promote cultural heritage tourism and showcase the unique diversity of Mississippi's rich history.

The Chickasaw Nation's story is deeply intertwined with the narrative of Mississippi. Their presence in the state predates European contact, and their history is inextricably linked to the development of the region. While Mississippi boasts diverse cultural attractions related to our music heritage, Civil War, and Civil Rights history, the Chickasaw Heritage Center will offer a vital perspective often missing from the state's historical narrative. This will enrich the visitor experience by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the state's past. The center's focus will be on the history and culture of the Chickasaw people from their perspective. This will diversify Mississippi's tourism landscape and attract a new generation of culturally curious travelers.

Beyond its cultural significance, the Chickasaw Heritage Center is projected to significantly contribute to the state's economy. Estimates forecast an annual economic impact of \$5.6 to \$6 million and the creation of at least 25 permanent jobs. This economic stimulus will benefit not only the immediate community but the state as a whole.

Visit Mississippi strongly supports the collaborative spirit behind this project. The substantial financial contributions from the Chickasaw Nation, the City of Tupelo, and the State of Mississippi demonstrate a unified commitment to realizing this project's potential. We believe the Chickasaw Heritage Center will be a transformative landmark, enriching the cultural landscape of Mississippi and attracting visitors from across the nation.

We urge your approval of the Chickasaw Nation's request for federal funding. The Chickasaw Heritage Center has the potential to be a game-changer for cultural heritage tourism in Mississippi, enriching the visitor experience, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and contributing significantly to the state's economic well-being.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rochelle H. Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Rochelle Hicks
Director
Visit Mississippi



State of Mississippi
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
DELBERT HOSEMANN
Lieutenant Governor

March 4, 2026

Honorable Trent Kelly
U.S. Representative, Mississippi

RE: Letter of Support for the Chickasaw Heritage Center

Congressman Kelly:

I am writing to express my support for the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation's Chickasaw Heritage Center project and the Chickasaw Nation's request for federal funding.

The Chickasaw Inkana Foundation's and Chickasaw Nation's vision for this center aligns perfectly with the State of Mississippi's commitment to cultural preservation and economic development. We recognize the immense value of this project and its potential to leave a lasting positive impact on our state.

The Chickasaw Heritage Center will serve as a vital educational resource, offering visitors and residents alike a unique opportunity to learn about the rich history and vibrant culture of the Chickasaw people. This center will provide opportunity for the Chickasaw people to share their own narrative.

Beyond its cultural significance, the center is projected to be a significant economic driver for the state. Its strategic location on the heavily trafficked Natchez Trace Parkway, attracting an estimated 100,000 visitors annually, has the potential to significantly boost cultural heritage tourism throughout Mississippi. The economic impact is an estimated \$6 million.

The state of Mississippi has already demonstrated its commitment to this project by authorizing \$16,000,000 towards its construction. We believe this collaborative effort between the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation, Chickasaw Nation, the City of Tupelo, the State of Mississippi, and the federal government exemplifies a strong partnership

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Delbert Hosemann".

Delbert Hosemann
Lieutenant Governor
State of Mississippi



City of Tupelo

Todd Jordan
Mayor

COUNCIL

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To: The Honorable Trent Kelly

From: Todd Jordan, Mayor, City of Tupelo, Mississippi

Date: February 24, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support for the Chickasaw Heritage Center

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation's Chickasaw Heritage Center project and urge your favorable consideration of the Chickasaw Nation's request for \$16,000,000 in federal funding.

The Chickasaw Inkana Foundation's strong partnership with the Chickasaw Nation and their dedication to preserving the cultural heritage of the Chickasaw people and sharing it with the world aligns perfectly with the City of Tupelo's vision of fostering a vibrant and inclusive community. The center will not only serve as a vital educational resource, but also act as a powerful economic driver, attracting visitors and stimulating tourism within our city and the state of Mississippi.

The City of Tupelo has already demonstrated its commitment to this project by providing over \$1,400,000 for the construction of access roads. We believe the Chickasaw Heritage Center has the potential to be a transformative landmark, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike.

The strategic location on the Natchez Trace Parkway, coupled with the Foundation's commitment to creating a world-class heritage center, positions this project for exceptional success. I am confident that the center will attract over 100,000 visitors annually, generating significant economic benefits for our region.

Furthermore, the Chickasaw Nation's cultural perspective is invaluable and deserves to be shared accurately and authentically. The center will provide a platform for correcting historical inaccuracies and fostering a deeper understanding of the Chickasaw people's unique history and traditions.

I urge you to join us in supporting the completion of the Chickasaw Heritage Center. Your \$16,000,000 contribution will be instrumental in realizing this remarkable project and its lasting impact on our community, the state and the nation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Todd Jordan

Mayor, City of Tupelo, Mississippi



February 29, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

The Chickasaw people are an integral part of Mississippi's rich history. Too often, their story, as well as those of other First American groups, has been told by others. The proposed Chickasaw Heritage Center will enable the Chickasaw Nation to preserve and share their history from their own perspective, furthering knowledge of their resilience and the complexities of our shared past.

The center will also have a tremendous economic impact on Mississippi. It will draw visitors from across the country and provide them with a deeper understanding of the Chickasaw story. It will enhance the state's cultural heritage tourism, thereby having a positive impact on other sites across Mississippi.

This Mississippi Humanities Council is very excited to work with the Chickasaw Heritage Center once it is completed. We have partnered with the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation in the past and look forward to supporting the robust public programming they have planned for the new center. The Mississippi Humanities Council was founded in 1972 to support public programs across Mississippi that educate people about our history and culture. We consider Chickasaw heritage as a vital part of that history.

We therefore support the Chickasaw Heritage Center. We urge you to support funding that is vital to the completion of this transformative project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stuart Rockoff
Executive Director
Mississippi Humanities Council

**The Mississippi
Humanities Council**

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*** Governor's Appointees**

Staff

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Molly McMikan

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Office Administrator
Evan Jones



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To: Members of the United States Congress
From: Mary Cates Williams, Executive Director,
Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance
Date: March 1, 2026
Subject: Letter of Support for the Chickasaw Heritage Center

The Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance (MHAA), the local coordinating entity for the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area, wholeheartedly supports the Chickasaw Nation's request for \$16,000,000 in federal funding to aid the Chickasaw Inkana Foundation complete the Chickasaw Heritage Center.

We strongly believe this project aligns with our mission to promote cultural heritage tourism and economic development within the Mississippi Hills region, which is comprised of 19 full counties and portions of 11 others. Since 2016, MHAA has awarded almost \$2 million in grants and special projects to communities within the heritage area. Our current local members include Booneville Main Street, Chickasaw County, Columbus Cultural Heritage Foundation, Corinth Area CVB, Holly Springs Tourism and Recreation Bureau, Pontotoc Co. Chamber and Main Street, City of New Albany / Union County Heritage Museum, Visit Oxford / University of MS, Ripley Main Street, Starkville CVB, Tishomingo County Tourism, Tupelo CVB and Water Valley Main Street.

The Chickasaw Heritage Center presents a unique opportunity to:

- **Enhance Cultural Heritage Tourism:** The center's location on the Natchez Trace Parkway, coupled with its focus on sharing the rich history and culture of the Chickasaw people, positions it to attract a significant number of visitors. This influx of visitors will generate new revenue streams for local businesses, bolstering the regional economy.
- **Promote Cultural Understanding:** By providing a platform for the Chickasaw Nation to share their history and culture in their voice, the center will foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for their unique heritage. This will contribute to a more inclusive and diverse cultural landscape within the Mississippi Hills region.
- **Stimulate Economic Growth:** The estimated annual economic impact of \$5.6 million to \$6 million and the creation of at least 25 permanent jobs highlight the center's potential to significantly contribute to the economic well-being of the region.

The MHHAA recognizes the collaborative spirit behind this project, with the Chickasaw Nation, the City of Tupelo, and the State of Mississippi demonstrating their unwavering commitment through substantial financial contributions. This collaborative approach strengthens the project's viability and underscores its potential to benefit the entire community. The MHHAA has thus far committed to provide \$70,000 in grants for exhibit and program development, and will strongly consider additional funding in the future.

We urge you to approve the this request for federal funding. The Chickasaw Heritage Center has the potential to be a transformative landmark, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike while contributing significantly to the cultural and economic landscape of the Mississippi Hills region.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Cates Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "W".

Mary Cates Williams
Executive Director, Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance
marycates@mshills.org
(662) 816-2272